

DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY



**INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR: A FOCUS ON
SAVANNA DRY CIDER CUSTOMERS IN THE DURBAN CENTRAL BUSINESS
DISTRICT IN KWAZULU-NATAL**

By

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ABSTRACT

The popularity of online tools and the advent of social media are critical to modern day business as they assist with the advertising and marketing of products and services. Through social media, consumer behaviour and attitudes towards certain products, companies and organisations are changed based on what other consumers say about those products, services or organisations; hence, social media remains a powerful advertising mechanism (Scholz and Smith, 2019). Organisations that market what they offer through contemporary means and methods like social media increase their competitive advantage over those that use traditional advertising and marketing methods such as billboards, newspapers and magazines. This quantitative research investigated the influence of social media on consumer behaviour focusing on Savanna Dry Cider customers in the Durban Central Business District CBD KwaZulu-Natal.

The study used the simple random sampling method to select 120 participants (60 each) from two different liquor shops, Liberty Liquors and Tops North Beach in the Durban CBD. The study gathered its primary data through self-administered questionnaires. The data was processed and coded using Microsoft Excel spread sheets. Thereafter, it was entered into SPSS 27 software and analysed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The findings of the study include that Facebook was the most popular online platform used by consumers of SDC, especially ones within the age range of 18 to 25 years. The SDC consumers' purchasing behaviour was influenced by reviews and information that other consumers presented online pertaining to product, thus this is an important marketing tool. The SDC's social online platform presence influences the buying decisions of most of its consumers. Evidently, SDC is successfully taking advantage of its social media platform to influence, mostly consumers between 18 to 40 years, to purchase the product. The study concludes that social media influences the behaviour of Savanna Dry Cider consumers in the Durban CBD, KwaZulu-Natal Province. The study further concluded that most people, especially young people between the ages of 18 and 25 years, are swayed to buy or consume Savanna Dry Ciders based on the reviews and comments of other consumers about the product. The findings also concluded that negative reviews of the product deter people from buying it while positive reviews make them want to purchase it more often. The study recommended that Savanna Dry Cider should launch an aggressive social media

campaign to market its brand, as this will ensure that many people know about it and change their perceptions.

Keywords: Communication tools; Consumer behaviour; Savanna Dry Cider; Social media platforms

DECLARATION

I Thobile Shoji hereby declare that this dissertation is solely the result of my work. Sources that have been used and quoted have been acknowledged and referenced accordingly. This study has not been previously submitted at any other institution.

Thobile Shoji

05/03/2023

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family, Mom and Dad thank you for the constant support and always reminding me that I can achieve anything. To my baby sister Sthokozo at my lowest you have been my rock and made me feel and believe that all will be well.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

The advent of technology, combined with the utilisation of information and communication technologies (ICTs) created a virtual environment for people to collaborate, interact and do other businesses, such as shopping online. Technology has led to the development of interactive and communication tools and techniques to create user-generated content that has the potential to influence human behaviour (Abeza, O'Reilly and Reid, 2013). One such technique is social media, which is an online interaction where users can connect, create, share and exchange information and ideas. This technique or platform is now widely used by organisations and businesses for their combined marketing communication strategies. The research explores the influence of social media on the consumer behaviour of Savanna Dry Cider customers in the Durban Central Business District in the KwaZulu-Natal Province. Taking note of the above, this chapter provides the background of the study, outlines the research problem and the aims of the study. The chapter also provides the research objectives and research questions, as well as the rationale or significance of the study.

1.2 Background of the Study

The previous two decades have exposed how the World Wide Web (www) has transformed into an electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), seen an increase in user-driven web technologies like blogs, social networks, chat rooms, consumer-to-consumer emails, consumer product rating emails and media sharing platforms (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). eWOM is defined as any positive or negative information that is shared pertaining to a commodity, business offering, company or organisation online (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004; Ismagilova et al. 2017). Social media has a strong influence in terms of how people use online tools and this can be seen through the emergence and success of Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn and Twitter (Gil de Zúñiga, Jung and Valenzuela, 2012).

Social media platforms provide people with online technologies, tools, opportunities, and a venue to interact at a social level and discuss, share, and exchange ideas, opinions, insights, experiences, perspectives, and thoughts on brands and products on sale, thereby creating new ways how customers take action (Bandara, 2020). The modern customer can induce the way they view and value the business offerings of brands on social media and the organisations do not always have the power to control the narrative (Xia, 2013). Thus, Kaplan

and Haenlein (2010) maintain that using applications like Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, LinkedIn and Facebook has emerged as an important marketing tool that allows businesses to quickly create, share content and engage with their consumers, thereby potentially influencing consumer behaviour through low-cost, short and effective messages.

Online photo sharing can be used as a way of passing messages based on what a particular set of people require in terms of viewing and sharing of images that are often co-ordinated (Oeldorf-Hirsch and Sundar, 2016). Online users that regularly post photos and content tend to be much effective at inducing social media interaction and responding to other people's photos. Thus, these types of interaction may increase the number of discussions about alcohol and drinking habits (Steers et al., 2019).

South Africa (2023) reports that cider beverages are popularly enjoyed in South Africa, with Savanna, Hunters, Strongbow, Redds, Smirnoff, being in the top ten. Since Savanna is a popular brand of cider in South Africa, the people that consume it encompass a diverse group, including legal drinking-age individuals that enjoy alcoholic beverages. Ciders, in South Africa, are a common beverage for a wide array of people like young adults, working professionals, and social drinkers. Thus, the target market for Savanna dry ciders are young, urban, sophisticated and adventurous consumers that have a taste for a premium, dry and refreshing drink (Crouth, 2021). However, the fact that Savanna is a popular cider in South Africa entails that it has a big exposure to so many consumers across different ages, socioeconomic status and geographical location. Therefore, the cider is popular in the KwaZulu Natal Province and South Africa, in general, amongst young, urban and adventurous consumers. Ornico and World Wide Worx report that in 2021, there were 38 million active users of social media in South Africa (Ornico, 2021). However, Galal (2023) reports that the online social media users in South Africa reached 28 million in 2022. These statistics indicate that there is quite a big social media presence in South Africa. The most common social platforms in South Africa are Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn (Galal, 2023). The primary type of social media accounts in South Africa includes accounts of friends, family and acquaintances, and they made up 66% of internet users between the ages of 16 to 64 (Kemp, 2022). Over 95% of online social media users in South Africa used WhatsApp in 2021. In 2022, there were about 30.7 million South African online users on Facebook, most of which ranged within the ages of 25 to 34 (Galal, 2023). These statistics were followed by Instagram users that were about 24 million less than Facebook users in 2022, encompassing users ranging from 18 to 24 years old. The users of LinkedIn

