2019

MESSAGE FACTORS THAT FAVOURABLY DRIVE CONSUMER'S ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURAL INTENTIONS TOWARDS SOCIAL NETWORK AND MEDIA PLATFORMS

Majid, Sarhang

http://hdl.handle.net/10026.1/14208

Copyright Statement

This copy of the thesis has been supplied on condition that anyone who consults it is understood to recognise that its copyright rests with its author and that no quotation from the thesis and no information derived from it may be published without the author's prior consent.

UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

MESSAGE FACTORS THAT FAVOURABLY DRIVE CONSUMER'S ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURAL INTENTIONS TOWARDS SOCIAL NETWORK AND MEDIA PLATFORMS

By

SARHANG MAJID

A thesis submitted to the University of Plymouth
in partial fulfilment for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Plymouth Business School

May 2019

Acknowledgements

Doing this PhD has been both painful and joyful, and I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the people who made my PhD studies worthwhile and memorable.

To my wife Soma, your unconditional love, comfort, and care gave me the strength and excitement to complete my PhD with joy. Without you, doing this PhD would have been much less enjoyable. Your encouragement and trust in me helped me to do my PhD with excitement, each day. You have been an absolute joy to have.

To my daughter Skye, without you, I would have finished my PhD a long time ago! I am only joking here! I love you a lot! I am proud of how you were always enjoying going to the nursery and making nice paintings that I loved looking at each day!

To my supervisory team, Professor Phil Megicks. Dr Carmen Lopez Lamelas and Dr Wai Mun Lim, I learned a lot from you. I am thankful for all your guidance in helping me develop the skills that I needed for completing my PhD thesis in the best possible way. I am also thankful to Dr Ibrahim Elbeltagi for giving me the opportunity to do my PhD. I am sorry that he died.

To my sister Kafija, my brothers and my father-in-law and mother-in-law, thank you for all your support throughout my studies. I was lucky to have you all.

Author's Declaration

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee.
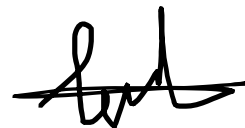
Work submitted for this research degree at the University of Plymouth has not formed part of any other degree either at the University of Plymouth or at another establishment.

Publications:

Word Count – Main Body: **59888**

Signed:

Date: May 2019

MESSAGE FACTORS THAT FAVOURABLY DRIVE CONSUMER'S ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURAL INTENTIONS TOWARDS SOCIAL NETWORK AND MEDIA PLATFORMS

Sarhang Majid

Abstract

As consumers are increasingly utilising social network and media platforms for pre-purchase information, managers are confronted with producing effective social network and media platform (SNMP) messages that can favourably influence buyers' attitudes and behavioural intentions towards brands and products. To ensure a thorough investigation of this research realm, and to develop awareness of the factors influencing the effectiveness of social media marketing, this study adopted a mixed methods approach involving a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research. An exploratory sequential research design was followed, starting with an in-depth, elite interview investigation with social media marketing experts. Adopting a thematic analysis approach, this study contributes to knowledge by identifying three overriding themes of interactivity, credibility, and infotainment as the key determinants of how social media marketing can enhance brand performance. Attitude theory and the hierarchy-of-effects theory is utilised to support understanding and explain the decision making of social media users in this context. This thesis also contributes to social media marketing knowledge by providing a comprehensive study of the key factors that create effective SNMP messages. This was achieved through analysis of data collected using a questionnaire that was completed by a sample of SNMP users. Analysis was undertaken using Structured Equation Modelling which tests the hypotheses and confirms the importance of the key identified themes on the

users' attitudes, word of mouth and purchase intentions. Uses and Gratification theory is used to comprehend and explain user needs for using SNMPs. Overall, this study provides managers with a thorough explanation of the effects of the identified core themes on SNMP user attitudes, behaviours and intentions. Implications for social media marketing theory and practice are presented based upon the depth and breadth of knowledge attained from the analysis of the expert interviews and the SNMP user survey data.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations	Complete Terms
e-WOM	Electronic Word of Mouth
HOET	Hierarchy-of-Effects Theory
UGT	Uses and Gratification Theory
OBCs	Online Brand Communities
SM	Social Media
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action
TPB	The Theory of Planned Behaviour
SMM	Social Media Marketing
SRW	Standardised Regression Weights
SNMPs	Social Network and Media Platforms
SMMEs	Social Media Marketing Experts
SMM	Social Media Marketing
IV	Independent Variables
DV	Dependent Variables

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This introductory chapter introduces an overview of this research. Initially, a background relating to the research context and the growing importance of social network and media platforms (SNMPs) is presented. Subsequently, the drive for the study is explained encapsulating the research rationalisation, research contributions, research aims, and objectives and followed by the thesis structure.

1.2 Research Background

From a marketing communications perspective, social network and media platforms (SNMPs) provide a vehicle for companies to share information relating to their brands, and a forum for consumers to interact with other users in their network (Rapp *et al.*, 2013; Kumar, Choi, and Greene, 2017). SNMPs have become a key area of research on brands as it offers the opportunity to use interactive platforms for the creation and exchange of information, and exploit its marketing potential (Ibrahim, Wang, and Bourne, 2017). In recent years, the popularity of SNMPs for educating, connecting and cooperating with customers have increased significantly (Jun *et al.*, 2017). This is particularly so in the case of online brand communities, in which groups of computer users bring relationship, information, belongingness and social resources to one another (Wang, Ting and Wu, 2013).

In 2018, around 1.64 billion individuals were expected to be using Facebook alone, increasing to 1.75 billion in 2019 (EMarketer, 2018). Also, Facebook is expected to be generating an advertising turnover of $54.44 billion in 2018 (eMarketer, 2018), an increase from $27 billion in 2016 (Louisa, 2017). SNMPs are now considered the world's

fastest growing advertising platforms (Louisa, 2017). In the era of mass SNMP communication, the average consumer is consistently exposed to limitless mostly unverified, messages (Pentina and Tarafdar, 2014). Hence, the chances of a message favourably influencing users' attitudes and behavioural intentions are becoming increasingly more difficult to achieve. Hence, this has led to marketers placing a strong emphasis on the quality of the message content, its source characteristics, and interactivity etiquette (Pornpitakpan, 2004). As such, with the increasing popularity of SNMPs as a form of communication across all demographics and as a means of collecting information about pre- and post-purchasing decisions, social media (SM) managers are perpetually endeavouring to identify new and effective forms of social network and media platform (SNMP) messages that can favourably influence recipients' attitudes and behaviour. Yet, thus far, there have been only a limited number of empirical studies that explored the factors that contribute to the effectiveness of social media marketing (SMM) communication (Godey *et al.*, 2016; Saboo, Kumar and Ramani, 2016), to influence users' attitudes and behavioural intentions. Therefore, this research first initiates with a qualitative interviewing, setting out to mitigate this deficiency by enriching understanding of the development of effective SNMP messages. In particular, the study seeks to explore the factors that influence the creation of effective SNMP messages by combining knowledge from the extant literature with insights from an exploratory study with 25 social media-marketing experts (SMMEs). The qualitative study subsequently followed by a quantitative survey questionnaire distributed amongst 399 highest SNMP users. The quantitative part is to strengthen further the knowledge and insights obtained from the SMMEs by testing whether the identified key themes does favourably influence user attitudes and behavioural intentions taking into considerations the perspectives of the actual users.

Knowing how to use SNMPs correctly can significantly enhance the company's productivity (Kumar, Choi and Greene, 2017). Also, because its effect on sales performance remains ambiguous, businesses want to know the level of commitment they should have when investing in SNMPs. Some marketers claim improved sales performance while others claim obscure and dubious sales growth after adopting SNMPs (Kumar, Choi and Greene, 2017). The growth of SNMPs compels brand managers to search for innovative and interactive approaches that can reach out and connect to as many customers as possible, and lead to positive outcomes for their brands (Gallaugher and Ransbotham, 2010; Godey *et al.*, 2016).

1.3 Research Rationalisation

As more online users use more time browsing, SNMPs are becoming an essential subject research realm for brands. Despite the growing popularity of these platforms, studies relating to SNMPs is limited (Ibrahim, Wang, and Bourne, 2017). Similarly, while there are anecdotal indications that SMM activities affect customers purchase decision, there is little empirical research on how SMMEs positively influence their existing and potential customer's attitudes and behavioural intentions to purchase (Godey *et al.*, 2016). Likewise, despite brands investing great resources on SNMPs to interact with their users, there is inadequate comprehension on how users engage with brands on SNMPs and how it affects their purchasing procedure (Saboo, Kumar and Ramani, 2016). As such, with the lack of comprehensive studies of how SMMEs are effectively influencing their customer attitudes and behavioural intentions and with the lack of adequate comprehension on how/why the users engage with brands on SNMPs in the first place, has led to the need for further extensive studies within the realm of SMM.

1.4 Research Contributions

The contribution of this study is the identification of the key factors that influence the development of effective SNMP communication concerning brands. These are developed from a conceptual platform based upon the consideration of attitude and behavioural intention toward brands from a modular 'hierarchy-of-effects theory' (HOET) perspective (Lavidge and Steiner, 1961), which has not previously been considered in the context of SMM. Also, since previous SMM research has mainly been undertaken using quantitative approaches with SNMP users (Dehghani and Tumer, 2015; Erkan and Evans, 2016), it has been proposed that in order to more fully comprehend customers' SNMP influences on attitudes and behavioural intentions towards brands, a need exists for further insights utilising more qualitative approaches (Alves, Fernandes and Raposo, 2016). Furthermore, considering that, most studies concentrate on the customer's viewpoint regarding usage and impact of SMM on customers' decisions and perspectives, further research is needed to examine the viewpoints of companies as they engage in SMM (Alves, Fernandes and Raposo, 2016), a gap this research aims to fill. Moreover, using data from experts across a broad range of industry experts adds to greater understanding, as they can offer technical process and explanatory knowledge of SNMP message effectiveness (Meuser and Nagel, 2009).

In the quantitative study, while testing the effects of the identified key themes, the user drives/needs for using SNMPs were also taken into consideration, as it is the users who first engage in SNMPs as a personal choice driven by needs (Smith and Gallicano, 2015). These are built from a theoretical platform based on the consideration of the user needs for using SNMPs from a modular uses and gratification theory (UGT) perspective (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1973), which has also not previously been considered in combination with the hierarchy of effects model in the realm of this study. With the lack of a comprehensive study relating to the core themes involved in the

creation of effective SNMPs and with limited qualitative research approaches, this qualitative/quantitative study was necessary for both enriching the academic literature as well as helping business of all types with a comprehensive study that is robustly researched, analysed, and reflected.

1.5 The aim of the study

The qualitative aim of the study is to draw out knowledge, experiences, insights, and strategies relating to SNMP message factors that are proven to be effectively influencing the user attitudes and behavioural intentions from the perspective of SMMEs. The quantitative aim of the research is to determine the effects of the key identified SNMP message factors from the perspectives of the users. Thus, this research seeks to provide businesses of all types with innovative and effective SNMP message factors and strategies that can favourably affect the user attitudes and behavioural intentions towards the brands and products.

Objectives

- To identify the various types of effective SNMP message factors that can favourably influence user attitudes and behavioural intentions.
- To identify the various types of effective SNMP message strategies that can favourably influence user attitudes and behavioural intentions.
- To comprehend user motives and needs for using SNMPs.
- To determine the effects of trustworthiness on user attitude and behavioural intentions.
- To determine the effects of expertise on user attitudes and behavioural intentions.
- To determine the effect of OBCs on user attitudes and behavioural intentions.

- To determine the effects of social approval on user attitudes and behavioural intentions.

- To determine the effects of informativeness on user attitudes and behavioural intentions.

- To determine the effects of entertainment on user attitudes and behavioural intentions.

- To determine the mediating role of attitude in the relationship between the key identified message factors and behavioural intentions.

- To determine the moderating role of involvement in the relationship between the key identified message factors and attitude.

1.6 Thesis Structure

To accomplish the aim and objectives of this study, this thesis is arranged into seven chapters encapsulating introduction, literature review, methodology, qualitative findings, quantitative findings, discussions, and conclusions. Each chapter is organised with a set of questions in mind constructed on one another to cover this thesis overall aim and objectives.

Chapter One: in this chapter, research introduction is presented that provides an overall structure of the research whereby in the case of this thesis encapsulates research background, research rationalisation, research contributions, aims, and objectives of this thesis. Likewise, this introductory chapter defines the focus of the thesis.

Chapter Two: the literature review - discusses the background of the key factors relevant within the realm of SMM. Consistent with the factors pertinent to SNMP messages, related concepts and theories are explored, reflected and adopted leading to addressing

the aims and objectives of this thesis, involving Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), attitude, the role of involvement, electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), HOET, and UGT.

Chapter Three: describes the methodology and methods used in this research. It provides explanations relating to different types of research paradigms and justifies the reasons behind the use of each particular paradigm about this study. Research strategy and research design are explained, including qualitative and quantitative designs, mixed method design and the sequential mixed. Subsequently, the methodological triangulation and the role of the researcher is explained. This is then followed by describing the ethical considerations applied within this study, explaining the research data collection methods including the semi-structured methods and the survey questionnaires well as well as the data analysis process.

Chapter Four: presents the qualitative research findings and results including thorough explanations regarding the identification of the key themes that emerged from the 25 semi-structured interview transcripts of SMMEs, adopting thematic analysis theory.

Chapter Five: presents the quantitative research findings, and results, which evolved from the distribution of 399 survey questionnaires amongst the highest SNMP users. The study initiated with presenting the demographics of the participants, the hypotheses testing and results adopting the structured equation modelling (SEM).

Chapter Six: presents the discussions of the study in which the results of both qualitative and quantitative approaches are combined and synthesised together supported by the relevant literature.

Chapter Seven: the conclusions of the study are presented including theoretical implication, managerial implications, and recommendations. Finally, research limitations and future directions are reported.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter starts with critically reviewing the existing relevant literature relating to SMM to facilitate the identification of the vital, relevant factors, concepts, and theories to operationalise as a foundation for addressing the aims and objectives of this study. Firstly, a summary of the research questions and hypothesis are explained. Then the definitions of SM and literature relating to the growing importance of SM amongst brands and users are presented. This is followed by explaining the theory of attitudes, the hierarchy-of-effects theory (HOET) and uses and gratification theory (UGT). Subsequently, the role of user involvement and user WOM is explained. Finally, the concept of the user's behavioural intentions and the actual behaviour is defined by the TRA and TPB. The focus of the research questions surrounds the following five questions:

1. What are the various types of SNMP message factors that SMMEs have found to be favourably influencing the user's attitudes and behavioural intentions?

2. What are the effective SMM strategies used by the SMMEs that have led to favourably influencing the user's attitudes and behavioural intentions?

3. What are the key components of source credibility in the context of SMM messages?

4. What are the key components of interactivity in the context of SNMP messages?

5. What are the key components of infotainment in the context of SNMP messages?

The first question is concerned with the various types of SNMP message factors that SMMEs have found to be favourably influencing the user's attitudes and behavioural intentions. This is important because knowing how to use SM correctly can significantly enhance the brand's productivity (Kumar, Choi and Greene, 2017). Also, businesses want to know the level of commitment they should be investing in SMM because its effect on sales performances is still ambiguous. Some marketers claim improved sales performances while others claim obscure and dubious sales growth after adopting SNMPs (Kumar, Choi and Greene, 2017). As in the second question, collecting first-hand data relating to effective SMM strategies adopted by the professionals is important, because the growth of SMM compels managers to search innovative interactive strategies to reaching out and connecting to as many customers as possible (Gallaugher and Ransbotham, 2010; Godey *et al.*, 2016). Questions three, four and five relate to the identification of the key components of credibility, infotainment and interactivity in the context of SMM. Identifying and defining the components of these key factors is important for the development of effective SNMP messages. To study these research questions, the researcher interviewed professionals from various businesses of some of the world's largest brands and organisations.

2.2 Social Media Marketing (SMM)

SM is a new and innovative platform that is driving businesses to focus on customer engagement and business interactivity (Wollan, Smith and Zhou, 2011). Direct interactivity in SM strengthens the relationship between the brand and its consumers and therefore increases rapport (Gao and Feng, 2016), which subsequently affects consumers' purchase intentions (Mal*är et al*., 2011). Being a follower of a brand on networks such as Facebook can lead to enhanced purchase intentions, and the use of SNMP messages to promote brands has therefore increased significantly. In a similar vein, undertaking SMM

promotes the automatic distribution of messages, and its synergistic nature makes it an influential communication tool. For example, a mere customer liking can influence users' attitudes and encourage new interactions, as liking can be viewed by an increasing circle of friends, potentially steering them to positive purchase intentions (Chang, Yu and Lu, 2015).

SNMPs have altered consumers' behaviour by providing customers with new approaches to searching, selecting, evaluating and purchasing products and services (Alves, Fernandes and Raposo, 2016), so shifting the control to develop brand images from businesses to customer's online relationships (Tsai and Men, 2013; Godey *et al*., 2016). These developments affect how advertisers work and influence their strategic and tactical practices, which has led to them being faced with new problems and difficult choices (Alves, Fernandes and Raposo, 2016).

While SNMPs provides users with access to new information about interesting topics, it also simultaneously accomplishes publicity for brands (Gao and Feng, 2016). Via this platform, marketers are enabled to perform various essential marketing aims such as customer relationship management (CRM), marketing intelligence, advertising, service, product and public relations, and marketing communications (Ashley and Tuten, 2015; Alves, Fernandes and Raposo, 2016). These approaches enable marketers to engage with target customers in their communities and to create more focused interactivity (Kelly, Kerr, and Drennan, 201*0; Godey et al*., 2016) and develop effective SNMP messages in an attempt to favourably influence customer's attitudes (Wollan, Smith and Zhou, 2011). As such, organisations can no longer afford to take the significance of SNMPs lightly, as how a user perceives or communicates about a particular brand affects the existing and potential customer's views towards that brand (Dehghani and Tumer, 2015; Felix, Rauschnabel and Hinsch, 2017; Ibrahim, Wang and Bourne, 2017). Also, the growing popularity of SNMPs amongst users has led to brands of all sizes vying for

customer attention. Such activity can lead to users being overwhelmed by the amount of information that they are faced with, diminishing their cognitive ability to process and evaluate the information with limited attempts in the desired timeframe, and subsequently compelling them to make inaccurate decisions (Pentina and Tarafdar, 2014).

2.3 Social Network and Media Platform (SNMP) Messages

A SNMP message such as that encountered in Facebook advertising (Dehghani and Tumer, 2015; Louisa, 2017) refers to a message posted through a SNMP by a brand as a means of promoting its products and services (Jung, 2017; Louisa, 2017). Additionally, it is a method of encouraging interactions between the brand and its consumers (De Vries, Gensler, and Leeflang, 2012; Louisa, 2017). They are prudently constructed and communicated to create the right impressions of the brand (Richey, Ravishankar, and Coupland, 2016). SNMPs enable consumers and users to become the followers of a particularly interested brand wherein they can like, comment on, and share the promotional messages that appear on their SNMP as well as seeing who else has already behaved similarly towards the advertised message (De Vries, Gensler, and Leeflang, 2012). Correlative terms analogous to SNMP messages include brand messages (Rapp *et al.*, 2013) web advertising (Ducoffe, 1996; Brackett and Carr, 2001), microblogging word of mouth (WOM) messages (Hennig-Thurau, Wiertz and Feldhaus, 2015), SM advertising (Jung, 2017), SM posts (Richey, Ravishankar and Coupland, 2016) and SM messages (Ashley and Tuten, 2015; Chang, Yu and Lu, 2015). To gain success, a brand's SM message approach needs to generate robust feelings among users (Chen, Kim, and Lin, 2015). Among other marketing methods, this requires producing bright and communicative promotional messages by placing them visibly on media platforms (Chang, Yu and Lu, 2015). Subsequently, for the effective use of the Internet, marketers will benefit from comprehending how users see this platform as a source of marketing

because of opinions of the media influence attitudes concerning specific promotions (Bauer and Greyser, 1968; Ducoffe, 1996). In other words, a key measure of advertising effectiveness is the individuals' attitudes towards online advertising (Haley, Staffaroni and Fox, 1994; Mehta, 2000; Wang and Sun, 2010), as customer's cognitive capability towards advertising are mirrored in their feelings (affect), thoughts (beliefs) and consequently influencing their intentions (behaviour) to purchase (MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989).

2.4 SNMP and Brands

The growing importance of online shopping amongst people has led to brands adopting SNMPs into their business operations (To and Ngai, 2006; Ibrahim, Wang, and Bourne, 2017). According to eMarketer (2013), social network and media (SNM) have been categorised as a branding platform. Being a follower of a brand on networks such as Facebook leads to increase their purchase intention (Zhang and Mao, 2016). Hence, the use of SNMP messages for advertising brands amongst marketers has increased significantly (Ashley and Tuten, 2015; Zhang and Mao, 2016). Dell has been known as the frontrunner in using SNMPs for daily business interactions and CRM with the focus on business to customer (B2C) communication (Ashley and Tuten, 2015).

The advent of SNMPs has profoundly changed the marketing scenery. Brands incorporated SNMPs to observe and examine discussions to comprehend how users perceive the brand or its activities (Felix, Rauschnabel and Hinsch, 2017). Some of the various marketing aims that lead to brands using SNMPs include researching, branding, service, CRM and purchase intentions (Ashley and Tuten, 2015). SNMPs facilitate brand-directed one-to-many communications that bypass the traditional media such as avoiding information intermediaries and permitting brands to broadcast its intended messages to an extensive network of stakeholders (Ashley and Tuten, 2015; Lee, Hutton and Shu,

2015). Similarly, SNMPs enable users to have multidirectional online communications involving both brands and other users simultaneously, leading to altering the energies and landscape of brand exposure (Chu and Kim, 2011). Users of a SNMP receive prompt news messages relating to a brand wherein they can share instantly within their networks, cascading the company's message intention into widespread reach (Lee, Hutton and Shu, 2015).

2.5 Attitude Theory

Attitude has been defined as the degree of favourable or unfavourable feeling of an individual towards an object (Thurstone, 1931). This is aligned with the more recent work of Fishbein and Ajzen (1975, p. 6) which describes attitude as "a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given object." Similarly, Eagly and Chaiken, (1993, p. 1) explain attitude as ''a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour.'' In essential conceptual terms, attitudes can be seen as evolving through what an individual thinks (cognitive), what an individual feels (affect), and what an individual does (conative) (Roth and Diamantopoulos, 2009; Szmigin and Piacentini, 2015). In other words, an attitude is ''an overall evaluation of an object that is based on the cognitive, affective and behavioural information'' (Maio and Haddock, 2010, p. 4). Per se, attitude can, therefore, be viewed as an individual's private assessment of their emotional sentiment and predisposition towards particular substances or concepts (brands), emanating from different components in relation to their knowledge, feelings, and actions (Kotler, 2000). The modular ABC model of attitude comprises the components of cognition, affect and behaviour (Solomon *et al*., 2006; Maio and Haddock, 2010; Szmigin and Piacentini, 2015). The cognitive component relates to the thought, beliefs, and qualities an individual associated with an attitude object. Affect relates to how an

individual feels when relating to an attitude object, whereas, behaviour engages an individual's intentions to do something relating to an attitude object (Maio and Haddock, 2010; Szmigin and Piacentini, 2015; Solomon *et al.*, 2016). One main deficiency of the three-component perspective of attitudes is each component's dependency on one another as they are all interrelated (Verlegh, 2007; Roth and Diamantopoulos, 2009). For instance, in the context of SM, a user could favour a particular brand message (affect) as s/he perceives that brand message as informative (cognition) and subsequently has the intention to like, comment, share and or purchase the brand (conation). Also, while the components can form an attitude, the ABC model does not express how they come together; nor does it explain how vital one is relating to the others (Szmigin and Piacentini, 2015). Subsequently, marketers find it challenging to influence attitudes using this approach (Szmigin and Piacentini, 2015).

Nonetheless, the three core components of attitudes presented in this model shape the foundation of various other, more structured, models of attitudes such as the hierarchy-of-effects theory (HOET) adopted in this study (Szmigin and Piacentini, 2015). For example, more recent studies explain attitudes either alongside a two-component perspective (Engel, Blackwell and Miniard, 1995; Roth and Diamantopoulos, 2009), or a HOET, the ABC sequence (Liska, 1984; George M. Zinkhan and Fornell, 1989), which posits that effective and/or cognitive variables are antecedents of self-reported behaviours and stated intentions (Warner and DeFleur, 1969). Intentions are less abstract, in other words, and are thus closer to observable behaviour as opposed to the cognitions and affective feelings on which they are based (Bagozzi and Burnkrant, 1979; Roth and Diamantopoulos, 2009). Equally, this study focuses on attitude from the two-component perspective of cognition and affect, in which attitude identification does not cover a behavioural component. There are numerous situations wherein separate or combined results of affect and or cognition on intention happen (Ajzen, 2001). Firstly, when beliefs

and feelings concerning an object are of a different nature, feelings are likely to rule (Lavine *et al.*, 1998). Whereas, when cognition and emotions are consistent with one another, both predictably contribute robustly and mutually to behavioural intentions (Simons and Carey, 1988). Secondly, the trend to form ones' intentions on cognition, or affect, likewise relies on the particular individual. For instance, people recognised as thinkers mostly depend on their beliefs concerning the object, while for feelers the reverse is correct (Haddock and Zanna, 1999). Lastly, behavioural intentions concerning hedonic objects depend more on affect than cognition, while behavioural intentions concerning functional objects depend more on cognition than emotion (Roth and Diamantopoulos, 2009).

2.6 Attitude towards Advertising

While studying the subject of attitude has been of interest to scholars for a very long time (Tsang, Ho, and Liang, 2004), attitude towards online advertising is still deemed to be an evolving concept because of its short history (Karson, McCloy and Bonner, 2006; Wang and Sun, 2010). Since the invention of television, the Internet has been the first platform in which presenting advertisers with continuous prospects and encounters leading to the need for a more methodical study (Ducoffe, 1996). The advent of the Internet as a contemporary platform motivated research on attitude concerning Internet marketing in the web-created setting (Tsang, Ho, and Liang, 2004). Relating to advertising, Bauer and Greyser (1968) explained attitude as the public's behaviour concerning advertising. MacKenzie and Lutz (1989) postulated that such behaviour is shown by customers' positive or negative reactions towards a specific advertisement.

Similarly, Solomon *et al.*, (2016) defined attitude towards advertising as a predisposition to react in a positive or negative etiquette towards a specific advertising incentive, in a specific disclosure occurrence. The higher the favourability of an

individual's attitudes toward online advertising, the higher the probability of that individual responding positively towards the online advertisement (Wang and Sun, 2010). Studies advocating this claim found that customers with more positive attitudes concerning advertising were found to be highly likely to remember, and be convinced by brand messages (Mehta, 2000; Wang and Sun, 2010). Thus, this notion can clarify favourable or unfavourable SM message evaluations.

There are various foregoing conceptions, concepts, and theories relating to both traditional and online advertising within the existing literature operationalised as antecedents for their prevailing importance pertaining to the development of this study. The next section starts with the current literature relating to the concepts of HOET.

2.7 Hierarchy-of-Effects Theory (HOET)

Since research on SNMPs is still at an evolving phase (Michaelidou, Siamagka, and Christodoulides, 2011; Zhang and Mao, 2016), there is no established theory to understand the effectiveness of advertising through SNMPs (Zhang and Mao, 2016). To identify, to explore and to explain the effective factors of advertising through SNMPs to favourably influencing the user's attitudes and behavioural intentions, it is helpful to adopt the HOET in advertising (Olney, Holbrook, and Batra, 1991; Smith, Jiemiao and Yang, 2008). The HOET defines the phases that consumers go through while shaping or modifying their attitudes and intentions towards a brand (Smith, Jiemiao and Yang, 2008; Zhang and Mao, 2016). The model is predicated on a sequential development of attitude progressing from knowing to feel to doing where a fixed set of steps are followed on the way to attitude (Solomo*n et al*., 2006; Roth and Diamantopoulos, 2009). Indeed, it has been proposed that the approach regards attitude as being unidimensional in terms of being solely determined by affect - the degree of (un)favourability in regard to the attitude

object - with the other two component beliefs and conation respectively seen as the antecedents and consequences (Lutz, 1981).

Commonly, research categorises three forms of the HOET (Solomon *et al.*, 2006; Hamari, 2015), namely the standard learning hierarchy, the low involvement hierarchy, and the experiential hierarchy (Roth and Diamantopoulos, 2009), all of which are relevant within the context of advertising and SMM (Szmigin and Piacentini, 2015). The standard learning hierarchy (cognition → affect → conation) is aligned with the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980), which states that a user first shapes beliefs regarding a particular SNMP message through collecting knowledge concerning essential aspects of the message such as its content relevancy and or product offerings. The user subsequently depends on these beliefs to create feelings regarding that SNMP message. For example, the user could find the message content and or its product offerings valuable. Successively, the user engages in related behaviour including liking, commenting on, sharing and or buying the product through that message (Dehghani and Tumer, 2015). This hierarchy sequence proposes that a consumer is highly engaged in creating his/her decision, which means s/he is interested in obtaining as much information as possible including searching for alternatives, and then prudently reaches a reflective decision (Solomon *et al.*, 2006).

Regarding the low involvement hierarchy sequence (cognition → conation → affect), a person does not first have a robust liking towards one object over another. The person subsequently responds based on the limited information (beliefs) available and consequently shapes an evaluation after s/he has made the purchase (Solomon *et al.*, 2006; Szmigin and Piacentini, 2015). An instance would be having to obtain information through SNMP about which brand to buy between two alternatives, where the user does not have a prior predisposition for one over the other but shapes his/her feeling towards these alternatives after purchasing the two brands. After the purchase, the user can build

an emotional relationship with the brand purchased. This sequence is unique in that it is essential for reasonably low involvement settings and familiar consumption circumstances, whereby the user depends highly on his/her own understanding and beliefs to modify their attitudes concerning the consumption object (Szmigin and Piacentini, 2015). Lastly, the experiential hierarchy (affect → conation → cognition) is built on hedonic consumption wherein users are expected to respond merely on the grounds of their emotional associations (Solomon *et al.*, 2006; Roth and Diamantopoulos, 2009). In this sequence, the feeling is initiated first, followed by consumption. After consumption, the user will think through and shape his/her attitude concerning the brand purchased including aspects such as, whether the price was reasonable, and whether other emotional features and benefits were being delivered. In this case, feelings control the attitude creation process (Szmigin and Piacentini, 2015).

While the studies of Olney, Holbrook, and Batra (1991) and Szmigin and Piacentini (2015) identified different phases, the theory primarily suggests a sequence of cognition → affect → conation (Smith, Jiemiao and Yang, 2008). Although some advertising practitioners and researchers have questioned either the existence or sequence of the hierarchy-of-effects (Kunda, 1990; Goodrich, 2011) its relevance to comprehending the influence of advertising (Smith, Jiemiao and Yang, 2008) and other promotional undertakings endures (Balasubramanian, Karrh and Patwardhan, 2006). The research presented here concentrates on the main components of the hierarchy-of-effects and not the ordering of those components. Essentially, it proposes that the effectiveness of a SNMP message relies on its capability to lead users into engaging in thinking and feeling about the brand in the message promotion, before their intended behavioural response to buy it or not (Zhang and Mao, 2016).

2.8 The Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT)

In studying the media needs that steer to SNMP use, foregoing studies mainly used UGT. UGT is one of the critical theories that explains the user drives for selecting the media (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1973; Zolkepli and Kamarulzaman, 2015; Gao and Feng, 2016), along with the succeeding attitudinal and behavioural influences (Ruggiero, 2000; Diddi and La Rose, 2006; Lee and Ma, 2012). This theory proposes that people eagerly select media to fill particular needs (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1973; Gao and Feng, 2016). As such, UGT presumes that users are goal oriented in their behaviour and are conscious of their needs. Subsequently, pleasingly gratifying these needs leads to continued engagement with these media selections (Fullwo*od et al*., 2017).

In the beginning part of the century, in the noughties, enhancement in technological innovation has evolved significantly. Subsequently, this rapid development of the internet rejuvenated weakening importance in UGT (Ruggiero, 2000), as the Internet exemplifies expectations that consumers are objective driven and they eagerly select media and media content to satisfy their needs (Charney and Greenberg, 2001; Johnson and Kaye, 2009). Compared to traditional media, the Internet enables reciprocal communication. Through the Internet, users are enabled to have greater access to information than what has been the case within the traditional media. The Internet also gives users more leverage in deciding which information to adopt, which means when using the media, they are encouraged to be dynamic and choosy (Bucy, 2004; Johnson and Kaye, 2009).

From the onset, it is the users, who first engage in SNMPs as a personal choice driven by needs for information, self-esteem, sense of existence, and social interaction. Users start their SNMP engagement based on their personal insights and experiences (Smith and Gallicano, 2015). The need for social and psychological gratification is why people use media (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1973; Lee and Ma, 2012; Zolkepli and

Kamarulzaman, 2015). How users practice and respond to media intensely affected by these satisfaction needs. Thus, comprehending these needs is vital in offering relevant content and encouraging users to interact with brands through SNMPs (Gao and Feng, 2016). However, according to Cheung, Chiu, and Lee (2011) studies that apply UGT to inspect and recognise the vital underlying dimensions for using SNMPs are limited.

Previous studies that used UGT proposed various identifications of media needs and motives encapsulating media used to gratify instant and deferred satisfaction as a form of informational and learning and similarly as a tool to associate or disconnect from the truth (Ko, Cho, and Roberts, 2005; Diddi and La Rose, 2006). Relating to UGT Cheung, Chiu and Lee (2011) suggested that the main motives for SNMP use are to helping users realise purposive value, entertainment, self-discovery, social improvement and keeping relational connectivity. The critical notion of UGT is that the decision users make while using media inspires their wish to gratify a variety of needs. The simple human needs that interrelate with the different characteristics in UGT denote to the psychological arrangement, social situation, life history, and people, which comprise a media structure that yields observed problems and observed solutions to the consumer (Zolkepli and Kamarulzaman, 2015). The problems and anticipated solutions are formed into motives for messages and steer to media behaviour (Weng and Ding, 2012). The most broadly used categorisation of UGT in media research proposed by Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1973) in which analyses the mass media adoption is covering five key media involving TV, radio, magazines, books, and cinema. Among the social and psychological functions of the mass media, 35 needs were identified whereby categorised into cognitive needs, affective needs, personal needs, social needs and tension release needs (Zolkepli and Kamarulzaman, 2015). Various studies have employed these needs to comprehend the uses and values of different media (Ko, Cho and Roberts, 2005; Papacharissi and Mendelson, 2011).

Studies that engaged UGT concentrates on media or media platforms that study media drives or media qualities with pertinent social and psychological backgrounds to view the concerns or effects related to the use of the media. Rubin (1983) identified nine recurring customer needs concerning television adoption including relaxation, companionship, entertainment, social interaction, information, habit, pastime, arousal, and escape. There are six needs that customers grow while engaging with relational communication media involving pleasure, affection, inclusion, escape, relaxation, and control (Rubin, Perse, and Barbato, 1988).

Furthermore, in computer-mediated communication, the study of Perse and Courtright (1993) found four kinds of needs involving relaxation, entertainment, self-awareness, and excitement. Consequently, exploring the use of computer connectivity to interconnect with other users through information services, Perse and Dunn (1998) discovered six needs including learning, entertainment, social interaction, escapism, passing time and out of habit. Likewise, the study of Zolkepli and Kamarulzaman (2015) suggested that SNMP use determined over three kinds of need classification involving personal, social and tension release.

Table 1 encapsulates some of the key foregoing empirical results relating to media needs, which offer a model in evolving the multidimensional formulation of SNMP selection. Grounded on this and because of the inherent participating nature of SNMPs that occurs in the online platform, the researcher accepts some of these needs as pertinent to the present setting. Therefore, the researcher has utilised them in collaboration with the HOET in evolving the existing study concept. These needs were verified in the survey questionnaire to examine whether they establish a key variable to describe SNMP selection.

Source	Medium	Media needs
Stafford, Stafford and Schkade, 2004	Internet	Entertainment, news, cognitive factor, search factor, unique factors
Ko, Cho and Roberts, 2005	Internet	Entertainment, information, social interaction, convenience
Diddi and La Rose, 2006	Internet news	Entertainment, news quizzes, escapism, pastime, habit, surveillance,
Haridakis and Hanson, 2009	Video-sharing website	Entertainment, convenient, information, social interaction, co-viewing,
Quan-Haase and Young, 2010	Facebook – instant Messaging	Passing the time, social information, sociability, fun, relationship preservation, relationship Improvement
Lee and Cho, 2011	Social media	Entertainment, interactivity, mobility, passing time, substitute, friendship, solitude, Popularity
Zolkepli and Kamarulzaman, 2011	Social media	Social integrative needs, tension release needs, personal integrative needs,
Zolkepli and Kamarulzaman, 2015	Social media	Enjoyment, entertainment, social influence, interaction, tension release, belongingness, companionship, playfulness
Gao and Feng, 2016	Social media	Information seeking, entertainment, social interaction, self-expression, and impression management.
Lee and Ma, 2012	Social media	Socialising, Information seeking, entertainment, status seeking and prior social media sharing experience
Lin, Salwen and Abdulla, 2005	Online news	Entertainment, interpersonal communication, information seeking, and information learning
Dunne, Lawlor and Rowley, 2010	Social networking sites	Entertainment, information search, peer acceptance, and relationship maintenance
Park, Kee, and Valenzuela, 2009	Social media	Information seeking, socialising, entertainment, and self-status seeking
Hausman and Siekpe, 2009	Website	Information, entertainment, irritation
Wang and Tchernev, 2012	Social media	Cognitive, Emotional, Social Habitual
Whiting and Williams, 2013	Social media	Information seeking, Entertainment Relaxation, Pass the time, Social interaction, Communicatory utility, Convenience utility, Expression of opinion Information sharing, Knowledge about others

Table 1. Earlier studies relating to media needs from 2004 to 2016.

2.8.1 Conceptualising SNMP Selection

SNM are social platforms that hitherto established a large number of customers and has achieved to entice Internet users more rapidly over all other online platforms concerning interaction and personalisation (Zolkepli and Kamarulzaman, 2015). In addition to understanding the perspectives of the SMMEs through the interviewing process, this study uses UGT to understand the views of the SNMPs actual users to gain an in-depth insight into the study. There are various fundamental concepts of UGT to study and identify users' needs and motives for using SNMPs. Various media adoption antecedents are studied from the realm of media. Consistent with UGT, this study is focused on identifying the user needs for using SNMPs.

2.8.2 Rationale - HOET and UGT Collaboration

To understand the factors of effective SNMP message that drives user's attitudes and behavioural intentions towards the brand, the researcher adopted the HOET in collaboration with the UGT. The HOET is taken to understand the different types of sequences that the users are likely to go through when exposed to a SNMP message while the UGT is focused on the needs/drives that lead to the users using the SNMPs initially. Traditionally, HOET has evolved from the context of advertising while UGT from the context of media. The purpose for the use of the HOET is to get a deep insight into the experiences, technique, and strategies applied by the SMMEs to favourably influencing the user's attitudes and behavioural intentions towards the brands SNMP messages. Whereas, the purpose for the use of UGT is to get insights and understandings from the perspectives of the actual users relating to why or what drives them to use or follow a brand through SNMPs and thus adopting their message. Consistently, this logic suggests that the sequences users go through when responding to a SNMP message can vary

depending on their personal, social and or psychological needs. In other words, the concept of HOET is to test its different sequences (e.g. (cognition → affect → conation) when designing a SNMP message that closely meets the preferences of a particular user or users of interest when processing a message through a SNMP. Subsequently, to favourably influencing the user's attitudes and intentions towards the message, this HOET sequence analysis process, starts before the user deciding between whether to buy or not to buy. Consequently, understanding each of the components of these sequences from the perspectives of UGT is vitally important before deciding on a particular sequence or element. Thus, this strategy is not complete or counterproductive without taking into the considerations of user perspectives relating to why they adopt a particular SNMP message in the first place.

2.9 The Role of Involvement

Involvement is a psychological factor that happens when an individual's attitude relating to the observed pertinence of the message offerings grounded on intrinsic wants, standards, and interests (Zaichkowsky, 1985; Laczniak, Muehling and Grossbart, 1989; Laczniak and Muehling, 1993). Richins and Bloch (1986) and Celsi and Olson (1988) define involvement as the observed personal relevance and is categorised as situational or enduring. In the context of this study, the situational involvement could mean when a brand creates stimuli, suggestions or contingencies such as offering a price discount for a limited time or helping a customer to accomplish a personally important goal and values. The enduring involvement tends to have an intrinsic base of personal importance. It has connections to previous experiences. For example, in the context of SMM to increase involvement, a brand could link a SNMP message to nostalgia experiences relating to a user or a particular group of users. Andrews, Durvasula, and Akhter (1990) describes involvement as a significant concept in the research of advertising, which has given

increase to many involvement-motivated frameworks such as HOET. Fundamentally, HOET postulates the cognition-affect-conation sequence (Smith, Jiemiao and Yang, 2008; Malär *et al.*, 2011). In line with this theory, Krugman (1965) has suggested a different and substantially acknowledged opinion amongst consumer scholars, which emphasises that increasing involvement does not rise resistance to influence, however instead changes the order of message effect (Yoo, Kim and Stout, 2004). In other words, high involvement means a message is expected to impact cognition, then behaviour, then attitudes (Ray *et al.*, 1973; Petty, Cacioppo and Schumann, 1983). Similarly, other studies proposed dissimilar steps of involvement are related with divergent sequences of influences on the known attitude modules of affect, behaviour, and cognition (Ray *et al.*, 1973; Calder, 1979; Greenwald and Leavitt, 1984).

The concept of involvement is not new. Researchers have considered the impact of involvement in advertising since the 1960s (i.e., Krugman, 1965). Nonetheless, with the arrival of new media platforms, growing message clutter, and progressively dubious customers, getting customers involved with the advertising message has become more complex. Hence, marketing researchers require reconsidering what is presently known regarding involvement in situations outside traditional product promotion (Kim, Haley and Koo, 2009). With ever-growing mixed-up and viable message setting, brands are pursuing methods to make their messages acknowledged and recalled. Consequently, they pursue to make marketing messages that involve the customer, appealing the customer to stopover, devote time, and become involved with the advertising message (Kim, Haley and Koo, 2009).

There are two distinct methods of undergoing and being involved through SNMPs. The first method is categorised through a lack of individual involvement, while the second method is categorised through a high level of individual involvement (Greenwald and Leavitt, 1984). Studies have proposed that involvement in an advertised

message has a significant influence on how brand attitudes are shaped, or altered (Laczniak, Muehling and Grossbart, 1989) and on information processing and exploration behaviour (Andrews, Durvasula and Akhter, 1990).

Despite various explanations of involvement, there is substantial agreement that with high involvement conditions, the message under concern has a high level of individual importance (i.e., exciting arguments and consequences) to the receiver than low involvement conditions whereby the individual importance of the message is relatively trivial (Sherif and Hovland, 1961; Petty, Cacioppo and Schumann, 1983; Greenwald and Leavitt, 1984). There is agreement that high involvement signifies individual relevance or meaning. Likewise, message effects can transpire through low involvement, and that the appliance of message influence for low and high involvement is dissimilar from one another. Nevertheless, academics have revealed little agreement concerning the hypothetical appliances of involvement, understanding it in terms of ideas such as degree of individual relations (Krugman, 1965), link to core values (Sherif and Hovland, 1961), peripheral vs. central cognitive routes (Petty and Cacioppo 1981) and complication of decision-making (Houston and Rothschild, 1977).

With the absence of agreement concerning the developments underlying differences in involvement, substantial doubt endures concerning what the ramification of involvement is as well as how antecedent variables affect involvement. There is also considerable doubt concerning how to employ the concept of involvement in envisaging consumers' reactions to variants in the advertising approach. This doubt follows the method, for instance, of hypothetical explanations that envisage bigger cognitive amendment (Krugman, 1965; Ray *et al*., 1973) as well as a bigger confrontation to cognitive amendment (Sherif and Hovland, 1961) with high involvement (Greenwald and Leavitt, 1984).

Message involvement is an individually detailed wherein a user involves in elaborative processing, creating relations concerning a message of an advertisement and facets of the individual's life (Greenwald and Leavitt, 1984; Muncy and Hunt, 1984; Laczniak, Muehling and Grossbart, 1989), a concept Krugman (1965) describes as "personal connections" or "bridging experiences." These relations are most common when information enclosed in the message is individually relevant (Zaichkowsky, 1985). In an advertisement processing setting, academics have discovered that the degree of involvement is favourably linked to persons' cognitive commitment in the advertisement (Petty, Cacioppo and Schumann, 1983). Discovering the information to be individually pertinent, a person is likely to dedicate stronger processing work and attentional ability to the contents of the advertisement (Laczniak, Muehling and Grossbart, 1989).

Consistent with the HOET, the high-involvement hierarchy (cognition→affect→ conation) which assumes that a user will conduct extensive research regarding key aspects of the message such as its content relevancy and or product offerings to subsequently create beliefs about the SNMP message. This hierarchy sequence proposes that a consumer is highly involved in creating his/her decision, which means s/he is interested in obtaining as much information as possible including searching for alternatives, and then prudently reaches a reflective decision (Solomon *et al.*, 2006). Message signals such as the strength of the claims made in the message have been identified as significant influencers of brand attitudes (Petty, Cacioppo and Schumann, 1983). The user will then create a feeling towards the message. In contrast, when the users are in a low involvement mood, there is a cognition → conation → affect sequence. When there is low involvement, the key objective of the message is to obtain users' attention through amongst others, source characteristics, music, and background (Laczniak, Muehling and Grossbart, 1989).

Formerly, one of the most prominent concepts in social psychology derives from Sherif, Sherif, and Nebergall (1965) which proposes that in any known situation highly involved individuals show more unfavourable assessments of a message as high involvement produces confrontation to cognitive change (Sherif and Hovland, 1961). Hence, received messages on involving subjects are believed to have an improved likelihood of being confronted, as they are most probably to fall within the undesirable collection of an individual's implied attitude range (Petty, Cacioppo and Schumann, 1983). However, consistent with studies that are more recent, this study claims that customer involvement towards products prompts responses to marketing and advertising incentives, as such high involvement customers are more determined in and more expectedly to buy a product (Karmarkar and Tormala, 2010; Wang, Yu and Wei, 2012). Therefore, high involvement consumers are more likely to express favourable attitudes toward product messages and buy it than consumers with low involvement (Wang, Yu, and Wei, 2012). When a phenomenon discussed in a message becomes increasingly important to the user, there is a higher probability that the user will undertake the cognitive effort to consider the message (Solomon *et al*., 2006).

2.10 Behavioural Intentions

2.10.1 Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM)

Sun *et al.*, (2006) defines e-WOM communication as an online opinion leadership, which underlines the process wherein people exercise prevailing influences upon others. In other words, e-WOM is an announcement presented by possible, current, or previous customers regarding a product or brand to a large target of people as well as organisations through the Internet (Hennig-Thurau *et al*., 2004). Further research by Jillian, Geoffrey, and Tim

(2013) explained e-WOM as the key factors influencing consumers' attitude, beliefs, and behaviour in the marketplace. WOM is the none-formal message by consumers about their assessments of products and services to other consumers (Higie, Feick and Price, 1987; Anderson, 1998; Tang and Guo, 2015). It is generally communicating, summary, and missing in profitmaking favouritism, which has a strong effect on consumer behaviour (East, Hammond and Lomax, 2008). Kozinets *et al.*, (2010) defined Word of Mouth Marketing (WOMM) as the deliberate influencing customer to customer (C2C) communications by skilled marketing strategists, and it is also known as SMM, viral marketing, buzz, and guerrilla marketing (Sernovitz, 2006). WOM is considered as the main platform for contagion (Rapp *et al.*, 2013), as opinion leaders with their disproportionate influences use SNMP messages to accelerate product adoption and thus expediting contagion (Iyengar et al., 2011). The term contagion is derived from the medical concept of contagion, with the effect that behaviour analogous to a disease is contagious and can grow progressively (Rapp *et al.*, 2013).

SNMPs are good tools for e-WOM, as users create and disseminate brand-related information to their associates, peers, and other contacts without limits (Godey *et al.*, 2016). Aligned with UGT, self and social drives steer consumer's intention to participate in WOM (Alexandrov, Lilly and Babakus, 2013). Consumers diffuse WOM with those whom they have robust social connections (Ryu and Feick, 2007). A psychological incentive for people to disseminate positive WOM is to obtain social and self-approval through showing their satisfactory purchases as well as their altruistic behaviour such as caring by sharing (Richins, 1983).

SNMPs offer users online exchanges, enabling the distribution of thoughts, events, and interest in individual networks and these platform services work as WOM because its users repeat the information (Zhaveri, 2013). SMM is a special form of e-WOM marketing that motivates and eases consumers to create positive attitudes towards

brands/products as well as enabling the forwarding of the advertising messages to family, friends, and associates on SNMPs (Gunawan and Huarng, 2015). Brands desire positive word of mouth as a means to affect their users, because when a SNMP user search information online, they perceive products and service information offered through other users in SNMPs more valued over information offered though marketers (De Vries, Gensler, and Leeflang, 2012; Coyle and Strahilevitz, 2013; Fu, Ju, and Hsu, 2015). As such, the informal and relational nature of WOM makes it an influential and credible message source (Harrison-Walker, 2001). Similarly, consumers become skilled at distinguishing between a recommendation forwarded by a consumer or an agent (Coyle and Strahilevitz, 2013). WOM information enables the user to quickly realise the risks and uncertainties involved in making a product purchase decision, which subsequently perceived to be credible (Murray, 1991; Reichheld and Schefter, 2000; Urban, Sultan and Qualls, 2000).

Besides, e-WOM makes the size of information transmission broader and larger compared to traditional media. The rise of SNMPs leads to brands to invest largely in building connections with customers to create the full influence of e-WOM, as knowing how e-WOM created on SNMPs offer marketing communicators objective insights (Fu, Ju, and Hsu, 2015). Brands and individuals have used SNMPs for forwarding updates including their marketing and advertising undertakings relating to their followers as well as bring them together. The ability of these platforms in diffusing information across large follower based networks offer initiators with the high response rate in short periods (Fu, Ju, and Hsu, 2015).

Huang *et al.*, (2011) explained that WOM transformation from a spoken message to the online message had transformed WOM from person to person to between networks. One of the e-WOM characteristics that vary from traditional WOM is that there is little or no boundaries to time, geography and location in e-WOM effects (Cheung *et al.*, 2009),

and this only enhances the possibility of ripple effect (Huang *et al.*, 2011). Ripple effect is an occurrence that spreads advertising messages more substantially because of the message recipient's decision to diffuse the message via their social networks (Cheema and Kaikati, 2010; Huang *et al.*, 2011).

Furthermore, a study by Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, (2010) stated that e-WOM on online SNMPs are replacing the traditional face-to-face WOM as the driver of consumer behaviour in which Internet networks are becoming key tools for CRM. SNMPs concentrate on written and recording of individual messages that leads to building ties within their social network (Eisingerich *et al*., 2015). This provides individuals with the time to effectively prepare themselves to others when interacting on SNMPs and therefore diffuse information and express sentiments more freely and at a time and location that is most suitable to them (Sun *et al.*, 2006; Berger and Iyengar, 2013).

WOM through SNMPs has become an important force for the brand suggestion between consumers, encouraging a growing number of brands to advertise their products and services over SNMPs with the aim to motivate consumer interactions, increase consumer loyalty, and obtain potential customers (Hoffman and Fodor, 2010; Liu and Lopez, 2016). Through enabling WOM, SNMPs have considerably changed the balance of advertising communication from only brands to consumers (traditional marketing) to among consumers in various consumer markets.

2.10.2 Purchase Intention (PI)

Purchase intention is an attitudinal variable for measuring customers' future contributions to a brand, a combination of consumers' interest in and the likelihood of purchasing a product (Kim and Ko, 2012). It is robustly related to attitude and preference towards a product or a brand (Kim & Johnson, 2010). It is also defined as a likelihood wherein

depends on whether a customer intends to buy a specific product (Grewal, Monroe, and Krishnan, 1998). In social media, the probability of a customer to purchase a product depends predominantly on the values offered in the product as well as the suggestions shared by other users. As such, message posts designed by brands in collaboration with consumer WOM steers the recipients to naturally promote and suggest the brand to others (Dehghani and Tumer, 2015). The concept of the intention and the behaviour is explained by The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) that are explained in the following sections.

2.10.3 Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) originated by Fishbein and Ajzen in 1975 and further improved in 1980. TRA was introduced to study behaviour in social psychology in which posits that behaviour is inspired through behavioural intentions (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). This theory proposes that when deciding a particular behaviour, consumer intention is effected through two factors involving attitude and social approval (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Ajzen, 2005; Erkan and Evans, 2016). In other words, the user's attitude towards a particular circumstance combined with social approval forms the behavioural intention, in which successively effects the user's actual behaviour (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980).

Behaviour is the change of intention into explicit action (Chatzidakis, Hibbert and Smith, 2007; Linda Jane Col*eman et al*., 2011). Consistent with the TRA, behavioural intention denotes to the intention of the user to undertake a particular activity. Intention is the likelihood that a person will engage in a specific behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; Lu, Fan and Zhou, 2016). Intention is the best forecaster of behaviour, and accordingly, to change a specific behaviour towards a SNMP, a brand must first change the intention to perform

that behaviour (Erkan and Evans, 2016). Attitude denotes to the favourable or unfavourable feelings related to undertaking the activity, and social approval denotes to how individuals (e.g., reference groups, family, friends and relatives) who are important to this user will view s/he as they undertake the activity (Karahanna, Straub and Chervany, 1999; Lin, 2007; Hernández, Jiménez and M. Martín, 2010).

2.10.4 Critics of TRA

TRA is viewed to be a well-studied model and has proven popular in clarifying and envisaging the behaviour through dissimilar areas. Despite being a very common theory, Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw (1989) posit that the TRA has worked as a basis for further technology acceptance models. It connects the opinions, norms, and attitudes concerning the behavioural intentions of an individual when making a decision and subsequently predicting the actual behaviour. A criticised view of this model is not taking into consideration the individual's capability to leverage the behaviour (Yusuf and Derus, 2013). Moreover, the theory enables no direct reflection when used. It is used merely with self-reported information, which according to Taylor and Todd (1995) is perceived to be subjective. Poss (2001) also assessed TRA by highlighting the absence of justification of behaviour.

