THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN A TELECOMUNICATION BUSINESS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF ECONET WIRELESS ZIMBABWE LIMITED

by

Patience Tsitsi Makwara

submitted in accordance with the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF COMMERCE

in the subject of

Business Management

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Supervisor: Mrs. C. Wessels

Co-supervisor: Mr. R. Machado

27 February 2020

DECLARATION

Name: **Patience Tsitsi Makwara**

Student number: **46009167**

Degree: **Master of Commerce in Business Management**

Title of dissertation: **The use of social media marketing in a telecommunication business: An exploratory study of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited**

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

I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

....

SIGNATURE DATE

(For the signed version of this document, see 'APPENDIX F: Declaration'.)

ABSTRACT

The study focused on the use of social media marketing in the telecommunication business in Zimbabwe, as it has received limited attention in the literature available to date. The study aimed to explore the use of social media marketing in a telecommunications business- Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited. The study took on an exploratory research design which was qualitative in nature. A case study approach was applied with Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited as focus of being studied. Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited was chosen because it is the market leader in the telecommunications industry which has adopted the use of social media marketing in its business. Data collection was done through in-depth interviews with judgement sampling being used to choose the participants for the interviews. The data collected was analysed using thematic analysis. It was found that Econet Wireless Limited is using social media marketing to communicate with its customers, for their brand to be visible. They also use it because it is an inexpensive way to promote their business with a possibility to reach a large number of people in a short space of time.

<u>KEY TERMS</u>

Digital marketing, social media, social media channels, social media marketing, telecommunications industry, research process, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited, qualitative research, in-depth interviews, judgement sampling, exploratory research design, Facebook, Blogs, Twitter, Instagram.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this Master's dissertation to my loving parents who have stood by me during my studies. I am so grateful for your encouragement and the love that you showed me throughout this journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to give all the praise and glory to God, for, without Him nothing is possible. I would like to thank a few extraordinary people for their support during this journey.

My sincere gratitude goes to my supervisors Mrs Corinne Wessels and Mr Ricardo Machado for their patience, leadership, and guidance during the time I was working on this dissertation. I could not have asked for better supervisors. Thank you for believing in me, without you this dissertation would not be completed.

I would like to thank my parents, family and friends for the words of encouragement, support and advices that kept me going throughout this research. I really appreciate and I am so blessed to have you in my life. I would also like to acknowledge Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited personnel in the marketing department for allowing me their time and knowledge in making this research a success.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

GLOSSARY

For this study the following terms are defined:

Blogs: A blog is a website that allows the users (bloggers) to publish posts displayed with the most recent post appearing first (Zou & Hylands, 2019).

Business networking: Business networking is the process of establishing relationships that are mutually beneficial for businesses as well as potential customers (Yadav & Rahman, 2018).

Case study: Is a research method that investigates a phenomenon in-depth, which is set in a real-life context (Yin, 2012).

Category: A category is a subtopic of finding that is under the main theme (Roller & Lakravas, 2015).

Digital marketing: Digital marketing is a way of promoting products and services in manner that is advanced, using primarily a database driven distribution channel to reach customers in a cost-effective and timely manner (Ryan & Jones, 2016).

Exploratory research design: An exploratory research design gathers primary information that helps to define a problem and recommends a hypothesis (Pride & Ferrell, 2017).

Facebook: Facebook is a social network defined as a virtual online community where people connect with each other as well as sharing and building their profiles using videos and pictures of themselves (Seo & Park, 2018).

In-depth interview: An in-depth interview is defined as an open-ended method used to obtain detailed information about a subject matter (Schober, 2016).

Instagram: Instagram is a mobile photo-sharing application that transform an image into a memory (Lee, Moon & Sung, 2016).

Non-probability: Non-probability sampling is a sampling method whereby the sample is gathered in a process which does not allow all the individuals in the population an equal chance of being selected (Nosek *et al.,* 2018).

Open-ended question: An open-ended question is defined as free-form survey questions that allows respondents to answer in their own knowledge and understanding (Yin, 2017).

Quantitative research: The quantitative research method is an objective, formal, and systematic process whereby numerical data is used to gather information a quantitative research method is a formal, objective, and a systematic process whereby numerical data is used to gather information (Hammarberg, 2016).

Search engine optimisation: Search engine optimisation is defined as a process by which elements of a website are altered in a way that changes the ranking of the website on the search engine results pages (Iredale & Heinze, 2017).

Social media: Social media has been described as a series of internet-based applications that allow for shared ideas, opinions and experiences through content generated by the user (Chahal & Rani, 2017).

Social media marketing: Social media marketing is a form of interaction, which has transformed the way in which businesses relate to their customers (Pride & Ferrell, 2017).

Theme: A theme is the main topic of finding that is identified from the interviewed participant response (Roller & Lakravas, 2015). A theme helps to capture something that is important about the collected data about the research question and represents responses that are patterned.

Thematic analysis: Thematic analysis is a technique used to identify, analyse and report themes or patterns in greater detail (Braun & Clarke, 2016).

Twitter: Twitter is a micro-blogging website, which limits the content that can be posted on a message (Barnes, 2018).

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Social media marketing has become one of the most important business developments of the 21st century and, it remains unclear how much telecommunications companies have benefitted from the use of digital marketing and social media marketing in Zimbabwe (Madziwa & Sibanda, 2018). Social media marketing is critical in the processing of information and it also provides a way for telecommunications companies to differentiate their products and services (Chakraborty & Nandi, 2019). The ZimMarketers (2017) stated that social media marketing has come to be very popular among Zimbabwean businesses since 2013, as Zimbabweans have become acquainted with digital platforms for business.

This chapter serves as an introduction and presents an overview of the telecommunication industry in Zimbabwe with a specific focus on Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited, followed by a discussion on social media marketing. The research question as well as the primary and secondary research objectives for the study are also presented, then discussion of the research methodology follows. The chapter concludes with the outline of the chapters in the rest of the study.

The section below provides the reader with a brief background of the telecommunications industry in Zimbabwe.

1.2 BACKGROUND ON THE TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY IN ZIMBABWE

The telecommunications industry in Zimbabwe has grown significantly regardless of the overall economic challenges experienced in recent years (POTRAZ, 2017). The industry has witnessed the entrants of multiple operators with both voice and data capabilities (The ZimMarketers, 2017). Notable telecommunication providers include Econet Wireless Zimbabwe, Telecel, NetOne, and internet access providers include Africom, Liquid Telecom, Powertel and TelOne (POTRAZ, 2017). Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited

dominates the telecommunications industry, as they have the largest market share of 51.7 percent followed by NetOne with a market share of 35.3 percent and lastly Telecel with a market share of 13 percent, which is all controlled by the Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (POTRAZ, 2018). For this reason, this study will focus on Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited.

Table 1.1 below was extracted from the 2017 Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe annual report and outlines the structure of the telecommunication industry in Zimbabwe.

Table1.1: Number of licensees and type of operators

Types of operators	Number of licensees
PSTN (Public switched telephone network)	1
Mobile	3
Internet Access	11
Public Data	2
Internet service providers	17

Source: POTRAZ (2017)

Table 1.1 above represents the number of companies by type of operator in the Zimbabwe telecommunications industry. The table is important because it shows the operators in the Zimbabwe telecommunications industry. As shown in the table, there were three mobile operators, 17 internet service providers and one providing fixed line services (POTRAZ, 2017).

The section below provides a brief background on Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited, the market leader in the Zimbabwe telecommunications industry, which is the focal point of this study.

1.2.1 Background on Econet Wireless

Econet Wireless Private Limited is a telecommunications service provider established in July 1998 and it was so listed on the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange in the same year (Econet

Wireless Zimbabwe Limited, 2016). Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited (2016) indicated that they offer a large number of communication solutions such as short messaging services (SMS), mobile calling, money transfer services, mobile money and mobile banking as well as internet services. Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited was also one of the first telecommunications companies to start digital marketing in Zimbabwe, which it uses to communicate with its customers through various social media channels like Facebook and Twitter (Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited, 2019).

Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is a privately held diversified telecommunications group that has operations and investments in Africa, Europe and also in the East Asian Pacific Rim. Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited offers products and services in the main areas of mobile and fixed telephone services. Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is using broadband, which is a high capacity transmission technique that uses a range of frequencies which enables a large number of messages to be communicated at the same time (Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited, 2016). Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited also uses fibre optic for their internet. Fibre optic is a medium that is used to spread information from one place to another through sending pulses of light through an optical fibre (Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited, 2016).

POTRAZ (2018) indicated that internet penetration in Zimbabwe was at 52.1 percent during 2018 with at least 7 million people gaining access to the internet through their mobile phones for business use. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn were the most used in Zimbabwe, with about 1.2 million users on Facebook, an estimate of 200 000 on Twitter and 276 000 on LinkedIn (POTRAZ, 2018). Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited made headlines with the introduction of airtime credit services which is done via the Ecocash platform, and they have also launched Ruzivo which is an online digital learning platform which is interactive and provides educational resources that help to improve the pass rate of both primary and secondary students in Zimbabwe (Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited, 2018).

Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited offers quality services, especially mobile network and internet services, in the telecommunications industry in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is regarded as the leading company in the

telecommunications industry, and has invested in telecommunications infrastructure, owning 80 percent of the mobile phone infrastructure in Zimbabwe (Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited, 2018). Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is using social media marketing, and for social media marketing to become more effective, it is crucial for Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited to determine the most useful social media marketing channels that deliver the best performance for a particular marketing aim (Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited, 2018). This establishes Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited as an important player in the Zimbabwean sector.

An overview of social media will be discussed in the following section.

1.2.2 Social media

According to Miekle (2017), social media has been described as real-time conversations among people that enable effective communication. It entails the conversations that people have and the information that they exchange to enable better and more informed choices. Miller (2015) argued that social media is a tool that encourages two-way communication and it is, therefore, a term used to cover platforms such as micro-blogging, social media networks, blogs, online communities, reviews and social bookmarks. Tuten and Solomon (2017) said that, social media represent virtual places that bring people together mostly for social and business purposes.

Tuten and Solomon (2017) posit that social media is the democratization of information and the ability to transform people from just being content readers, but also becoming content readers. Social media has been described as a series of internet-based applications that allow for shared ideas, opinions and experiences through content generated by the user (Chahal & Rani, 2017). It is interactive and also known as new media or consumer generated media (Chahal & Rani, 2017).

Social media is Internet-based applications that enable businesses to create and exchange information (Chahal & Rani, 2017). Not only do businesses use social media to reach customers but also for engaging and strengthening the business and customer bond. According to Seo and Park (2018) social media is a set of Internet-based applications which are built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0

which allows for the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Seo and Park (2018) indicated that social media uses the internet to circulate information that the businesses would have created.

From the definitions, it is clear that social media is all about the interaction of people making use of various online platforms to create and share information. However, for this study, the researcher uses the definition of Seo and Park (2018) who said social media is a group of Internet-based applications that are built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, which allows for the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Through the development of social media, there has been a growing impact on how businesses communicate with customers. It also allows the customers to interact with businesses as compared to a business just sending out their marketing message and not getting feedback from the customers they are delivering their messages to (Meyers, 2017).

With social media, businesses are able to focus on their customers and respond to their needs and create ongoing communication (Chaffey, 2018). Social media uses technology that is web-based which quickly disseminates information to a lot of people at the same time. Social media covers different online forums such as social networking websites and video sharing channels such as YouTube (Chaffey & Chadwick, 2019). Social media is not only used by businesses to reach to customers, but also for engaging and strengthening the business and customer relationship.

Social media has become a valuable marketing tool because of its viral nature and also acts as another means of information (Meyers, 2017). Foux (2016) postulated that customers perceive social media as an information source that is trustworthy when it comes products and services that a business offers, as compared to the traditional elements of the promotion mix. Social media has moved from being a platform were people communicate with family and friends to a place where customers can learn more about a business and its products and services (Chaffey, 2018).

The following section focuses on the problem statement.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

While the literature is full of numerous cases of the uses of social media marketing, most of the reported cases are from the developed world and very few, if any at all, from developing countries (Madziwa & Sibanda, 2018). For example, Fridolf and Arnautovic (2011) did a study with the purpose being to acquire knowledge and describe how and why companies use social media in marketing communication. The outcome of the study showed that businesses should use social media in their communications because it gives them an opportunity to inform their customers and create two-way communication, as well as helping them strengthen the identity of the business, build confidence for the company as well as creating relationships.

Briones, Kuch, Liu and Jin (2011) and Cho and Park (2012) demonstrated how the Korean government used Twitter to encourage collective cooperation between ministries and how the American Red Cross uses Facebook and Twitter to help spread awareness, develop and build relationships through engagements. Bhanot in 2014 did a study on the impact of social media marketing on Indian companies' performance, where the purpose was to establish how companies are using social media in their business. The outcomes of the study showed that businesses use social media to promote their products and services and that through using social media channels, more customers can be reached.

Telecommunication companies in Zimbabwe are struggling to increase market share and therefore, the results obtained from this study might help influence the telecommunications companies to fully utilise social media marketing and improve communication with customers. In Zimbabwe, social media marketing is becoming more important as more people have access to it and various business sectors are making use of it (Madziwa & Sibanda, 2018). However, there is still very limited research done on the uses of social media marketing in the telecommunications industry in Zimbabwe, and, therefore, a gap exists in the literature that should be investigated.

According to Felix, Rauschnabel, & Hinsch (2017), an increase on the use of social media marketing could have a positive impact on the sales of a business. This research study will aim to investigate the importance of enriching the knowledge and understanding of

the use of social media marketing in the Zimbabwe telecommunications industry. The current marketing practices at Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited are inadequate because social media marketing is a system that allows marketers to engage, collaborate, interact and harness intelligence for marketing purposes (Mehelmi & Sadek, 2019).

The significance of this study to the Zimbabwean telecommunications industry is that it could provide the industry with new and improved knowledge about the uses of social media marketing. The Zimbabwean telecommunications industry will not only realize the importance of having increased interaction with consumers, but also the opportunity to meet the demands of customers.

Table 1.2 below shows some of the past studies done around the world on social media marketing.

Table1.2: Summary of past studies done on social media marketing

Topics	Purposes	Author	Year	Country	Research Method	Sample size
An exploratory study of SMM and traditional media in the Irish Fashion Industry	To determine the perceived benefits of using social media marketing and the impact these have on traditional media.	Jessica, D.	2013	Ireland	Qualitative	15
Social Media Marketing: A case study of Saab Automobile A.B.	To describe how and explaining why companies use social media in their marketing communicating strategy	Malin. F and Alem. A	2011	Sweden	Qualitative	5
Social Media Marketing: Measuring Its effectiveness and identifying the Target Market.	To measure effectiveness of social media marketing.	Pradiptarini, C.	2011	U.S.A	Quantitative	20
Keeping up with the digital age: How the American Red Cross uses Social media to build relationships.	Exploring how the American Red Cross utilises social media channels to create relationship measurement outcomes.	Briones, R.L., Brooke, B.K. and Yan Jin, F.L	2011	U.S.A	Qualitative	40
The impact of customer relationship marketing on	To prove the association this	Jatili, P.P.	2008	Iran	Qualitative	25

market performance. A Study among Iranian telecommunication service providers.	exists between relationship marketing strategies and firms' market performance.					
The impact of marketing on sales volume in the telecommunications industry: A case study of MTN Uganda.	To establish the impact of the marketing on sales volume	Wahito, W.L.	2011	Uganda	Qualitative	20
Social media and brand equity: reality for small to medium enterprises in Zimbabwe tourism industry.	To see how social media could fit in SMEs branding as a survival strategy to overcome the increasing global tourism competition.	Chigore, F.	2016	Zimbabwe	Quantitative and qualitative	36
An evaluation of the effectiveness of social media marketing in enhancing sales performance in the mobile telecommunications industry.	Is social media marketing effective in enhancing sales performance in the telecommunications industry?	. Baloyi, K.	2014	Zimbabwe	Qualitative	15
Social Media and Brand Equity: Reality for Small to Medium Enterprises in Zimbabwe Tourism Industry.	To see how social media could fit in SMEs branding as a survival strategy to overcome the increasing	Sibanda, V. and Madziwa, C.	2016	Zimbabwe	Quantitative	135

	global tourism competition					
The role of trust in understanding the impact of social media marketing on brand equity and brand loyalty.	To explore the impact of social media marketing activities on brand loyalty via brand trust and brand equity.	Ebrahim, R.S.	2019	Egypt		287
The social media and marketing strategies. How it impacts the small- and medium- sized enterprises' Business performance?	To identify the social media marketing strategies adopted by the small- and medium sized enterprises.	Noor Fadhiha Mokhtar, N.F., AbuHasan, Z.R. and Halim, M.A.S.A	2017	Malaysia	Qualitative	36

Based on the above table, it can be seen that studies on social media marketing have been done around the world, and only one study has been done on Zimbabwe's telecommunications industry. However, the studies that have been done did not specifically focus on the uses of social media marketing and neither on Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited, therefore a gap in the existing literature domain can be seen. More specifically, the purpose of this study was to explore the use of social media marketing in a Zimbabwean telecommunications business- Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited.

In the next section, the research question, the primary and secondary objectives are discussed.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

Kufandirimbwa, Zanamwe and Rupere (2016) highlighted that, in Zimbabwe, social media marketing has become more important as time progresses, and many people and business industries have access to using the various social media marketing channels. The existing literature has failed to establish the importance of social media marketing in the telecommunications industry in Zimbabwe. The purpose of this study was, therefore, to explore social media marketing usage within Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited as a Zimbabwean telecommunications business.

The research question that was derived from the preliminary literature was as follows: How is social media marketing being utilised in the telecommunications industry in Zimbabwe particularly by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited? Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is being used in this study, because it is the market leader in the Zimbabwean telecommunications industry. The primary and secondary objectives were derived from the research question and they are discussed in the next section.

1.4.1 Research objectives

The primary research objective of this study was to explore the use of social media marketing in a Zimbabwean telecommunications business- Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited.

The study was guided by the following secondary objectives:

- To explore how Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited uses social media marketing.
- To examine the reasons behind Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited's usage of social media marketing.
- To determine the most useful social media channels used by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited.
- To determine how Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited measures social media usage.
- To identify areas of future research.

The proposed methodology of this study is discussed in the following section.

1.5 PROPOSED RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section briefly describes the research design, the sample design, the data collection method and the analysis technique that was used in this research study.

1.5.1 Research design

For the purpose of this study, the research followed an exploratory research design. Exploratory research design gathers primary information that helps to define a problem and recommends a hypothesis (Pride & Ferrell, 2017). The reason why an exploratory research design was used was that a concept could be clarified, that is, exploring the use of social media marketing in a telecommunications business in Zimbabwe using Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited as the case study. Further, an exploratory research design also gives a better understanding of how Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited uses social media marketing in their business.

A constructive philosophical worldview was followed, because the research is about getting the participants' views of the situation under study. The meanings regarding participants' views on certain topics differ and the researcher therefore looks for complexity in the views rather than narrowing meanings into few ideas (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Constructive philosophical worldview means that knowledge is constructed from human experiences and not self-evident knowledge (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Subjective meanings are drawn from individual experiences. The goal of the research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied and therefore open-ended questions are encouraged to use, as the researcher can listen carefully to what people say and do in their lives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Therefore, an exploratory research design that is qualitative in nature was deemed appropriate for this study.

The investigation was conducted from a qualitative research perspective. Given the nature of the topic under investigation, qualitative research allowed the researcher to go

deeper into the subject matter (Yin, 2017). Qualitative research explores the processes that points out human behaviour using exploratory research methods such as interviews, case studies and other relatively personal methods (Nosek, Ebersole, DeHaven & Mellor, 2018). Qualitative research is flexible more than quantitative, as it can adjust to the setting and aims to get a better understanding through first-hand experience (Gneezy, 2017). The study was carried out using a case study strategy, as the focus of the study was on one company, namely Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited.

Yin (2017), defined a case study as a first-hand inquiry that investigates a temporary context especially when the limitations between phenomenon and contexts are not clearly defined. A case study is an in-depth study of a particular situation (Gneezy, 2017). The case study strategy allows for greater depth of analysis and it objective is to gain a rich, thorough understanding of the case by examining aspects of it in greater detail (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). For the purpose of this study, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited was used as the case study for this research.

1.5.2 Data collection

The study made use of in-depth interviews to collect the data. In-depth interviews were deemed as a successful data collection method, because interviews help to gain first-hand information, deepen understanding and allow bounds of knowledge (Brotherton, 2018). According to Yin (2017), in-depth interviews is one of the most significant sources of case study information. The advantages of using the interview technique approach are that the participants can expand on areas of interest. An interview guide was developed and utilised which consisted of semi-structured questions (refer to chapter 4 section 4.2.6 and appendix D).

Every interview was recorded by utilising a digital recorder after permission was given by the participants and thereafter the interviews were transcribed. Furthermore, a research diary was utilised to document the researcher's observations and personal reflections after each participant was interviewed. See chapter 4 for a more in depth discussion on the data collection process employed in the study.

1.5.3 Sample design

The target population, the sample method and sample size of the study is discussed.

1.5.3.1 Target population

The entire population of the marketing department of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is 120, as some of the marketing employees of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited are in other towns such as Bulawayo, Kwekwe and Gweru offices. For this study the marketing employees of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited housed at the head office are the ones who were interviewed.

1.5.3.2 Sampling

Sampling involves selecting a small number of elements from a larger well-defined target group or population (Gneezy, 2017). There are two types of sampling methods- probability sampling and non-probability sampling, which are used to select the sample elements. Probability sampling is when every potential subject has the same probability of being included in the sample (Ruel, 2017) whereas non-probability sampling is a sampling technique where the samples are gathered in a process that does not give all the individuals in the population an equal chance of being selected (Saunders *et al.,* 2019).

For the purpose of this study, a non-probability sampling method is used because it is less expensive and often implemented quicker than a probability sampling method Ruel, (2017). The type of non-probability sampling technique used is the judgement sampling technique. According to Gneezy (2017), judgement sampling is a technique whereby the researcher relies on his or her own judgment when selecting members of the population to take part in the study. Judgement sampling is widely used in qualitative research for identifying and selecting information-rich cases for the most effective usage of limited resources in order for the research question to be answered (Saunders *et al.,* 2019). The advantage of judgement sampling is that it saves time, money and effort since the relevant people to assist in the research study are chosen (Brotherton, 2018). It involves

identifying key characteristics such as demographics, usage and geographic characteristics (Ruel, 2017).

The sample was selected based on the following inclusion criteria:

- Employees must be older than 18 years and under 65 years;
- Employees must be part of the marketing department of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited in Harare; and
- Employees should be able to speak, read and write in English.

1.5.3.3 Sample size

From the total population of 120 employees in the marketing department, the sample size consisted of 20 employees who were part of the marketing department of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited in Harare. The 20 in-depth interviews were sufficient as both researchers Pradiptarini (2011) and Wanju (2011) made use of a sample size of 20 in their research study, as indicated in table 1.2 above and the findings was deemed as sufficient.

1.5.4 Data analysis

Thematic analysis was used for this research study since the research was contextual in nature. Thematic analysis is a technique used to identify, analyse and report themes or patterns in greater detail (Braun & Clarke, 2016). Thematic analysis was used as it shows patterns in data that can be grouped into meaningful themes (Braun & Clarke, 2016). According to Ditchfield and Meredith (2018), the goal of thematic analysis is to identify important aspects of the context and present them clearly and effectively. Chapter 4 provides a discussion that is detailed on the thematic analysis process that was followed.

The next section discusses the ethical consideration.

1.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

In order for high ethical standards to be upheld, the study followed various ethical measures before, during and after the study was conducted. The following ethical measures were taken:

- **Seeking consent:** A letter of consent was sent to Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited seeking for permission to do the study. The letter stipulated that the study was for academic purposes and what the information gathered would be used for. A statement regarding the purpose of the investigation was provided to all participants' role in the study and how the information they provide would be used.

- **Confidentiality:** The opinions as well as the identities of respondents were confidentially treated. The names and any other information that could review the identities of participants were not requested, thus ensuring anonymity and confidentiality (Arifin, 2018).

- **Privacy:** The researcher ensured that respondents' rights and privacy was protected throughout the study by adhering to the ethical guidelines and their rights were fully explained to them (Arifin, 2018). To uphold the issue of privacy, the researcher explained to the participants what the research is all about. Participants were told how the results would be published and that the quotations would not reveal the participant's names in any case.

- **Reporting the findings honestly:** According to Arifin (2018) the researcher should report findings in a truthful manner without distorting the outcomes of the study.

- **Beneficence:** refers to the action that is done for the benefit of others and preventing harm (Wiid & Diggins, 2015). To ensure that the principle was upheld, participants were briefed about what the research is about and that they had the right to withdraw from the research.