were 9.9 million in 2022, and messaging apps like Messenger and WhatsApp in 2022 had 25.7 million and 9.9 million, respectively (Galal, 2023). YouTube possessed the biggest potential of advertisement in South Africa in 2022 where it reached over 42% of the people in the country. However, Facebook followed at 40.1% and TikTok showed so much growth which is continuing from the 10.7% indicated in 2022 (Kemp, 2022). Nxumalo (2020) reports that the Province of KwaZulu Natal has a population of over 11.5 million, making it the second most populated in South Africa. The total number of people in Durban at the end of 2023 was about 3,228,003 (World Population Review, 2023). This showed an increase of about 0.9%, representing 28,674 people's growth over the previous year. There is a lack of statistics pertaining to social media use neither in Durban nor KZN province. However, basing it off the population statistics, it can be assumed that there exists a large number of social media users in the study area.

1.3 Research Problem

Digital networks are the new and essential element that is used as an advertising tool in business and management in South Africa (Abuhashesh, 2014). The use of E-commerce for organisations has promoted the online interaction of brands and customers via social media (Al Amin, 2020). Reaching customers via social media promotes brand's awareness, which in turn positively influences its sales volume and success. The ban of alcohol in South Africa, due to the COVID-19 crisis, resulted in stricter trading and marketing conditions and therefore affected marketing strategies in the liquor industry (Matzopoulos, Walls, Cook, and London, 2020). On the other hand, social media continued to flourish as a way to quickly share information, necessitating brands like Savanna to be able to keep abreast of the market by understanding, communicating and engaging with consumers on these networks. To date, there has been insufficient information with regards to the influence of social media on customer decisions, behaviours, or outcomes (Gabarron et al., 2017).

There is numerous content that can be accessed from social media. Thus, it is likely that some of the content that can reach the audience of young people may be harmful. Some of the content that young people get exposed to on social media has liquor use and related messages and marketing (Hoffman et al., 2014). Studies have exposed the connection between the use of social media by the youth and high levels of liquor use (Jernigan and Rushman, 2014). A study by Curtis et al. (2018) found that there was so much substance abuse content that is communicated on social media in South Africa among adolescents and

young adults. This group of people was found to have so much liquor related interactions and high levels of intake that was self-reported. The argument is that there is a big chance that the society can be influenced and behaviour acquired because of social learning (Bandura and Walters, 1977) that occurs via social media. The influence may promote the dangerous liquor use by the youth that consume content of that nature.

Even though customers outline token behaviour towards organisations by means of 'liking' them, it may not always entail that they would buy from them in the end (John, Senith and Ramson, 2014). Hence, the personnel that is in charge of carrying out marketing initiatives for an organisation searches for strategic means of accessing customers that show positive interactions and behaviour towards the brand like making buying decisions on social media (Van Meter et al., 2018). There has been minimal research carried out with regards to the impact of social media on consumer behaviour among Savanna Dry drinkers in the Durban Central Business District (CBD). Therefore, conclusions cannot be made pertaining to the question of social media having a wider reach of consumers as compared to traditional advertising to access the online shoppers' group. However, some studies like Room & O'Brien (2021), looked at the relationship between social media platforms and alcohol marketing and how it might affect the general public's health. The study emphasised that alcohol business had increasingly and successfully used social media as a forum for advertising and to promote its products. The study paid more attention to addressing the health issues pertaining to alcohol use. Thus, that was a different angle to the study at hand. Regardless, the study managed to indicate that the use of social media had an immense influence on the consumers of alcoholic beverages. A study by Alhabash, Park, Smith, Hendriks, & Dong (2022) considered the relationship between social media marketing and alcohol consumption. The study considered a comprehensive set of studies over a ten-year period, 2009 to 2019. The study found that social media had a direct relationship with the consumer uptake of alcoholic beverages, with an overwhelming majority of 93.10% of the studies encompassed within the 10-year period. The study was formulated within similar confines with the one at hand. A study by Barry, Bates, Olusanya, Vinal, Martin, Peoples, Jackson, Billinger, Yusuf, Cauley & Montano (2016), investigated whether alcohol businesses limit young people's and adolescents' access to, participation in, and exposure to their social media marketing. The study found that the suggested self-regulation criteria for digital marketing communications on Instagram are being broken by the alcohol industry. Twitter's age-gate effectively prevented direct phone updates, but posting was still open to all users. Fictional profiles, including those of children as young as 13, received daily communications

from the alcohol business and marketing materials on their phones. This finding is not in line with the study at hand but it still shows that there is a strong connection between the use of social media and access to information pertaining to alcohol. Thus, online alcoholic platforms have a strong tool that they can use for the promotion of their product. Thus, the research seeks to explore the manner in which the presence and abundance of popular social media platforms influence the arriving at the choices and behaviour of Savanna Dry Cider (SDC) consumers in the Durban CBD, KwaZulu-Natal province. The study also seeks to respond to the following question: Do the points of view of the people on social media influence the actions by customers to buy from a brand?

1.4 Aim of the Research

The study sought to explore the influence of social media with regards to the way SDC customers behave in the Durban CBD KwaZulu-Natal. The study also sought to recommend strategies that Savanna Brand can use to promote the engagement and interaction of the people on social media with the company so that greater sales can be achieved. Quantitative research methods were used and data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire.

1.5 Research Objectives

The study's objectives were:

To investigate the impact of social media on SDC consumers in the Durban CBD, KwaZulu-Natal;

To determine whether online reviews and comments about the SDC have an impact on consumers' perceptions and purchases in the Durban CBD;

To identify the effects of viral content on consumers' perceptions of SDC; and

To identify the factors that drive customer loyalty (or attraction) to the brand via social media.

1.6 Research Questions

The study's questions were:

Does social media influence SDC consumers in the Durban CBD, KwaZulu-Natal Province?

Do online reviews and comments about SDC have an impact on consumers' perceptions and purchases in the Durban CBD?

Do viral contents affect consumers' perceptions of SDC?

What are the factors that drive customer loyalty (or attraction) to the brand via social media?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The research was very relevant and crucial to SDC, as it would inform the company of how consumers perceive the brand online and how that affects or shapes consumers' buying behaviour. The study is also important in that it will provide recommendations to Savanna brand marketers and the broader alcohol industry with strategies that can assist positively in impacting consumers' perception and loyalty even toward similar alcoholic brands, thereby promoting sales. The study will also add new knowledge to academia given that little research has been done on social media and alcohol. More so, the study is important in that through its findings, scholars, students and academics will be able to identify a research gap for further studies and also use these findings to apply them to other similar contexts.