Ajzen reviewed the theory and added the third component known as the perceived behavioural control (see Figure 1), thus presenting the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985). TPB constructed to envisage behaviours whereby users lack having control. The behavioural intention can express in behaviour merely when the user has the necessary capabilities and means required to carry out the behaviour in question (Ajzen, 1991). The new element focused on reinforcing the initial concept by studying the influence of behavioural control on the intention to do the target behaviour. Consistent

with TRA and TPB, behavioural intention is regarded as the originator of actual behaviour (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen, 1985; Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw, 1989; Erkan and Evans, 2016). However, the critics of this view are that a consumer might not purchase the product or service despite having the intention to buy (Sun and Morwitz, 2010; Erkan and Evans, 2016).
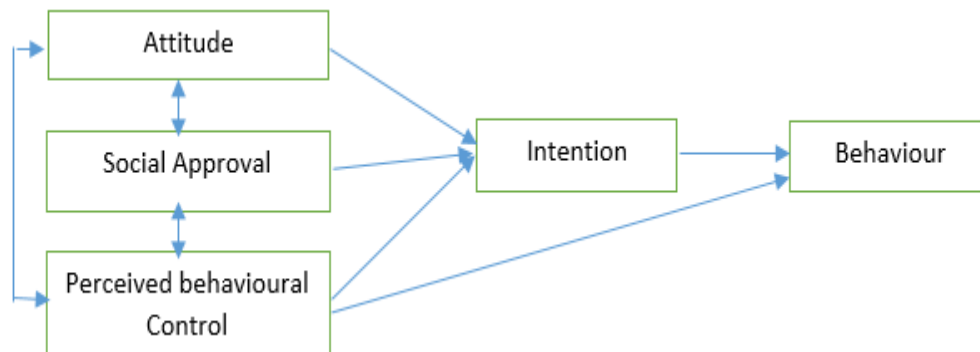
Figure 1: The concepts of the TPB (Ajzen, 1991).

2.10.5 Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

The elementary proposition of the TPB is to comprehend a customer's selection behaviour; it is important to study their attitudes and intentions initially. The TPB is descriptive and foretelling and considered a multi-attribute since a user can simultaneously have a number of attitudes concerning a brand. In addition to the two components of TRA (e.g., attitude and social approval), the perceived behavioural control component of the TPB denotes with a user's perspective of the simplicity of doing a specific behaviour (Trafimow and Finlay, 1996). Furthermore, Darker *et al.*, (2007) refers to the perceived behavioural control as the degree whereby a user senses that the behaviour is easy to make and under his/her control. An instance is that when the

competitiveness of adopting a SNMP message perceived to be high or complex, the user is unlikely to shape robust intention to do that behaviour.

The influence of perceived behavioural control (e.g., having the skills, facilities and other means to perform a particular act or behaviour), social approval and attitude concerning the behaviour together influence behaviour. A person's opinions regarding the influence of internal and external aspects to prevent or ease the behaviour are decided through control. Internal control denotes to the person's ownership of the talents and competencies necessary to execute the behaviour, whereas external control denotes to the obtainability of means and chances that enable the behaviour. One challenge of the TPB is that a user needs to be inspired to execute a particular behaviour, which is considered to be a disadvantage of studying adoption behaviour (Taylor and Todd, 1995).

2.10.6 Attitude and Social Approval

Attitude and social approval are decided by opinions regarding the effects of the behaviour and opinions regarding the view of particular important people, respectively. According to Trafimow and Finlay (1996, p. 821), the opinions that are assumed to control attitudes (example, ''my father will disagree with me if I perform the behaviour'') cannot be differentiated from those that are assumed to control social approval (example, ''my father thinks I should not perform the behaviour'') and subsequently difference is not necessary. Subsequently, and despite previous research frequently using TRA to study the link concerning e-WOM and purchase intention (Reichelt, Sievert and Jacob, 2014; Erkan and Evans, 2016), in this research, behavioural intention is chosen in preference to behaviour. This is because the main focus has been given to the relationship between attitude and behavioural intention and thus social approval has been applied as a

component of interactivity, operationalised as an antecedent of attitude as depicted in Figure 2. Consistent with TRA, the current study predicts that a person's intention to perform in a specific demeanour relies on their intention as a meaning of the beliefs that an explicit behaviour will steer to a specific result.

Figure 2: Grounded on TRA, adapted from Ajzen and Fishbein (1980).

2.11 Chapter Summary

In chapter two, an in-depth literature review relevant to the subject of SMM is undertaken. The literature search was focused on several research questions relating to the SNMP message factors and strategies that brands use to favourably influence user attitudes and behavioural intentions. The literature reveals that research providing a full comprehension of how brands influence user attitudes and behavioural intentions using SNMPs in Online Brand Communities has yet to be undertaken. In particular the factors that determine the effectiveness of the SNMP in the marketing of brands have not been fully assessed up to this point. The role of attitude, the HOET, the role of involvement, the UGT and the TRA were studied and reflected upon, as a basis for investigating this. The role of attitude is considered because the identification of effective messages requires understanding the key factors that could lead to positive user attitudes and behavioural intentions. The literature found that attitudes could be influenced through effects of the consumer cognition - affect - conation model. The limitations of this approach, including the interdependency of the different effects, suggests that an alternative framework may be more appropriate. The HOET was found to provide a more comprehensive option in

proposing that various sequences of consumer attitudes may be influenced. Furthermore, the role of user involvement suggests that the more a consumer is involved in a SNMP message for a brand, the higher the probability of this consumer responding favourably towards the message. Moreover, the UGT is also found to be important relating to SMM because the theory suggests that users use SNMPs to satisfy psychological needs and comprehending these are important for the creation of effective SNMP messages and strategies. The TRA is used to explain purchase intention which proposes that intentions are the best predictors of the behaviour. In other words, to lead a user to buy a product, the brand needs to increase the user's intentions towards that product first. Finally, a research gap identified in the literature indicated the need for more qualitative research on effective SNMP messages (Alves, Fernandes and Raposo, 2016).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter Outline

In this chapter, epistemological assumptions basing the research and methodological approaches commenced in the study are demonstrated. The chapter clarifies different interconnected aspects of the research in a demeanour that depicts their sequence. The methodologies and methods employed in the study are acknowledged and assessed, and arguments for selecting one approach over others are reported. The chapter identifies four key aspects involving theoretical assumptions that are the basis of the research, the paradigm of inquiry, the research design, and the research analysis theory and procedures.

First, the research philosophy and research strategies are discussed including their methodological and epistemological assumptions. The strengths and limitation of each paradigm of inquiry are assessed relating to this research realm in order to place this study in the most appropriate paradigm and epistemological stance. Subsequently, a critical analysis regarding research methodologies is conducted aligned with the research focus, with justifications of how each methodology is advocated or rejected in line with the research.

Subsequently, the evaluation of various research designs is discussed including qualitative and quantitative and followed by explanations about mixed method design. Justifications for the relevancy of the exploratory sequential mixed method design is given for this study. Also, detailed explanations about the data collection methods (e.g., semi-structured interviews, survey questionnaires) and data analysis theories (e.g., thematic analysis) and procedures are presented. Finally, the ethical considerations that were set out prior to the start of the research are discussed.

3.2 Paradigm of Inquiry

Paradigms of inquiry are a key phenomenon that structure how the research is mapped out and carried out (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006; Fellows and Liu, 2008). Collis and Hussey (2014) define a research paradigm as a philosophical framework that steers how scientific research should be undertaken. Guba and Lincoln, (1994, 105) explain paradigm as the "basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator." In other words, a paradigm is a method to investigate social phenomena from which certain knowledge of these phenomena can be understood, and explanations tried (Grix, 2004; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Paradigms work as an instructor for academics in a particular subject, which leads to an understanding of the phenomenon under study. It helps in deciding the appropriate study methods and methodologies and providing epistemological views for undertaking the research subject in question (Filstead, 1979). Subsequently, for research to be grounded holistically (e.g., research questions, hypotheses, data collection methods, analysis and data interpretation and presenting the findings) identifying the philosophical paradigm from the start is necessary. The decisions taken on undertaking these research stages depend on the philosophical perspective a researcher follows (Creswell, 2014). Philosophy is defined as ''a set of system of beliefs stemming from the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence'' (Waite and Hawker, 2009, 685).

Research paradigms allow studies to be analysed and interpreted through different perspectives and holds assumptions and wording controlling research procedures. Paradigms are created by academics that have analogous beliefs and assumptions regarding what contributes to reality and also a system of knowledge acquisition and building (Hinshaw, 1996). Hence, each paradigm identifies how knowledge is accomplished, interpreted and established in its belief. The literature has discussed and demonstrated paradigms of inquiry through three key features, which include the aim of

inquiry, ontological assumptions and epistemological stances (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). These distinguishing characteristics will help to identify which research paradigm is suitable for this study, as it depends on what the investigator wishes to determine. This is further important because reasoning the philosophical stance will increase the research credibility (Crotty, 1998). Consequently, research paradigms are taken into consideration at the start of the study to create a foundation for following the selection of research methods and research design.

Paradigms originally stem from Kuhn (1962) in which focused mainly on the impact of paradigms in the past of natural sciences. Academics support that theory of paradigms is a key influencer on the philosophy and methodology within social sciences (Creswell and Plano, Clark, 2007; Collis and Hussey, 2009). Paradigm is characterised as a holistic system of thinking (Neuman, 2011). Hence, paradigm links to the established research paradigms in a specific research field (Mouton, 1996) or a philosophical framework (Collis and Hussey, 2009). A paradigm of inquiry encompasses theories, methods, models, and methodologies since it is regarded as a framework for analysing and comprehending (Guba, 1990; Creswell and Plano, Clark, 2007; Babbie, 2010). Paradigms are considered to play an important role in social science because paradigms are a range of assumptions that lead to action.

This research concentrates on the paradigm that guides a theoretical and a methodical inquiry in which according to Howell (2013) and Guba (1990) is categorised as ontology, epistemology, and methodology. The question of how knowledge obtained is epistemologically oriented, the question of what exists out there relates to ontology while the question of how the researcher plans to discover knowledge is methodologically oriented (Guba, 1990; Grix, 2004). The researcher required to define how knowledge and truth are viewed and to what level is the reality can be known (Hughes and Sharrock, 1997).

3.3 Ontological Assumptions of the Research

Ontology is some assumptions created regarding the reality and the demeanour it works (Bryman, 1984; Bryman and Bell, 2015). Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009) note that ontology is a theory regarding the nature of social phenomena and centralises the questions of the assumptions researchers set regarding the way the world functions and assurances kept to certain perspectives. Ontology concentrates on the nature of reality, and this leads to query the predictions observers have regarding the way reality exists and the strengths towards certain beliefs (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Ontological views are necessary, as it is not possible to research reality without having beliefs regarding the subject under study (Bryman, 1984). Therefore, making this ontological hypothesis explicit is important to foresee how knowledge can be obtained as well as what the researcher views to be as knowledge, for example, epistemology (Bryman, 1984). In other words, ontology is a science that mirrors how a social actor comprehends what creates truth, and it fundamentally assesses if an object is considered as being real or relative. The term realism implies that there is a social phenomenon that exists regardless of the social actor.

On the other hand, relativism holds that reality is constructed by social actors (Bulmer, 1984). Ontology intentions are to decide whether there are certainties can be guaranteed towards all potential doubt or if ultimately one cannot be assured of anything (Hughes and Sharrock, 1997). The investigator wants to explain how truth and knowledge are observed and the level of how much can be recognised about truth.

3.4 Dimensions of Ontology: Objectivism and Subjectivism

The two common approaches to understanding reality are through objective and subjective approaches (Dancy *et al*., 2010). Objectivism argues that social entities and

phenomena do not depend on social actors, and therefore exists regardless of their representativeness (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). In contrast, subjectivism argues that social entities and phenomena exist because of social actors (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Objectivism is based on facts and none biased. Thus there is limited interaction between the investigator and the investigated for the researcher to remain value-free regarding the research studied and its outcome (Remenyi *et al.*, 1998). Alternatively, subjectivism is based on opinions, and biased whereby depends on sentiments and viewpoints, which requires a close relationship between the research and researched (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).

From an objective stance, researchers use pre-defined research tools such as questionnaires and structured interviews among others, for data collection. On the other hand, the subjective approach assumes that researchers understand and create meaning through interaction between the investigator and the social phenomena studied (Collis and Hussey, 2009). This implies that pre-defined research tools are avoided in order to remain a subjective stance that allows reality to be created through interaction (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). When focusing on this research, the two approaches of knowing can contribute to the research results. Subjective approach is advocated at the start of the research so that to obtain in-depth comprehension relating to various SNMP message factors and strategies through inter-subjective interaction with SMMEs.

The overall objective of the subjective approach at the inception is to confirm that study tools at the subsequent are as comprehensive as possible. This is particularly important when at the early stage of the research, little information regarding the social phenomena under investigation is known since the phenomena are either little or incorrectly conceptualised (van Manen, 1990; Jasper, 1994). This would enable identifying a complete list of measures and factors, which is subsequently analysed through the objective stance.

While aiming to obtain generalisable outcomes, it is necessary for the sample to be representative of the study population (Creswell, 2014). The capability to obtain generalisable outcomes would improve the research value. Nevertheless, this requires a high volume of participants, which is timely and costly if not done through pre-designed study mechanisms (Gay, Mills and Airasian, 2008). The researcher took an objective stance in the research when using this approach. Subsequently, this research applied subjective as well as objective epistemologies at its qualitative and quantitative phases respectively. The subjective epistemology enabled the researcher to gain a comprehensive list of SNMP message factors with impacts towards attitudes and behavioural intentions, while the objective epistemology enabled testing the practicability of those message factors towards developing practically confirmed practices for improving marketing through SNMPs.

3.5 Epistemological Stance of the Research

Epistemology derives from the Greek word episteme, which means knowledge and symbols (Carlsnaes, Risse and Simmons, 2012). Epistemology concerns with ''the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known'' (Guba and Lincoln, 1998, p. 201). In other words, epistemology explains how the investigator understands his/her connection with what can be learned (Guba and Lincoln, 2005) and what creates satisfactory knowledge (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). An epistemological issue relates to the query of what is or should be viewed as traditional knowledge within a domain (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Epistemological predictions can relate to the nature of knowledge and the types of knowledge that will be produced by the study plan. The study plan will create knowledge around many realities, the dissimilar reality whereby each interviewee experiences within their work (Quinlan *et al.*, 2015).

Research is impacted by philosophical notions even when they are rarely defined explicitly (Creswell, 2009). Epistemology quantitative approach is usually more fixed and can be obtained at different times in various settings, which typically leads to outcomes with an increased level of reliability. Moreover, the epistemologically quantitative study is greatly affected by a natural science (e.g., molecules, atoms, chemicals, gases, metals) method in which the definition of an acceptable knowledge is debated (Bryman, 2016). Epistemologically, the qualitative study underlines meaning and comprehension of social occurrences and value related and subjective truth overgeneralisation; this view postulates that the social world is created through the sympathies and engagement of social entities/actors. Most qualitative situations are created on the ontological hypothesis that external realities cannot be objectively understood because of the view that realities can only be conceived through interpretation (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Moreover, epistemologically in qualitative research, face-to-face communications have been widely viewed as the completest forms of the researcher's involvement in getting to know the research participant's thoughts and views.

Involving in the positions of others is another approach to obtaining social knowledge. Seeking to understand from the perspectives of others is closely aligned to interpretivism and shows the epistemological connections to phenomenology, verstehen and symbolic interactionism (Bryman, 2016). With this paradigm, the interview's focus was to explore data on surroundings, views, thoughts, and attitudes that individuals have in common (Collis and Hussey, 2014). Qualitative studies are more affected by interpretivism — topic issues relating to the social sciences (i.e., people and their social reality). For example, while the aspects of exploration of the natural sciences cannot give meaning to occasions and their setting, humans do. This is because unlike the aspects of the natural sciences, in interpretivism humans can give meaning to their situations

(Bryman, 2016). Therefore, several qualitative academics have proposed that an approach is needed for studying people that reveals these variances among people and the aspect of natural sciences. This has led to several qualitative examiners advocating the view that is experiencing social reality through the perspectives of persons under study (Bryman, 2016). This means that people are capable of expressing their views of the social word surrounding their situations and therefore their perspectives of that situation need to be listened, interpreted and reflected (Bryman, 2016). Table 2 portrays the differences between quantitative and qualitative researches (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

Research approaches	Qualitative	Quantitative
Principal orientation to the role of theory about research	Deductive: testing of theory	Inductive; generation of theory
Epistemological orientation	Natural science model, in particular positivism	Interpretivism
Ontological orientation	Objectivism	Constructionism

Table 2. Quantitative and Qualitative Research Differences.

3.6 Types of Paradigms of Inquiry

There are various paradigms of inquiry. In the social sciences, amongst others, Guba (1990) and Guba and Lincoln (1994) proposes five key paradigms of inquiry involving positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, constructivist and participatory. Guba and Lincoln (1994) distinguished paradigms between positivism, post-positivism, critical theory and constructivism. These paradigms are varied in their rationale of how philosophy can be shaped. In other words, how the paradigm of inquiries practice concepts of mirroring reality, truth and knowledge changes (Kincaid, 1996). Traditionally, positivist and interpretivist have been used as the key paradigms within the

46

marketing research. The researcher's selection amongst these paradigms is reliant on the nature of the study question and researchers chosen methods for studying the research question (Grix, 2004). The next section starts with explanations relating to positivism, post-positivism, interpretivism, critical theory and critical realism.

3.6.1 Positivism

Positivism is frequently linked with scientific study primarily adopting quantitative data and follows the rules of science (Lastrucci, 1963). The positivist perspective suggests that it is possible to establish social science grounded on similar values as natural science. The positivism paradigm argues that reality occurs independently of the investigator (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Hence, it is epistemologically objective, on the assumption that the investigator is studying the entity without being influenced or influencing the entity. According to Krauss (2005), the key aim of the positivist stance is to clarify, forecast and regulate through detecting and determining appropriate elements to create the causes and effects of particular links. Positivists opine that merely information derived from rational and statistical approach is considered as real knowledge (Guba and Lincoln, 1994) with knowledge deriving from universal laws that are considered unchanged.

Likewise, in a positivist stance words are operationalised into numbers, which can be measured. This is consistent with a deductive approach to the inquiry (Tribe, 2001). Accordingly, positivism is based on a realism ontology in which rational is independent of reality, an objective epistemology, theory testing opposed to theory creation, mostly use quantitative data collection and analysis techniques, methical approach to data validity, and operationalisation of words (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). This positivism stance, therefore, allows for the study to be generalised.

The drive of the positivist approach is that relationships between variables are analysed, which in this study relates to the link between SNMP message factors and attitude. However, this study does not require the forecasting and regulating features of positivism. Moreover, in contrast to the study of Solomon *et al.*, (2006), the theory of positivism according to Howell (2013) pursues laws, and this is not possible in research studies relating to human behaviour. Creswell (2002) supports this by noting that positivism is not suitable when studying the attitude and responses of people. Besides, positivism limits the study to gain an in-depth understanding, which is a key point of this research. Also, positivism in the social sciences is a relatively dated paradigm of inquiry, which has been substituted by post-positivism (Howell, 2013). Hence, despite that, positivism can address the quantitative stage of this study; however, it does not provide a whole solution to the research questions.

3.6.2 Post-positivism

Post-positivism does not assume that reality can be totally understood as it criticises the absolute truth of knowledge (Creswell, 2002; Howell, 2013). Post-positivism criticises the full understanding of existing reality, as individuals are unable to totally understand the truth (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). In other words, the theory argues that reality can only be approximated. Within a post-positivists perspective, a theory is a securer the more it prohibits and when it can be contradicted through an occasion. The testability of a concept is its refutability (Popper, 1963). Development is planned for by falsification through discovering new opinions, and that might request the most established or current hypothetical clarification (Howell, 2013). In post-positivism, existing theories are used to develop hypotheses, which subsequently will be tested (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill,

2009). This is a deductive approach which is also known as the top-down approach, whereby the existing theories are tested through quantitative methods (Wilson, 2014).

The concept of post-positivism includes the rational after positivism through assessing the traditional opinion of the outright reality of knowledge (Phillips and Burbules, 2000) and founding that while studying behaviour and activities of people, it is not possible to be "positive" around the knowledge generated (Creswell, 2009). The post-positivism aims to study real-world issues and changes positivism from a limited viewpoint into a more incorporating method (Henderson, 2011). Post-positivists realises the necessity to recognise and measure the reasons that affect results (Creswell, 2009). There is a move from merely one truth to various explanations of truth (Howell, 2013) and an opinion that concepts are satisfactory for a certain period do not necessarily remain for infinity and can be substitutable (Popper, 1963).

This shadows the ontological viewpoint of the critical realist (Howell, 2013). This paradigm is an expansion from the inexperienced examiner who assumes that truth can be absolutely understood (Howell, 2013). Positivism and post-positivism identify concept as discovery connections between non-concrete views and experiential observations, therefore an empiricist opinion of concept expansion. It is important to recognise that positivism and post-positivism are viewed as a continuum rather than being evidently defined in history (Howell, 2013).

Epistemology post-positivism directs this research to aim for minimising its interaction with the research participants, which is important to remain factual based on investigations and not on opinions. However, the total separation is not possible. In post-positivism, values overcome through scientific procedures as values and beliefs of the investigator are not vital (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Therefore, the researcher and the research are distinct (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). Epistemologically post-positivism acknowledges that the total discarding of interaction between the researcher and research

is not possible. However, objectivity remains crucial (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Likewise, post-positivism spreads a concept into a smaller group of concepts to assess factors for example study hypotheses and study questions. Using numerous observations and studying the attitude of social actors are the most important aspect for post-positivism (Creswell, 2008).

Causes determine the current research results since the SNMP message factors (cause) will affect consumers' attitudes and behavioural intentions (outcome, e.g., purchase intention). Although adopting this approach could have been useful in the early stages of the research, it would have fallen short in covering the first and second parts of this study.

3.6.3 Interpretivism

Interpretivism studies a particular social phenomenon that takes place in a specific time and place. In contrast to positivism, the interpretivist explores the reasoning, interpretations and rationale and other subjective experiences that are taking place in a particular time and place (Bulmer, 1984; Hudson and Ozanne, 1998). Interpretivism underlines that the subjective experience and the researcher able to create their own meaning by their own and shared cultural experiences (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Therefore, the researcher works closely with the investigated social phenomena since it is not possible to distinguish reality in social world from what exists in the researcher's mind (Smith, 1983; Collis and Hussey, 2009; Creswell, 2014). This requires the researcher to employ any method, which is not derived from a statistical analysis of quantitative data (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Rather, the findings come from the analyses of qualitative research data (Collis and Hussey, 2014). Solomon, Bamossy, and Askegaard (1999) state that interpretivist is a paradigm that has been developed to

criticise the positivist paradigm. The view here is advocating the idea that everyone has a distinctive reality. This means each person has its own distinctive life experiences, ideas and set of situations, which subsequently interpret the world differently (Quinlan *et al.*, 2015). The framework of interpretivism is developed when research intends to explore thought, feeling and beliefs of the participants about the phenomenon under study. Each person will have an answer or interact with the research in a distinctive and personal demeanour (Quinlan *et al.*, 2015).

Despite the first stage of this research requires a subjective epistemology to comprehend and obtain a complete list of testable elements; however, the study is not underpinned by the relative ontology — this study required to create practically tested measures without the research bias that exists within an interpretivism paradigm. This argues that interpretivism philosophy is merely able to address the inception of the research and lacks objectivism, which is necessary at the later stage of the research. Therefore, a holistic option is not obtained by merely taking an interpretivist stance. Table 3 exhibits the difference between positivist and interpretivist approaches.

Assumptions	Positivist	Interpretivist
Epistemological		
Knowledge generated	Time free Context-independent	Time-bound Context-dependent
View of causality	The existence of real causes	Multiple simultaneous shaping events
Research relationship	A separation between researcher and subject	Interactive, co-operative with the researcher being part of phenomena under study
Ontological		
Nature of reality	Objective, tangible Single	Socially constructed Multiple
Goal	Prediction	Understanding
Methodology		
Techniques used by the researcher	Formalised statistical and mathematical method predominant	Primarily qualitative

Table 3: Positivist and interpretivist approaches **(**Hudson and Ozanne, 1998).

3.6.4 Critical Theory

Critical theory is a philosophical obligation and assumed belief system that is regarding criticism of social normalcy with a perspective to shift and relocate influence. Unlike positivism and interpretivism, the aim of this theory is not to comprehend, reflect on the forecast, rather alter it. Therefore, study adopting critical theory is assumed to be practical, explanatory and normative. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007), this implies that it has to decipher what is incorrect regarding the current activities, select and give the necessary strategies to obtain the anticipated social change. Ontologically, this theory according to Guba and Lincoln (1994) takes a historical and critical realism stance, while it is epistemologically contextual. It collects information by review of current entities towards changing, controlling or altering it while using both qualitative and quantitative methods to obtain the intended outcomes.

Studies in SMM rarely adopt a critical theory position, as most research in this realm are only concerned with causal associations. Similarly, SMM studies objective is to enhance, generalise and predict measures that are capable of developing, contrasting to modification or legislate, SMM activities, which might not be entirely comprehended through interpretivist and critical theory. Consequently, since this study does not seek to modify or legislate the current activities in the industry, the paradigm of critical theory is not regarded as suitable for this research.

3.6.5 Critical Realism

The most well-known philosophy for mixed-methods research design is critical realism (Mingers, 2001; Venkatesh, Brown and Bala, 2013). Critical realism is mainly regarded as a middle between positivism and interpretivism. Critical realism encompasses different

methodological approaches from various philosophical stances by placing "a critical stance towards the necessity and validity of current social arrangements" without pursuing the existing paradigms assumptions, as they are now (Mingers, 2001, p. 248).

Guba and Lincoln (1994) denote critical realism as an ontological supposition of post-positivism philosophy. According to Krauss (2005) and Yeung (1997), this theory has become a more popular research paradigm. Bygstad and Munkvold (2011) posit that critical realism does not aim to expose universal rule nor to comprehend indiscretion, it rather aims to expose, comprehend and explain mechanisms that cause a happening. According to Krauss (2005) and Sayer (1992), positivism, as well as interpretivism, assume a single or multiple reality respectively, while critical realism takes into consideration numerous views to a single reality, whereby rational-independent. Subsequently, the realist has similar ontology as positivism and shares similarities in epistemology with the interpretivist stance.

While aiming to study the fundamental tools that encourage an impact and activity in the dominion of critical realism, both qualitative and quantitative methods can be employed (Healy and Perry, 2000). Therefore, both structured and unstructured data, as well as statistical analysis and modelling, are characteristics of critical realism (Krauss, 2005). However, the fundamental elements of a critical realist study is that it focuses on analyzing relationships between dependent and independent variables, analysis of instruments that are underpinning an occurrence, activity, causal link, employment of qualitative and quantitative approach and finally both numerous views to a single reality (Sayer, 2000; Krauss, 2005).

Critical realism is a moderately new philosophical stance that provides a major alternative to the existing paradigms of positivism and interpretivism (McEvoy and Richards, 2003, 2006). For critical realists, the key objective of the research is neither to seek universal laws as aligned with positivism nor to decipher the actual feelings and

principles of social actors as aligned with interpretivism. Rather, it aims to create higher levels of explanation and understanding.

The reasoning that lays the foundation for critical realism is referred to as "retroduction." This includes shifting from the degree of observations and actual undergoing to assume regarding the fundamental structures and procedures that control for the phenomena (Mingers, 2003). Retroduction is defined as ''a mode of analysis in which events are studied with respect to what may have, must have or could have caused them. Hence, it implies inquiring why occurrences happen in the way it did'' (Olsen and Morgan, 2004, p, 25). Critical realists note that the characteristic of the research matter should govern the selection of methods. Generally, it is argued that employing both quantitative and qualitative methods or techniques is the best way. However, the emphasis is on how these methods are utilised in a critical realist stance (Mcevoy and Richards, 2006).

The advantage of quantitative methods is that they allow to create trustworthy narration and give correct contrasts. In the exploratory stage of research, quantitative methods can recognise systems and linkages that might have been hidden otherwise. This enables to identify new and unpredicted causal mechanisms. Quantitative methods are further used to test theories through regarding how a causal mechanism functions in specific contexts (Mingers, 2004). The main advantage of qualitative methods, from a critical realist stance, is that they are open-ended. Through the questionings of the research participants, new themes might arise which are unexpected. Furthermore, qualitative methods allow clarifying complex phenomenon and links that are difficult to be identified through a pre-set response group or standardised quantitative measures.

Consistent with Sayer (2000), in this study, critical realism is applicable as it aims to comprehend a mechanism creating an activity. This has realist ontology and argues that there are various ways to comprehend a single rational-independent reality (Yeung,

1997). Despite that critical realism is linked with a subjective epistemology (Krauss, 2005), it allows the employment of qualitative as well as quantitative approach to collect and analyse data (Healy and Perry, 2000; Sayer, 2000). Hence, support the use of both subjective and objective approaches, which is necessary for this study in the first and second stage respectively. Aligned with critical realism, this research aims to reveal aspects that can create a model, which can lead to enhancing marketing through SNMP messages. In line with the current research, Sayer (2000) states that a critical realist starts with a qualitative approach and finalises it through a broader approach such as a quantitative approach.

The study first started with a qualitative research approach on SMMEs through semi-structured in-depth interviews. This qualitative approach allowed this study to reveal what causes incidents in particular situations. In contrast, the quantitative approaches analysed the immensity of an experience within a large population (Sayer, 2000), in which a survey questionnaire subsequently followed to measure this. While aspects of interpretivism and positivism are used at the first and second stage of this research respectively, explorative and explanatory and analytical instruments provided through qualitative and quantitative nature of critical realism supports its appropriateness for this research. Accordingly, this study is underpinned by the critical realism philosophy.

3.7 Research Approach

Interpretivism takes an inductive and deductive reasoning approach for interpretivist and positivist stance respectively (Tribe, 2001). This study will take a retroductive approach based on the critical realist approach, which enables the investigator to refine and recreate social theory in a constant changing procedure (Sæther, 1998). The first stage of the research is inductive which allows theories to be created which in this study is to identify

SNMP message factors that lead to favourable user attitudes and behavioural intentions. These theories are further developed and tested through a deductive analysis during the second phase.

3.8 Research Strategy

A research strategy is also referred to as the research methodology and is a fundamental aspect of research that decides the route the study will be undertaken. The selection of research strategy is dependent on the research question, knowledge resource availability, paradigm of inquiry stance of the investigator and time available to conduct the research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Despite that, there are different interconnections between the research strategies (Yin, 2003), most traditional research methodologies include case studies, experimental, action research, ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, narrative and survey study (Collis and Hussey, 2009; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). However, it is vital that the investigator assesses the emphasis of the research in order to undertake the best strategy for the investigation (Walliman and Baiche, 2001).

Grounded theory is described as an inductive research strategy that includes the systematic development of theory from data. This requires iterative and numerous phases of data collection and modification in order to create a conceptual theory, which is founded in the perspective of the research participants (Creswell, 2014). The key importance when undertaking grounded theory is to make certain that the theory is derived from data opposed to empirical theory, which has not been generated from human perspectives. However, due to that, the main objective of this research is not to generate theory in data through an iterative strategy, grounded theory is not perceived appropriate in this research.

While in the phenomenological research, the attention is given to the lived experience of the people that are experiencing and practising the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2014). Phenomenology is derived from the principle that a certain event cannot be fully comprehended until all assumptions and requirements are eliminated by the investigator (Holloway and Wheeler, 1996) to develop new denotations. In this approach, the researcher enables the research participants to describe and explain their understandings without imposing any rigid thoughts on the capabilities of participants. It interacts with participants in a demeanour that helps to explore the several realities of the participant's distinctive lived experiences (Quinlan *et al.*, 2015). In other words, it identifies the investigator as an interpreter of the participants understanding and behaviour, and it is taking into consideration the person's views, and description of the situation studied (Edie, 1987) lacking factual interpretations denoted by the investigator (Smith and Osborn, 2007). This approach takes advantage of the possibility for the investigator to comprehend the current SMM activities from the manager's perspective, free from any assumptions. This is regarded as suitable in line with the study, since it is appropriate for a study in which a particular phenomenon is little or wrongly conceptualised (Van Manen, 1990; Jasper, 1994). Thus, the phenomenological research strategy can allow this study to comprehend the characteristics of SNMP message development through the expert's perspective.

Furthermore, survey research is a research strategy in which quantifiable data is collected via a standardised mechanism (Sapsford, 2007) by directing questionnaires to a research sample that represents the population (De Vaus, 2002). The study methodology is particularly beneficial in administrating large populations by providing identical questionnaires to gain a generalisable perspective of the population. In this study, the second stage required a survey research methodology in which obtained a wider

perspective of a large population on outcomes of previous qualitative research. This allowed the generalisation of the research outcome.

3.9 Overview of Relevant Search Strategies

After evaluating the most common research strategies, two research methodologies were identified as pertinent for this research, which was phenomenology and survey research. These two research methodologies require each distinct types of data collection and analysis techniques. First, the phenomenological methodology was employed, and its outcome was subsequently integrated into the survey methodology leading to concluding the study.

3.10 Research Design

A research design is a framework for the creation of findings that answer research questions that are of interest to the researcher to undertake a research project (Malhotr, Birks and Wills, 2012; Bryman and Bell, 2015). Kinnear and Taylor (1991) note that the framework identifies the type, source, and procedure of the data collected thus it specifies the procedures that are essential to gain information needed to structure or answer research problems. This ensures that the research will be appropriate to the social phenomena issue addressed by the implementation of economic procedures (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2002). Commonly research designs are categorised in three main categories depending on the research objective, specifically encapsulating exploratory research, descriptive research and causal research (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2002; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).

3.10.1 Research Design Categories

In an exploratory study, the goal is to gather insight and ideas (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2002). This research design is appropriate when little is known regarding the problem. Exploratory studies are flexible in methods used to achieve this; possible methods include literature search, survey and focus groups. The key aim of exploratory research is to gain insight into and comprehension of social phenomena. It is amongst others used to gain additional insight to define the problem areas more precisely and to formulate hypotheses for more investigation and or quantification. The causal design is a research design with the objective to analyse cause and effect correlations (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2002). Causal studies are normally undertaken with the use of experiments in order to determine cause and effects.

Descriptive research is to describe something usually market characteristics or functions. Difference between exploratory and descriptive research is that descriptive research is characterised by the prior formulation of specific research questions and hypotheses (Creswell, 2002). This study used a predominantly descriptive research design. Initially, exploratory research was undertaken to gather data regarding SNMP message factors. Thus, a qualitative method, specifically an interview of exploratory research were employed. These findings were subsequently used as an input for the quantitative survey, which interpreted through statistical analysis. Since the drive of this study was to analyse the relationships between the SNMP message factors (e.g., social approval, OBCs) and user attitudes, and behavioural intentions (e.g., e-WOM and purchase intention), a descriptive approach was deemed to be the most appropriate. Therefore, it can be stated that this study is labelled as an exploratory study with descriptive elements. Exploratory research applied as an initial step in the design of the current research and then followed by the descriptive approach. Hence, the hypotheses

were developed through the exploratory research whereby subsequently tested statistically using descriptive research.

3.10.2 Mixed Method Design Selected in this Research

A mixed methods approach is the combination of both qualitative and quantitative method during any stage or throughout the study (Downward and Mearman, 2006; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010). According to Creswell (2014), a researcher employs mixed method when it requires the application of qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, or as Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) suggested when a researcher analyses qualitative data quantitatively or the other way around. With confirming the differences among qualitative and quantitative study approaches as two dissimilar philosophical paradigms created in opposing philosophical grounds, their differences can be exaggerated. Therefore, authors such as David and Sutton (2011) suggest that all types of social studies employ some practices of quantitative approach encapsulating nominal, ordinal, interval or ratio and such like, and qualitative meaning. Furthermore, the existence of different concepts of integration such as methodological triangulation and the phase-model offer different results involving convergence, complementarity, and divergence (Kelle and Erzberger, 2004). This study applies a mixed methods approach, which indicates that both quantitative and qualitative research methods are merged into a single study (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). In other words, mixed methods investigation is a study approach (or methodology) wherein the investigator gathers, examines and mixes (connects or integrates) qualitative and quantitative information in single research or a multistage program of questioning (Creswell, 1995).

Triangulation, complementary, development, initiation and expansion are amongst the various reasons for the use of multiple methods (Bryman, 2016). Creswell, Fetters, and Ivankova (2004) suggests that researchers should utilise all required methods to gain the best outcomes, even when this requires shifting between other paradigms, as quantitative or qualitative methods are not enough by themselves to create a comprehensive analysis. Therefore, it is necessary to combine them in order for them to complement one another. According to Ivankova and Kawamura (2010), the significance of a mixed method approach is that it balances out the limitations of one another and it is appropriate in identifying highly valuable and difficult inference. Taking into consideration the significance of each approach to this research, there is an obvious sign that both approaches enable studying various elements of the research. Due to the complexity of this research focus, it requires the use of both methods, as merely one or the other will not comprehend the whole picture, which is required to understand, create and explain the operationalisation of SNMP messages towards attitudes and behavioural intentions.

3.10.3 Qualitative and Quantitative Research Design

When designing a study, the investigator has two alternatives, which are either qualitative or quantitative methods to collect and analyse data. These two methods characterise dissimilar research approaches with each conveying salient dissimilarities relating to the role of concept and epistemological and ontological issues (Bryman, 2016). Recently, an increasing number of studies have combined the use of the two methods (Bryman, 2016). The difference between qualitative and quantitative approaches is far from an explicit one as researches with a wide representative of one research approach can have a representative of the other (Creswell, 2014; Bryman, 2016). The quantitative study

generally takes the route of natural science or positivist method to social occurrences, which involves directing methodological, empirical study through statistical and measuring methods and such like. The quantitative approach is consistent with the objective opinion of reality, which suggests that there is existence an outside reality independent of the social world. The natural science concept is referred to the view that all knowledge initiates in practice. In other words, the scientist can merely know what the reality is presenting them and merely ''through objective or neutral observation true knowledge may be realised and understood'' (Howell, 2013, p. 34). Following this concept, positivism emerged and proposed that social sciences ought to be grounded on similar values as the natural sciences (Howell, 2013).

The selection of methods depends on the purpose of the research to discover and on the broader theoretical and methodological perspectives whereby the research is observed (Grix, 2004; Creswell, 2010). Both the two methods are assessed for their suitability in this research.

3.10.4 Qualitative Method of Inquiry

According to Creswell (2003) and Denzin and Lincoln (2011), a qualitative study is an approach that emphasises discovering and comprehending particular phenomenon through creating a comprehensive depiction of the meaning attributed to people or issues through research fields. Collis and Hussey (2014) describes qualitative as impermanent, understood merely within the setting and are related to the interpretivist approach, which typically leads to outcomes with an increased level of validity. This approach is focused on viewing reality from the perspective of the actors (Bryman, 2016). Qualitatively researchers investigate the phenomena under study in their natural situations with the aim to make meaning of or to describe the occurrences relating to the insights offered by the

participants (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Merriam (1998) postulates that researchers undertaking qualitative approach are seeking to understand how people experience and interrelate to their social reality, and the focus is given to what the data offers to the research under questioning including the current information. The qualitative method stems from a constructivist view (Guba and Lincoln, 1994) which is inclined to note that knowledge is socially constructed (Crotty, 1998). The role of qualitative methods within critical realism is more profound. Qualitative methods such as interviews, case studies, and ethnography are "epistemologically valid" (Tsoukas, 1989, p. 556) and can describe a phenomenon, create the hypothesis and point out systems and links between complex mechanisms (Sayer, 2000).

Qualitative methods allow the exploratory style to generate knowledge. While utilising qualitative methods, the investigator becomes the main research tool that can analyse discourse, the attitude, and response of the participants (Creswell, 2014). Data sources within qualitative methods involve audio-visual data, observations, interviews and other types of reports, whereby documented, structured and re-evaluated to comprehend the data build on the interpretation of the contributors (Berg and Lune, 2004). Data can be assessed utilising various approaches to analysis, which can include content analysis, discourse analysis, thematic analysis, and many more (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Bryman, 2006). Regardless of these techniques, they generally require data familiarisation, coding, themes generation, re-assess themes and description of themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The key objective of qualitative research is to yield a whole comprehension of the phenomenon under investigation (Schutt, 2006). This study assessed the qualitative data adopting thematic analysis approaches. The thematic analysis theory was perceived to be suitable for this research as the researcher's objective were to identify key emerging themes, which were experienced and deemed to be key influencers of attitudes and behavioural intentions.

3.10.5 Quantitative Methods of Inquiry

Quantitative research aims to analyse the link amongst variables to explicate a phenomenon (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Opposed to qualitative methods in which the utilisation of words are key, in quantitative methods numbers and operationalisation of words are utilised (Crotty, 1998). The quantitative research approach is rigid, objective in which the attention is given to scientific procedures where the data is used numerically to gather information about the reality (Burns and Grove, 2005). Quantitative methods are based in the positivist paradigm, which assumes that causal relationships can be analysed through the testing of hypothesis and theories, and observations. It depends on quantifiable tools that are created free from the research phenomenon (Creswell, 2014).

The role of quantitative methods within critical realism are mainly perceived as descriptive, because of numerical outcomes and links between variables by itself cannot reveal proof on the causal mechanism that creates the actual occurrences we observe or forecast future events. Hence, quantitative methods within social sciences have been found to provide generalisable findings that are not satisfactory or are problematic (Seddon and Sheepers, 2012). Most of the critical realism critique on quantitative methods is the use of econometrics (Downward and Mearman, 2002) in which statistical methods such as regression analysis are used to test theories, predict links that derive from patterns found in data and predict events (Wooldridge, 2006). The ability of quantitative methods to identify links between variables has received significant important among researchers, regulators, and businesses (Draca, Sadun and Reenen, 2007). Moreover, unlike qualitative, quantitative methods are not biased and are based on facts, consequently avoiding any subjective inference regarding the research study (Pym, 1993). Quantitative data is obtained through structured and pre-defined research tools that can

include close-ended questionnaires, structured interviews, and many more (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Generally, quantitative studies use samples that are larger and represent the research population. This data is subsequently analysed through empirical mathematical analysis, in order to obtain the preferred statistical data (Schutt, 2006). Thus, the key aim of quantitative studies can be descriptive, to describe a phenomenon or experimental in which causal links are set by employing a different range of quantifiable data.

3.10.6 Sequential Mixed Approach

This study uses an exploratory sequential design in which qualitative data is collected and analysed first. The results emerged from the qualitative is used in the second stage of the research whereby quantitative data is collected and analysed (Creswell, 2014). Within the mixed method study strategy, there are three mixed method types of analysis have been known as to entail sequential, concurrent and transformative (Creswell, 2009). The sequential mixed approach involves the explanation or developments of results. This approach starts either with qualitative first and subsequently followed by a quantitative approach for generalisation or starting with a quantitative first then followed by a qualitative approach involving the thorough investigation of fewer participants (Creswell, 2009). Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) explains different forms of mixed method approaches including the exploratory sequential approach, which proposes the gathering of qualitative data before quantitative. Commonly, qualitative research is regarded as a method to create rather than to test theories.

Similarly, the exploratory sequential approach is linked with analyses whereby the researcher wants to create research questions, which can then be tested through quantitative research (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). Alternatively, the investigator

may gather both forms of data simultaneously and incorporating discoveries from both in the overall outcomes in which named concurrent mixed approach. Transformative mixed approaches are used as the investigator uses a hypothetical outline which entails qualitative as well as quantitative data (Creswell, 2009).

This study is following the sequential mixed approach starting with qualitative results first to describe, explain and interpret the new insights obtained from the SMMEs about the important SNMP message factors and their relationships towards user attitudes and behavioural intentions (Creswell, 2009). The notion is that doing qualitative first would provide the research with more up-to-date insights relating to the study and subsequently conducting a quantitative study to take into consideration the perspectives of the SNMP users. Numerous research have followed the mixed approach, starting with qualitative research first and followed by quantitative research (Gabzdylova, Raffensperger, and Castka, 2009). Myers and Oetzel (2003) also applied semi-structured interviews first to generate surveys based on some of the insights collected from the analysis of the qualitative data. The utilisation of both qualitative and quantitative methods will certainly increase expenses and the need for more time. However, the advantages outweigh the disadvantages (Reichardt and Cook, 1979), as this combination of the two methods diminishes the biases that exist in each method.

Similarly, Yin (2003) suggests that the credibility of the study findings are strengthened when multiple data gathering methods are applied. Consistent with the current research, studies are advocating the application of these two paradigms in a single study, which is expressed to be holding equal importance (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner, 2007). Inductively this research started with collecting the data relating to SNMP message factors from the perspectives of the SMMEs. Deductively, this research focused on quantitatively measuring the key identified SNMP message factors taking the perspective of the users into considerations.

The discrepancy between quantitative and qualitative research is vague as it is considered by some researchers as an essential contrast and by others as unimportant (Layder, 1993). Figure 3. Shows the exploratory sequential design adopted in this study which involves the two-phase research approaches starting with qualitative and followed by a quantitative approach. In phase one data was collected through a systematic review of the literature and semi-structured interviews. Following the thematic approach, the text data collected from the interviews were imported into Nvivo for the analysis. Subsequently, the interpretations of the findings from the literature review and the qualitative research were reported. In the second phase of the research, a survey questionnaire was developed using appropriate pre-existing measurement scales and administered through Qualtrics. This is followed by pilot testing the survey questionnaires to finalise the design of the questionnaire and the quantitative data subsequently were collected using a paper formed self-completed survey. SEM - AMOS was used to analyse the data.

| Approaches | Procedure | Output |

Phase One

Qualitative Data Collection →
- Systematic Review of Literature
- Semi-structured Interviews
→ Textual Data from Semi-structured Interviews

Qualitative Data Analysis →
- Thematic Analysis of the Textual Data

Qualitative Data Integration →
- Integration of the Findings from the Literature Review and Quantitative Studies

→ Conceptual Framework for the Research

Phase Two

Creation of quantitative research instrument using conceptual framework →
- Creating Questionnaire
- Pilot testing
→
- Fully Designed Questionnaire

Qualitative Data Collection →
- Paper-Formed self-completed Survey
→
- Filled and Returned Survey

Quantitative Analysis and Modelling →
- Structural Equation Modelling (AMOS)
→
- Standardised and Measured Coefficient
- Strength and Direction of Relationship

Generation and Integration of Findings →
- Integration of the Findings from SEM
→
- Discussion
- Implication and Future Research

Figure 3. Stages of the Exploratory Sequential Mixed Method.

3.11 Methodological Triangulation

"Triangulation involves employing more than one method or source of data in the study of social phenomena" (Bryman and Bell, 2003, p. 291). In other words, triangulation is a useful study option whereby methods are combined together (Flick, 2002; Denzin, 2006). Triangulations are frequently used interchangeably in social science literature (Downward and Mearman, 2006). Triangulation relates to different elements of research and involves mixing various perspectives in a research such as data triangulation (data gathered from dissimilar sources or dissimilar times), researcher triangulation (the application of various independent researchers), theoretical triangulation (the use of a theory from a dissimilar subject filed) methodological triangulation (linking dissimilar methods) (Downward and Mearman, 2006). Consistent with Denzin (2006), this study uses data triangulation as a strategy whereby multiple perspectives of the same phenomena are considered through the analysis of different data sources (e.g., SMMEs and the actual users). The utilisation of triangulation within social science studies is mainly used for three reasons: confirmation, completeness, and retroduction (Risjord, Dunbar and Moloney, 2002).

3.11.1 Confirmation

Triangulation for the reason to confirm is when a range of techniques are employed to improve the reliability and validity of the findings. By employing a mix of methods, investigators aim to cancel out the limitations that are linked with one-method research (Denzin, 1989). It is argued that quantitative and qualitative outcomes can support each other to form a more solid conclusion than when either is used by themselves (Risjord, Moloney and Dunbar, 2001).

3.11.2 Completeness

Quantitative and qualitative data are sometimes triangulated to gain complementary views and a higher degree of detail that it could be achieved when merely using one data source. The objective of completeness is vaguer than of confirmation. From a positivist stance, the aim of completeness can be to expose various elements of a phenomenon, while from a constructivists stance; it can be to give a wider set of views. Both of these objectives are consistent with a critical realist stance. A mixed methods design can be used to expose various perspectives of the same reality and to analyse reality from various views.

3.11.3 Abductive inspiration

Abductive inspiration has a similar meaning to the critical realist concept of retroduction. Methodological triangulation in order to obtain confirmation and completeness can be an important determinant in research strategy that exists in a critical realism stance. This is because in-depth observation can create an opportunity to generate retroductive assumptions about the causal instrument that exists in a particular condition. For example, Byng (2002) cited in McEvoy and Richards (2003) analysed how and why enhancement in the nursing of people with long-term mental illness happened. He performed a two-stage strategy in which he first used an exploratory randomised controlled trial, which resulted in mixed outcomes. This was further analysed through a range of retrospective interview with experts. Byng (2002) states that not all aspects were answered; however this retroductive approach allowed for a more in-depth comprehension of the procedure that leads to better care.

Retroduction is neither appropriate within the positivist stance, nor in the constructivist for varying reasons. From a positivist perspective, it is argued that investigators should merely focus on making observations regarding empirical situations since they seek for standard and frequent events that allow generalisations (Fleetwood, 2001). They are cautious of speculative theory and note that inferences about social phenomena and instruments cannot be made if it cannot be observed (Halfpenny, 1987). From a constructivist point of view, retroduction is not appropriate because their ontological assumptions are limited to comprehend subjective inferences. The material parts of reality are intangible from an interpretivist view, and there is no solid foundation to support retroductive assumptions about social phenomenon.

Subsequently, a critical realist view is normally aligned with all three of the aims of methodological triangulation as noted by Risjord, which are confirmation, completeness, and retroduction (Risjord, Moloney and Dunbar, 2001). The objective of retroduction is not deemed suitable within a positivist or constructivist stance. However, the aim of confirmation and completeness are consistent with a positivistic stance. For constructionists, the objective of methodological triangulation is merely for completeness, whereby it can aid the generation of a wider set of views.

Despite that, the main objective for critical realists is explanatory comprehension derived from the creation of retroductive assumptions, methodological triangulation for the aim of confirmation and completeness can also impact the research procedure. This is because detailed observations allow the opportunity for creating retroductive assumptions regarding the causal mechanisms that exist in particular conditions.

It has been found that critical realist tends to put more value in the use of qualitative research methods as opposed to quantitative (Porpora, 2001). This might be because qualitative methods can be adopted more to follow other ways of analysing to obtain retroductive explanations because in qualitative methods such as interviews the

researcher is less bound to predetermined variables. However, the possible input of descriptive statistics in obtaining retroductive explanations should not be undervalued.

3.12 Role of the Researcher

This study has undertaken both qualitative and quantitative methods, which means both subjective and objective positions were also taken respectively. In stage one, when qualitative data were collected, the researcher took a participating position through direct involvement with the research interviewees so that to discover new theory (Creswell, 2003). Nevertheless, caution was taken to avoid bias due to the close involvement between the investigator and the research participants. This was done by making certain that the investigator is merely a mediator without affecting the participant's perspectives and answers. Coding and examination of data are derived from particular terminologies applied through the research participants. In stage two whereby quantitative data were collected and analysed, an objective stance was taken. This was done through pre-tested and pre-defined research tools that did not require close interaction between the researcher and the participants, which otherwise could have caused subjective and biased interpretation. The data were collected, explored and confirmed by rigorous statistical examination and pre-defined value for statistical meaning. This is to prevent bias from occurring, which could ruin the findings of the research.

3.13 Research Data Collection Methods

Primary data can be collected either with qualitative or quantitative methods. Forms of data gathering techniques include questionnaires, interviews, observations, and focus group. This study has employed both qualitative and quantitative methods, specifically

interviews and survey questionnaires respectively, which are clarified in detail in the next sections. Table 4 shows the methods and steps undertaken in this research.

Method	Description
Interviews	Conducted 25 semi-structured interviews with SMMEs in different fields, organisations, and hierarchical levels. The insight gained through this method has been used as a foundation for the quantitative survey questionnaire.
Final Survey Questionnaire	399 Surveys were distributed amongst the actual SNMP users between the age categories of 16 to 35.

Table 4: Research Methods Adopted

3.14 Qualitative Methods

With a limited previous empirical study on the effects of SNMP messages on user's attitudes and behavioural intentions, this research initially started with a qualitative research approach to explore the depth of comprehension in user engagement with brand's SNMP messages (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). I conducted iterative and inductive analysis research approach, following in-depth interviews to obtain thorough explanations of participants' research evidence, new insights and experiences, which is viewed as the main objective of the qualitative study (Pentina and Tarafdar, 2014; Smith and Gallicano, 2015).

3.14.1 Interviews

Interviews are data collection methods in which participants are enquired questions to get to know what they do, think or feel (McCracken, 1988; Collis and Hussey, 2014). Interviews under an interpretivist paradigm are employed to explore data on understandings, views, feelings, what people remember doing, attitudes and such like, that people have in common (Arksey and Knight, 1999). The interviews are applied as the key method within this qualitative study, because it enables the researcher to obtain first-hand insights and experiences from the perspectives of those who have the experts within the subject research realm by explaining their experiences and revealing their lived reality (McCracken, 1988; Kvale, 1996; Rubin, H. & Rubin, 2015). Similarly, Keats (2000) posits that when the research design focuses on the analysis of an individual's views, interviewing proves to be an effective method for data collection. In other words, the qualitative interviews help the researcher to view the research subject from the participant's viewpoints (Kvale, 1996).

3.14.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

There are different forms of interview structures, encapsulating structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. This study employed the semi-structured interview (Dexter, 1970; Fontana and Frey, 1998) to enable the researcher obtaining thorough answers to a set of pre-planned research questions as well as offering opportunities for revealing new and the unknown experiences and insights to arise from the participant's answers. One important aspect of semi-structured interviewing is that the sequence of the questions asked is flexible (Babbie, 2005; Collis and Hussey, 2014). Thus, the researcher has a guide on specific topics, which encourages the informants to

make a conversation regarding those topics that are of interest for the interviewer (Leidner, 1993). Participants are known to be expressing their views with ease when the style of the interviewing questions are deemed flexible and open-ended over interview questions that are structured and limited (Flick, 2002). However, this does not mean there should be no structure in the interview. Covering the research questions entirely requires the researcher to have an interview plan (question familiarity) so to direct the communication and to avoid neglecting the important subjects (Babbie, 2005). Thus, to ensure that the research questions were asked explicitly and fully, the researcher did have a set of questions to enable the subject discussion to follow through a guideline. This is to ensure that all the important aspects relevant to the research questions were kept in an orderly style for the researcher to remember and therefore to become comfortable with asking the questions (Babbie, 2005). In contrast to the interpretivist paradigm, interviews under the positivist paradigm are more structured (Collis and Hussey, 2014).

3.14.3 Drawback of Interviews

The drawbacks to interview methods include the predictability of the researcher, the interview location and interview questions manipulating the interviewees' answers. There is the possibility of the interviewees giving answers that s/he deems the researcher desires to hear. Moreover, the process of interviewing is time-consuming for the interviewer as well as the interviewee. Likewise, although 25 interviews were undertaken for this study, numerous other SMMEs were contacted without leading to further interviews, which also led to delaying the process. Also, in some cases, the informants were feeling uncomfortable talking about sensitive aspects relating to how they use technological tools such as SNMPs to make sales. Other concerns relating to qualitative data is that there is ''no clear and universally accepted set of conceptions for analysis corresponding to those

observed with quantitative data'' (Robson, 2011, p. 466). However, the benefits accomplished through the overall application of this approach outweighed these challenges such as making a unique contribution to the realm of SMM through revealing thorough insights and practices not usually found within the existing literature.