- **Justice:** deals with the issue of fairness when it comes to recruiting research participants (Wiid & Diggins, 2015). To ensure that this principle was upheld, the researcher made sure that research participants selected were the right participants and the questions being asked were relevant to the participants. A detailed discussion on the ethical measures taken were discussed in chapter 4, section 4.5.

1.6 STRATEGIES TO ENSURE RIGOR

The trustworthiness of a study is the degree of confidence in methods, interpretation, and data used to guarantee the value of a study (Nosek *et al.,* 2018). The strategies to ensure rigour are; dependability, credibility, confirmability, and transferability. Credibility refers to the confidence in the truth that the study has (Amankwaa, 2016). Dependability refers to the stability of the data, overtime and the study conditions (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Confirmability means the findings are established on the responses of the participants and not from any personal motives or bias of the research (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Transferability refers to the degree that the research findings can be transferred to another context by the researcher (Amankwaa, 2016). Refer to chapter 4, section 4.4 for a detailed discussion on each strategy based on the study and linked to Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited.

1.7 CONTRIBUTION OF STUDY

The available literature about the use of social media marketing in the telecommunications industry are very limited, as indicated in table 1.2 above. The literature lacks in establishing means of how social media marketing can be used in the telecommunications industry as well as identifying the advantages and disadvantages of social media marketing usage.

The purpose of this study was, therefore, to explore social media marketing usage within Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited as a Zimbabwean business. This was an important study to do, as insights gained through the findings might be used to help other companies that are using social media marketing in the same industry. The study might help companies to understand what social media marketing is and how it can be utilised in order to bring out favourable and profitable results especially for Zimbabwe.

Other researchers can also benefit from the study as it can be used as a reference point in future seeing that social media marketing is now an area of interest and can pave way for researchers to discuss and study more on social media marketing. This study will also

benefit the researcher who is a marketing student to get experience with the business world and helps to understand the market better.

1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The chapter outline for the rest of this research study are as follows:

Chapter 1: The chapter provided an overview of the study as well as the introduction and background of the study, problem statement and research objectives. A brief discussion was given on the methodology that was used, followed by the potential limitations and ethics.

Chapter 2: Chapter two concentrated on the literature of the telecommunications industry in Zimbabwe. The chapter contained key concepts regarding telecommunications, its roles and the benefits it has brought about in Zimbabwe.

Chapter 3: Chapter three provided insight into social media marketing in general. Digital marketing and social media marketing were discussed, the benefits of using social media marketing and the social media channels were discussed.

Chapter 4: The chapter provided a comprehensive research methodology that was used in the study. The research design, the study population, the data collection methods and the data analysis method that were used in the research.

Chapter 5: This chapter provides a detail discussion on the data analysis and findings obtained in the study, based on the stated objectives of the study.

Chapter 6: This chapter presented the summary discussion, conclusion as well as the recommendations of the study.

In the next chapter the telecommunication industry is discussed.

CHAPTER 2: THE TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The telecommunications industry is among the key economic pillars of many economies and is, therefore, regarded as a very important sector in the world economy (Mehelmi & Sadek, 2019). The telecommunications industry has a growing impact on people's lives and on businesses when it comes to its effectiveness, a country's competitiveness as a profitable economy (Chakraborty & Nandi, 2017). The telecommunications industry continues to be at the centre of growth and innovation for any economy (Chakraborty & Nandi, 2019).

In this chapter, the background of the Zimbabwean telecommunications industry and the industry size are discussed. The major players as well as the importance and challenges of the telecommunication industry in Zimbabwe are highlighted, then followed by a discussion on the future of the industry as it is one of the important sectors in the Zimbabwean economy. The following section starts to discuss the background of the Zimbabwe telecommunication industry.

2.2 TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY IN ZIMBABWE

Telecommunication involves the transmitting of signals over a distance in order to enable communication to take place (Chakraborty & Nandi, 2019) and it has an impact on the social, cultural and economic areas of today's society. Telecommunications in Zimbabwe suffered from many challenges which include government regulations and difficulties in getting the regulatory authority to register answering machines (Kufandirimbwa *et al.,* 2016).

The size of the Zimbabwe telecommunications industry is 15 million users (POTRAZ, 2019). Currently the internet penetration of Zimbabwe is at 57.9 percent, this is due to the depressed demand in the economy which also showed a decline in the active mobile subscribers (POTRAZ, 2019). In 2018 the active mobile subscribers were 12.9 million as

compared to 2019 which had 12.1 million active mobile subscribers (POTRAZ, 2019). When it comes to the telecommunications industry, Econet Wireless is the biggest contributor of revenue towards the Zimbabwean economy with 82.3 percent followed by NetOne with 13.7 percent and lastly Telecel with 4 percent (POTRAZ, 2019).

In Zimbabwe, TelOne which was formerly known as Postal and Telecommunication Corporation (PTC), became the very first telecommunication company to be established in 1890, when the first Post Office was opened in Southern Rhodesia (now known as Zimbabwe) (POTRAZ, 2016). Being the only provider of fixed telecommunications services in the country before the emergence of NetOne, Econet and Telecel, PTC had gained the sole market share, and thus, the only known telecommunications service provider (POTRAZ, 2016). The demand for the service increased daily resulting in shortage of supply, leaving many customers not being able to enjoy the service.

The demand for telecommunication services increased over the years resulting in the shortage of the services leaving a gap in the market (Kufandirimbwa *et al.,* 2016). The fixed telecommunications service brought convenience to the corporate businesses and the government and a few individuals who were fortunate to be connected. Zimbabwe was connected to the World Wide Web, popularly known as the internet in the mid-90s (Kufandirimbwa *et al.,* 2016). The PTC introduced internet through a dial up modem and people began to connect with each other from around the globe using the internet modem, which was a great achievement (POTRAZ, 2017). This was a significant milestone as internet services were previously not available in Zimbabwe. The use of the internet as a communication channel then brought about the use of social media marketing, which has become the new way of communication for businesses and their customers.

The Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe regulates the Zimbabwe telecommunications industry (POTRAZ, 2017). An Act of Parliament established POTRAZ, which falls under the Ministry of Transport and Communication (POTRAZ, 2017). POTRAZ regulates the pricing of all telecommunication operators and regulates the services offered to customers. The first rule is that all telecommunications companies must be licensed for them to be able to operate in the telecommunications industry. The licensed operators must adhere to the services that are specified in their

license documents even though they might want to offer other services (POTRAZ, 2017). As an example, Liquid Telecommunications cannot offer mobile voice services as they are licenced only to offer voice over internet protocol (VOIP) and data services.

Section 2.3 below discusses the size of the Zimbabwe telecommunications industry.

2.3 THE SIZE AND PLAYERS IN THE TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY IN ZIMBABWE

Among the mobile operators, Econet Wireless was the first telecommunications operator to offer third generation (3G) services and General Packet Radio Service (GPRS) to its subscribers (POTRAZ, 2017). Before the era of 3G services, the second-generation technology (2G) was used, which only enabled one to talk and to send text messages (POTRAZ, 2017). As time progressed, developments took place and more services became available over the mobile phone. The advent of smart phones brought about new ways in the way people use cell phones as they have enabled people to use social media marketing channels such as YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter (Sutherland 2016). The third-generation technology (3G) introduced high speed broadband to the people which has made communication very efficient.

Table 2.1 below was extracted from the 2018 POTRAZ annual report and outlines the number of subscribers each operator had from 2009 to 2018 in Zimbabwe.

Table 2.1: Subscriber statistics (Number of subscribers in 000')

Company	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
NetOne	440	500	1300	2000	2400	4134	5200	4712	4801	3213
Econet	2110	3200	4200	8000	8700	8900	9200	6360	7488	7859
Telecel	600	1200	2500	2500	2210	460	780	1646	1100	930
TelOne	385	386	338	347	307	300	474	807	876	850

Source: POTRAZ (2018)

Table 2.1 above represents the number of telecommunication players together with the number of subscribers from 2009 to 2018. The table is important because it shows the trends in the Zimbabwean telecommunication industry and how the companies have been performing. It is evident from the table that Econet Wireless has the largest market share followed by NetOne, Telecel and then TelOne (POTRAZ, 2019). This means that Econet Wireless has been maintaining its market share through using social media channels to inform their customers about the products and services that they offer (The ZimMarketers, 2018).

It is further evident from table 2.1 that there has been an increase in Econet subscribers amongst the rest of mobile subscribers in the country. The three major players, in terms of subscribers (see table 2.1), NetOne, Econet Wireless and Telecel, were all experiencing consistent growth over the period. Whilst TelOne had overall growth, it also had periods of decline, for example, between 2012 and 2013 where it lost 40 000 subscribers. POTRAZ (2016) attributed this loss from customer's shifting from TelOne a fixed line operator to one of the three major operators. Further, POTRAZ (2016) indicated a sharp growth in TelOne subscribers between 2015 and 2016 were it gained 402 000 subscribers due to a paradigm shift towards its broadband internet focus which also shows that there is a great potential for growth in telecommunications industry in Zimbabwe. With regards to Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited, also, the unit of analysis for this study has the largest subscribers and shows potential growth with its development and focus on Mobile Internet Data services which will facilitate growth of digital marketing, in particular social media marketing.

In order for Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited to maintain their market share and to keep on improving on their performance, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited has maintained traditional marketing communication channels that are being integrated with digital marketing in particular social media marketing (The ZimMarketers, 2018). Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited was the first telecommunication company to come up with Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter bundles in Zimbabwe which made the use of these social media channels affordable (POTRAZ, 2018). Ever since Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited commenced with social media marketing in Zimbabwe, it has managed to build and sustain company and product presence on social media channels in Zimbabwe because this is where business is taking place (The ZimMarketers, 2018).

The following section discusses the importance of the telecommunication industry in Zimbabwe.

2.4 IMPORTANCE OF THE ZIMBABWE TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY

The importance of the telecommunication industry for Zimbabwe's economy can be seen from the fact that it is increasingly becoming essential in everyday life (POTRAZ, 2019). For example, the Zimbabwe telecommunications industry contributed 7.2 percent towards the total Zimbabwe Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2018, a slight decrease from 2017, which showed a contribution of 7.8 percent (Zimbabwe Economic Report, 2018). The decrease in contribution from 2017 to 2018 was due to a number of regulatory measures and taxes imposed by the cash-strapped government (Zimbabwe Economic Report, 2018).

The telecommunications industry plays a significant role in contributing to the economy as well as in the operations of a society from business to family. The way people communicate distinguishes a business, the community and society from a collection of individuals (Mandizha, 2015). Instant messaging, phone calls and use of social media channels such as Twitter and Facebook have become more integrated into how people work and live. It also plays a pivotal role in enabling the participation and development of people in communities that are disadvantaged when it comes to geographical location,

whether in rural areas or urban areas (Mandizha, 2015). In Zimbabwe, most people in the rural areas can now access the internet, unlike before, due to the advanced technologies that the telecommunications industry has been introducing.

The telecommunication industry players have been playing an active role in supporting education and the development of sport in Zimbabwe. One of the telecommunications industry players, namely NetOne sponsored the Zimbabwe national soccer team during the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) 2017 when they went to play in Gabon. The telecommunications industry has helped in uplifting people's lives regardless of their geographical location and level of education (Mandizha, 2015). Telecommunications enables people to communicate on an instant basis, reaching the intended recipients within seconds due to the advancements in the telecommunications industry. The use of mobile phones has improved the way of life for people in rural areas in many ways such as doing business transactions over the phone, getting updates through different information sent on phones about different products and services, transacting goods with traders from towns and cities (Kufandirimbwa *et al.,* 2016).

The telecommunication industry is very important but does, however, have challenges and these challenges will be discussed next.

2.5 CHALLENGES IN THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY IN ZIMBABWE

One of the biggest challenges faced by the Zimbabwean telecommunications industry is the shortage of power due to power outages that are intermittent (POTRAZ, 2019). Over 70 percent of the base stations are run by diesel generators, which lead to an increase in tariffs due to the high cost of running base stations using diesel powered generators. The cost is passed on to consumers for making calls, accessing mobile internet services and social media channels to enable generator maintenance (The ZimMarketers, 2019). Another challenge faced by the telecommunication industry is the general economic downturn which has seen depressed spending power from customers. This has led to a decrease in profit margins of all telecommunication operators, forcing them not only to

adjust their spending habits but also affecting operations such as marketing, research and development (The ZimMarketers, 2019).

Another challenge that the telecommunications industry in Zimbabwe continues to face is that of the economic meltdown which continues to cause many people to lose their jobs and hence, decreases the purchasing power of the general population and hampers the growth of the telecommunication industry (POTRAZ, 2019). The laws the government put in place such as restrictions on the tariffs and phones that the telecommunication industry can produce is another challenge faced by the telecommunications industry (Zimbabwe Economic Report, 2018). For example, in Zimbabwe it is a government requirement that all players in the telecommunications sector must pay license fees to POTRAZ. The license fees that are demanded and charged by POTRAZ are so high that they have made it difficult for the telecommunications players to operate competitively. Instead of expanding the infrastructure so that services can be improved, the telecommunications operators spend most of their financial resources on settling licensing fees (The ZimMarketers, 2019).

In August 2016, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited revenue declined due to the import duties that where being levied by the authorities (Econet, 2016). Telecommunications infrastructure is expensive to put in place and this can affect the potential growth of the telecommunications industry (The ZimMarketers, 2019). The ability to differentiate product offerings from one telecommunications service provider to the other is another challenge. All the telecommunications players provide the same traditional short message services (SMS), voice and bundles (POTRAZ, 2016).

Based on the challenges, the telecommunication industry does, however, have many successes as discussed below.

2.6 SUCCESS OF THE TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY IN ZIMBABWE

Zimbabweans have in recent year's embraced technology with more people using mobile phones and the internet (Mandizha, 2015). With the emergence of social media channels

such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, people have been provided with another medium to interact and this has brought significant social and cultural changes in the lifestyle of both people in the urban and rural areas. Telecommunications in Zimbabwe has enabled the country to be connected to the SADC region, the rest of Africa and to the global world (Madziwa & Sibanda, 2018).

The increase in the development of the telecommunications infrastructure enabled wider network coverage (POTRAZ, 2017). Areas which were not previously covered with telecommunications services, such as rural areas, are now being covered and rural people now have access to the social media channels. In the education sector, the telecommunications industry has managed to enable the development and growth of e-learning (POTRAZ, 2018). E-learning is an educational system which allows people to learn from anywhere and anytime via electronic media (Sutherland, 2016). Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited introduced a digital learning platform called Ruzivo which is aligned to the Zimbabwean education curricula and helped to improve the pass rate, thus investing in quality education at a lower cost (POTRAZ, 2018).

Telecommunications has enabled companies to make use of social media channels such as Facebook and WhatsApp to conduct business activities. Companies have active WhatsApp accounts for their day-to-day operations and customers are able to place orders, make enquiries and provide feedback (Sutherland, 2016). The use of mobile data has assisted in the adoption of social media as a tool for business. The upgrade from second generation (2G) to third generation (3G) enabled data transmission to be faster at a lower cost (Jovanovic & Rob, 2016). The Zimbabwe telecommunications industry is continuing to show strong growth in the subscriber base which translates into revenue growth for the industry (POTRAZ, 2018).

The infrastructure development done by the telecommunications players has enabled an increased nationwide coverage and network expansion thus making communication efficient (POTRAZ, 2018). The competition among the telecommunications industry players has led to new product development and services, which has changed the face

of communication and changed its role of basic communication to mobile banking, internet access, interaction and exchange of ideas (The ZimMarketers, 2018).

Based on the successes of the telecommunications industry, the future of the telecommunications industry in Zimbabwe will be discussed next.

2.7 THE FUTURE OF THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY IN ZIMBABWE

Communication is important for the development of each individual's day-to-day living as well as economic development (The ZimMarketers, 2018). The question is not about if telecommunications have a future in Zimbabwe, but it is about what kind of future the old and new telecommunications operators will have, given the dynamic changes in technologies and markets with various challenges and opportunities. POTRAZ (2016) noted that the telecommunications sector remains the fastest growing sector in Zimbabwe and its growth can enable the economy to grow rapidly.

There are massive network investments currently being done and still more innovations are happening within the sector with the key players, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited, NetOne and Telecel focusing on data services to enable usage of internet (POTRAZ, 2017). POTRAZ (2017) also noted that there is rapid internet increase in Zimbabwe from 6.7 million subscribers in 2016 to 6.9 million in 2017. During this period, the mobile penetration rate also increased from 97 percent to 105 percent in 2017 and this gave an opportunity to further grow usage of digital marketing in the Zimbabwean telecommunications industry (POTRAZ, 2017). POTRAgZ (2017) noted that the highest growth rate on the telecommunications sector is on data usage, mostly mobile data.

The significant investment into infrastructure and technology upgrades, presents a brighter future for the Zimbabwe telecommunications industry since it has experienced phenomenal growth in the last ten years (POTRAZ, 2017). Whilst it is important to have POTRAZ as a regulator, it is also important to allow the companies to have the liberty of innovation and develop their products. Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited has a wider offering when it comes to diversified products and services that are across different sectors in the Zimbabwe industry. In the Econet annual report of 2016 the chief executive

officer of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited said that the business model of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited and its diversified products will enable it to increase revenue, improve earnings and ensure sustainable growth for the future. (Econet, 2016).

Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is considering introducing the 5th generation (5G) long-term evolution technology as part of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited's long-term plan to help improve convenience among its customers in the near future. It is also focusing on the expansion of the current 4G services it is offering across the country as it keeps looking for new technology to keep improving their speed (Econet, 2016). Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited has noted that, as time progresses, voice will eventually seize to be the highest revenue earner in the telecommunications business because of broadband services (Econet, 2016). It has since realized that they cannot rely on voice alone for them to secure an ongoing business in the future. Currently, it is offering services that contribute 11 percent of its revenue (Econet, 2016). The services include Ecocash with nearly 8,5 million customers, Ecosure with 3,2 million customers and Ecofarmer service that provides farmers with farming tips which is used by over 1,5 farmers in Zimbabwe (Econet, 2019). Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited has started to combine these services into one package, which will be a challenge to its competitors.

Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited has to figure out how to ensure that broadband services are appreciated more and also encourage data use as revenue generated by voice and short message services (SMS) which are declining because of the use of social media channels (Econet, 2016). There is still potential when it comes to broadband in the Zimbabwean market and innovation can help bring stronger growth in numbers in the coming years. In 2016 Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited had an expo whereby they displayed a variety of innovative products and solutions such as the 'connected home'. This is a service that allows customers to monitor their homes whilst they are away from their home and a 'Tap and Pay' card that allows customers to enjoy shopping conveniently (Econet, 2018). All this was done by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited as it realized that they cannot only depend on voice.

It is evident from the above discussion that the telecommunications industry will continue to play a significant role in the foundation of businesses (POTRAZ, 2019) and regulatory

and policy changes are important to adapt to the future trends in the telecommunications industry in Zimbabwe.

2.8 SUMMARY

The chapter began with an introduction of the telecommunications industry in Zimbabwe. The size and the role players in the industry, which include Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited, TelOne, Telecel and NetOne were also discussed. The industry challenges and success as well as the future of the telecommunication industry in Zimbabwe were discussed.

The following chapter, chapter 3, provides a detailed discussion on digital marketing and social media marketing.

CHAPTER 3: SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As social media marketing increases in popularity, telecommunication businesses know have a better opportunity to continuously build relationships with customers. This can be done through marketing their products and services effectively on social media channels (Ford & Ravansari, 2017). Social media marketing provides popular channels that can be used for businesses to communicate with their customers (Yadav & Rahman, 2018). Social media marketing has managed to change the way information is delivered to both current and future customers. Social media marketing is at the core of digital marketing and helping businesses to have access to the global markets due to its low cost (Ryan & Jones, 2016).

This chapter reviews the literature on digital marketing and social media marketing. Digital marketing was mainly examined as well as its components, the role and uses of social media marketing in businesses. Marketers have begun to understand the use of social media marketing as a way they can use to reach out to customers and as part of their marketing strategies.

In the next section digital marketing is defined.

3.2 DIGITAL MARKETING

According to Ryan and Jones (2016), digital marketing is a way of promoting products and services in manner that is advanced, using primarily a database driven distribution channel to reach customers in a cost-effective and timely manner. It is a term that is used to describe how products can be marketed using digital media (Ryan & Jones, 2016). The aim of digital marketing is to promote products, and to increase sales through the use of several digital marketing media (Chaffey, 2018).

Kim, Lim and Brymer (2017) defined digital marketing as a function of an organization, which generates processes for communicating and value delivery to customers. Chaffey (2018) defined digital marketing as the marketing of products by means of digital media and allows real-time communication with customers. Wymbs (2017) defined digital marketing as an online channel that is formed through online channels, which are made from a range of access platforms and communication tools. Digital marketing involves all the activities that a business can do through the internet. Chaffey (2018) said that digital marketing is more centred on creating demand using internet-based platforms to allow interaction between the customer and the business.

Since the start of digital marketing, doors have been opened enabling businesses to market their products in ways that are creative and exciting (Ryan & Jones, 2016). The internet is at the centre of digital marketing and has created a new paradigm for the way in which businesses interact with its customers and giving them an opportunity to provide feedback or to initiate communication with businesses through various types of digital marketing media. Econet Wireless has been using digital marketing types to promote their products; for example, when they launched Ecocash they posted a video on YouTube about what Ecocash is and it helped them to monitor what customers are viewing, how often and for how long they have been viewing it (The ZimMarketers, 2019).

According to Chahal & Rani (2017), digital marketing is the practice of using digital devices and technology to market a business' products and it aims to make a business' information to be highly exposed. Digital marketing enables businesses to reach customers and develop relationships through effective interaction with customers on digital media (Trainor, Rapp, Beitelspacher & Schillewaert, 2015). Digital marketing uses digital devices such as tablets, smartphones and laptops that are connected through the internet. There are many types of digital marketing media, which businesses can use to market their products and services.

The types of digital marketing media are discussed below.

3.3 TYPES OF DIGITAL MARKETING MEDIA

The digital marketing types include search engine optimization (SEO), electronic mail (e-mail), short messaging services (SMS), blogs, affiliate marketing, viral marketing, pay per click (PPC), to only name a few (refer to figure 3.1 below) (Ismail, 2017). These types of digital marketing media have become a way that businesses can use to extend their marketing campaigns to many customers (Ismail, 2017). The digital marketing types allow communication to be interactive and happen in real time. Real time is the actual time that an event takes place. Digital marketing includes all the activities that a business can do through the internet.

There are many digital marketing types that businesses can use to market their services and products. These include social media marketing, e-mails, search engine optimisation, viral marketing and affiliate marketing. Social media marketing is the most popular type of digital marketing, which has managed to change the way people communicate (Ismail, 2017). Social media marketing is an important digital marketing media, which allows various people or businesses to exchange ideas and information about products and services (Mills, 2017). Figure 3.1 below shows the types of digital media.

Figure 3.1: Digital Marketing Types
Source: Robert and Zahay (2014)

The following discussion refers to the digital media types, based on figure 3.1, that are being used by Econet Wireless:

- **Email Marketing** is one of the first types of digital marketing, which is used to send regular updates to customers about a business's product or services (Patterson, 2015). Through the use of e-mails, meaningful conversations can be made between the customer and the business. Personalised e-mails that suit each segmented market can be sent to customers (Patterson, 2015). Through the use of e-mail, marketing businesses are able to push their message at a lower cost (Robert & Zahay, 2014). For example, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited creates text and graphics on their products and services that captures the attention of their customers and send via email because it is cheaper.

- **Search Engine Optimisation (SEO):** Iredale and Heinze (2017) defined search engine optimisation as a process by which elements of a website are altered in a way that changes the ranking of the website on the search engine results pages. Search engine optimisation entails the increase of the visibility of the website in online search engines such as Google and Yahoo. Through the use of a search engine keyword system, the website ranking can be increased ensuring that when customers search for a business's product or service, it can be visible. For example, when searching on Google for any of the Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited products, a number of products will be listed that can be clicked on to open and view.

- **Online advertising** is a key part of digital marketing and is referred to as internet advertising where a business can use to communicate information about their products and services they offer (Nobre & Silva, 2017). The publisher puts information about Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited on their website so that customers get free information.

- **Short message service (SMS)** is a commercial message that is also known as a text message and is sent in text format from one mobile phone to another using a mobile network operator (Nobre & Silva, 2017). A short message service can be sent by a

business to help promote the sales of a product. It is a cheaper way for businesses to communicate with customers. Information can be sent as text, pictures, audio or video. For example, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited sends marketing messages in real-time to its customers.

- **Viral marketing** is a combination of the marketing mix elements (price, promotion, place and product). According to Mills (2017), viral marketing is a digital marketing tool used to promote brands by encouraging the sharing of content using the social networking site. The aim is to make sure that all the content that is put on all the social media channels captures the intended audience and that it spreads through all social media channels of the marketing mix. Viral marketing includes e-mail marketing, YouTube videos and blogs. For example, when Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited introduced their one-dollar data bundle, videos of how customers can use these data bundles were on YouTube. The video was shared and became popular throughout social networks, which includes WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube and others.