1.8 Limitations and Delimitations of Study

The geographical location of the study was the Durban CBD and only included over-18-year-old participants who both consume SDC and are social media users. These limitations imply that the results of the research could not be considered as comprehensive in terms of explaining non-Savanna Dry consumers' opinions and purchase behaviour. Furthermore, the Durban CBD was chosen due to its practicality and feasibility. Due to time and financial constraints, the study did not include the whole population of the Durban metropolitan area; therefore, findings cannot be generalised to other locations within the province.

1.9 Structure of Dissertation/Thesis Chapters

The format of the study included:

Chapter One: Introduction: The introduction outlines a brief outlook of the research by indicating its context. The introduction is made up of the research problem, aims and objectives. Chapter 1 is also made up of the research questions and the significance of the study, its limitations and delimitations and general format.

Chapter Two: Literature review: Chapter 2 presented relevant existing secondary data pertaining to the liquor industry, social media's influence on consumer behaviour with particular emphasis on e-Wom, online reviews and the role they play in consumer purchase decisions. In addition, an appropriate theoretical framework was selected and presented in this section.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology: Chapter 3 outlined the methodology that was selected and was capable of guiding the study to bring about satisfactory findings. The chosen methodology was discussed and justified. The chapter was composed of the data collection methods, sampling and analysis. In addition, the ethical considerations were presented and shown how they were observed.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Presentation of Results: Chapter 4 presented and analysed the primary data, against the secondary data and theoretical framework. The Chapter provided a reflection of the outcome of the study and outlined important patterns between social media and consumer behaviour. The analysis was carried out using SPSS and it showed the statistical aspects of the phenomenon under the study.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations: Chapter 5 presented the conclusions derived from the research. The Chapter went on to indicate the recommendations on how social media influences SDC consumers' behaviours and decision-making in the Durban CBD, KwaZulu-Natal South Africa.

1.10 Conclusion

The rapid rise in internet use and the subsequent advent of technology have given rise to the development of tools, platforms and techniques on which people can collaborate, interact and connect virtually. Such platforms or techniques include social media platforms, which provide people with online technologies, tools, opportunities, and a venue to interact at a social level and discuss, share, and exchange ideas, opinions, insights, experiences, perspectives and thoughts on various things. Considering the above, social media has become a strong marketing tool for companies and organisations as well as a platform where consumers share their perceptions and opinions on different brands and products on sale, thereby creating new consumer behaviour patterns. The chapter indicated the context of the study its research problem and aims. In addition, it showed the study objectives and questions, as well as justification for conducting it and its significance. The next chapter outlined the secondary data collected for the research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Communication and trade have been vastly improved by the developments in technology and globalisation. Organisations around the world, both in the public and private sectors, have adopted online sales and marketing, and with the majority of people on different social media platforms, companies now use these platforms as marketing platforms. Online platforms have completely changed the business world, making it an easy, fast and accessible tool to reach consumers and conduct business (Advanced Recovery Systems, 2021). With a wide array of options in products, services, and electronic payment systems, social media has become the hub of business all over the world.

The COVID-19 pandemic led to a rise in social media activity, which then altered the way customers and businesses communicate with each other (Advanced Recovery Systems, 2021). Before the pandemic and lockdowns, consumers used to do their shopping in physical stores, with a small population doing online shopping. However, the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic isolated people, who then turned to social media for communication and comfort, while businesses used it to communicate with consumers and offer services and products. Online shopping, online buying behaviour and internet shopping are now the order of the day (Uys, 2018).

This chapter reviewed and discussed literature related to social media and the impact that it has on customer behaviours and perceptions. The primary focus of the secondary data was to understand customer buying actions and how these behaviours are influenced by social media. Taking note of the above, this chapter discussed various concepts such as social media, consumer behaviour and consumer perceptions, as well as the theoretical framework that was relevant.

2.2 Definition of Key Terms

2.2.1. Social Media

Brief (2012) explain that social media is a computer-based digital innovation responsible for the communication of points of views, intellectual property, imaginations, and knowledge

using a virtual platform and community. Social media includes an online means of communication that allows people an instant, real time of fast form of passing around data that may be personal or involves others with regards to documents, videos, and photos (Chahine and Malhotra, 2018). People can connect, interact, share or receive information from this online system through computers, phones and many other electronic devices.

Taylor (2019) is of the view that the online platform comprises of a wide range of functions, like passing pictures and videos, vlogging, networking, advertising, reviews and more. These tech-enabled activities allow governments and politicians to engage with constituents and voters. Uys (2018) argues that social media was initially conceived for the purpose of interaction and connecting with people's loved ones, but to date it has become an important tool for marketing, education and learning, canvassing political support and buying and selling, among other things.

Chi (2011) maintains that due to the growth of subscriptions of the online platforms, marketing through it was invented. Social media marketing outlines "connections between brands and consumers, while offering a personal channel and currency for user-centred networking and social interaction" (Chi, 2011). Social media is a virtual shopping mall with Facebook's marketplace, Twitter's political hub, WhatsApp and WhatsApp business and LinkedIn as a professional platform (Cluley and Green, 2018). Chi's (2011) definition of social media is more wholesome than those of Taylor (2019) and Uys (2018) as it touches on its fundamentals and expansion of its uses in business and marketing.

Duncan (2013) concurs with Chi (2011) and further describes social media as a platform that has the ability to collect information and influence the promotion of business offerings and commodities. The promotion can be observed through the strategic acquisition of sales from current and potential clients. This study therefore adopted the definitions provided by Duncan (2013) and Chi (2011).

2.2.2. Consumer Behaviour

Consumer behaviour looks at the manner in which individual consumers or more choose, purchase, utilize or provide information about business offerings or commodities that they desire (Qazzafi, 2019). Consumer behaviour is about the mannerisms in which customers use and dispose of goods and services, and this mannerism determines whether there is added value or devaluation of the product (Hoyer, 2017). The use of technology has added

value through social media due to consumer behaviour. In light of the above, Campbell, Ferraro and Sands (2014) observe that consumer behaviour is “much more to do with what people are doing with the technology than the technology itself, for rather than merely retrieving information, users are now creating and consuming it, and hence adding value to the websites that permit them to do so.”