3.14.4 Sampling

A sample is a subset of a population, which in the qualitative stage of this study formed into three interchangeable categories, including SM managers, bloggers, and consultants. SM managers are those individuals with the responsibility of running the brand's daily SMM activities. Bloggers are those who write regularly about topics of interests (e.g., writing about a product feature, an awareness) in SNMPs and other brand's online websites, while SM consultants are those who advise, help and oversee the brands overall SMM activities, operations, strategies, and objectives.

3.14.5 Purposive Sampling

The samples were selected purposively (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). This sampling approach is a non-probability sampling, which means the researcher aimed to avoid sampling research participants randomly. Therefore, aligned with purposive sampling, the research participants were selected based on their insight and experience relevancy specifically relating to the research questions (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In other words, purposive sampling seeks to objectively sample its potential participants so that the selected samples are those with relevancy and importance to the research questions under study. The non-probability nature of purposive sampling does not allow findings to be generalised over a wider population. Opposing to convenience sampling where the

sample is available to the researcher by chance, purposive sampling selects its participants with a specific research question(s) in mind (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Likewise, purposive sampling is concerned with the choice of units, which includes people, organisations, departments, reports and such like with direct orientation to the research questions enquired. Therefore, the hypotheses specify which type of unit should be sampled. Examples of purposive sampling in qualitative research are theoretical and snowball sampling, while in quantitative research, quota sampling is a form of the purposive sampling procedure

3.14.6 Snowball Sampling

Purposive type of sampling is comparable with snowball sampling since the researcher chooses the participants based on their ability and experience in regards to the social phenomena studied (Bryman and Bell, 2015). The use of snowball sampling for this study was followed, which involved the encouraging of the participants to help with identifying and recommending other participants with expertise relevant to the research subject (Bryman and Bell, 2015). In other words, snowball sampling is a type of sampling in which the researcher initially makes contact with a small group of participants who are significant to the research topic. From there these participants will be asked to refer other informants who share a similar experience or knowledge relevant to the research under question. The issue arising with snowball sampling is that they are less likely to represent the population (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

3.14.7 Theoretical Sampling

Glaser and Strauss (1967) refer to theoretical sampling as a procedure of data collection whereby the interviewer jointly gathers, codes and analyses data, and agrees on what and where to collect the following data in order to create a theory while it arises. In other words, this sampling approach is a process wherein the researcher collects data for generating a model. This research did not adopt this theory because while new insights and experiences relevant to the subject under question emerged from the study, the key aim was not to generate a model.

3.14.8 Theoretical Saturation

The main idea is that the researcher continuously samples theoretically until a category has been saturated with data (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Strauss and Corbin (1998) proposes that sampling continues until: (1) no new or relevant data seem to be emerging regarding a category, (2) the category is well developed in terms of its properties and dimensions demonstrating variation, and (3) the relationships among categories are well established. However, Bryman and Bell (2015) posit that saturation is not merely that when information is mentioned continuously, rather saturation indicates that new information is no longer useful to propose new areas of theoretical categories. However, to ensure a scientific approach to research, the proposed view is that the more interviews, the better (Kvale, 1996), while Travers (2001) suggests once an adequate number of themes explored and realised, no further interviewing is necessary. We continued interviewing participants until theoretical saturation was accomplished, after 25 interviews (Corbin and Strauss, 1990; Bryman and Bell, 2015). For example, when further new or relevant data did not emerge relating to the research area (Strauss and

Corbin, 1998). The sample size involved conducting 25 in-depth, elite interviews (Dexter, 1970; Fontana and Frey, 1998) with SMMEs. The participants were selected based on their extensive knowledge and expertise with the social phenomenon under investigation (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Table 5 shows the profile of the 25 participants, their positions and selected characteristics of their respective companies.

3.14.9 Interview Procedure - Prior Connections with Participants

The researcher needed to understand the viewpoints, perceptions, and experiences of the experts relating to the research phenomenon under investigation. Using LinkedIn and email as the main methods for contacting and securing suitable participants that met the sampling criteria. The initial contact included providing the experts with introducing the researcher's positions, the subject research discussion and objectives and the length of the interviews (Thomas, 1993). After the participants agreed to take part in the research, a follow-up email was sent included the full information sheet for the participants to agree and sign prior to the start of the interviewing. A period of over six months was committed to conducting the 25 semi-structured interviews with each taking an average of 46 minutes (Fontana and Frey, 1998). This method offered the researcher the opportunity to expose the unknown and to gain thorough insights and experiences about the research questions from the industry experts (Rubin, H. & Rubin, 2015). The interviews took place over Skype for Business (13), telephone (8) and face-to-face (4), which lead to over 17 hours of audio interview recordings. The interviews were transcribed verbatim using a professional typing company. The transcripts resulted in 438 no-line spacing pages containing over 130,000 words. Prior to the start of the interviews, meeting rooms were booked at the University of Plymouth for doing the Skype and telephone interviews, using the university's telephones, laptops, digital recorders, and printing resources. One

important advantage of using these two communication methods was that most of the participants were incredibly busy people as they were holding important positions within their organisations with some located in offices outside of the UK and therefore meeting them in person would have been acutely costly and time-consuming. The face-to-face interviews were all conducted in the offices of the interviewees as they were given a choice to decide where they would like to be interviewed.

The interviews were recorded on digital audio recording devices and were backed-up immediately on multiple locations including the Dropbox and OneDrive after the interviews had finished. The researcher checked all interview transcripts against its digital recordings to ensure the accuracy of its content (MacLean, Meyer and Estable, 2004). Subsequently, each participant received a copy of their interview transcripts to review in which they confirmed and made suggestions and corrections accordingly (Creswell, 2003). Consistent with the conditions of ethical approval, participants were offered the option of withdrawing from the study at any point hitherto the data analysis had started (Huber and Power, 1985).

3.14.10 Participant Demographics

Table 5 exhibits the profile of informants, their positions and selected characteristics of their respective companies. Participants' ages ranged from 24 to 56, and tenure at their respective firms ranged from 1.5 to 30 years with an average of 9.34 years. A broad range of respondents was included across many different industries, and from organisations of different capacity both in terms of turnover and number of employees, thus enabling comprehensive insights into the research area.

3.14.11 Interview Protocol

The interviews were built on an exact protocol so that to ensure that all the participants asked the same set of questions, and by the same researcher, to ensure consistency (Bryman and Bell, 2007; Johnson and Sohi, 2016). The designing of the interview questions were challenging, as they needed to be thoughtful enough to explore revealing understandings as well as being interesting to the participants. Questions needed to be both explicit enough to obtain pertinent answers, and broad enough to encourage participants to express their experiences and views freely rather than leading them to what the researchers wanted to hear.

The initial stages of the interview questioning started with questions that were broadly related to the study (Creswell, 2003). These first few questions involved how their interests begin in working as SM managers, how long have they worked in this role and what is a typical day like in their office as SM manager. This helped the participants to define their positions and duties within the SMM. This was to help the participants get comfortable with the subject research and therefore encouraging some rapport at the initial stages (see Appendix C for the interview protocol).

3.15 Ethical Considerations during the Interviews

The research proposal and data gathering approaches were scrutinised, analysed and accepted by the University of Plymouth Business School Ethics Committee (see Appendix F and G for the ethical approval letters). A consent form containing participant information sheet giving a summary of the research aim and process and the choice to withdraw from the research at any time were sent to each of the participants prior to the start of the interviewing process (Bryman and Bell, 2007) (see Appendix D for the consent form). Before the start of the interviews, all the forms were approved and confirmed.

In all cases, the researcher communicated to the participants via email and or LinkedIn several times before the interview commenced. This allowed participants to ask as many questions as they liked about the research project, subject discussions, and process in advance. Subsequently, the interviews completed, the researcher sent a copy of the transcripts to each of the participants as a reference and asked them if they would like to highlight any changes/comments they wish to make prior to the start of the analysis phase. The entire interviews took place via Skype, telephone, and face-to-face in locations preferred by the participants.

Furthermore, the interviewing study did not require interviewing people who are categorised as vulnerable as all the interviewees were adults withholding highly responsible and professional positions. Therefore, they were quite familiar with being interviewed regularly as part of their managerial job. The discussions were concerned about the general attitudes and behavioural responses of people towards brands SNMP messages. However, a few of the participants did ask ''who is going to see this'' or ''is this going to be anonymous'' (Robson, 2002). Overall, the ethical rules did not limit the overall outcome of the interview procedures and ensuring participants that their information was going to be kept strictly anonymous received as a positive and encouraging sign.

Informants	Informant's Role	Nature of Business	Experience	Year Founded	Industry	Annual Income of Organisation (2016)	Number of Employees
1	Managing Director (Owner)	Management Consultancy	13 Years	2003	Advertising	$263	2
2	Digital Marketing Manager	Research Institution	10 Years	1862	Education	$309 million	2900
3	SM Manager	Research Institution	10 Years	1862	Education	$309 million	2900
4	SM Producer	IT-Focused Content Distributor	12 Years	2008	IT	$88,000	1
5	SM Manager	Faucet Design and Distribution	5 Years	1911	Plumbing	$397 million	1420
6	Head of SM Manager	Hotels	12 Years	1991	Tourism	$8.77 billion	1150
7	Digital Marketing Manager	Sanitary Fittings (Manufacturer)	5 Years	1945	Plumbing	$352 million	1370
8	SM Consultant	SM Agency	8 Years	2009	Advertising	$1,521	2
9	SM Consultant (Director)	SM Agency	6 Years	2012	Advertising	$500,000	10+
10	Managing Director (Owner)	Marketing Agency	5 Years	2009	Advertising	$42,233	4
11	SM Manager	Marketing Agency	4 Years	2009	Advertising	$42,233	4
12	Digital Insight Manager	Market Research	7 Years	2009	Advertising	$2.6 million	15
13	Community Manager	SM Agency	1.5 Years	2005	Advertising	$37 million	300+
14	Digital Marketer	Digital Marketing	28 Years	2005	Education	$50,000	2
15	SM Manager	SM Agency	8 Years	2001	Advertising	$207,000	2-10
16	SM Influencer	Service (Solution provider)	6 Years	1987	Technology	$75 billions	180,000

17	Deputy Head of Communication	Communications Department	7 Years	1948	Health	$135 billion	1400,000
18	SM Manager	Non-alcoholic Beverages	4.5 Years	1886	Beverage	$42 billion	100,300
19	SM Marketer	SM Agency	27 Years	2010	Advertising	Unpublished	2-10
20	SM Controller	Media Corporation (TV)	2 Years	1990	Media	$16 billion	30,000
21	Marketing Director	SM Agency	2 Years	2016	Advertising	$13	2
22	Principal Channel Consultant	Inbound Marketing and Sales	3 Years	2005	Software	$271 million	1777
23	Digital Marketing Manager	Aesthetic Dermatology	3.5 Years	1971	Health	$51 million	51-200
24	Managing Director	SM & SEO Agency	30 Years	2008	Advertising	$13	4
25	Chief Engagement Officer	SM & PR Agency	13 Years	1923	Advertising	$500 million	978

Table 5. Participants Demographics

3.16 Qualitative Analysis

This section reports the process of the qualitative data analysis whereby the theory of thematic analysis was used to code, to identify and to organise relevant themes and patterns extracted from the data sources of twenty-five (25) SMME's interview transcripts.

Qualitative research encapsulates various and difficult methods (Bryman, 2016). This has led to the support for learning the thematic analysis as the first approach when doing qualitative research. This is because the skills learned through applying thematic analysis approaches considered essentially useful for numerous other types of qualitative analysis approaches (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Therefore, thematic analysis's widely shared skills amongst various other qualitative analysis have led researchers to question whether thematic analysis could be considered as a method on its own or to be used across various other approaches (Boyatzis, 1998). For example, thematic coding procedures found in analytic approaches such as grounded theory (Chapman, Hadfield and Chapman, 2016), while other studies described thematic analysis as a specific approach applied on its own meaning (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis is defined as an approach for finding, examining, recording and reporting the arising themes (patterns) through iteratively and thoroughly reading of the data set under investigations (Green, Davies and Ng, 2017). It arranges and defines the research data thoroughly. Despite its extensive use within qualitative researches and unlike other well-known analysis methods such as grounded theory and narrative analysis, there is not a widely accepted definition of what a thematic analysis is and how it is applied. However, most analysis is done thematically while claimed as something different or ignored to be acknowledged as any specific method altogether. Grounded theory is used increasingly as an analysis process for coding data similar to thematic

analysis whereby the focus of the analysis is less directed towards generating theory as it is in the grounded theory (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

3.17 Thematic Networks Analysis

The focus of this analysis is to make meaning of what the SMMEs have expressed including the researcher's observations and studies while going through the procedure of combining, reducing and explaining the data. In other words, the researcher analyses the story of interviews between the researcher and the SMMEs applying thematic analysis method as well as quantifying the frequency and the percentages of the most commonly appeared themes (patterns) following the content analysis approach (Silverman, 2011; Collis and Hussey, 2014; Qui*nlan et al*., 2015; Bryman, 2016). The objective of this research is to realise experiences, insights and practical knowledge from the industry experts about effective SNMP messages so that to favourably influencing the user's attitude and behavioural intentions. This study involved procedures of repeated revaluations at various stages concerning strong parts of the data and intellectual ideas, concerning inductive and deductive approach, concerning description and interpretation and exploration. The thematic analysis approach applied is following the model of the thematic network originated by (Attride-Stirling, 2001), which is inductive (inward) and follows three levels of theme identification encapsulating the basic themes, the organising themes, and the global theme.

Attride-Stirling (2001) defined thematic networks as a method of arranging a thematic analysis of qualitative information. Thematic analysis aim is to discover the themes noticeable in the data at various degrees. Thematic networks objective is to help the arrangement and representation of these themes. This approach proposes a network-like diagram as an arranging source and a realistic tool, creating clear techniques that

facilitate the transition of data from transcript into explanations. In other words, the thematic networks are depicted graphically as a network-like diagram so that to give a recap of the key themes salient within the data as well as preventing any ambiguity of standing, enabling the basic themes to move freely and highlighting the connections within the diagram (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Themes are also known as categories (Creswell, 2003).

The thematic networks merely work as a rearranging source and interpretative tool whereby the data texts represented metaphorically to enable easier understanding and not the analysis in itself. It is considered a robust and monumentally thoughtful tool for the organisation and exhibition of qualitative analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001). However, data analysis is a challenging process as it encompasses continuous waddling back-and-forth amongst the whole data set, the analysis of the extracted codes, and the analysis of the data that the researcher is creating (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

This study started the coding process with an inward approach where the basic themes were coded first and then flowed towards the global theme whereby moving from more basic features of the data to final summary of the themes. The research questions were used as the starting point wherein the basic themes identified upon. Subsequently, the basic themes were clustered into more common groups that formed the organising themes. Helped by the basic themes, the organising themes were reviewed again and combined to form what Attride-Stirling (2001) describes as the global theme.

In qualitative analysis, this process is commonly employed, including in methods such as grounded theory (Corbin and Strauss, 1990). The objective of the thematic network process does not seek to learn the start of views or the completion of explanations. It just offers a method for collapsing texts and discovering within it explicit explanations and their hidden meaning (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

This study follows the analysis of the thematic network by applying the network-like diagram to depict an overview of the key themes at all the three levels and how they are linked to one another within the networks diagram (see Figure 4).

1. Basic Themes (lowest level sources marked within the data)

2. Organising themes (groups of basic themes clustered collectively to review more theoretical codes)

3. Global themes (super category themes summarising the key representations within the transcripts as a whole)
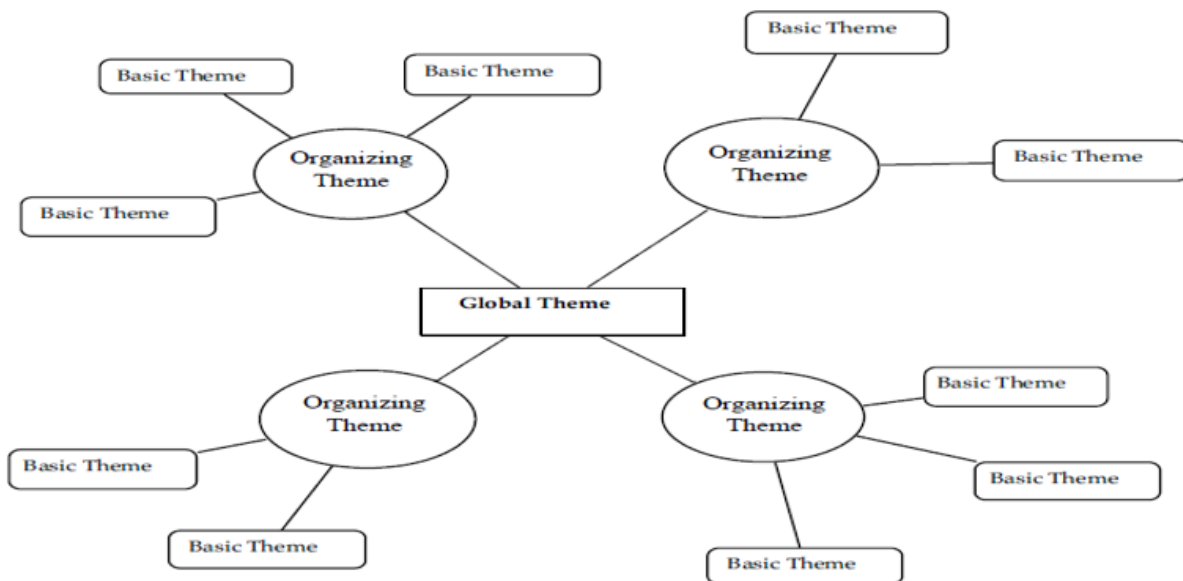
Figure 4: Thematic Network Hierarchy. Source: (Attride-Stirling, 2001)

Attride-Stirling explains the three types of themes as follow:

3.17.1 Basic Themes

Basic themes are considered as the lowest level on the hierarchy of the three themes that are resulting from the written data. It is similar to supporting a statement of confidence related to a fundamental idea, which subsidises towards the meaning of a global theme. This level of themes is considered as simple evidence representative of the information. Unilaterally, they explain little relating to the units of the data, and therefore required to be studied in the setting of further basic themes so that to create intelligence beyond their instant logic. These are themes derived from the data (interview transcripts), and subsequently collected into clusters and used as basic themes. Themes make groups of basic themes with the focus on greater common aspects, which then rearranged into organising themes.

3.17.2 Organising Themes

These themes are considered as the central level theme in which the basic themes are organised into groups of analogous aspects. They are groups of suggestions that recap the key expectation of a collection of basic themes. Therefore, they reveal a more theoretical and more expressive overview of what is in the text. Equally, their purpose is also to improve the importance and impact of a wider theme that merges many organising themes. At this level, the key concepts suggested by many basic themes grouped together simultaneously and divided the key sections to identify a wider theme that is particularly important within the data set. This is where a collection of organising themes originate a global theme.

3.17.3 Global Themes

Global themes are described as ''superordinate'' themes that involve the main representations of the entire data set. At this point, the grouped concepts claimed as a final or concluding concept. Intrinsically, global themes cluster collections of organising themes that collectively bring a debate, a viewpoint or a proclamation relating to a given subject research question. They develop into large themes that review and understand groups of lower level themes that are disorganised and reinforced by the data. In other words, global themes communicate what the content of the data as a whole concerned with within the framework of a known investigation. They give an overview of the key themes as well as an expressive interpretation of the texts. The researcher has produced more than one global theme for two reasons. One, because of the pre-hypothetical understandings of the subject prior to the interviewing and two, because of the various types of different subject issues emerged within each of the 25 interview transcripts were monumental. Therefore, it is important to note that producing more than one global theme is quite possible and this is reliant on the involvedness of the data type/scale and the questioning objectives. However, the numbers of the global themes yielded will be a lot less in comparison to the basic and the organising themes as it is the case in this study.

As expressed earlier, and consistent with the analysis of the thematic network in the form of a network-like diagram, the researcher started the search with the development of the basic themes and then flowing inwards towards the global theme. After a group of basic themes identified, they were categorised aligned with the underlying narrative they were expressing and subsequently became the organising themes. This level of themes was subsequently interpreted again with regard to their basic themes and collated together to explain a distinct conclusion, which then developed into the global theme.

Doing thematic analysis via employing thematic networks is not the only approach amongst the many other qualitative methods, as other studies have questioned the process of coding and the attempts to standardising qualitative analysis methods (Coffey, Beverley and Paul, 1996). Despite these critics of thematic analysis, support for the reduction of data in qualitative analysis viewed as a crucial approach, whereby coding has been considered as helpful (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun and Clarke, 2006).

3.18 The process of the Adopted Thematic Networks Analysis

Consistent with the study of Attride-Stirling (2001), the analysis phase first started with the data reduction and breakdown of the text, reducing and collapsing the texts including coding of the transcripts, identifying themes and constructing thematic networks. As mentioned earlier, the analysis process was not a straightforward undertaking, and it involved repeated re-evaluations during the phases. Therefore, it is important to consider the phases as a guideline, which can be adjusted as necessary, and not to be treated as a fixed set of rules.

Prior to the start of the first phases of the adopted analysis process, which is the coding of the transcripts, the researcher has already finished the earlier phases of the study encompassing the planning of the semi-structured interview questions, pre-testing the questions, gathering the data and interviewing the informants as well as completing the interview transcriptions. Further, it became evident that without having an in-depth understanding of the collected data, a sound analysis outcome would become impossible to accomplish. Therefore, the researcher had spent an enormous amount of time doing just that.

The researcher has gathered the entire data himself. This facilitated the researcher to start the analysis process with some prior understanding of the data set and some early investigative opinions. The researcher started listening back to each interview recordings immediately after it has finished so that to look for new ideas, meaning and patterns, and therefore better prepared for the following interviews. The process of listening and watching the interview's recorded audios and videos continued during and after all the interviews were finished with transcriptions. This approach enabled the research not only to immerse and familiarise with the depth and breadth of the content of the data set earlier on but also to reflect on how to question the following interviews more effectively subsequently. Successively, after the data collection reached towards the concluding phase, the researcher went through the entire data set by rereading the interview transcripts several times prior to the start of the coding process, and this contributed to shaping concepts and identification of potential themes (patterns) as well as thorough understandings of the entire data set.

The rereading of the data as in the interview transcripts is quite important, but monumentally a time-consuming procedure and at times it can be quite tedious. However, the researcher was eager to be familiarised with the data set so that to get an in-depth understanding and therefore avoided being selective and or rushing through the process (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The thematic network diagrams of each of the global themes worked as a guideline throughout the entire analysis process.

3.19 Reduction and Breakdown of the Transcripts

3.19.1 Coding the Transcripts

Coding has been considered as a vital method for qualitative researchers and rather beneficial and yet still only one of the many other qualitative analysis methods (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Codes find a component of the texts that seem interesting to the researcher, which is referred to the most simple section or elementary part of the gathered data that can be evaluated inexpressive demeanour relating to the research question (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Bryman, 2016).

The first thing in the application of the analysis of the thematic network within this study involved the reduction of the data into controllable and expressive written sections (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The understanding of the data set increased after going through the repeated reading, and once new concepts realised, the researcher started with the initial coding using Nvivo 11 Pro Software suggested by Bryman and Bell (2015).

3.19.2 Inductive Versus Deductive

The following two main approaches proposed for the process of coding and identifying themes in the thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006):

1. Inductive or inward (bottom-up) method.
2. Deductive, theoretical, or outward (top-down) method.

Inductively or in an inward approach, the acknowledged themes are robustly connected to the gathered data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). This method of analysis endures some resemblance to the grounded theory. Because the gathered data were

undertaken is explicitly for the research at hand, whereby the identified themes have small connections to the pre-planned questions probed of the applicants. This also means that the researcher's hypothetical importance of the subject will be limited. In other words, the process of coding the data inductively is an attempt without aiming to match the pre-planned coding structure or researcher's logical expectations to the research outcomes, which means a data-motivated thematic analysis approach.

Nevertheless, it is essential to know that investigators cannot ignore their hypothetical and epistemological vows and it is not possible to code data in an epistemological emptiness. In comparison, the deductive method in thematic analysis motivated by the researcher's hypothetical or logical importance in the subject realm, and therefore analyst/theory motivated, whereby less focus is given on providing a detailed description of the entire data, but rather more analysis is given to some parts of the data (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Guba and Lincoln (1994) state that a deductive approach allows hypotheses to be tested and the findings can be generalised. A deductive approach is related to developing a hypothesis based on the existing theory, and it is often associated with the quantitative research strategy (Wilson, 2014). Other characteristics of a deductive approach include operationalisation and generalisation (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).

Despite having some pre-planned research ideas and hypotheses, which evolved from researching the existing literature on the subject topic before the start of this qualitative research project, the inductive thematic analysis method was followed for the analysis of the qualitative research project stage. Throughout the interviewing process, the researcher was interested in understanding more about how the industry experts use SNMP messages effectively for marketing purposes. Equally, the researcher was seeking to discover other unknown and important patterns, themes, insights, and issues from the expert's experiences and views relating to SMM. Therefore, the data was coded widely

including based on issues that emerged most frequently within the data set and without concentrating merely on the pre-planned conceptualised thoughts, theories and or beliefs that have already been discussed and or understood within the existing literature. In other words, with the data-motivated approach, the themes will be reliant on the data, whereas, with the theory-motivated, the researcher might analyse the data with particular pre-conceptualised questions that will be central to the coding process.

Opinions about when a researcher ought to involve with the literature pertinent to the analysis varies. Early reading has been associated with narrowing down the researchers questioning arena of conception. This can lead the researcher's concentration on some features of the data while ignoring other equally or potentially more important features. Others claim that early involvement with the literature can improve a researcher's analysis by informing the researcher to more indirect aspects of the data. As explained above, within an inductive approach no or limited involvement with the literature at the beginning predicted to improve the analysis process while in a deductive method, involvement with the literature before the analysis is deemed appropriate (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Before the start of this analysis process, the researcher started with getting an in-depth understanding of what has already been said within the literature about the subject of SMM hitherto. This is to feel comfortable and knowledgeable with questioning the SMMEs while interviewing them rather than aiming to adhere to particular pre-planned conceptualisations or hypotheses merely. Therefore, the researcher was not looking to discover specific aspects of the subject but rather what has been happening hitherto, what is happening now, and what is likely to happen and or become effective and popular within SMM.

3.19.3 Coding using Nvivo

Using Nvivo 11 Pro software, codes were applied to the interview transcripts to dividing them into text sections including expressive and organising amounts of content such as citations, single words, sentences and paragraphs perceived important for a specific analysis. After sections identified and extracted, they were coded accordingly. Coding should have clear definitions to avoid similarities or redundant as well as limitations in scope and to give clear concentration to the aim of analysis and therefore not to aim to code every sentence within the text (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Table 6 exhibits an example of the coding process of a short section of the data extract derived from SMME's interview transcripts relating to expertise credibility.

Data extract (See Table 13 for the completed extracts, codes and the identified themes of credibility).	**Coded for (phase 1)**	**Subjects discussed**	**Themes identified (phase 2)**
It's, of course, thought leadership, professionalism, branding our personnel as top experts, that we are and we have here. We are very careful not to try answer things we not the experts in it. We'd make sure that what we're saying is true and can be verified. If we're making a statement about something - like we're the cheapest or we're the best or the favourite, or whatever. I always make sure I learn. I always make sure I stay up to date.	Thought leadership	Feelings Emotions Experiences	Being an industry leader Being knowledgeable. Being professional. Staying up to date.

Table 6. Data Extract Example: Expertise.

The researcher coded for possible themes and patterns widely and maintained what was relevant to the surrounding area of the codes, as critics of coding claim the surrounding area of coding are usually misplaced (Bryman, 2001). Specific extracts of data can be coded in as many dissimilar themes as they can fit into which means an extract can be un-coded, coded once or coded several times. This explains that there is no data free of

contradiction. Therefore, creating a diagram-like map that portrays an inclusive representation of the data and connections among them does not mean to disentangle or disregard the strains and contradictions within the interview transcripts (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

As mentioned earlier, the entire transcripts were coded for new and unknown concepts, patterns and issues predicted by the researcher as to be important relating to the subject research including coding keywords, phrases, sentences and sometimes, large chunks of texts. The use of Nvivo software was particularly helpful in enabling the researcher to delete, edit, retrieve and drag around the data extracts instantly and as many times as necessary (see Figure 5 for an example of Nvivo data extracts, and theme identification procedure).
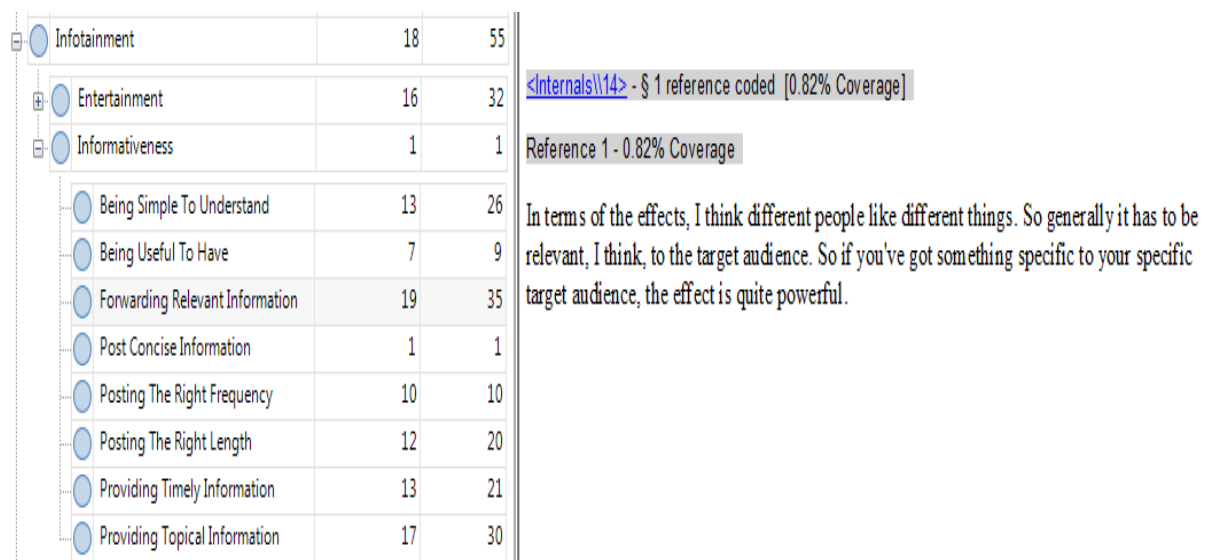
Figure 5. Nvivo Data Extracts and Theme Identification Hierarchy

Each segment of the data developed over a collection of data extracted from the transcripts relating to issues of similar topic and was coded with words that gave a representation to the entire collected data extracts. The above example has coded the

entire extract from interview transcript fourteen (14) as ''informativeness,'' because the entire extract is referring to the relevancy of the information *(see Table 15 for a more detailed process of extracts, codes and theme identifications relating to infotainment).* This process was repeated throughout the data analysis process, which leads to the reduction of the entire data set into a more organised set of important themes that can distinctively represent written data about various subject issues (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The researcher coded the texts for words, phrases that were commonly repeating and or had strong relevancy towards the subject of SNMP messages (Bryman, 2016). In the next section, detailed explanations about how different codes were placed into themes and how all the relevant coded data extracts were collected within the identified themes.

3.19.4 Identifying Themes

After extracting the data from the transcripts, a long list of different codes identified. Subsequently, the researcher concentrated the analysis on a wider degree of themes, where themes abstracted from the written sections of the codes. This encompassed organising the various codes into possible themes as well as collating the pertinent coded data extracts into recognised themes. Codes extracted from the full transcripts were analysed repeatedly to identify salient, common or important patterns and themes, which then merged into segments. The rereading process of the identified sections of the coding facilitated the researcher to identify the important patterns and making the necessary arrangements of the coding.

Similarly, the identified themes went through the process of revision several times for further improvement. Firstly, doing a limitless rereading of the themes to ensure they were clear enough to be distinct and wide enough to conclude a set of concepts deriving from the many text sections. This approach led to reducing the data into more controllable

and established themes that concisely recapped the content of the transcripts. For presenting the text statements concisely, the transcripts went through the process of thorough examinations with a close focus given to theoretical aspects. Individual themes needed to be explicit enough to concern one concept, and wide enough to identify patterns in many divers text sections (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

The repeated words, phrases and paragraphs that related to the subjects talked about within the interview data turned into the identification of text segments, sentences and words. It is through this procedure that the data reduced into a more attainable set of important themes that exactly recaps the text.

3.19.5 Verification and the Refinement of the Networks

The text sections linked to each basic theme were revised several times for ensuring that basic, organising and global themes mirror the data and that it supports the basic, organising and global themes. Changes made as necessary throughout the process. Individual themes reviewed so that to develop superior and combining themes that concluded the perceptions and concepts stated at a lower level. The themes were organised through collecting them into analogous, consistent groups, and these groups are thematic networks. The researcher grouped the themes based on the content of the data. Themes that lacked sufficient level in numbers or were relating to analogous enough subjects were squeezed into one network. Conversely, when issues emerged frequently or when they were considered relatively distinct, more than one theme was created. Individual themes led to distinctive global themes advocated by separate organising and basic themes (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

3.19.6 How to decide if a Theme is Robust

Something important captured from the data relating to the research question is considered as a theme. This includes showing some degree of patterned answers and or importance in the data set. This has raised the question about an acceptable size of a theme. For example, at what level a repeated answer or something of importance within the data to be accepted a theme; both within a single unit of data and across the entire collected data. Frequent occurrences of the theme are desirable within the data. However, more occurrences do not particularly convey as the theme to be more important. In qualitative analysis, there is no definitive and quick solution to the query of what percentage of the data set required an indication of the theme to be counted as one (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

The notion that if it existed in 50% of the data units, then it would be a theme, whereas if it existed merely 47%, then it would not be a theme is not the case. Similarly, a theme is not merely an occurrence mentioned by several data units and not the case when it is only mentioned once or twice. For example, a few of the themes mentioned many times by some of the interview participants while zero by others. Therefore, researcher knowledge is crucial to conclude what a theme is. This perspective advocates adoptability over rigid rules when deciding on what ought to be counted as a theme. Furthermore, it is not how frequently a theme mentioned but if it finds something essential relating to the whole research question (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Themes for this study were decided mainly based on the frequency level of the repeated answers within the transcripts (see Table 7). However, considerations were given to the emergence of strong connections between the essences of a possible theme and the research questions. Thematic analysis has been known for its flexibility in enabling the researcher to decipher themes with no strict roles (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

What is important however is that the themes chosen should have consistency and relevancy relating to the study under analysis.

Numbers	Key themes	Sources	Frequency	Percentages	References
1	Expertise	25	12	48%	24
2	Trustworthiness	25	16	64%	30
3	Entertainment	25	16	64%	32
4	Informativeness	25	18	72%	55
5	OBCs	25	14	65%	22
6	Storytelling	25	9	36%	14
7	Social approval	25	16	64%	25
8	Brand influencer	25	13	52%	16
9	Testimonials	25	10	40%	15

Table 7. Key Themes mention frequency and percentages.

3.19.7 Constructing the Thematic Networks

There are 46 basic themes identified from the 25 interview transcripts. An inward approach to analysis is followed to shape the thematic networks. The basic themes are the first ties of the network, which is linking and shaping the organising themes whereby via improvements steer to the organising theme. When themes appear within the analysis, a web is constructed within the diagram of a network-like map, which is mainly structured to symbolise the importance that makes clear the processes of moving from written documents to explanations. Table 8 below exhibits an example of the Development of the Global Theme Credibility.

Basic themes	Organising theme	Global theme
1. Being an industry leader 2. Being knowledgeable 3. Being professional 4. Staying up-to-date	Expertise	Credibility
5. Being competent 6. Openness. 7. Integrity		

8. Being accurate. 9. Being consistent. 10. Being ethical 11. Being legal. 12. Being transparent. 13. Being honest 14. Being reliable 15. Being present	Trustworthiness	

Table 8. The Development of the Global Theme Credibility

Table 8 demonstrates the exploration of the themes that are ranked as numbers one to four. These themes are clustered under one network, expertise. Themes five to fifteen are clustered within another network, trustworthiness. The same practice is followed for the remaining of the themes. The grouping of the basic themes relating to expertise used as an example in Table 6 which resulted from the code of *''Thought leadership.''* The collections of the basic themes developed the organising themes whereby the researcher explains as "expertise" and "trustworthiness." Subsequently, the organising themes are steered to a clearly defined global theme which has been branded as ''Credibility.'' The global themes are central to the thematic networks, whereby resulting from the key statements and opinions obvious within the organising themes.

After the emergent of the identified basic themes from the data set, more improvements and regroupings of the basic themes took place repeatedly, which subsequently turned into the development of nine (9) organising themes. This subsequently steered to the identification of three (3) global themes encapsulating credibility, infotainment, and interactivity. These key themes operationalised as the centre of the network derived from the contributions given by both basic and organising themes. Once these were established the reliability of the generated themes was assessed by involving a second coder with significant qualitative research experience that examined all the interview transcripts. The themes were then compared resulting in an inter-coder

agreement of k = 0.814 (Cohen, 1960). In case of disagreements, there were extensive

discussions between the coders until an agreement was established

3.19.8 Quantitative Method - Survey Questionnaire

The second part of this research employed a survey questionnaire, which generally takes

a deductive style. Surveys have the advantage to obtain large data sets, which can be

easily understood and compared (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). This approach

enabled the researcher to gather quantitative data that identifies the relationship between

the effects of the identified SNMP message factors and attitudes and behavioural

intentions (see Appendix E for the study survey questionnaires). This research employed

a survey questionnaire by initially identifying what information needs to be sought.

Churchill and Iacobucci (2002) posit that to undertake a descriptive study, it is important

for the researcher to have adequate knowledge which allows hypotheses to be created for

them to be used as a guide to composing the questionnaire.

Firstly, scale items were identified taken from previous studies (Table 9 depicts a

list of item scales adopted from forgoing studies. Appendix E also presents the full survey

questionnaire).

Variables	Measurement: **scale items**	**Source followed**
Expertise	Expert. Experienced. Knowledgeable. Qualified. Skilled.	(Ohanian, 1990)
Trustworthiness	Dependable. Honest. Reliable. Sincere. Trustworthy.	
Informativeness	Valuable information Convenient information Up to date information Immediately accessible information Relevant information Latest information Accurate information	(Pollay and Mittal, 1993; Ducoffe, 1996; Schlosser, Shavitt and Kanfer, 1999; Cheng *et al*., 2009; Zhang and Mao, 2016)
Entertainment	Entertaining Enjoyable Pleasing Fun Interesting	(Lastovicka, 1983; Ducoffe, 1996; Brackett and Carr, 2001; Taylor, Lewin and Strutton, 2011; Kim and Ko, 2012; Zhang and Mao, 2016)
OBCs	Supporting others Reach personal goals Sense of belonging Emotionally attached Personal satisfaction Exchange of information Quick inquiry and responses Exchanges between host and members	(Algesheimer, Dholakia and Herrmann, 2005; Jang *et al.*, 2008; Habibi, Laroche and Richard, 2014)
Social approval	People who influence my behaviour would think I should post messages frequently on SNMPs People who are important to me would think I should post messages frequently on SNMPs My friends think that I should post messages frequently on SNMPs Posting a SNMP message makes me feel important	(Hsu and Lu, 2004; Park, Kee, and Valenzuela, 2009; Lee *et al*., 2010; Lee and Ma, 2012; Chen *et al*., 2013)

	It helps me to gain status when sharing a SNMP message	
	It helps me to look good when sharing a SNMP message	
Attitude	For me using SNMPs is a good idea For me using SNMPs is an intelligent idea For me using SNMPs is pleasant I like using SNMPs I am interested in SNMPs	(Taylor and Todd, 1995; Bhattacherjee and Sanford, 2006; Hernández, Jiménez and M. Martín, 2010)
Involvement	Not involved–highly involved Of no concern–of concern to me Unimportant–important Irrelevant–relevant Necessary-Not necessary	(Zaichkowsky, 1985, 1994; Stamm and Dube, 1994; Sussman and Siegel, 2003; Wang, Yu and Wei, 2012)
E-WOM	Saying positive things about a brand on SNMPs Encouraging others to buy a brand on SNMPs Becoming a fan of a brand on SNMPs Recommending a brand on SNMPs	(Valarie *et al*., 1996; Eisingerich *et al*., 2015)
Purchase Intention	I am likely to purchase a brand using a SNMP in the near future I intend to use a SNMP to purchase a brand in the near future I intend to use a SNMP to seek further information about a brand in the near future I intend to use a SNMP to purchase a particular product that I have looked at on a relevant SNMP. When I use a SNMP, I usually buy something I will purchase a product over a SNMP in the near future I use SNMPs to purchase a product I have heard about	(Jarvenpaa and Todd, 1997; Gefen, Karahanna and Straub, 2003; Hernández, Jiménez and M. Martín, 2010; Zhang and Mao, 2016)

Table 9: Survey Questionnaire Item Measures Adapted from Previous Studies.

Subsequently, designing the survey questionnaire started utilising the identified items. Survey questionnaires have grown in popularity within management and marketing research. This method has been considered as the main mechanism for collecting data. It involves strictly created measures and questions formatted as attitude measures, checklist and rating measures (Oppenheim, 2005). The survey questionnaire is classified into telephone, postal and in person (face-to-face). This method guarantees a high respondent rate, precise sampling and reduces bias (Oppenheim, 2005).

This study followed a self-completed questionnaire using in person (face-to-face) paper-formed self-completed questionnaire rather than a self -administered questionnaire (Brace, 2008), as participants completing the questionnaire on their own is perceived to save time, money and more convenient (Bryman, 2004). The questionnaire items taken from previous studies were slightly modified to fit the concept of the current study. The benefit of using existing items is that they have already been tested and therefore are considered more reliable (Bourque and Fielder, 1995) and are easier to compare (Bryman and Bell, 2007).

3.19.9 The process of the Survey

The survey questionnaires were initially designed using Qualtrics software and subsequently its completion; the servery questionnaires were printed and distributed to respondents through face-to-face meetings. University and local libraries were used as the key locations for recruiting the potential respondents (16-35 years old), including the University of Plymouth, Goldsmith University of London, University of the Arts London (UAL), the University of Greenwich as well as Peckham, Camberwell and Dulwich local libraries. Literature presented convincing influences and indications that the users most active in SNMPs fall into the 16-35 age group (Chau and Ngai, 2010; Wang, 2011; Gong,

Stump and Li, 2012). This age group also includes the Millennials. Smith and Gallicano (2015) describes the Millennials as the individuals under the age of 30, which are viewed to be amongst the most active user of social media (Hargittai and Hsieh, 2010). Likewise, Millennials attachment for technology and their predisposition to digital marketing makes them suitable for this study (Smith and Gallicano, 2015).

Similarly, according to Erkan and Evans (2016) university students viewed to be suitable for this study, as research has shown that SM use is the highest amongst individuals between the ages of 18-29. 89% of this age category, who use the Internet, likewise use SNMPs (Erkan and Evans, 2016). The researcher chose the 16-35 categories of samples as it involves all the suggested relevant samples in the literature for this study.

Furthermore, to avoid wrong target respondents, screening questions were placed at the onset of the survey comprising age and the usage frequency of SNMPs and OBCs. For example, the respondents were asked, "Are you between the ages of 16 to 35? In which country do you currently reside? How frequently are you to use Social Network and Media Platforms (SNMPs: e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) each day?" They were taken to the end of the survey whenever they answered no/never to questions relating to SNMP, OBC usage frequency, residency, and age. The remaining questions were replied based on the Likert scale (Appendix E presents the survey questionnaire).

3.19.10 Pilot Testing

Testing of the survey questionnaires on a small sample of participants to identify and remove possible problems has been defined as pilot testing (Malhotra and Birks, 2000). This approach ensures interview question accuracy and consistency (Bryman and Bell, 2007; Johnson and Sohi, 2016). Thus, testing the survey questionnaire is an important practice for an effective study (Reynolds and Diamantopoulos, A Schlegelmilch, 1993;

Presser *et al.*, 2004) because it is not feasible to make any amendments after the core data is collected (Kent, 1999). Hence, pretesting starts once the initial plan of the questionnaire is undertaken and prior to applying it for the full survey rollout (Churchill, 1979, 1987).

The facets of questionnaire pretested involved the question length/simplicity, content, concurrent, phrasing, order, form and design, question ambiguity and guidelines (Buckingham and Saunders, 2004; Creswell, 2014). These facets are vital for the suitability of information attained via the study survey (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010).

The pre-test study was undertaken through interviewing individuals (Reynolds and Diamantopoulos, A Schlegelmilch, 1993), knowing its manageability and the correctness and inclusiveness of the information it offers (Miller, 1991). Respondents were chosen from the same population for both the pre-test and the final survey. Subsequently, the pilot study was directed in circumstances that reflect the final survey (Green, Tull, and Albaum, 1998; Chisnall, 2001). Each informant was given a copy of the questionnaire to read-through the questions in their own time first to have an overview understanding of the subject and subsequently doing face-to-face interviewing. The questionnaire took approximately 10 minutes to answer.

There are different sample sizes for pilot studies that have been suggested. For example, Van Belle, (2002) proposes 10 respondents, Mooney, and Duval (1993) proposes up to 30 respondents and Isaac and Michael (1995) suggesting between 10 and 30 respondents could be adequate, while Chisnall (2001) suggesting about 10 percent of the planned survey sample size. In this study, 16 respondents were chosen for the pilot study in which 12 of those respondents gave their contact detail for future references. The pilot study leads to the following essential changes prior to making the full survey going live.

1. The researcher discovered that more simplicity and clarification to be given to terminologies such as SNMPs and OBCs as some participants needed explanations of what does OBCs meant.

2. Some respondents pointed out the similarity between some questions, which needed to be either removed or made the difference clearer between them.

3. Some respondents suggested adding additional items to give the respondents more options when answering questions relating to the frequency of SNMP use.

4. Rephrasing, reordering the item scales to make an easier understanding of the key questions and ensuring that all sentences are grammatically correct and spelling mistake free. Furthermore, some questions needed to be shortened to increase question simplification.

Pilot testing the questionnaire is to ensure that the survey questionnaire is as complete as possible before disseminating it to the respondents. However, designing a sound questionnaire is merely one vital aspect, doing the actual process are believed to have a more effect on the outcome (Dillman, 2007). Appendix E depicts the full survey questionnaire.

3.19.11 Sampling Approach - Piloting

A convenience sampling was used for the piloting test, which is known as a non-probability sampling approach (Malhot*ra et al*., 2004). This approach seemed to be appropriate for piloting and pre-test researches (Malhotra *et al.*, 2004). The majority of the participants were selected from university students who needed to reside in the UK currently.

3.19.12 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

Sampling is a procedure in which units are selected including people or organisations from a population important to the social phenomena studies. This study followed the simple random sampling in which every sample entity (Company, employee, customer, etc.) has an equal chance of being part of the sample (Collis and Hussey, 2014). The findings of the sample can then be used to generalise or extrapolate to the target population with assurance (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007). Hair *et al.,* (2010) recommends that when using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) the sample size should be minimum 100 and a maximum of 400. This is consistent with the current study in which grounded on 300 completed surveys. This is excluding the removals of 99 uncompleted and unqualified survey respondents.

3.19.13 Ethical Consideration – Survey

From the beginning, while handing over each of the questionnaires to the participants, the researcher spent approximately 2 minutes and in some cases more explaining the researcher's position. What the questionnaires were about and how to answer them. The questionnaires were left with the respondents for a minimum of 15 minutes, and in some cases, the surveys were collected the following day as some participants asked the researcher to meet them at the same place in the next day. After collecting each questionnaire, the researcher went through it quickly to ensure all questions were answered. When a question was unanswered, the researcher went back to the respondent and asked if there was a reason for that and in most cases, they just missed that question and answered them or asked a question about it. The respondents took part in answering the surveys voluntarily and were given the option of withdrawal. The researcher offered

two £25 Amazon vouchers as incentives for their contribution in which some 50% of the respondents have written their email address at the end of the survey.

3.19.14 Summary

To use the correct methods of inquiry for this study, different research paradigms, strategies and designs have been assessed. After a critical assessment, the selection of using critical realism as a philosophical stance in this study has been rationalised. The critical realism stance encourages the utilisation of both qualitative and quantitative methods, which are adopted at the first and second stage of this study respectively. This confirms undertaking an exploratory sequential mixed method design because it is appropriate to meet the research objective. At the inceptive stage of the research, a phenomenological stance has been taken, in support with a systematic literature review and semi-structured interviews, which allows obtaining rich information necessary for this research. The survey is regarded as the most appropriate research design for quantitative analysis in the later phase of the research. It is therefore denoted that a critical realism paradigm underpins the exploratory sequential mixed method design in this research.

CHAPTER 4: QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the research findings in which the theory of thematic analysis was used to code, to identify and to organise relevant themes and patterns extracted from the data sources of twenty-five (25) SMME's interview transcripts. The explanations of the three key identified themes of credibility, infotainment, and interactivity are presented and how they are connected and joined through the development of the thematic networks. This is where each network is developed from SMMEs views and experiences, and each segment of the data is described, and the emerged patterns are explored. Subsequently, a summary of each thematic network is given along with an organising thematic network diagram depicting the key identified themes and patterns and their relations to one another (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The researcher extends this by creating a thorough table at the end of each central theme showing the complete development process of data extracts, coding and theme identifications.

4.2 Research Findings

Eleven codes from over 1000 data extracts were identified in the analysis stage as well as 46 basic themes. Based on the pre-planned semi-structured research questions, the following eleven codes have been identified within the 25 SM manager's interview transcripts relating to the current study:

1. Engagement. 2. Relevancy. 3. Usefulness. 4. Helpfulness. 5. Funny. 6. Thought leadership. 7. Transparency. 8. Results. 9 Interesting. 10. Behaviour change. 11. Brand influencer.

4.3 Exploration of the SMME Interviews

Table 10 lists the three central themes identified from the SMME's interview transcripts and nine (9) organising themes. The remaining of this part will be describing and exploring each of these core themes.

Organising themes	Global themes
1. Expertise 2. Trustworthiness	Credibility
3. Entertainment 4. Informativeness	Infotainment
5. Community building 6. Storytelling 7. Social approval 8. Brand influencers 9. Testimonials	Interactivity

Table 10. Key Emergent Themes

4.4 Describing and Exploring the Identified Key Themes

In this section, the researcher defines and discovers the thematic networks of each of the central identified themes. Here, the thematic networks help the researcher to ensure a thorough exploration of the occurred texts, the exploration of the themes and explaining the patterns motivating them (Attride-Stirling 2001).

4.5 Global Theme: Credibility

Credibility is the first global theme in Table 10 to be used as an illustration drawn from SMME's interview transcripts within this data analysis. This theme forms one thematic

network including two organising themes (expertise and trustworthiness) and the following fifteen (15) basic themes:

> 1. Being an industry leader. 2. Being knowledgeable. 3. Being professional. 4. Staying Up-To-Date. 5. Being competent. 6. Openness. 7. Integrity. 8. Being accurate. 9. Being consistent. 10. Being ethical. 11. Being legal. 12. Being transparent. 13. Being honest. 14. Being reliable. 15. Being present.

This network organises an investigation of the participant's insights, experiences, and responsibilities of working as SMM managers within the framework of the wider debate on credibility. Emerging from the basic themes that are associating with credibility, two kinds of credibility has been identified as the organising themes encapsulating expertise and trustworthiness.

In the context of this study, expertise credibility is referred to how the readers, listeners, viewers, followers, and customers of a brand perceive the source of a particular SNMP message concerning professionalism, subject knowledge in comparison to alternative businesses doing similar business and such like. Trustworthiness is referred to the factors such as how the followers of a brand perceive the information contained in their SNMP message considering aspects such as its truthfulness, accuracy, consistency, and integrity.

4.5.1 Organising Theme: Expertise

The organising theme expertise is referred to the level of knowledge and experiences a brand's SM manager is perceived to be possessed by their follower and potential customers. The overview was that SNMP message sources that are perceived to be as experts and knowledgeable in the subject discussion are also perceived as more skilful,

up-to-date, and focused on delivering satisfaction to their target customers and therefore more dependable. SM managers placed high importance on staying true to what is being promised to customers and potential audiences by doing what they say they and back that up by evidence and results. In this context, the expertise has been referred to the communicators that have the experience and awareness to offer practical and correct information or argue a specific theme (Wang and Yang, 2010).

The expression was that SM managers, bloggers, and consultants desire to be known as experts are high as people feel less at risk to make a purchase or a decision about a particular aspect of their lives when they are recommended by someone whom they perceive to be as experts. This phenomenon was expressed to be even truer in SMM as people can open as many accounts as they like and post as many messages as they like and therefore call themselves SM experts. Table 11 depicts eight (8) extracts that prove the concept of expertise:

Credibility is what it's all about. I think you've got to show expertise, knowledge, experience and why should people trust you? Are you the best-selling product in Brisbane? Are you the best known on social media topics? And it's got to shine through in your work. People have got to be able to find you and look and see, okay, what has this person or what has this business done? [Expert 16, SM Influencer].

The word 'expert' is overused. I think there's a lot of people that have been in business for two or three months and they call themselves experts. You've got to be able to back it up in real life as well because it is that feedback loop. If you say you're great you're expecting you're nine out of ten or you're ten out of ten, and then the reality is that you don't know what you're talking about and you're one or two out of ten, it then comes back to bite you, so think reputation's really important — [Expert 19, SM marketer]. For a B2C point of view, we want the businesses to be seen as experts in their sector, which is why we share pieces of information that's of interest to them — [Expert 11, SM manager].

So I always make sure I learn. I always make sure I stay up to date. I read a lot of content every day because social media changes every day, there's something new. I try and do a bit of studies as well as I get time. I'm busy at the moment doing another social media course that I'm completing. I'm doing all the Facebook training, I'm doing all the Google training that's all offered by these companies, so I try and make sure that

I know the products, I know what's happening, just staying up to date with my own education to make sure I can give the best and right information to my clients. [Expert 16, SM Influencer].

We need to make sure it's the right and delivers value for our customers. So we need to be seen as experts, we need to be seen as good judges of what is content that people want to watch. We work with partners and have access to some of the best content production agencies, studios in the world. We work with the likes of Disney, HBO and we have strong partnerships with those guys to ensure that we've got exclusive content for our UK audience. [Expert 20, SM controller].

We are very careful not to try answer things we not the experts in it — [Expert 3, SM manager].

We'd make sure that what we're saying is true and can be verified. If we're making a statement about something - like we're the cheapest or we're the best or the favourite, or whatever. [Expert 6: Head of SM Manager].

You notice if, let's say, one of our CMO or CEO, if they Retweet something then it will automatically get more Retweets because they're a person of authority and they're obviously very intelligent to have gone to the position that they're in and people realise that and say, 'Oh well if they're sharing it then it must be good.' [Expert 13, Community Manager].