- **Social media marketing** to date is an effective type of digital marketing media, which Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited has been using. It can be defined as a computer-based tool used by businesses and individuals to exchange ideas and information and pictures of the products offered by the business (Nobre & Silva, 2017). For example, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited uses social media marketing channels such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to post pictures of their products, their current promotions and all the activities that they might be doing.

For the purpose of the study, the researcher focused on social media marketing and will be discussed in the next section.

3.4 SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Social media marketing is a type of digital marketing media, which has changed how the business communicates with their customers and market their products as well as how business is done (Stelzner, 2016). Social media marketing has managed to redefine

digital marketing and in the process, it has managed to change how marketing information is disseminated in business (Yadav & Rahman, 2018). It is now possible for businesses to communicate information about their services and products in a timely manner around the globe (Yadav & Rahman, 2018). Social media marketing is a form of interaction, which has transformed the way in which businesses relate to their customers (Pride & Ferrell, 2017).

Social media marketing is used to create direct relationships with existing customers and reach new customers (Alalwan, Rana, Dwivedi, & Algharabat 2017). Yadav and Rahman (2018) stated that social media marketing is the same as a highway with multiple lanes that enable customers to say what they want about products and services. For example, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited has different social media marketing channels where customers voice their opinions about products. Chaffey (2018) said that social media marketing enabled businesses to encourage customers to communicate on their website. According to Alalwan *et al.,* (2017) social media marketing can be defined as a broad term that is used to describe software tools that enable the creation of user generated content that can be shared.

Chaffey (2018) suggested that social media marketing is a paradigm shift in marketing that enables transparent, trustworthy dialogues and building relationships, in the presence of professional and user generated content. According to Noone, McGuire and Rohlfs (2018), social media marketing are internet tools that help in facilitating interaction by allowing continuous modification and exchange of content. Social media marketing's ability to enable businesses to communicate with customers in real time, having access to product information and providing feedback that is direct, gives businesses the opportunity to address the problems of the customers directly (Chaffey, 2018).

From the above definitions, it can be noted that most of the authors agree that social media marketing is about interacting, sharing ideas, and experiences using various online tools to educate customers about products and services that a business offers. Noone *et al.* (2018) said that social media marketing is a new way of communication where businesses are able to communicate directly with customers without going through intermediaries.

According to Chaffey (2018), social media marketing is allowing businesses to uncover deep customer connections, which allows for greater planning and understanding of the markets that they target. It also offers an entirely new way to market and advertise a business' products and reaching their customers directly. Social media marketing helps a business to know its customer's analyses and make forecasts through the comments that they post on the social media marketing channels about products and services being offered by the business (Tuten & Solomon, 2017). Social media marketing is aligned more to sharing information and opinions and it focuses more on achieving direct contact with customers through the use of social media channels.

Tuten and Solomon (2017) mentioned that social media marketing has been regarded as a two-way channel of communication between a business and a customer depending on the way customers participate. Further, social media marketing has allowed businesses to connect with customers and allow them to plan and understand the markets that they target (Stelzner, 2016). Social media marketing offers a new way for businesses to advertise and market a business's products and reaching their customers more directly (Ismail, 2017).

The incorporation of social media marketing in business operations helps to increase revenue in a cost-effective manner that is efficient (Ryan & Jones, 2016) as it is a low-cost marketing option. Many businesses are using of social media marketing for generating online word of mouth and creating relationships with their customers and thus, enabling businesses to extend its efforts of marketing through the use of social media marketing (Ismail, 2017). Customers are spending much of their time on social media, which is why companies need to meet them there (Tuten & Solomon, 2017).

In the following section social media is discussed.

3.5 SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is defined in many ways by different authors, Chahal and Rani (2017) defined social media as an online tool that can be used by people to share information, ideas and experiences. Miekle (2017) said social media provides a new way of how

people read and share information. According to Ismail (2017), customers perceive social media as a reliable source of information on services and products that a business offers, other than the old elements of the promotion mix. Social media has changed from being a channel that people communicate with friends and family to a place where customers learn more about a business and its products and services.

To further explain social media, it is important to highlight the different channels of social media. The social media channels have different effects on the marketing performance, and are, therefore, important to understand their relevance and how it relates to each other (Seo & Park, 2018). Seo and Park (2018) indicated that each social media channel has functionalities that are unique that a business should take into account in order to maximize results. With the vast amount of social media channels available, a business can choose the best channels, which enables them to reach their intended customers (Tuten & Solomon, 2017).

The next section discusses the social media channels.

3.6 SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

Social media channels are an online forum that is used for interaction between businesses and customers (Yadav & Rahman, 2017). Social media channels enable users to share short videos, pictures and voice messages, they can be able to give feedback and share their views and experiences (Tuten & Solomon, 2017). The social media channels can provide a business with the opportunity to interact with both potential and existing customers, which helps to build relationships (Felix *et al.*, 2017). Social media channels help to encourage global collaboration and allow businesses to uncover customer connections, which allow them to get a better understanding (Felix *et al.,* 2017). Social media channels can help businesses to monitor what customers are saying about their products and services. Customer's views should be listened to as the feedback they give can enable a business to be in a position to develop answers that change customers' mind-sets and behaviour (Tuten & Solomon, 2017). Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited

is more involved with its customers on various social media channels, which have helped to create customer loyalty (The ZimMarketers, 2017).

All types of social media channels provide an opportunity for businesses to present their products to dynamic communities and individuals that may show interest (Meyers, 2017). Social media channels can also provide improved communication and collaboration between the firm and its stakeholders. Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook are the most popular social media platforms in Zimbabwe, with approximately 6.9 million users on Facebook, an estimated 5.2 million on Twitter and 1,69 million on LinkedIn (The ZimMarketers, 2019). This shows that the customers in Zimbabwe are becoming accustomed to social media channels when it comes to communication.

Table 3.1 below shows the most used social media channels in Zimbabwe during the year 2019. The usage determined the most used social media channels that were monitored over a six-month period. The number of likes, comments, shares and views on the social media platforms were also considered to determine the most used social media channels in Zimbabwe.

Table 3.1: The most used social media channels in Zimbabwe

Channel	Number of People/Users
Facebook	6.9 million
Twitter	5.2 million
YouTube	2.4 million
LinkedIn	1.69 million
Instagram	1.6 million

Source: The ZimMarketers (2019)

Businesses use social media channels to provide information that is valuable to customers (Chaffey, 2018). The conversation prism is a visual map that shows all the channels that a business can use to communicate with customers and how the channels are used in daily life (Solis, 2015). The conversation prism shows that social media is divided into many types of channels. Further, it also helps a business to understand the best way to reach the right customers and for the business to deliver the right message

and build mutual relationships (Solis, 2015). The conversation prism has different types of sectors, see figure 3.2 below, which provides an illustration of all the social media channels as it appears in the conversation prism.

Figure 3.2: Conversation prism
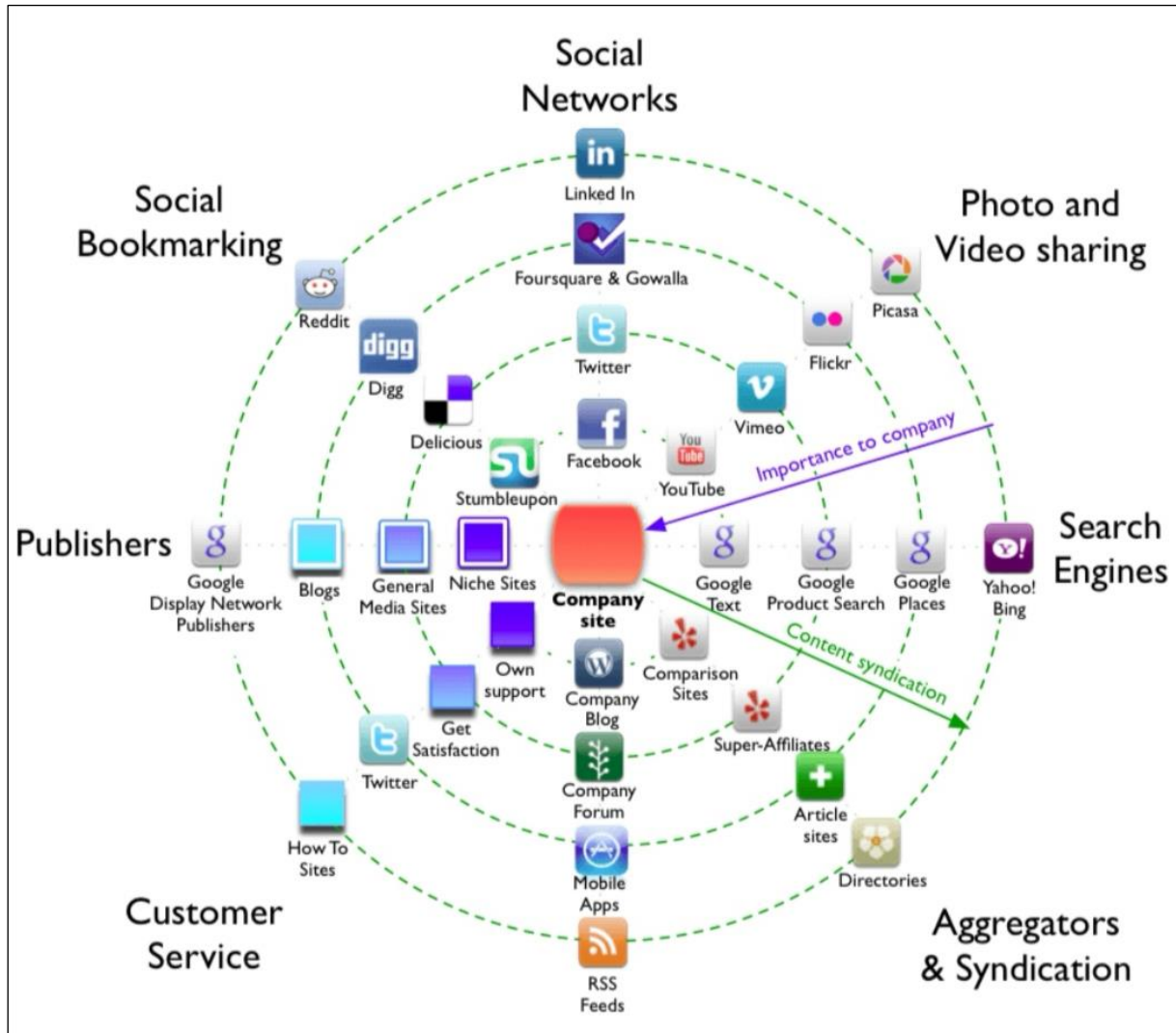
Source: Chaffey and Chadwick (2019)

As seen in figure 3.2, the conversation prism consists of seven sectors namely, social networks, social bookmarking, photo and video sharing, aggregators and syndication, customer service, publishers and search engines. Each of these sectors has its own channels which serve different purposes for the business. Table 3.2 below provides a

summary of the social media channels (based on the conversation prism) that are being used by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited.

Table 3.2: Social media channels used by Econet Wireless

Main Sectors of The Prism	Social Media Channels
Social networks	Facebook and Instagram
Microblogs	Twitter and Blogs
Videos	YouTube
Business networks	LinkedIn

For the purposes of this research study, the social media channels that will be focused on will be Facebook, Twitter, blogs, YouTube, LinkedIn and Instagram, as these are the main social media channels that are being used by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited and are discussed below.

3.6.1 Social networks used by Econet Wireless

Social networks are gradually becoming popular among companies as most companies are using social media for customer engagement and for learning the experiences of their customers (Miller, 2015). Nowadays marketing cannot be effective if the relevance of social networks is not considered in business and customer engagements (Nobre & Silva, 2017). Social networks have become an important tool for all businesses as social networks help to spread information (Choi, Fowler, Goh & Yuan, 2018) making it easy for a user to create a profile and interact with other users that share common interests (Miller, 2015). Social networks help companies in opening new marketing communication channels with customers. The social networks are applications that allow users to connect with each other around the globe, where the user creates a profile and invites family and friends to have access to their profiles, videos, texts, pictures and audio (Choi *et al.,* 2018). The most popular social networks that are used by Econet Wireless are Facebook and Instagram.

- **Facebook**

Facebook has the capacity to communicate with- and reach a lot of people, as well as exchange information through live questions and answers (Choi *et al.*, 2018). Facebook is a social network defined as a virtual online community where people connect with each other as well as sharing and building their profiles using videos and pictures of themselves (Seo & Park, 2018). Tuten and Solomon (2017) said that advertising through Facebook offers a business an opportunity to use electronic word of mouth to increase their reach and to create a more persuasive message. According to Choi *et al.* (2018) Facebook had become important for a business's marketing strategy, as a business's Facebook page was a profile of the brand, which allows a business to directly interact with both existing and prospective customers. Businesses can be able to access the activities that happen on the Facebook page in real-time, thus providing valuable market insight and interaction with customers (Nobre & Silva, 2017). For example, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited uses Facebook to shares live videos, text messages and images marketing its products and services (Econet, 2018).

- **Instagram**

Instagram is a mobile photo-sharing application that transforms an image into a memory (Lee *et al.,* 2016). Instagram is all about sharing visuals and it allows users to edit and upload photos and short videos through a mobile application. Businesses can use Instagram to share photos and the photo-sharing application offers companies the opportunity to start a free business account to promote their brand and products (Lee *et al.,* 2016). For example, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited uses Instagram for photo-sharing and promoting their products and services.

3.6.2 Micro blogs used by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited

Micro blogs are a service that allows users to send audio, video, images and text which are not more than 140 characters in length (Barnes, 2018). A business is able to improve its transparency through using micro blogs (Barnes, 2018). Microblogging provides a quicker way for companies to engage customers and this helps a business to grow. The most popular micro blogs that are used by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited are twitter and blogs.

- **Twitter**

Twitter is a micro-blogging website, which limits the content that can be posted on a message. Twitter can also be used to update the customers about the products and promotes new products (Pride & Ferrell, 2017). It is a channel that is used to tweet and post about the newest products and topics that are of interest to the customers and the people who follow their Twitter page (Barnes, 2018). A tweet has a maximum of 140 characters; it also includes emails instant messages and blogging. Businesses use Twitter for different reasons, some businesses use it to see what customers are saying about their products and that of their competitors as well as managing their campaigns. Businesses can also use their Twitter accounts to update customers and provide them with discounts when purchasing their products because they follow them on Twitter (Pride & Ferrell, 2017). Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited uses Twitter to identify areas of improvement and to know and understand what their customers think about them.

According to Barnes (2018), businesses that are use Twitter and other social media channels have more followers on average than businesses that are not using social media channels. This means that businesses that are not actively using social media channels miss out on the chances to reach their markets through affordable means offered by social media channels. Social media channels increase the credibility of a product or service and attracts new customers and more followers on the social media channels (Nobre & Silva, 2017). Customers who are on Twitter can help the business to generate free publicity by re-tweeting and quoting tweets that will have been posted by the business. Through these re-tweets more people will be able to see the information.

- **Blogs**

A blog is a website that allows the users (bloggers) to publish posts displayed with the most recent post appearing first (Zou & Hylands, 2019). Blogs include texts, videos and pictures. They help to promote discussions since they have a section designed to create online conversations. The blogs give businesses the chance to communicate and interact with customers and other stakeholders (Zou & Hylands, 2019). Econet Wireless

Zimbabwe Limited uses blogs to increase awareness among customers who use this channel. The blogs used by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited include AAU Africa blog Moovah blog, and Vaya Africa Blog.

3.6.3 Videos used by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited

Videos refer to media which has the ability to show motion pictures and sound which can be uploaded and shared online by users (Kaur & Sharma, 2018). Businesses are able to visually communicate with their audiences on the videos they upload and share on platforms such as YouTube. The most popular video that is used by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is YouTube.

- **YouTube**

YouTube is a site where businesses can upload product demonstrations through videos and anyone can view the video anywhere in the world. Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited post videos on YouTube showing how their products are used especially when they launch new products.

3.6.4 Business networking used by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited

Business networking is the process of establishing relationships that are mutually beneficial for businesses as well as potential customers (Yadav & Rahman, 2018). Business networking helps a business to get new customers and build relationships that are sustainable through referrals and also to learn new ways of doing business. The most popular business network that is used by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is LinkedIn.

- **LinkedIn**

LinkedIn is a channel used by businesses to build and manage professional networks and has a maximum of 140 words that can be used to promote future business relationships (Yadav & Rahman, 2018). It also helps different people to learn about what other businesses are doing. Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited uses LinkedIn to educate potential customers on their products and services, raise brand awareness and promote career opportunities.

It can be inferred from the discussions above that social media channels can help with providing a quick way of disseminating information and has the ability to engage large numbers of customers in a short period of time.

The benefits of social media marketing will be discussed in the next section.

3.7 BENEFITS OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Social Media marketing provides businesses with a lot of opportunity to reach their customers. The correct use of the various types of social media channels can improve the performance of a business drastically through engagement with customers and creating value (Trainor *et al.,* 2015). Customers get information easily about a product they wish to know about at any time. Some of the benefits of using social media marketing in businesses are discussed below.

- **Brand Awareness/ Exposure**

Social media marketing helps create brand awareness to its customers as it involves a community that is engaged. Social media marketing is a cost-efficient digital marketing method that is used to increase the visibility of the business as it engages many customers (Chen & Lin, 2019). For example, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited has managed to increase its brands visibility for their "smart data" campaign through the use of social media channels.

- **Engagement**

Social media marketing enables businesses to engage customers in a manner that is direct and timely at a low cost (Chaffey, 2018), as well as enable customers to engage with a business. For example, customers visit the Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited website to read information about their products and Econet Wireless provide feedback to customers. Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited has a Facebook page where they provide customers with more information about their products, provide feedback and allows anyone and everyone to share and express an idea or opinion. Through interacting

with customers and the general discussions on the social media channels, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited gets an opportunity to explain what their business stands for, its values and the products to customers (Econet, 2018).

- **Increasing Sales**

According to Felix *et al.* (2017) many businesses believe that social media marketing can be used to increase the sales revenue of a business. Through the communication that marketers of Econet Wireless and its customers have, customers acquire product information that is extensive, which eventually makes the purchase decision appealing.

- **Reduces Costs**

Social media marketing does not require high advertising costs (Miekle, 2017). The moment that something is posted on a social media channel many people become aware of it because of the low costs involved. For example, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is aware that its customers are active on social media channels, so they make sure that whatever they are offering is posted on their social media channels because it reaches the customer quickly at a low cost.

- **Network with customers**

Networking with customers enables a business to communicate information about the products and services the business offers (Yadav & Rahman, 2018). Social media marketing enables a business to network with customers in order to better understand the needs of the customer and for building relationships (Chahal & Rani, 2017). Customer relationship management is about building relationships with customers and being able to identify what the prospective customer wants and improving services based on the needs of the customer. Barnes (2018) mentioned that customer relationship is a process that involves three steps, which are getting to know what the customer wants, nurturing the customer and engaging with the customer which in turn improves the service of the customer.

- **Value Creation**

Value gained by a business through the use of social media marketing cannot be ascertained (Barnes, 2018) but the trust a customer has of a business's product or service create value to the business. The comments that customers post on the various social media channels pertaining to Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited products, benefit the business because they get to know what the customers are saying about their products and services. Businesses that build a certain trust level with their customers grow faster as compared to those who only advertise (Seo & Park, 2018).

- **Customer information**

The new ways of doing business is through social media marketing (Barnes, 2018). Ryan and Jones (2016) stated that through connecting on social media channels with customers, a business is able to get personal information about a customer and they become aware of what the customer is interested in, with a personal touch that helps customer relationships to take place. For example, when one purchases a product or service from Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited, they keep the records and once they have new products, they will make contact and provide more detail about the new available products with the customer.

- **Saves Time**

Product demonstration can now be done on social media channels and this saves time of travelling, setting up logistics, and reduces overall costs. Information about a service or product are compiled and put on the internet so that customers can go through the product information (Ryan & Jones, 2016). For example, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited has a section on its Facebook page that is dedicated to frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the product. This helps the customer to get all the information they need to know about the product, hence saving time. There is instant feedback from customers and they are able to share their experiences when they have used the product. Social media marketing has the ability to put together sales and promotion in a way that was never possible before through previous promotion and sales channels that were used (Econet, 2018).

- **Improved Visibility**

Visibility is another benefit of social media marketing. It helps owners of businesses to learn and be involved in the global environment (Tuten & Solomon, 2017). Being involved in the global environment through social media marketing helps to expose the business to a wider market. Yadav and Rahman (2018) said that social media marketing brings about an enhanced business performance through the reduction of costs, increasing sales, engagement with customers and brand visibility. These benefits are important to Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited because they help them to reduce costs, increase sales and maximize profits. Although social media marketing holds many benefits to a business, it is also important that businesses should be aware of the disadvantages that associate with social media marketing.

In the next section, the disadvantages are discussed.

3.8 DISADVANTAGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

If social media marketing is not managed well it can have a negative impact on a brand's image (Chen & Lin, 2019). Businesses can damage their reputation as well as their products and services if they do not take enough time to appreciate how social media marketing works (Tuten & Solomon, 2017). Some of the disadvantages are discussed below.

- **Time intensive**

Social media marketing involves a lot of interaction and needs commitment. There has to be someone from the business who is committed to monitor all the comments and questions that are asked by customers and providing customers with timely feedback (Calder, Malthouse, & Schaedel, 2019). If this is not done, a business may lose many customers (Calder *et al.*, 2019).

- **Risk**

Social media marketing has several risks associated with it, of which, the biggest being cyber-crime (Meyers, 2017). For example, a person may just hack in to the Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited social media channels and post damaging messages which may appear to the ordinary person as official communication coming from Econet

Wireless Zimbabwe Limited. By the time the administrator of the social media channels sees it, it might be too late as harm would have already been done (Calder *et al.,* 2019). Every post that is sent on social media channels can be viewed by anyone, and therefore, the business has no control over who views it.

- **Negative Feedbacks**

Social media marketing enables customers to become marketers and these customers can create negative or positive pressure for a business's products or services (Chen & Lin, 2019). An unhappy customer or a competitor can post an offensive comment or picture that may damage the reputation of the business and there is not much that a business can do to prevent these occurrences from happening (Chen & Lin, 2019).

- **Slow returns on investments**

Social media marketing is an investment that is long-term and returns cannot be expected overnight (Meyers, 2017). It requires time for a business to build followers and for the followers to understand what the business is all about.

As discussed, a few disadvantages are associated with using social media marketing and it is important that businesses should be aware of these disadvantages, however social media marketing has also led to an increase in transparency and ease of buying products (Meyers, 2017). Businesses must know that social media marketing must be planned and executed properly and effectively as it requires time and dedication for it to bring benefits to the business. Social media marketing has emerged as an innovation in the marketing field and it is the future of communication.

3.9 SUMMARY

The chapter provided a detailed discussion on social media marketing, the various types of digital marketing and social media. A comprehensive discussion of social media marketing and focus on social media channels and the benefits of using social media

marketing were also discussed. The chapter concluded with the disadvantages of social media marketing.

The next chapter focussed on the research methodology that the study implemented.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focused on discussing the research methodology that was used in order to achieve the purpose and the objectives of the study. Booth (2017), defined research as an enquiry that is systematic and provides information that guides the decisions of the business. Research is a process that involves steps, which are used for collecting and analysing data to increase the understanding of a topic (Nosek *et al.,* 2018). The information, which is gathered from the marketing research process assists the business to increase its sales and have a competitive advantage over its competitors (Booth, 2017). It also gives the business an insight of what the customers want and need in order for them to be satisfied. Marketing research is also used for finding solutions to challenges that the business might be facing and helps to make informed decisions (Brinkmann, 2015).

This chapter commences with a discussion on the research process, after which each step in the research process is discussed in detail. The limitations of the study were then given, followed by a discussion on the ethical considerations and rigour.

4.2 RESEARCH PROCESS

Research is the process of gathering information, which makes businesses aware of how the customers being targeted will react to the business's current and potential products and services (Ruel, 2017). According to Schober (2016) research helps to determine if a product or service can satisfy the customer needs or not. If research is done effectively, a business can gain valuable information about its competitors, demographic shifts and the market (Booth, 2017). Research allows a company to discover who their target customers are and what they think about the products or services. For research to take place there is a procedure that the researcher needs to follow.