Consumer behaviour informs the way consumers purchase certain goods and products and how they end up using such products; hence, the role of marketers is to understand consumer behaviour as this is critical in creating customer satisfaction (Qazzafi, 2019). The idea behind understanding consumer behaviour is to build a brand that is held in high repute as well as create campaigns that target the right market (Hoyer, 2017). Foxall, Sigurdsson and Gallogly (2020) also define consumer behaviour as the way customers conduct themselves with regards to buying the business offerings or commodities for their use. The consumer behaviour characteristics include problem identification, looking for information, seeking other options, deciding what to buy and analysis of the commodity after acquiring it (Foxall et al., 2020). Similarly, Chaturvedi and Reddy (2019) maintain that it includes deciding what to buy and a wide range of physical processes carried out by customers with regards to assessing, accessing and enjoying or getting rid of the commodity.

The role of social media advertising approach aims at addressing consumer behaviour and build consumer perceptions that aid in the sale of products through various target markets. The consumer behaviour determines which social media platforms, different demographics prefer to use allowing ease in market segmentation and target marketing.

2.2.3. Consumer Perception

Consumer perception, as defined by Cowen and Strunk (2015), includes activities where a person gathers information pertaining to his or her surroundings and translates that in terms of what he or she wants or desires. Taylor (2015) defines this concept as a course of action that involves the gathering of data pertaining to business offerings or commodities and evaluating them to result with a comprehensive answer. Ismail (2017) explains that the modern customer has become more involved in the advertising and promotion processes of most businesses; hence, brand reviews have become a big part of social media marketing in creating customer perception.

Considering the above, Taylor (2015) further maintains that in a situation where a person comes across marketing efforts, through various mediums pertaining to an organization including social media, he or she somehow becomes influenced. This is proven by the usage of influencers, celebrities and socialites in promoting products; for example, the popularization of champagne through rapper endorsements, whereby they had music videos on YouTube and reels on Instagram while celebrating with bottles of champagne in their hands. Thus, it follows that the course of action begins the moment a person comes across or accesses information pertaining to a business offering or commodity and develops a point of view (Pongpaew, Speece and Tiangsoongnern, 2016).

Cowen and Strunk (2015) maintain that the actions, or lack thereof, that an organization carries out have an impact on the point of view of consumers. Therefore, the manner that commodities of a brand are arranged in a shop, the physical and defining elements of an organization's logo, marketing avenues, prices that it offers all impact customer perception. However, consumer perception is no longer solely built by the brand but by the consumers as well (Pongpaew et al., 2016). Considering the above, a definite conclusion that can be made includes that platforms like YouTube, Facebook and Twitter cannot be considered as an amalgamated method of marketing but one that stands alone. Helal, Ozuem and Lancaster (2018) and Berthon et al. (2012) agree with this and indicate that modern customers take an active role in the marketing system of businesses.

2.2.4. Consumer

According to Kothari (2010), a consumer includes a person or a number of people that buy business offerings or commodities from an organization so that they can use them or for reselling purposes. Thus, customers are usually the people that are found at the end of an organization's chain of value. Hajli and Sims (2015) note that while the terms consumer and customer may be used interchangeably, there is a difference. A customer is defined as an individual that purchases the commodity or service that is being sold. A consumer is an individual that uses the commodity or service that is being sold. In essence, regularly, a customer is a consumer, but there are also situations where the customer may not be the consumer (Hajli and Sims, 2015). In this research a consumer was considered as an individual or collection of people that are considered as end users of a commodity. This includes individuals or groups who want to use the product or service and are not acquiring it on behalf of someone or other people.

2.3. Theoretical Framework

Swanson and Chermack (2013) assert that a theoretical framework is a designed structure that is used to hold and assist an empirical study. According to Kharlamova, Kharlamov and Antohina (2020), the theory of reason is generally crucial in decision-making by clients. Taking note of the above definitions, the Consumer or Buyer Decision-making Process was followed in this study for the purpose of discussing how consumers make their decisions when purchasing products or services. Consumers take specific actions only when they expect an equally specific outcome based on products or services, and by their very nature, they have the capability of changing their minds and taking different courses of action as they decide to act until the moment, they complete the action.

2.3.1 Consumer or Buyer Decision-making Process Model

Pesonen (2013) notes that this is adopted by marketers for the purpose of recognizing and following the customer decision-making process from the beginning until the end. It is broken down into five individual stages, which demonstrate how an individual consumer, or a group of consumers arrive at a decision to purchasing a product or service (Pesonen, 2013).

Problem Recognition

The initial phase of the process of decision-making, according to Pesonen (2013), is working out what exactly the consumer needs. This theory which works in relation to the customer decision process, is Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This means that the consumer's needs evolve, and s/he feels as though there is a gap that needs to be addressed so that things return to normal. Problem identification is unquestionably the address of needs and wants which is either brought about by a lack of or influenced by factors such as those of social media.

It is the marketer's role to create their target demographics' needs and wants. Maslow's hierarchy of needs suggests that needs and wants develop due to growth in social stature or social influences (Rosen, 2018). Anticipation of needs is the marketer's role in order to determine what would be an ideal time to advertise; hence, there are numerous organizations that consider social media avenues as one of the most essential means of reaching out to consumers. Social media algorithms are designed to capture the necessary information to determine and anticipate the needs of consumers based on their growth and development

(Razaei and Ismail, 2018). Therefore, in light of this study, this means the problem identified would be either the need to socialize, decompress, rung out of liquor, or just the consumer's desire to have a drink, as evidenced by numerous advertisements that portray this.

Information search

This is the stage when the consumer looks for information on intended product. The process is consistently transforming with regards to previous systems of purchasing and being replaced or supplemented by social media (Pesonen, 2013). Crittenden, Peterson and Albaum (2010) postulate that people that are interested in a product or service seek information about business offerings or commodities on social media, interact with brands and acquire more information from other people. In this stage, essential data is acquired through other people's recommendations and experiences pertaining to business offerings and commodities.

Ismail (2017) argues that in this stage, the consumer is involved in assessing the risk and advantages and disadvantages of making a purchase. Therefore, in awareness of this, marketers in the liquor industry have begun to warn consumers in their advertisements; for example, "do not drink and drive; enjoy responsibly". Consumers usually take so much time in arriving at a concrete purchase decision so that they can make the right one and reduce risk, therefore opening doors for other companies such as Taxify and Uber.