Table 11: Quotes that illustrate expertise

4.5.2 Organising Theme: Trustworthiness

The organising theme ''trustworthiness'' is explained as the etiquette of which SMMEs go about doing their business. It was commonly expressed amongst SMMEs that a trustable SNMP message is one that is honest, ethical, has the integrity and well communicated supported by evidence. Being consistent, being transparent, and being open and therefore not afraid to admit failure or fault when things go wrong were expressed as key ingredients of a trustworthy SNMP message. The experts showed strong favourability for the presence of these factors in SNMP messages. Their experiences and perceptions were that businesses who are coming across as someone who looks like trying

to hide something when marketing via SM as wired and time wasting. Experts 16 stated that *''People want to see the faces behind the logos. They want to see who you are. I find that companies that try to not include enough information about who they are, what they do, they struggle a bit because people go well, what have you got to hide?''* The experts placed a high emphasis on the trustworthiness of a marketing message. One reason is that you cannot lie in SM, because people will find out immediately. For example, if a message comes from Sainsbury's, saying our baby nappies are the best in the market. If this is not the case then it can take a very short time for mothers responding to this message in SM and saying hey, this is not entirely true at all, I brought these nappies, and they are not that good as described on this message and its packaging. These are the types of messages other potential buyers find to be more real and therefore trustable. Therefore, SMMEs expressed that installing trustworthiness at the heart of every aspect of SMM activities is key to the overall success of the business both in the short and long term. Table 12 depicts eight (8) extracts that prove the concept of trustworthiness:

If you get reach and awareness that again doesn't necessarily guarantee that you will build a genuine organic relationship with that person or that audience…Ultimately, that boils down to your message, your content, your trustworthiness…Those are things that I'd say still largely speaking today; you can't buy those things… Some core authenticity and trust to what you are doing that you will gain more value from social media. [Expert 24, managing director].
Ensuring that it is honest, it has integrity, that it's ethical, that it's well communicated. And then it's backed up by authenticity; you deliver on the promise that you say you're going to… It's human characteristics, really. That's the thing about social media. It's very, very human — [Expert 25, CEO].
Staying true to your brand and staying true to your messaging and producing quality and being consistent is probably the most reliable and the most effective. Being transparent definitely, and yes, being open, not afraid to admit failure or fault. People appreciate that, rather than trying to hide something you say, 'Okay yes, we were wrong,' or, 'That was wrong.' That doesn't happen very often thankfully, but when it does, you need to own up to it. I think that's quite important for all brands. Accountability is a good way of putting it. [Expert 13, community manager]

I know if I want to run a campaign and do a giveaway or I want to run a competition, or I maybe want to try and push on sales, and I'll offer an offering like you know, win a week's free consulting with me or something like that. I know my audience will engage because they've learned to trust me. They like what I do. They know I'm out there and they will engage and be interested in what I have to say because there is that trust and they've learned that I know what I'm doing, so being a thought leader in my industry. [Expert 16, SM influencer]

Well, make sure it's accurate for a start, so there's nothing worse than being caught outputting something online that actually people think, well, that's not true because of this, that and the other. So being really careful with the information you put out. If you can't quantify it or back it up, then you've got to be very careful. [Expert 17, Deputy Head of Communication]

I think there's for me; I suggest consistency as well, so you become a trusted source for information… It's so nosy out there, everybody trying to battle for your attention and for a lot of people if you see for example something that it's not from a likely source you would question whether they are the authority on that topic. But also accuracy, you know if things [inaudible] or links are broken, or it's difficult to find what you can do with that post or that piece of content then it makes the user question the validity of it, so I think that sort of during consistent quality output is really important. [Expert 2, Digital Marketing Manager]

Well, it's not only digital we are working in. We are working also with our customers, face to face meetings. We work on the fairs and exhibitions. We work on point of sales, and in all these touch points, we proved that our products are the way that we are talking; and also the quality is in that level, that when our customers, the end consumers, when they get their products, they feel that these are good quality products and that they can rely on us. I believe that the trust comes through the products. [Expert 7, Digital Marketing Manager]

I think credibility of messaging with social media is the same as credibility in any form of communication. You can't lie because people will see through you straightaway and especially on social media. [Expert 1, managing director]

Table 12: Quotes that illustrate trustworthiness

Recapping Credibility Thematic Networks

In summary, a thematic network is structured for the global theme "credibility" in the form of a diagram wherein all the links between the networks are graphically represented (see Figure 6). The thematic networks show the main themes whereby credibility was connected including expertise and trustworthiness. This thematic networks approach shows metaphorically how the themes are developed by reporting the networks in which the basic themes flow inwards towards the central part of the arrangement, the global theme. The desire for effective use of SNMPs as a marketing tool for reaching out to as many potential audiences as possible, turning them into potential buyers, followers, idea contributors and subsequently business ambassadors were some of the key reasons behind the experts reasoning for placing high importance on the establishment of message credibility.

Figure 6 facilitates the reader to view how these themes of credibility (expertise, trustworthiness) make the marketing experts engage in capturing the attention of the existing and potential audience's attention via SNMP messages. Moreover, Table 13 exhibits the overall coding and data extracts relating to the credibility theme. The phenomenon of consumers moving towards SNMPs not only for communicating with friends and family but also for communicating with brands just as easily is perceived as another key reason for businesses wanting to build credibility. The experts evidently expressed that business followers trust SNMP messages that are transparent and expert in the subject discussion. They further expressed that these attributes can help users to make easier purchasing decisions when thinking about purchasing a particular product amongst different alternatives.
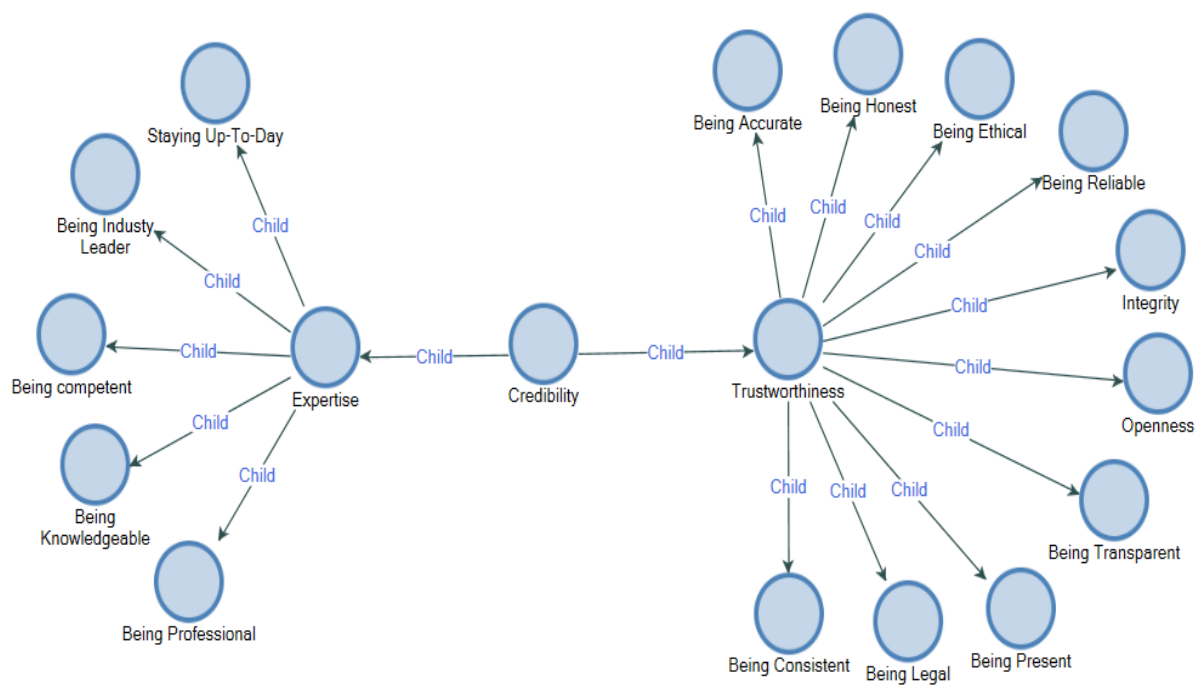
Figure 6. Thematic Network for Credibility

Phase 1: coding process			Phase 2: theme identification			
Data extracts (see example 1 and 2 for a more detailed list of extracts relating to credibility theme development)	Coded for (phase 2)	Subjects discussed	Themes identified (phase 2)	Basic themes	Organising themes	Global themes
It's, of course, thought leadership, professionalism, sort of branding our personnel as top experts, that we are and we have here. We are very careful not to try answer things we not the experts in it. We'd make sure that what we're saying is true and can be verified. If we're making a statement about something - like we're the cheapest or we're the best or the favourite, or whatever. I always make sure I learn. I always make sure I stay up to date.	Thought Leadership	Experiences loyalty Feelings	Increase Subject knowledge. Increase business Professionalism Stick to message promises. Back up statements Competent	1. Being an industry leader 2. Being knowledgeable. 3. Being professional. 4. Staying Up-To-Date 5. Being competent	Expertise	Credibility
Being transparent definitely, and yes, being open, not afraid to admit failure or fault. People appreciate that, rather than trying to hide something you say, 'Okay yes, we were wrong,' or, 'That was wrong.' That doesn't happen very often thankfully, but when it does, you need to own up to it. I think that's quite important for all brands. Accountability is a good way of putting it. Then yes, the online world, like I said again, all about your messaging, being authentic, giving people access to you and if you can, provide customer service online. Ensuring that it is honest, it has integrity, that it's ethical, that it's well communicated.	Transparency	Feelings Emotions Experiences	Seek transparency. Seek truthfulness. Seek accountability. Seek authenticity Create easy accessibility. Stay present to quires. Stay consistent. Stay helpful. Stay ethical & legal. Seek correctness. Seek integrity.	6. Openness. 7. Integrity 8. Being accurate. 9. Being consistent. 10. Being ethical 11. Being legal. 12. Being transparent. 13. Being honest 14. Being reliable 15. Being present	Trustworthiness	

Table 13. Data Extractions, Coding, and Theme Identification: Credibility.

4.6 Global Theme: Infotainment

Infotainment is the second global theme within Table 10, which creates one thematic network involving two organising themes (Entertainment and Informativeness) and the following thirteen (13) basic themes:

1. Being humorous. 2. Being amusing. 3. Being excited. 4. Not being boring. 5. Connect emotionally. 6. Being simple to understand. 7. Being useful to have. 8. Posting the right message length. 9. Posting the right message frequency. 10. Providing timely information. 11. Providing topical information. 12. Forwarding relevant information. 13. Posting concise messages.

Infotainment is referred to the mixture of information and entertainment in SNMP messages. The content provided by infotainment is created to be informative as well as entertaining to the degree that attracts and keeps the user's interest. Infotainment concept is to avoid irksomeness in message posts. The experiences and views of the experts were that a message could be perceived as trustworthy, for example, but at the same time boring. As expert six explained that *''you can be very trustworthy and very simple, but it could be very boring, and therefore no one's going to pay attention.''* Another description of this phenomenon by expert one was that *''it's not just purely entertainment; it's entertainment with a purpose.''* The expression was that to avoid falling into the dull category of messages, presenting information in a way that is also perceived as entertaining was commonly viewed and experienced as impactful in favourably influencing the recipient's attitudes and behavioural intentions towards the SNMP messages. Kim, Kim, and Nam (2016) describe infotainment as the product lines that offer a range of information and entertainment services.

122

4.6.1 Organising Theme: Entertainment

The organising theme ''entertainment'' was explained as the aspects relating to the funny side of a SNMP message such as being humorous, amusing, and exciting, and interesting, including things that encourage laughter, feelings, and emotions. The view was that if a SNMP message only focused on promoting business interests, then it will be most likely to be viewed as boring. The experiences were that people respond positively to SNMP messages that have a humorous, amusing and or an interesting element attached to it. The belief was that people like to be connected emotionally and considering the entertainment aspects when creating a SNMP message helps the message recipients feel the excitement and the humours side of the message. In Fu, Ju and Hsu (2015) study, perceived news entertainment is explained as the amount of the users' observed interest, satisfaction and pleasure from the updates displayed on the profile page, which steers attitude towards the advertisement. Table 14 depicts ten (10) extracts that prove the concept of entertainment:

Can we entertain people, and therefore they want to engage with it? There are some, for example, Hotels.com adverts with this character, Captain Obvious. He looks like a sailor, he is quite funny, and it's amusing for a family audience to watch. We do the entertainment job there, but then we should also hope that we deliver our message at the same time. [Expert 6: Head of SM Manager].

That's something that we're constantly looking to provide, is access to the best entertainment content in the world. I think definitely all of our propositions and our channels strive to achieve that and I think we do a really good job. We've got… Our content propositions teams are always making sure that we have the right access and the right content for our UK audience. [Expert 20, SM controller]

I think you have to entertain. People do want to be entertained. It's not just purely entertainment; it's entertainment with a purpose, which is what good advertising is about anyway, but it has to be generated towards stimulating interest in the brand or, at least, liking for the brand. [Expert 1, managing director]

I add a bit of a fun, and I add a bit of inspiration, but I also add a bit of education and information that's useful and easy to process for someone to use. [Expert 16, SM influencer]

I commissioned some animations which were specifically to target 18 to 25-year-olds, and that was around choosing the right NHS services. So if you have a look at them

you'll see that the videos are quite funny, they use humour and they're really to engage that kind of audience through Facebook to generate people to pass them on, tag them, share them and things like that. [Expert 17, Deputy Head of Communication]

I think the thing that people like most is a little bit of humour…If you were following, Barclays Bank on Twitter and they sent some really corporate message about your banking, no one cares. It's so boring, but if you can find a bit of a more personable touch for these messages and add in a little bit of humour and something that somebody will get, they might not get one in five seconds, but they will get it. I think it makes it resonate much more with them and they're far more likely to actually engage with you, following that, so yes, humour is very important. I think if people know that an account is funny, they're going to tell their friends about it. [Expert 18, SM manager]

Marketing is based on feeling, and your message has got to have something that makes people feel, rather than thinking facts. Funny, something that makes you laugh. It's all about the emotion. When you're scrolling through the feed it's something that just makes you stop and want to either click on it, so that might be the valuable thing, it might be something that makes you laugh which is a funny — [Expert 19, SM marketer].

Tony McCoy did the ice bucket challenge at the racecourse, so we put the video up, and everyone was oh, it's so funny, he's getting covered in ice and everything, and it's that awareness as well. [Expert 11: SM manager]

A lot of humour, we find humour works very well across all demographics. [Expert 21, Marketing Director]

The basic idea is - we call it Infotainment - we have a mix of Information and Entertainment. [Expert 5, SM Manager].

Table 14: Quotes that illustrate entertainment

4.6.2 Organising Theme: Informativeness

The organising theme ''informativeness'' was explained as giving information that is timely, relevant, useful, and valuable to the users and in doing so the relationship and the engagement between the source behind the SNMP message and recipient are bolstered. The types of information that was mentioned to be given in a SNMP message included aspects such as the fear of missing something, giving practical advice, which is valuable and insightful and told in an interesting demeanour. Some of the experts stated that they are attaching information in their SNMP messages that their followers can find helpful for getting on better with doing their job, with their daily lives and or helping the potential

124

buyer to make the right purchasing decision. This approach expressed as a key factor in increasing the response rates towards the message, as expert 25, a chief engagement officer from a PR industry explained *"once every ten posts I'll ask my community for something. I'll ask them to engage in a conference or to participate in a crowd-sourcing exercise. Because I've got a relationship with them on a sustained basis, they will engage."* In Fu, Ju and Hsu (2015) study, informativeness is explained as the users observed value size offered by the information contained in a SNMP message such as its significance, correctness, and truthfulness (Ducoffe, 1996; Ranganathan and Ganapathy, 2002). Table 15 depicts twelve (12) extracts that prove the concept of informativeness.

I try to provide them information that would be valuable in their jobs and in doing so they would follow me and that way we create a community approach, so I get to provide a service to them through my insights and repurposing of other information I think is interesting and valuable and in doing so I develop a following. I cover enterprise information technology infrastructure subjects and people who follow me want to learn more and keep up to date on those topics. So it's really about sharing information that's timely and relevant. [Expert 4, SM Producer]

For me being a marketer, the content that I like is content that gives me valuable information, that it's something that can…portray valuable information…Valuable information in an interesting way that tells a story, the narrative that gives me enough value in the time that I can spend. [Expert 19, SM marketer]

So effectively we're using the channel to push relevant information to their sector, and we're not using it as a sales channel, we're using it as an information channel, and to a degree that changes when we're using social media from a client perspective to talk to their audience. So we'll use the channels as an information channel, there is a race tomorrow, or there's a race next week, but one of the things that we think works really well is also using the channel to, for example, push opportunities, so free tickets, and getting the channel to talk in the channel and pass it into their networks. So we're trying to have that kind of conversation on a B2C basis. We are using it as a push channel for sales messages, but we're not overtly pushing them as sales messages. We're trying to put information into that channel so that other people talk about it. [Expert10, managing director]

Capturing attention works in different ways, you can create a sense of - how do I say this? As if you - like fear of missing out, so make the audience think this is something

they need to read in order to make their job better or to make their day better. [Expert 13, community manager]

There's a lot of research done nationally around the messages, so the messages are get your flu vaccination, and the reason is if you don't have your flu vaccination, you're somebody who's elderly, or you're somebody that has a long-term condition then you could have exacerbated medical conditions in the winter which could mean you end up in hospital. So we try and warn people that if you can get vaccinated and your eligible you should do it for those reasons. [Expert 17, Deputy Head of Communication]

So, we have information that's for patients, and then we also have events and training and content that is specifically for doctors. This is because we have to be seen to be supporting the doctors and giving them information, but at the same time if somebody comes to our Facebook page, and we haven't directed them from anywhere else, if they have come to the page organically, we need to have information there that's relevant to them. For the direct consumer it's about we need to be giving them as much information on these treatments as possible because it's a very important decision if they're going to be having one of these treatments, and obviously as a pharmaceutical company we're heavily regulated, so we need to be seen as providing very, very important information to them. Doctors is the same but, yes, it is the same sort of medium, it's about supporting them in their businesses, and it's about giving them information towards events and supporting them on training sessions, et cetera. [Expert 23, Digital Marketing Manager]

Creating compelling conversations on information that is relevant to the topic at hand and to give readers and listeners and viewers and followers information that they want to come back for again and again. [Expert 4: SM Producer]

The key is to help people to buy, is educate people on your products and services. When somebody buys a holiday, typically if somebody's buying a holiday, there's many touch points. There's many digital touch points that they would go through, so they would read reviews, they would read - they'd go and watch YouTube videos, they're going to do pricing research. So there's quite a big, big journey that somebody goes through before buying products. Whilst they're in that phase, they're learning. For example, you would provide educational content in that process, so it's educating them. [Expert 14, Digital Marketer]

For me, if I don't know you, I'm not going to say listen to me for an hour because you're not likely to do it, but you might listen to me for 30 seconds for short-form content. Long-term content works but only if you've got a relationship with that person. [Expert 8, SM Consultant]

I think simplicity's really important. I partly think that because I'm a human being and I know that if I email you asking you three questions… If I send you one question, you'll answer that one question. I find that with advertising and brands - and definitely when I've looked at post-campaign research - that I've seen from people like Nielsen and Millward Brown, the most effective campaigns I've worked on are those that are

incredibly simple, where there was a clear message, and there was only one. It wasn't like: here's a brand you've never heard of before. [Expert 6, Head of SM Manager].

Again, it's going to depend on the audience. If I'm based in Germany, I probably would prefer a very long eBook, because that's going to believe me that you're an expert at what you're talking there. Okay. But if I'm based in the US, I'm probably going to prefer the quick, short video. [Expert 22, Principal Channel Consultant]

If you're selling to a B2B, more senior audience, you need, you know, more contextual information. More detailed information. It's very, very different. You know, I blog, constantly. And once every ten posts I'll ask my community for something. I'll ask them to engage in a conference or to participate in a crowd-sourcing exercise. Because I've got a relationship with them on a sustained basis, they will engage. Insight, information, practical advice, help them get on with their career, insight around the profession that I work in. Go and have a look on my blog... My blog's very, very basic. But it's mainly around my professional identity and my career. And how I manage my own career, and the work I do with clients. And so, it's those sorts of stories. So, I'll publish book reviews; I'll publish reports on papers that I've read. I'll publish analyses. I did a couple of weeks ago, new year, I did a, here's the 20 things I'm thinking about this year in our profession. Here's what you'd do well to watch out for. I know, then. As a result, I get people come in, asking advice and asking for help. So, it's a really powerful means of engagement. [Expert 25, CEO]

Table 15: Quotes that illustrate informativeness

Recapping Infotainment Thematic Networks

The summary of the global theme ''infotainment'' is presented in a graphically thematic network that gives an overview of the theme, its connections, and outcomes (see Figure 7). The diagram shows the main themes upon which infotainment is set involving entertainment and informativeness, which includes the steps of how the basic themes flow inwards towards the major theme, which is infotainment. The importance of these themes of infotainment (entertainment and informativeness) steered SM managers to practice messages that are perceived as informative as well as entertaining. Table 16 below shows

an example of the process of coding and identifying the key themes relating to Infotainment within the data.
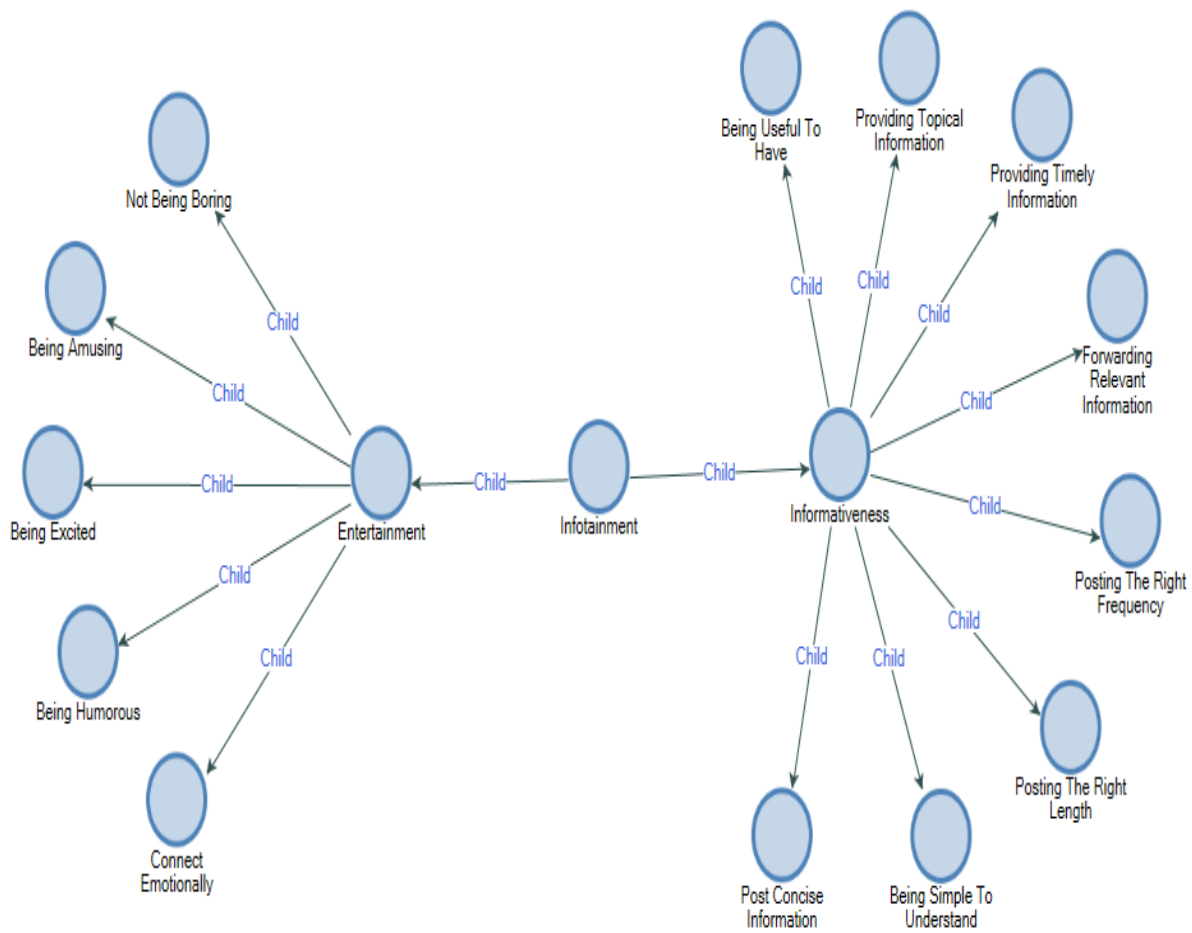
Figure 7. Thematic Network for Infotainment

Stage 1: coding process			Phase 2: Thematic Identification			
Data extracts (see example 3 and 4 for a more detailed list of extracts relating to infotainment theme development)	Coding (phase 1)	Issues debated	Themes identified (phase 2)	Basic themes	Organising themes	Global themes
Funny, something that makes you laugh. It's all about the emotion. When you're scrolling through the feed it's something that just makes you stop and want to either click on it, so that might be the valuable thing, it might be something that makes you laugh which is a funny. A lot of humour, we find humour works very well across all demographics.	Funny	Feelings Emotions	Create laughter Create excitement Create something unexpected Create value Interestingness	16. Being Humorous 17. Being Amusing 18. Being Excited 19. Not Being Boring 20. Connect Emotionally.	Entertainment	Infotainment
So it's really about sharing information that's timely and relevant — creating compelling conversations on information that is relevant to the topic at hand and to give readers and listeners and viewers and followers information that they want to come back for again and again. So I very much try to provide information that's useful and beneficial in an occupational environment. I think simplicity's really important.	Relevancy Usefulness Helpfulness	Learning Experiences Motivation	Look for topical information. Know when to post. Know how often to post. Know the length of the message. Seek to simplify the information. Look for useful information. Find helpful information Look for correct information. Look for information that in useful. Look for the right hashtags Look for valuable information. Look for helpful information. Look for the right time to post info.	21. Being Simple To understand. 22. Being useful to have. 23. Posting the right frequency. 24. Posting the right length. 25. Providing timely information. 26. Providing topical information. 27. Forwarding relevant information. 28. Post concise information.	Informativeness	

Table 16. Data Extractions, Coding, and Theme Identification: Infotainment.

4.7 Global Theme: Interactivity

Interactivity is the third global theme within Table 10, which creates one thematic network involving four organising themes (OBCs, Social approval, Storytelling, Brand influencer, Testimonials) and eighteen basic themes:

> 1. Encourage engagement. 2. Get involved in conversations. 3. Social organisations. 4. Correct use of hashtags. 5. Inspire audiences. 6. Link messages to nostalgia experiences. 7. Link messages to seasonality events. 8. Link messages to socially responsible topics. 9. Creating exciting content. 10. Create educational content. 11. Increase social proof. 12. Make people feel important. 13. Enhance reputation. 14. Enhance customer marketing. 15. Encourage business recommendations. 16. Being able to get results. 17. Providing real reviews. 18. Show customer satisfaction.

In the context of this study, the interactivity theme is referred to the conversational exchanges made through SNMPs between the brand and its followers in which brand communities are developed. In these communities, brands have the opportunity to build a large community of followers and subsequently turning them into brand evangelists as well as potential buyers. These brand communities enable members to interact promptly not only to the brands but also with other members of the community. Business experts commonly emphasised the importance of SNMPs as a marketing tool. They expressed that the speed whereby users can respond to product offerings and queries and exchange discussions with other members in the community and with the brand behind the message is fast moving in SM. This prevalence was expressed as an opportunity for the users as well as the brands. Besides, other important aspects that were expressed to be leading to increased brand user interactivity and thus favourable user attitudes and behavioural

intentions towards the brand included the use of brand influencers, storytelling and user testimonials.

4.7.1 Organising Themes: Online brand communities (OBCs)

The organising theme online brand community (OBC) is referred to the use of SNMPs by brands for building online communities for the brand advocates, consumers, and potential customers. Subsequently, the community enables its members to talk directly with the brand behind the community and or with other community members all simultaneously about the brand's product offerings and any issues concerning their product needs or their pre/post-purchases. SNMPs were commonly described as an effective and growing marketing tool, because of its importance with aspects such as enabling brands and users to directly and easily communicate with one another without time and location boundaries. The views were that after a community is built, the brand would then have the opportunity to increase its relationships and product offering awareness by reaching out to more potential customers. The views were that being present to answer any questions or concerns that the followers or the potential customers might have about particular issues would increase customer satisfaction and the like results.

Further expressions were that satisfied community members could turn into brand ambassadors, which subsequently increases the community followers and therefore more opportunities to increase financial performances. It was commonly expressed that involving in conversational topics that customers find interesting as an effective approach to bolstering the relationships between the brand and its followers, consumers and potential customers. The mentioned topical conversations were included awareness days, weeks, months, holidays and such like occasions. Thoughtful content was expressed as the key factors to the success or failure of a SNMP message within brand communities.

The expressions were that organisations are seeking ways to connect with their audiences, a phenomenon that expert 25 described as ''social organisations'' whereby a two-way reciprocal relationship with users and potential customers are established to routing them in every area of the organisation, and therefore building some interesting communities around the brand. Table 17 shows eight (8) data extracts that prove the concept of OBCs.

We're trying to increase engagement; we're trying to ensure that they're leaving comments, that they're asking us about the products and that's a big part of what goes on behind the scenes for our community management because obviously, these treatments are… They're very high involvement purchase decisions, and people will tend to ask a lot of questions, but they won't ask it directly on Facebook, they'll send us a private message, and then that's when our team picks it up and gives them more information about it. [Expert 23, Digital Marketing Manager]

There's a lot of talk about brands becoming social organisations or companies becoming social organisations. Very few have done this and do it well. You know, there's companies like Lego and Patagonia have managed to. The Economist have managed to. And that's where you truly enter into a two-way reciprocal relationship with your audience or public. And they become routed in part of every area of your organisation. And they've built some fantastic communities around the brand. Lego, its purpose is to encourage inspiration through play. And if you look at the brand, it's created some fantastic crowd-sourcing sites to… Where people share ideas and product designs that they've built, and vote, and comment on those. [Expert 25, CEO]

The best thing about social media and why it's better or more effective than other forms of marketing or advertising is that you can have conversations with your customers. [Expert 19, SM marketer].

First thing in the morning I would check all of our channels to see if I needed to engage with anybody if I needed to respond to any questions if there was any problems, queries, anything like that. [Expert 13, community manager]

I think when we are sending out content; you are definitely looking for engagement. You want people to engage, whether that's a comment or a question or maybe visiting your website. [Expert 16, SM influencer]

I think it's important to get involved in trending topics on social media, so whatever other people are talking about. I think that if you get involved in that, then they'll see you as a brand that gets involved in conversations, rather than a brand that just does

one thing. I think they're the main things. The correct use of hashtags as well. [Expert 18, SM manager]

Another thing is to look out for, what other people talking about, so something is topical; something a lot of people is discussing it in a particular topic. Anyway, if we got experts here have something to say about that, have an opinion on it then we trying engaging those conversations. Always lookout likewise for things like awareness days, weeks and months wherever they are we might be able to tap into with our content. So, we not just sort of throwing it out there hoping that someone will pick it up, it's more considered in what we talk about and when. [Expert 2, Digital Marketing Manager]

Engage with potential clients and get them in conversation. It's a relationship-based approach. Social media has got a keyword, and that's social. We're hoping that every single thing we put out on social media gets engagement. [Expert 9, SM Consultant]

Table 17: Quotes that illustrate OBCs

4.7.2 Organising Theme: Storytelling

The storytelling theme is referred to the stories behind the SNMP messages that brands develop to resonate with their followers and potential customers. Building relationships with consumers and potential customers were mentioned to be key to increasing the size of the community followers and therefore heightened brand awareness and sales by merging product messages to subjects that are of interest and concern to the audiences. One interesting approach of doing this was expressed as indirect relationships in which brands relate their SNMP messages to interesting topics such as arts, green responsibilities, product design, and functionality and customer promise. Some of the types of stories expressed and used by the experts included connecting lighting stories around children sleeping time with cartoons, faucet product stories to environmental concerns such as water scarcity, clean water, and product design stories to winning prestige awards, and product/service durability and beauty features to aspects such as

product location and or country of origin. The popularity of storytelling expressed as to have been popular since well before the arrival of social media. The expression was that the phenomenon of storytelling had changed gradually over the last decade from storytelling through text publications into images and infographics and with the increasing popularity of SNMPs such as YouTube, people are now becoming more responsive to stories that are told via videos. Other mentioned types of storytelling into SNMP messages included stories relating to nostalgia such as relaying messages to topics that were for example popular some twenty years ago and this could be targeted at people who were in their teens back then for example. Seasonality such as Easter and summer holidays were some of the other potential topics for message storytelling. Accordingly, storytelling is important in labelling a product because stories communicate brand values and connectivity (Wachtman and Johnson, 2009). Rather than just presenting information in a plain message promotion, storytelling is focused on affecting the recipient's emotions and vitality (McKee, 2003; Woodside, 2010). Table 18 demonstrates five (5) data extracts that explain the concept of storytelling.

It all comes back to content, and whether the content has been developed for the correct audience. And of course, not just what type of content is, but what is the type of a story does it say. So, if we look at the most successful brands, and regardless whether they do things on Facebook, or Instagram, or YouTube, or whatever, it all comes down back to storytelling. Now, one trend that we've been seeing lately has been really, video. So, I think we had this transition happening within the last ten years or so where we had, you know, text. So, storytelling in the form of text. And then we transitioned more into images and infographics and all that kind of stuff. Now, this hasn't gone away in any way, but I think where people are finding more relevancy, and what's actually getting a lot more shareable and consumed has been videos. It tells a story. Regardless whether it's a story of a situation, a challenge, a product, something that's relevant to me, something that's interesting, something that's exciting. Something that I can relive. Something that I can relate to. [Expert 22, Principal Channel Consultant]

You know, we did a project for Phillips Lighting last year. We identified that there's a particularly critical issue for parents around putting their child to bed at night… Lighting's an important aspect of that conversation because as your child goes to sleep, you know they transition from day to night. Going to sleep, lighting can help move

through that phase. So, we spotted that through, intuition. Intuitively if you're a parent, you kind of know that, especially around younger years. But we spotted that as an issue on several different places. And so, ended up creating a community for Phillips around this whole aspect of bedtime and, you know, helping get children to sleep. And publish content relative to cartoons, to the importance of sleep. How you get your child to sleep and all that sort of thing. So, you know, the engagement in that was incredibly high. It's like a conversation in real life; you're trying to find content that will engage people and excite them and form the basis of a conversation. And it's when you do that, and you do that really, really well. You really engage people and create advocacy, and push them through the sales cycle. [Expert 25, CEO]

The content lines that we use have always got some sort of indirect relation to the product. So we'll always have a goal, and a call to action from each post which either takes them back to the website to learn more about the product or it will be a form of engagement, so we'll be asking them a question or trying to get them to interact in some way. So one of our products is made in France, and we had a whole campaign that was run around Paris and around everything that happens in Paris, so what Paris is known for, you know, beautiful architecture, food, arts, museums, everything about Paris. We had lots of stuff on the back of this. We had competitions where people were just taking photos of elements of Paris; we had events that were being held in Paris like open events so people could come and learn more about the product… There was even a poetry sessions which we ran which was people posting poems, very short poems, verses of poems et cetera. So we did a whole campaign that was all around Paris but… all of the written content, all of the imagery, everything that was linked to it all came back to peoples general wellbeing, so saying that this is all in benefit of your health, of your beauty and, oh, by the way, our brand can help with this. It wasn't immediately obvious to them, so they don't see it as an advertisement, but it would also come back to the branding and why the brand can help with your general wellbeing or your beauty or whatever you're looking for from the product. [Expert 23, Digital Marketing Manager]

We want to delight with interesting content – content that the people are engaged about, are interested in. Sometimes it's just a refreshing drink made from water and how to get the recipe. Or how difficult it is – in some countries, of course – to have clean / fresh water. We talk about the environment. We have a lot of topics around these five main topics: Main-Theme days, water experience, water hygiene, Green responsibility/Resources and their topics like Design, hybrid fittings. We divide it in five main stories or main topics. We said, 'Okay, there are a lot of main theme days,' like World Water Day; even Father's Day, birthdays, where we build up stories around. Then we have the second part: water experience, matching topics around (brand name). Then we have water hygiene, drinking water resources, cleaning tips in the bathroom, cleaning tips for the dishes. Then we have green responsibility, sustainability, and resources where we talk about water consumption, water savings. Basically, we have water saving functionalities in the products, but don't want to talk about water saving. Our product, you name it, is saving two litres. We talk about water saving around daily

life, how much water can you save when you use the right products? Then, there are other topics. We are a design orientated company, so we can talk about design topics; because we have a lot of awards. Then we have the (brand name) beside us; we can talk about Finland: what's the difference between the German brand and the Finnish brand or our colleagues? What about our hybrid fittings that have sensors? [Expert 5, SM Manager].

I mean is mainly the stories about the products, stories about the things that are related to our products, like hygiene factors and so on, which ones we're sharing in the company blog, for example, through our digital newsletters to our customers. Then we have also a customer magazine, which is printed out and sent to our customers, so they kind of go hand by hand with each other. we try to create stories that people can relate to, to be kind of more to person, more to a human being. [Expert 7, Digital Marketing Manager]

Table 18: Quotes that illustrate storytelling

4.7.3 Organising Theme: Social Approval

In the framework of this study, social approval is referred to the way whereby people in SNMP respond to a message because they want to be viewed as having associations with it, or they respond because many other people have already responded to it. For example, people like, comment and or share content not necessarily because they know much about it or have any background relations to it, but because they want to be viewed as having associations with it. Besides, people's response to a SNMP message will also depend on the number and the types of people who already responded to it. The SMMEs described social approval as pressure to do good at work and in life, social mechanisms, and social proof. As expert 25 explained social approval in SNMP as *''wanting to look smart. Being part of a crowd or a community. Bragging, boasting, all these sorts of things.''* Gunawan and Huarng (2015) expressed the phenomenon of social approval as the subjective norms meaning how the perceptions of consumer's social circle (reference groups) and relational

impressions (family, friends and relatives) influence and form their behaviours (Lin, 2007).

Similarly, the arrival of SNMPs has brought the end to the days in which people solely trusted the big established organisations for advice when needing to buy a product or service. People are now heading to SNMPs for advice before buying anything. They want to know how the people who have already bought this product or service think about it, and they go talk about it on their SNMPs. As expert 14 explained, *''People are looking at social proof, they're looking at who's sharing it, who's liking it, the number of likes, the number of views.''* Table 19 shows eight (8) data extracts from SMME's interview transcripts proves the concept of social approval.

A lot of people have that sense of what picture am I forming of myself online by the sort of activities I then do. So certainly for prospective employers, if you are thinking, well if somebody would look me up what would they find on my profile on Twitter, LinkedIn and various things, would they get a good rounded picture of me from that. I think a lot of people have perhaps…like a sense of what picture do I want to portray of myself online that may affect how they respond or interact with different people. [Expert 2, Digital Marketing Manager]

If you go and talk to the guys at The Economist, they will tell you that the main reason people retweet Economist articles is to look smart amongst their peers, not necessarily because they've read anything. [Expert 25, CEO]

Having made a purchase, there's a third decision, which I think a lot of people also forget, which is about reassurance, to tell people that they made the right decision and that's where social media is actually very, very useful as well. What it does is it reinforces the idea that people have done the right thing because they can see a lot of a community online that's positive and happy about the brand and the brand itself seems to be happy about itself, and I feel good about being part of that. [Expert 1, managing director]

I think peer pressure is maybe - I don't know if you can really use that term when you talk about B2B companies. I think…how I understand peer pressure to be…I think it's more of a professional pressure to succeed, so I think yes, I mean everyone wants to succeed in their job and sort of do a good job, hopefully at least. I think it has an effect, yes. [Expert 12, Digital Insight Manager]

We know that if you put out a post and it has zero likes, comments or shares on it, it's less likely to get engagement than if you go, so say, for example, I posted a business page, I will then personally go and like or comment or share that post. It takes the pressure off someone to sort of - when you like something, say, on Facebook, you are holding your hand up to say, 'I publicly like this', and if nobody else has, you feel a bit sort of like, 'Why has nobody else done that?' and, you know, 'Maybe it's not that funny', or whatever. So if you take that pressure off them and show them that somebody else has engaged with that content, they're more likely to engage with it also. Once things start really snowballing and you're getting hundreds of likes, comments and shares, it only goes upwards from there. [Expert 21, Marketing Director]

This is one of the major keys to gain more attention because people trust in the opinion of their friends and families and other people - even people they don't know - but if they see that somebody's liking something, probably they will try it out also. [Expert 5, SM Manager]

The sorts of content that they share is always, usually, something exciting or highly educative, but usually in that sense is something that allows the person who's sending it on to show how good they are because they're sharing it. It's those education and excitement points that are so key. [Expert 6: Head of SM Manager].

If an account messages you or sends you a direct message, you're going to tell your friends about it. You're going to retweet a tweet that they send you because you've been messaged by a massive brand and I think that people do start talking about that. I think Paddy Power are a fantastic example of that. [Expert 18, SM manager]

Table 19: Quotes that illustrate social approval

4.7.4 Organising Theme: Brand Influencers

The SM influencer theme relates to the importance of having influencer(s) to speak positively on behalf of the brand about their product offerings within their networks and to the broader audiences. This approach was explained to be positively influencing followers and user's attitudes and behavioural intentions towards the brand's SNMP messages. SMMEs described these individuals as brand ambassadors and influencers, thought leaders, celebrities and including anyone who has already built large communities around themselves. They were perceived as to be increasingly interesting individuals by

the business experts because of their large communities as well as having the ability to speak well about the organisation's businesses to the users and the potential customers wherever they might be. They were also described as credible characters whose recommendations of the brand leads to user favourability towards the brand which then moves them closer towards making a purchase decision. This is because the expressions were that people trust influencers and even strangers more than they do of brands. Likewise, studies advocating these views include a global survey on PR and marketing experts labelled influencer marketing to be effective in increasing their brand awareness with 87% showing influencer marketing leading to motivating sales (eMarketer, 2017). Consistently, according to Iyengar, Van den Bulte and Valente (2011) message promotions forwarded through influencers can have a stronger impact on users' attitudes than those communicated directly by brands. Table 20 shows seven (7) extracts from the interview transcripts expressing the notion of brand influencers.

So I work with lawyers, accountants, CEOs, executives, and teaching them how to lift their profile and build their influence online or become a thought leader in a specific industry. So that's a typical day for me. Working with small business, medium business and then with the bigger brands I work with, that's more on an influencer marketing level, that's where I work as a brand ambassador or just spreading the word for them using, through my channels to my audience. [Expert 16, SM Influencer]
So, those are people that are highly interesting to brands, because they're influencers, you know. They've replaced traditional media. It's this continuum I talked about first of all. So, yes, first of all, you have traditional media, then you have influences creating content across all sorts of different forms of media. And yes, there are lots and lots of examples of that. And those are highly interesting individuals for brands to engage with because they've built an audience, they've built a network, they've built community. Whatever you want to call it. [Expert 25, CEO]
Like what kind of reputation you have, so I think the best case scenario is that someone recommends us to someone else. I mean, also the brand. You need sales, obviously. If the brand has a bad reputation, that will weaken the message. If the brand has very strong…spokespersons, whether they're celebrities or they're normal people, but they're people who speak well about the brand. [Expert 12, Digital Insight Manager]

It's important to identify who the influencers are and who our clients are engaging with so that we can engage with them in conversation as well. If you look at Facebook for consumers, if you can get - the classic, getting my friends - so I can get Milly* to talk about what's going on to her friends and some of her friends talk - so it's a great way of amplifying the channel. So one of the things that we're trying to do with the competitions and the conversations is trying to get other people into other people's channels to amplify through sharing and conversations. So if Milly*'s having a conversation about Newton Abbot* with her friends, all of her friends are seeing that conversation and maybe join in. So the amplification is really, really important. [Expert 10, Managing Director]

There's a lot of companies looking at influencers and social media influencers; it's because people actually trust influencers and people they've never met before more than they trust brands. [Expert 15, SM manager]

Trying to get new students or new member of staff but also to hopefully make those who already here feel that they have a good service that supported while they are students here and you would hope then that the message carries through from them. So they are going out acting as our ambassadors for us if they happy with something we provided online they will say so and then other people see that and hopefully the reputation again enhances as it spreads through those people. [Expert 2, Digital Marketing Manager]

I create content on building relationships with influencers, rather than just creating a piece of content. So on my blog, 90 percent of the content is not aimed for the end user. It's actually aimed for influencers to build relationships with. The content I'm creating helps the end user, but I'm creating it really to build relationships with the people who help me monetise my social media. [Expert 8, SM Consultant]

Table 20: Quotes that illustrate brand influencers

4.7.5 Organising Theme: Testimonials

The theme testimonial is referred to the brand's promotional messages that are published by satisfied customers showing how the company's product, service or concept has worked for them. In other words, the customer explains how using a particular product or service have helped achieve their needs. The experts explained the publications of testimonials via videos, web links to a website, profile reviews, newsletters, recommendations and such like. This marketing method was described as; a YouTube

video could be showing the satisfied customers who have already used particular products/services and how it resulted. Experts described this approach as a powerful marketing method in SMM. One understanding is that the people's perception of business caring more about their own interests than those of their customers is high, and subsequently, people listens more to people they can believe. The second reason was the desire to accomplish results. Potential customers are interested in buying products and or services that will result in meeting their needs before making a decision. Therefore, they seek other people who have already used the products of their interest, as expert 14 quoted *''so if somebody is looking at our messages, they're asking the question, you know, who else like me has used your products?''* Consistent with these findings the study of (Belch and Belch, 1998; Appiah, 2007) describe testimonials as the brand messages in which showing a satisfied customer who has already used their product/services explaining the results s/he accomplished from using it. The individuals chosen to perform this promotion are ordinary customers promoting on the brand's behalf (O'Guinn, Allen and Semenik, 2000). This promotional approach has become popular among organisations. This is because satisfied customers are deemed to explain their genuine experiences of the products they purchases. In other words, people prefer to obtain product information from the ordinary customers (Appiah, 2007), which is perceived more credible (Coyle and Strahilevitz, 2013; Fu, Ju, and Hsu, 2015). Table 21 depicts 5 extracts from the SMMEs interview transcripts that verify the concept of testimonials.

You need to have testimonials from other people; I think it's quite key…So if somebody is looking at our messages, they're asking the question, you know, 'Who else like me has used your products?' So I think that directed approach is very important. [Expert 14, Digital Marketer]

Show video testimonials. I've got my one client now; she sells at a local market her own home-based products that she makes, and I got her - immediately I said start getting video testimonials. When your customer walks in say, 'Hey, please, you've been with me for a while, can I take a video? Please tell people what you think of my

product.' And just capturing it right there and then, sharing it on her Facebook page because that all builds credibility. It's real people. It's real reviews. People can see, yes, I can trust this product. One of the most visited things online is review sites, right? I mean look at how many people are going to read up about product reviews? So you've got TripAdvisor for travelling and restaurants, and you've got all the tech gadget sites, all of those. People want to know if you can be trusted, are you credible, do you provide good customer service, and can they trust you? [Expert 16, SM Influencer].

I think actually being able to get results is important. What works for me is testimonials from clients saying that I've come in, I've done this, this was the results from that and…I think you've seen my LinkedIn; I've got 150 something testimonials. The average person in my industry probably in Greater Manchester or the North West probably only has about ten or 15 so I've got ten times more than them, and that to me shows that I know what I'm talking about. [Expert 19, SM marketer]

It's not us saying this is what we stand for or lookout how great we are, its other people's comments which often then taken us more trustworthy because it's the third person. [Expert 2, Digital Marketing Manager]

We do a lot of video testimonials. So we'll be actually looking to target and engage people that are in our target audience for each of our products, and that will be obviously through sending them relevant information, links to the website, YouTube videos which are focussed on the products, so explaining this is Joanne, and she's had this product and this has been her story. So it's about pushing patient testimonials, it's about getting them to engage with that kind of information. [Expert 23, Digital Marketing Manager]

Table 21: Quotes that illustrate brand influencers

Recapping Interactivity Thematic Networks

The process of developing the interactivity theme is likewise presented in a graphical structure following the analysis of the thematic network illustrated in Figure 8. This theme constitutes of five (5) organising themes including OBCs, social approval, brand influencers, storytelling, and testimonials. Figure 8 exhibits a clear picture of the key basic themes drawn-out of the interview transcripts wherein they flow inwards towards the development of the central theme, interactivity.

The concept of interactivity expressed as SMME's desire for engaging in meaningful interactions with the users and therefore developing brand communities in which its members are happy with the brand, its products, its stories, and its persona. The expert's views were that brands could turn its community members into buyers as well as brand evangelists through making direct conversations and encouraging them to like, share and leave comments and such like activities. The importance of encouraging customer to engage with SNMP messages and interacting with the brand about it was acutely evident within the SMME's interview discussions. Similarly, storytelling emerged as another aspect of SMM for increasing user interactivity with the brand. The expert's experiences were that through storytelling brands could differentiate themselves from the mass of marketing messages posted through SNMPs. Customers like to know the stories behind the brand's messages they receive. Feeling resonated with the message content can lead the recipients to some reaction towards the message, and that can be built based on emotional and or logical sentiment. As expert 5, a SM manager who was selling faucets explained that the story behind their product messages is built around the issues of water such as *''a refreshing drink made from water.''* At a more emotional level, their messages were relating to issues of saving of water such as *''how difficult it is to get clean water in some countries.''* Besides, social approval was expressed as another important emerging theme to be increasing user interactivity with the brands when marketing through SNMPs. The expressions were that people are looking for aspects such as social proof before deciding on a product purchase, they want to know who has brought it or liked, commented and shared. Also, the brand influencers were described as another key theme that emerged within the interview transcripts to be favourably influencing the user's attitudes and behavioural intentions when marketing in SNMPs. Finally comes the brand testimonials in which the experts explained that the customers want to know the results that other consumers experienced after using a particular product that is of interest

to them prior to making a purchase. This phenomenon according to the experts has led to the increasing popularity of product testimonials among SMM. Table 22 exhibits an example of the process of coding and identifying the key themes relating to interactivity within the data.
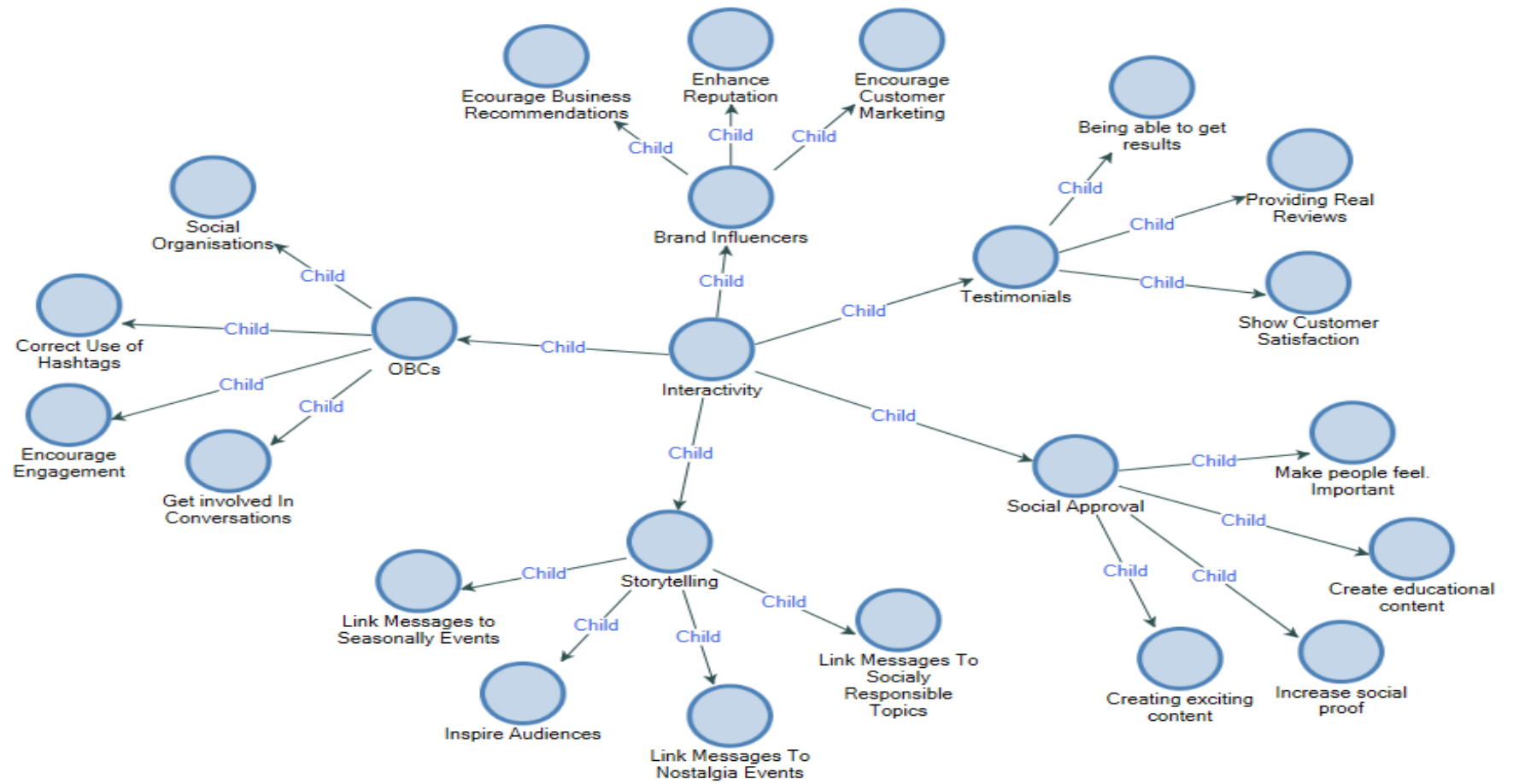
Figure 8. Thematic Network for Interactivity

Phase one the coding process			Phase two theme identification			
Data extracts (see examples 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 for a detailed list of extracts relating to the interactivity theme development)	Coded for Phase (1)	Issues discussed	Identified themes phase (2)	Basic Themes	Organising Themes	Global Themes
We're trying to increase engagement; we're trying to ensure that they're leaving comments, that they're asking us about the products and that's a big part of what goes on behind the scenes for our community management. The correct use of hashtags as well.	Engagement	Motivation Emotions Reasoning Experience	Increase relationships Encourage customer feedback Provide interactive content Encourage message liking. Encourage message sharing. Help audience with problems. Increase use of hashtags.	29. Encourage engagement 30. Get involved in conversations. 31. Social organisations. 32. Correct use of hashtags	Online brand community	Interactivity
We want to delight with interesting content. Content that people are engaged about are interested in. Sometimes it's just a refreshing drink made from water and how to get the recipe. Or how difficult it is – in some countries, of course – to have clean / fresh water. We talk about the environment.	Interestingness	Emotions Experiences Facts	Thoughtful message. Interesting message content. Seek connection with inspiring storytelling. Linking messages to events important to target audiences. Show importance to green issues.	33. Inspire audiences 34. Link messages to seasonality events. 35. Link messages to nostalgia events. 36. Link messages to socially responsible topics.	Storytelling	
The main reason people retweet Economist articles is to look smart amongst their peers, not necessarily because they've read anything. The sorts of content that they share is always, usually, something exciting or highly educative, but usually in that sense is something that allows the person who's sending it on to show how good they are because they're sharing it.	Behaviour change	Feelings Experiences Motivation	Desire to look smart. Desire to look correct. Desire to create content. Desire to be likeable. Desire for connections. Desire to impress. Desire to be adventures.	37. Creating exciting content. 38. Create educational content. 39. Increase social proof. 40. Make people feel. Important	Social Approval	
There's a lot of companies looking at…SM influencers…because people actually trust influencers…more than they trust brands. Those are highly interesting individuals for brands to engage with because they've built an audience, they've built a network, they've built community.	Brand Influencer	Motivation Positivity Feelings Experiences	Seek dissemination. Seek sales opportunities. Seek better reputation. Create relationships. Seek influencer marketing.	41. Encourage business recommendations. 42. Encourage customer marketing. 43. Enhance reputations.	Brand Influencers	
I think actually being able to get results is important. What works for me is	Results	Feelings Experiences	Desire to succeed. Desire to look authentic.	44. Being able to get results.		

testimonials from clients saying that I've come in, I've done this, this was the results from that.		Motivation	Desire to increase positivity.	45. Providing real reviews. 46. Show customer satisfaction	Testimonials

Table 22. Data Extractions, Coding, and Theme Identification: Interactivity.