For the purposes of the research, figure 4.1 below shows all the steps of the research process. The chapter from now on will be based on the research process as designed by Brotherton (2018) and Wiid and Diggines (2015), and is illustrated in figure 4.1 below. The research process steps will be discussed in detail below.
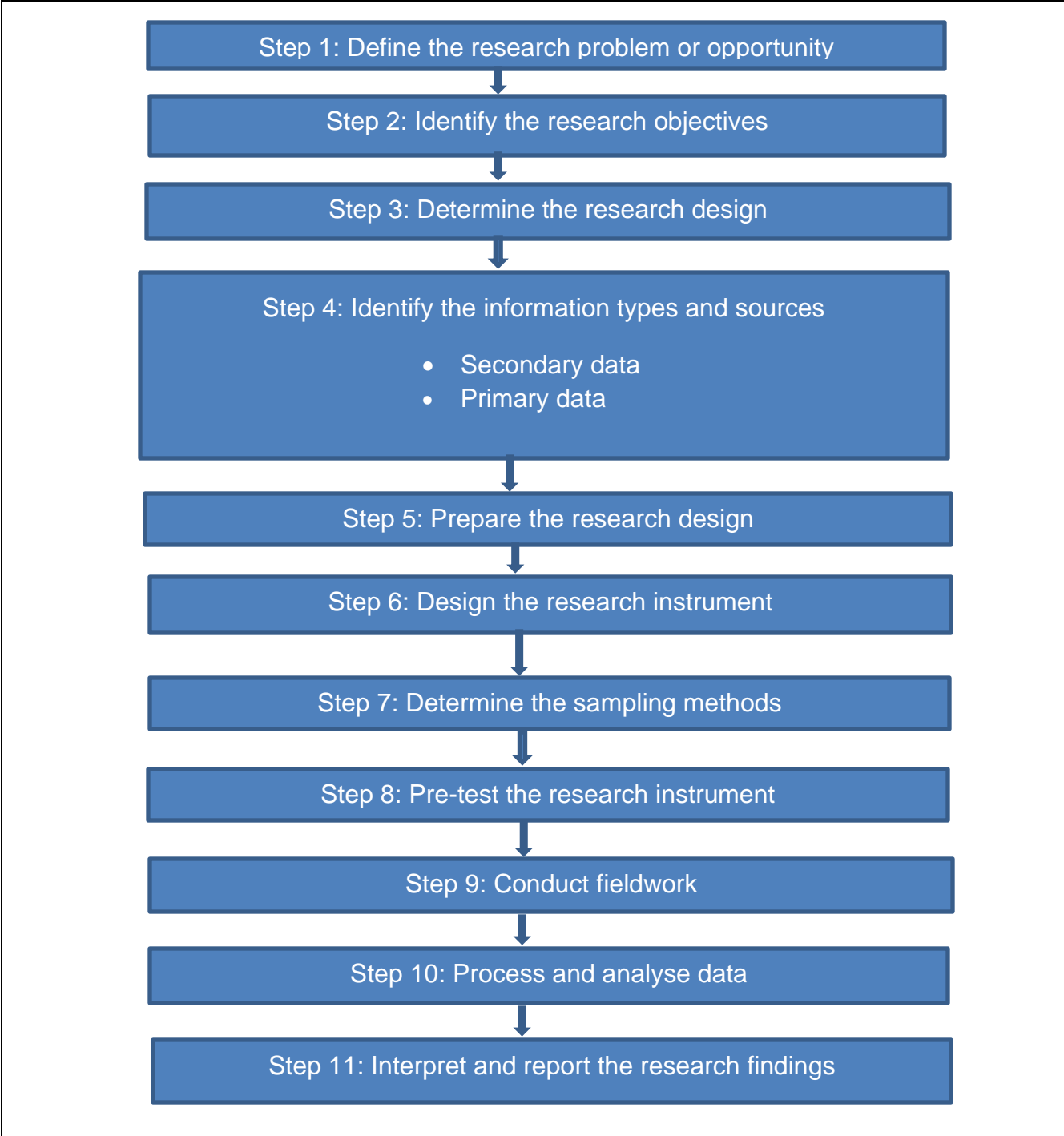
Figure 4.1: The Research Process

Source: Adapted from Brotherton (2018); Wiid and Diggines (2015)

4.2.1 Step 1: Define the research problem or opportunity

The first step in the research process (as indicated in figure 4.1 above) is the defining of the research problem or opportunity. A research problem is a situation that needs to be investigated (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). A research opportunity is a situation that is favourable and can be used by management to make decisions (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). In this study, the use of social media marketing in a telecommunication business i.e. Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is being investigated. It was emphasized in chapter 1 that social media marketing has become one of the most significant business developments of the 21st century and not only is social media marketing critical in the processing of information, it also provides a way for telecommunications companies such as Econet Wireless to differentiate their products and services.

The telecommunications industry in Zimbabwe has grown significantly despite the overall economic challenges in recent years. According to Douglas Mboweni, the CEO of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited, the business's resilience through continuously investing in infrastructure and the introduction of innovative products such as social media marketing is key to surviving and growing in an increasingly unstable economic environment (Econet, 2018). The research project investigates the use of social media marketing in a telecommunications business in Zimbabwe i.e. Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited with the aim of providing telecommunications businesses in Zimbabwe with the necessary information about the importance and use of social media marketing.

Based on the research opportunity, objectives have been set, which are discussed in step two of the research process, as shown in figure 4.1.

4.2.2 Step 2: Identify the research objectives

The identification of research objectives is the second step in the research process as shown in figure 4.1 above. The research objectives are divided into two different groups which are primary objectives and secondary objectives (Ruel, 2017). The primary objective is the highest goal that the researcher needs to achieve, whereas secondary objectives are the specific aspects of the topic that the researcher wants to research on,

which might have a direct or indirect contribution to attaining the primary objective (Booth, 2017).

The primary objective of this study was to explore the use of social media marketing in a Zimbabwean telecommunications business- Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited.

The secondary objectives of the study as derived from the primary objective are as follows.

- To explore how Econet Wireless uses social media marketing.
- To examine the reasons behind Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited's usage of social media marketing.
- To determine the most useful social media channels used by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited.
- To determine how Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited measures social media usage.
- To identify areas of future research.

After the research objectives have been set, the next step in the research process is to determine the research design as shown in figure 4.1 above.

4.2.3 Step 3: Determine the research design

Step 3 of the research process as depicted in figure 4.1 is to determine the research design. Saunders *et al.* (2017) defined a research design as the plans and procedures used to conduct marketing research, in order to solve the defined problem. A research design provides the main plan on how data will be collected, managed and ultimately be analysed (Saunders *et al.,* 2017). A research design contains important aspects that are significant to the study, such as the population, the sampling method, the data instrument and the advantages and disadvantages of each data collection tool.

Exploratory and conclusive research designs are the two types of research designs (Saunders *et al.,* 2017). A conclusive research design consists of a casual design and a descriptive design (Booth, 2017). The type of research design used is usually determined by the research question and objectives, as well as the type of information that the researcher is looking for (Pride & Ferrell, 2017). Pride and Ferrell (2017) indicated that,

creating a design that enhances the value of the information obtained, while reducing the cost of obtaining it is key. These designs are discussed in detail below.

4.2.3.1 Exploratory Research design

An exploratory research design is used when the researcher wants to get to know more about the nature of a problem (Booth, 2017). Exploratory research brings more information and insight that can help to define a problem and suggest a hypothesis (Pride & Ferrell, 2017). Exploratory research is done to help find a solution to an immediate problem facing an industry, society or an organization (Pride & Ferrell, 2017). Exploratory research is designed in such a way that the participants are able to provide their own answers (Saunders *et al.,* 2017). Further, an exploratory research design is used in order to get more insight about a problem so that it can be clarified and the results that are obtained are considered as the starting point of research (Hanook & Algozzine, 2016).

According to Wiid & Diggins (2015) the purpose of exploratory research is to gain as much information as possible in a short space of time, with limited costs and effort. Exploratory research designs will usually implement open-ended questions, also known as structured questions with unstructured responses, and were respondents need to give answers in their own words (Pride & Ferrell, 2017). Further, exploratory research designs are usually qualitative in nature, meaning that qualitative research methods such as projective techniques, focus groups and in-depth interviews, together with case studies are used (Brotherton, 2018). A case study investigates a phenomenon in depth to enable the situation to be understood (Yin, 2017).

4.2.3.2 Conclusive Research Design

A conclusive research design is useful in making decisions and drawing conclusions, as it measures and monitors the performance of a business (Ruel, 2017). Ruel (2017) went on to say that, conclusive research designs are more structured and formal than an exploratory research design. The data that is collected is usually quantitative in nature and make use of large samples (Yin, 2017). The conclusive research design can further

be broken down into two types, namely a descriptive design and a casual design, and are explained below.

- **Descriptive Research Design**

A descriptive research design helps to identify and describe market segments through the provision of accurate data of individuals, the environment or the business (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Descriptive research is mostly used when statistical data on facts are needed and when a company needs to seek specific details about the purchasing behaviour of customers (Nosek *et al.,* 2018). Numerical data is collected through a descriptive research design and questions such as who, what, how, when and why are answered (Nosek *et al.,* 2018). Closed-ended questions are usually used, meaning that respondents choose their responses from a set of answers that are provided and this limits the provision of unique insights. When using a descriptive research design, surveys and observations are usually used to gather the data (Saunders *et al.,* 2017) and will be discussed in more detail in section 4.2.5.2.

- **Casual Research Design**

A casual research design refers to a research design that seeks to investigate the relationship and influence of one variable on another (Pride & Ferrell, 2017). Quasi-experimental designs aim to establish the cause and effect relationship between an independent variable and dependent variable (Booth, 2017). Subjects for quasi-experiment are based- on non-random criteria. This approach is used to establish whether a change in a single variable may cause a change in another variable (Noble & Smith, 2016). A causal research design is quantitative in nature and it is also pre-planned and follows a structured design. A causal research design has two main objectives which are to understand the variables that cause and the variables that effect (Booth, 2017). One of the advantages of a causal research design is that it has a greater level of internal validity (ability to measure what it is intended to measure, because subjects are selected systematically (Booth, 2017). However, a limitation associated with a causal research design is the fact that it might be difficult to reach an appropriate conclusion, because there are many factors and variables that impact the social environment (Schober, 2016).

A constructive philosophical worldview was followed, because the research is about getting the participants' views of the situation under study. The meanings regarding participants' views on certain topics differ and the researcher therefore looks for complexity in the views rather than narrowing meanings into few ideas (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Constructive philosophical worldview means that knowledge is constructed from human experiences and not self-evident knowledge (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Subjective meanings are drawn from individual experiences. The goal of the research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied and therefore open-ended questions are encouraged to use, as the researcher can listen carefully to what people say and do in their lives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Therefore, an exploratory research design that is qualitative in nature was deemed appropriate for this study.

For the purpose of this study, the exploratory research design was used. Since little information is known, an exploratory design was viewed as the best for this research to enable the researcher to explore the topic further (Yin, 2017). The reason why an exploratory research was selected was to ensure that the concept is clarified, that is exploring the use of social media marketing in a telecommunications business in Zimbabwe using Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited as the case study. An exploratory research design also helps in giving an increased understanding of how Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited uses social media marketing in their business. Since not much information is known, an exploratory research design helps in providing more detail and insight towards the study.

As previously mentioned, the study implemented a case study approach which is discussed below.

4.2.3.3 Case study research

Yin (2017) defines case study research as an empirical inquiry on a new phenomenon, which is set in a real-life context. It is mainly used for collecting qualitative data and is used to answer questions such as how and why. Case study research is usually used when the study involves a sample that is small (Brotherton, 2018). Yin (2017) mentioned that the main advantage of case study research is that it explores a phenomenon deeply

and thoroughly as well as giving more insight. Through the use of case study research, new research can be formulated.

For the purpose of this study, the research was carried out using Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited as a case study. Case study research was used because it helps to investigate and explore an event deeply thus providing a detailed study on the use of social media marketing by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited in Zimbabwe. After determining the research design, the next step will be to identify the information types and sources and this is discussed next.

4.2.4 Step 4: Identify information types and sources

The fourth step as shown in figure 4.1 is to identify the information types and sources. In this step the researcher will decide on the data sources that are able to address the objectives of the study. The data sources are grouped in to two, which are secondary and primary data (Hair, Celsi, Money, Samouel & Page, 2015) and these are discussed below.

4.2.4.1 Secondary data

Secondary data is data that currently exists in a useable format and involves getting information about the problem from prior research (Bradley, 2016). This is information readily available for the general public, which is relevant to the research problem and the information may have been originally collected by another person or business for a different purpose (Yin 2017). Secondary data can be very useful as it can provide the researcher with historical insights, which can be used as a base starting point for the current study and also providing a potential basis for comparative analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Secondary data consists of external and internal data. Internal data is data that is produced within a business (Hair *et al.,* 2015), such as annual reports, sales data and profiles of customers. External data is collected outside the business, for example newspapers, media, textbooks, books and government census data (Bradley, 2016).

Secondary data has the advantages of being more cost-effective and gathering information is faster and quicker using less effort (Booth, 2017). Secondary data provides

new insight and it can also be used as a basis for comparison with the primary data collected (Booth, 2017). Secondary research is also accurate and readily available as compared to primary data and it also gives guidance to the research in terms of which direction to take for a specific research study (Bradley, 2016). However, secondary data also have a few disadvantages of which the biggest disadvantage is that the data might not suit the objectives of the research as it has been collected for a different purpose (Bradley, 2016). Secondary data might also be outdated and may not always be accurate (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

For the purpose of this study, secondary data was gathered in two ways, internally through the use of company annual reports, product reports and externally through academic textbooks, the internet and journals. Due to the use of secondary data, a thorough literature review was done on the topic of this study and were discussed in chapters 1, 2 and 3 of this study. Chapter 1 provided a general overview (introduction and background) of the study, chapter 2 focused on the telecommunications industry in Zimbabwe and chapter 3 reviewed the literature on digital marketing and social media marketing.

Marshall and Rossman (2016), indicated that if the problem cannot be solved through secondary data, primary data needs to be collected and for the purpose of this study primary data is discussed in the next section.

4.2.4.2 Primary Data

If secondary research does not provide enough information to solve a research problem, primary research has to be conducted (Hair *et al.,* 2015). Primary data is defined as information that is put together for the first time in order for a research problem to be solved (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Primary data is collected directly from a group of participants referred to as the sample of the study in order for the specific research questions to be answered (Booth, 2017). Similarly, Tustin, Lighthelm, Martins and Van Wyk (2005) and Hammarberg (2016) explains that primary data is obtained specifically for the purpose of addressing research objectives or questions in a study.

Primary data can be collected through either communication or observation techniques (Hammarberg, 2016). Observational techniques refer to the process of observing people's behavioural patterns and occurrences without interaction or direct communication with them (Hair *et al.,* 2015). The communication techniques are those methods used for gathering data, which involves the communication between a researcher and the participants through methods such as focus groups, surveys and personal interviews (Hair *et al.,* 2015).

For the purpose of this study, primary data was collected through the use of in-depth interviews and these are discussed in more detail in section 4.2.5. Once the sources of data have been identified, the research design is prepared which is the fifth step in the marketing research process.

4.2.5 Step 5: Prepare the research design

After the research design has been selected and the information sources has been discussed, the next step, as depicted in figure 4.1 will be to determine how the data for the study will be collected in order to ensure that the objectives of the research are achieved. In this section the two data collection methods which are qualitative and quantitative research methods are discussed, then followed by a discussion on the data collection techniques.

4.2.5.1 Primary data collection methods

There are two main primary data collection methods and each one is discussed in detail below.

- **Quantitative research method**

The quantitative research method is an objective, formal, and systematic process whereby numerical data is used to gather information (Hammarberg, 2016). This method of research is used to describe variables, to determine the cause-and-effect between variables and to examine relationships among variables (Hammarberg, 2016).

According to Brinkmann (2015), quantitative research is built on the measurement of amount and quantity. It is an appropriate phenomenon that can be articulated in terms of

quantity, thus explaining the use of structured questions in data collection (Caruth, 2016). Ruel (2017) indicated that structured questions with structured answers that have response options that are predetermined are used for collecting the needed data for a larger sample. Usually, how, what and why questions are answered (Brinkmann, 2015). The quantitative research techniques are used to get a representative sample so that the information can be generalised (Hammarberg, 2016).

Brotherton (2018) said one of the many advantages of the quantitative research method is that it allows for a broader study with a larger sample thus generalization of results can take place. The measuring of the outcome of results through quantitative research is easy since results are easily shown through objective data (Ruel, 2017). Another advantage of quantitative data is that predictions can easily be made due to its numerical bases (Nosek *et al.,* 2018). The disadvantage of quantitative research is that it predetermines answers and chances are high that participants do not express their opinions truthfully (Nosek *et al.,* 2018). Booth (2017) mentioned that quantitative research cannot be used to explain social phenomena, since it cannot give insights of why something is happening but can only tell what is happening. Nosek *et al.* (2018) mentioned that participants do not really express how they feel about a subject since the answers are pre-set.

• **Qualitative research method**

Qualitative research is defined as the process of analysing data that is unstructured and audio-recorded (Marshall & Rossman, 2018). Qualitative research methods deal with data that are mostly verbal and the main focus is on getting more insight into a problem and also discovering the perspectives and experiences of the active participants (Gneezy, 2017). The qualitative techniques involve the use of a small number of participants as they seek to obtain information that is rich and detailed (Gneezy, 2017). People's behaviours, attitudes, perceptions and opinions are uncovered when using qualitative research.

The advantage of qualitative research is that it avoids pre-judgement and tries by all means to represent subjects from their perspective so that the researcher can see their

views (Metzler, 2015). It also provides in-depth and a more detailed account of a phenomenon and allows participants to elaborate more on the subject matter (Metzler, 2015). The disadvantage of qualitative research is that it uses smaller samples, thus, the ability to generalize the data to the population is limited (Brotherton, 2018). Qualitative research is also time consuming and costly. Another disadvantage of qualitative research is that the quality of the gathered data is subjective as what another researcher considers to be important to gather may not be important to the next researcher (Metzler, 2015).

Table 4.1 below provides a summary comparison between the differences of qualitative and quantitative research methods.

Table 4.1: Difference between qualitative and quantitative research methods

	Quantitative Methods	Qualitative
Subject Matter	Relations of meaning	Casually related units
Purpose	Understanding the actions and events	Uncovering related entities
Methods	Interpreting actions and events	Establishing relationships between variables
Materials	Texts	Numbers
Ontology	Performance that are done	Things that happen
Requirements of administration	Interviewer should have specialised skills	Interviewer can have fewer specialised skills or no skills at all
Structure of questions	Open-ended questions are used	Closed ended questions used
Sample size	Small	Large

Sources: Adapted from Brinkman (2015:20).

For the purpose of this study, the researcher conducted the investigation from a qualitative research perspective. Given the nature of the topic under investigation, qualitative research would allow the researcher to go deeper into the subject matter in

order to gain more insight. Qualitative research is a behavioural or social science research methodology that investigates the processes that underline human behaviour using exploratory methods such as case studies, interviews and other fairly personal techniques (Gneezy, 2017) which are discussed below. A qualitative method is more flexible than a quantitative method, and aims to get an enhanced understanding of the phenomenon through first-hand experience (Nosek *et al.,* 2018)).

The qualitative research method was used in this study to explore the use of social media marketing in a telecommunications business using Econet Wireless as the case study. Qualitative research was also used in order to get more insights from the employees who are in the marketing department for the research objective to be achieved. Qualitative research would further on be appropriate because the researcher wanted to gather data that is personalised from the participants to enable the research questions to be achieved. Personalised data means, the participant would give their own response from their view point. After the data collection methods are known the next phase would be to determine the data collection instrument. There are two main techniques through which primary data can be collected, namely communicational techniques and observational techniques as discussed earlier in step 5 (section 4.2.4.2).

In the section below, the data collection techniques were discussed.

4.2.5.2 Data collection techniques

The section below provides a brief discussion on the available data collection techniques. Observation techniques refer to a way of collecting data through observing, whereas the communication techniques refer to a method of collecting data which involves asking questions to respondents using a data collection instrument such as questionnaires (Brotherton, 2018). The observation technique is discussed first, followed by the communication techniques which include in-depth interviews, surveys, focus groups and projective techniques.

- **Observation technique**

Merriam (2015) said the observation method is used to record behavioural patterns through observing people's actions without face-to-face interaction with the respondents. Observations can be either structured or unstructured (Hanoock & Algozzine, 2016). Structured observations refer to data collection that is done using specific order, whereas unstructured observations are done in an open and free manner were there are no pre-determined variables (Brotherton, 2018). Through the use of the observation method, a sample of individuals are observed and their behaviours are recorded and will be used in future studies (Hanoock & Algozzine, 2016). Observations are the best method to use for a study on human behaviour as it is a direct way of collecting information (Merriam, 2015).

- **Communication techniques**

Brotherton (2018), said communication techniques are stand-alone instruments of collecting data that will be administered to the respondents either through mail, phone or online. Communication techniques gives the researchers an opportunity to formulate and structure the data collection plan accurately (Brotherton, 2018). Communication techniques include surveys, focus groups, in-depth interviews and projective techniques are discussed below.

  o **Survey Research**

This is a method that is used for collecting facts, motives and people's opinions using a questionnaire that is structured (Hammarberg, 2016). The respondents can be contacted personally by using mall intercepts, telephone interviews and electronic mail to collect the data (Merriam, 2015). Information collected from individuals using surveys is compared in order to achieve the research objectives. The advantage of using surveys is that the researcher can be able to compare responses (Schober, 2016).

  o **In-depth Interviews**

This involves collecting data through verbal interaction between the interviewee and the interviewer (Schober, 2016). The in-depth interview can be an unstructured and semi-structured direct way of gathering information, which is conducted on a face-to-face basis

(Marshall & Rossman, 2016). An experienced interviewer probes a single respondent to find the underlying beliefs, feelings and motivations on a particular topic. When an interviewer gains access to the respondent, the interviewer first explains the purpose of the interview. The interviewer will use unstructured questions as guided by a topic emphasizing on important areas that the study wishes to cover (Hair *et al.,* 2015).

Table 4.2 below provides a brief summary of the advantages and disadvantages of in-depth interviews.

Table 4.2 Advantages and disadvantages of in-depth interviews

Advantages	Disadvantages
The process of in-depth interviews is faster because it enables the recruiting and scheduling process easier and faster.	Researcher has less control over the generated data.
The responses can be attributed to the respondents.	Participants must be carefully selected to avoid bias.
Additional information is gained due to ability to have follow-up questions	In-depth interviews require level of trust between interviewer and participants especially when the issues being discussed are sensitive.
Yields data that is rich with advanced detail	It is time consuming as interviews must be transcribed, organized, analysed, and reported.
Data is easier to analyse.	The cost of doing in-depth interviews is high.
	Interviewer has to be well trained.

Source: Schober (2016)

- o **Projective Techniques**

These are indirect methods used for questioning the participants to bring out beliefs and feelings on events or things (Nosek *et al.*, 2018). With projective techniques, the participants reveal their hidden values through means such as word association, pictorial

construction and role playing (Nosek *et al.,* 2018). Projective techniques help the researcher to get emotional responses from the participants. They are mainly used to uncover hidden opinions and beliefs.

   o   **Focus Group Interviews**

Focus groups are a process which involves bringing a small group of people together usually between eight and ten people to discuss a specific topic (Nosek *et al.,* 2018.) The discussion is basically interactive and used as an alternative to in-depth interviews. A moderator is used to guide the discussion towards the focus of the research (Merriam, 2015).

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used in-depth interviews to collect the data, because it helps the interviewer to get first-hand information, provide more insight, knowledge and build a deepened understanding on the study (Merriam, 2015). According to Schober (2016), the most important sources of case study information are interviews. The respondent's ability to expand on areas of interest is an advantage of using interviews. An interview guide was developed and utilised which consisted of semi-structured questions (Schober, 2016). Every interview was recorded by utilising a digital recorder after permission was given by respondents and thereafter the interviews were transcribed.

To summarise step 4 and 5, the researcher used an exploratory research design making use of a qualitative data collection method implementing in-depth interviews to gather the data. After the research design had been formulated, the research instruments were designed which is the sixth step in the marketing research process.

4.2.6 Step 6: Designing the research instrument

As indicated in figure 4.1, designing the research instrument is the sixth step in the research process. The research instrument is the tool that the researchers use to gather information that is needed from the selected sample. The question structure that are used to collect the data refers to a structured question with a structured response, also known as close-ended questions or unstructured questions with responses that are unstructured,

also known as open-ended questions (Merriam, 2015). The question structures are discussed below.

- **Structured questions with structured responses**

This type of structure is used when the researcher provides a set of response options to the respondents and also highlights the format the questions will have. Structured questions, with structured responses are mostly used with both a descriptive- and- causal research design that is quantitative in nature (Hair *et al.,* 2015). When using structured questions, a larger number of respondents usually answer the questions and the level of involvement of the researcher is minimal (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Dichotomous and multiple-choice questions are examples of structured questions, with structured responses or closed-ended questions (Nosek *et al.,* 2018). The main advantage of structured questions that have structured responses is that the researcher can code and analyse the data quickly and easily (Gneezy, 2017).