Bernoff and Li (2010) identified a variety of five social behaviours. These include creators, critics, collectors, joiners and spectators. The creators are involved in putting forward, repeating and circulating data, critics analyse and put forward comments to the data, collectors spread the data around, joiners link and point people towards the data and spectators are involved in reading the data (Bernoff and Li, 2010). The most important aspect concerns the consumers that have a positive input towards a business's offerings or commodities on social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, among others, for the purpose of gaining information about it.

The COVID-19 crisis spiked the demand and sales of alcohol as well as the levels of alcohol consumption in South Africa, especially during Alert Level 3, when Corona Cider found immense publicity on social media in the heat of the pandemic (Pollard, Tucker and Green, 2020). Considering the above, social media marketing uses all types of social media

behaviours to create a collective impression of a brand by giving different levels of information from all sectors of social media behaviour.

Evaluation of Alternatives

During this phase people start asking questions such as: is this the appropriate commodity to purchase? Could I possibly require an alternate different product or service? In the circumstance where the responses end up being either: “No, it’s not right” or “Yes, I need a different product”, it entails that phase 2 may start (Pesonen, 2013). It is important to note that the phase 3 to 2 change could occur a number of times preceding the 4th one.

Pesonen (2013) further maintains that once the moment a customer decides a business offering or commodity that meets his/her requirements, he/she proceeds to identify the most suitable offer. The most suitable offer may be characterized by the amount required to be paid, the standards of the business offering and many other elements that are essential to the purchaser. Purchasers get access to a number of reviews and weigh up the different amount for a commodity. Finally, they select the business offering or commodity that meets their wants and requirements. This therefore means that at this stage, the consumer is confronted with several alternatives and is forced to choose the best alternative.

Purchase

Pesonen (2013) observes that, at this stage, the consumer decides to purchase what he/she desires based on his/her knowledge. The purchasing stage entails that a purchaser conducted a full analysis of the details about a business offering and arrives at the most appropriate conclusion, reached the decision with regards to emotional connections/experiences or has been influenced by marketing avenues of a brand or a mixture of various aspects.

There are different types of marketing, but the modern emerging concept is shopper marketing, and it introduces a new angle where brands and consumers connect (Mishra and Ayatham, 2017). In the liquor industry, this could be girls “relaxing” at the club sipping wine or cocktails or viral videos of consumers dancing to “*Amapiano*” with a bottle of SDC in their hands. Shopper marketing can be defined as “the planning and execution of all marketing activities that influence a shopper along and beyond the entire path of purchase, from the

point at which the motivation to shop first emerges through purchase, consumption, repurchase, and recommendation (Shankar et al., 2011)."

Post Purchase satisfaction or dissatisfaction

The phase where the analysis is carried out is important for an organization and its customers. The Questions that are usually presented include whether the business offering or commodity meet the expectations as indicated in its promotion endeavours or if it went above and beyond? According to Bernoff and Li (2010), this is the stage where consumers review and critique the product. Consumers usually believe what other consumers say with regards to a brand as compared to its marketing messages. Consumers pay close attention to the experiences and subjective points of view of other consumers so that they can minimise the risk of buying a commodity and acquire important knowledge before making a purchase; thus, the knowledge of other consumers can be much persuasive and vital as compared to that of the company (Shankar et al., 2011). Therefore, at this stage, the company is looking for good reviews in order to be the best when new customers do informational searches on the product.

Pesonen (2013) observes that a person that is happy with a purchase tends to talk positively about it and serves as its ambassador. Thus, such a customer makes a positive impact on others, in phase 2, and this promotes the possibility of a commodity to be bought again in the future. Similarly, negative feedback, during the phase 2, would affect the purchasing decisions that potential customers would arrive at pertaining to a commodity.

2.4 Global Perspective on how social media has Shaped Consumer Behaviour

The exponential growth in people's access to online advancements and electronic devices like smartphones, has introduced an innovative way of consumer reviews, that is called electronic word of mouth (EWOM) or social media (Marino and Prestti, 2018). Hudson (2020) states that the biggest platform is Facebook and it has approximately three billion people globally, followed by Twitter, which has 750 million users and LinkedIn with 225 million users. Taking note of the above statistics, social media emerged as a tool that ensures that an organisation progresses and take its rightful space in the rigid market.

Millennial consumers have emerged as the biggest group of consumers of business offerings and commodities after moving from traditional ways of marketing towards the use of social media (Mishra and Ayatham, 2017). Holly (2013) maintains that in past years marketers have focused more on “collecting” instead of “connecting with the consumers”, and conversely, the new way of marketing and advertising is more concerned with connecting with the consumers. In other words, marketers focused on having more fans while forgetting a vital element, that includes to strategically interact and bond with social media supporters, one has to induce consumers that remain committed to the brand (Lagrosen and Grundén, 2014).

Lagrosen and Grunden (2014) further note that marketers may not always remember that social media is a valuable marketing tool that possesses a strong impact on people’s buying decisions. Considering the above, Taylor, Strutton and Thompson (2012) noted that “advertisers should consider the symbolic and self-expression properties of their online advertisements and match them to targeted consumers’ self-concepts.” Thus, it is important for the advertising avenues of an organization to possess a strategy that its target market can relate to.

Hudson and Hudson (2013) explain that organisations have a double effect of acquiring or losing customers online. The use of social media platforms has the power of promoting or dismantling the good image or reputation of a business. The emergence of social media introduced a pattern of consumption where consumers have a say towards the business offerings and commodities and impact on the choices that others make notwithstanding the price, age, lifestyle and other characteristics or behavioural patterns (Taylor, 2015). For instance, Jack Daniels and Glenfiddich whiskey are considered expensive brands of alcohol but their different bottles of alcohol with different colour codes add prices to cater for the different customers and income.

The use of the internet ushers a platform where business promoters have a voice and can interact directly with various stakeholders like work colleagues, current and potential customers (Dibb, Stern and Wensley, 2012). Dibb et al. (2012) explain that a brand becomes customised, and the use of the internet ensures that it communicates to its stakeholders through a loose and conversational way. Hamouda (2018) posits that it has been observed that some businesses set up online accounts on social media and use them on their own and not as part of a comprehensive system that enhances the consumer’s experience. Taylor

(2015) indicates that online platforms are not used instead of traditional media but as a means of interacting in a more direct way with consumers, and acquire attention and influence.