4.8 Interpreting Patterns Emerged from the SMME's

4.8.1 Interview Transcripts

In this section, the summary of the interpretations of the applied thematic networks will be given so that to present an overview interpretation of the entire data analysis process including the interpretations of the relevant theories, important themes, ideas, patterns as well as the organisations emerged within the text. This is to reflect over the original research questions and their theoretical backgrounds, and therefore addressing the issue with the arguments and insights based on the themes arose within the examination of the transcripts. The following three thematic networks created from the interview transcripts of the SMMEs:

1. Credibility
2. Infotainment
3. Interactivity

4.8.2 Conceptual Framework

With the lack of a comprehensive study relating to the core themes involved in the creation of effective SNMP messages and with limited qualitative research yet undertaken, this qualitative study was necessary for both enriching the academic literature as well as helping business of all types with a comprehensive study that is robustly researched, analysed, and reflected. The framework of this study is derived from applying the theory of thematic network analysis proposed by (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The researcher applied this method to identify the most frequently mentioned themes as well as those the researcher deemed to be fundamental relating to the current research questions. This facilitated the researcher to identify the three core and distinctive themes

of credibility, infotainment, and interactivity relating to effective SNMP messages. Figure 9 below shows the development of the research framework that emerged from the analysis and the findings of this qualitative study. It also shows the relationships between the key identified themes which are subsequently tested quantitatively in the second parts of this study.
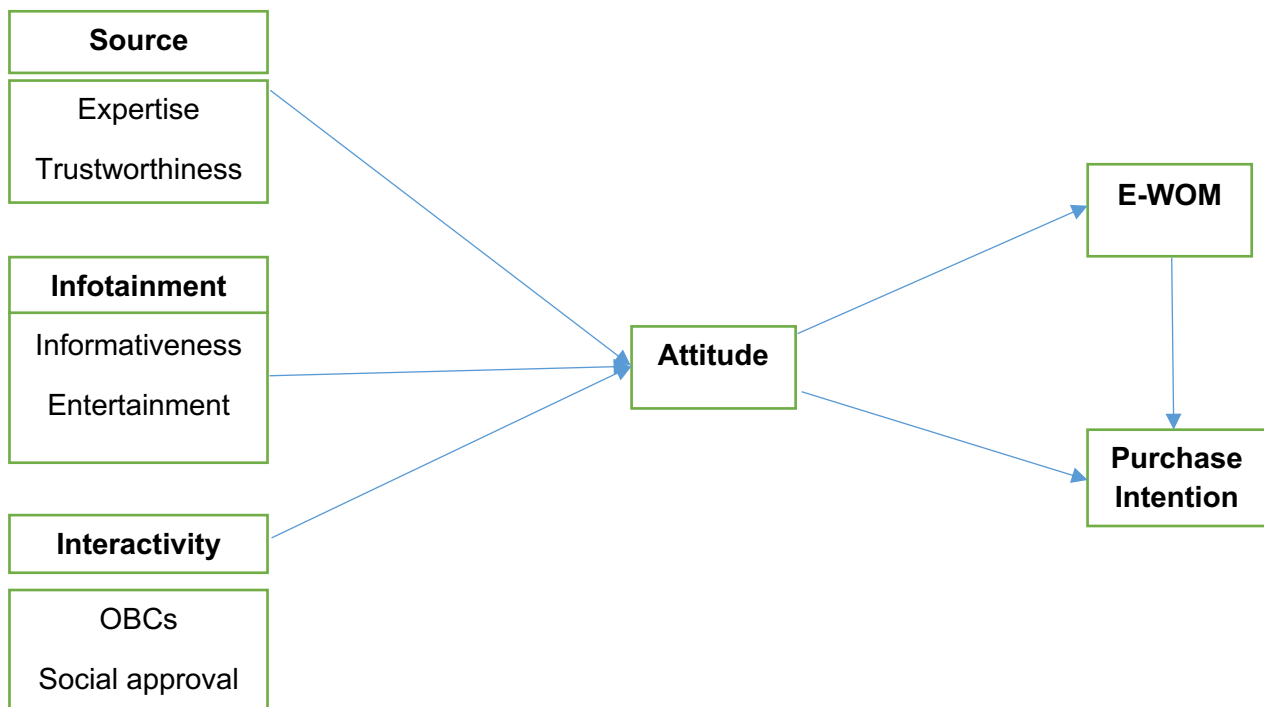
Figure 9. Conceptual Framework: Effective SNMP Messages and Its Results.

The conceptual framework in Figure 9 developed based on the findings of the qualitative interview transcripts. The Figure is a symbolic interpretation of the three identified key themes of credibility, infotainment, interactivity, and their subthemes lead to directly influencing user attitudes, WOM and purchase intention.

4.8.3 Chapter Summary

Since customers are heading towards SNMPs for their news consumptions, product information, and offerings, brands of all types seek new, innovative and effective

approaches to reaching out and connecting to as many customers as possible. The objective of this research was to gather data that can help all types of businesses and academics to understand effective SNMP messages and strategies that can favourably influence their customer's attitudes and behavioural intentions. The suggestions, insights, and conclusions presented relating to effective methods for effective SNMP messages are credited to the insights, perceptions, and experiences of SMMEs. The discussions of favourably influencing the follower's attitudes and behavioural intentions are focused on the responses of the followers when receiving an informational message that is perceived relevant, useful, helpful, credible, fun and interesting rather than the persona of the followers. This study subsequently highlights the following important suggestions: first, offer users with timely information that is perceived to be relevant, useful, interesting, fun, credible, concise and easy to understand, and it is told in an entertaining demeanour. In SNMPs, trying to sell directly can be perceived as off-putting, and therefore brands must first seek to inform and educate their audiences about their product offerings and doing this can favourably influence their attitudes and behavioural intentions towards the message.

Second, building successful brand communities whereby meaningful interactions are encouraged and made easy between the brand and its followers as well as amongst its members. Brands that can build communities with their follower's needs, desire and interests in mind could turn them into product design contributors and ambassadors, which is expressed in the data as important to creating e-WOM and purchase intentions.

Third, heightening the credibility of the business by promoting aspects such as transparency, reliability, competency, consistency, and honesty can create a positive attitude and behavioural intentions. People want to know if the persona behind the brand can be trusted and have expertise in the subject discussion. Furthermore, helping

users to feel important with product offerings, stories, and personas that resonates with them. People want to be associated with product offerings, and activities that help them feel good about themselves and their SNMPs are a good place to demonstrate that to family, friends and work colleagues. Therefore, they would like, share, comment and buy into the messages that make them look professional, smart, adventures, and successful and such like. The themes that emerged from this research will be beneficial to both large and small-medium sized brands who either seek to bolster their existing SMM or just want to start from scratch. Also, understanding these concepts, insights, and experiences shared by the SMMEs can help them broaden their knowledge of the subject, which means better prepared for the challenges and opportunities of SMM.

The following hypotheses shown in Table 23 were created from the qualitative findings. Subsequently, a quantitative survey questionnaire was constructed to test each of these hypotheses. The results of these hypotheses are presented within the quantitative findings in Chapter five.

Hypotheses
H1a. OBC has a significant positive influence on attitude.
H1b. Social approval has a significant positive influence on attitude.
H1c. Entertainment has a significant positive influence on attitude
H1d. Informativeness has a significant positive influence on attitude.
H1e. Trustworthiness has a significant positive influence on attitude.
H1f. Expertise has a significant positive influence on attitude.
H2a. OBCs has a significant positive influence on e-WOM.
H2b. Social approval has a significant positive influence on e-WOM.
H2c. Entertainment has a significant positive influence on e-WOM
H2d. Informativeness has a significant positive influence on e-WOM
H2e. Trustworthiness has a significant positive influence on e-WOM
H2f. Expertise has a significant positive influence on e-WOM

H3a. OBCs has a significant positive influence on purchase intention.
H3b. Social approval has a significant positive influence on purchase intention.
H3c. Entertainment has a significant positive influence on purchase intention.
H3d. Informativeness has a significant positive influence on purchase intention.
H3e. Trustworthiness has a significant positive influence on purchase intention.
H3f. Expertise has a significant positive influence on purchase intention.
H4a. Attitude mediates the positive influence of OBC and WOM.
H4b. Attitude mediates the positive influence of social approval and WOM.
H4c. Attitude mediates the positive influence of entertainment and WOM.
H4d. Attitude mediates the positive influence of informativeness and WOM.
H4e. Attitude mediates the positive influence of trustworthiness and WOM.
H4f. Attitude mediates the positive influence of expertise and WOM.
H5a. Attitude mediates the positive influence of OBC and purchase intention
H5b. Attitude mediates the positive influence of social approval and purchase intention
H5c. Attitude mediates the positive influence of entertainment and purchase intention
H5d. Attitude mediates the positive influence of informativeness and purchase intention
H5e. Attitude mediates the positive influence of trustworthiness and purchase intention
H5f. Attitude mediates the positive influence of OBC and purchase intention
H6a. Involvement moderates the positive relationship between OBCs and attitude towards SNMP messages.
H6b. Involvement moderates the positive relationship between social approval and attitude towards SNMP messages.
H6c. Involvement moderates the positive relationship between entertainment and attitude towards SNMP messages.
H6d. Involvement moderates the positive relationship between informativeness and attitude towards SNMP messages.
H6e. Involvement moderates the positive relationship between trustworthiness and attitude towards SNMP messages.
H6f. Involvement moderates the negative relationship between expertise and attitude towards SNMP.

CHAPTER 5: Table 23. Overall Research HypothesisQUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The survey questionnaires were used for the data collection from the participants. The item scales used were adopted from the existing literature. The questionnaires were pretested through the actual SNMP users, which subsequently lead to a more cohesive set of questions (Moghaddam, Mosakhani and Aalabeiki, 2013). A face-to-face paper copy of the questionnaires was distributed to 399 actual SNMP users in which 300 completed survey copies were returned and used for the development of this study. To confirm internal consistency, the reliability of these questionnaires were measured grounded on Cronbach alpha. Analysing the data encapsulated descriptive statistics involving frequencies and percentages using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and Structured Equation Modelling (SEM) applying a structured equation program of AMOS. The term statistics is defined as ''a number that describes a sample'' (Moore *et al.*, 2009, p. 210). Descriptive statistics are used to compress the data in a more presentable form such as in tables and charts. This enables the researcher to draw patterns, which are not visible as raw data and thus help to confirm hypotheses (Lovie, 1986). Inferential statistics are ''statistical tests that lead to conclusions about a target population based on a random sample and the concept of sampling distribution'' (Kervin, 1992, p. 727).

5.2 Demographic Individualities of Respondents

The demographic individualities of respondents entailed their age, gender, occupation, educational level, current residence location and their daily usage of SNMP and OBCs.

The age category of the respondents was between the 16-35 years as this category deemed to be amongst the highest Internet and SNMP users (Chau and Ngai, 2010; Wang, 2011; Gong, Stump and Li, 2012). Likewise, individuals with a higher level of educations deemed to be using the Internet more frequently than those with less education. Since the study was undertaken in the UK, only respondents who were resided in the UK allowed participating in the study. Similarly, since the questionnaire's objective was to obtain user perspectives on brand messages on SNMPs, only those with daily usage of SNMPs and OBCs were allowed to participate.

5.1.1 Participant Age Categories

Table 24 depicts the respondent's age categories.

Age category	Frequency	Percentage
16.00	2	0.7
17.00	1	0.3
19.00	5	1.7
20.00	22	7.3
21.00	25	8.3
22.00	28	9.3
23.00	46	15.3
24.00	30	10.0
25.00	34	11.3
26.00	18	6.0
27.00	11	3.7
28.00	31	4.3
29.00	61	5.3
30.00	14	4.7
31.00	11	3.7

32.00	7	2.3
33.00	5	1.7
34.00	5	1.7
35.00	7	2.3
Total	300	100.0

Table 24. Age Categories

5.1.2 Participant Gender

Table 25 depicts the gender respondents.

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	113	37.7
Female	187	62.3
Total	300	100.0

Table 25. Gender Respondents

5.1.3 Participant Occupations

Table 26 exhibits the respondent's occupation. Students were amongst the highest of the research participants with 86.7%. The list of the occupational types portrayed in Table 26 was obtained from the UK Office for National Statistics (UKONS, 2018), with slightly modified to suit the current study, for example by adding ''other'' as an additional option.

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Managers, directors and senior officials	5	1.7
Professional occupations	17	5.7
Associate professionals and technical occupations	4	1.3

Administrative and secretarial occupations	1	0.3
Skilled trades occupations	1	0.3
Caring, leisure, and other service occupations	2	0.7
Sales and customer service occupations	3	1.0
Student	260	86.7
Other	7	2.3
Total	300	100.0

Table 26. Respondent Occupation

5.1.4 Participant Education

Table 27 portrays the participates educational level. With 42.7% of the respondents, bachelor degree holders were amongst the highest. The types of educational levels have been adopted from the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) proposed by UNESCO (2011) with slightly modified to suit the current study, for example by adding ''other'' as an additional option.

Education	Frequency	Percentage
Upper secondary education	19	6.3
Post-secondary non-tertiary education	11	3.7
Short-cycle tertiary education	5	1.7
Bachelor's degree	128	42.7
Master's degree	113	37.7
Doctoral degree	12	4.0
Other	12	4.0
Total	300	100

Table 27. Educational Level

5.1.5 Participant SNMP Usage

Table 28 depicts the respondent's daily usage of SNMPs adopted from the study of Sanchez and Javed (2014).

	Frequency	Percentage
Once a day	17	5.7
2-5 times a day	54	18.0
6-10 times a day	84	28.0
11-15 times a day	44	14.7
16-20 times a day	35	11.7
More than 20 times a day	66	22.0
Total	300	100.0

Table 28. SNMP Usage

5.1.6 Participant OBC Usage

Table 29 depicts the respondent's daily OBC usage (Sanchez and Javed, 2014).

	Frequency	Percentage
Once a day	186	62.0
2-5 times a day	67	22.3
6-10 times a day	26	22.3
11-15 times a day	8	2.7
16-20 times a day	4	1.3
More than 20 times a day	9	3.0
Total	300	100.0

Table 29. OBC Usage

5.2 Samples and Missing Data

Three hundred ninety-nine (399) respondents filled out the survey. The analysis was done based only on three hundred (300) completed survey questionnaires. Ninety-nine (99) survey questionnaires were identified as incomplete and unqualified and subsequently removed from the analysis. For example, some respondents did not complete the questionnaires fully while others still completed the questionnaires even when they did not meet the eligibility criteria of the study.

5.3 Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is defined ''as a hybrid of factor analysis and path analysis'' (Weston and Gore, 2006, p. 720) which allows the investigator to create, test and confirm models with complex relationships (Gallagher, Ting, and Palmer, 2008). To test the fit of the model, the study employed SEM, which involves the measurement model, and the structural model (Muijs, 2004; Hair *et al.*, 2010). The measurement model allows the researcher to measure how well the observed variables represent the latent (construct variable). The structural model enables the researcher to assess the strength of interrelationships amongst those latent constructs, which are also referred to as unobservable variables (Gallagher, Ting, and Palmer, 2008). Initially, the measurement model must be satisfied to test the validity and fit of the structural model (Gerbing and Anderson, 1988). This research analysed the interrelationships amongst many concepts in a complex framework. Therefore, the use of SEM enables to test the hypothesised relationships with a method which is easy to interpret (Chakrapani, 2004).

5.4 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Deciding the research objectives prior to deciding on a method of analysis is important. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was selected as a suitable method, while exploratory factor analysis (EFA) deciphered as unsuitable for this study. This study did not seek to develop new scales as all factors on the survey questionnaire were selected based on the literature. Addressing theoretic (concept identification) and methodological (measurement creation) issues (Fabrigar and Wegener, 2012) were not the objective of this analysis in which it can be conducted through EFA. Similarly, deciding to agree on an acceptable result relating to the frequency and nature of the main latent variables and their indicators were not the key issue, and subsequently, EFA deemed unsuitable (Fabrigar and Wegener, 2012).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) or measurement model used to measure the relationships between indicators/items, (observed variables), and latent variables (Muijs, 2004; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). The CFA was undertaken in the measurement model whereby involved ten factors: expertise, trustworthiness, Informativeness, entertainment, social approval, OBCs, involvement, WOM, attitude, and PI. For the measurement model part, CFA, the goodness of fit tests, reliability and validity tests (e.g., convergent and discriminant validity) were completed. Initially, 67 items were used to measure these factors in which obtained from the literature. To obtain good results for these tests, items were deleted accordingly. A minimum of three items per construct remained after all the analysis, totalling 31 items (see Appendix E). Moreover, CFA is utilised to verify the factorial construction of the survey questionnaire and to build the construct validity of the scale as well as testing the model fit.

Numerous psychologists view CFA as a better approach to EFA since it exams hypothesis (Kline, 1994; Hair et al., 2010). Kline (1994) posits that CFA is more suitable

when there are very explicit hypotheses to be examined concerning model parameters. CFA was implemented to evaluate the unidimensionality, reliability, and validity of measures. Aligned with the study of Hair *et al.*, (2010) and Muijs (2004), two methods were utilised, including concern for the goodness of fit (GOF) and assessment of the reliability and validity of the measurement concept. The measurement concept was undertaken through utilising maximum likelihood (ML) estimation methods delivered through AMOS 22. Software.

5.4.1 The Goodness of Fit (GOF)

Hair *et al.* (2010, p. 632) define GOF as a measure "indicating how well a specified model reproduces the observed covariance matrix among the indicator variables.'' GOF tests in CFA are key to achieving a good fit of the model (Muijs, 2004; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). Adequate GOF of a model enables the researcher to claim for the credibility of hypothesised associations between variables. When the model is inadequate, the reasonability of such associations is rejected (Gallagher, Ting, and Palmer, 2008). The concern increases when a researcher attempts to decide what is and what is not deemed to be adequate or acceptable. Considering sample size, a conclusive solution is not available because of the same concerns of different sample sizes, level of model difficulty and error.

Considering the desire for most GOF values to be as nearest to one (1) as possible, there are several issues and limited settlement with regards to what is acceptable or unacceptable within the literature (Lance, Butts and Michels, 2006; Gallagher, Ting, and Palmer, 2008). According to Hair *et al.* (2010, p. 630) "Absolute fit indices refer to measures of overall goodness-of-fit for both the structural and measurement models. This type of measure does not make any comparison to a specified null model (incremental fit

measure) or adjust for the number of parameters in the estimated model (parsimonious fit measure)." In the Absolute Fit Indices, Chi-square (x^2 or CMIN) statistic and its related probability or p-value is the single statistically founded measure of fit which should not be statistically significant if there is a good model fit (Gallagher, Ting, and Palmer, 2008).

Table 30 exhibits the achieved outcomes of the GOF measure and their suggested degrees. The results exhibit that CMIN statistics is equal to 634.123 and *Df* equal to387, giving a CMIN/*Df* of 1.639 are significant at $p < 0.05$ showing that the GOF of the data towards the model was not good and ought to be rejected, because, in order to fit the model, it requires to be insignificant (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). Nonetheless, since the Chi-square is also sensitive to sample size, it is no longer relied on as a foundation for acceptance or rejection (Gallagher, Ting, and Palmer, 2008). Subsequently, the use of various fit indexes such as RMSEA, AGFI, TLI, CFI, and NFI has established to offer a more all-inclusive perspective of GOF, considering both the sample size as well as the complexity of the model (Gallagher, Ting, and Palmer, 2008). The outcomes produced absolute fit measures of RMSEA: 0.046 and GFI: 0.0882, AGFI: 0.849 and incremental fit measures of TLI: 0.955, CFI 0.962 and parsimony fit evaluate of NFI: 0.910 (see Table 30). These measures meet the criteria presented in Table 31. Subsequently, these GOF measurements verify the model sufficiently fits the data.

			Absolute fit measure				Incremental fit measures		Parsimonious fit indices
	$\chi2/$	*Df*	$\chi2/Df$	GFI	RMSEA	AGFI	TLI	CFI	NFI
Standards			≤2	>0.85	<0.05	0.85	$\geq.090$	≥0.90	≥ 0.90
Achieved	634.123	387	1.639	.882	.046	.849	.955	.962	.910

Table 30. The result of GOF measures

Table 31 depicts the standards and clarification of the chosen GOF and modification indicators.

Important Measures	Satisfactory Value and Clarification
Chi-Square -(CMIN/DF)	CMIN/Df ≤2 = adequate fit (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007)
Goodness- of- Fit Index (GFI)	GFI >.85 = adequate fit (Kelloway, 1998)
Adjusted Goodness-of-fit (AGFI)	AGFI 0.85 = acceptable (Gallagher, Ting, and Palmer, 2008)
Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	RMSEA ≤ .05 = good fit (Steiger, 2007; Gallagher, Ting, and Palmer, 2008)
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	CFI ≥ 0.90 = good fit (Gallagher, Ting, and Palmer, 2008)
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	Cut-off values of 0.95 = acceptable (Gallagher, Ting, and Palmer, 2008)
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	NFI ≥ 0.90 good fit (Hair *et al.*, 2010)

Table 31. Standards and Clarification of Chosen GOF and Modification Indicators

Furthermore, Table 32 exhibits the standard regression weights (SRW), which are all proved to be above the threshold of 0.7. This also supports that the model fits the data and subsequently the unidimensionality of the model was developed. Unidimensionality is existing while a set of assessed items can be clarified merely through one distinct construct (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

Standardised Regression Weights			Estimate	Standardised Regression Weights			Estimate
Expertise5	<---	Expertise	.815	Social approval1	<---	Social approval	.912
Expertise4	<---	Expertise	.822	OBC8	<---	OBC	.861
Expertise2	<---	Expertise	.769	OBC7	<---	OBC	.904
Trustworthiness5	<---	Trustworthiness	.940	OBC6	<---	OBC	.768
Trustworthiness3	<---	Trustworthiness	.913	Involvment5	<---	Involvement	.755
Trustworthiness2	<---	Trustworthiness	.876	WOM2	<---	WOM	.935
Informativeness3	<---	Informativeness	.834	WOM3	<---	WOM	.913

Informativeness2	<---	Informativeness	.802		WOM4	<---	WOM	.691
Entertise4	<---	Entertainment	.827		Purchase Intention1	<---	Purchase Intention	.931
Entertainment2	<---	Entertainment	.946		Purchase Intention2	<---	Purchase Intention	.963
Entertainment1	<---	Entertainment	.820		Purchase Intention3	<---	Purchase Intention	.723
Attitude1	<---	Attitude	.790		Involvment4	<---	Involvement	.881
Attitude3	<---	Attitude	.804		Involvment6	<---	Involvement	.770
Attitude4	<---	Attitude	.910		Informativness1	<---	Informativeness	.799
Social approval3	<---	Social approval	.828		Informativness4	<---	Informativeness	.762
Social approval2	<---	Social approval	.903				

Table 32. Standardised Regression Weights (SRW)

5.4.2 Construct Validity and Reliability Assessment

The construct reliability and validity results of the data is provided in the following section.

	CR	AVE	Expertise	Trustworthiness	Informativeness	Entertainment	Social Approval	OBC	Involvement	WOM	Purchase Intention	Attitude
Expertise	0.844	0.644	**0.802**									
Trust	0.935	0.828	0.656	**0.910**								
Informativeness	0.876	0.639	0.245	0.235	**0.800**							
Entertainment	0.900	0.750	0.200	0.224	0.466	**0.866**						
Social Approval	0.913	0.778	0.212	0.228	0.120	0.210	**0.882**					
OBC	0.883	0.716	0.187	0.260	0.174	0.351	0.415	**0.846**				
Involvement	0.845	0.646	0.260	0.298	0.401	0.390	0.372	0.347	**0.804**			
WOM	0.888	0.728	0.205	0.355	0.315	0.433	0.406	0.587	0.395	**0853**		
Purchase Intention	0.909	0.772	0.215	0.287	0.480	0.408	0.335	0.440	0.318	0.591	**0.879**	
Attitude	0.874	0.700	0.146	0.257	0.417	0.505	0.338	0.318	0.681	0.426	0.416	**0.836**

CR= construct reliability; AVE= average variance extracted (convergent validity).

The diagonal values are square roots of AVE (discriminant validity)

Table 33. Constructs Reliability, Convergent and Discriminant Validity.

5.4.3 Construct Reliability (CR)

Reliability is performed to ensure the overall reliability of the measurements' quality and consistency. A measure can be considered reliable if it accomplishes analogous results when applied repeatedly to the same item (Sekaran, 2003; Gallagher, Ting, and Palmer, 2008; Hair *et al.*, 2010). The debate in the literature relating to which reliability estimate is the best has received great attention in which Internal Consistency has been suggested to be the most frequently used measure (Bacon, Sauer and Young, 1995; Gallagher, Ting, and Palmer, 2008). Consistent with Cronbach's alpha reliability measurements, which is the most commonly applied estimate of Internal Consistency, the consistency of the measures were assessed through testing the consistency of all item responses within the measure. Subsequently, construct reliabilities were undertaken to decipher the reliability of all the latent constructs followed in the model. Validation can proceed when the score is high or acceptable. The score of 0.70 or above is a broadly recognised indication of reliability (Gallagher, Ting, and Palmer, 2008; Janssens *et al.*, 2008).

The outcomes in Table 33 depict that the reliability coefficient of all the constructs was higher than the suggested standards of >0.7 with 0.844 being the lowest to the highest of 0.935 signifies robust reliability and good internal consistency in assessing connections in the model.

5.4.4 Construct Validity

Construct Validity is the most important objective when evaluating a research measure. The most vital objective when assessing a research measure is construct validity. It offers an estimated reality relating to whether or not the proxy correctly reproduces its construct. In other words, a measure is only valid if it measures what is supposed to be measuring

(Gallagher, Ting, and Palmer, 2008). Convergent validity, discriminant validity, and nomological validity are some of the key measures for examining construct validity (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Consistent with Brown (2006), the outcomes of the CFA portrays confirmation of the convergent, discriminant and nomological validity of supposed constructs.

5.4.5 Convergent Validity

Convergent validity assesses the degree wherein indicators (items) of a particular construct converge or share a high ratio of variance in common (Gallagher, Ting, and Palmer, 2008). It is assessed by average variance extracted (AVE) statistics, whereby according to Fornell and Larcker (1981), the standard minimum is 0.50. Hair *et al.*, (2010, p. 688) describes the AVE as "a summary measure of convergence among a set of items representing a latent construct. It is the average percentage of variation explained (variance extracted) among the items of a construct." Hence, in order to create convergent validity, AVE should be higher than 0.50 for all possibilities (Batra and Ahtola, 1991; Lin and Wang, 2006). Convergent validity is debatable when a construct emerges with an AVE that is lower than 0.50 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The absence of a correlation between observed variables in the latent factor creates issues of convergent validity (Hair *et al.*, 2010). As shown in the outcomes of the measurement model in Table 33 that the AVE results are all higher than 0.50, which means adequate convergence (Gallagher, Ting, and Palmer, 2008; Hair *et al.*, 2010)**.**

5.4.6 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is specified through outcomes exhibiting that a construct is truthfully different from the rest (Brown, 2006). In other words, discriminant validity assesses the level of association or divergence concerning two factors that should not be hypothetically analogous while operationalised. For instance, the degree whereby a construct is dissimilar from others and therefore avoid assessing a similar thing. This is necessary for categorising and understanding the significance of a variable (Gallagher, Ting, and Palmer, 2008). The discriminant validity was measured through computing the squared AVE for each distinct construct. The outcomes presented in Table 33 discovered that the model confirmed a discriminant validity (grounded on the square root of AVE) higher than the other associations in this model. In this proposes, consequently, the assessed indicators (items) poses more commonality with the latent construct they were correlated with over all other latent constructs and therefore this offers robust backing for discriminant validity.

5.4.7 Nomological Validity

The last measure of validity is the nomological validity, which assesses if the correlation between constructs in the measurement model make sense (Gallagher, Ting, and Palmer, 2008; Ha*ir et al*., 2010). The findings in Appendix A and B demonstrate that the correlations were both positive and statistically significant, which means that nomological validity is obtained (Cronbach and Meehl, 1955; Hair *et al.*, 2010). The CFA findings have portrayed that the measurement model had obtained reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and nomological validity.

5.5 Outliers

The researcher analysed the Cook's distance to determine if there are outliers. In the plotting of those distances the bigger the number, the bigger the influence that record responses have on the regression between those independent and dependent variables. The Cook's distance threshold is 1. Therefore, if it is greater than 1, it is an influential respondent subsequently it might need to be removed. Figure 10 below portrays that there are no abnormal Cook's distances identified. This suggests that we do not have any values that are influential as the highest values shown in the graphs are less than 0.08.
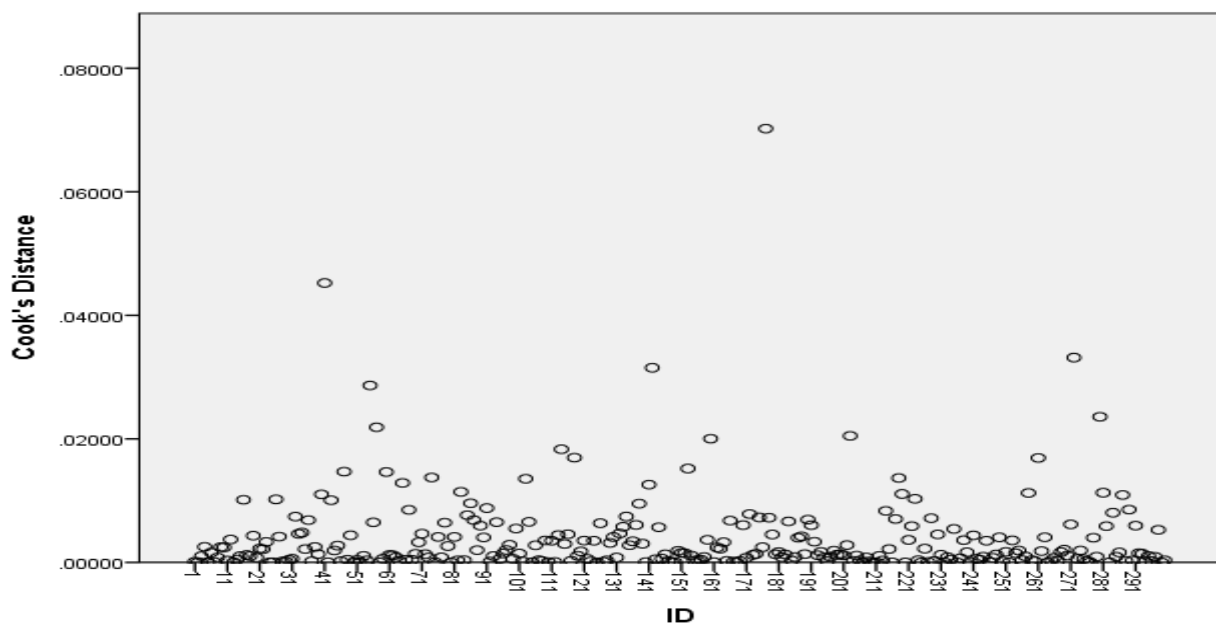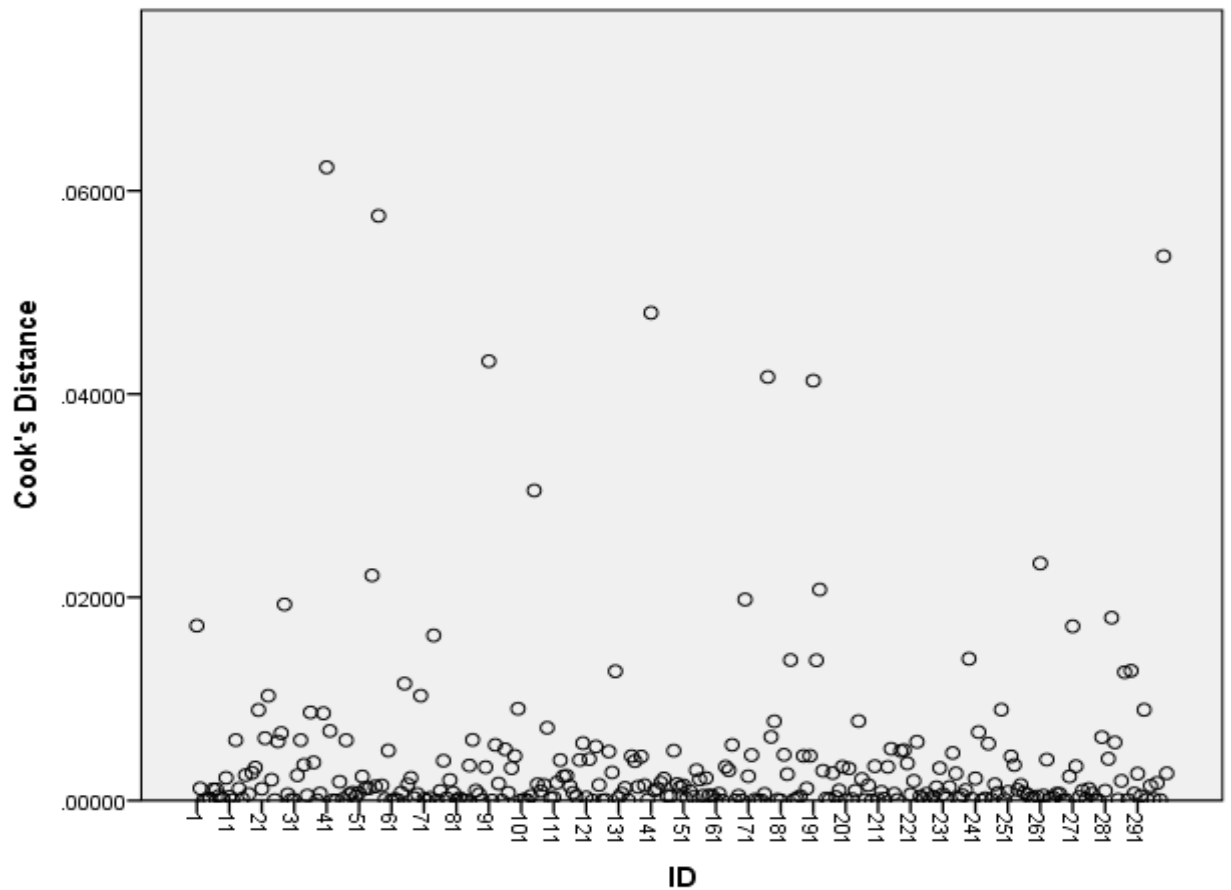

Figure 10. IV with Purchase Intention as DV

Figure 11. IV with WOM as DV

5.6 Multicollinearity

According to Gujarati and Porter (2009), the VIF should be below 10 and tolerance above

0.1 which means there are no Multicollinearity issues in the analysis as depicted in Table

34 and Table 35 that the dependent variables of purchase intention and WOM IVF values

are all below 3 and with all tolerance values above 0.1

Coefficients		
Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)		
Involvement	.386	2.590
Social Approval	.690	1.450

Attitude	.362	2.760
Entertainment	.569	1.758
Informativeness	.620	1.613
Trustworthiness	.459	2.178
OBCs	.681	1.469
Expertise	.459	2.180

Table 34. Dependent Variable: WOM

Coefficients		
Model	**Collinearity Statistics**	
	Tolerance	**VIF**
(Constant)		
Involvement	.386	2.590
Social Approval	.690	1.450
Attitudes	.362	2.760
Entertainment	.569	1.758
Informativeness	.620	1.613
Trustworthiness	.459	2.178
OBCs	.681	1.469
Expertise	.459	2.180

Table 35. Dependent Variable: PI

5.7 Hypothesis Testing

In this part, the correlations among the latent constructs are presented, discussed and tested. There are two category types of latent constructs encapsulating exogenous and endogenous constructs. Relating to path diagram, one or more arrows steer to endogenous constructs whereas no arrows steer to exogenous constructs (Hair *et al*., 2010).

Endogenous constructs also referred to dependent variables (DV) while exogenous is referred to independent variables (IV). The exogenous constructs comprise expertise, trustworthiness, informativeness, entertainment, OBC and social approval whereas the endogenous constructs comprise attitude, WOM and purchase intention. GOF guides and further parameter assessments were implemented to assess the hypothesised structural model.

In order to search the factors and the significant correlations among them, the paths were improved several times to make the study run correctly. For example, using modification indices (e.g., covariance, variances and regression weights) in AMOS, certain paths that appeared to be difficult were removed. The developments subsequently offered a better GOF to the data.

5.8 Measuring the Structural Model

On the satisfactory results of the validity and reliability of the CFA measurement model, the researcher moved onto the last phase of the SEM. This phase comprises transforming the CFA measurement model into a structural model as well as placing an error term to DV (endogenous variables) and subsequently measuring the validity of the structural model through the GOF guides and the significance, size, and path of parameter estimates (Gallagher, Ting, and Palmer, 2008). Checking the statistical importance of the regression weights for the DV as well as IV is the first stage in this section of the SEM, which we found a p-value that is significant. Subsequently, this is followed by a valuation of the SRW for the variables (Parameter Estimates), thereby indicating the strength of the correlation among the variables (Gallagher, Ting, and Palmer, 2008).

5.9 Model Fit and Hypothesis Assessment

Firstly, the model fit was undertaken, subsequently followed by examining the p-value in which indicating the significance degree. If the model fit is unsatisfactory, then having significant p-values is worthless.

	$\chi2/$	Df	P value	$\chi2$/Df	GFI	RMSEA	AGFI	TLI	CFI	NFI
				Absolute fit measure				Incremental fit measures		Parsimonious fit indices
Standards				$\leq$2	>0.85	<0.05	0.85	$\geq$.090	$\geq$0.90	$\geq$ 0.90
Achieved	22.702	17	0.159	1.335	0.992	.033	.917	.979	.998	.991

Table 36. Structural Model Fit Measure Assessment

Table 36 lays the GOF indices and portrays that the assumed structural model offers a good fit to the data. The outcomes indicate that CMIN is equal to 22.702 and *Df* equals to 17, giving CMIN/*Df* of 1.335 are insignificant at p > 0.05 which means the GOF towards the model sufficiently fits the observed data. Furthermore, the absolute fit measures of GFI, RMSEA, and AGFI were 0.992, 0.033 and 0.917 respectively signifying good fit. TLI and CFI of the incremental fit measures were 0.979 and 0.998 respectively equally signifying good-fit and with the parsimony fit measure of 0.991 for NFI. All these values were higher than the lowest requirement for adequate GOF as shown in table 36.

In this study, the researcher included two control variables, involving social network and media platform use frequency (SNMP_f) and online brand community use frequency (OBC_f). After regressing the control variables with attitude, purchase intention and WOM, it was revealed that OBC_f had no significant effect on attitude or purchase intention and SNMP_f had no significant effect on WOM. We deleted these

paths to free up parameters and gain degrees of freedom. The regression estimates and

the p-values are shown in Table 37.

Path	Estimate	S.E	C.R	P
Attitude ← SNMP_f	.089	.033	2.676	.007
Attitude ← OBC_f	.053	.044	1.209	.227
WOM ← OBC_f	.065	.036	1.822	.068
WOM ← SNMP_f	.011	.027	.414	.679
Purchase Intention ← SNMP_f	.071	.035	2.007	.045
Purchase Intention ← OBC_f	.052	.058	.891	.373

Table 37. Regression Estimates of Control Variables

The structural model was determined by 31 measurement items that defined the ten latent

constructs. A key aspect of the structural model analysis is the coefficient estimates that

are used to create the estimated population covariance matrix. A parameter is statistically

significant when it has a value of 0.10 or less (Ha*ir et al*., 2010). The p-values were

assessed to determine the statistical significance of all hypothesised paths. The

standardised coefficients (β) specifies the impact of the variable on other variables in the

model.

Construct	Hypotheses	Path	Beta (β)	S.E	C.R.	P
Attitude	H1a	OBCs→ Attitude	.038	.043	.885	.376
	H1b	Social Approval → Attitude	.156	.040	3.950	***
	H1c	Entertainment → Attitude	.304	.055	5.565	***
	H1d	Informativeness → Attitude	.323	.057	5.685	***
	H1e	Trustworthiness → Attitude	.138	.049	2.808	.005
	H1f	Expertise → Attitude	-.186	.068	-2.720	.007
Beta= Standardised regression weight; CR = critical ratio (t-value); P = significance value.						

Table 38. Hypothesis Testing Results with Attitude as DV

H1a. OBC has a significant positive influence on Attitude.

As shown in Table 38, the standardised regression weight and a p-value of OBC to attitude are 0.038 and 0.376 respectively, suggesting that this path is statistically insignificant. The results demonstrate that hypothesis 1a must be rejected since the insignificant p-value indicate that OBC is not a determinant of attitude towards SNMP.

H1b. Social approval has a significant positive influence on Attitude.

Table 38 shows the standardised regression weight is 0.156 and p-value ≤ 0.01 of social approval to attitude, suggesting that this relationship is statistically significant and positive. The findings show support for hypothesis 1B, indicating that if social approval increases the attitude towards SNMP messages also increases. Therefore, we can conclude that social approval is a determinant of attitude towards SNMP messages.

H1c. Entertainment has a significant positive influence on Attitude.

Table 38 exhibits the standardised regression weight is 0.304 and p-value ≤ 0.01 of entertainment to attitude demonstrating that this relationship is statistically significant

and positive. This finding demonstrates support for hypothesis 1C which means when entertainment increases, the attitude towards SNMP messages increases. Subsequently, we can confirm that entertainment is a determinant of attitude towards SNMP messages.

H1d. Informativeness has a significant positive influence on Attitude.

Table 38 portrays the standardised regression weight is 0.323 and p-value $\leqslant 0.01$ of informativeness to attitude signifying that this relationship is statistically significant and positive. This finding demonstrates support for hypothesis 1D, which means when information increases, the attitude towards SNMP messages increases. Subsequently, we can ratify that informativeness is a contributing factor of attitude towards SNMP messages.

H1e. Trustworthiness has a significant positive influence on Attitude.

Table 38 depicts the standardised regression weight is 0.138 and p-value $\leqslant 0.005$ of trustworthiness to attitude representing that this relationship is statistically significant and positive. This finding proves support for hypothesis 1E, explaining when trustworthiness increases, the attitude towards SNMP messages increases. Subsequently, we can approve that trustworthiness is a factor of attitude towards SNMP messages.

H1f. Expertise has a significant positive influence on Attitude.

Table 38 illustrates the standardised regression weight is - 0.186 and p-value $\leqslant 0.007$ of expertise to attitude suggesting that this relationship is statistically significant and negative. Therefore, the findings show that hypothesis 1f must be rejected since the negative beta indicates that expertise is negatively influencing attitude.

Construct	Hypotheses	Path	Beta (β)	S.E	C.R.	P
WOM	H2a	OBCs→ WOM	.434	.034	12.593	***
	H2b	Social Approval → WOM	.146	.033	4.495	***
	H2c	Entertainment → WOM	.213	.046	4.599	***
	H2d	Informativeness → WOM	.169	.048	3.502	***
	H2e	Trustworthiness → WOM	.250	.040	6.218	***
	H2f	Expertise→ WOM	-.221	.056	-3.960	***
	H2g	Attitude → WOM	.103	.046	2.252	.024
Beta= Standardised regression weight; CR = critical ratio (t-value); P = significance value.						

Table 39. Hypothesis Test Results with WOM as DV

H2a. OBCs has a significant positive influence on e-WOM.

Table 39 exemplifies the standardised regression weight is 0.434 and p-value ⩽ 0.01 of OBC to WOM representing that this relationship is statistically significant and positive. This finding provides support for hypothesis 2A, explaining when OBC increases the WOM towards SNMP messages increases. Subsequently, we can conclude that OBC is a contributing factor of WOM towards SNMP messages.

H2b. Social approval has a significant positive influence on e-WOM.

Table 39 illustrates the standardised regression weight is 0.146 and p-value ⩽ 0.01 of social approval to WOM representing that this relationship is statistically significant and positive. This finding provides support for hypothesis 2B, explaining when social approval increases the WOM towards SNMP messages increases. Thus, we can claim that social approval is a contributing factor of WOM towards SNMP messages.

H2c. Entertainment has a significant positive influence on e-WOM.

Table 39 exemplifies the standardised regression weight is 0.213 and p-value ≤ 0.01 of entertainment to WOM representing that this relationship is statistically significant and positive. This finding provides support for hypothesis 2C, explaining when entertainment increases the WOM towards SNMP messages increases. Thus, we can confirm that entertainment is a contributing factor of WOM towards SNMP messages.

H2d. Informativeness has a significant positive influence on e-WOM.

Table 39 signifies the standardised regression weight is 0.169 and p-value ≤ 0.01 of informativeness to WOM representing that this relationship is statistically significant and positive. This finding provides support for hypothesis 2D, explaining when informativeness increases the WOM towards SNMP messages increases. Thus, we can claim that informativeness is a contributing factor of WOM towards SNMP messages.

H2e. Trustworthiness has a significant positive influence on e-WOM.

Table 39 exemplifies the standardised regression weight is 0.250 and p-value ≤ 0.01 of trustworthiness to WOM representing that this relationship is statistically significant and positive. This finding provides support for hypothesis 2E, explaining when trustworthiness increases the WOM towards SNMP messages increases. Thus, we can claim that trustworthiness is a determinant of e-WOM towards SNMP messages.

H2f. Expertise has a significant positive influence on e-WOM.

Table 39 demonstrates the standardised regression weight is -.221 and p-value ≤ 0.01 of expertise to WOM representing that this relationship is statistically significant and negative. The finding indicates that when expertise decreases the WOM towards SNMP messages increases. Therefore, despite that expertise is a determinant of WOM towards SNMP, hypothesis 2F must be rejected, as it does not positively influence WOM.

H2g. Attitude has a significant positive influence on e-WOM.

Table 39 demonstrates the standardised regression weight is 0.103 and p-value ⩽ 0.024 of attitude to WOM representing that this relationship is statistically significant and positive. This finding provides support for hypothesis 2G, explaining when attitude increases the WOM towards SNMP messages increases. Subsequently, we can approve that attitude is a contributing factor of WOM towards SNMP messages.

Construct	Hypotheses	Path	Beta (β)	S.E	C.R.	P
Purchase Intention	H3a	OBCs→ Purchase intention	.295	.056	5.220	***
	H3b	Social approval→ Purchase intention	.160	.054	2.990	.003
	H3c	Entertainment→ Purchase intention	.161	.076	2.120	.034
	H3d	Informativeness→ Purchase intention	.519	.079	6.560	***
	H3e	Trustworthiness→ Purchase intention	.094	.066	1.424	.154
	H3f	Expertise→ Purchase intention	-.099	.091	-1.084	.278
	H3g	Attitude → Purchase intention	.033	.076	.435	.663
Beta= Standardised regression weight; CR = critical ratio (t-value); P = significance value.						

Table 40. Hypothesis Test Results with Purchase Intention as DV

H3a. OBCs has a significant positive influence on purchase intention.

Table 40 shows the standardised regression weight is 0.295 and p-value ⩽ 0.01 of OBC to purchase intention, suggesting that this relationship is statistically significant and positive. The findings show support for hypothesis 3A, indicating that if OBC increases, the PI towards SNMP messages increases. Therefore, we can conclude that OBC is a determinant of purchase intention towards SNMP messages.

H3b. Social approval has a significant positive influence on purchase intention.

Table 40 shows the standardised regression weight is 0.160 and p-value ≤ 0.003 of social approval to purchase intention, suggesting that this relationship is statistically significant and positive. The findings show support for hypothesis 3B, indicating that if social approval increases, the purchase intention towards SNMP messages increases. Therefore, we can conclude that social approval is a factor of purchase intention towards SNMP messages.

H3c. Entertainment has a significant positive influence on purchase intention.

Table 40 shows the standardised regression weight is 0.161 and p-value ≤ 0.034 of entertainment to purchase intention, suggesting that this relationship is statistically significant and positive. The findings show support for hypothesis 3C, indicating that if entertainment increases, the purchase intention towards SNMP messages increases. Subsequently, we can encapsulate that entertainment is a contributing factor of purchase intention towards SNMP messages.

H3d. Informativeness has a significant positive influence on purchase intention.

Table 40 shows the standardised regression weight is 0.519 and p-value ≤ 0.01 of informativeness to purchase intention, suggesting that this relationship is statistically significant and positive. The findings show support for hypothesis 3D, indicating that if informativeness increases, the purchase intention towards SNMP messages increases. Accordingly, we can summaries that informativeness is a contributing factor of purchase intention towards SNMP messages.

H3e. Trustworthiness has a significant positive influence on purchase intention.

As shown in table 40, the standardised regression weight and the p-value of trustworthiness to purchase intention are 0.094 and 0.154 respectively, suggesting that

this path is statistically insignificant. The results demonstrate that hypothesis 3E must be rejected since the insignificant p-value indicate that trustworthiness is not a determinant of purchase intention towards SNMP messages.

H3f. Expertise has a significant positive influence on purchase intention.

Table 40 shows the standardised regression weight and the p-value of expertise to purchase intention are -0.099 and 0.278 respectively, suggesting that this path is statistically insignificant. The results demonstrate that hypothesis 3F must be rejected since the insignificant p-value indicate that expertise is not a contributing factor of purchase intention towards SNMP messages.

H3g. Attitude has a significant positive influence on purchase intention.

Table 40 illustrates the standardised regression weight and the p-value of attitude to purchase intention is -0.033 and 0.663 respectively, suggesting that this path is statistically insignificant. The outcomes establish that hypothesis 3G must be rejected since the insignificant p-value indicates that attitude is not a contributing factor of purchase intention towards SNMP messages.

5.10 Mediators

Hair *et al.* (2010, p. 690) describe mediation factors as "the effect of a third construct intervening between the two related constructs." Table 41 presents hypothesis test results with WOM as a dependent variable and attitude as a mediating factor.

Construct	Hypotheses	Variable	Estimate	P
WOM	H4a	OBCs	.004	.253
	H4b	Social approval	.015	.053

	H4c	Entertainment	.029	.070
	H4d	Informativeness	.031	.063
	H4e	Trustworthiness	.013	.049
	H4f	Expertise	-.018	.044

Table 41. Attitude as Mediating Factor

H4a. Attitude mediates the positive influence of OBC and WOM.

As shown in Table 41, the p-value of attitude as a mediator between OBC and WOM is 0.253 and therefore not significant at p ≤ 0.10. This implies that hypothesis 4a must be rejected, as attitude is not a mediation factor of OBC and WOM.

H4b. Attitude mediates the positive influence of social approval and WOM.

As shown in Table 41, the regression weight and p-value of attitude as a mediator between social approval and WOM are 0.015 and 0.053 respectively, suggesting that this path is statistically significant. The findings show support for hypothesis 4B and denote that attitude is a mediation factor of social approval and WOM.

H4c. Attitude mediates the positive influence of entertainment and WOM.

As shown in table 41, the regression weight and p-value of attitude as a mediator between entertainment and WOM are 0.029 and 0.070 respectively, which means this path is statistically significant. The findings show support for hypothesis 4C and denote that attitude is a mediation factor of entertainment and WOM.

H4d. Attitude mediates the positive influence of informativeness and WOM.

As exhibited in Table 41, the regression weight and p-value of attitude as a mediator between informativeness and WOM are 0.031 and 0.063 respectively, suggesting that this

path is statistically significant. The findings present support for hypothesis 4D and denote that attitude is a mediation factor of informativeness and WOM.

H4e. Attitude mediates the positive influence of trustworthiness and WOM.

As depicted in Table 41, the regression weight and p-value of attitude as a mediator between trustworthiness and WOM are 0.013 and 0.049 respectively, suggesting that this path is statistically significant. The findings show support for hypothesis 4E and denote that attitude is a mediation factor of *trustworthiness* and WOM.

H4f. Attitude mediates the negative influence of expertise and WOM.

As revealed in Table 41, the regression weight and p-value of attitude as a mediator between expertise and WOM are - 0.018 and 0.044 respectively, suggesting that this path is statistically significant. The findings show support for hypothesis 4F and denote that attitude is a mediation factor of expertise and WOM.

Construct	Hypotheses	Variable	Estimate	P
Purchase intention	H5a	OBCs	.001	.489
	H5b	Social approval	.005	.702
	H5c	Entertainment	.009	.709
	H5d	Informativeness	.009	.693
	H5e	Trustworthiness	.004	.625
	H5f	Expertise	-.005	.603

Table 42. Purchase Intention as DV and Attitude as Mediating Factor.

Table 42 portrays the hypothesis test results with purchase intention as the dependent variable and attitude as a mediating factor. The results show that the p-value of all paths

from hypothesis 5a to 5f are statistically insignificant and therefore must all be rejected. This implies that the independent variables (OBC, social approval, entertainment, informativeness, trustworthiness, and expertise) are not mediated through attitude towards purchase intention.

5.11 Moderators

The moderator influence is where a construct changes the relationship between two other associated constructs in which it either strengthen or weaken its direction (H*air et al*., 2010). In other words, moderation is when a construct directly influences the association among the exogenous and the endogenous latent factor. Table 43 shows the hypothesis test results with attitude as the dependent variable and involvement as a moderating factor.