- **Unstructured questions with unstructured responses**

Unstructured questions, with unstructured responses are questions where the participants can answer questions using their personal words (Schober, 2016). These questions allow the participants to express what they feel as well as their attitudes. Unstructured questions, with unstructured responses are mostly used when an exploratory research design is implemented that is qualitative in nature (Gneezy, 2017). Unstructured questions are mostly used during in-depth interviews and they aid in information flow between the respondent and the researcher (Brotherton, 2018).

For the purpose of this study, unstructured questions, with unstructured responses (open-ended questions) were used to allow the researcher to access the participants' true feelings on what they think about the use of social media marketing by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited. The researcher compiled a few open-ended questions, which are based on the objectives of the study to ensure that the objectives of the study are achieved from the collected data. Since the research was conducted through an exploratory research design, the open-ended questions helped the researcher to acquire more information and insight of the subject matter since it allows for the participants to

include more information. The advantages of open-ended questions are that they allow for specific answers from participants, unusual responses are received and new ideas are explored from the area that the researcher had little or no knowledge (Brotherton, 2018).

Table 4.3 below represents the open-ended questions that were asked based on the objectives of the study. Each question asked was based on an objective, however more questions could be asked as the interviews progressed and more information was needed.

Table 4.3: Research objectives and questions

Objective	Question
To explore how Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited uses social media marketing.	How does Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited use social media marketing?
To examine the reasons behind Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited's usage of social media marketing.	Why did Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited decide to use social media marketing?
To determine the most useful social media channels used by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited.	Which social media channels are mostly used by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited?
To determine how Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited measures social media usage.	How is your department or Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited measuring the use of social media?

After the instrument for research has been designed, the next step in the research process would be to determine the sampling methods that will be used.

4.2.7 Step 7: Determine the sampling method

Determining the sampling method is the seventh step as shown in figure 4.1 of the research process. This step is made up of various internal steps, which are discussed based on the steps in the sampling process (Rose, Spinks & Canhoto, 2015).

Sampling is the process of selecting the appropriate representative part of a population for the purpose of determining the features of the whole population (Brotherton, 2018). Brotherton (2018) went on to discuss sampling as the process a researcher uses to select places, people or things to study. Therefore, sampling and the selection of a geographical location is, to a larger extent, influenced by the strategy of enquiry that the researcher uses (Booth, 2017). The selection of the sampling method is also determined by the time constraints and the availability of time and the problem that is being researched.

The steps in the sample process are shown in figure 4.2 and are discussed below.
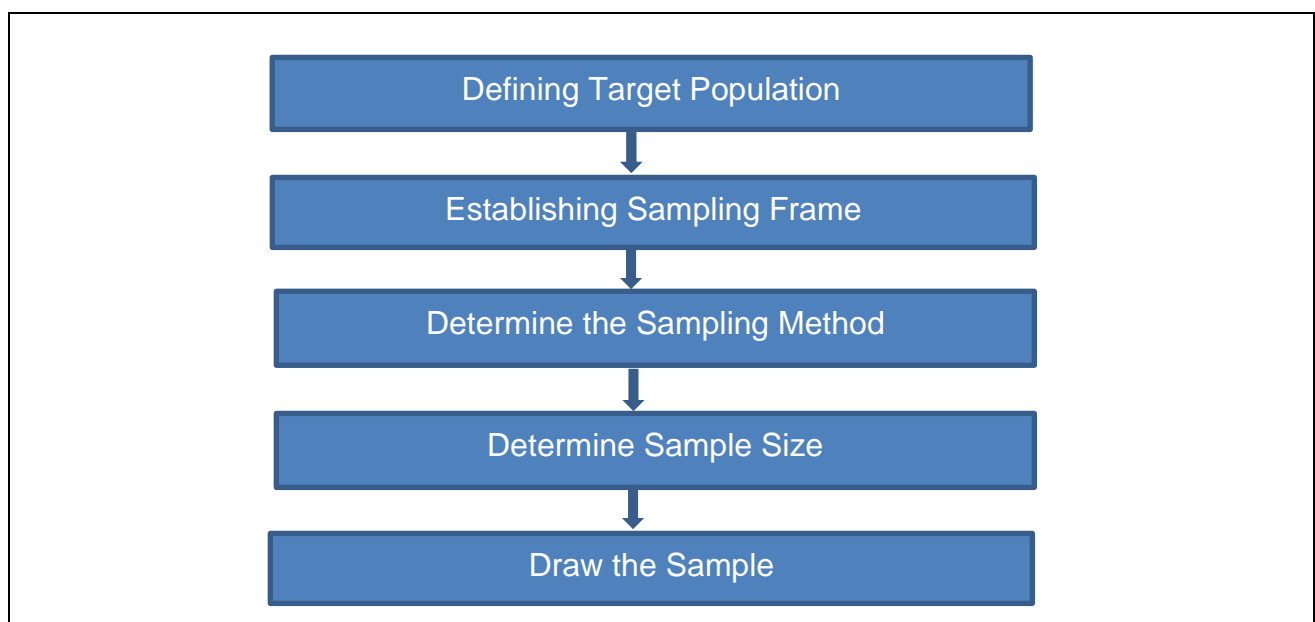

Figure 4.2: Steps in the sample process
Source: Rose *et al.* (2015)

4.2.7.1 Step 1: Define the target population

As shown in figure 4.2, first step in the sampling process is defining the target population. The target population is the total number of people that the researcher needs to acquire information from in order for data to be gathered (Schober, 2016). It is the actual

population that the samples can be drawn from, for the research study (Brinkmann, 2015). The target population of the study were Econet Wireless employees employed in the marketing department because they are the ones responsible for social media marketing in the business. The total population consisted of 120 employees which is the total number of employees in the Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited marketing department in Zimbabwe.

4.2.7.2 Step 2: Establish the sampling frame

The sample frame is the list of individuals that are chosen to take part in the research study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Schober (2016) stated that a sampling frame is an illustration of the elements of the target population. Employees in the marketing department of Econet Wireless are the sample frame since they are responsible for social media marketing and they were selected based on the following inclusion criteria:

- Employees had be older than 18 years and under 65 years;
- Employees had be part of the marketing department of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe in Harare; and
- Employees were able to speak, read and write in English.

The section below focuses on the sampling method.

4.2.7.3 Step 3: Determine the sampling methods

The third step in the sampling process as illustrated in figure 4.2 is the selection of the sampling methods which are chosen based on the objectives of the research study. Sampling methods are the methods used to establish the sample of the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Overall the two basic sampling methods are probability and non-probability and are discussed below.

- **Probability sampling method**

A probability sampling method is a method that is used whereby a sample from a larger population is chosen using a method that is based on the probability theory (Schober, 2016). Saunders *et al.* (2017) points out that with probability sampling the chance of each element being selected from the population is known and usually it is equal for all. Hair *et*

al. (2015) agrees that it is possible for research questions to be answered and attain objectives that require one to statistically assess the features of the population from the sample. With probability sampling, large samples that are representative of the population are used (Hair *et al.,* 2015). The advantages of probability sampling are that it minimizes the chance of sampling bias and it has a better representative sample than non-probability sampling (Schober, 2016). The disadvantages of probability sampling are that it needs a lot of time and that it is expensive to conduct. The probability sampling techniques include stratified random sampling, random sampling, systematic sampling, and cluster sampling which are discussed in more detail below:

- o **Simple Random Sampling:** Simple random sampling entail that every element has an equal probability of being chosen for the sample which is selected from a list of the entire population (Booth, 2017). The elements must be mutually exclusive and the elements must all have the same characteristics, which meet the criteria of the targeted population (Nosek *et al.,* 2018).
- o **Stratified Random Sampling:** Stratified random sampling, ensures that the elements that are in the population are organized into separate "strata" and each stratum is sampled as an independent sub-population and then the individual elements are randomly selected (Booth, 2017). The same sampling fraction is used to ensure that the strata are equally represented in the sample and each element in the stratum has the same equal chance of being selected.
- o **Systematic Sampling:** Systematic sampling is probability sampling type where each element in the population has a known chance and equal probability of being selected when the elements are selected at regular intervals (Hammarberg, 2016). At the starting point, selection is done randomly then every "nth" number which is on the list is selected for the sample.
- o **Cluster Sampling:** This is a technique that is used when the population elements are spread over a large geographical area. The population will then be divided into groups, which are called clusters (Brinkmann, 2015).

- **Non-Probability sampling**

Non-probability sampling is a sampling method whereby the sample is gathered in a process which does not allow all the individuals in the population an equal chance of being selected (Nosek *et al.,* 2018). A non-probability sample is used when the judgment of a researcher is used to make the selection (Booth, 2017). According to Brinkmann (2015) non-probability sampling is less expensive and is often implemented quicker than probability sampling. The main disadvantage of non-probability sampling is that it is dependent on the researcher's judgement when selecting study subjects (Saunders *et al.,* 2017. This means that non-probability sampling is prone to researcher's bias if ethical considerations are ignored (Booth, 2017). Convenient sampling, snowball sampling judgement sampling and quota sampling are the techniques of non-probability sampling and are discussed below:

- o **Snowball Sampling:** With snowball sampling, only one element of the population is approached at each time and the researcher then asks the subject to identify another subject who meets the research criteria (Brinkmann, 2015).
- o **Quota sampling:** Quota sampling is a method where the researcher guarantees that there is an equal representation of the subjects depending on the characteristic that is considered to be bias to the quota (Merriam, 2015).
- o **Convenient Sampling:** This type of sampling, ensures that the researcher includes participants who are convenient and easy to approach (Saunders *et al.,* 2017). This method is cheap and less time consuming.
- o **Judgement Sampling:** With judgment sampling the researcher depend on his or her own judgment when selecting the study units and also focuses on the elements that will help answer the research questions (Ruel, 2017). Judgement sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources in order to answer the research question (Hseish & Shannon, 2015). Ruel (2017) confirms to the fact that in judgment sampling the researcher's verdict is used for choosing elements or subjects, which he or she considers as a representation of the population.

For the purpose of this research, a non-probability sampling technique was used for this study because it is less expensive and often implemented quicker than probability sampling (Brinkmann, 2015). Non-probability sampling was selected, also, due to time limitation, budgetary constraints and the exploratory nature of the study. The sampling technique implemented for the study was judgement sampling, as the selected participants were experts in the field of study and they were in the position to discuss matters concerning Econet Wireless. Judgement sampling also enabled the researcher to choose participants that are best suited to answer the research questions (Ruel, 2017). Ruel (2017) went on to say, judgement sampling involves identifying key characteristics such as demographics and usage characteristics. After the sampling techniques have been chosen, the next phase is to determine the size of the sample.

4.2.7.4 Step 4: Determine the sample size

When the sampling technique has been identified, the next step is to determine the sample size as shown in figure 4.2. A sample size is the number of participants that are included in the final sample (Caruth, 2016). The sample size also depends on what the researcher wants to use the research results for. A sample size that is too small may produce results that are inconclusive and too large a sample may waste resources and time (Saunders *et al.,* 2017). For this study, a sample of twenty (20) participants was regarded as being sufficient and if those twenty in-depth interviews were not sufficient, more participants' would be interviewed, till a point of saturation was achieved. Saturation is when an exhaustive conclusion under the subject matter under discussion is reached (Saunders *et al.,* 2017) that is when all the necessary and essential information is obtained and the primary objective of this research study is achieved. According to Schober (2016), a sample of twenty (20) participants for in-depth interviews should be sufficient. After the sample size is determined, the final stage of the sampling process is to draw the sample.

4.2.7.5 Step 5: Draw the sample

The last step in the sampling process, as shown in figure 4.2 is that of selecting the sample elements needed for the study. For the purpose of this study, the participants

were invited to participate in the in-depth interviews through an email that was sent to the head of marketing of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited. The head of marketing advised the researcher on the most relevant employees to use as part of the study which contributed to the judgement sampling method. The email highlighted the purpose of the study, the question structure that would be used as well as the time and date when the interviews would take place. The sample was then finalized when all twenty employees had confirmed that they could go ahead with the in-depth interviews. The researcher used the inclusion criteria to select the participants.

The next step in the research process is to pre-test the research instrument which is discussed below.

4.2.8 Step 8: Pre-test the research instrument

Pre-testing is whereby the research instrument is tested on a small sample of the respondents, who does not form part of the actual sample size, before the full study is done and this is done in similar conditions to those of the actual study (Merriam, 2015). According to Caruth (2016), pre-testing is done in order to identify problems such as unclear wording or ambiguity. Pre-testing helps to see whether the questions is understood correctly by the participants, to eliminate possible errors, to determine what questions needs to be added or removed and to check whether the questions actually addressed the objectives of the study (Hseish & Shannon, 2015). Pre-testing is also done in order to ascertain the way in which the instrument collects the information. The open-ended questions were pre-tested first before starting the data collection process. The purpose of this pre-test was to refine the questions so that the respondents would not find the questions difficult to answer before the actual research takes place (Caruth, 2016).

Pre-testing provides an opportunity for making changes to study materials and data collection processes. This is done to ensure that the correct questions are asked and that questions do not make respondents uncomfortable and/or confused because two or more significant aspects are in a single question. For the purpose of this study, 5 participants were pre-tested and they did not form part of the actual data collection process. To ensure that the individuals included in the pre-test were excluded in the main interviews, those

pre-tested did not form part of the total population. The participants who formed part of the pre-tested had to sign a consent letter and was asked to treat the interview as confidential.

The section below focuses on conducting the fieldwork.

4.2.9 Step 9: Conduct fieldwork

Conducting fieldwork is step 9 as indicated in the research process in figure 4.1 above. According to Merriam (2015), fieldwork is a process of collecting data using methods such as observations, interviews and surveys. The researcher made use of in-depth interviews as mentioned in section 4.2.5. Five open-ended questions were derived from the research objectives of the study and the participants answered these questions. Follow-up questions and probing based on the participants' responses was done for each question. The questions were shown in table 4.4 above and appendix D.

From the total population of 120 employees in the marketing department of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited, the sample size consisted of 20 employees in the marketing department who have control over the social media marketing channels used by Econet Wireless. According to Saunders *et al.* (2017), researchers engage with participants when doing in-depth interviews by posing questions in the same manner for each participant and listening attentively to the participants' responses. The researcher used in-depth interviews to collect information because in-depth interviews enable researchers to collect first-hand information as well as broadens the understanding of the study (Brinkmann, 2015). Every interview was recorded by utilising a digital recorder after permission was given by respondents and thereafter the interviews were transcribed.

- The appropriate participants were selected for the interview. The marketing manager helped in identifying the most suitable employees to take part in the research study. The selected employees complied with the inclusion criteria which were older than 18 years and under 65 years and part of the marketing department of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited. The samples chosen were based on the inclusion criteria. Though the marketing manager helped in identifying the suitable employees to take part in the study, the participate would chose not to be interviewed.

- Each interview took between 30 minutes and an hour depending on each participants' responses. Because the marketing manager assisted in the recruitment process, acquiring co-operation from the participants especially considering that the interviews were conducted during working hours, was not a problem.

- Appointments were placed in advance so that the interviewee and interviewer had enough time to prepare.

- The interviewer first explained the purpose of the interview and assured the participants that taking part in the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

- The interviews took place in the boardroom at the head office of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited in Harare, which was booked prior to the interviews to make sure that the participants were at ease and in comfortable environment. The interviews took place from the week of 13 – 17 May 2019 during the morning mostly from 10:30am to 12:00pm.

- Each participant signed a consent form on the day of the interview. (See appendix A for the consent letter.) The researcher also assured each participant that the study was anonymous and that all identifiers that would be personal are removed.

- All the interviews were recorded and then transcribed and analysed at a later stage.

- After the interviews took place, the researcher sent an e-mail to the marketing manager and all the participants thanking them for the time they took to respond to the interview questions.

After the fieldwork took place, the next step will be to process and analyse the data and it will be discussed in the following section.

4.2.10 Step 10: Process and analysis of data

Figure 4.1 indicated that the 10th step of the research process is about processing and analysing the data. Data analysis is the process of applying statistical practices to organise, evaluate and interpreted data (Saunders *et al.,* 2017). According to Marshall and Rossman (2016) data analysis is a process used for cleaning, and remodelling data for conclusions to be made.

For the purpose of this study, thematic analysis was used and the coding process was done manually by grouping theme like-themed-data together. When doing manual coding the researcher read the notes from the transcribed data and highlighted data that was related and made them the main themes (topics). The main themes were then assigned codes and the most meaningful words identified from the main themes were then defined and grouped into categories. Thematic analysis was used since the research was contextual in nature. Thematic analysis is a method that is used to identify, analyse and report patterns and themes in detail (Braun & Clarke, 2016). A theme is the main topic of finding that is identified from the interviewed participant responses (Roller & Lakravas, 2015). A theme helps to capture something that is important about the collected data in relation to the research question and represents patterned responses. According to Roller and Lakravas (2015) a category is a subtopic of findings that are under a main theme. Roller and Lakravas (2015) go on to say that a category is a set of ideas and the beliefs of people who have the same qualities in common. The findings obtained in this study are discussed in detail in chapter 5.

After all the data had been analysed, the research findings need to be reported on and that is discussed next.

4.2.11 Step 11: Interpret and report the research findings

Presentation and reporting of the research findings are the last step in the research process as indicated in figure 4.1. In this stage all the gathered data is interpreted and reported on to the decision makers of the business. The final conclusions and recommendations made for the study are discussed in chapter 6.

The limitation associated with this study are discussed next.

4.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Within this study, the following limitations were foreseen:

The fact that the research was held at a specific point in time and not longitudinal, may have had a bearing on the results especially since the macro-environment conditions in

which the industry is operating, would have a serious impact on the psychology and emotional well-being of the participant. Not all participants were willing to spend an hour doing in-depth interviews. The researcher made sure that the time for the interviews for those who were not comfortable with the one hour was reduced to 30 minutes and ensured that all the interview questions were answered by the participants.

Getting information on time from the respondents was a problem for the researcher and it took six months for the researcher to get an approval letter to carry out the study from Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited. Some of the interviews had to be rescheduled because of the political climate in the country that affected business operations. This slowed the progress of the research. The research was limited and delimited to the City of Harare and did not necessarily generalise the phenomena of the use of social media marketing within Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited. For the purposes of this study, only those employed in the marketing department were selected and also because of the qualitative nature, the results cannot be generalized, as this is a specific case study.

In the next section the strategies employed to ensure data quality are discussed.

4.4. STRATEGIES EMPLOYED TO ENSURE DATA QUALITY

In qualitative research, reliability and validity are described through strategies for trustworthiness. Trustworthiness consists of transferability, credibility, conformability and dependability, and are discussed below.

- **Credibility** involves establishing that the results are believable from the view of the participant since the purpose of qualitative research is to describe the phenomena of interest from the perspective of the participant (Nosek *et al.,* 2018). To ensure that the findings are accurate, the researcher can use triangulation. Triangulation is the process of examining the same questions of research to different participants and collecting data from different sources and using different approaches to answer the research questions (Merriam, 2015). Analyst triangulation is another type of triangulation that can be used to ensure credibility. It involves using another analyst

to investigate the findings of a study and this helps to illuminate any blind spots in the analysis process (Nosek *et al.,* 2018). Credibility was ensured by asking the same question to different participants and a statistician and transcriber were used.

- **Conformability** refers to the degree of how neutral the research study findings are (Rose *et al.,* 2015). Conformability means the research findings are based on the participant's responses and not from any personal motives or bias of the research. It can be established by the provision of an audit trail by the researcher, which highlights all the steps that were involved in the data analysis (Rose *et al.,* 2015). This audit trail helps to establish that the findings of the research accurately portrayed the participant's responses. To ensure conformability, the researcher can document the procedure of how the data was analysed and another researcher who was not part of the research study can examine the findings. With conformability, the researcher ensured that all the interview procedures were documented by using an interview guide. A pre-test was conducted which enabled the researcher to pick up any research issues before data collection started. The researcher made sure that no personal information that would be linked to the responded was used in anyway in the research

- **Dependability** refers to the degree to which a study can be repeated by other researchers and still maintain findings that are consistent (Amankwaa, 2016). Dependability can be established by the use of an inquiry audit whereby an outside person can review and examine the research process and analysis the data to ensure that the findings are dependable (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). To ensure dependability the data would be collected and analysed in the same manner for all participants and each process in the study was reported in detail to ensure that when an external researcher is to repeat the inquiry similar results are obtained.

- **Transferability** refers to the extent to which findings of the study can be transferred to another context by the researcher (Rose *et al.,* 2015). To ensure transferability, the researcher's results can be used by other researchers who are carrying out research in another context. Transferability of data was ensured by making sure that the

dissertation will be on the UNISA repository so that other researchers can use the results in carrying out research in another context.

In the next section ethical clearance is discussed.

4.5 ETHICAL CLEARANCE

The following ethical considerations were taken into account when the research was conducted in order to uphold high ethical standards:

- The researcher obtained internal ethical clearance from the ethical committee of the University of South Africa (UNISA) (see appendix B). The researcher also declared that she had read the Policy on Research Ethics of UNISA and that the contents of this research study are a true and accurate reflection of the methodological and ethical implications and that the confidentiality of all the data collected from the research participants would be maintained and kept safe and secure, thereby not harming any of the participants.

- **Seeking consent**: A letter of consent was sent to Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited to seek permission to do the study (see appendix C). The letter highlighted that the study is for academic purposes only and what the information would be used for. A statement regarding the purpose of inquiry was provided to all participants and their role in the study as well as what the information they provided would be used for.

- **Confidentiality:** The identities of respondents and their opinions should be treated confidentially. Any information that can identify participants should not be requested, thus ensuring anonymity and confidentiality.

- **Privacy:** The researcher ensured that respondents' rights and privacy would be protected throughout the study by adhering to the ethical guidelines and their rights would be fully explained to them.

- **Reporting the findings:** The researcher reported the findings in an honest manner without misrepresenting the outcomes of the study.

- **Beneficence:** To ensure beneficence was upheld, those who did not want to participate or unable to give consent were not interviewed.

- **Voluntary participation**: With regards to voluntary participation, the consent letter (appendix c) did explain that participation was voluntary.

4.6 SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to explore how social media marketing is used by Econet Wireless and its influence on Zimbabwe's telecommunications industry. This chapter focused on the research methodology to be applied in order to collect and analyse the required data in order to achieve the primary objective of the research study. The problem statement as well as the research objectives were stated. Primary data was collected using in-depth interviews to help ensure that the collected data reach a point of saturation. The data was analysed using thematic analysis.

The main research findings are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 provided an introduction of what this study is about, highlighting the research objectives, methodology to be used, background discussion on the telecommunications industry, ethical considerations, and limitations of the study and contribution of the study. Chapter 2 provided a detailed background discussion of the telecommunications industry in Zimbabwe, the size and players in the telecommunication industry in Zimbabwe, challenges and success of the telecommunication industry as well as the future of the telecommunication industry in Zimbabwe. In chapter 3 emphasis was placed on the types of digital marketing media, social media marketing, social media marketing channels and the benefits and disadvantages of social media marketing. In the previous chapter, (chapter 4) the research methodology that this research study implemented was discussed. The entire research process was explained in detail and the 10th step in the research process focused on the method of data analysis.

This chapter (chapter 5) provides the findings of the analysed data that were collected among 20 Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited employees. The aim of this chapter is therefore to present the findings and interpreting the results of the gathered data in terms of the stated research objectives as given in chapters 1 and 4. This chapter commences with a short discussion on the ethical clearance followed by the research terms that will be used in this chapter, then a discussion on the objective of the research, the sample discussion and ends with the research finding.

5.2 ETHICAL CLEARANCE

Ethical clearance was granted before the research took place as discussed in chapter 4, section 4.5 in order to uphold high ethical standards. A letter seeking approval to carrying out the research at Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited was also sent explaining what the research is all about (see appendix C). All the ethical considerations were taken into

account, thus making this research valid. Refer to section 4.5 in chapter 4 for a complete discussion on ethical clearance.

5.3 RESEARCH TERMS

Various research terms discussed in chapter 4 will be revisited and will also be discussed in short in chapter 5 to facilitate the reader.

- **Category:** According to Roller and Lakravas (2015), a category is a subtopic of finding that are under a main theme. Roller and Lakravas (2015) go on to say that a category is a collection of ideas, beliefs of people who have the same qualities in common.

- **Themes:** A theme is the main topic of finding that is identified from the interviewed participant response (Roller & Lakravas, 2015). A theme helps to capture something that is significant about the collected data which also relates to the research question and represents responses that are patterned.

- **Case study:** A case study, as previously discussed in chapter 4, is a research method that investigates a phenomenon in depth, which is set in a real-life context (Yin, 2017). Case studies usually involves doing interviews, which is the source of data used for this research with Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited, exploring the use of social media marketing in a telecommunication business.