Many organisations globally have invested in social media and social networking as a way of promoting their business offerings and commodities (Mishra and Ayatham, 2017). A few examples of such organisations or companies are The Absolut Vodka Company, which runs an online video and at the same utilises its Facebook fan page, Top Bartender, to connect with different bartenders online, and in that way, the company advertises its products. BMW Motors created a Facebook account so that it can promote its 1-series road trip. In addition, BMW Motors created a Facebook account so that its fans can be involved in its Rampenfest. Through its online advertisements, BMW gets the attention of the fans or consumers who will be thrilled by the idea of owning a BMW and experience what others are posting on the Facebook page. Savanna uses the *Siyavana* campaign to advertise its ciders by making it seem easy to connect with people personally because of the drink they are having.

2.5 Influence of social media on Consumer Behaviour

The rapid increase in the popularity of online platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp and Instagram, among others, has created a necessity across industries to make social media their primary advertising instrument (Winfield and Richardson, 2016). Atkin (2012) maintains that the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced people to stay indoors with no physical interactions banned or restricted, created a need for human interaction, which was catered for by social media, leading to an increase in business interactions on these platforms. Digital marketing was promoted and popularised in South Africa and other countries across the world with social media, providing businesses with opportunities to modify their marketing methods and interact with consumers online (Pophiwa, Moroane and Kennie, 2021).

Most companies nowadays have increased their media presence due to the positive influence that online platforms possess in terms of the actions that customers take in comparison to traditional avenues of business promotion (Campbell et al., 2014). Campbell et al. (2014) adds on to point out that online media platforms have created a race in human communication, which has a huge impact on human behaviour. Online platforms have a wide array of information from consumers that brands are encouraged to take advantage of through different strategies, including creating their own pages and accounts (Pophiwa et al., 2021; Winfield and Richardson, 2016).

Research carried by Kaplan and Haelein (2010) to investigate the relationship between age and consumer behaviour established that social media users' behaviour compared to other digital users differed greatly among various groups. The study further established a direct relationship that exists with the use of online platforms and the actions that consumer take, since they prefer blogs, videos and direct communication through brand channels (Kaplan and Haelein, 2010). Evidence from Curran et al. (2011) indicates that about one out of thirteen human beings from across the globe use Facebook. Thus, the online platform is a market that exists and can be taken advantage of by brands. Taking note of the above, it can be clearly stated that online platforms are an important tool that companies, and businesses can use to express information and advertisements about their products and services. It is evident that online platforms serve a big influence in the decision taken by a consumer.

Dibb et al. (2012) notes that the business world today is becoming progressively competitive such that in order for a business to stay relevant in this volatile environment, it has to embrace and encourage the use of social media strategies. To this end, companies have gone to the extent of hiring social media experts and consultants to help them with content and marketing strategies and increase their social media presence (Duncan, 2013). A study conducted by Duncan (2013) revealed that so many people log on to online platforms so that they can find out information about their favourite brands' commodities as well as marketing services. Thus, online platforms influence the positive purchasing actions taken by consumers.

Amine and Smith (2019) observe that consumers use social media to have access to information at their convenience, which helps them to make informed and authentic decisions on what products to buy and also to see what products are on offer whenever they want. In the liquor industry social media exposes consumers to liquor messages that are shared or promoted by peers or other users and this is argued to be an influence towards behaviour for its consumption (Mundt, 2011). Thus, it is common that consumers consult with online platforms, ads, views and opinions of others and trending patterns, so that they get a detailed insight pertaining to business offerings or commodities of a brand before they purchase (Balci and Celtin, 2017).

Balci and Celtin (2017) pointed out that social media has had a strong impact on the actions taken by consumer. It has been observed that it is one of the most important aspects in inducing participatory culture where users of online platforms connect, share and discuss various things with others. The online platforms ensure that like-consumers share

information, monitor updates, and request, as well as analyse all kinds of products and information on the available services of a brand. Online platforms make it possible for anyone to generate content and pass important knowledge to others. Thus, there has been a rise in online communities and an electronic network where people pass around knowledge pertaining to a wide array of brands much effectively and efficiently (Bruwer and Li, 2017). Taking note of the above, Balci and Celtin (2017) observe that the modern customer assesses a product or a business offering by looking at the feedback from people that used and experienced it before making a purchase. This behaviour has become popular because of the growth of ordering goods online. Customers value these opinions and points of view because they provide them with insight into actual perspective pertaining to the commodity or business offering needless of them physically possessing it.

Dibb et al. (2012) conclude that online products are characterised by informativeness and persuasiveness, and hence, they possess a major impact towards purchasing actions made by consumers. The challenges with this are the issues of unauthentic displays of information and most advertisements are built around the fantasy of human interaction with alcohol rather than the actual effects that unfortunately influence alcohol abuse and addiction (Bruwer and Li, 2017). Anderson (2020) notes that compared to corporate communications and mainstream media, social media has been effective as it is perceived by consumers to be more trustworthy, as the information is readily available and its authenticity can be confirmed easily.

This shift in perspective has resulted in consumers minimising the use of the usual mainstream marketing systems, which includes magazines, newspapers and televisions being the main sources guiding their purchasing decisions and behaviour (Anderson, 2020). Although traditional mainstream media are more reliable sources of information with governing boards, consumers are progressively favouring social media, and as such, it is having a major impact on the purchasing behaviour of the consumers. Research conducted by Gvili and Levy (2018) revealed that one of the advantages of using online platforms is that businesses acquire a great customer relationship management channel that enables the improvement of its commodities or business offerings since they interact easily and frequently.

A study on the effects that social media have on the actions of customers conducted by Cluley and Green (2018) revealed that, customers that make use of the platforms become aware of

each other and the messages they communicate and develop some sense of trust. Thus, online platforms possess the capacity of greatly influencing users' intentions to buy. Gummerus et al. (2012) observe that online platform influences the actions of customers through the messaging from celebrities. This entails that celebrity sometimes have the power to direct people towards certain businesses. Organisations that are aware of this make full use of it on a regular basis. Research has shown that young people post a lot of alcohol-related posts on social media, which have been shown to increase drinking behaviours Anderson (2020) and Gummerus et al. (2012) outline that so many studies that have been carried out portray that the youth share liquor related content on social platforms and these have the consequence of promoting its consumption.