Construct	Hypotheses	Interaction	Estimate	S.E	C.R	P
Involvement	H6a	OBCs_X_involvement	.045	.049	.924	.355
	H6b	Social approval_X_involvement	.018	.044	.421	.674
	H6c	Entertainment_X_involvement	-.068	.053	-1.288	.198
	H6d	Informativeness_X_involvement	.002	.046	.037	.971
	H6e	Trustworthiness_X_involvement	-.128	.061	-2.112	.035
	H6f	Expertise_X_involvement	.122	.052	2.365	.018

Table 43. Involvement as Moderating Factor

Table 43 reveals that involvement only moderates between trustworthiness and attitude; and between expertise and attitude, while all other hypotheses are shown to have an insignificant p-value. Therefore, we reject hypotheses 6a, 6b, 6c, and 6d.

H6e. Involvement moderates the positive relationship between trustworthiness and attitude towards SNMP messages.

Table 43 shows the regression weight and p-value of the interaction between trustworthiness and attitude are -0.128 and 0.035 respectively. Therefore, the findings provide support for hypothesis 6e, denoting that involvement is a moderating factor of trustworthiness and attitude towards SNMP messages. The results are further explained in Figure 12, which shows that involvement weakens the positive correlation between trustworthiness and attitude. As shown in Figure 12, involvement moderating the effect of trustworthiness on attitude.
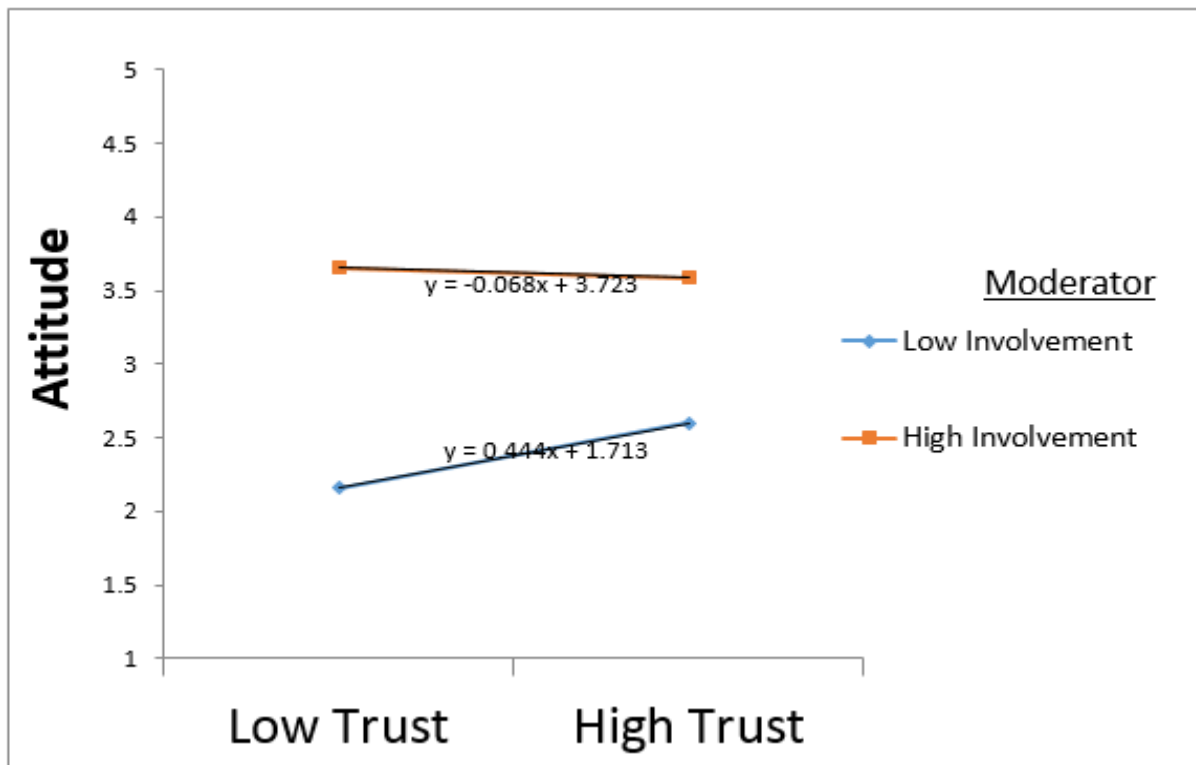
Figure 12: Involvement: Low versus High Trustworthiness

H6f. Involvement moderates the negative relationship between expertise and attitude towards SNMP.

Table 43 shows the regression weight and p-value of the interaction between expertise and attitude are 0.122 and 0.018 respectively. Therefore, the findings provide support for hypothesis 6f, denoting that involvement is a moderating factor of expertise and attitude towards SNMP. The results are further depicted in Figure 13, which shows that involvement dampens the negative correlation between expertise and attitude. As shown in Figure 13 involvement moderating the effect of expertise on attitude.
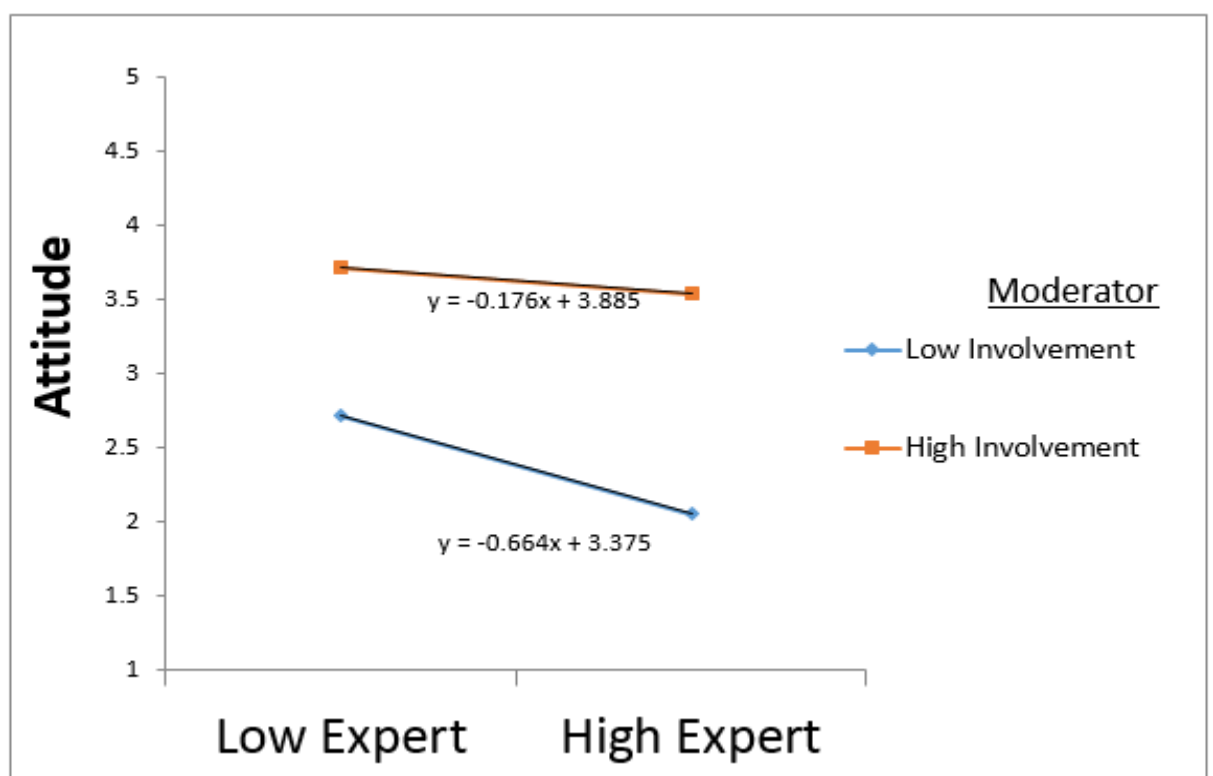
Figure 13: Involvement: Low versus High Expertise
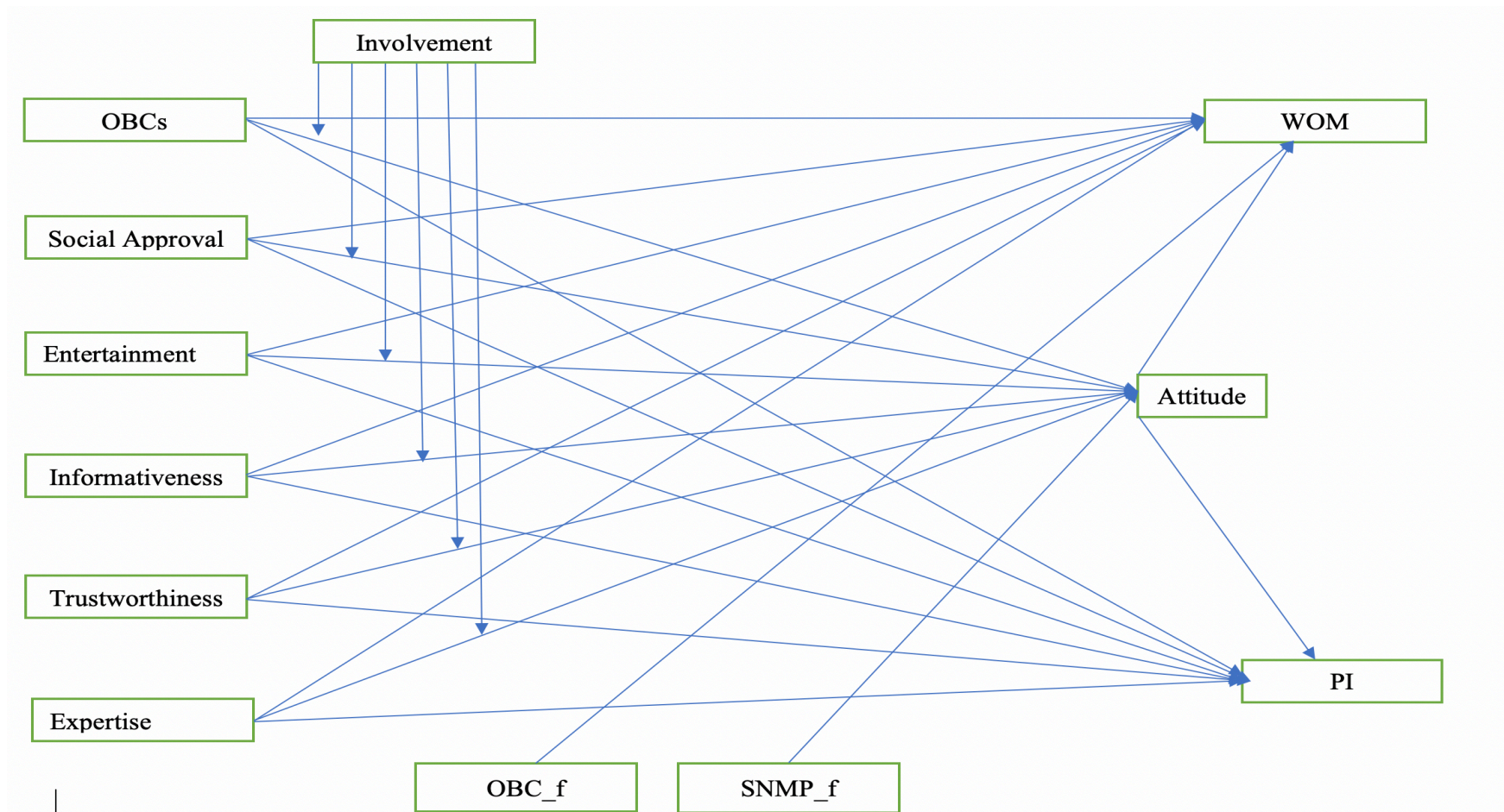
Figure 14: Overall Structural Model

Table 44 below shows a summary of the quantitative survey questionnaire results in which only OBC and expertise have insignificant effects on attitude.

Hypotheses	Variable	Result	Estimate	P
H1a	OBCs→ Attitude	**Insignificant**	.038	.376
H1b	Social Approval→ Attitude	**Positive**	.156	***
H1c	Entertainment→ Attitude	**Positive**	.304	***
H1d	Informativeness→ Attitude	**Positive**	.323	***
H1e	Trustworthiness→ Attitude	**Positive**	.138	.005
H1f	Expertise→ Attitude	**Negative**	-.186	.007
H2a	OBCs→ WOM	**Positive**	.434	***
H2b	Social Approval→ WOM	**Positive**	.146	***
H2c	Entertainment → WOM	**Positive**	.213	***
H2d	Informativeness→ WOM	**Positive**	.169	***
H2e	Trustworthiness→ WOM	**Positive**	.250	***
H2f	Expertise→ WOM	**Negative**	-.221	***
H3a	OBCs→ Purchase Intention	**Positive**	.295	***
H3b	Social Approval→ Purchase Intention	**Positive**	.160	.003
H3c	Entertainment→ Purchase Intention	**Positive**	.161	.034
H3d	Informativeness→ Purchase Intention	**Positive**	.519	***
H3e	Trustworthiness→ Purchase Intention	**Insignificant**	.094	.154
H3f	Expertise→ Purchase Intention	**Insignificant**	-.099	.278
H3g	Attitude→ Purchase Intention	**Insignificant**	.033	.663
H4a	OBCs →Attitude →WOM	**Insignificant**	.004	.253
H4b	Social Approval →Attitude →WOM	**Positive**	.015	.053
H4c	Entertainment →Attitude →WOM	**Positive**	.029	.070
H4d	Informativeness →Attitude →WOM	**Positive**	.031	.063
H4e	Trustworthiness →Attitude →WOM	**Positive**	.013	.049
H4f	Expertise →Attitude →WOM	**Negative**	-.018	.044

H5a	OBCs → Attitude →Purchase Intention	**Insignificant**	.001	.489
H5b	Approval → ATT →Purchase Intention	**Insignificant**	.005	.702
H5c	Entertainment→ Attitude →Purchase Intention	**Insignificant**	.009	.709
H5d	Informativeness→Attitude→Purchase Intention	**Insignificant**	.009	.693
H5e	Trustworthiness→Attitude→Purchase Intention	**Insignificant**	.004	.625
H5f	Expertise→ Attitude → Purchase Intention	**Insignificant**	-.005	.603
H6a	OBCs_X_Involvement	**Insignificant**	.045	.355
H6b	Social Approval_X_Involvement	**Insignificant**	.018	.674
H6c	Entertainment_X_Involvement	**Insignificant**	-.068	.198
H6d	Informativeness_X_Involvement	**Insignificant**	.002	.971
H6e	Trustworthiness_X_ Involvement	**Negative**	-.128	.035
H6f	Expertise_X_ Involvement	**Positive**	.122	.018

Table 44. Summary of the Quantitative Survey Questionnaire Results

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSIONS

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher combines the findings above on interactive-related, credibility-related and infotainment-related themes derived from the qualitative analysis, with the relevant extant literature to provide a synthesis that informs understanding of the factors influencing the effectiveness of SNMP messages. These are presented consistent with the recognition that SNMP users' attitudes and intentions underlie the process that informs their decision making about brands, which is further explained through the appropriate components of the staged HOET.

In the qualitative phase of this research, the aim is to obtain new insights, perceptions, and experiences from the perspectives of SMMEs relating to the effective SNMP messages that can favourably influence user attitudes and behavioural intentions. Throughout the interviewing process, the researcher's focus was that to reveal the various types of methods, concepts, practices, and strategies that the experts applied when designing SNMP messages, in which lead to favourably influencing the users' attitudes and behavioural intentions. The qualitative data revealed that the three identified distinctive themes of credibility, infotainment and interactivity have direct effects on the user attitudes and behavioural intentions, which subsequently leads to the user's actual behaviour.

In the quantitative phase of this study, the aim is to confirm or reject the findings relating to the identified key themes emerged from the qualitative phase of the research, taking the views of the actual SNMP users. Subsequently, the interpretations and implications of the analysis results and a thorough discussion of the survey findings are presented. Specifically, the findings of the survey questionnaires and interviews are

compared, combined and synthesised. Moreover, these findings are also synthesised with the previous researches relating to the realised key factors that drive consumer's attitudes and behavioural intentions towards SMM. Firstly, a detailed summary of the quantitative survey findings is given relating to the eight influences that lead to creating attitudes towards SNMP messages. Subsequently, results relating to the message factors that lead to positive attitudes towards SNMPs are discussed and compared.

6.2 Antecedents of Attitude of SNMP Messages

Relating to the antecedents of attitudes of SNMP messages, this research mainly depends on the findings of the qualitative research in which identified the key factors that lead to creating user attitudes and intentions towards SNMP messages encapsulating OBCs, social approval, entertainment, informativeness, trustworthiness, and expertise. Considering that, the foregoing literature has studied many factors predicting attitude towards advertising, and user needs for using SNMPs, this search documents the key relevant factors constructed on the initial qualitative stage of this research. The qualitative findings are subsequently synthesised with the findings of the survey questionnaire presented in this chapter along with the existing literature relevant to the research topic under question.

6.3 Credibility

The qualitative interview findings indicate that source credibility can grow favourable user attitudes and behavioural intentions towards SNMP messages that are perceived to be as credible. Current literature supports these findings in which proposes that information presented by credible sources can affect user beliefs, attitudes and behavioural intentions (Gunawan and Huarng, 2015; Wang, Kao, and Ngamsiriudom,

2017). Similarly, Powell (1965) discover that sources with high credibility are more influential at encouraging persuasion, for instance, encouraging the user to accept a message and or creating a favourable user attitude towards a particular concept. According to Fragale and Heath (2004), credible sources are expected to make credible messages. This finding supports Beaulieu and Rosman (2003) study wherein suggests that sources with low credibility can either weaken messages in different ways or lead consumers to invest more energy in concluding a reaction, while Gotlieb, Schlacter, and St. Louis (1992) presents that high credibly perceived sources can persuade users easily towards accepting a brand message. In other words, the higher the source credibility of the message, the higher its persuasiveness is expected to be towards accepting a message (Tormala, Briñol, and Petty, 2006; Keller, 2007; Kao, 2013). Equally, other studies in SMM, posit that the user opinions are influenced by source credibility and subsequently the higher the credibility of a SNMP message the higher its persuasiveness on the user's acceptance of the message (Liu and Patricia, 1987; Gunawan and Huarng, 2015).

Credibility is referred to the speaker's ability to make convincing statements that reflect users' confidence and perception that the speaker has the ability and motivation to present information in a fair, truthful and sincere demeanour (Kelman and Hovland, 1953; Ohanian, 1991; Beaulieu, 2001; Sussman and Siegel, 2003). Furthermore, source credibility is related to the credibility of a famous person (endorse), spokesperson, or individual that presents a SNMP message which can include a purchaser, an organisational worker, a famous person, or a specific individual model. The individual is used as evidence or indication that the advocated product or service has superiority and therefore can be trusted (Kao, 2013).

The findings show that businesses who tend to ignore or play less emphasis on the importance of credibility will struggle to perform well because consumers, followers, and users want to know if you are a credible source for the information they need and whether

you can be trusted and have expertise in the subject issue. Otherwise, anyone can post information in SNMPs. Kao (2013) advocates these findings, wherein states that the positive favourability towards source credibility derived from the user perception and prediction that source credibility presents valid messages in which subsequently drives their belief that message arguments eliciting from such sources can be more believable.

The credibility of the source behind SNMP messages was expressed to be operationalised in two different ways involving trustworthiness and expertise. This is consistent with the foregoing literature whereby it has realised these two factors as the key components of credibility (Pornpitakpan, 2004). These two components of credibility are believed to be major contributors towards increasing the favourability effects of the SNMP messages. These results are advocating the findings of Ohanian (1990) wherein postulates that trustworthiness and expertise positively affect the user's acceptance of a message. Similarly, the findings indicated that a message is most likely to be shared or talked about if its sources perceived to be credible. This is aligned with the study of Richins and Root-Shaffer (1988) in which states that source credibility to be a predictor of information sharing, and when sharing online information, source credibility is perceived to be an impactful factor (Ho and Dempsey, 2010).

The respondents highlighted the importance of trustworthiness and expertise credibility specifically in SNMPs, as their experiences were that it is hard for a business to survive if it is perceived to be lacking in credibility. The experience was that people want to know the source(s) behind the SNMP messages they receive. Can they be trusted? Do they sound and look professional and do they have the expertise to claim what they say in their SNMP message. These findings are consistent with the prior literature in which states that trustworthiness and expertise have been known as the main aspects of source credibility of a message (Kahle and Homer, 1985; McCracken, 1989; Lafferty, Goldsmith, and Newell, 2002; Wang and Yang, 2010).

6.3.1 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is conceptualised as someone in which the users observe to be truthful and genuine, while an untrustworthy source is someone whom the user sense disbelieve and distrust (McCracken, 1989; Priester and Petty, 2003). In other words, trustworthiness is when the user believes that the sender offers practical information fairly and sincerely (Wang and Yang, 2010). Similarly, other researches support these results wherein claim that information is considered by consumers if it is both useful and believable but will be disregarded if they are disseminated via sales push messages that violate communication's sincerity and intrinsic qualities of socialisation and trust (Reinhard, Messner and Sporer, 2006). Consumers are aware that brands use commercial intended SNMP messages to attract them, however when the privately produced message sharing experience is the main intention, it is perceived to be more trustworthy (Berthon, Leyland, and Colin, 2008), as source trustworthiness depends on how the audience perceive the intention of the message communicator (Eagly, Wood and Chaiken, 1978). For example, consumers perceive the suggestions of genuine consumers more trustworthy than brands marketing messages (Iyengar, Bulte and Valente, 2011), because of their possible conflict of interest (Berthon, Leyland and Colin, 2008).

The survey analysis confirmed that the trustworthiness is a significant construct that positively influences both the attitudes and WOM of SNMP messages as ($\beta = 0.138$, $p < 0.005$) and ($\beta = 0.138$, $p < 0.005$) respectively. This is consistent with the findings of the qualitative analysis, which revealed that SNMP messages that perceived to be trustworthy are positively influencing user attitudes and WOM. These findings are also in line with earlier studies. Trustworthiness is conceptualised as the perceived motivation of the source, to tell the truth (Kelman and Hovland, 1953; M*etzger et al*., 2003), to offer fair and sincere information (Reinhard, Messner and Sporer, 2006; Berthon, Leyland and

Colin, 2008; Wang and Yang, 2010) and to represent SNMP user's with believability, honesty, and dignity (Erdogan, 1999). It has been suggested that source trustworthiness depends on how the audience perceives the intention of the message communicator (Eagly, Wood and Chaiken, 1978). Evidence indicates that the perceived trustworthiness of SNMP users directly affects persuasive processes that affect both attitudes and behavioural intentions, and resultant insights can significantly influence brand SNMP communication strategies (Chu and Kamal, 2008). However, the findings of the survey analysis confirmed that the effects of trustworthiness on purchase intention of SNMP messages to be insignificant as ($\beta = 0.094$, $p < 0.154$) which is inconsistent with the findings of the qualitative analysis.

6.3.2 Expertise

Expertise is conceptualised as ''the perceived ability of the source to make a valid assertion'' (McCracken, 1989, p, 311). For example, dentists are best positioned to endorse the purchasing of particular toothpaste. In other words, expertise is the perceived ability of the source to know the truth and to make correct assertions, and SM users who are regarded as experts tend to be more persuasive (Aaker and Myers, 1987) and able to drive consumer behavioural intentions (Ohanian, 1990, 1991). Before consumers go through the purchasing process, they browse and search information through numerous products of interest and online reviews in which the expertise and credibility of the participants deemed to be key to a successful online realm (Bleier and Eisenbeiss, 2015; Verma, Sharma and Sheth, 2016). Marketers employ individuals with a high degree of expertise to advocate their products and services. These approaches are decided on the view that highly expert sources positively influence attitude towards message claims compared to those with lower expertise(Harmon and Coney, 1982).

The desire for effective use of SNMPs as a marketing tool for reaching out to as many users as possible, turning them into potential buyers, follower, idea contributors and subsequently brand ambassadors were some of the key reasons behind the experts reasoning for placing high importance on the establishment of credibility when designing a SNMP message. Likewise, because of the phenomenon of users moving towards SNMPs not only for communicating with friends, family, and acquaintances but also for communicating with brands just as easily were perceived as another key reason for businesses wanting to build credibility.

The respondents proposed that for a SNMP message to be considered as trustworthy it first needs to be presented in a demeanour that is perceived to be transparent, honest and practical in which the user's needs, wants and desires are carefully taken into consideration. These findings are consistent with those of Wang and Yang (2010) wherein posits that the message communicator should have the experience, awareness to offer practical, honest, and accurate information or argue a specific subject. The experts further expressed that these attributes can help users and potential customers to make easier purchasing decisions. Consistently, Eagly, Wood, and Chaiken (1978) suggest that a message is most likely to be considered honest if it is believed to be effectively expressing genuineness. If a message is considered to be subjective through individual limitations (e.g., conflict of interest) or conditional limitations (e.g., features of the recipients), its rationality is most likely to be impaired (Eagly, Wood and Chaiken, 1978). Thus, consumers frequently desire to understand the motives behind why a messenger embraces or promotes a particular view (Friestad and Wright, 1994, 1995; Campbell and Kirmani, 2000).

Expertise was hypothesised to have significant positive influences on attitude, WOM and behavioural intentions towards SNMP messages. However, the findings of the survey analysis confirmed that expertise has a significant negative effect on both attitude

and WOM of SNMP messages as (β = - 0186, p < 0.007) and (β = -0.221, p < 0.001) respectively. Similarly, the survey also confirmed that expertise has an insignificant effect on the purchase intention of SNMP message as (β = -0.99, p < 0.278).

These results are inconsistent with the qualitative findings in which revealed that expertise does have a direct positive effect on attitude, WOM and purchase intention of SNMP messages. A possible explanation is that in addition to expertise and trustworthiness, the user's attitudes and behavioural intentions in SNMPs are also likely to be influenced by the number of user likes, comments and shares an interested SNMP message has received or the types of people who have already liked, commented or shared the message. Prior studies also support this perspective and posit that consumer's brand ratings have significant impacts on other customer's preferences towards the company offerings (G*odey et al*., 2016). In other words, in SNMPs brands can create preferences towards their brands and products by increasing their follower likes, comments, and shares (Naylor, Lamberton and West, 2012). The results of the qualitative study are consistent with earlier empirical studies relating to expertise which recognises that expertise has a positive influence on attitude and behavioural intentions (Till and Busler, 2000). This is consistent with a further study by Bergkvist, Hjalmarson, and Mägi (2016) who reveal a positive association of source expertise and attitude toward the brand.

6.4 Infotainment

Now directing the focus on the infotainment-oriented factors. The qualitative findings discovered that messages that are perceived to be informative and entertaining could entice and retain the user's attention whereby subsequently leading to influencing the user's attitudes and behavioural intentions towards the brand messages. Consistent with these findings, prior research suggests that SNMP messages that are built with

informativeness and entertainment in mind lead to encouraging users to read the message (Fu, Ju, and Hsu, 2015), in which steers attitude and behavioural intentions towards the message. These findings also support the study of Jahn and Kunz (2012) wherein suggests that functional and hedonic contents are the drivers of consumer participation in brands SNMPs. The study argued that people's needs for communications are oriented to content, relationships, and self. Content refers to the information distributed by the media, and it can be either hedonic or functional. Some of the two most vital and strongest motivators tend to be entertainment and informativeness. SNMP users desire both informativeness and entertainment (Luo, 2002; Ashley and Tuten, 2015). When buying mainly hedonic products, consumers search for items that are exciting, pleasant and entertaining (Sciiuize, Sciiöler, and Skiera, 2014), while utilitarian products must be effective, supportive, necessary, functional and practical to appeal to consumers (Voss, Spangenberg and Grohmann, 2003). These findings also aligned with the study of Eighmey (1997) in which claims that information and entertainment factors are vital to achieving a successful website.

Similarly, literature relating to the UGT advocates these findings in which states that a website high in observed informativeness and entertainment creates a favourable attitude towards the website (Chen, Clifford, and Wells, 2002). Entertainment has been associated with website gratification, attitude towards the website and intends to return (Hausman and Siekpe, 2009).

6.4.1 Informativeness

The qualitative findings revealed that having relevantly researched information that is thoughtful and easily accessible and understood can increase user attitudes and behavioural intentions towards a SNMP message. In line with the findings of this study,

Burke (2002) posits that the need for information and knowledge before making an online purchase is why the user's search, analyse and compare product features, prices, shipping information, payment options, and return policies (Burke, 2002). Kim, Kim, and Park (2010) define informativeness as one of the key antecedents to observing website advertisements. Likewise, Rotzoll, Haefner, and Sandage (1989) have defined informativeness as the capability of the advertisements to offer suitable information with the aim to influence customers to adopt the message of the advertisements.

The findings revealed that in SNMPs, users seek messages with information that is perceived to be thoughtful, relevant, useful, timely and valuable to them. The findings propose that people are actively looking for such information. Therefore, messages with information that is perceived to be useful by the users and if it is told in a fun and interesting demeanour can bolster its effect on creating favourable attitudes and behavioural intentions towards the brand messages. The reasoning that emerged from the data is that SMM is getting increasingly crowded, and thus the users have less time for giving attention to the increasing number of mostly irrelevant SNMP messages on their network timeline. The respondents stated that this phenomenon has led to increasing the desire for the production of SNMP messages to contain information that is thorough, thoughtful, useful, relevant, concise, accurate and timely, has the right length and easily understood by the specific target audiences receiving it. Previous literature supports these finding in which suggests that users use SNMPs to learn any subjects they become interested (Gao and Feng, 2016). This supports the study of Kuan-Yu and Hsi-Peng (2011) wherein posits that the need for information is one of the key factors steering users to use and brows SNMPs in which attracts users to contribute to SNMPs such as Facebook crowds. SNM is becoming the core platform for obtaining the newest news and information about topical discussions and product browsing (Godey et al., 2016). Consistently, in Fu, Ju and Hsu (2015) study, informativeness explained as the

consumers' observed value size offered by the messages posted on SNMP such as significant, correctness and truthfulness (Ducoffe, 1996). Moreover, Taylor *et al.*, (2004) and Taylor, Lewin, and Strutton (2011) posit that information that is perceived to be current and valuable including those that offers advice, recommendations or knowledge steers the users to create a positive attitude toward the advertisement.

The findings relating to the size of the information contained in a message indicates that unless the communicator knows the receiver, shorter messages will prove more effective. Foregoing studies advocating these findings posit that regardless of the information's relevancy, user's message knowledge is influenced by the size of its information contained (Tormala, Briñol, and Petty, 2007). Tormala, Briñol and Petty experiment noticed that the target audience attitudes were mediated by participant's insights into how much information the received message enclosed. Messages that contained less information were perceived to be more informative and more influential by the participants and thus have more influence on message user's attitudes.

The experts also mentioned that the messages could not be posted too frequently to avoid being viewed as a nuisance and they cannot be posted too infrequently to avoid getting lost in the crowds of messages poured into the user's network timeline. Likewise, the data indicates that SNMP messages designed with solving a specific problem of the targeted audiences into consideration experienced to be encouraging favourable attitudes and behavioural intentions. For example, some experts explained that they post information that helps their followers to become better at doing their jobs. Furthermore, the data also revealed that the core concept of infotainment is not only to present information but also to present information in an entertaining demeanour. The expressions were that mixing entertainment with information in a SNMP message proves to be more effective in favourably influencing the user's attitudes and intentions. Consistent with these findings, earlier researches claim that 70% of users used SNMPs

for information gathering about products/brands in which 49% of them used the information to make a purchase (Worldwide, 2008; Kim and Ko, 2012; Coyle and Strahilevitz, 2013). This suggests that not having updated product information to differentiate between them leads to increasing consumers' risk about purchasing (Gilly *et al.*, 1998).

Informativeness was hypothesised to have a direct positive effect on attitude, WOM and purchase intention of SNMP messages. The quantitative analysis confirmed that informativeness have a significant positive influence on attitude, WOM and purchase intention of SNMP messages as ($\beta = 0.323$, $p < 0.01$), ($\beta = 0.169$, $p < 0.01$) and ($\beta = 0.519$, $p < 0.01$) respectively. These findings are consistent with those of the qualitative analysis, whereby exposed that informativeness positively leads to attitudes, WOM and purchase intentions of SNMP messages. Moreover, these findings are also in line with prior studies, which refers informativeness as the capability of the message promotion to offer relevant and useful information with the aim to persuade consumers to accept the message promotion (Rotzoll, Haefner and Sandage, 1989). Consistently, the study of Kuan-Yu and Hsi-Peng (2011) suggest that the need for information is one of the key factors steering customers to use and browse SNMPs, which attracts consumers to contribute to SNMPs such as Facebook crowds. In line with these findings, research by Taylor *et al.*, (2004) and Taylor, Lewin, and Strutton (2011) reveals that information that is perceived to be current and valuable, including that which offers advice, recommendations or knowledge, steers the users to create a positive attitude towards the message promotion.

Furthermore, consistent with UGT, which suggests that individuals use media to satisfy a particular need, Luo (2002) equally supports these findings in which posits that informativeness gratification is a key factor that influences the use of a specific media. Chen and Wells (1999) refer to the informativeness construct as the degree whereby the

network media offers users with inspired and considerate information to media users. Collecting different types of information is the key aim of people going online (Maddox, 1998). Online brand information that is perceived to be of quality exhibits direct impact on user perceptions of the brand and its products/service offerings and subsequently shapes the realisation of the user's attitude towards the platform (Bauer and Greyser, 1968; Haq, 2009). SNMP users frequently request quality features of the information content such as accuracy, relevancy (Keng and Zixing, 2003), and competent to satisfy the needs of informativeness gratification, in which leads to favourable user attitudes towards the website (Ducoffe, 1995).

6.4.2 Entertainment

Entertainment was also expressed as an important factor in creating favourable attitudes and behavioural intentions. The data indicates that SNMP messages built with entertaining elements are more impactful on user attitudes and intentions. Entertainment concept in a SNMP message was described as being funny and interesting thereby allowing the users, the viewers, and the targeted customers to feel a sense of relief, relive, satisfaction, relaxation, amusements, and excitement. There findings are consistent with forgoing researches (e.g. Ducoffe, 1996; Eighmey and McCord, 1998; Koufaris, Kambil and LaBarbera, 2001; Fu, Ju and Hsu, 2015) in which proposes that entertainment is the users' observed interest, satisfaction and pleasant obtained from the messages displayed through the SNM|Ps, which subsequently steers attitudes towards the advertisement. Furthermore, Internet advertisement researches support these findings in which defined entertainment as the capability of advertisement to satisfy the consumers' desires of relaxation, hedonistic preference, aesthetic amusement or emotional relief (Luo, 2002).

Similarly, entertainment also observed as one of the key antecedents of Internet advertisements (Kim, Kim, and Park, 2010). Entertainment is the result of the fun and plays evolving from the SNMP experience (Agichtein et al., 2008). A hedonic perspective views SNMP users as pleasure seekers who are being entertained and amused, and who experience enjoyment (Aikaterini, Lanlung, and Tang, 2013). In other words, relaxation and escapism, which are reasons for seeking entertainment, drive content loading on SNMPs (Courtois et al., 2009). In line with these findings, various studies present entertainment as a strong motive for SNMP use (Park, Kee, and Valenzuela, 2009; Muntinga, Moorman and Smit, 2011).

Entertainment construct was hypothesised to have a significant direct effect on attitude, WOM and purchase intention of SNMP messages. Consistently, the findings of the quantitative analysis has confirmed that entertainment has a significant direct impact on attitude, WOM and purchase intention of SNMP messages as ($\beta = 0.304$, $p < 0.01$), ($\beta = 0.213$, $p < 0.01$) and ($\beta = 0.161$, $p < 0.34$) respectively. These results are also consistent with the findings of the qualitative study in which indicates that SNMP messages with entertaining elements will have positive effects on user attitudes and behavioural intentions, which can subsequently lead to spreading the message and creating purchases.

Literature supporting these findings claim that entertainment values strongly influence consumer's attitude towards advertisements (Jung, Min, and Kellaris, 2011) and advertisements on SNMPs (Taylor, Lewin and Strutton, 2011; Fu, Ju, and Hsu, 2015). According to Zhang and Mao (2016), these values mainly rely on the execution approach of the advertisement (e.g., message appeals, interactivity, and virtual direct experience), that are prevalent on SNMPs. For instance, academics frequently claim that products need to be entertaining to be communicated about (Hughes, 2005), as nobody talks about irksome products, irksome organisations or irksome messages (Sernovitz, 2006). This result supports the study of Ducoffe (1995) and Schlosser, Shavitt and Kanfer (1999) in

which posits that online platforms that offer entertainment values positively influences users attitudes and behavioural intentions towards the online platform.

These findings are also consistent with UGT in which states that entertainment gratification is a key element that influences the use of a specific media (Luo, 2002). Other studies support these findings. For example, Eighmey and McCord (1998) refer to the entertainment construct as the degree whereby the network media is enjoyable and amusing to media users. Lee and Ma (2012) postulates that entertainment is used as the way SNMP serves as a tool for entertaining and evading stress. The importance of entertainment is credited to the media capability to fulfil the user's needs for emotional relief and release of worry (McQuail, 1983; Ruggiero, 2000). Chua, Goh, and Lee (2012) propose that giving content on SNMP offers a good basis for entertainment. Likewise, Lee and Ma (2012) posit that entertainment is favourably associated with Internet news reading. Online buyers have an aspiration for these entertainment preferences while shopping online. The more a media platform provides entertainment values the more the media users will be motivated to return to the media. In other words, entertainment, enjoyment, and humour are key reasons for returning to the media platform (Wolfinbarger and Gilly, 2001).

6.1 Interactivity

Stromer-Galley (2004) defined interactivity as the relational communication happening through SNMPs. The qualitative findings also show that the interactivity focused SNMP messages can create favourable user attitudes and behavioural intentions towards the brand's SNMP messages. The findings identified five key factors that lead to the development of interactivity between the brand and its followers, users and potential

customers, involving the role of OBCs, social approval, brands influencers, storytelling, and testimonials.

The findings reveal that SNMPs enable users and followers and customers to interact, cooperate and spread information easily, instantly and cost-effectively without time or location boundaries. The study of Kumar, Choi, and Greene (2017) support these findings in which states that message developments in these platforms can generate social interaction in which users are enabled to co-produce, consumer and share information with anyone without location and time zone limits.

Relating to the interactivity concentrated SNMP messages and strategies, the desire for engaging in meaningful interactions with the existing and potential customers were expressed as the key to creating favourable attitudes and behavioural intentions towards SNMP messages. These results are consistent with the study of Gunawan and Huarng (2015) wherein proposes that interactivity positively influences attitudes that result in the user purchase intentions. Similarly, the study of Qiu and Benbasat (2005), suggest that presenting product and service information and interactivity is the best marketing strategy. This finding supports the study of Kaye and Johnson (2001) in which posits that Internet interactivity is the motive behind the user's active involvement and engagement with the website. In other words, interactivity has been credited to the Internet as one of its main assets (Hanjun, 2000). The results also indicate that in SNMPs, consistency in posting relevant SNMP messages is essential to increasing user attitudes and intentions. The study of Zolkepli and Kamarulzaman (2015) supports this finding whereby proposes that unlike in the traditional media, the users of the Internet is required a greater degree of interactivity.

Aligned with Gallaugher and Ransbotham (2010), the expressions were that the user needs for Internet interactivity with the interested brands has led to the development and the rapid growth of SNMPs, wherein users are offered support and space for dialogues

and the exchange of concepts (God*ey et al*., 2016) and subsequently leading to favourable attitudes. In other words, interactivity is used as a practice of message interchange (Song and Zinkhan, 2008), which enhances brand and website attitudes (Liu and Shrum, 2009) and behavioural intentions.

The interactive innovation of SNMPs provides give-and-take communication, which aids to haste-up the adoption process since it reaches an acute mass of individuals more rapidly (Rogers, 2003). Besides, according to Song and Zinkhan (2008), the observed values of interactivity leads to a favourable attitude towards SNMP messages whereby influences the adoption. Consistent with the earlier studies (e.g., Schultz and Peltier, 2013; Ibrahim, Wang, and Bourne, 2017), the findings suggest that interactions through SNMPs have become a routine in people's daily life, and a compelling source wherein brands encourage online interactions amongst users.

6.1.1 Online Brand Communities (OBCs)

The findings revealed OBCs as the main component of interactivity in which leading to increasing user engagement with the brand thereby enabling the brands to favourably influencing their potential customers in these communities. Community development was mentioned as the core concept of the development of effective SNMP messages. Wang, Ting and Wu (2013) define OBCs as groups of computer users who bring relationship, information, belongingness and social resources to one another. A SNMP such as Facebook is an example of an OBC. Exchanging information in these OBCs have become progressively easier and quicker (Wang, Ting, and Wu, 2013). Muniz and O'Guinn, (2001, p. 412) defined brand communities as "a specialised, non-geographically bound community based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand." In other words, OBCs are social groups in which users spontaneously join and maintain

their involvement while growing benefits from joining in the community (Mousavi, Roper and Keeling, 2017).

Aligned with the study of (Fu, Ju, and Hsu, 2015), OBCs on SNMPs were expressed to be linking users with shared interests, values, aims, and dreams. Members share means and knowledge to satisfy community affiliate's desires (Ridings, Gefen and Arinze, 2002; Wang, Yu and Fesenmaier, 2002; Subramani and Rajagopalan, 2003; Wu, Chen, and Chung, 2010). The findings show that these communities bring social values to their users and the Internet is a forceful method for people to create close connections with others and therefore enhancing their well-being (Ch*en et al*., 2013).

The popularity of SNMPs for connecting, interacting and cooperating with customers has increased monumentally (Mount and Garcia Martinez, 2014). To connect with consumers, an increasing number of fortune 500 corporations use a SNMP in some way (Mount and Garcia Martinez, 2014). The main force behind this change was explained to be as a result of the technological advancement within the Internet, cooperation developments and web2.0 whereby enabling brands to cooperate with a bigger number of consumers easier and with less cost. For example, to involve external stakeholders, SNMPs such as Facebook and Twitter have been used as key platforms (Brodie *et al*., 2013). These platforms provide brands with enriched tools with high outreach strengths enabling many to many exchanges and perceived to be influential information sources.

Furthermore, the findings also indicate that companies want to become social organisations whereby creating crowdsourcing sites for followers to feedback and suggest ideas towards the company's product development and design. The companies then take the best of the crowdsourced ideas and designs and putting it straight into their research and development. Expert's experiences were that through successfully established online communities, brands can turn their members to product design contributors, brand

ambassadors as well as increasing sales. The views were that giving users and customers some degree of ownership in business by making direct conversations and encouraging user likes, shares and comments and such like. These findings are consistent with the study of Mount and Garcia Martinez (2014) in which posits that through online communities, brands elicit relevant insights and knowledge from a deep and diverse arena of perspectives that can be used to make brands more inventive.

Moreover, the characteristics of these communities were explained to be increasing inventiveness and value of offerings because members from diverse positions with dissimilar ranges of knowledge, abilities, and involvements can work jointly, where the individual's daily spare times is used making content, solving problems as well as helping brands with their research and development (R&D). Consistent with these findings, for the creation of new flavour crisps, PepsiCo took the co-creation strategy by involving consumers through SMM on Facebook (Mount and Garcia Martinez, 2014). These findings support the study of (Baldwin and Von Hippel, 2011) wherein proposes that studying what consumers value in a product and service as well as engaging in lively discussions and interactions, brands can create greater value offers with relevant significant to the target customers. Similarly, Brodie *et al.*, (2013) recommend that deep emotional connections are made when consumers are engaged with brands' inside undertakings directly, and this approach steers to improved brand opinions, loyalty, and satisfaction.

Moreover, the findings suggest that SNMP services provide means for online interaction, allowing the sharing of ideas, activities, events, and interests within individual networks. According to Zhaveri (2013), these services act as WOM because participants repeat the information on SNMPs. Likewise, both brand and individually owned communities are found to be effective tools for promoting sales (Adjei, Noble, and Noble, 2010).

The survey findings suggest that OBC is a significant factor that has a direct positive influence on both WOM and purchase intention. Earlier researches advocates these findings in which states that OBCs link users with shared interests and values (Fu, Ju, and Hsu, 2015) thereby enabling them to share knowledge and information (Wang, Yu, and Fesenmaier, 2002; Wu, Chen, and Chung, 2010) thus increasing their interactivity (Zhe*ng et al.*, 2015). Likewise, these results advocate the findings of the qualitative study in which the SMMEs considered OBCs as the core method for building relationships with the users, spreading the word about the brand and ultimately increasing behavioural intentions. However, the survey analysis discovers that the effects of OBCs are insignificant on the attitudes of SNMP messages. This in contrast to the findings of our qualitative study, which revealed that OBCs have a significant positive effect on user attitudes towards the brand's SNMP messages. In the study framework, the OBC was hypothesised to have a significant and positive direct effect towards attitudes, e-WOM and purchase intention of SNMP messages.

The quantitative analysis confirmed the positive direct influence of OBC factor on the e-WOM and purchase intention as ($\beta = 0.0434$, $p < 0.01$) and ($\beta = 0.295$, $p < 0.91$) respectively while insignificant effects on the attitudes of SNMP messages ($\beta = 0.038$, $p < 0.376$). A possible explanation is that OBCs has become an increasingly powerful, exciting and trustable concept not only for marketers but also for its members in which most likely to immediately leading them to perform the actual behaviour that is suggested by other fellow members. In other words, members of an OBC is likely to bypass the mediating effects off attitudes and head directly towards performing the actual behaviour when the recommendation comes from its other fellow community members.

Community interaction is used as communication that happens concerning two or more persons. Each individual knows his/her own affiliation in the community and relations to and with other members belonging to the community wherein the connections

happen mainly over an Internet platform to attain equally shared aims (Morandin, Bagozzi and Bergami, 2007). Online communities are used by brands to collect relevant insights and knowledge relating to their business activities (Adjei, Noble, and Noble, 2010). Consistent with UGT, community interaction is considered as one of the satisfaction that encourages college students to join Facebook crowds (Park, Kee, and Valenzuela, 2009). Similarly, according to Dunne, Lawlor, and Rowley (2010) retaining relations in the social setting is an important user motivation for using SNMPs. One of the drives for Internet use is social interaction (Sun *et al.*, 2006). SNMPs provide characteristics that encourage the growth and preservation of relationships for its users that successively develop into a shared social understanding (Smock *et al.*, 2011). According to (Cheung, Chiu and Lee, 2011) the sense of belonging needs drive users to online communities in three situations involving a sense of emotional connection with the community (affective), an assessment of self-esteem on the foundation of fitting to a specific group (evaluative), or a sense of self-consciousness of being a member of the community (cognitive). These factors assumed to have key influences on the intention of using OBCs. When suing SNMPs, UGT is a useful context for comprehending the user needs and motives for using new media (Cheung, Chiu, and Lee, 2011).

Furthermore, consistent with UGT, social interaction is an important motivator for creating user-generated content. SNMPs offer users assistance as well as space for discussions and the exchange of ideas (Daugherty, Eastin and Bright, 2008). According to Muntinga, Moorman, and Smit (2011), social interaction describes users who contribute to brand-related SNMPs in order to meet like-minded individuals, interact, and talk with them about specific products/brands. Also, social interaction is one of the main factors leading to e-WOM behaviour (Hennig-Thurau *et al*., 2004; Chu and Kim, 2011). Thus, brands need to post unique content, reflect their users' profile, and be active and

open in discussions and help with practical matters in order to promote interaction (Aikaterini, Lanlung, and Tang, 2013).

Interactivity in SNMPs can engage a user in the interaction development and presenting them a personalised searching experience (Sicilia, Ruiz and Munuera, 2005). Thus, vastly interactive SNMPs enable users to selectively choose the most relevant information as well as decreasing their searching costs and more space to practice message suppositions. In other words, interactive online advertising activities enable consumers to become selective in processing information and involve in instant two-way communication with brands as well as with other consumers (Liu and Shrum, 2009).

6.1.2 Social approval

Social approval was also revealed from the qualitative findings as another essential component of interactivity through SNMPs. The findings explain social approval as the demeanour in which people in SNMPs respond to a message post because they want to be viewed as having associations with it, or they respond because many other people have already responded to it. Consistently, these results are supported by the study of Smith and Gallicano (2015), wherein states that people participate in SNMPs to obtain social approval. Besides, the self-expression theory (Sedikides and Strube, 1995) supports these results in which posits that users use SNMPs to share information relating to themselves, their jobs and their preferences within their SNMPs to portray their values and importance. Self-expression theory aids the user to construct an identity and thus obtaining peer approval (Gao and Feng, 2016).

Moreover, the views were that people follow social norms with the aim to obtain social approval. This is in line with the study of Trafimow and Finlay (1996), whereby explains social approval as the user's perspectives regarding what most close other people

consider s/he should do. These findings equally advocate the study of Gunawan and Huarng (2015) and Weber (1947) which states that social approval is salient when two or more individuals aim to affect one another's intentions by taking social pressure into their demeanour (Weber, 1947; Gunawan and Huarng, 2015). Likewise, align with these findings, DiTunnariello, and Farrell (2015) suggests that a person liking/approving of something is perceived that s/he feels positively towards the provided information and subsequently approving the information. Disliked persons and those perceived to be breaking the group norms get unwanted reactions. In the context of SNMPs, users desire to be accepted which is revealed in the decision-making practice they go through while determining what information to reveal online (DiTunnariello and Farrell, 2015).

Social approval was hypothesised to have a significant direct positive effect on attitude, WOM and purchase intention of SNMP messages. Social approval is applied as the level wherein a user observes that significant others consider s/he should behave in a certain demeanour (Venkatesh, Brown and Bala, 2013). The quantitative analysis confirmed that social approval had a significant direct positive influence on attitude, WOM and purchase intention of SNMP messages as ($\beta = 0.156$, p 0.01), ($\beta = 0.146$, p 0.01) and ($\beta = 0.160$, p 0.003) respectively. This is consistent with the results of the qualitative findings in which revealed that brands exploit social approval as a method for spreading their brand messages as well as making sales. These findings also supported by the study of Fu, Ju and Hsu (2015) in which posit that social approval will have a direct influence on attitude, e-WOM intentions, and purchase intentions (Gunawan and Huarng, 2015). Likewise, these findings concur with those of Smith and Gallicano (2015) who identify that users engage in SNMPs, amongst other reasons, for approval purposes.

Moreover, aligned with self-expression theory, individuals follow SNMPs to spread information about who they are and what they do and like, within their networks to convey and reaffirm their importance and values (Sedikides and Strube, 1995). As well,

self-expression helps individuals towards building an identity and consequently getting peer approval and reciprocating social care (Gao and Feng, 2016). This can relate in particular to brand consumption where the brand is associated with status and fulfilment of self-expression and self-presentation and enables them to fulfil their own social status needs as well as conveying them to others (Schlosser, Shavitt and Kanfer, 1999). In enabling them to portray a particular social image and achieve the required social status users are effecting social attitudes toward a brand and intended behaviour around its purchase (Annie, 2012). Also, consistent with UGT, the need to be acknowledged is one of the main factors for user participation in an OBC, and this is because the community (friendship connections in SNMP) usually works as the user's robust reference point (Zolkepli and Kamarulzaman, 2015).

Furthermore, storytelling emerged from the qualitative analysis as another component of interactivity whereby proposed to be operationalised as an important factor for favourably influencing user attitudes and behavioural intentions. SNMP messages that are build based on stories were expressed to be contributing to a more effective outcome. The expressions were that people like to know the stories behind the messages they receive and if it is told in a way that is specifically meaningful, valuable and resonates with their needs, it can subsequently lead to favourably influence the user's attitudes and behavioural intentions towards the message. Delgadillo and Escalas (2004) support these findings in which posits that advertisements that are told in a storytelling demeanour lead to increasing user positive feelings towards the message.

Additionally, testimonials were also proposed as another interactivity component in which marketers can apply as a marketing tool for increasing user brand interactivity. The findings indicate that people in SNMPs look for social proof such as the number of likes, shares and or comments a particular message has managed to obtain from its follower. Subsequently, customers want to ensure that the products they are about to

purchase has what they are looking for, and this is where the customer testimonials are credited to play a critical role in favourably influencing the user attitudes and behavioural intentions towards the brand. The findings suggest that review sites and brand communities are where customers going when needing to get information about products they are interested in before finalising their purchasing decision. The study of Appiah (2007) supports these findings wherein presents that user attitudes and intentions towards a brand are positively influenced if the brand has already received positive reviews from other users.

Finally, the analysis also revealed brand influencers as another component of interactivity. Brand influencers were described as a marketing strategy that can effectively lead to increasing brand user engagement. These individuals were described as acutely interesting for brands to engage with as they have developed an audience, they have developed a network and they have developed community in which they can spread the word about the brand and subsequently reaching out to a larger number of potential customers. Their recommendation was explained to have favourable effects on user attitudes and behavioural intentions. Likewise, Iyengar, Van den Bulte and Valente (2011) support these findings by stating that message promotions forwarded through influencers can have a stronger impact on user attitudes and intentions than those communicated directly by brands. However, factors emerged from the qualitative research including storytelling; testimonials and brand influencer were removed from the analysis of the quantitative study because its strengths of evidence emerged from the qualitative analysis proved to be amongst the lowest with only 36%, 40% and 52% of the participants mentioning these variables respectively. Concerning the brand influencers, there was an overlap in the data with OBCs and subsequently removed in the quantitative analysis as the focus was given to the brands itself as influencers behind their online communities rather than brand influencers in general.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the conclusions of the study are presented. It begins with a general summary of the study. They are followed by the theoretical implication, managerial implications, and recommendations. Finally, research limitations and future directions are reported.

Since customers are heading towards SNMPs for their news consumptions, product information, and offerings, brands of all types seek new, innovative and effective SNMP messages and strategies that can favourably influence SNMP user attitudes and behavioural intentions towards their messages. Subsequently, the objectives of this study required to gain an in-depth understanding of the message determinants and strategies that can lead to favourably influencing user attitudes and behavioural intentions towards brands SNMP messages. To accomplish these objectives, this research followed an exploratory sequential mixed method in which involving both the qualitative and quantitative approaches. Firstly, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with 25 SMMEs from some of the world's largest brands. The data were video/audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. The thematic analysis approach was adopted for analysing the data.

In this phase, the researcher obtained first hand thorough understating of the effective SNMP message factors and strategies that can favourably influence user attitudes and behavioural intentions. The findings of this study revealed three key themes involving credibility, infotainment, and interactivity with favourable influences on user attitudes and behavioural intentions towards the brand's SNMP messages. Credibility

involved two subthemes (e.g., expertise and trustworthiness), infotainment also involved two subthemes (e.g., informativeness and entertainment), while interactivity involved five subthemes (e.g., OBCs, social approvals, storytelling, SM Influencers and testimonials).

Nine of those subthemes were perceived to be IV including expertise, trustworthiness, OBCs, social approvals, storytelling, SM Influencers, entertainment, informativeness, and testimonials, while WOM and purchase intention perceived as DV. The attitude was used as the mediator between all IVs and DVs, with involvement used as the moderating effect between all IVs and attitude. The discussions of favourably influencing the user attitudes and behavioural intentions are focused on the responses of the users when receiving an informational message that is perceived relevant, useful, helpful, credible, fun and interesting rather than the persona of the users.