- **In-depth interviews:** In-depth interviews are defined as an open-ended method used to obtain detailed information about a subject matter (Schober, 2016). An in-depth interview is a data collection method that indicates the qualitative approach of this particular research study. In-depth interviews might flow naturally to cover the research topic in question but also perhaps digress into new areas.

- **Open ended questions:** An open-ended question is defined as free-form survey questions that allows respondents to answer in their own knowledge and understanding (Yin, 2017). Open-ended questions assist the researcher to get more knowledge and insight as the participants are free to include more information.

- **Thematic analysis:** Thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data (Braun & Clarke, 2016). Braun and Clarke (2016) went on to say thematic analysis helps with looking for patterns in data so that the data can be connected together into groups that are meaningful to the subject being investigated.

5.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

As previously discussed in chapter 1 (section 1.4) and chapter 4 (section 4.2.2) the stated primary objective for this research study was to explore the use of social media marketing in a Zimbabwean telecommunications business- Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited.

From the stated primary objective, the secondary objectives below where derived:

- To explore how Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited uses social media marketing.
- To examine the reasons behind Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited's usage of social media marketing.
- To determine the most useful social media channels used by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited.
- To determine how Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited measures social media usage.
- To identify areas of future research.

In the attempt to achieve the research objectives outlined above, the in-depth interviews were conducted with selected Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited employees to reveal the use of social media marketing in a telecommunications business using Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited as a case study.

The following section will provide a discussion on the pre-testing of the interview questions.

5.5 PRE-TESTING

Reis and Judd (2015) indicated that pre-testing is when the research instrument is tested on a smaller sample of participants who are not part of the actual sample size. This is done to ensure that questions are understood clearly by participants to eliminate possible errors when the actual research commences. This was discussed in more detail in chapter 4 section 4.2.8. For the purpose of this study, five (5) in-depth interviews were conducted as part of the pre-testing. The pre-test assisted the researcher to ensure that the correct questions were asked, that the questions were logically and easily understood by the participants, and lastly the pre-test enabled the researcher to determine how long each interview took.

During the pre-testing, it was found that the participants understood the questions that were being asked. The interviews were recorded to ensure that all responses were kept. The interviewer also made sure that there was minimal noise in the background to avoid distractions during the interviews. After the pre-testing was conducted, the researcher found that the boardroom was a conducive place for the interviews to be done, the recorder was working well and when the recordings were played the sound was clear.

5.6 INTERVIEW PROCESS

The first information to be shared with the participants was that the responses would be recorded to ensure accuracy and that all personal identifiers will be removed. The researcher also communicated to the participants that the information gathered using the interviews was for use during compilation and documenting the research findings as discussed in chapter 4. During the interviews, the researcher took notes to ensure that even if the tape recorder stopped working, the information would still be available on the notes written during the interviews. The researcher constantly checked during the interviews if the recorder worked properly.

In order to get in-depth information that was valuable, the researcher had to make sure that the participant would talk as much as possible. The researcher had to ask the participant to elaborate when participants gave short answers without being biased. All interviews were done in the same set up and the researcher used the same tone during all 20 interviews, and questions were asked in the same order and wording. The time taken for each interview differed from one participant to the other depending on how able and willing they were to give out information. On average, the interviews took 35 minutes to complete. Follow up questions and probing based on participant's responses was also done.

The next section discusses the research methodology in brief.

5.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As discussed previously in chapter 4, in section 4.2.3.2, the study followed an exploratory research design that was qualitative in nature and the instrument used were in-depth interviews. A total of 20 in-depth interviews were done and after the 16th in-depth interview, saturation was reached but for completeness a total of 20 interviews were still done. The data for the in-depth interviews were analysed according to the thematic analysis process, which was also indicated in chapter 4, section 4.2.10.

The following section describe the findings obtained from the demographic sample of the study.

5.7.1 Findings on the demographic sample

As previously discussed in chapter 4, section, 4.2.7.4, the sample size consisted of 20 Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited employees that are employed in the marketing department, because they are the ones responsible for social media marketing. Table 5.1 below shows the characteristics of the participants who took part in the study. The participants were employees from Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited between the ages of 18 and 65 years, who are based in Harare and who could read, write and speak English, as stated in Chapter 4 section 4.2.7. Both males and females participated in the

in-depth interviews. The age, gender, level of management and number of years the participants have worked in the marketing department will be summarized in table 5.1 below and illustrated in figure 5.1 and figure 5.2 below.

Table 5.1: Age for participants

Age	18-25	26-40	41-65	Total
Unit	1	12	7	20
%	5	60	35	100

Figure 5.1 below shows a visual illustration of the age distribution of the sample elements who participated in the study.
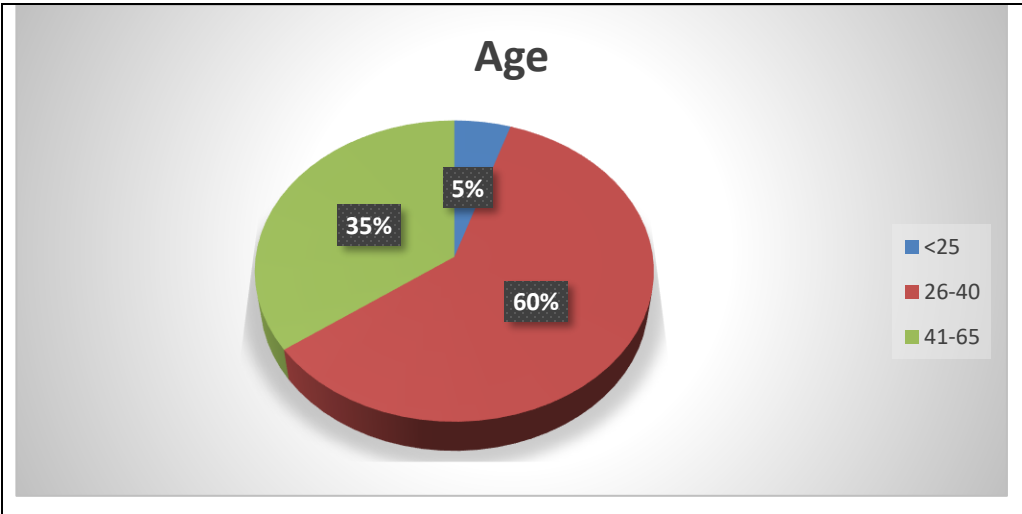

Figure 5.1: Age profile for participants

Figure 5.1 above shows a visual illustration of the age distribution of the sampled elements who participated in the study. It is evident that the distribution of the age of participants was spread widely. Five percent of the participants were aged between 18 to 25 years, 35 percent of the participants were between the ages of 41 and 65 years and the majority (60%) of the participants were aged between 26 and 40 years. The diagram shows that the age distribution was even as all the age groups were represented.
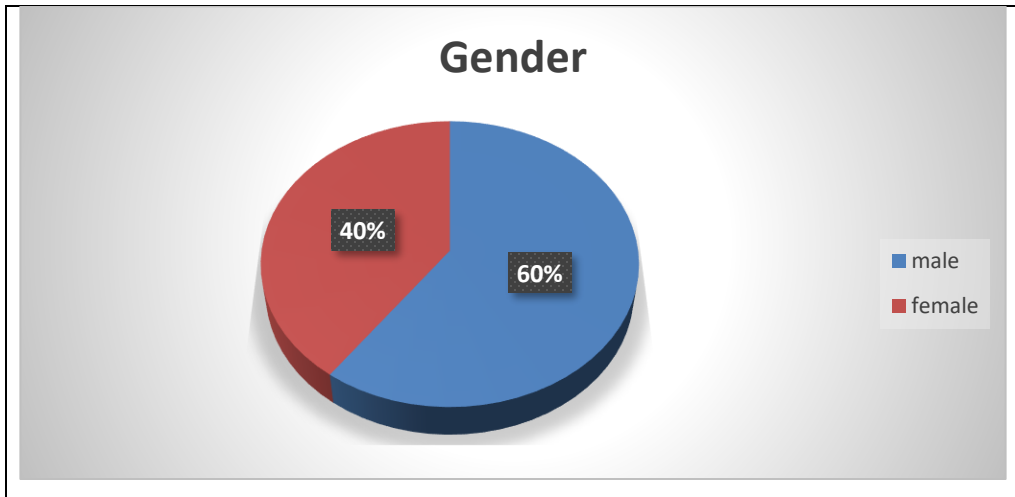
Figure 5.2: Gender profile for participants

Figure 5.2 shows a visual illustration of the gender distribution of the sample elements who participated in the study and it is evident that the majority of the participants were male (60%) and the females were less with a percentage of 40 percent.

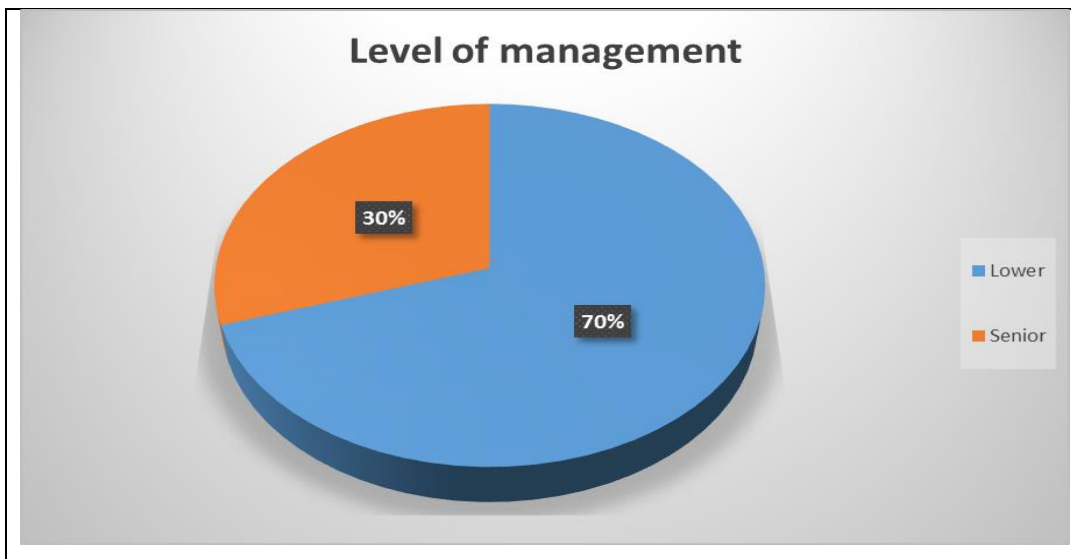Figure 5.3 below shows the level of management of the participants in the study.

Figure 5.3: Level of management

Figure 5.3 shows that 30 percent of the participants were in the senior level of management at Econet Wireless and 70 percent were in the lower level of management.

- 30 percent of the participants are in the senior level of management. Senior level management refers to a team of individuals who are at the highest level of management at an organisation who manage the day-to-day tasks of an organization.
- 70 percent are in the lower level of management. Lower level management refers supervisors in the business who are concerned with giving direction and controlling functions of management.

Figure 5.4 below shows the number of years that the participants have worked in the marketing department doing social media marketing.
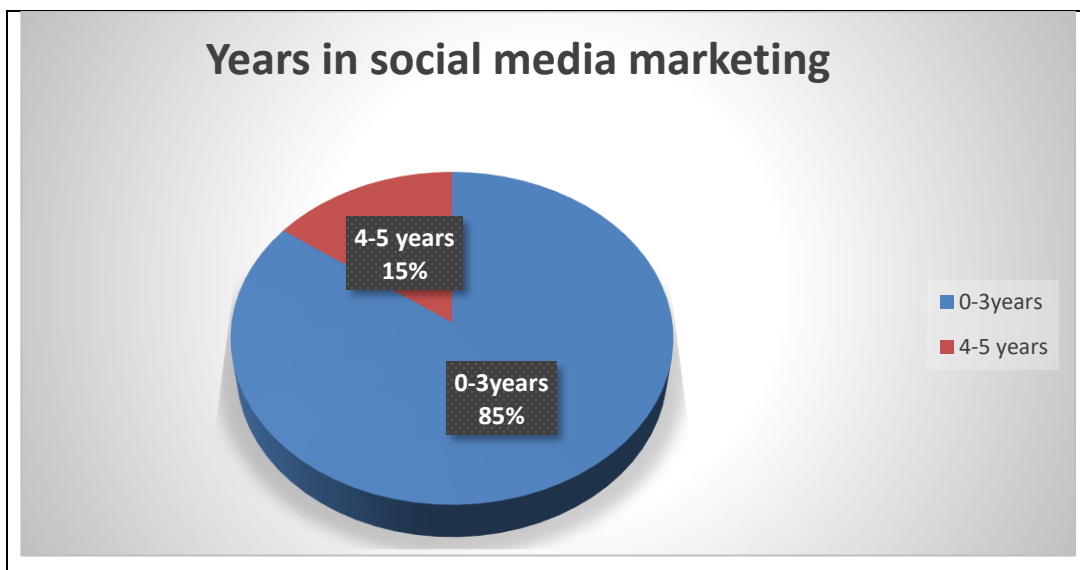

Figure 5.4: Number of years in social media marketing

From figure 5.4 it is evident that 85 percent of the participants have worked for Econet Wireless for 0-3 years and 15 percent have worked in the marketing department doing social media marketing for 4 to 5 years.

The above findings show that all the age groups were represented in the study with the majority of participants aged between 26 and 40 years. The male participants formed the majority of those interviewed. Seventy percent of those interviewed were in the lower level of management which refers to those who supervise the business giving directions and controlling functions of management.

The section below provides the findings of the research study.

5.8 RESEARCH FINDINGS ON THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

The section below discusses the research findings on the use of social media marketing in a telecommunication business an exploratory study of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited. The findings were achieved through interviewing Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited employees in the marketing department who use social media marketing. The findings discussion consists of four (4) themes that were identified from the in-depth interviews. Each theme together with their categories are discussed in detail below.

5.8.1 Themes and categories

Themes and categories were used to illustrate the research findings because it helps to explore the link between the responses. With thematic analysis, themes and categories sharing the same meaning are created and the findings are discussed according to four themes which were identified from the data, each theme having their own categories. Each theme, together with its categories, are supported and justified by direct quotations that are taken from the transcribed voice recordings of the in-depth interviews.

The outcomes are presented as a storyline branching in to four themes with each theme consisting of four or five categories as indicated in figure 5.5 below. The findings were then confirmed by direct quotations that were obtained from the participants in the study.
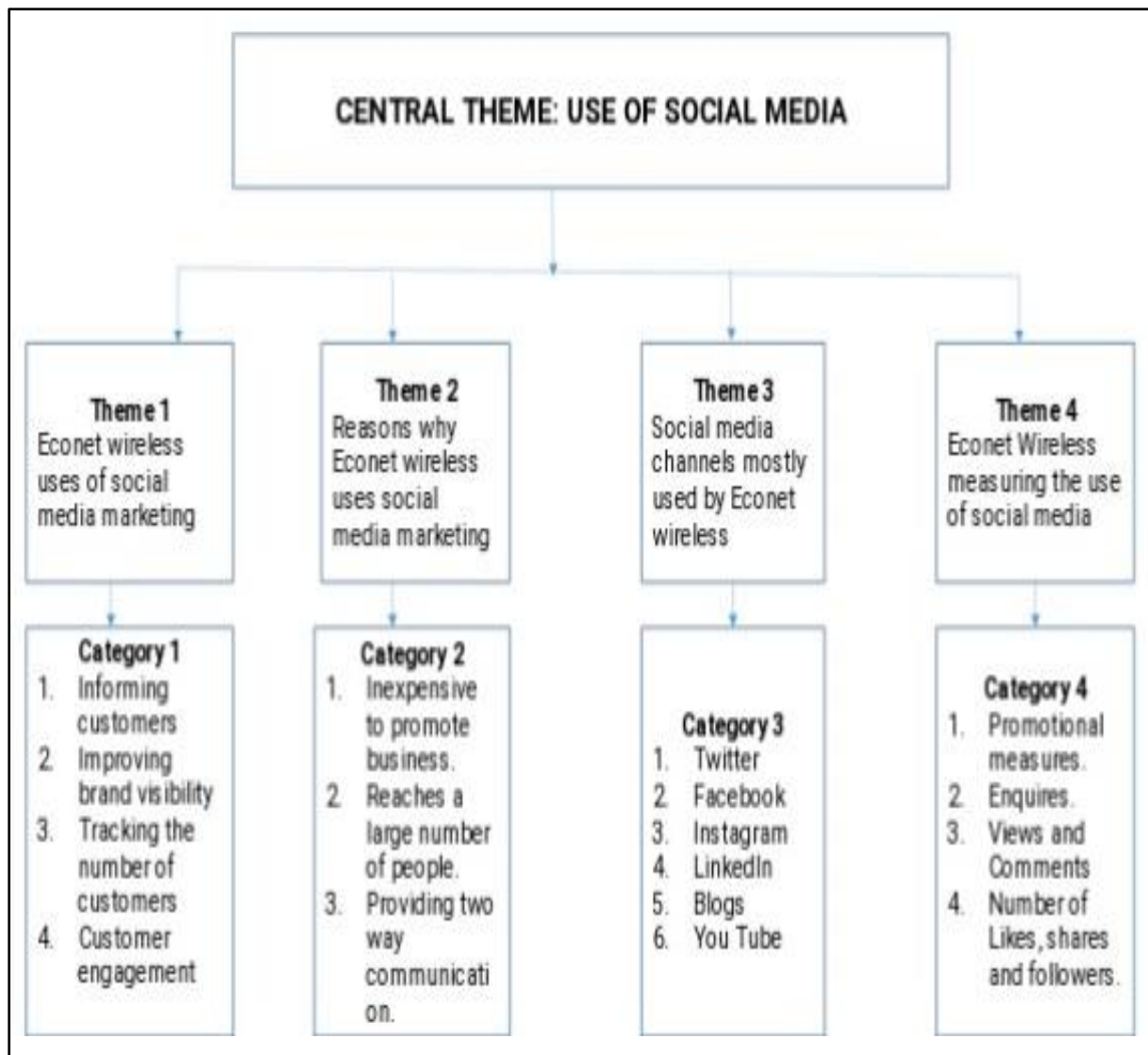
Figure 5.5: Central Story Line

Each theme based on figure 5.5 are discussed in the following section in detail.

5.8.1.1 Theme 1: Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited uses of social media marketing

Theme one (1) is in line with the secondary objective of this study: "To explore how Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited uses social media marketing". The participants acknowledged that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is using social media marketing and they are using it for customer engagement, informing customers, improve brand

visibility, and track number of people using our products. The participants highlighted that information can now be exchanged in a faster way about any changes that may affect the business and the customers. Brand visibility is also emphasised as Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is concerned with how they are viewed and how many customers are aware of the brand.

Customers are also engaged by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited to help ensure that they are also part of brand building as they are the ones who use of the products and services. Four categories were identified from theme one (1) (Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited uses of social media marketing) which are informing customers, improving brand visibility, tracking the number of customers and customer engagement. Below are direct quotations to justify theme one.

- "… our social accounts are a critical part of our sales funnels the process through which a new contact becomes a customer."
- "… we use social media marketing for market research and also we build brand awareness through creating online presence that shows who Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is."
- "… we always need to communicate with our customers using social media marketing to make sure that they are up to date with what we are offering."

From the first theme, four categories emerged, namely informing customers, improving brand visibility, tracking number of customers and customer engagement and are explained below.

Category 1: Informing customers

The first category that was identified from theme one (1) was "informing customers". With regards to informing customers, most participants highlighted that the customers are always well informed about upcoming changes that can affect the way business is done and customers are kept up to date with what is on offer. The following are the direct quotations of the participants were taken from the in-depth interviews confirming the findings regarding category one (1) - informing customers:

- "... our customers are always well informed about upcoming changes that may affect the way business is done ..."
- "... getting in touch with our customers and informing them about what we are currently offering is what we best …"
- "… we always use social media marketing to inform our customers about what we are offering …"

Category 2: Improving brand visibility

The second category that was identified from theme 1 was "improving brand visibility". From the in-depth interviews, it was evident that the participants highlighted that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited uses social media marketing to improve their brand visibility. The participants also acknowledged that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is very much concerned about how customers view Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited's brands and how many people are aware of the brand. The following direct quotations of the participants were taken from the interviews confirm the findings regarding informing customers:

- "… Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited uses social media marketing to improve on our brand visibility …"
- "… we use social media marketing to build our brand and we create captive and professional visuals that really represent our brand …"
- "… and we also build brand awareness through creating online presence that shows how Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is doing …"
- "… we build brand awareness by using targeted influencers on our social media platforms to market our products for us."
- "… use social media marketing to tell our brand's story so that we can differentiate ourselves from our competition. Customers like to be drawn to brands that they can connect with and this increases brand loyalty."

Category 3: Tracking the number of customers

The third category that was identified from theme one (1) was "tracking the number of customers." Most participants acknowledged that they track the number of customers who use their social media marketing channels. Participants also further said tracking customers is the way they can find out how many customers know about their products and services. The following direct quotations were selected from the responses from interview participants:

- "… I track the number of people who are interested in our brands through their activity on our social media channels."
- "… we track the number of people using our products and services through our social media channels."
- "… the number of people who have visited our social media pages are tracked."

Category 4: Customer Engagement

The fourth category that was identified from theme one was "customer engagement." The participants felt that customer engagement is important as the products and services are made for the customers to enjoy. Participants further highlighted that customer engagement helps to understand what the customers want. Below are the direct quotations selected from the responses from the interview participants.

- "… social media marketing is used to engage our customers in what we do."
- "… we use a lot of videos to keep our customers engaged."
- "… the reason why customers are receptive to our brands is because social media marketing helps us to engage with our customer."

The following sub-section discusses the second theme that was identified.

5.8.1.2 Theme 2: Reasons why Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited use social media marketing

The second theme identified from the in-depth interviews is in line with the second secondary objective, "to examine the reasons behind Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited's usage of social media marketing." The participants highlighted that social media

marketing is being used because it is less expensive and reaches a large number of customers both potential and existing customers. The participants also mentioned that customers can be reached at any time making social media marketing an effective and easy way to communicate and reach many customers.

Most participants agreed that they are using social media marketing because it is inexpensive to promote business, reaches a large number of people, and helps in making sales and providing two-way communication and communicating new offerings. The following direct quotations taken from the in-depth interviews supports theme 2:

- "… as Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited we focus on providing value to our customers this is why we decided to use social media marketing."
- "… social media marketing is the way to go as most customers spend their time on social media channels because the channels offer an easy and fun way to network."

From the second identified theme, three categories were identified. The categories are as follows- inexpensive to promote business, reaches a large number of people and providing two-way communication and are discussed below in detail.

Category 1: Inexpensive to promote business

The first category that was identified from theme two was "inexpensive to promote business". The participants highlighted that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited wants to reach as many people as possible whilst minimizing costs. Participants indicated that marketing by using social media platforms to promote Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited's business is inexpensive. The following direct quotations shed light on the views of the participants on this category:

- "… social media marketing is an inexpensive way to promote our business as it helps us to distribute content this is why we chose to use social media marketing."
- "… marketing costs are cut through using social media marketing as social media marketing is less expensive than the traditional way of marketing."
- "… it is inexpensive to market using social media marketing as we reach a lot of customers at a low cost."

Category 2: Reaches a large number of people

The second category that was identified from theme two was "reaches a large number of people". The participants highlighted that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited would want as many customers to be reached this is why Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is using social media marketing, mainly because a lot of people are doing their business on social media platforms. It was interesting to note that most of the participants said that through social media marketing, they have managed to reach customers in areas that their products were not common. Below are direct quotations from the interviewed participants:

- "… we use social media marketing so that we can be able to reach everyone regardless of which channel they use. This helps us to engage with customers."
- "… social media is a natural place to reach new and to target potential customers and we can be able to connect with fans."
- "… we want to reach customers both locally and abroad so this is why we use social media marketing."
- "… social media marketing has given us access to areas that were not reachable when we were only using the traditional marketing tools. We can know reach areas that we could not because of social media marketing, this is why we decided to use it."
- "… we have improved our reach. Social media marketing helps us to do business both locally and abroad and this helps our brand to grow."
- "… we wanted to have a global reach and to increase our brand visibility and social media marketing helps us to reach these customers."

Category 3: Providing two-way communication

The third category that was identified from theme two was "providing two-way communication". The participants said for any business to go forward, there is a need for two-way communication as feedback from customers is very important. Participants further highlighted that Econet Wireless has been able to improve its services because of the two-way communication. The following direct quotations were taken from the in-depth interviews:

- "… two-way communication is achieved through social media marketing; the customer gets to send feedback and ask questions where they need clarity on our social media channels."