A study by Baird and Parasnis (2011) established that a wide array of online platforms promotes the spread of alcohol related messages and these include Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Twitter. People use a wide range of online platforms like online forums and communities, recommendations, ratings, and reviews for the purposes of engaging others (Gummerus et al., 2012). Pesonsen (2013) argues that the connection that exists between social media and customer choices directs the way the promotion of a firm's commodities or business offerings will be done, its attitude and the mind-set of customers towards it. On the same note, Haiji and Sims (2015) postulate that online platforms may sometimes lack the impact towards consumers' choices, but could serve as an intervening factor. For instance, online platforms may influence the attitude that customers may have towards a brand and this may be observed in their purchasing behaviour. A brand that has a good name or reputation attracts and encourages people to purchase from them (Baird and Parasnis, 2011). In addition, the times where someone that interacts with the customers, passes a message or talks about a brand and its business offerings, the customers' choice may be affected (Baird and Parasnis, 2011). Hence, the promotion of a brand using online platforms, that integrates commercial sources, has an impact on the customers attitudes towards it as well as purchasing intentions (Ngai, Moon and Tao, 2012).

The motives that customers outline for using online platforms show their activities. According to Haiji and Sims (2015), customers usually intend to use online platforms mainly for three aspects. These include acquiring knowledge, entertainment and social elements. These aspects can be arranged into two main categories namely rational and emotional motives (Hamouda, 2018). Rational motives include features like the spreading and passing of information, and advocacy, and emotional motives, include elements like social connection

and self-expression (Hamouda, 2018). Online platforms impact other areas of study or careers, like politics and law towards the ushering of justice and democracy (Baird and Parasnis, 2011).

2.6 Online Social Media Platform

According to Chahine and Malhotra (2018), social media includes online platforms that are used as a tool to increase or promote the efficiency and effectiveness of the engagement and interaction of individuals or a large contingent of people. These platforms allow the passing or spreading of knowledge, points of view or it necessary to exchange and share ideas, opinions and criticisms in terms of certain aspects of society. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) explain that social media incorporates “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and the technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allow for the creation and exchange of user-generated content.”

Social media lacks the regulation of publishing or advertising laws; rather, it is an online technology and system used by people and, firms so that they can spread or pass around information and points of view (Hamouda, 2018). Razaei and Ismael (2018) concur with the above and further note it is a collection of different social entities based on Web 2.0 technologies. There are various popular online platforms, namely: Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. Social media platforms hold numerous benefits for marketers and consumers in that they are cheaper and faster in their operations (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Considering the above, Chahine and Malhotra (2018) observe that despite influencing customers' behaviours and perceptions, social media poses a threat to children who are susceptible to pressure and can result in unwarranted issues of alcohol abuse among minors.

The use of online platforms provides a space where people feel a sense of belonging to a society where they are understood, have similarities and differences with others based on beliefs, traditions, points of view, which can influence peer pressure (Harris, 2019). In light of the above, Urumsah (2015) maintains that being able to feel a sense of belonging to a society is important for the mental wellbeing of people. This result in trends and challenges that a host of consumers participate in online due to the fear of missing out: for example, Savanna Dry did *Tshayi Mpembe* challenge where people danced with an SDC bottle in hand while whistling to the beat of the “*Amapiano*” song *Tshayi Mpembe*.

Even though numerous social media specialists have noted that the sense of belonging that comes from being a part of online platforms has a high chance of shrinking, possibly because of not being in a space where there is a physical connection and distance to the society (Laroche et al., 2012). A lifespan of trends and challenges and their frequency thereafter do not allow for feelings of exclusion to build, but rather the fear of missing out builds up (Urumsah, 2015). In the same vein, Hamouda (2018) noted that the impact of online platforms must not be taken for granted as it ensures that it generates or introduces communities that allows people to feel a sense of belonging and be connected or recognized.

2.7 Brand Community

Jenyo and Soyoye (2015) define brand community as a special means of a society that is not constrained by geographical boundaries that is connected based on similar social characteristics pertaining to brand of preference. Brand community is the coming together of consumers of the same product and brand (Helal et al., 2018). The Savanna, *Siyavana* slogan is a good example of a brand creating a community whereby consumers know and understand each other because they drink the same brand of alcohol. Zhao and Chen (2022) further explain that brand communities consist of partner associates and their connections are well recognized through similar facets they share in a brand; thus, the outcome is they also share vital resources. Modern enterprises recognize the importance of online communities that prompt engagement with consumers' appropriate communication with customers that also open up free customer marketing for the brand they are loyal to. (Jenyo and Soyoye, 2015).

It is important to point out that Brand communities rarely promote ease of communication; however, they influence the connections between devoted users or beneficiaries (Pongpaew et al., 2016). In view of this, brand communities possess the chance of future benefit that has the power of connecting customers from different backgrounds and enhance the possibility of conversations that brings about verifiable knowledge pertaining to a brand (Zhao and Chen, 2022). This assertion puts brand power in the hands of the consumers and a customer consensus in dissatisfaction or satisfaction determines whether the brand maintains loyalty or not and whether or not they get favorable reviews or critics (Chahine and Malhotra, 2018).

Moreover, Campbell et al. (2014) establish that customers are some of the most important sources of knowledge that can influence managerial decisions that a business can make. To add on to this, current consumers of a business also serve as an important source of inventive

concepts that have the possibility of influencing a series of actions that could result to commodity or business offering modification (Pongpaew et al., 2016). For instance, Savanna recently introduced Savanna Angry Lemon in response to consumers' needs for more variety.

The notion of brand community has a strong link with the brand; online platforms serve the function of connecting and introducing a space that keeps the current and future consumers together for an enterprise and the bond created between customers and the brand (Cluley and Green, 2018).

2.7.1 Social-media-based brand community

Online platform -based brand communities involve the mix of social media and brand communities (Balci and Cetin, 2017). The concept of online platform-based brand community outlines a broader notion of virtual communities (Baird and Parasnis, 2016). Back in the days, communities used to be created on the Web 1.0 platform, meaning that they existed on companies' portals or initiated by consumers (Balci and Cetin, 2017). Nowadays, the growth in the adoption of online social platforms has resulted to a large number of enterprises adopting the social networking sites angle for the purpose of generating their online brand communities. Networking spaces give people so much freedom and enables them to interact with others various languages pertaining to subjects and aspects that promote the creation of easy spreading of data (Bruning and Hao, 2017). The authors further note that the brand communities are the social media pages that different companies hold and are followed by their customers.

2.7.2 Influence of online-based brand community

Currently, online platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram show that they can be an essential advertising tool as compared to traditional marketing communication ones (Hassan and Craft, 2015). Considering the above, marketers of a wide range of commodities and business offerings have realised the potency of online social platforms and use them to reach their audience (Bruning et al., 2017; Winfield and Richardson, 2016). Ngai et al. (2017) define an online brand community (OBC) as a group that is formed on an internet basis and has key interest towards a brand. OBCs enables its users to freely connect with enterprises and form bonds that are resilient and durable. Online Platform-based-brand communities that are formulated to ensure that there is a passing or spreading of knowledge instead of promoting an enterprise have a higher rate influence on their members' perspectives, points of view and

purchase intentions (Campbell et al., 2014). In the same way, the passing or spreading of information amongst the users, both current and potential tend to be more intensely focused on a specific brand (Kumar and Nayak, 2019).