The second part of the research started with the quantitative survey questionnaires distributed over 399 SNMP users across the UK to test whether the identified key themes emerged from the qualitative analysis does favourably influence user attitudes and behavioural intentions towards SNMP messages. The objective of this stage was to examine the strengths of the identified message factors from perspectives of the SNMP users. As explained in the findings, there were some inconsistencies in the results revealed from the two applied methods of interviewing SMMEs and the survey questionnaires on the actual SNMP users. Thus, after testing the key identified themes that emerged from the qualitative part quantitatively, the study merely accepted the factors with significant effects and rejected the once with negative and insignificant effects. SPSS and Structured Equation Modelling applying the structured equation program of AMOS were used to analyse the data.

The overview emerged from this research is that creating positive attitudes through activities such as getting involved in interactions that customers find to be

interesting, offering information that is perceived to be useful, relevant, interesting, fun and credible can lead to favourable user e-WOM. This is where the user spreads the word about the brand message offerings and therefore increasing customer reach and subsequently increasing favourable attitudes and purchase intentions. These findings are consistent with the earlier literature in which proposes that e-WOM through SNMPs that is perceived to be informative influences consumer intentions and behaviour (Gunawan and Huarng, 2015). This is because users perceive an **e-**WOM message valuable that presents relevant information when going through their purchasing process (Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006; Reza and Samiei, 2012). The expression was that to create favourable WOM; the brands require making their community members feel positive and happy about being part of their brand community and for owning their products. By doing so, happy customers will likely to work on behalf of the brand as ambassadors by going around and sharing their positive views and experiences with their networks and other potential audiences, which can increase user attitudes and intentions. Moreover, Liu and Lopez (2016) advocate these notion in which proposes that to create SNMP message offerings that users can relate and be happy about accepting it, the brand needs to eagerly monitor and motivate increasing exchanges relating its business offerings over various SNMPs in which it can relate to consumer needs. Consistently, Liu and Lopez (2016) state that consumer experience to WOM on different SNMPs considerably motivate consumer buying behaviour.

In the framework of this study, e-WOM is referred to the brand's desire for encouraging their followers, associates, influencers, consumers and customers and such like to go around and share the word positively about their product/brand offerings within their networks and communities in which ultimately reaches out to large number of potential customers. As expressed in the findings, encouraging users to speak well about the brand's message offerings can lead to increasing the brand's ripple effect and

therefore increased purchase intentions. These suggestions are in line with the earlier WOM literature whereby explains that e-WOM influences customer purchase decisions as well as making ripple effect, an occurrence that spreads advertising messages more substantially because of the message recipient's decision to diffuse the message via their SNMPs (Cheema and Kaikati, 2010; *Huang et al*., 2011).

Purchase intention in the context of this research is expressed as the main outcomes to accomplish through the brand's SMM. The overall findings that emerged from the data show robust desires for accomplishing this objective from their SMM efforts. The experiences and views of the experts are that to create effective SNMP messages; the brand messages should be timely and readily available on their SNMPs and communities that can offer its followers, customers, and users relevancy, usefulness, simplicity, value, entertainment, trust and expertise. In other words, the overall expressions are that SNMP messages that are perceived to be topical, current, relevant, useful, timely, entertaining as well as credible could lead to favourably influencing the user attitudes and behavioural intentions towards the brand message and its source.

This is an emerging phenomenon in which brands seek to help their followers, consumers and potential customers first by providing them with the information they really need and or find exciting relating to their needs, desires, and interests. This phenomenon is a new approach, a more successful approach of helping users to make purchases through SNMP messages. Trying to sale directly in SNMPs was expressed as not only counterproductive but also can be viewed as off-putting to the audiences. The explanations were that first educate and help the user with the information they need, want and find exciting. This approach mentioned as to be trending in the age of SNMPs. This same phenomenon was the reason that the experts stated that SNMP marketers are now shifting their attention to aspects such as brand community development for their SMM. The expressions were that these communities enable brands to build not only

meaningful relations with their followers but also the opportunity to reach out to a limitless number of potential customers through encouraging favourable WOM amongst its community members.

7.2 Theoretical Implications

This study started by offering an in-depth understanding of the factors affecting the development of effective SNMP messages that can influence user attitudes and behavioural intentions towards a brand. It contributes to the literature by identifying three core themes of influence on SNMP message effectiveness encapsulating interactivity, credibility, and infotainment. Also, the results revealed a number of interactivity-related sub-themes (OBCs, storytelling, social approval, brand influencers, and testimonials); credibility-related sub-themes (expertise and trustworthiness); and infotainment-related sub-themes (informativeness and entertainment).

To the researcher's knowledge, studies relating to SMM and the effectiveness of SNMP use have focused on quantitative surveys (Gruner, Homburg, and Lukas, 2014; Alves, Fernandes and Raposo, 2016; God*ey et al*., 2016; Zhang and Mao, 2016), experiments (Adjei, Noble and Noble, 2010; Naylor, Lamberton and West, 2012; Rapp *et al.*, 2013), and/or collected and analysed (sales) data from an organisation's information documents (Kumar, Choi and Greene, 2017). Using data from experts across a broad range of industry experts adds to greater understanding, as they can offer technical, process, and explanatory knowledge of SNMP message effectiveness (Meuser and Nagel, 2009). The insights provided contribute to a set of influences on SNMPs as a marketing communications activity that cut across different market sectors and organisational type, thus providing a strong base for developing a deep knowledge of its effectiveness.

Furthermore, the research presented here utilises attitude and HOET (Lavidge and Steiner, 1961), as a platform for understanding how the identified factors lead users into their behavioural intention/purchase decisions, which has not previously been considered in the context of SMM. There is no theory to understand the effectiveness of advertising through SNMPs (Zhang and Mao, 2016). Subsequently, the application of the HOET in this study has operationalised as a foundation to identify, exploring and explaining the effective factors of advertising through SNMPs to favourably influencing the user's attitudes and behavioural intentions (Olney, Holbrook, and Batra, 1991; Smith, Jiemiao and Yang, 2008). Moreover, this study extends the theory of Ducoffe (1996) and Brackett and Carr (2001) in which studied the effects of three and five advertising factors on attitudes respectively.

The results emerged from this qualitative analysis were developed as a background for the quantitative study and were subsequently tested on the actual SNMP users taking into consideration their perspectives. In the quantitative study, while examining the influence of the identified key themes, the user drives/needs for using SNMPs were also taken into consideration, because it is the users who initially engage in SNMPs as a personal choice motivated by needs (Smith and Gallicano, 2015). These are constructed from a theoretical platform based on the consideration of the user needs for using SNMPs from a modular UGT perspective (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1973), which has also not previously been considered in combination with the HOET in the context of this research. With the lack of a comprehensive study relating to the core themes involved in the creation of effective SNMPs and with limited qualitative research approaches, this qualitative/quantitative study has contributed to both enriching the academic literature as well as helping business of all types with a comprehensive study that is strongly investigated, analysed, and reflected.

7.3 Managerial Implications

To develop effective SNMP messages, this study provides new and effective concepts, experiences and strategies that SNMP managers need to embrace, replicate and evaluate when constructing SNMP messages. The three identified key themes of interactivity, infotainment, and credibility are proposed to have a significant impact on marketing through SNMPs. These are factors that SNMP managers can control and improve, and subsequently create effective SNMP messages that can favourably influence user attitudes and behavioural intentions.

With the increasing popularity of SMM amongst businesses, it is important that managers avoid straining user's cognitive ability with having to digest abundant and mostly irrelevant messages from all directions in the limited time available to them. In other words, as SNMPs are becoming increasingly crowded with advertising messages, SM managers must invest resources in their current and potential customers, followers, and users through building brand communities that help them enjoy and feel good about their membership so that they do not perceive themselves as mere buyers. Hence, SM managers need to invest in follower and user relationship development to retain a strong degree of experience and expertise to develop trust and to strengthen relationship gratification and value. This means that managers first need to take into consideration factors such as timing, length, size, relevancy, frequency, usefulness, accuracy, conciseness and simplicity of their SNMP messages to meet the needs and expectations of the targeted customers. They should also aim to tell the message in an entertaining demeanour.

Similarly, managers also need to encourage users to share their product experiences and to participate in the brand's product research and development discussions and to understand better how customer's attitudes and behavioural intentions evolve towards SNMP messages. Moreover, informing and educating customers through the increasing

customer engagement methods such as testimonials to help accomplish the desired results, whereby ordinary satisfied customers are encouraged to explain the results they accomplished from using the product of interest. Similarly, the application of other factors involving brand influencers, social approval, and storytelling can facilitate favourable user responses. If applied well these factors can help potential targets to fell important with product offerings, stories, and personas. Equally important is that messages to be created with factors such as transparency, accuracy, consistency, accountability, honesty and standards and ensuring that it is also legal and ethical to create a positive attitude and behavioural intentions.

Moreover, this study highlights other important suggestions that emerged from the study that can lead to increasing the effectiveness of SNMP messages. Firstly, offer users with timely information that is perceived to be relevant, useful, interesting, fun, credible, concise and easy to understand, and it is told in an entertaining demeanour. In SNMPs, trying to sell directly can be perceived as off-putting, and therefore brands must first seek to inform and educate their audiences about their product offerings and doing this can favourably influence their attitudes and behavioural intentions towards the brand message.

Secondly, building successful brand communities whereby meaningful interactions are encouraged and made easy between the brand and its followers as well as amongst its members. Brands that can build communities with their follower's needs, desire and interests in mind could turn them into product design contributors and evangelists, which is expressed in the data as important to creating e-WOM and purchase intentions.

Third, heightening the credibility of the business by promoting aspects such as transparency, reliability, competency, consistency, and honesty can create a positive attitude and behavioural intentions. People want to know if the persona behind the brand can be trusted and have expertise in the subject discussion. Furthermore, helping users to

feel important with product offerings, stories, and personas that resonates with them. People want to be associated with product offerings, and activities that help them feel good about themselves and their SNMPs are a good place to demonstrate that to family, friends and work colleagues. Therefore, they are most likely to like, share, comment on a message that can make them look professional, smart, adventures, and successful and such like. Figure 15 symbolises these recommendations.

The implications that emerged from this research will be beneficial to both large and small-medium sized brands who either seek to bolster their existing SMM or want to start from scratch. Understanding these concepts, insights, and experiences shared by the SMMEs can help them to develop effective SNMP message and broaden their knowledge of the subject, which also means better prepared for the challenges and opportunities of SMM.
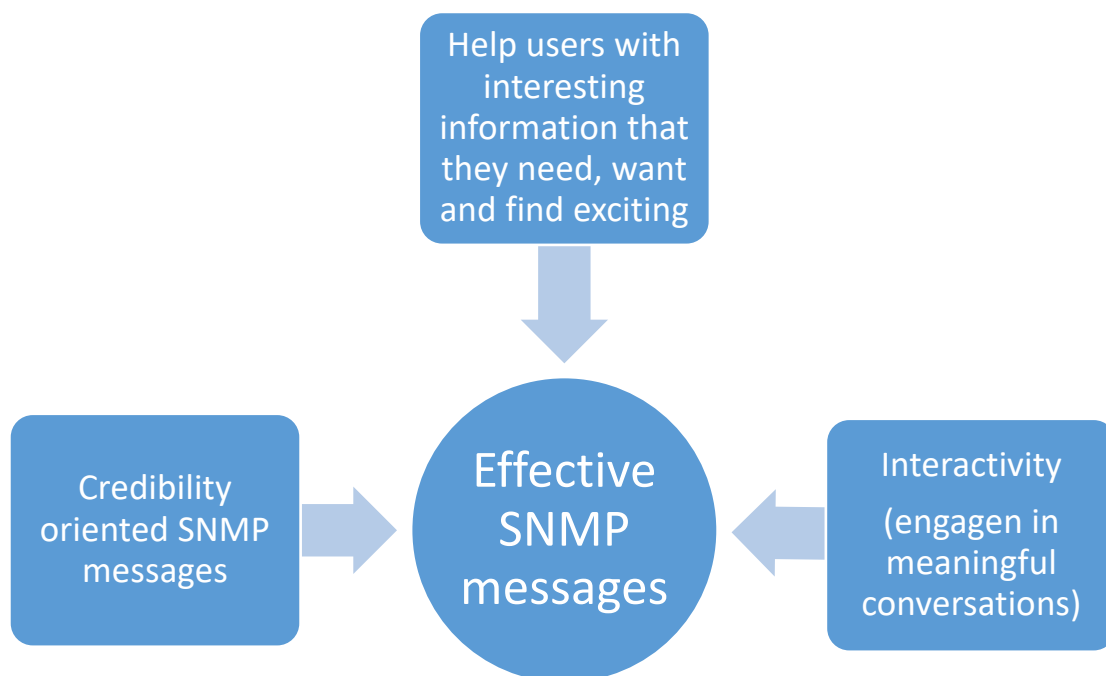
Figure 15. Thematic Network - Effective SNMP Messages

7.4 Research Limitations and Future Directions

In the first phase, this research followed a comprehensive qualitative study to identify the key themes that are effectively influencing user attitudes and behavioural intentions when exposed to SNMP messages. While this research provides us to obtain a thorough understanding of the topic, it has some limitations. The qualitative nature of the study limits the generalisation of the results. Furthermore, the purposive sampling technique used in this project is not representative of all SMMEs. Also, the SMMEs focused on consumers when analysing the effectiveness of SNMP messages thus as an avenue for further research, the perspectives of other stakeholders could be considered when conducting a similar study. Likewise, research could also empirically test against different companies and product industries through large-scale surveys with online users in different international markets. Another limitation of the study relates to the setting of the study wherein the study was conducted particularly in the UK setting, and this has placed restrictions on the generalisation of the outcomes to other counties. Therefore, future research should also work to involve data from different countries to test if SNMP users from different countries would respond to similar types of SMM message factors and strategies. Besides, this study focused mainly on SMM in the context of business to customer, and therefore future research could similarly study the effects of SMM in the context of business to business to examine whether the identified message factors will have the same impact between brands when communicating amongst one another using SNMPs.

Also, since respondents selected in the quantitative study were between the ages of 16-35, the generalisability might have been reduced as the popularity of SNMP usages amongst people outside of this age category deemed to be increasing, and subsequently, future researches can involve people who are 35 plus years of age. However, growing literature proved the sampling of this study to be amongst the highest Internet and SM

users. Also, future research could also undertake in-depth interviews with the actual users to provide a more in-depth understanding of what are the factors that influence their attitudes and behavioural intentions including what are the needs/drives that steers them to go on using SNMPs, adopting UGT. Finally, since 86% of the survey questionnaire respondents were students this limits its generalisability, so future research could take into consideration a more representative sample of SNMP users.

REFERENCES

Aaker, D. A., and Myers, J. G. (1987) *Advertising Management*. India: Prentice Hall.

Adjei, M., Noble, S. and Noble, C. (2010) 'The influence of C2C communications in online brand communities on customer purchase behaviour', *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 38(5), pp. 634–653.

Agichtein, E. *et al.* (2008) 'Finding high-quality content in social media,' in *Proceedings of the international conference on Web search and web data mining - WSDM '08*. Palo Alto, California, p. 183.

Aikaterini, M., Lanlung, C. and Tang, L. R. (2013) 'Identifying and Responding to Customer Needs on Facebook Fan Pages,' *International Journal of Technology and Human Interaction*, 9(3), pp. 36–52.

Ajzen, I. (1985) 'From Intentions to Actions: A Theory of Planned Behavior', in *Action Control*. Berlin, Heidelberg: Publisher: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, pp. 11–39.

Ajzen, I. (1991) 'The theory of planned behaviour,' *Organisational Behaviour & Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), pp. 179–211.

Ajzen, I. (2001) 'Nature and operation of attitudes,' *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, pp. 27–58.

Ajzen, I. (2005) *Attitudes, personality, and behaviour*. Milton-Keynes, England: Open University Press/McGraw-Hill.

Ajzen, I. and Fishbein, M. (1980) *Understanding attitudes and predicting social behaviour. Englewood Cliffs, N.J. Prentice-Hall.* New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Alexandrov, A., Lilly, B. and Babakus, E. (2013) 'The effects of social- and self-motives on the intentions to share positive and negative word of mouth,' *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 41(5), pp. 531–546.

Algesheimer, R., Dholakia, U. M. and Herrmann, A. (2005) 'The social influence of brand community: Evidence from European car clubs,' *Journal of Marketing*, 69(3), pp. 19–34.

Alves, H., Fernandes, C., and Raposo, M. (2016) 'Social Media Marketing: A Literature Review and Implications', *Psychology and Marketing*, 33(23), pp. 1029–1038.

Anderson, E. W. (1998) 'Customer Satisfaction and Word of Mouth,' *Journal of Service Research*, 1(1), pp. 5–17.

Andrews, J. C., Durvasula, S. and Akhter, S. H. (1990) 'A Framework for Conceptualising and Measuring the Involvement Construct in Advertising Research,' *Journal of Advertising*, 19(4), pp. 27–40.

Annie, J. S. (2012) 'The potential of social media for luxury brand management,' *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 30(7), pp. 687–699.

Appiah, O. (2007) 'The Effectiveness of Typical-User Testimonial Advertisements on Black and White Browsers' Evaluations of Products on Commercial Websites: Do They Really Work?', *Journal of Advertising Research*, 41(1), pp. 14–27.

Arksey, H. and Knight, P. (1999) *Interviewing for Social Scientist*. London: Sage.

Ashley, C. and Tuten, T. (2015) 'Creative Strategies in Social Media Marketing: An Exploratory Study of Branded Social Content and Consumer Engagement,' *Psychology and Marketing*, 32(1), pp. 15–27.

Attride-Stirling, J. (2001) 'Thematic networks: an analytic tool for qualitative research,' *Qualitative Research*, 1(3), pp. 385–405.

Babbie, E. (2005) *The basics of social research*. California: Thomson Wadsworth.

Babbie, E. (2010) *The Practice of Social Research*. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Bacon, D., Sauer, P. and Young, M. (1995) 'Composite Reliability in Structural Equations Modeling,' *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 55(3), pp. 394–406.

Bagozzi, R. P. and Burnkrant, R. E. (1979) 'Attitude organisation and the attitude-behaviour relationship', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 37(9), pp. 13–19.

Balasubramanian, S. K., Karrh, J. A. and Patwardhan, H. (2006) 'Audience response to product placements: An Integrative Framework and Future Research Agenda,' *Advertising, Journal of*, 35(3), pp. 115–141.

Baldwin, C. and Von Hippel, E. (2011) 'Modeling a Paradigm Shift: From Producer Innovation to User and Open Collaborative Innovation.', *Organisation Science*, 22(6), pp. 1399–1417.

Batra, R. and Ahtola, O. T. (1991) 'The Measurement and Role of Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes,' *Marketing Letters*, 2(2), pp. 159–170.

Bauer, A. R., and Greyser, A. S. (1968) *Advertising in America: The Consumer View*. Boston: Harvard University.

Beaulieu, P. R. (2001) 'The Effects of Judgments of New Clients' Integrity upon Risk Judgments, Audit Evidence, and Fees,' *A Journal of Practice & Theory*, 20(2), pp. 85–99.

Beaulieu, P. R., and Rosman, A. J. (2003) 'How does negative source credibility affect commercial lenders' decisions?', *Advances in Accounting Behavioral Research*, 6, pp. 79–94.

Belch, G. E. and Belch, M. A. (1998) *Advertising and Promotion: An Integrated Marketing Communications Perspective*. Boston, MA: Irwin McGraw-Hill.

Van Belle, G. (2002) *Statistical rules of thumb*. New York: John Wiley.

Berg, B. L., and Lune, H. (2004) *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. Boston: Pearson.

Berger, J. and Iyengar, R. (2013) 'Communication Channels and Word of Mouth: How the Medium Shapes the Message,' *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40(3), pp. 567–579.

Bergkvist, L., Hjalmarson, H. and Mägi, A. (2016) 'A new model of how celebrity endorsements work: attitude toward the endorsement as a mediator of celebrity source and endorsement effects,' *International Journal Of Advertising*, 35(2), pp. 171–184.

Berthon, P., Leyland, P. and Colin, C. (2008) 'When Customers create the Ad,' *California Management Review*, 4(50), pp. 6–31.

Bhattacherjee, A. and Sanford, C. (2006) 'Influence processes for information technology acceptance: An elaboration likelihood model,' *MIS Quarterly*, 30(4), pp. 805–825.

Bleier, A. and Eisenbeiss, M. (2015) 'Personalised Online Advertising Effectiveness: The Interplay of What, When, and Where,' *Marketing Science*, 34(5), pp. 669–688.

Bourque, L. B. and Fielder, E. P. (1995) *How to conduct self-administered and mail surveys*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Boyatzis, R. E. (1998) *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Brace, I. (2008) *Questionnaire Design:How to Plan, Structure and Write Survey Material for Effective Market Research*. Philadelphia, PA: Kogan Page.

Brackett, L. K., and Carr, B. N. (2001) 'Cyberspace advertising vs other media: Consumer vs mature student attitudes,' *Journal of Advertising Research*, 41(5), p. 23–32.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) 'Using thematic analysis in psychology.', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), pp. 77–101.

Brodie, R. J. *et al.* (2013) 'Consumer engagement in a virtual brand community: An exploratory analysis,' *Journal of Business Research, January*, 66(1), pp. 105–114.

Brown, T. A. (2006) *Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Applied Research*. New York: Guilford.

Bryman, A. (1984) 'The Debate about Quantitative and Qualitative Research: A Question of Method or Epistemology?', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 35(1), pp. 75–92.

Bryman, A. (2001) *Social Research Methods*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Bryman, A. (2004) *Social research methods*. New York. Oxford University Press.

Bryman, A. (2006) 'Integrating quantitative and qualitative research: how is it done?', *Qualitative Research*, 6(1), pp. 97–113.

Bryman, A. (2016) *Social Research Methods*. London: Oxford University Press.

Bryman, A. and Bell, E. (2003) *Business Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bryman, A. and Bell, E. (2007) *Business research methods,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bryman, A. and Bell, E. (2015) *Business Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Buckingham, A. and Saunders, P. (2004) *The survey methods workbook: From design to analysis*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bucy, E. P. (2004) 'Second generation net news: Interactivity and information accessibility in the online environment.', *The International Journal on Media Management*, 6(1&2), pp. 102–113.

Bulmer, M. (1984) *The Chicago School of Sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Burke, R. R. (2002) 'Technology and the customer interface: what consumers want in the physical and virtual store,' *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 30(4), pp. 411–432.

Burns, N. and Grove, S. (2005) *The Practice of Nursing Research: Conduct, Critique, and Utilisation*. Missouri: Elsevier Saunders.

Burrell, G. and Morgan, G. (1979) *Sociological paradigms and organisational analysis: Elements of the sociology of corporate life*. London: Heinemann.

Bygstad, B. and Munkvold, B. E. (2011) 'In search of mechanisms. Conducting a critical realist data analysis', in *Proceeding of the 32nd International Conference on Information Systems*. Shanghai, ICIS, 2011, Paper 7.

Calder, B. J. (1979) 'When Attitudes Follow Behavior: A Self-Perception/Dissonance Interpretation of Low Involvement,' in *Attitude Research Plays for High Stakes*. Chicago: American Marketing Association.

Campbell, M. C., and Kirmani, A. (2000) 'Consumer's use of persuasion knowledge: The effects of accessibility and cognitive capacity on perceptions of an influence agent,' *Journal of Consumer Research*, 27(1), pp. 69–83.

Carlsnaes, W., Risse, T. and Simmons, B. (2012) *Handbook of International Relations*. California: Sage.

Celsi, R. and Olson, J. (1988) 'The role of involvement in attention and comprehension processes.', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 15(2), pp. 210–224.

Chakrapani, C. (2004) *Statistics in Market Research*. London: Arnold.

Chang, Y.-T., Yu, H. and Lu, H. P. (2015) 'Persuasive messages, popularity cohesion, and message diffusion in social media marketing,' *Journal of Business Research*, 68(4), pp. 777–782.

Chapman, A., Hadfield, M., and Chapman, C. (2016) *Qualitative research in healthcare: An introduction to grounded theory using thematic analysis*. Available at: https://www.rcpe.ac.uk/journal/qualitative-research-healthcare-introduction-grounded-theory-using-thematic-analysis (Accessed: 15 January 2017).

Charney, T. and Greenberg, B. . (2001) 'Uses and gratifications of the Internet,' in *Communication Technology and Society: Audience Adoption and Uses of the New Media*. New Jersey: Hampton.

Chatzidakis, A., Hibbert, S. and Smith, A. (2007) 'Why People Don't Take their Concerns about Fair Trade to the Supermarket: The Role of Neutralisation,' *Journal of Business Ethics*, 74(1), pp. 89–100.

Chau, V. . and Ngai, L. W. L. (2010) 'The youth market for internet banking services: perceptions, attitude, and behaviour,' *Journal of Services Marketing*, 24(1), pp. 42–60.

Cheema, A. and Kaikati, M. A. (2010) 'The effect of need for uniqueness on word of mouth.', *Journal of Marketing Research*, 47(3), pp. 553–563.

Chen, A. *et al.* (2013) 'What drives content creation behaviour on SNSs? A commitment perspective', *Journal of Business Research*, 66, pp. 2529–2535.

Chen, K. J., Kim, J. and Lin, J. S. (2015) 'The effects of affective and cognitive elaborations from Facebook posts on consumer attitude formation,' *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 14(3), pp. 208–218.

Chen, Q., Clifford, S. J. and Wells, W. D. (2002) 'Attitude Toward The Site II: New Information,' *Journal of Advertising Research*, 42(2), pp. 33–45.

Chen, Q. and Wells, W. d (1999) 'Attitude Toward the Site,' *Journal of Advertising Research*, 39(5), pp. 27–38.

Cheng, J. M.-S. *et al.* (2009) 'Consumer attitudes and interactive digital advertising,' *International Journal of Advertising*, 28(3), pp. 501–525.

Cheung, C. M. K., Chiu, P. Y. and Lee, M. K. O. (2011) 'Online social networks: Why do students use Facebook?', *Computers in Human Behavior*, 27(4), pp. 1337–1343.

Cheung, M. Y. *et al.* (2009) 'Credibility of Electronic Word-of-Mouth: Informational and Normative Determinants of Online Consumer Recommendations,' *International Journal*

of Electronic Commerce, 13(4), pp. 9–38.

Chevalier, J. and Mayzlin, D. (2006) 'The Effect of Word of Mouth on Sales: Online Book Reviews,' *Journal of Marketing Research*, 43(3), pp. 345–54.

Chisnall, P. (2001) *Marketing research*. Berkshire: McGraw-Hill.

Chu, S.-C. and Kamal, S. (2008) 'The Effect of Perceived Blogger Credibility and Argument Quality on Message Elaboration and Brand Attitudes,' *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 8(2), pp. 26–37.

Chu, S. C., and Kim, Y. (2011) 'Determinants of consumer engagement in electronic Word-Of-Mouth (eWOM) in social networking sites,' *International Journal of Advertising*, 30(1), pp. 47–75.

Chua, A. Y. K., Goh, D. H. and Lee, C. S. (2012) 'Mobile content contribution and retrieval: An exploratory study using the uses and gratifications paradigm,' *Information Processing & Management*, 48(1), pp. 13–22.

Churchill, G. (1979) 'A paradigm for developing better measures of marketing constructs.', *Journal of Marketing Research (JMR)*, 16, pp. 64–73.

Churchill, G. (1987) *Marketing research. Methodological Foundations.* New York: The Dryden Press.

Churchill, G. A., and Iacobucci, D. (2002) *Marketing research methodological foundations*. Ohio, South Western: Thomson Learning.

Coffey, A., Beverley, H. and Paul, A. (1996) 'Qualitative Data Analysis: Technologies and Representations,' *Sociological Research Online*, 1(1), pp. 1–12.

Cohen, I., Manion, I. and Morrison, K. (2007) *Research methods in education*. Madison Avenue, New York: Routledge.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., and Morrison, K. (2011) *Research Methods in Education*. New York: Routledge.

Collis, J. and Hussey, R. (2009) *Business research*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Collis, J. and Hussey, R. (2014) *Business research : a practical guide for undergraduate & postgraduate students*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Corbin, J. and Strauss, A. (1990) 'Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria', *Qualitative Sociology,* 13(1), pp. 3–21.

Corbin, J. and Strauss, A. (2008) *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Courtois, C. Ug. *et al.* (2009) 'Gratifications and seeding behaviour of online adolescents,' *Journal of computer-mediated communication*, 15(1), pp. 109–137.

Coyle, J. R., and Strahilevitz, M. A. (2013) 'Electronic word of mouth: The effects of incentives on e-referrals by senders and receivers,' *European Journal of Marketing*, 47(7), pp. 1034–1051.

Creswell, J. (1995) *Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. (2002) *Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. (2010) 'Mapping the developing landscape of mixed methods research,' in *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social & Behavioral Research, Tashakkori, A., and Teddlie, C*. California: Sage, pp. 45–68.

Creswell, J. and Plano, Clark, V. (2007) *Designing and Conducting mixed methods research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. and Plano Clark, V. (2011) *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2003) *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2008) 'The Selection of a Research Design,' in *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. California: Sage, pp. 5–11.

Creswell, J. W. (2009) *Business research*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Creswell, J. W. (2014) *Research Design*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W., Fetters, M. D., and Ivankova, N. V (2004) 'Designing a mixed methods study in primary care.', *Annals of family medicine*, 2(1), pp. 7–12.

Cronbach, L. J., and Meehl, P. E. (1955) 'Consumer validity in psychological tests,' *Psychological Bulletin*, 52, pp. 281–302.

Crotty, M. (1998) *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process.* London: Sage.

Dancy, M. H. *et al.* (2010) 'Why Do Faculty Try Research-Based Instructional Strategies?', in, pp. 117–120.

Darker, C. D. *et al.* (2007) 'Are beliefs elicited biased by question order? A theory of planned behaviour belief elicitation study about walking in the UK general population', *British Journal of Health Psychology*, 12(1), pp. 93–110.

Daugherty, T., Eastin, M. S., and Bright, L. (2008) 'Exploring Consumer Motivations for Creating User-Generated Content,' *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 8(2), pp. 16–25.

David, M. and Sutton, C. (2011) *Social research : an introduction*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Davis, F., Bagozzi, R. and Warshaw, P. (1989) 'User acceptance of computer technology: a comparison of two theoretical models.', *Management Science*, 35(8), pp. 982–1002.

Dehghani, M., and Tumer, M. (2015) 'A research on effectiveness of Facebook advertising on enhancing purchase intention of consumers,' *Computers in Human Behavior*, 49, pp. 597–600.

Delgadillo, Y. and Escalas, J. E. (2004) 'Narrative Word-of-Mouth Communication: Exploring Memory and Attitude Effects of Consumer Storytelling,' *Advances in consumer research. Association for Consumer Research*, 31(1), pp. 186–192.

Denzin, N. K. (1989) *The Research Act*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Denzin, N. K. (2006) 'Strategies of multiple triangulation,' in *A. Bryman (Ed.), Mixed methods*. London: Sage.

Denzin, N. K., and Lincoln, Y. S. (1994) *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage.

Denzin, N. K., and Lincoln, Y. S. (2003) *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. London: Sage.

Denzin, N. K., and Lincoln, Y. S. (2011) *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*.

London: Sage.

Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (2000) 'The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research,' in *Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S., Eds., Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 1–32.

Dexter, L. (1970) *Elite and specialised interviewing*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Diddi, A. and La Rose, R. (2006) 'Getting hooked on news: Uses and gratifications and the formulation of news habits among college students in an internet environment,' *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 50(2), pp. 193–210.

Dillman, D. (2007) *Mail and Internet Surveys - The Tailored Design Method*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

DiTunnariello, N. and Farrell, L. (2015) 'Your Life Sucks,'' but I think "'You Deserved It'": Social approval and disapproval of messages on FMyLife.com,' *Computers in Human Behavior*, 44, pp. 220–229.

Downward, P. M. and Mearman, A. (2002) 'Critical realism and econometrics: constructive dialogue with Post Keynesian economics,' *Metroeconomica*, 53(4), pp. 391–415.

Downward, P. and Mearman, A. (2006) 'Retroduction as mixed-methods triangulation in economic research: reorienting economics into social science,' *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 31(1), pp. 77–99.

Draca, M., Sadun, R. and Reenen, V. J. (2007) 'Productivity and ICT : A Review of the Evidence.', in *R. Mansell, C. Avgerou, D. Quah, & R. Silverstone, The Oxford Handbook of Information and Communication Technologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 100–147.

Ducoffe, R. H. (1995) 'How Consumers Assess the Value of Advertising', *Journal of Current Issues & Research*, 17(1), pp. 1–18.

Ducoffe, R. H. (1996) 'Advertising value and advertising on the web,' *Journal of Advertising Research*, 36(5), pp. 21–36.

Dunne, A., Lawlor, M. and Rowley, J. (2010) 'Young people's use of online social

networking sites – A uses and gratifications perspective.', *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 4(1), pp. 46–5.

Eagly, A. H. and Chaiken, S. (1993) 'Psychology of Attitudes,' in *Psychology of Attitudes*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Eagly, A. H., Wood, W. and Chaiken, S. (1978) 'Causal inferences about communicators and their effect on opinion change,' *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 36, pp. 424–435.

East, R., Hammond, K., and Lomax, W. (2008) 'Measuring the impact of positive and negative word of mouth on brand purchase probability.', *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 25(2), pp. 215–224.

Edie, J. M. (1987) *Edmund Husserl's phenomenology: A critical commentary.* Indiana University Press.: Bloomington:

Eighmey, J. (1997) 'Profiling user responses to commercial Web sites,' *Research, Journal of Advertising*, 37(3), pp. 59–67.

Eighmey, J., and McCord, L. (1998) 'Adding value in the information age: Uses and gratifications of sites on the World Wide Web,' *Journal of Business Research*, 41(3), pp. 187–194.

Eisingerich, A. *et al.* (2015) 'Why recommend a brand face-to-face but not on Facebook? How word-of-mouth on online social sites differs from traditional word-of-mouth', *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 25(1), pp. 120–128.

eMarketer (2017) *Here's Why Influencers Are Making Bank - eMarketer, eMarketer*. Available at: https://www.emarketer.com/Article/Heres-Why-Influencers-Making-Bank/1016307 (Accessed: 9 September 2017).

EMarketer (2013) *Advertisers Boost Social Ad Budgets in 2013*. Available at: https://www.emarketer.com/Article/Advertisers-Boost-Social-Ad-Budgets-2013/1009688 (Accessed: 25 August 2017).

EMarketer (2018) *Facebook's 2018 Year in Review And What to Expect for Usage, Advertising, and Privacy in 2019, eMarketer*. Available at: https://www.emarketer.com/content/facebooks-2018-year-in-review (Accessed: 28 January 2019).

Engel, J. F., Blackwell, R. D. and Miniard, P. W. (1995) *Consumer behaviour*. Fort Worth: The Dryden Press.

Erkan, I. and Evans, C. (2016) 'The influence of eWOM in social media on consumers' purchase intentions: An extended approach to information adoption,' *Computers in Human Behavior*, 61, pp. 47–55.

Fabrigar, L. R. and Wegener, D. T. (2012) *Exploratory Factor Analysis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Felix, R., Rauschnabel, P. A. and Hinsch, C. (2017) 'Elements of strategic social media marketing: A holistic framework,' *Journal of Business Research*, 70, pp. 118–126.

Fellows, R. and Liu, A. (2008) *Research method for construction*. West Sussex, UK: Wiley Blackwell.

Filstead, W. J. (1979) *Qualitative Methods: A Needed Perspective in Evaluation Research.* Beverly Hills, California: Sage.

Fishbein, M. and Ajzen, I. (1975) *Measurement techniques*, *Belief, Attitude, Intention, and Behavior, An Introduction to Theory and Research*. Reading: MA Addison-Wesley.

Fleetwood, S. (2001) 'Causal laws, functional relations, and tendencies.', *Review of the Political Economy*, 201–220(13), p. 2.

Flick, U. (2002) *An Introduction to qualitative research*. London: Sage.

Fontana, A. and Frey, J. (1998) 'Interviewing: The Art of Science,' in *N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 47–78.

Fornell, C. and Larcker, D. F. (1981) 'Evaluating Structural Equation Models with Unobservable Variables and Measurement Error,' *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), pp. 39–50.

Fragale, A. and Heath, C. (2004) 'Evolving information credentials: The (mis)attribution of believable facts to credible sources.', *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 30(2), pp. 225–236.

Friestad, M. and Wright, P. (1994) 'The persuasion knowledge model: How people cope with persuasion attempts,' *Journal of Consumer Research*, 21(1), pp. 1–31.

Friestad, M. and Wright, P. (1995) 'Persuasion knowledge: Lay people's and researchers' beliefs about the psychology of advertising,' *Journal of Consumer Research*, 22(1), pp. 62–74.

Fu, J.-R., Ju, P.-H. and Hsu, C.-W. (2015) 'Understanding why consumers engage in electronic word-of-mouth communication: Perspectives from theory of planned behaviour and justice theory,' *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 14(6), pp. 616–630.

Fullwood, C. *et al.* (2017) 'My virtual friend: A qualitative analysis of the attitudes and experiences of Smartphone users: Implications for Smartphone attachment,' *Computers in Human Behavior, October*, 75, pp. 347–355.

Gabzdylova, B., Raffensperger, J. F. and Castka, P. (2009) ''Sustainability in the New Zealand wine industry: drivers, stakeholders, and practices', *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 17(11), 99(17), p. 11.

Gallagher, D., Ting, L., and Palmer, A. (2008) 'A journey into the unknown; taking the fear out of structural equation modelling with AMOS for the first-time user,' *The Marketing Review*, 8(3), pp. 255–275.

Gallaugher, J. and Ransbotham, S. (2010) 'Social media and customer dialogue management at Starbucks,' *MIS Quarterly Executive*, 9(4), pp. 197–212.

Gao, Q. and Feng, C. (2016) 'Branding with social media: User gratifications, usage patterns, and brand message content strategies,' *Computers in Human Behavior*, 63, pp. 868–890.

Gay, L., Mills, G., and Airasian, P. (2008) *Educational research: competencies for analysis and application*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.

Gefen, D., Karahanna, E. and Straub, D. W. (2003) 'Trust and TAM in online shopping: an Integrated model,' *MIS Quarterly*, 27(1), pp. 51–90.

George M. Zinkhan and Fornell, C. (1989) 'A test of the Learning Hierarchy in High- and Low-Involvement Situations,' *Advances in Consumer Research*, 16, pp. 152–159.

Gerbing, D. W. and Anderson, J. C. (1988) 'An Updated Paradigm for Scale Development Incorporating Unidimensionality and its Assessment,' *Journal of Marketing Research*, 25(2), pp. 186–192.

Gilly, M. . *et al.* (1998) 'A dyadic study of interpersonal information search,' *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 26(2), pp. 83–100.

Glaser, B. . and Strauss, A. (1967) *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research.* Chicago: Aldine.

Godey, B. *et al.* (2016) 'Social media marketing efforts of luxury brands: Influence on brand equity and consumer behaviour,' *Journal of Business Research*, 69(12), pp. 5833–5841.

Gong, W., Stump, R. . and Li, Z. (2012) 'Global use and access of social networking websites: a national culture perspective,' *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 8(1), pp. 37 – 55.

Goodrich, K. (2011) 'Anarchy of effects? Exploring attention to online advertising and multiple outcomes', *Psychology & Marketing*, 28(4), pp. 417–440.

Gotlieb, J. B., Schlacter, J. L. and St. Louis, R. D. (1992) 'Consumer decision making: A model of the effects of involvement, source credibility, and location on the size of the price difference required to induce consumers to change suppliers', *Psychology and Marketing*, 9(3), pp. 191– 208.

Green, M. H., Davies, P., and Ng, I. C. (2017) 'Two strands of servitisation: A thematic analysis of traditional and customer co-created servitisation and future research directions,' *International Journal of Production Economics, October 2017*, 192, pp. 40–53.

Green, P. ., Tull, D. . and Albaum, G. (1998) *Research for Marketing Decisions*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Greenwald, A. G., and Leavitt, C. (1984) 'Audience Involvement in Advertising: Four Levels,' *Journal of Consumer Research*, 11(1), pp. 581–592.

Grewal, D., Monroe, K. B. and Krishnan, R. (1998) 'The effects of price-comparison advertising on buyers' perceptions of acquisition value, transaction value, and behavioural intentions,' *Journal of Marketing*, 62(2), pp. 46–59.

Grix, J. (2004) *The Foundations of Research*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gruner, R. ., Homburg, C. and Lukas, B. (2014) 'Firm-hosted online brand communities

and new product success,' *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 42(9), pp. 29–48.

Guba, E. . and Lincoln, Y. (2005) 'Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences,' in *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 191 – 215.

Guba, E. G. ed (1990) *The paradigm dialogue*. London: Sage.

Guba, E. G., and Lincoln, Y. S. (1994) *Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.

Guba, E. G., and Lincoln, Y. S. (1998) 'Competing paradigms in qualitative research,' in *The landscape of qualitative research: Theories and issues*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 195–220.

Gunawan, D. D., and Huarng, K.-H. (2015) 'Viral effects of social network and media on consumers' purchase intention.', *Journal of Business Research.*, 68(11), pp. 2237–2241.

Habibi, M., Laroche, M. and Richard, M.-O. (2014) 'The roles of brand community and community engagement in building brand trust on social media,' *Computers in Human Behavior*, 37, pp. 152–161.

Haddock, G. and Zanna, M. P. (1999) 'Cognition, affect, and the prediction of social attitudes,' *European Review of Social Psychology*, 10(1), pp. 75–99.

Hair, J. F. *et al.* (2010) *Multivariate data analysis, Upper Saddle River*. New Jersey: Pearson Education.

Haley, R. I., Staffaroni, J. and Fox, A. (1994) 'The missing measures of copy testing,' *Journal of Advertising Research*, 34(3), pp. 46–56.

Halfpenny, P. (1987) 'Laws, causality, and statistics: positivism, interpretivism, and realism,' *Sociological Theory*, 5, pp. 190–217.

Hamari, J. (2015) 'Why do people buy virtual goods? Attitude toward virtual good purchases versus game enjoyment', *International Journal of Information Management*, 35, pp. 299–308.

Hanjun, K. (2000) *Internet uses & gratifications: understanding motivations for using the Internet. Annual Meeting of the Associate for Education in Journalism & Mass*

Communication, Washington, USA.

Haq, Z. U. (2009) 'E-mail advertising: a study of consumer attitude toward e-mail advertising among Indian users,' *Journal of Retail & Leisure Property*, 8(3), pp. 207–223.

Hargittai, E. and Hsieh, Y.-L. P. (2010) 'Predictors and consequences of differentiated practices on social network sites. Information', *Communication, & Society*, 13(4), pp. 515–536.

Haridakis, P. and Hanson, G. (2009) 'Social interaction and co-viewing with you-tube: Blending mass communication reception and social connection,' *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 53(2), pp. 317–335.

Harmon, R. R., and Coney, K. A. (1982) 'The Persuasive Effects of Source Credibility in Buy and Lease Situations,' *Journal of Marketing Research*, 19(2), pp. 255–260.

Harrison-Walker, L. (2001) 'The measurement of word-of-mouth communication and investigation of service quality and customer commitment as potential antecedents,' *Journal of Service Research*, 4(1), pp. 60–75.

Hausman, A. V and Siekpe, J. S. (2009) 'The effect of web interface features on consumer online purchase intentions.', *Journal of Business Research*, 62(1), pp. 5–13.

Healy, M. and Perry, C. (2000) 'Comprehensive criteria to judge validity and reliability of qualitative research within the realism paradigm,' *Qualitative Market Research – An International Journal*, 3(3), pp. 118–126.

Henderson, K. A. (2011) 'Post-Positivism and the Pragmatics of Leisure Research,' *Leisure Sciences*, 33(4), pp. 341–346.

Hennig-Thurau, T. *et al.* (2004) 'Electronic word-of-mouth via consumer-opinion platforms: what motivates consumers to articulate themselves on the Internet?', *Marketing, Journal of Interactive*, 18(1), pp. 38–52.

Hennig-Thurau, T. *et al.* (2010) 'The impact of new media on customer relationships.', *Journal of Service Research*, 13(3), pp. 311–330.

Hennig-Thurau, T., Wiertz, C. and Feldhaus, F. (2015) 'Does Twitter matter? The impact of microblogging word of mouth on consumers' adoption of new movies', *Journal of the*

Academy of Marketing Science, 43(3), pp. 375–394.

Hernández, B., Jiménez, J. and M. Martín, J. (2010) 'Customer behaviour in electronic commerce: The moderating effect of e-purchasing experience,' *Journal of Business Research*, 63, pp. 964–971.

Higie, R. A., Feick, L. F. and Price, L. L. (1987) 'Types and amount of word-of-mouth communications about retailers.', *Journal of Retailing*, 63(3), pp. 260–278.

Hinshaw, A. S. (1996) 'Research traditions: A decade of progress,' *Journal of professional nursing*, 12(2), p. 68.

Ho, J. Y. . and Dempsey, M. (2010) 'Viral marketing: Motivations to forward online content,' *Journal of Business Research,* 63(9), pp. 1000–1006.

Hoffman, D. L. and Fodor, M. (2010) 'Can you measure the ROI of your social media marketing?', *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 52, pp. 41–49.

Holloway, I. and Wheeler, S. (1996) *Qualitative research for nurses*. New Jersey: Blackwell Science.

Houston, M. J., and Rothschild, M. L. (1977) *A Paradigm for Research on Consumer Involvement," unpublished working paper*. Graduate School of Business, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Howell, K. (2013) *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Methodology*. London: Sage.

Hsu, C. L., and Lu, H. P. (2004) 'Why do people play online games? An extended TAM with social influences and flow experience.', *Information & Management*, 41(7), pp. 853–868.

Huang, M. *et al.* (2011) 'Making your online voice loud: The critical role of WOM information.', *European Journal of Marketing*, 45(7/8), pp. 1277–1297.

Huber, G. P., and Power, D. J. (1985) 'Retrospective reports of strategic-level managers: Guidelines for increasing their accuracy,' *Strategic Management Journal*, 6(2), pp. 171–180.

Hudson, L. A., and Ozanne, J. L. (1998) 'Alternative ways of seeking knowledge in consumer research,' *Journal of Consumer Research*, 14(4), pp. 508–521.

Hughes, J. A., and Sharrock, W. W. (1997) *The Philosophy of Social Research*. London: Routledge.

Hughes, M. (2005) *Buzz marketing*. New York: Penguin.

Ibrahim, N. F., Wang, X. and Bourne, H. (2017) 'Exploring the effect of user engagement in online brand communities: Evidence from Twitter,' *Computers in Human Behavior*. Elsevier Ltd, 72, pp. 321–338.

Isaac, S. and Michael, W. B. (1995) *Handbook in research and evaluation*. San Diego, CA: Educational and Industrial Testing Services.

Ivankova, N. and Kawamura, Y. (2010) 'Emerging trends in the utilisation of integration designs in the social, behavioural and health sciences,' in *A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds.), The Sage handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioural research*. London: Sage, pp. 581–611.

Iyengar, R., Bulte, V. den C. and Valente, T. W. (2011) 'Opinion leadership and social contagion in new product diffusion.', *Marketing Science*, 30(2), pp. 195–212.

Jahn, B. and Kunz, W. (2012) 'How to transform consumers into fans of your brand,' *Journal of Service Management*, 23(3), pp. 344–361.

Jang, H. *et al.* (2008) 'The Influence of On-Line Brand Community Characteristics on Community Commitment and Brand Loyalty,' *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 12(3), pp. 57–80.

Janssens, W. *et al.* (2008) *Marketing research with SPSS*. Harlow: Pearson.

Jarvenpaa, S. . and Todd, P. (1997) 'Consumer Reactions to Electronic Shopping on the World Wide Web,' *Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 1(2), pp. 59–88.

Jasper, M. A. (1994) 'Issues in phenomenology for researchers of nursing,' *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 19(2), pp. 309–314.

Jillian, S. C., Geoffrey, S. N. and Tim, M. (2013) 'Word of mouth: measuring the power of individual messages.', *European Journal of Marketing*, 46(1/2), pp. 237–257.

Johnson, J. S. and Sohi, R. S. (2016) 'Understanding and resolving major contractual breaches in buyer-seller relationships: a grounded theory approach,' *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 44(8), pp. 185–205.

Johnson, R. B., and Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004) 'Mixed Methods Research: A Research Paradigm Whose Time Has Come,' *Educational Researcher*, 33(7), pp. 14–26.

Johnson, R., Onwuegbuzie, A. and Turner, L. (2007) 'Toward a definition of mixed methods research,' *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(2), pp. 112–133.

Johnson, T. J., and Kaye, B. K. (2009) 'In blog we trust? Deciphering credibility of components of the internet among politically interested internet users', *Computers in Human Behavior*, 25(1), pp. 175–182.

Jun, Y. *et al.* (2017) 'Enhancing customer brand experience and loyalty through enterprise microblogs,' *Information Technology & People*, 30(3), pp. 580–601.

Jung, A. R. (2017) 'The influence of perceived ad relevance on social media advertising: An empirical examination of a mediating role of privacy concern,' *Computers in Human Behavior*.

Jung, J. M., Min, K. S., and Kellaris, J. J. (2011) 'How the entertainment value of online ads helps or harms persuasion,' *Psychology & Marketing*, 28(7), pp. 661–681.

Kahle, L. R., and Homer, P. M. (1985) 'Physical Attractiveness of the Celebrity Endorser: A Social Adaptation Perspective,' *Journal of Consumer Research*, 11(4), pp. 954–961.

Kao, D. T. (2013) 'The impacts of goal orientation, terminology effect, and source credibility on communication effectiveness,' *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, October*, 43(10), pp. 2007–2016.

Karahanna, E., Straub, D. and Chervany, N. (1999) 'Information technology adoption across time: a cross-sectional comparison of pre-adoption and post-adoption beliefs.', *MIS Quarterly*, 23(2), pp. 183–213.

Karmarkar, U. R. and Tormala, Z. L. (2010) 'Believe Me, I Have No Idea What I'm Talking About: The Effects of Source Certainty on Consumer Involvement and Persuasion,' *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36(6), pp. 1033–49.

Karson, E., McCloy, S. and Bonner, G. (2006) 'An examination of consumers' attitudes and beliefs towards web site advertising,' *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising*, 28, pp. 77–91.

Katz, E., Blumler, J. G. and Gurevitch, M. (1973) 'Uses and Gratifications Research,'

Public Opinion Quarterly, 37(4), pp. 509–523.

Kaye, B. K., and Johnson, T. J. (2001) 'A web for all reasons: uses & gratifications of Internet resources for political information,' in *Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication Conference*. Washington, USA.

Keats, D. M. (2000) *Interviewing: A practical guide for students and professionals*. Sydney: University of NSW Press.

Kelle, U. and Erzberger, C. (2004) 'Qualitative and Quantitative Methods: Not in Opposition,' in *Uwe Flick, Erich von Kardorff & Ines Steinke (Eds.), A Companion to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage, pp. 172–177.

Keller, E. (2007) 'Unleashing the Power of Word of Mouth: Creating Brand Advocacy to Drive Growth,' *Journal of Advertising Research*, 47(4), pp. 448–52.

Kelloway, E. K. (1998) *Using LISREL for structural equation modelling: A researcher's guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kelly, L., Kerr, G., and Drennan, J. (2010) 'Avoidance of advertising on social networking sites: The teenage perspective,' *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 10(2), pp. 16–27.

Kelman, H. C., and Hovland, C. I. (1953) '"Reinstatement" of the communicator in the delayed measurement of opinion change,' *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 48(3), pp. 327–335.

Keng, S. and Zixing, S. (2003) 'Building customer trust in mobile commerce,' *Communications of the ACM*, 46(4), pp. 91–94.

Kent, R. (1999) *Marketing research: Measurement, method, and application*. London: International Thomson Business Press.

Kervin, J. (1992) *Methods for Business Research*. New York: HarperCollins.

Kim, A. J., and Ko, E. (2012) 'Do social media marketing activities enhance customer equity? An empirical study of luxury fashion brand', *Journal of Business Research*, 65(10), pp. 1480–1486.

Kim, J., Kim, S. and Nam, C. (2016) 'User resistance to acceptance of In-Vehicle Infotainment (IVI) systems,' *Telecommunications Policy*, 40(9), pp. 919–930.

Kim, J. U., Kim, W. J. and Park, S. C. (2010) 'Consumer perceptions on Web advertisements and motivation factors to purchase in the online shopping,' *Computers in Human Behavior2*, 26(5), pp. 1208–1222.

Kim, S., Haley, E. and Koo, G.-Y. (2009) 'Comparison of the Paths From Consumer Involvement Types To Ad Responses Between Corporate Advertising And Product Advertising,' *Journal of Advertising,* 38(3), pp. 67–80.

Kincaid, H. (1996) 'Can Neoclassical Economics Be Defended on Grounds of Explanatory Power?', *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 34(S1), pp. 155–177.

Kinnear, T. C., and Taylor, J. R. (1991) *Marketing research: an applied approach*. New York; London: McGraw-Hill.

Kline, P. (1994) *An easy guide to factor analysis*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Ko, H. J., Cho, C. H. and Roberts, M. S. (2005) 'Internet uses and gratifications – A structural equation model of interactive advertising source,' *Journal of Advertising*, 34(2), pp. 57–70.

Kotler, P. (2000) *Marketing Management*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Koufaris, M., Kambil, A. and LaBarbera, P. A. (2001) 'Consumer behaviour in Web-based commerce: An empirical study,' *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 6(2), pp. 115–138.

Kozinets, R. *et al.* (2010) 'Networked Narratives: UnderstandingWord-of-Mouth Marketing in Online Communities', *Journal of Marketing*, 74(2), pp. 71–89.

Krauss, S. E. (2005) 'Research paradigms and meaning-making: A primer,' *The qualitative report*, 10(4), pp. 758–770.

Krugman, H. E. (1965) 'The Impact of Television Advertising: Learning Without Involvement,' *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 29(3), pp. 349–356.

Kuan-Yu, L. and Hsi-Peng, L. (2011) 'Why people use social networking sites: An empirical study integrating network externalities and motivation theory,' *Computers in Human Behavior*, 27(3), pp. 1152–1161.

Kuhn, T. (1962) *The structure of scientific revolutions.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kumar, V., Choi, J. W. B. and Greene, M. (2017) 'Synergistic effects of social media and traditional marketing on brand sales: capturing the time-varying effects,' *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 33(3), pp. 524–541.

Kunda, Z. (1990) 'The case for motivated reasoning.', *Psychological Bulletin*, 108(3), pp. 480–498.

Kvale, S. (1996) *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Laczniak, Russell N., Muehling, D. D. and Grossbart, S. (1989) 'Manipulating Message Involvement in Advertising Research', *Journal of Advertising*, 18(2), pp. 28–38.

Laczniak, R. N. and Muehling, D. D. (1993) 'Toward a better understanding of the role of advertising message involvement in ad processing,' *Psychology & Marketing*, 10(4), pp. 301–319.