- "… when it comes to social media marketing there is two-way communication as we are able to give feedback timeously. A customer can just make an enquiry and we can respond to that question on our social media channels. "

The following sub-section discussed the third theme that was identified.

5.8.1.3 Theme 3: Social media channels mostly used by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited

The third theme identified from the in-depth interviews is in line with the third secondary objective "to determine the most useful social media channels used by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited." All the participants confirmed that they are using social media channels in their department. The participants indicated that they are all currently using Facebook and Twitter as part of their strategy for social media marketing. It was, however, evident from the in-depth interviews that the majority of the participants are mostly using Facebook and Twitter as their main social media marketing channels at Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited. LinkedIn, blogs and YouTube are also used but not as much as Twitter and Facebook. The quotes below justify theme three.

- "… our mandate is to use as many social media channels as possible so that we can reach everyone regardless of which platforms they use.

- "… social media channels are awesome tools that complement customer support by offering a subtle ability to engage our customers."

- "… most of our social media followers are on Facebook."

From theme three, six categories have been identified which are Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn and blogs, these will be discussed below.

Category 1: Twitter

The first category that was identified from theme three was "Twitter". The participants in the in-depth interviews acknowledged that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is using Twitter to reach people all over Zimbabwe, interacting with the customers and this has made their products and services that they offer to be well known. Below are the direct quotations to illustrate the participants' views:

- "… Twitter is one of the most used social media platforms."
- "… Facebook and twitter mainly are used."
- "… generally, we use Facebook mainly, and, twitter and LinkedIn compliment."
- "… at the moment Facebook, and Twitter are used more by our customers."
- "… Twitter, Facebook, YouTube are the most used social media platforms for interacting with clients."
- "… we use Twitter to enable customer engagement."
- "… mainly Twitter is used."
- "… Twitter is one of the main social media platforms we use."
- "… we are mostly using Twitter in our department."
- "… Twitter is being used and becoming popular every day."
- "… the main ones are Facebook and Twitter, and to some extent, YouTube.
- Blogs are used for brand visibility and awareness, but the mainly used platforms are Facebook and Twitter."
- "… Twitter, Facebook, YouTube are the most used social media platforms for interacting with clients."
- "… the main ones are Facebook, Twitter, and to some extent, YouTube."
- "… we are mostly using Twitter in our department as well as Facebook."
- "… Twitter is an awesome tool that complements customer support as it offers use the subtle ability to connect with our customers and know what customers think about Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited.
- "… You need to keep an eye always on who mentions your brand on social media platforms, who replies to tweets we post, who retweets your tweets, who tags you, and who sends direct messages on our Twitter handle."

- "… Twitter is one of the biggest excellent social media platforms which we use to boost customer support."
- "… we have expanded our social content and brand reach through using Twitter."

Category 2: Facebook

The second category that was identified from theme three was "Facebook". The participants highlighted that they mainly use Facebook as most of their customers are on Facebook. The participants indicated that they use Facebook to introduce new products and interact with both potential and existing customers. Below are some of the direct quotations taken from the participants that were interviewed concerning Facebook.

- "… generally, we mainly use Facebook. We have realized that most of our following is on Facebook."
- "… we do use other social media platforms, but Facebook is the one we mostly used."
- "… Facebook is one of the most used channel at Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited because most of our followers are no Facebook."
- "… we usually use Facebook when introducing new products as most of our followers are on Facebook."
- "… we always use the platforms that we get the best reach. From all the platforms we mostly use Facebook."
- "… it is an easy way of communicating with customers around the globe. We can upload pictures and videos of our business which is a powerful way to communicate. After-sales questions can be posted on our Facebook wall, and we can answer them there. It is more efficient than answering phone calls and customers can be able to read common questions and answers."
- "… generally, we use Facebook."
- "… Visitors who come to the website are exposed to stronger marketing messages and, often, the option of buying goods and services.
- "… in order for us to get customers we need to be where they spend most of their time which is on Facebook."

- "…it is easy to gather customers and prospects and fans who can provide reviews and share opinions and offer feedback."
- "… Facebook is one of the largest social media platforms in the world that we use. Our business' presence on Facebook helps us gain exposure to potential customers.
- "… Facebook allows us to target specific demographics, based on their interests, location, gender and age this is why we use it."
- "… Facebook is a cost-effective social platform for B2B companies, and is mostly beneficial to small businesses or start-ups.
- "… our posts on the page can give our customers a glimpse of our products and other relevant information."

Category 3: Instagram

The third category that was identified from theme three was "Instagram". A few of the participants highlighted that Instagram is also being used although it is not as popular as Facebook and Twitter. The participants also said that the hashtags used on Instagram have helped the Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited brand to be more visible than before. Two direct quotations were found to support these findings.

- "… This will encourage your followers to learn more about your business and push them to visit your website."
- "… using hashtags help us to increase interaction with our followers because they help our business to be recognized easily. The hashtags we use on Instagram has helped increased our brand visibility."

Category 4: LinkedIn

The fourth category that was identified from theme three was "LinkedIn". The participants acknowledged that LinkedIn allows them to share content and opinions. Participants explained that LinkedIn helps them to build relationships with potential customers and partners. Below are some of the direct quotations taken from the interviews to illustrate the participants' views on this objective.

- ".. not only does it allow us a business to share opinions and content on relevant topics, it also allows us to interact with professionals and this is why we use it."
- "… we use LinkedIn for launching new products as I see it as one of the best for launching a new product."
- "… LinkedIn provides us with an opportunity to connect with other businesses and professionals who are in the same industry as us and we have gained knowledge and their unique experiences through interacting with them and seeing what they post on LinkedIn,"
- "… through using LinkedIn, we have been able to connect with professionals directly."

Category 5: Blogs

The fifth category that was identified from theme three was "Blogs". Participants indicated that blogs allow the readers to comment and have a conversation with the blogger and anyone else who reads the blog. The participants highlighted the fact that customers can get to know the brand and end up buying the services and products that are offered by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited. This is achieved through the interaction and conversations Econet Wireless has with their customers on our blogs. The following direct quotations were obtained from the participants in relation to blogs.

- "… blogs provide us with an opportunity to connect with our existing and potential customers in a way that is different, more conversational way, this is why we use blogs."
- "… we always want to allow for conversations as this helps us to relate well with our customers, blogs allow for conversations and we get to interact with the customers and they get to know more about our brand."

Category 6: YouTube

The sixth category that was identified from theme three was "YouTube". From the in-depth interviews, the participants explained that YouTube is designed for sharing videos that anyone can watch and it is a way for them to reach potential customers and Econet Wireless has created their own YouTube channel. This channel is used for posting

advertisements and any other marketing videos to help them sell their brand to everyone. The following direct quotations were taken from the in-depth interviews:

- "… we are so proficient in our business and YouTube gives you a chance to show how we do things."
- " .. YouTube has the benefit of visual content."
- "… YouTube is an easy way to build credibility for the services or products that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited offers." Customers trust businesses' video content more because through videos they can actually see the products in action unlike just reading a flier."

The following sub-section discusses the fourth theme that was identified.

5.8.1.4 Theme 4: Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited measuring the use of social media marketing in their business

Theme four (4) is in line with the secondary objective of this research study: "How is your department or Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited measuring the use of social media marketing?" From the in-depth interviews the participants acknowledged that they measure how Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited uses social media marketing, as it helps them to understand their customers better and to measure whether their campaigns or content that they post on social media platforms are being viewed. Views, Likes, and Comments help them to measure how well they are doing on social media and what people would be saying about them. By using social media channels, it enables Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited to calculate the number of customers who buy bundles, number of likes and comments, enquiries they get after starting a promotion, views and comments and number of likes and shares are ways used to measure the use of social media marketing.

The participants further mentioned that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited strives to better its business, and by using social media channels it allows them to measure how effective they are doing. Direct quotations were taken from the transcribed in-depth interviews to justify theme four.

- "… Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited does live promotions which are streamed live on their social media channels. Customers give us feedback through commenting and asking questions as well as liking and sharing what is happening on Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited social media channels such as Twitter and Facebook."

- "… Besides the likes and comments Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited gets after posting on the social media channels, the mentions Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited gets for example on Facebook when a customer tags, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited gets a mention."

Four categories were derived from theme 4, which are; promotional measures, number of likes and share, enquires, views and comments and these are discussed in detail below.

Category 1: Promotional measures

The first category that was identified from theme four (4) was "promotional measures". The participants highlighted that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited carry out promotions on their social media channels to get people involved in their promotions so that they get to appreciate Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited brands. These promotions are meant to get customers to participate and get familiar with our brands so that they can get to use them. The participants highlighted that the promotions help to increase customer traffic, because the more a brand is promoted the more the customers will know about Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited and the more the customers get interested in the Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited brands. The participants were of the opinion that promotions set a business apart from its competitors because, as a business, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited has to stay ahead of its competitors. The participants further mentioned that they can increase awareness through promotions where they encourage their followers to tag friends and increase likes and shares on the Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited social media channels. By doing this they will raise awareness and participation. The following direct quotations where taken from the in-depth interviews to support category one (1).

- "… doing new things is what we do best. As Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited have introduced different promotions on data bundles to encourage use of our social media platforms and we are to measure by calculating the number of people who buy these bundles and use then to visit our platforms."

- "…Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited always carry out some promotions where customers enter and win something in order to enable us to measure the use of our social media platforms."

- "… promotions are a way to keep Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited in business because there are competing brands who are also offering the same products and services, you can only make many customers buy from you if you have a special promotion that is going on."

- "… promotions help us make use of various social media channels such as micro blogs, social networks and business networks. This makes us visible to our target market."

Category 2: Enquiries

The second category that was identified from theme four was "enquiries". The participants highlighted that the enquires they get from customers who use, and also those intending to use, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited products, helps Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited to understand what their customers are saying about the brands. Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited has dedicated staff that responds to these enquiries on the social media channels. These enquires helps Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited to engage with their customers on a personal basis. The following direct quotations were taken from the participants:

- "… dedicated staff that monitors everything that happens on our social media platforms and all the enquiries we get on our social media platforms."

- "… we also measure social media marketing usage by identifying the time that our audience visits our pages and make enquiries."

- "… when we do live promotions on our social media platforms, we stream live and we can be able to measure the number of people who participated and made enquiries after the live streaming."
- "…enquiries we get after we start a promotion on our social media platforms help us measure the use of social media marketing."

Category 3: Views and comments

The third category that was identified from theme four (4) was "views and comments". The participants explained that, views and comments on social media channels, such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook, help Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited to know what customers are saying about Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited's brands and helps them to know how many people they have reached and taken part in the discussion or post they have shared. The participants further highlighted that the comments help Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited business to know what people are thinking about their initiatives. Below are the direct quotations taken from the participant's responses during the in-depth interview:

- "… we evaluate the number of comments."
- "… on YouTube we can access the number of comments on your videos and the number of times it was rated."
- "… Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited also measures how many people it has reached and how many people have participated whether through posting positive or negative comments. This helps us to get a view of comments. This helps us to get a view of what people are thinking of our initiatives."
- "… the feedbacks and comments that we get after we have posted something helps in measuring social media usage. The number of comments on a particular post helps us on measure how effective the post was."
- "… we also measure how our brand is doing on social media as compared to our competitor. When a competitor posts something on their platforms we see the people who have viewed their posts as compared to the number of people who have viewed ours."

Category 4: Number of likes, shares and followers

The fourth category that was identified from theme four (4) was "number of likes, shares and followers". All the participants acknowledge that they measure how Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited uses social media marketing, for them to be able to understand their customers better and to measure whether their campaigns or content that they post on social media platforms are being viewed. Views, likes, shares and followers help Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited to measure how well they are doing on social media platforms and what people are saying about them. The following direct quotations were taken from the in-depth interviews:

- "… we can track the growth of our followers on our social media platforms through follower counts and have the likes we get from a post shows us the number of people who have taken interest in the post."
- "… we track the number of likes and shares on our page and we also ask people how they get to know about our campaign."
- "… rate of likes and shares also help us to measure and understand how our followers converse with use."
- "… URL shares, likes, and conversations are used to measure."
- "… track the growth of our followers on our social media platforms through follower counts and the likes we get from a post."

From the in-depth interviews, four themes were identified. The first theme, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited use of social media marketing was identified and it was found that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is using social media marketing to inform customers about their products and services, improve brand visibility and for tracking the number of customers using Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited products. Four (4) categories were derived from theme one which are; informing customers, improving brand visibility, tracking number of customers, and engagement.

The second theme that was identified was, reasons why Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited use social media marketing. It was indicated that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe

106

Limited uses social media marketing because it is less expensive, helps in making sales, providing two-way communication and reaches a large number of people. From this theme, three (3) categories were derived, namely inexpensive to promote business, reaches a large number of people and providing two-way communication.

The third theme that was identified was social media channels mostly used by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited. It was found that Facebook and Twitter are the most used channel at Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited though LinkedIn, Blogs and YouTube are also used. These channels are used so that they can reach as many customers. A total of six categories emerged from this theme, namely Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn and blogs. The participants showed that social media channels are being used to reach people from all over Zimbabwe in relation to the products and services being offered by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited. From the social media channels identified, Facebook and Twitter were mainly used as they have the most followers.

The final theme was theme four, which measures the use of social media marketing. When people view, share or like the content posted on the Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited social media platforms, it helps to measure how many people have seen their posts as well as understanding their customers better. From this theme, four (4) categories were identified, namely; promotional measures, enquiries, views and comments and number of likes, shares and followers.

5.9 SUMMARY

This chapter presented and discussed the findings from the in-depth interviews carried out at Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited. Participants expressed, during the interviews, that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is using social media marketing to communicate with their customers and it is key for their marketing. Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is presently using social media marketing to market their many services and products. Most participants highlighted that they are using social media marketing to engage with

their customers and that it helps their brand to be visible. They also use it because it is inexpensive to promote their business and it reaches many people in a short space of time. Ultimately Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited employees believe that social media marketing has helped them to reach markets that were previously not accessible.

The following chapter provides the overall conclusions and recommendations of this study.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The conclusions and recommendations of the study are based on the information that was attained from the in-depth interviews. This chapter provides the conclusions and recommendations of the study that are based on the primary and secondary research objectives as stated in chapter 1 'Introduction', and also highlighted in chapter 4 'Methodology' and chapter 5 'Research findings'. The chapter starts with a discussion on the research question and objectives, followed by the conclusions discussion which is based on the secondary and primary objectives. Thereafter, the recommendations are discussed, followed by the contribution to the study in particular Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is highlighted. The limitations of the study were then emphasised and finally the chapter concludes with suggestion for future related research.

6.2 RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES

The research question that resulted from the initial literature was as follows: How is social media marketing being utilised in the telecommunications industry in Zimbabwe, particularly by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited? From the research question, specific primary and secondary objectives were derived.

The primary objective of the study was to explore the use of social media marketing in a Zimbabwean telecommunications business- Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited. From the stated primary objective, the following secondary objectives were formulated:

- To explore how Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited uses social media marketing.
- To examine the reasons behind Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited's usage of social media marketing.
- To determine the most useful social media channels used by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited.
- To determine how Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited measures social media usage.

- To identify areas of future research.

The next section discusses the conclusions of the study that were based on the research findings, as discussed in chapter 5.

6.3 CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited has been using social media marketing and it has proved to be very beneficial as shown from the findings discussed in chapter 5. The in-depth interviews show that social media marketing has linkages to Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited's brand, market share and has seen the business expanding in the products and services they provide. The findings showed that social media marketing plays a significant role in relationship creation between Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited and its existing and potential customers. These findings support (Calder *et al.,* 2019) who said many businesses are making use of social media marketing to create relationships with their customers and for generating online word of mouth.

It is important that businesses should determine which social media channels are most popular with their customers, by looking into the number of likes, followers, views, comments and feedback (Kaur *et al.,* 2018). From the in-depth interviews done, it was perceived that social media marketing has granted Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited a competitive edge over its competitors, as Econet Wireless has managed to adapt to their customer preferences in a short space of time. Both the primary and secondary objectives highlighted in section 6.2 above were formulated for the research problem to be addressed. In the following section, the conclusions derived from the research findings discussed in chapter 5 with regards to the research objectives are discussed.

6.3.1   Secondary objectives

Each one of the five secondary objectives of the research study, as listed above in section 6.2, are discussed next in the same order as they appeared, based on the findings of the research.

6.3.1.1 Secondary objective 1

The secondary objective one, as stated in chapter 1 and discussed further in chapters 4 and 5, was "to explore how Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited uses social media marketing". This secondary objective was addressed through theme one in chapter 5, named "Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited uses of social media marketing".

The interviewed participants pointed out that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is using social media marketing to inform customers about new services and products so that the customers can be up-to date with what will be on offer. Social media marketing is also used by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited to enhance its brand visibility as Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is concerned with how people think about their brand. The participants further acknowledged that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited also track the customers in order for Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited to know about the number of customers who are aware of the services and products that are offered by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited.

Participants said that it is important for Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited to stay in touch with their customers through creating online presence that shows who Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is, as customers like to be drawn to brands that they can associate and connect with and this increases brand awareness and loyalty. The participants also emphasised that information is being shared in a faster way about any changes that may affect both the business and customers.

To summarise, it was established that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is indeed using social media marketing in many ways such as informing customers about their products and services, improving brand visibility and increased customer engagement. This finding is supported by Seo and Park (2018) which said that social media marketing can improve the performance of a business drastically through engagement with customers and by creating value. Marketers are engaged by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited to ensure that they also take part in building the brand as they also use the products and services offered by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited offers.

6.3.1.2 Secondary objective 2

Secondary objective two, as stated in chapter 1 and discussed further in chapters 4 and 5, was "to examine the reasons behind Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited 's usage of social media marketing". This secondary objective was addressed through theme two in chapter 5- "reasons why Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited use social media marketing".

Most of the participants highlighted that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited uses social media marketing for customers' engagement and that it helps the Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited brand to be visible which is a critical aspect for the business. The participants also explained that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited uses social media marketing because it is an inexpensive way to promote the business and it reaches a large number of people in a short time and at a low cost. According to the participants, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is achieving a two-way communication through interaction they have with customers on the social media channels as the customers can easily send feedback and ask questions where they need clarity. This finding is in line with a study done by Seo & Park (2018) who stated that social media marketing is used by businesses to share information about products and services quickly and efficiently, and offers the customers the ability to give feedback to organisations and engage in discussions with the community. Participations also explained that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited started using social media marketing because it helps to increase sales through acquiring new customers.

To summarise, the participants said that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited uses social media marketing to effectively and efficiently connect with customers as well as to create and increase awareness among their current and potential customers to ensure that all are aware of the Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited brand, services and products. Therefore, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is using social media marketing because it allows them to inform their customers about new products as well as engaging the customers in activities, such as events, new product launches and so forth that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited does. If a business does not engage its customers, it will not be successful in social media marketing. This is also alluded to by Meikle (2016) who said businesses should use social media marketing because it allows them to engage its

customers, create two-way communication, inform their customers, as well as helping to strengthen the corporate identity, build confidence for the company and creating relationships and therefore the findings support the theory.

6.3.1.3 Secondary objective 3

Secondary objective three, as outlined in chapter 1 and further discussed in chapters 4 and 5, was "to determine the most useful social media channels used by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited". This objective was addressed in chapter 5 through theme three, named "social media channels mostly used by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited".

All the participants confirmed that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is using social media channels in the marketing department. A few of the participants indicated that Facebook and Twitter are the most used social media channels at Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited, because responses are easy to track in the form of likes, comments, views, shares and retweets. This finding supports what POTRAZ (2019) said that Facebook and Twitter are the two most popular social media channels in Zimbabwe, with nearly 1.2 million users on Facebook, an estimated 200 000 on Twitter. The participants highlighted that their mandate is to use as many social media channels as possible so that they can reach everyone regardless of which social media channel they are using. Although Facebook and Twitter are the mostly used social media channels, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited also makes use of YouTube. Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited have created a YouTube channel where they share marketing related videos about their products and services that anyone can watch, as a strategy to reach potential customers. Similarly, to the findings obtained, Chen and Lin (2019) indicated that customers are making their purchase decisions relying on YouTube reviews, as customers want information that is easy to comprehend.

LinkedIn is another social media channel that is used by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited for sharing content and opinions as well as interacting with professionals and learning from these professionals who have knowledge and unique experiences about the telecommunications business. This is reflected in the research done by Meyers (2017) who said LinkedIn is a social media channel used by businesses to build and manage

professional networks and to promote future business relationships. The participants also highlighted that they use blogs, and that, the blogs allow the customers to comment and have a conversation with the blogger (Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited) and anyone else who reads the blog. This finding is supported by literature indicating that blogging provides a way to continually grab the readers' attention with new posts and information (Felix *et al.,* 2017).

From all these channels, Facebook and Twitter are the most used channels by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited. Reason being that the interaction between the customers and Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is the most on these channels, as well as the number of followers. This finding supports (Calder *et al.,* 2019) indicating that Facebook was the most popular social media channel used by many businesses to promote themselves, to engage with customers and to improve on their communication. From the study findings, it shows that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is satisfied with how they are using social media marketing as mentioned in chapter 5 section 5.8.1.1.

6.3.1.4 Secondary objective 4

The fourth secondary objective as stated in chapter 1 and further discussed in chapters 4 and 5 were "to determine how Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited measures social media usage". This secondary objective was addressed through theme four in chapter 5, "Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited measuring the use of social media marketing in their business".

All the participants stated that they measure how Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited uses social media marketing, which allows them to better understand their customers and to measure whether their campaigns or what they post on the Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited social media channels is being viewed. Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited uses tools such as the total views, likes and comments to measure how well they are doing on social media platforms. On Twitter, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited measures the number of customers' responses through retweets, likes and comments. Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited also measures the level of responses on the Facebook page before and after a promotion in order for them to gauge the usage of their social media. The

participants further mentioned that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited's goals is to provide the best services and products to its customers, and therefore, it is critical for Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited to measure how well they are using social media marketing and whether it is sufficient. The findings support Hu and Zang (2016) and Calder *et al.,* 2019) who said it is critical to measure the extent to which they are using social media channels since it delivers information to the business about the customers being targeted and their purchasing behaviour.

In summary it was established that measuring social media usage helps Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited to establish what they are doing and were they need to improve. It is therefore, critical for Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited to take heed of the comments they get on their social media channels whether negative or positive, so that they can also measure how well they are doing with regards to their social media usage. On Twitter the retweets and likes on the messages posted on the Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited Twitter handle are used to measure how they are doing. Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited also measure the usage of social media marketing by measuring the views for a video they may have posted on YouTube over a specific time period and also the total number of people who have subscribed to the Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited YouTube channel.

After the secondary objectives were addressed, the primary objective of the study needs to be answered as it was the core of this research study. The primary objective is therefore discussed next.

6.3.2 Primary objective

The primary objective of the study aimed to explore the use of social media marketing in a Zimbabwean telecommunications business- Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited. The participants highlighted that customers were being very responsive on the social media channels. The followers on the social media channels are increasing which indicate that Econet Wireless's efforts on their social media channels are being appreciated by customers. The participants mentioned that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited's brand visibility had improved through the use of social media marketing as customers are

always informed about any changes to the products and services that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited offers.

The participants further acknowledged that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited tries to build its brand awareness through networking with customers on their social media channels, which has played a major part in maintaining the visibility of their products and services in the market. Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited also tracks the number of people using their social media channels so that they can find out how many customers know about what they are offering and find ways to reach those customers who are not aware of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited's products and services.

The participants also highlighted that engaging with the customers helped Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited to improve on its products and services through the interactions they have with customers on social media channels. Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is, therefore, getting value from using social media marketing, because it is an inexpensive method and many customers are constantly active on social media channels comparing products and services of different businesses and can therefore easily be reached. Social media marketing also enabled Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited to distribute content to areas that were previously not reachable when using traditional marketing tools.

From the findings, it was clear that Twitter and Facebook are the most popular and favoured social media channels used by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited. Through Facebook and Twitter, Econet Wireless uploads pictures, text messages and short videos about the products and services they offer, which customers can view, share or comment on. By viewing these pictures and videos, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited can get reviews from customers and some customers share opinions which helps Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited to get feedback on what is being said about their products.

The participants also highlighted that videos help customers to have an appreciation of a product or service more than just hearing people talk about it. Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited measures the way their business uses social media marketing so that they can get to understand their customers and also to ensure how their campaigns are

doing by looking at the number of customers who have liked, viewed, shares and commented on their content.

To summarise, it was noted that social media marketing has the ability to improve a business if properly used. This is because social media marketing has helped Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited to reach a large number of customers in a short period of time. Customers are engaged and this helps Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited to communicate and to measure what the business is doing right or wrong through feedback from customers. Therefore, the primary research objective of the study which was "to explore the uses of social media marketing by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited" was successfully met and the research question which was "how is social media marketing being utilised in the telecommunications industry in Zimbabwe particularly by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited?" was successfully answered.