Lafferty, Barbara A Goldsmith, R. E. and Newell, S. J. (2002) 'The dual credibility model: The influence of corporate and endorser credibility on attitudes and purchase intentions,' *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 10 Vol.10(3), pp. 1–11.

Lance, C. E., Butts, M. M. and Michels, L. C. (2006) 'The Sources of Four Commonly Reported Cutoff Criteria What Did They Really Say?', *Organisational Research Methods*, 9(2), pp. 202–220.

Lastovicka, J. L. (1983) 'Convergent and discriminant validity of television commercial rating scales,' *Journal of Advertising Research,* 12(2), pp. 14–23.

Lastrucci, C. L. (1963) *The scientific approach: Basic Principles of Scientific Method*. Cambridge, Mass: Schenkman.

Lavidge, R. J. and Steiner, G. A. (1961) 'A Model for Predictive Measurements of Advertising Effectiveness,' *Journal of Marketing*, 25(6), pp. 59–62.

Lavine, H. *et al.* (1998) 'On the Primacy of Affect in the Determination of Attitudes and Behavior: The Moderating Role of Affective-Cognitive Ambivalence,' *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 34(4), pp. 398–421.

Layder, D. (1993) *New Strategies in Social Research*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Lee, C. S. *et al.* (2010) 'Indagator: Investigating perceived gratifications of an application

that blends mobile content sharing with gameplay,' *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 61(6), pp. 1244–1257.

Lee, C. S. and Ma, L. (2012) 'News sharing in social media: The effect of gratifications and prior experience,' *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28, pp. 331–339.

Lee, L. F., Hutton, A. P. and Shu, S. (2015) 'the role of social media in the capital market: Evidence from consumer product recalls,' *Journal of Accounting Research*, 53(2), pp. 367–404.

Lee, S. and Cho, M. (2011) 'Social media use in a mobile broadband environment: Examination of determinants of twitter and facebook use.', *International Journal of Mobile Marketing*, 6(2), pp. 71–87.

Leidner, R. (1993) *Fast food, Fast Talk: Service Work and the Routinisation of Everyday Life*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Lin, C., Salwen, M. B. and Abdulla, R. A. (2005) 'Uses and gratifications of online and offline news: New wine in an old bottle?', *In M. B. Salwen, B. Garrison, & P. D. Driscoll (Eds.), Online news and the public (pp. 221–236).* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Lin, H. . and Wang, Y. (2006) 'Commerce, An examination of the determinants of customer loyalty in mobile Contexts,' *Information & Management*, 43, pp. 271–282.

Lin, H. F. (2007) 'Predicting consumer intentions to shop online: An empirical test of competing theories,' *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications,* 6(4), pp. 433–442.

Lincoln, Y. S. and Guba, E. G. (1985) *Naturalistic inquiry.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Lincoln, Y. S. and Guba, E. G. (2000) 'Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences,' in *N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 163–188.

Linda Jane Coleman *et al.* (2011) 'Walking The Walk: How The Theory Of Reasoned Action Explains Adult And Student Intentions To Go Green', *Journal of Applied Business Research*, 27(3), pp. 107–116.

Liska, A. E. A. (1984) 'Critical examination of the causal structure of the Fishbein/Ajzen

attitude-behaviour model,' *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 47(1), pp. 61–74.

Liu, S. and Patricia, S. (1987) 'Effects of Message Modality and Appeal on Advertising Acceptance,' *Psychology and Marketing,* 3(4), pp. 167–87.

Liu, Y. and Lopez, R. (2016) 'The impact of social media conversations on consumer brand choices,' *Marketing Letters*, 27(1), pp. 1–13.

Liu, Y. and Shrum, L. (2009) 'A dual-process model of interactivity effects,' *Journal of Advertising*, 38(2), pp. 53–68.

Louisa, H. (2017) *Social Media Advertising and eWOM from 2011 to present*, *Explore Taylor & Francis Online*. Available at: http://explore.tandfonline.com/content/bes/ujoa-social-media-virtual-special-issue-full-introduction (Accessed: 12 August 2017).

Lovie, P. (1986) 'Identifying Outliers,' in *New Developments in statistics for Psychology and the Social Sciences*. London: Methuen.

Lu, B., Fan, W. and Zhou, M. (2016) 'Social presence, trust, and social commerce purchase intention: An empirical research.', *Computers in Human Behavior*, 56, pp. 225–237.

Luo, X. (2002) 'Uses and gratifications theory and e-consumer behaviours: A Structural Equation Modeling study,' *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 2(2), pp. 34–41.

Lutz, R. (1981) 'A reconceptualisation of the functional approach to attitudes,' *Research in Marketing*, 5, pp. 165–210.

Mackenzie, N. and Knipe, S. (2006) 'Research dilemmas: Paradigms, methods, and methodology,' *Issues in Educational Research*, 16(2), pp. 193 – 205.

MacKenzie, S. B., and Lutz, R. J. (1989) 'An Empirical Examination of the Structural Antecedents of Attitude toward the Ad in an Advertising Pretesting Context,' *Journal of Marketing*, 53(2), pp. 48–65.

MacLean, L. M., Meyer, M. and Estable, A. (2004) 'Improving accuracy of transcripts in qualitative research,' *Qualitative Health Research*, 14(1), pp. 113–123.

Maddox, K. B. (1998) *Cognitive representations of light- and dark-skinned blacks: Structure, content, and use of the African American stereotype*. University of California, Santa Barbara.

Maio, R. G., and Haddock, G. (2010) *The Psychology of Attitudes and Attitude Change*. London: SAGE.

Malär, L. *et al.* (2011) 'Emotional Brand Attachment and Brand Personality: The Relative Importance of the Actual and the Ideal Self,' *Journal of Marketing*, 75(4), pp. 35–52.

Malhotr, N. K., Birks, F. D. and Wills, P. (2012) *Marketing research : an applied approach*. Harlow, England: Pearson.

Malhotra, N. *et al.* (2004) *Essentials of marketing research: an applied orientation*. Australia: Pearson Education.

Malhotra, N. and Birks, D. (2000) *Marketing research. An applied approach*. Essex: Pearson.

Van Manen, M. (1990) *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy.* London, ON, Canada: Althouse Press.

McCracken, G. (1988) *The Long Interview*. London: Sage.

McCracken, G. (1989) 'Who Is the Celebrity Endorser? Cultural Foundations of the Endorsement Process', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 16(3), pp. 310–321.

Mcevoy, P. and Richards, D. (2006) 'A critical realist rationale for using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods,' *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 11(1), pp. 66–78.

McEvoy, P. and Richards, D. (2003) 'Critical realism: a way forward for evaluation research in nursing?', *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 43(4), pp. 411–420.

McKee, R. (2003) 'Storytelling that moves people: A conversation with screenwriting coach, Robert McKee', *Harvard Business Review*, 81(6), pp. 51–55.

McQuail, D. (1983) *Mass Communication Theory*. London: Sage.

Mehta, A. (2000) 'Advertising attitudes and advertising effectiveness,' *Journal of Advertising Research*, 40(3), pp. 67–72.

Merriam, S. (1998) *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. CA: Jossey-Bass.

Metzger, M. . *et al.* (2003) 'Credibility for the 21st century: Integrating perspectives on

source, message, and media credibility in the contemporary media environment', *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 27(1), pp. 293–335.

Meuser, M. and Nagel, U. (2009) 'The Expert Interview and Changes in Knowledge Production,' in *Interviewing Experts*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 17–42.

Michaelidou, N., Siamagka, N. and Christodoulides, G. (2011) 'Usage, barriers, and measurement of social media marketing: An exploratory investigation of small and medium B2B brands', *Industrial Marketing Management*, 40(7), p. 1153–1159.

Miller, D. (1991) *Handbook of research design and social measurement. 5th edn.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Mingers, J. (2001) 'Combining IS Research Methods: Towards a Pluralist Methodology,' *Information Systems Research*, 12(3), pp. 240–259.

Mingers, J. (2003) *The Place of Statistical Modelling in Management Science: Critical Realism and Multimethodology.* Canterbury Business School, Canterbury. Working Paper Series No.

Mingers, J. (2004) 'Realising information systems: critical realism as an underpinning philosophy for information systems,' *Information and Organisation*, 14, pp. 87–103.

Moghaddam, A. Z., Mosakhani, M., and Aalabeiki, M. (2013) 'A study on relationships between critical success factors of knowledge management and competitive advantage,' *Management Science Letters*, 3(12), pp. 2915–2922.

Mooney, C. Z. and Duval, R. D. (1993) *Bootstrapping: A nonparametric approach to statistical inference.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Moore, D. *et al.* (2009) *The practice of Business Statistics, 2nd edn.* New York: W.H. Freeman and Company.

Morandin, G., Bagozzi, R. . and Bergami, M. (2007) *Motivation to Participate in Brand Communities: Disclosing and Enacting Cognitive Schemes," unpublished working paper*.

Mount, M. and Garcia Martinez, M. (2014) 'SM: A tool for open innovation,' *California management review*, 56(4), pp. 124–143.

Mousavi, S., Roper, S. and Keeling, K. A. (2017) 'Interpreting Social Identity in Online Brand Communities: Considering Posters and Lurkers', *Psychology & Marketing*, 34(4),

pp. 376–393.

Mouton, J. (1996) *Understanding social research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Muijs, D. (2004) *Doing quantitive research in education with spss by daniel muijs*. London: Sage.

Muncy, J. A., and Hunt, S. D. (1984) 'Consumer Involvement: 'Definitional Issues and Research Directions,' in *Advances in Consumer Research*. Ann Arbor: Association for Consumer Research.

Muniz, A. M. J. and O' Guinn, T. C. (2001) 'Brand community.', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 27(4), pp. 412–432.

Muntinga, D. G., Moorman, M. and Smit, E. G. (2011) 'Introducing COBRAs: Exploring motivations for brand-related social media use.', *International Journal of Advertising*, 30(1), pp. 13–46.

Murray, K. B. (1991) 'A test of service marketing theory: Consumer information acquisition activities,' *Journal of Marketing*, 55, pp. 10–15.

Myers, K. . and Oetzel, J. (2003) 'Exploring the dimensions of Organisational Assimilation: Creating and Validating a Measure,' *Communication Quarterly*, 51(4), pp. 438–57.

Naylor, R., Lamberton, C. and West, P. (2012) 'Beyond the "Like" Button: The Impact of Mere Virtual Presence on Brand Evaluations and Purchase Intentions in SM Settings', *Journal of Marketing*, 76(6), pp. 105–120.

Neuman, W. (2011) *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

O'Guinn, T. C., Allen, C. T. and Semenik, R. J. (2000) *Advertising / Thomas C. O'Guinn, Chris T. Allen, Richard J. Semenik*. London: International Thomson.

Ohanian, R. (1990) 'Construction and Validation of a Scale to Measure Celebrity's Endorsers' Perceived Expertise, Trustworthiness, and Attractiveness,' *Journal of Advertising*, 19, pp. 39–52.

Ohanian, R. (1991) 'The impact of celebrity spokespersons' perceived image on consumers' intention to purchase,' *Journal of Advertising*, 31(1), pp. 46–54.

Olney, T. J., Holbrook, M. B. and Batra, R. (1991) 'Consumer responses to advertising: The effects of ad content, emotions, and attitude toward the ad on viewing time,' *Journal of Consumer Research*, 17.(4), pp. 440–453.

Olsen, W. and Morgan, J. (2004) *A Critical Epistemology of Analytical Statistics: addressing the Sceptical Realist*. Paper presented to the British Sociological Association.

Oppenheim, A. N. (2005) *Questionnaire Design, Interviewing and Attitude Measurement*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Papacharissi, Z. and Mendelson, A. (2011) 'Toward a new(er) socialability: Uses, gratifications and social capital on Facebook,' in *Media perspectives for the 21st century (pp. 212–230)*. New York: Routledge.

Park, N., Kee, K. F. and Valenzuela, S. (2009) 'Being immersed in social networking environment: Facebook groups, uses and gratifications, and social outcomes.', *CyberPsychology & Behaviour*, 12(6), pp. 729–733.

Pentina, I. and Tarafdar, M. (2014) 'From "information" to "knowing": Exploring the role of social media in contemporary news consumption,' *Computers in Human Behavior*, 35, pp. 211–223.

Perse, E. and Courtright, J. (1993) 'Normative images of communication media: Mass and interpersonal channels in the new media environment,' *Human Communication Research*, 19(4), pp. 485–503.

Perse, E. M., and Dunn, D. G. (1998) 'The utility of home computers: Implications of multimedia and connectivity,' *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 42(4), pp. 435–456.

Petty, R. E., Cacioppo, J. T. and Schumann, D. (1983) 'Central and Peripheral Routes to Advertising Effectiveness: The Moderating Role of Involvement,' *Journal of Consumer Research*, 10(2), pp. 135–146.

Phillips, D. C. (Denis C. and Burbules, N. C. (2000) *Postpositivism and educational research*. USA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Pollay, R. . and Mittal, B. (1993) 'Here's the beef: factors, determinants, and segments in consumer criticism of advertising,' *Journal of Marketing*, 57(3), pp. 99–114.

Popper, K. R. (1963) 'Science as Falsification,' in *Theodore Schick, ed., Readings in the Philosophy of Science*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield , pp. 33–39.

Pornpitakpan, C. (2004) 'The Persuasiveness of Source Credibility：A Critical Review of Five Decades' Evidence.', *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 32(2), pp. 243–281.

Porpora, D. (2001) 'Do realists run regressions?', in *Lopez, J., Potter, G. (eds) After Postmodernism: An Introduction to Critical Realism*. London: The Athlone Press.

Poss, J. (2001) 'Developing a new model for cross-cultural research: synthesising the health belief model and the theory of reasoned action,' *advances in nursing science*, 23(4), pp. 1–15.

Powell, F. (1965) 'Source credibility and behavioural compliance as determinants of attitude change,' *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 2(5), pp. 669–676.

Presser, S. *et al.* (2004) 'Methods for testing and evaluating survey questions,' *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 68(1), pp. 109–130.

Priester, P. and Petty, R. (2003) 'The Influence of Spokesperson Trustworthiness on Message Elaboration, Attitude Strength, and Advertising Effectiveness,' *Journal of consumer psychology*, 13(4), pp. 408–421.

Pym, A. (1993) 'Epistemological Problems in Translation and Its Teaching: A Seminar for Thinking Students.' Calaceit, Spain: Ediciones Caminade, p. 160.

Qiu, L. and Benbasat, I. (2005) 'An investigation into the effects of text-to-speech voice and 3d avatars on the perception of presence and flow of live help in electronic commerce', *ACM Transactions on Computer-Human Interaction*, 12(4), pp. 329–355.

Quan-Haase, A. and Young, A. L. (2010) 'Uses and gratifications of social media: A comparison of Facebook and instant messaging.', *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, 30(5), pp. 350–361.

Quinlan, C. *et al.* (2015) *Business research methods*. Hampshire: Cengage Learning.

Ranganathan, C. and Ganapathy, S. (2002) 'Key dimensions of business-to-consumer Web sites.', *Information & Management*, 39(6), pp. 457–465.

Rapp, A. *et al.* (2013) 'Understanding social media effects across seller, retailer and customer interaction.pdf,' *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 41(5), pp. 547–

566.

Ray, M. L. *et al.* (1973) 'Marketing Communication and the Hierarchy of Effects,' in *New Models for Mass Communication Research*. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Reichardt, C. S., and Cook, T. D. (1979) 'Beyond qualitative versus quantitative methods,' in *T. D. Cook & C. S. Reichardt (Eds.), Qualitative and quantitative methods in evaluation research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 7–32.

Reichelt, J., Sievert, J. and Jacob, F. (2014) 'How credibility affects eWOM reading: the influences of expertise, trustworthiness, and similarity on utilitarian and social functions,' *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 20(1–2), pp. 65–81.

Reichheld, F. F., and Schefter, P. (2000) 'E-Loyalty,' *Harvard Business Review*, 78(4), pp. 105–13.

Reinhard, M., Messner, M. and Sporer, S. L. (2006) 'Explicit persuasive intent and its impact on success at persuasion – The determining roles of attractiveness and likeableness,' *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 16(3), pp. 249–259.

Remenyi, D. *et al.* (1998) *Doing Research in Business and Management: An Introduction to Process and Method.* London: Sage.

Reynolds, N. and Diamantopoulos, A Schlegelmilch, B. (1993) 'Pretesting in questionnaire design: A review of the literature and suggestions for further research,' *Journal of Marketing Research Society*, 35(2), pp. 171–182.

Reza, M. and Samiei, N. J. (2012) 'The effect of electronic word of mouth on brand image and purchase intention: An empirical study in the automobile industry in Iran,' *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 30(4), pp. 460–476.

Richey, M., Ravishankar, M. N. and Coupland, C. (2016) 'Exploring situationally inappropriate social media posts: An impression management perspective,' *Information Technology and People*, 29(3), pp. 597–617.

Richins, M. . and Root-Shaffer, T. (1988) 'The role of involvement and opinion leadership in consumer word-of-mouth: an implicit model made explicit,' *Advances in Consumer Research*, 15(1), pp. 32–36.

Richins, M. L. (1983) 'Negative Word-of-mouth by Dissatisfied Consumers: A Pilot

Study,' *Journal of Marketing*, 47(1), pp. 68–78.

Richins, M. L., and Bloch, P. H. (1986) 'After the news wears off: The temporal context of product involvement,' *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13(2), pp. 280–285.

Ridings, C. M., Gefen, D. and Arinze, B. (2002) 'Some antecedents and effects of trust in virtual communities', *Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, 11(3/4), pp. 271–295.

Risjord, M., Dunbar, S. . and Moloney, M. . (2002) 'A new foundation for methodological triangulation,' *Journal Scholarship, Nursing*, 34(3), pp. 269–275.

Risjord, M., Moloney, M. and Dunbar, S. (2001) 'Methodological triangulation in nursing research,' *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 31(1), pp. 40–59.

Robson, C. (2002) *Real world research*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Rogers, E. (2003) *Diffusion of innovations*. 5th ed. New York: Free Press.

Roth, K. P., and Diamantopoulos, A. (2009) 'Advancing the country image construct,' *Journal of Business Research*, 62(7), pp. 726–740.

Rotzoll, K., Haefner, J. E. and Sandage, C. J. (1989) 'Advertising and the classical liberal world view.', in *R. Hovland & G. Wilcox (Eds.), Advertising in society*. Lincolnwood, IL: NTC Publishing Group.

Rubin, H. & Rubin, I. (2015) *Qualitative Interviewing : The Art of Hearing Data*. London: Sage.

Rubin, A. M. (1983) 'Television uses and gratifications: the interactions of viewing patterns and motivations.', *Journal of Broadcasting*, 27(1), pp. 37–51.

Rubin, A. M., Perse, E. and Barbato, C. (1988) 'Conceptualisation and measurement of interpersonal communication motives,' *Human Communication Research*, 14(4), p. 602–628.

Ruggiero, T. E. (2000) 'Uses and gratifications theory in the 21st century.', *Mass Communication & Society*, 3(1), pp. 3–37.

Ryu, G. and Feick, L. (2007) 'A Penny for Your Thoughts: Referral Reward Programs and Referral Likelihood,' *Journal of Marketing*, 71(1), pp. 84–94.

Saboo, A. R., Kumar, V. and Ramani, G. (2016) 'Evaluating the impact of social media

activities on human brand sales,' *International Journal of Research in Marketing*. Elsevier B.V., 33(3), pp. 524–541.

Sæther, B. (1998) 'Retroduction: an alternative research strategy?', *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 7(4), pp. 245–249.

Sanchez, R. A., and Javed, V. C. A. (2014) 'Students' perceptions of Facebook for academic purposes,' *Computers & Education*, 70, pp. 138–149.

Sapsford, R. (2007) *Survey research*. London: Sage .

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., and Thornhill, A. (2007) *Research Methods for Business Students. 4th Edition,* Edinburgh Gate, Harlow: Financial Times Prentice Hall.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., and Thornhill, A. (2009) *Research methods for business students.* Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Sayer, A. (1992) *Method in social science: A realist approach*. London: Routledge.

Sayer, A. (2000) *Realism and social science*. London: Sage.

Schlosser, A. ., Shavitt, S., and Kanfer, A. (1999) 'Survey of internet users' attitudes toward internet advertising,' *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 13(3), pp. 34–53.

Schultz, D. E., and Peltier, J. J. (2013) 'Social media's slippery slope: challenges, opportunities and future research directions,' *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 7(2), pp. 86–99.

Schutt, R. K. (2006) *Investigating the Social World - The Process and Practice of Research*. Newbury Park, CA: PineForgePress.

Sciiuize, C., Sciiöler, L. and Skiera, B. (2014) 'Not All Fun and Games: Viral Marketing for Utilitarian Products', *Journal of Marketing*, 78(1), pp. 1–19.

Seddon, P. and Sheepers, R. (2012) 'Towards the improved treatment of generalisation of knowledge claims in IS research: drawing general conclusions from samples.', *EJIS*, 21(1), pp. 6–21.

Sedikides, C. and Strube, M. J. (1995) 'The multiply motivated self,' *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 21(12), pp. 1330–1335.

Sekaran, U. (2003) *Research Methods for Business: A Skill-Building Approach*. 4th

Editio. Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons.

Sernovitz, A. (2006) *Word of Mouth Marketing: How Smart Companies Get People Talking*. Chicago: Kaplan Publishing.

Sherif, C. W., Sherif, M. and Nebergall, R. E. (1965) *Attitudes and attitude change: The social judgment-involvement approach*. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders.

Sherif, M. and Hovland, C. I. (1961) *Social Judgment*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Sicilia, M., Ruiz, S. and Munuera, J. (2005) 'Effects of Interactivity in a Web Site: The Moderating Effects of Need for Cognition', *Journal of Advertising*, 34(3), pp. 31–45.

Silverman, D. (2011) *Interpreting qualitative data: A guide to the principles of qualitative research*. London:Sage.

Simons, J., and Carey, K. B. (1988) 'A structural analysis of attitudes toward alcohol and marijuana use,' *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 24(7), pp. 727–35.

Smith, B. G., and Gallicano, T. D. (2015) 'Terms of engagement: Analyzing public engagement with organisations through social media,' *Computers in Human Behavior*, 53, pp. 82–90.

Smith, J. . and Osborn, M. (2007) 'Pain as an assault on the self: An interpretative phenomenological analysis of the psychological impact of chronic back pain.', *Psychology and Health*, 22(5), pp. 517–534.

Smith, J. K. (1983) 'Quantitative Versus Qualitative Research: An Attempt to Clarify the Issue,' *Educational Researcher*, 12(3), pp. 6–13.

Smith, R. E., Jiemiao, C. and Yang, X. (2008) 'The Impact of Advertising Creativity on the Hierarchy-of-Effects,' *Journal of Advertising*, 37(4), pp. 47–61.

Smock, A. D. *et al.* (2011) 'Facebook as a toolkit: A uses and gratification approach to unbundling feature use,' *Computers in Human Behavior*, 27, pp. 2322–2329.

Solomon, M., Bamossy, G. and Askegaard, S. (1999) *Consumer behaviour: a European perspective*. Barcelona, Spain: Prentice Hall, Inc.

Solomon, M. R. *et al.* (2006) *Consumer Behavior: A European perspective*. Harlow:

Prentice Hall.

Solomon, M. R. *et al.* (2016) *Consumer Behavior: A European Perspective*. Edinburgh: Pearson.

Song, J. H., and Zinkhan, G. M. (2008) 'Determinants of Perceived Web Site Interactivity,' *Journal of Marketing*, 72(2), pp. 99–113.

Stafford, T. F., Stafford, M. R. and Schkade, L. L. (2004) 'Determining uses and gratifications for the internet,' *Decision Sciences*, 35(2), pp. 259–288.

Stamm, K. and Dube, R. (1994) 'The Relationship of Attitudinal Components to Trust in Media,' *Communication Research*, 21(1), pp. 105–23.

Steiger, J. (2007) 'Understanding the limitations of global fit assessment in structural equation modelling,' *Personality and Individual Differences*, 42(5), pp. 893–98.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1998) *Basics of Qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Stromer-Galley, J. (2004) 'Interactivity-as-product and interactivity-as-process,' *The Information Society*, 20(5), pp. 391–394.

Subramani, M. and Rajagopalan, B. (2003) 'Knowledge-sharing and influence in online social networks via viral marketing,' *Communications of the ACM*, 46(12), pp. 300–307.

Sun, B. and Morwitz, V. G. (2010) 'Stated intentions and purchase behaviour: A unified model,' *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 27(4), pp. 356–366.

Sun, T. *et al.* (2006) 'Online word-of-mouth (or mouse): An exploration of its antecedents and consequences.', *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 11(4), pp. 1104–1127.

Sussman, S. W., and Siegel, W. S. (2003) 'Informational Influence in Organisations: An Integrated Approach to Knowledge Adoption,' *Information Systems Research*, 14(1), pp. 47–65.

Szmigin, I. and Piacentini, M. (2015) *Consumer behaviour*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tabachnick, B. G., and Fidell, L. S. (2007) *Using multivariate statistics, 5th ed*. Boston,

MA: Allyn & Bacon/Pearson Education.

Tang, C. and Guo, L. (2015) 'Digging for gold with a simple tool: Validating text mining in studying electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) communication.', *Mark Lett*, 26(1), p. 67–80.

Tashakkori, A. and Teddlie, C. (2010) *SAGE Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioural research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Taylor, D., Lewin, J. and Strutton, D. (2011) 'Friends, fans, and followers: Do ads work on social networks? How gender and age shape receptivity', *Journal of Advertising Research*, 51(1), pp. 258–275.

Taylor, S. E. *et al.* (2004) 'Culture and social support: Who seeks it and why?', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87(3), p. 354.

Taylor, S. and Todd, P. A. (1995) 'Understanding Information Technology Usage: A Test of Competing Models,' *Information Systems Research*, 6(2), pp. 144–176.

Thomas, R. J. (1993) 'Interviewing important people in big companies', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 22(1), pp. 80–96.

Thurstone, L. L. (1931) 'The Measurement of Change in Social Attitude,' *Journal of Social Psychology*, 2(2), pp. 230–235.

Till, B. D. and Busler, M. (2000) 'The Match-Up Hypothesis: Physical Attractiveness, Expertise, and the Role of Fit on Brand Attitude, Purchase Intent and Brand Beliefs,' *Journal of Advertising*, 29(3), pp. 1–13.

To, M. L. and Ngai, E. W. T. (2006) 'Predicting the organisational adoption of B2C e-commerce: An empirical study', *Industrial Management and Data Systems*, 106(8), pp. 1133–1147.

Tormala, Z. L., Briñol, P. and Petty, R. E. (2006) 'When credibility attacks: The reverse impact of source credibility on persuasion,' *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 42(5), pp. 684–691.

Tormala, Z. L., Briñol, P. and Petty, R. E. (2007) 'Multiple Roles for Source Credibility Under High Elaboration: It's all in the Timing,' *Social Cognition*, 25(4), pp. 536–552.

Trafimow, D. and Finlay, K. A. (1996) 'The Importance of Subjective Norms for a

Minority of People: between Subjects and within-Subjects Analyses,' *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 22(8), pp. 820–828.

Travers, M. (2001) *Qualitative research through case studies*. London: Sage.

Tribe, J. (2001) 'Research paradigms and the tourism curriculum,' *Travel, Journal of Research*, 39(4), pp. 442–448.

Tsai, W.-H. S., and Men, L. R. (2013) 'Motivations and Antecedents of Consumer Engagement With Brand Pages on Social Networking Sites,' *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 13(2), pp. 76–87.

Tsang, M. M., Ho, S. C. and Liang, T. P. (2004) 'Consumer attitude toward mobile advertising: An empirical study,' *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 8(3), pp. 65–78.

Tsoukas, H. (1989) 'The Validity of Idiographic Research Explanations,' *The Academy of Management Review*. Academy of Management, 14(4), pp. 551–561.

UKONS (2018) *Office for National Statistics (ONS) Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Hierarchy*. Available at: https://onsdigital.github.io/dp-classification-tools/standard-occupational-classification/ONS_SOC_hierarchy_view.html (Accessed: 15 August 2018).

UNESCO (2011) *The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)*. Available at: http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-isced-2011-en.pdf (Accessed: 15 August 2018).

Urban, G. L., Sultan, F. and Qualls, W. J. (2000) 'Placing Trust at the Center of Your Internet Strategy,' *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 42(1), pp. 39–48.

Valarie *et al.* (1996) 'The Behavioral Consequences of Service Quality,' *The Journal of Marketing*, 60(2), pp. 31–46.

De Vaus, D. (2002) *Surveys in Social Research*. London: Routledge.

Venkatesh, V., Brown, S. A. and Bala, H. (2013) 'Bridging the Qualitative-Quantitative Divide: Guidelines for Conducting Mixed Methods Research in Information System,' *MIS Quarterly*, 37(1), pp. 21–54.

Verlegh, P. W. J. (2007) 'Home country bias in product evaluation: the complementary roles of economic and socio-psychological motives,' *Journal of International Business Studies*, 38(3), pp. 361–373.

Verma, V., Sharma, D. and Sheth, J. (2016) 'Does relationship marketing matter in online retailing? A meta-analytic approach', *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 44(2), pp. 206–217.

Voss, K. E., Spangenberg, E. R. and Grohmann, B. (2003) 'Measuring the hedonic and utilitarian dimensions of consumer attitude,' *Journal of Marketing Research*, 40(3), pp. 310–320.

De Vries, L., Gensler, S. and Leeflang, P. S. H. (2012) 'Popularity of Brand Posts on Brand Fan Pages: An Investigation of the Effects of Social Media Marketing,' *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 26, pp. 83–91.

Wachtman, E. and Johnson, S. (2009) 'The persuasive power of story. Marketing Management', *Marketing Management*, 18(1), pp. 28–34.

Waite, M. and Hawker, S. (2009) *Oxford Paperback Dictionary and Thesaurus*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Walliman, N. and Baiche, B. (2001) *Your research project : a step-by-step guide for the first-time researcher*. London: Sage.

Wang, A. (2011) 'The contextual relevance effect on financial advertising,' *Journal of Financial Services Marketing*, 16(1), pp. 50–64.

Wang, K.-Y., Ting, I.-H. and Wu, H.-J. (2013) 'Discovering interest groups for marketing in virtual communities: An integrated approach,' *Journal of Business Research, September*, 66(9), pp. 1360–1366.

Wang, S. W., Kao, G. H.-Y. and Ngamsiriudom, W. (2017) 'Consumers' attitude of endorser credibility, brand, and intention with respect to celebrity endorsement of the airline sector,' *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 60, pp. 10–17.

Wang, X. and Yang, Z. (2010) 'The Effect of Brand Credibility on Consumers' Brand Purchase Intention in Emerging Economies: The Moderating Role of Brand Awareness and Brand Image,' *Journal of Global Marketing,* 23(3), pp. 177–188.

Wang, X., Yu, C. and Wei, Y. (2012) 'Social Media Peer Communication and Impacts on Purchase Intentions: A Consumer Socialisation Framework,' *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 26(4), pp. 198–208.

Wang, Y. and Sun, S. (2010) 'Examining the role of beliefs and attitudes in online advertising: A comparison between the USA and Romania', *International Marketing Review*, 27(1), pp. 87–107.

Wang, Y., Yu, Q. and Fesenmaier, D. R. (2002) 'Defining the virtual tourist community: Implications for tourism marketing,' *Tourism Management*, 23(4), pp. 407–417.

Wang, Z. and Tchernev, J. M. (2012) 'The myth of media multitasking: Reciprocal dynamics of media multitasking, personal needs, and gratifications.', *Journal of Communication,* 62(3), pp. 493–513.

Warner, L., and DeFleur, M. (1969) 'Attitude as an interactional concept: social constraint and social distance as intervening variables between attitudes and action,' 34(2), pp. 153–69.

Weber, M. (1947) *The theory of social and economic organisation*. New York: The Free Press.

Weng, M. L., and Ding, H. T. (2012) 'E-Shopping: An analysis of the uses and gratifications,' *Modern Applied Science*, 6(5), pp. 48–63.

Weston, R. and Gore, P. A. (2006) 'A Brief Guide to Structural Equation Modeling,' *The Counselling Psychologist*, 34(5), pp. 719–751.

Whiting, A. and Williams, D. (2013) 'Why people use social media: a uses and gratifications approach.', *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 16(4), pp. 362–369.

Wilson, V. (2014) 'Research methods: Sampling",' *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*, 9(2), pp. 45–47.

Wolfinbarger, M. and Gilly, M. C. (2001) 'Shopping online for freedom, control, and fun,' *California Management Review*, 43(2), pp. 34–55.

Wollan, R., Smith, N., and Zhou, C. (2011) 'Everything you need to know to get social media working in your business,' in *The Social Media Management Handbook*. New

Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

Woodside, A. (2010) 'Brand–Consumer Storytelling Theory and Research: Introduction to a Psychology & Marketing Special Issue,' *Psychology & Marketing*, 27(6), pp. 531–540.

Wooldridge, J. M. (2006) *Introductory Econometrics: A Modern Approach*. Mason: Thomson, South-Western.

Worldwide, D. (2008) *Engaging consumers online: the impact of social media on purchasing behaviour*. Available at: https://themarketingguy.files.wordpress.com/2008/12/dei-study-engaging-consumers-online-summary.pdf (Accessed: 5 February 2016).

Wu, J. J., Chen, Y. H. and Chung, Y. S. (2010) 'Trust factors influencing virtual community members: A study of transaction communities,' *Journal of Business Research*, 63(9–10), pp. 1025–1032.

Yeung, H. (1997) 'Critical realism and realist research in human geography: A method or a philosophy in search of a method?', *Progress in Human Geography*, 21(1), pp. 51–74.

Yin, R. K. (2003) *Case study research : design and methods*. London: Sage.

Yoo, C. Y., Kim, K. and Stout, P. A. (2004) 'Assessing the Effects of Animation in Online Banner Advertising,' *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 4(2), pp. 49–60.

Yusuf, M. and Derus, A. (2013) 'Measurement Model of Corporate Zakat Collection in Malaysia: A Test of Diffusion of Innovation Theory.', *Humanomics*, 29(1), pp. 61–74.

Zaichkowsky, J. L. (1985) 'Measuring the involvement construct in marketing.', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 12(3), pp. 341–352.

Zaichkowsky, J. L. (1994) 'The Personal Involvement Inventory: Reduction, Revision, and Application to Advertising', *Journal of Advertising*, 23(4), pp. 59–70.

Zhang, J. and Mao, E. (2016) 'From Online Motivations to Ad Clicks and to Behavioral Intentions: An Empirical Study of Consumer Response to Social Media Advertising,' *Psychology and Marketing*, 33(2), pp. 155–164.

Zhaveri, H. (2013) 'Social networking site for marketing,' in *Proceedings of National*

Conference on New Horizons in IT, pp. 215–218.

Zheng, X. *et al.* (2015) 'Building brand loyalty through user engagement in online brand communities in social networking sites,' *Information Technology & People*, 28(1), pp. 90–106.

Zolkepli, I. A. and Kamarulzaman, Y. (2011) 'Understanding social media adoption: The role of perceived media needs and technology characteristics.', *World Journal of Social Sciences*, 1(1), pp. 188–199.

Zolkepli, I. A. and Kamarulzaman, Y. (2015) 'Social media adoption: The role of media needs and innovation characteristics,' *Computers in Human Behaviour*, 43, pp. 189–209.

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Constructs Correlations (Nomological Validity)

			Estimate				Estimate
Expertise	<-->	Trustworthiness	.656	Entertainment	<-->	Involvement	.390
Expertise	<-->	Informativeness	.245	Entertainment	<-->	WOM	.433
Expertise	<-->	Entertainment	.200	Entertainment	<-->	Purchase Intention	.408
Expertise	<-->	Social Approval	.212	Social Approval	<-->	OBCs	.415
Expertise	<-->	OBCs	.187	Social Approval	<-->	Involvement	.372
Expertise	<-->	Involvement	.260	Social Approval	<-->	WOM	.406
Expertise	<-->	WOM	.205	Social Approval	<-->	Purchase Intention	.335
Expertise	<-->	Purchase Intention	.215	OBCs	<-->	Involvement	.347
Trustworthiness	<-->	Informativeness	.235	OBCs	<-->	WOM	.587
Trustworthiness	<-->	Entertainment	.224	OBCs	<-->	Purchase Intention	.440
Trustworthiness	<-->	Social Approval	.228	Involvement	<-->	WOM	.395
Trustworthiness	<-->	OBCs	.260	Involvement	<-->	Purchase Intention	.381
Trustworthiness	<-->	Involvement	.298	WOM	<-->	Purchase Intention	.591
Trustworthiness	<-->	WOM	.355	Attitude	<-->	Involvement	.681
Trustworthiness	<-->	Purchase Intention	.287	Attitude	<-->	WOM	.426
Informativeness	<-->	Entertainment	.466	Attitude	<-->	Purchase Intention	.416
Informativeness	<-->	Social Approval	.120	Attitude	<-->	Social Approval	.338
Informativeness	<-->	OBCs	.174	Attitude	<-->	OBCs	.318
Informativeness	<-->	Involvement	.401	Entertainment	<-->	Attitude	.505
Informativeness	<-->	WOM	.315	Informativeness	<-->	Attitude	.471
Informativeness	<-->	Purchase Intention	.480	Trustworthiness	<-->	Attitude	.257
Entertainment	<-->	Social Approval	.210	Expertise	<-->	Attitude	.146
Entertainment	<-->	OBCs	.351				

Appendix B. Covariance Estimates (Nomological Validity)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Expertise	<-->	Trustworthiness	1.020	.125	8.183	***	
Expertise	<-->	Informativeness	.278	.079	3.503	***	
Expertise	<-->	Entertainment	.250	.085	2.946	.003	
Expertise	<-->	Social Approval	.330	.105	3.138	.002	
Expertise	<-->	OBCs	.280	.102	2.752	.006	
Expertise	<-->	Involvement	.302	.083	3.643	***	
Expertise	<-->	WOM	.338	.110	3.067	.002	
Expertise	<-->	Purchase Intention	.345	.107	3.236	.001	
Trustworthiness	<-->	Informativeness	.358	.100	3.572	***	
Trustworthiness	<-->	Entertainment	.375	.109	3.447	***	
Trustworthiness	<-->	Social Approval	.474	.134	3.545	***	
Trustworthiness	<-->	OBCs	.521	.131	3.970	***	
Trustworthiness	<-->	Involvement	.465	.107	4.361	***	
Trustworthiness	<-->	WOM	.783	.145	5.395	***	
Trustworthiness	<-->	Purchase Intention	.618	.137	4.500	***	
Informativeness	<-->	Entertainment	.570	.095	6.030	***	
Informativeness	<-->	Social Approval	.183	.099	1.851	.064	
Informativeness	<-->	OBCs	.255	.097	2.618	.009	
Informativeness	<-->	Involvement	.456	.085	5.338	***	
Informativeness	<-->	WOM	.507	.110	4.628	***	
Informativeness	<-->	Purchase Intention	.754	.114	6.600	***	
Entertainment	<-->	Social Approval	.351	.110	3.200	.001	
Entertainment	<-->	OBCs	.567	.114	4.964	***	
Entertainment	<-->	Involvement	.489	.094	5.200	***	
Entertainment	<-->	WOM	.767	.128	5.977	***	
Entertainment	<-->	Purchase Intention	.706	.123	5.754	***	
Social Approval	<-->	OBCs	.833	.143	5.839	***	
Social Approval	<-->	Involvement	.579	.113	5.141	***	

Social Approval	<-->	WOM	.894	.152	5.883	***	
Social Approval	<-->	Purchase Intention	.720	.143	5.045	***	
OBCs	<-->	Involvement	.521	.108	4.830	***	
OBCs	<-->	WOM	1.246	.160	7.800	***	
OBCs	<-->	Purchase Intention	.914	.145	6.310	***	
Involvement	<-->	WOM	.650	.118	5.493	***	
Involvement	<-->	Purchase Intention	.613	.114	5.378	***	
WOM	<-->	Purchase Intention	1.348	.165	8.162	***	
Attitude	<-->	Involvement	.822	.108	7.620	***	
Attitude	<-->	WOM	.729	.120	6.087	***	
Attitude	<-->	Purchase Intention	.695	.116	6.018	***	
Attitude	<-->	Social Approval	.545	.110	4.953	***	
Attitude	<-->	OBCs	.495	.106	4.685	***	
Entertainment	<-->	Attitude	.657	.102	6.428	***	
Informativeness	<-->	Attitude	.555	.089	6.251	***	
Trustworthiness	<-->	Attitude	.415	.104	3.995	***	
Expertise	<-->	Attitude	.176	.079	2.222	.026	

Appendix C. Interview Protocol

Thank you very much for taking part in this research and for making this interview possible.

Before I start asking you my questions, I will read out a brief introduction about me and the procedures of this interview.

My name is Sarhang Majid. I am a marketing PhD student here at Plymouth University.

I am here today because I want to talk to a lot of people with expertise in using SNMPs for marketing purposes. I do this because I want to understand different SNMP message factors and their effects on the user's attitudes and behavioural intentions.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to talk with you today, to hear your experiences and insights with working with SNMPs. This will provide me with valuable information to understand how advertising through SNMPs works. I hope that you also find this interview enjoyable and beneficial for you.

As described on the information sheet, this will take approximately an hour, and I will be recording this interview. This is only because I want this interview to be transcribed as accurately as possible during the data analysis. Please, could you confirm that you are happy to agree to this?

Okay. For the benefit of this recording, time now is 9:30 am and today is Friday 2nd of November 2016. This interview is with (full name), a (job position) at (company name).

If you would like I will be happy to provide you with a copy of the transcript following the interview, and you will have the right to withdraw your information at any time before the data is used. I want to ensure you that the data gathered from this interview will only be used for research purposes, and will be kept strictly confidential.

Before we start, do you have any questions about what I have just said?

Ok. Thank you. I would now like to start asking you some questions about your views and experiences of SNMP advertising.

	Small Talk Questions	Probing Questions	Hypotheses
1	How did your interest in social network and media platforms (SNMPs) begin?		
2	How long have you worked in SNMPs and online advertising?	Why a career in SM?	
3	How long have you been working in the company?		
4	What is a typical day like in your office working as a Social Media Controller at…?		
	Key Questions		
1	How would you try to capture the attention of your online audience?	That is interesting. Can you tell me more?	[1]
2	How effective are the methods you have described in the first question?	Do you think of any other methods?	[1]
3	In your professional opinion, is there a single most effective method in online promotion?	Can you give me an example of what you mean?	[1]
4	What results are you hoping for when you send out a message on SNMP?	What results do you usually experience? How does that work?	[3]
5	What motivates your users to engage with your message content?	Would you like to add anything else?	[2]
6	In your opinion, does peer pressure have an effect on your online message?	What are the possible effects of peer pressure?	[4]

7	What effects does e-WOM have on users?	Are there any other effects?	[5]
8	Why is the credibility of your messages important in your professional opinion?	That's interesting.	[1]
9	In what ways would you ensure that your message is credible?		[1]
10	What are the challenges of SNMPs in your professional opinion?		
11	How in your professional opinion are offline and online SNMP messages delivered differently?		
12	Are there any specific factors that strengthen or weakens the effectiveness of online messages?	Please describe what you mean.	[6]
13	What questions do you think I should have asked you about SMM?		
	Ending Questions		
1	Do you know someone with expertise relevant to this research project where you could refer me to?		
	That's great, thanks ever so much for sharing that with me and talking to me about your experience. That's really all the questions I have for you, do have any questions that you want to ask me?		

Appendix D. Participant Information Sheet

Thank you very much for your time and effort in making this interview possible. Firstly, I would like to explain the aims and objectives of this research. The benefit of this research is to draw academic conclusions about how social network and media platforms (SNMPs) can be used most effectively by business as well as individuals to favourably influence their followers towards their SNMP messages.

The procedure will be either a telephone, Skype or face to face in-depth interview lasting approximately an hour and wherever possible within the working space of the participants. Digital recordings will be made of the interviews to ensure the data collected will be transcribed as accurately as possible. However, during this interview, you are free to request the recorder to be switched off at any time if you wish for specific information not to be recorded.

The data collected from this interview will be strictly confidential and will not be passed to any third party. The outcome of this interview will be used for research purposes only. Also, if desired, you can receive a copy of the transcript following the interview, and you will then have the full right to withdraw your information any time before the data is used.

No form of risk is foreseen.

If you are dissatisfied with the way the research is conducted, please contact the principal investigator in the first instance: Sarhang.majid@plymouth.ac.uk. If you feel the problem has not been resolved, please contact the Faculty of Business Research.

Finally, please also feel free to ask me any questions or concerns you might have relating to this interview before and or during the interview.

Sarhang Majid   **Plymouth Business School**
Marketing PhD student   Cookworthy Building
University of Plymouth   University of Plymouth
Plymouth - Devon   Plymouth- Devon
PL4 8AA   PL4 8AA
The United Kingdom   The United Kingdom
Sarhang.majid@plymouth.ac.uk   FOBresearch@plymouth.ac.uk

UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH
FACULTY OF BUSINESS

Participant Consent Form- interview

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN SOCIAL NETWORK AND MEDIA PLATFORMS
RESEARCH

Name of Principal Investigator:
Sarhang Majid, Business School, Plymouth University

Title of Research:

Message factors that favourably drive consumer's attitudes and behavioural intentions
towards social network and media platform (SNMP).

A brief statement of purpose of work:

This part of the research is looking to gather information from social media marketing
experts (SMMEs) in which way they use social network and media platforms (SNMPs)
to influence message recipients along with their perceptions of social media marketing
(SMM). Voluntary participants will be either interviewed alone or in a group of no more
than 10 other experts to share views in a session lasting one hour.

> I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for this research
> summarising the processes involved.
> The objectives of this research have been explained to me.
> I voluntarily agree to participate in the project.
> I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project and my
> participation.
> I understand I can withdraw without giving reasons at any time up to the data
> analyses.
> The use of data in research, publications, and sharing have been explained to me.
> I understand that my anonymity is guaranteed unless I expressly state otherwise.
> I understand that the Principal Investigator of this work will have attempted, as
> far as possible, to avoid any safety and health risks.
> I, along with the Researcher, agree to sign and date this informed consent form.

Participant:

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   Signature   Date

Researcher:

_____   _____   _____
Name of Researcher   Signature   Date

Registration Form

Full Name:

Job Title:

Company Name:

Age (Please Circle One):   (18-24)   (25-34)   (35-44)   (45-54)   (55-64)   (65 plus)

Education Level:

Gender: Male   Female

Appendix E. Survey Questionnaire

PhD Social Media Marketing Research - Survey Questionnaire

We are investigating users' perceptions of social network and media platform messages and how they influence brand attitudes and behaviour. We would be grateful if you could answer the questions in the survey, which should take you no more than 10 minutes. We believe there are no known risks associated with this research study; however, as with any online-related activity, the risk of a breach is always possible. We will minimize any risk by ensuring that all your answers will be kept strictly confidential, and no individual will be identifiable in the final research. Many thanks for your contribution. Please note: we refer to social network and media platforms as SNMPs (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) and online brand communities as OBCs (e.g. Nike and Apple fan pages) in this survey.

Are you between the ages of 16 to 35?

○   Yes

○   No

Please skip to end of survey if you are not between the ages of 16 to 35

In which country do you currently reside?

○   UK

○   I do not reside in the UK

Please skip to end of survey if you do not currently reside in the UK

How frequently are you on Social Network and Media Platforms (SNMPs: e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) each day?

Never	Once a day	2–5 times a day	6–10 times a day	11–15 times a day	16–20 times a day	More than 20 times a day
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Please skip to end of survey if your answer to the question is Never

How frequently are you participating in online brand communities (OBCs: e.g. when liking/commenting on a brand message on their follower/fan page such as Adidas Facebook Follower/Fan Page) each day?

Never	Once a day	2–5 times a day	6–10 times a day	11–15 times a day	16–20 times a day	More than 20 times a day
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Please skip to end of survey if your answer to the question is Never

To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements?

Social Network and Media Platforms (SNMPs)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
It is important to me that the brand sources that write messages on SNMPs are experts	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
It is important to me that the brand sources that write messages on SNMPs are experienced	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
It is important to me that the brand sources that write messages on SNMPs are knowledgeable	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
It is important to me that the brand sources that write messages on SNMPs are qualified	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
It is important to me that the brand sources that write messages on SNMPs are skilled	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
It is important to me that the brand sources that write messages on SNMPs are dependable	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
It is important to me that the brand sources that write messages on SNMPs are honest	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
It is important to me that the brand sources that write messages on SNMPs are reliable	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
It is important to me that the brand sources that write messages on SNMPs are sincere	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
It is important to me that the brand sources that write messages on SNMPs are trustworthy	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements?

Social Network and Media Platforms (SNMPs)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Most of the sources that write messages on SNMPs are experts	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Most of the sources that write messages on SNMPs are experienced	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Most of the sources that write messages on SNMPs are knowledgeable	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Most of the sources that write messages on SNMPs are qualified	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Most of the sources that write messages on SNMPs are skilled	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Most of the sources that write messages on SNMPs are dependable	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Most of the sources that write messages on SNMPs are honest	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Most of the sources that write messages on SNMPs are reliable	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Most of the sources that write messages on SNMPs are sincere	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Most of the sources that write messages on SNMPs are trustworthy	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements?

Social Network and Media Platforms (SNMPs)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
SNMP messages are valuable sources of product/brand information	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
SNMP messages are convenient sources of product/brand information	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
SNMP messages are good sources of up-to-date product/brand information	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
SNMP messages provide relevant product/brand information	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
SNMP messages provide accurate product/brand information	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
SNMP messages make product/brand information immediately accessible	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
SNMP messages inform me of the latest product/brands available on the market	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

To what extent do you agree/disagree with each of the following statements?

Social Network and Media Platforms (SNMPs)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Most SNMP messages are entertaining	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Most SNMP messages are enjoyable	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Most SNMP messages are pleasing	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Most SNMP messages are fun	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Most SNMP messages are interesting	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

277

To what extent do you agree/disagree with each of the following statements?

Online Brand Communities (OBCs)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
OBCs enable the exchange of information	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
OBCs provide quick inquiry and responses	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
OBCs allow for exchanges between the host and members	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I am motivated to participate in OBC activities because they give me a sense of belonging	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I am motivated to participate in OBC activities because they make me feel emotionally attached	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I am motivated to participate in OBC activities because I am able to support other members	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I am motivated to participate in OBC activities because I am able to reach personal goals	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I am motivated to participate in OBC activities because they make me feel satisfied	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

To what extent do you agree/disagree with each of the following statements?

Social Network and Media Platforms (SNMPs)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Most people who are important to me think that I should post messages frequently on SNMPs	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Most people who have an influence on my behaviour think that I should post messages frequently on SNMPs	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
My friends think that I should post messages frequently on SNMP	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Posting a SNMP message makes me feel important	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Sharing a SNMP message helps me to gain status	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Sharing a SNMP message helps me to look good	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

278

To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements?

Social Network and Media Platforms (SNMPs)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
For me using SNMPs is a good idea	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
For me using SNMP is an intelligent idea	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
For me using SNMP is pleasant	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I like using SNMPs	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I am interested in SNMPs	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I am involved in SNMPs	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I am concerned with SNMPs	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
SNMPs are important to me	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
SNMPs are relevant to me	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
SNMPs are necessary for me	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements?

Social Network and Media Platforms (SNMPs)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I mostly say positive things about product/brand messages on SNMPs	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I mostly use SNMPs to encourage friends and relatives to buy a company's product/brand	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I mostly recommend a product/brand message on SNMPs	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I often become a fan of the company brand pages on SNMPs	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

279

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Social Network and Media Platforms (SNMPs)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am likely to purchase a product/brand using a SNMP in the near future	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I intend to use a SNMP to purchase a product/brand in the near future	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I intend to use a SNMP to seek further information about a product/brand in the near future	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I intend to use a SNMP to purchase a particular product/brand that I have looked at on a relevant SNMP.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Social Network and Media Platforms (SNMPs)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
When I use a SNMP I usually buy something	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I will purchase a product/brand over a SNMP in the near future	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I use SNMPs to purchase a product I have heard about	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Please indicate your gender:

	Male	Female
	○	○

Please indicate your age:

Please indicate your occupation:

- ○ Managers, directors and senior officials

- ○ Professional occupations

- ○ Associate professional and technical occupations

- ○ Administrative and secretarial occupations

- ○ Skilled trades occupations

- ○ Caring, leisure and other service occupations

- ○ Sales and customer service occupations

- ○ Process, Plant and machine operatives

- ○ Elementary occupations

- ○ Student

- ○ Other: Please specify

281

What is the highest level of education you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

○ Upper secondary education

○ Post-secondary non-tertiary education

○ Short-cycle tertiary education

○ Bachelor's degree

○ Master's degree

○ Doctoral degree

○ Other: please specify

End of the survey

Thank you very much for taking the time answering our questionnaires. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding this survey or if you wish to withdraw your information, any time before the data is used.

Thank you in advance

Sarhang Majid

Marketing PhD student
Plymouth University
Room 005 - Mast House – Sutton Harbour
Plymouth - Devon PL4 8AA - United Kingdom
Telephone: int +447555734151
E-Mail: Sarhang.majid@plymouth.ac.uk

Please write your email in the box below for a chance to win one of two £25 Amazon vouchers for completing the survey

Appendix F. Research Approval Letter 1.

**RESEARCH
WITH
PLYMOUTH
UNIVERSITY**

Ref: FREC1516.71
Date: 9 November, 2016

Dear Sarhang,

Ethical Approval Application No: FREC1516.71
Title: Message characteristics that drive consumers purchase intention
through social media.

The Faculty Research Ethics Committee has considered the ethical approval form and is
fully satisfied that the project complies with Plymouth University's ethical standards for
research involving human participants.

Approval is for the duration of the project. However, please resubmit your application to the
committee if the information provided in the form alters or is likely to alter significantly.

We would like to wish you good luck with your research project.

Yours sincerely

(Sent as email attachment)

Mr. Jason Lowther
Deputy Chair
Faculty Research Ethics Committee
Faculty of Business

Appendix G. Research Approval letter 2.

Date: 18 July 2018

Dear Sarhang,

Ethical Approval Application No: FREIC1718.34
Title: Message characteristics that drive consumers purchase intention
**   through social media** *(amendment to FREC1516.71)*

Thank you for your application to the Faculty Research Ethics & Integrity Committee (FREIC) seeking ethical approval for your proposed research.

The committee has considered your revised application and is fully satisfied that the project complies with Plymouth University's ethical standards for research involving human participants.

Approval is for the duration of the project. However, please resubmit your application to the committee if the information provided in the form alters or is likely to alter significantly.

The FREIC members wish you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely
(Sent as email attachment)

Dr James Benhin
Chair
Faculty Research Ethics & Integrity Committee
Faculty of Business

James Benhin, Chair, Faculty Research Ethics & Integrity Committee, Faculty of Business, Cookworthy, University of Plymouth, Drake Circus, Devon PL4 8AA, United Kingdom
T +44(0)1752 585587   **E** FoBResearch@plymouth.ac.uk   **W** www.plymouth.ac.uk