The recommendations made for the study are discussed in the following section.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings drawn in Chapter 5 and the conclusions derived from the findings above in section 6.3, various recommendations were made to Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited. The recommendations are as follows:

- The participants highlighted that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited use Twitter and Facebook much more than the other social media channels such as LinkedIn, blogs, YouTube and Instagram which also offer free advertising. It is recommended that although Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is already using social media channels such as blogs, YouTube, Instagram and LinkedIn, they should use these channels more than they are currently doing because different customers prefer different channels and all the channels have their advantages as cited in chapter 3. Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited has introduced different promotions on Facebook and Twitter, which they should also introduce to the other social media channels such as YouTube and Instagram to encourage customer participation when they are running

promotions. For example, when the customers visit all the social media channels, they should see the posts of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited especially on YouTube where videos are posted, as customers are now making purchase decisions by relying on YouTube reviews more often.

- From the findings of the study it was evident that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited uses social media channels mostly for publicity and which can be turned to sales. It is therefore recommended that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited transform their social media channels into tools of selling that can be used to conclude sales and not just for advertising their products and services. For example, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited can create a link on their social media channels that the customers can click on, and that will direct them to the online shop and assist them in making a purchase.

- From the findings, it was evident that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is using social media marketing to communicate with customers on new offerings and getting feedback from customers. This shows that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is not fully using social media marketing according to literature by Ismail (2017) who defined social media marketing as a system that permits marketers to interact and engage to get market intelligence from customers for the purpose of increasing product awareness. It is therefore, recommended that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited should also use social media marketing for gathering market intelligence from their customers.

- The emergence of social media marketing has changed the role of a customer in the marketing process from being passive customers to being the creators of the marketing content (Abuhashesh, 2014). This means that customers are now actively participating by responding to posts and providing feedback through comments, shares, retweets and tagging other customers. For example, testimonials can be sent by a customer to a given number, social media platform or email of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited, and it can be in any type of format such as a short video, a text message or a voice message about the experiences they have with using Econet

Wireless Zimbabwe Limited products and/or services and encourage more customers to sign up for those products or services. It is, therefore, recommended that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited should continuously engage customers to participate on the Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited social media channels.

The study contribution to the Zimbabwe telecommunication industry is discussed next.

6.5 CONTRIBUTION TO ZIMBABWE'S TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

The research will contribute to the telecommunications industry by providing an integrated picture showing the use of social media marketing in the telecommunications industry of Zimbabwe using Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited as a case study. The research has shown that participants perceived social media marketing usage as important in the telecommunications industry and that it is not an area that should be ignored. The findings of the research confirm the literature that social media marketing has changed the way business is done, how businesses communicate with their customers and how businesses market their products (Tuten & Solomon 2017).

The study has also contributed to the telecommunications industry by providing recommendations on how the industry players can enhance their use of social media marketing and apply it in their business. That being said, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited can now apply the research findings to continuously improve how they are using social media marketing so that they can benefit more from using it which will add value to Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited.

The following section discusses the limitations of this study.

6.6 LIMITATIONS

The following limitations were experienced in this study:

- The fact that the research was held at a particular point in time and not longitudinal, may have had a significance on the results especially since the macro-environment

conditions in which the industry is operating would have a serious impact on the psychology and emotional well-being of the participants. Not all participants were willing to spend an hour doing in-depth interviews.

- It took six months for the researcher to get an approval letter from Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited to carry out the study. Some of the interviews had to be rescheduled because of the political climate in the country that affected business operations, thus interviews had to be postponed to a future date. This slowed the progress of the research.

- The research was limited and delimited to the City of Harare and the fact that an exploratory study was done, did not require that the findings should be representative. However, this was not regarded as a problem, as the study implemented a non-probability judgement sampling method, and as such the findings cannot be generalised to the entire population. Due to the fact that the industry is qualitative in nature, the main aim was not to be representative, but rather to be able to use the research findings for other studies in future.

- For the purposes of this study, only those employed in the marketing department were selected to be part of the study. The core purpose of the study was to determine the usage of social media marketing and therefore only the employees working in the marketing department of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited were selected and it was therefore not regarded as a problem.

The following section below provides a detailed discussion on the suggestions for future research.

6.7 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the discussed findings and conclusions above, various suggestions for future researchers can be presented. These suggestions are:

- It appears from the findings of the research study that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is using social media marketing, however it is suggested that this study should be conducted on the entire telecommunications industry in Zimbabwe, as well as in other countries.

- This study focused only on the telecommunications industry, the study can also be done for other industries in Zimbabwe, such as the media industry, retail industry and manufacturing industry for the in usage of social media marketing in these industries to be determined.

- Whilst it is clear that the participants expressed the benefits of using social media marketing, it would be valuable to do a study on the use of social media marketing versus the use of traditional marketing tools, such as radio, television and print media. In order to determine the benefits, uses and reach of both social media marketing and tradition marketing.

- This study focused purely on the employees of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited. It could be valuable to conduct the study from the perspective of the customer, in order to determine the customer's perception of using social media channels as a marketing tool by the telecommunication industry in Zimbabwe.

- This study implemented an exploratory qualitative research design. It may be interesting to see what the conclusions will be if the study is to take on a quantitative research design where all the competitors in the telecommunication industry are included in the study.

- Another future research study can be to determine why Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is not using other platforms and to determine based on consumers' perception and employees which additional platforms can work.

- The study has shown that indeed social media marketing is being used by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited and it was perceived that the business has benefited from social media marketing. However, the study has failed to give clarity on whether this is the norm in the Zimbabwe telecommunications industry since the study was centred on Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited. There is need for future studies to be carried out which includes all the other telecommunications businesses in Zimbabwe to explore how they are also using social media marketing.

6.8 SUMMARY

In this chapter, conclusions drawn from the study were made and recommendations deriving from the conclusions were presented. The key conclusion derived from the study was that Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is using social media marketing as part of their marketing strategy in their business to enhance its brand visibility, to promote communication that is two-way with customers, to create and increase customer engagement and to track the customers who are aware of the products and services. Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited is also using social media marketing to increase its market reach to previously inaccessible areas.

The use of social media marketing by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited has helped in improving its brand visibility, market share and has seen the business expanding in the products and services that they provide. Social media channels play a significant role when it comes to communicating with customers as feedback can be provided easily. Econet Wireless also measures the use of social media marketing through the views, likes and comments and shares by their customers.

After the conclusions were discussed, a few recommendations were made to Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited based on the findings obtained and conclusions made. The contribution to Zimbabwe's Telecommunications Industry was discussed, then the limitations experience during the study followed. Lastly the chapter concluded with various future research suggestions and opportunities.

REFERENCES

Abuhashesh, M.Y. 2014. Integration of social media in business. *International Journal of Business and Social Sciences,* 5(8), 202-208.

African Development Bank Group. 2018. Zimbabwe Economic Report: *Building a new Zimbabwe targeted policies for growth and job creation.*

Alalwan, A. A., Rana, N., Dwivedi, Y., & Algharabat, R. 2017. Social media in marketing: *A review and analysis of the existing literature. Telematics and Informatics*, 34(7), 1117–1190.

Amankwaa, L. 2016. Creating protocols for trustworthiness in qualitative research, *Journal of Cultural Diversity*, 23(3), 121.

Arifin, S.R.M. 2018. Ethical considerations in qualitative study. *International Journal of Care Scholar,* 1(2).

Barnes, N.G. 2018. Tweeting and blogging to the top. *Marketing Research,* 22(1), 8-13.

Booth, Andrew. 2017. "*Qualitative Evidence Synthesis." In Patient Involvement in Health Technology Assessment*, 187–99.

Bradley, P. 2016. Be where the conversations are: *The critical importance of social media.* Business Info Review, 27 (4), 248-252.

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2016). (Mis) conceptualising themes, thematic analysis, and other problems with Fugard and Potts' sample-size tool for thematic analysis. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, (6), 739–743.

Brinkmann, S. 2015. *Qualitative inquiry in everyday life working with everyday life Materials.* London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Brotherton, B. 2015. *Researching Hospitality and Tourism*. 2nd ed. London: Sage Publications.

Calder, B. J., Malthouse, E. C., & Schaedel, U. 2019. An experimental study of the relationship between online engagement and advertising effectiveness. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 23(4), 321–331.

Caruth, D. M. 2016. Social media marketing*: An exploratory qualitative study of U.S. small business owner's priority balancing and cognitive strategies (Doctoral dissertation).* Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Thesis Full-Text database. (UMI No. 1002863).

Chaffey, D. & Chadwick, F.E. 2019. *Digital marketing strategy, implementation and practice.* 7th ed. Pearson Publication.

Chaffey, D. 2018. Global social media research. Summary 2018. Retrieved from https://www.smartinsights.com/social-media-marketing/social-media-strategy/newglobal-social-media-research/ [Accessed 24 December 2019].

Chahal, H., & Rani, A. 2017. How trust moderates social media engagement and brand equity. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 11(3), 312–335.

Chakraborty, C., & Nandi, B. 2017. Mainline telecommunications infrastructure, levels of development and economic growth: *Evidence from a panel of developing countries. Telecommunications Policy,* 35(1), 441–449.

Chakraborty, C., & Nandi, B. 2019. Telecommunication adoption and economic growth in developing countries: Do levels of development matter. *Journal of Academy of Business and Economics,* 9 (2), 51–61.

Chen, S.-C., & Lin, C.-P. (2019). Understanding the effect of social media marketing activities: *The mediation of social identification, perceived value, and satisfaction. Technological Forecasting and   Social Change*, 140, 22 –32.

Choi, E.-K., Fowler, D., Goh, B., & Yuan, J. (2018). Social media marketing: Applying the uses and gratifications theory in the hotel industry. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management,* 25(7), 771–796

Chen, S. C., & Lin, C. P. 2019. Understanding the effect of social media marketing activities: The mediation of social identification, perceived value, and satisfaction. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 140, 22–32.

Creswell, John W.; & Creswell, J. David. (2018). *Research Design.* SAGE Publications. Kindle Edition.

Ditchfield, H. & Meredith, J. 2018. *Collecting qualitative data from Facebook: Approaches and methods. T*he Sage handbook of qualitative data collection (pp. 496–510). London: Sage.

Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited. Integrated Annual Report 2016. Available from: http://ewzinvestor.co.zw/annual-reports/. [Accessed 2016-12-09].

Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited. Integrated Annual Report 2018. Available from: http://ewzinvestor.co.zw/annual-reports/. [Accessed 2019-02-11].

Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited. Integrated Annual Report 2019. Available from:

http://ewzinvestor.co.zw/annual-reports/. [Accessed 2019-09-17].

Felix, R., Rauschnabel, P., & Hinsch, C. 2017. Elements of strategic social media

marketing: A holistic framework. *Journal of Business Research*, 70, 118–126.

Ford, R. & Ravansar, H. 2017. CPD 12 Impact Skills 3 –Social Media for Academics:

Research Dissemination, Retrieved January 10, 2019, from.

http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/employment/training/personal-

development/academicstaff/

Foux, G. 2016. Consumer-Generated Media: *Get Your Customers Involved. Brand*

 Strategy, 45—55.

Gneezy, A. 2017. Field experimentation in marketing research. *Journal of Marketing*

 Research 54, (1), 140–3

Hammarberg, K. 2016. Research methods: *When to use them and how to judge them.*

 Human Reproduction, 7, (3), 498-561

Hancock, D., & Algozzine, B. 2016. Doing case study research: *A practical guide for*

 beginning researchers. 3rd Ed. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Hair, J.F., Celsi, M.W., Money, A.H., Samouel, P. & Page, M.J. 2015 Essentials of

business research methods. Third edition. New York, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

Hsieh, H. F., & Shannon, S.E. 2015. Three approaches to qualitative content analysis.

 Qualitative Health Research, 15(9), 1277-1288.

Hu, T., & Zang, P. *Journal of Information Technology Management.* A publication of the

Association of Management Social Media Usage as a Formative Construct.

Conceptualisation, Validation and Implication, 27 (4), 151-168

Iredale, S. & Heinze, A. 2017. Ethics and professional intimacy within the search engine

optimisation (SEO) industry. IFIP International conference on human choice and

computers. *Technology and Intimacy: Choice or Coercions,* (474), 106-115

Ismail, A. R. 2017. The influence of perceived social media marketing activities on

brand loyalty: The mediation effect of brand and value consciousness. Asia Pacific

Journal of Marketing and Logistics, 29(1), 129–144.

Kaur, P., Sharma, S., Kaur, J., & Sharma, S. K. 2018. Using social media for employer

branding and talent management: An experiential study. *IUP Journal of Brand

Management,* 12(2), 7-20.

Kufandirambwa, O., Zanamwe, & Rupere, G. 2016. Mobile money

in Zimbabwe: Integrated mobile infrastructure and processes to organisation,

infrastructure and processes, 2 (4), 92-110.

Lee, J., Moon, J.H., & Sung, J., 2016. *Cyber psychology, behaviour and social

Networking,* 18 (19).

Madziwa, C., & Sibanda, V. 2018. An analysis of the impact of social media in the

financial services sector in Zimbabwe*: International Journal of Economics, Commerce
and Management:* A customer perspective.

Mandizha, A. 2015. *Newsday Business Report*: 23 October Newsday: Harare, Zimbabwe.

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. 2016. *Designing qualitative research*. 6th ed. Los

Angeles, CA: Sage.

Mehelmi, H.E., Sadek, H. 2019. Investigating the usage of social customer relationship management and its impact on firm performance in the mobile telecommunication services: Egypt case. *The Journal of Business and Retail Management Research,* 13 (3).

Meikle, G. 2017. Social media: *Communication, sharing and visibility.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Meyers, C. B. 2017. Social media influencers: A lesson plan for teaching digital advertising media literacy. *Advertising and Society Quarterly,* 18(2), 1–31.

Metzler. P. 2015. Underdeveloped themes in qualitative research: *Relationship with interviews and analysis. Clinical Nurse Specialist,* 30(1): 52–57.

Merriam, S. B. 2015. *Qualitative research and case study applications in education.*

Miller, M. 2015. *B2B digital marketing: using the web to market directly to businesses. New York:* Pearson.

Mills, A, J. 2017. Virality in Social media: The SPIN Framework. *Journal of Public Affairs.*

Noble, H., & Smith, J. 2015. Issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research. *Journal of Evidence Based Nursing*, 18, 34-35.

Nobre, H., & Silva, D. 2017. Social network marketing strategy and SME strategy benefits. *Journal of Transnational Management*, 19, 138-151.

Noone, B. M., McGuire, K. A., & Rohlfs, K. V. 2018. Social media meets hotel revenue:

Opportunities, issues and unanswered questions. *Journal of Revenue and Pricing Management,* 10 (4), 293-305.

Nosek, B., Ebersole, C., DeHaven, A.C, & Mellor, D.T. 2018. "*The Preregistration Revolution." Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 2017: 201708274.

Patterson, A. 2015. Social-networkers of the world, unite and take over: A meta-introspective perspective on the Facebook brand. *Journal of Business Research*, 65(4), 527.

Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (POTRAZ). Sector performance report. 2016. Available from: http://www.techzim.co.zw/.../POTRAZ-Sector-Performance- Report-4th-Quarter. [Accessed 2017-05-10].

Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (POTRAZ). Sector performance report. 2017. Available from: http://www.techzim.co.zw/.../POTRAZ-Sector-Performance- Report-4th-Quarter. [Accessed 2017-09-18].

Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (POTRAZ). Sector performance report. 2018. Available from: http://www.techzim.co.zw/.../POTRAZ Sector-Performance- Report-4th-Quarter.   [Accessed 2018-09-11].

Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (POTRAZ). Sector performance report. 2019. Available from: http://www.techzim.co.zw/.../POTRAZ-Sector-Performance- Report-4th-Quarter. [Accessed 2020-01-02].

Pride, W.M. & Ferrell, O.C. 2017. *Marketing*. 16th ed. Ohio: South-Western, Cengage Learning.

Reis, H.J, & Judd, C.M. 2016. *Handbook of research methods in social and personality psychology.* Cambridge University Press.

Roberts, L.M. & Zahay, D. 2014. *Integrated marketing: Integrating online and offline strategies.* Third edition. Mason, OH: South-Western Cengage Learning.

Roller, M. R., & Lavrakas, P. L. 2015. *Applied qualitative research design: A total quality framework approach.* New York, NY: Guilford.

Rose, S., Spinks, N. & Canhoto, A.I. 2015. *Management research: Applying the principles.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Roth, A., & Zawadzki, T. 2018. Instagram as a tool for promoting superfood products. *Annals of Marketing Management and Economics*, 4(1), 101–114.

Ryan, D & Jones, C. 2016.Understanding digital marketing: *Marketing strategies for engaging the digital generation*. Kogan Page. London.

Ruel, S. 2017. Qualitative methods in business research. Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: *An International Journal*, 12, 87-88.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. 2017. "*Research Methods for Business Students".* 8th edition: Pearson Education Limited.

Schober, M. 2016. Data Collection: *How do I collect data using Interview?* SAGE Publications, Inc.

Seo, E.-J., & Park, J.W. 2018. A study on the effects of social media marketing activities on brand equity and customer response in the airline industry. *Journal of Air Transport*

Management, 66, 36–41

Solis, B. 2015. *Engage! The complete guide for brands and businesses to build,*

cultivate and measure   success in the new web.* New Jersey: Wiley & Sons.

 Stelzner, M. 2016. The 2016 Social Media Marketing Industry Report. Social Media

Examiner. Retrieved from

http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/SocialMediaMarketingReport2016.pdf

Sutherland, E. 2016. *International mobile roaming in the Arab states*, 13 (2),

35-52.

The Zim Marketer Magazine. 2017. [Online] Available from:

http://www.maz.co.zw/zim_marketer.html [Assessed 2017-10-26].

The Zim Marketer Magazine. 2018. [Online] Available from:

http://www.maz.co.zw/zim_marketer.html [Assessed 2018-12-30].

The Zim Marketer Magazine. 2019. [Online] Available from:

http://www.maz.co.zw/zim_marketer.html [Assessed 2019-09-30].

Trainor, K.J., Rapp, A., Beitelspacher, L.S. & Schillewaert, N. 2015. Integrating

information technology and marketing: *An examination of the drivers and outcomes of*

e-marketing capability.

Tustin, D.H., Lighthelm, A.A., Martins, J.H., & van Wyk, H. de J. 2005. *Marketing*

research in practice. Pretoria: Unisa Press.

Tuten, T. L., & Solomon, M. (2017). *Social media marketing.* London, United Kingdom,

Sage Publications Ltd.

Wiid, J. A. & Diggines, C. 2015. *Marketing Research*. Cape Town: Juta.

Wymbs, C. 2017. Digital marketing: The time for a new "academic major" has arrived. *Journal of Marketing Education*, 33(1), 93-106.

Yadav, M., & Rahman, Z. (2018). The influence of social media marketing activities on customer loyalty: A study of e-commerce industry. Benchmarking: *An International Journal,* 25(9), 3882–3905.

Yin, R. K. 2017. *Case study research and application: Design and Methods.* New York, NY: Sage Publications.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT CONSENT LETTER

Dear Participant,

I am Patience Makwara a student in the Department of Marketing and Retail Management at the University of South Africa. I am seeking permission to carry out a study entitled "The use of social media marketing in a telecommunication business: An exploratory study of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe".

This study consists of a survey that will be administered to individual participants in the marketing department. This study is being carried out for academic purposes only. The information acquired as a result of this survey will be treated as highly confidential and will be revealed to Econet Wireless. I have selected Econet Wireless because it is the market leader in the telecommunication business through the provision of mobile and internet.

It is hoped that the information I gain from this study will help me in exploring the use of social media marketing in Econet Wireless.

Should you require any further information you can contact:

Researcher's name: Patience Makwara   Supervisor's name: Mrs. EC Wessels

Email: ptmakwara@gmail.com   Email: nellec@unisa.ac.za

Tel No: +263 772 613 549   Tel No: +27 12 429 2819

_____   _____

Participant's signature   Date

APPENDIX B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

UNISA | university of south africa

COLLEGE OF ECONOMIC AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCE RESEARCH ETHICS
REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 10 December 2018

Dear Ms Patience Tsitsi Makwara

**Decision: Ethics Approval from
2018 to 2020**

NHREC Registration # : (if applicable)
ERC Reference # : 2018_CRERC_023(FA)
Name : Ms Patience Tsitsi Makwara
Student #: 46009167
Staff #:

Researcher(s): Ms Patience Tsitsi Makwara
Department of Marketing and Retail Management
College of Economic and management Sciences
ptmakwara@gmail.com, +263772613549

**"The Use of Social Media Marketing in a Telecommunication Business: An
Exploratory Study of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe."**

Qualification: MCom Degree

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa College of Economic
and management Sciences Research Ethics Review Committee, for the above mentioned
research. Ethics approval is granted for 2 years (**10 December 2018 until 09 December
2020**).

The **low risk application** was **reviewed** by the College of Economic and management
Sciences Research Ethics Review Committee on **29 November 2018** in compliance with
the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research
Ethics Risk Assessment. The decision was approved at the next departmental ERC meeting.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:
1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and
   principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is
   relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the
   College of Economic and management Sciences Research Ethics Review Committee.

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.

5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.

6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.

7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date (**09 December 2020**). Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

8. Permission is to be obtained from the university from which the participants are to be drawn (the Unisa Senate Research, Innovation and Higher Degrees Committee) to ensure that the relevant authorities are aware of the scope of the research, and all conditions and procedures regarding access to staff/students for research purposes that may be required by the institution must be met.

9. If further counselling is required in some cases, the participants will be referred to appropriate support services.

Note:

The reference number **2018_CRERC_023 (FA)** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Prof AT Mutezo
Chairperson, CRERC
E-mail: muteza@unisa.ac.za
Tel: 012 429 4595

Prof MT Mogale
Executive Dean: CEMS
E-mail: mogalmt@unisa.ac.za
Tel: 012 429 4805

URERC 25.04.17 - Decision template (V2) - Approve

APPENDIX C: PERMISSION LETTER

UNISA | university of south africa

To Whom It May Concern   26 Feb 2018

From: R Machado (Staff Number 1974572)
M&D Coordinator
Department of Marketing and Retail Management

Re: Permission for doing Research at Econet for MS PT Makwara (46009167)

This memo is to request that permission be given to Ms PT Makwara for her research for her MCom studies at Unisa for her to be able to get ethical clearance from the University. It is a requirement that when research is to be done at a company that the company or a relevant manager issue a letter granting permission. Ms Makwara is using Econet as a case study and the basis for her research MCom.
If there are any questions, please contact me at the numbers shown below. The ethical clearance ensures that the research is ethically correct and that the anonymity of all participants are protected.

Yours sincerely,

....

R Machado
Dept. Marketing and Retail Management
Phone: +27 12 429 4020
Email: machar@unisa.ac.za

....

Approved: Prof K Makhitha
COD: Department of Marketing and Retail Management

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1.   How does Econet Wireless Zimbabwe use social media marketing?

2.   Why did Econet Wireless Zimbabwe decide to use social media marketing?

3.   Which social media channels are mostly used by Econet Wireless Zimbabwe?

4.   How is Econet Wireless measuring the use of social media marketing?

APPENDIX E: EDITOR'S CONFIRMATION

ProCom language consultancy

Professional Communicators and Language Specialists

1306 ZETHUSHOF, 620 PARK STREET
0083 ARCADIA
−27641001099, +263778915424
Josemutu@gmail.com

DATE : FEBRUARY 17, 2020

EDITING AND TRANSLATIONSERVICES

REPORT ON THESIS ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDITING

<u>To whom it may concern</u>

This is to certify that thesis paper with the provisional title; THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN A TELECOMUNICATIONS BUSINESS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF ECONET WIRELESS ZIMBABWE, By **PATIENCE TSITSI MAKWARA** Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF COMMERCE In the subject of BUSINESS MANAGEMENT At the UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA has been edited for language by ProCom Language Consultancy.

Tenses, punctuation and statement rephrasing have been attended to in line with language meaning and flow of ideas.

Neither the research content nor the author's intentions were altered in any way during the editing process. ProCom Language Consultancy guarantees the quality of English language in this paper, provided our editor's suggestions are accepted and further changes made to the paper are referred back to our editing team.

Mutangadura J. (Dr.) Author Services—ProCom Language Services

**Director: MUTANGADURA J. (DRS, BA Hons, MA Applied Language: UZ, DTech:
Language Practice, TUT, PhD: Communication Science. UNISA).**

APPENDIX F: DECLARATION

DECLARATION

Name: **Patience Tsitsi Makwara**

Student number: **46009167**

Degree: **Master of Commerce in Business Management**

Title of dissertation: **The use of social media marketing in a telecommunication business: An exploratory study of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe**

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

I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

....   27 FEBRUARY 2020

SIGNATURE   DATE

i