2.8 Consumer Trust and Loyalty to Social Media Platforms

People's buying attitudes are a definite angle that can be used to assess the direction that an organization is going, and the element can be followed from the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) (Enyinda, Ogbuehi and Mbah, 2018). Taking note of the above, Islam, Rahman and Hollebeek (2018) found that consumers' purchase intentions, and particularly their attitudes, usually exist as intrinsic factors channeling their behaviour in the marketing domain. Consumers' trust in social media stems from the community that surrounds them and uses the same product. Islam et al (2018) further maintain that these behaviours can be seen in both traditional and social media marketing, which operate through business-to-business (B2B), business-to-customer (B2C) or further as customer-to-customer (C2C) marketing. Social media allows for interaction and consumers believe another consumer's firsthand experience, thereby building trust.

The online platform space stands as a model change that targets a big pool of people, like customers, so that their opinions can be known and business promotional systems be based on them (Enyinda et al., 2018). Taking note of the above, Gummerus et al. (2012) maintain that online platform space advertising includes a big environment with the purpose of interacting or reaching people in large numbers and induce brand connection with them, as individually or a group. As explained by Tafesse and Wien (2018) online social platforms usually influence people, because of the brand image and the level of interaction. Alcohol industries sell the glitz and glamour of consuming certain types brands of alcohol, and they hire influencers, socialites and celebrities to pass the message along by either just having fun or "chilling" with a bottle of wine and label showing (Lagrosen and Grundén, 2014).

Social media marketing and advertising are increasingly conforming to the high levels of content that is generated through social media platforms; thus, they can influence purchasing intentions (Johnen and Schnittka, 2019). Brand image serves a vital impact to people with regards to its promises and levels of trust, which are usually connected with the consistent and persistent interaction of consumers and other businesses on social platforms (Zhang and Benyoucef, 2016). This ultimately converts the online-based brand community into consumer

brand loyalty, which is always considered an output of a “good brand (Goh, Heng and Lin, 2013).”

Usually, traditional media-based advertisement possesses limitations because people tend to only acquire information passively (Gummerus et al., 2012). Thus, brands face the difficulty of being able to communicate regularly about various business offerings or any aspects concerning them since they cannot reach a wide enough audience and do not allow for interaction between consumers and companies (Razaei and Ismail, 2018). According to Simkin (2018), regular interaction and communication carried out by people maintains in these communities’ results to marketers and researchers being able to access a big source of knowledge that enhances decision-making.

2.9 Impact of Online Reviews on Consumer Perception

Reviewing products on the internet is a practice that began in the 21st century with the increasing use of the internet, which resulted in increased online purchases by consumers (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2017). According to Hosanagar (2016), an online review can be regarded as a positive, neutral or negative point of view that generated from a current, potential or former purchaser pertaining to a business offering or organisation and published for the general masses online. Hussein et al. (2018) observe that due to the increased impact of online reviews on consumers, an increasing number of researchers have begun to pay more attention to the connection that exists between the standards of online reviews and buyer intention as well as consumer behaviour.

A study by Ismail (2017) shows that the buyer intention can be usually connected to the quantity of online reviews, which is in turn linked with the buyer intention. This sums up what may be regarded as consumer behaviour and how it is impacted by online reviews (Ismail, 2017). Reviews are the final phase that is carried out in the consumer decision-making activity, when consumers reflect on their purchases and because social media provides communities and consumers a platform to air their views freely. Hoyer (2015) notes that people pay close attention to available positive and negative online reviews. In a situation where there are more positive reviews, there is usually a stronger purchase intention, and vice versa, which facilitates the second phase of the consumer decision-making process.

Taking note of the above, Mbiti (2015) indicates that consumers tend to pay more attention to negative feedback when choosing what to buy. Negative reviews receive so much attention

and serve as a powerful stimulus as compared to positive ones (Lambe, Hudson and Sterwart, 2015). Research carried out by Jenyo and Sosoye (2015) on online reviews and consumer perception and behaviour revealed that consumers' intentions decline in a situation where there are so many negative online reviews pertaining to some products or services. This concurs with Nashombe (2015), who maintains that when a potential consumer is exposed to a large number of negative online reviews, a negative expectation of the commodity gets created.

The present study seeks to investigate the influence that online reviews have on buyer behaviour. A wide range of products and service classifications, based on online reviews, exist. The literature does not provide a comprehensive classification of how consumers search for and review commodities. According to Rosen (2018), the most common classification that includes the search and experience of products or services and is followed by researchers to assess the buying intentions of people. A product or services that is searchable includes one that has data that is readily available to buyers despite them not having bought it yet (Jenyo and Sosoye, 2015). However even though reviews have such a strong influence on people's perception they are highly subjective and cannot be used as a yardstick in the alcohol consuming community. The authors further note that the data that is acquired when searching for a product or service is mostly objective and can be effortlessly judged against others that are alike.

Conversely, an experience product or service includes one that has characteristics of being challenging to deduce (Pophiwa et al., 2021). Alcohol is one of these experience commodities, as one's experience cannot be shared and experiences under the influence of alcohol are totally subjective. Buyers prefer to have a sense of feeling and experiencing a product or service before evaluating it; therefore, data with regards to the products or services is usually based on personal points of view, and assessments carried out on the grounds of experience (Taylor, 2015). Considering the above, it is important to highlight that customers act in a number of ways when assessing data pertaining to the abovementioned two types of products or services. Pophiwa et al. (2021) maintain that consumers aim to acquire extensive knowledge from reviews that outline an experience commodity as compared to a search commodity due to the fact that they need to be able to acquire a sense of how it feels and experience it before buying.

In the same vein, so many studies show that customers tend to be extremely reliant on the messages from online reviews in the process of buying search commodities (Pesonsen, 2013; Rosen, 2018). According to Simkin (2018), a customer finds himself or herself in a position of assuming risk when he or she has to make a purchase for a commodity or service and the manner of purchasing it. Baird and Parasnis (2016) were the authors that initially presented the notion of perceived risk concept to customers actions or lack thereof for the purpose of putting emphasis on aspects like searching for information, being devoted to a business, opinion leaders, reference groups and thought processes made before buying something. Perceived risk remains as an important notion for the assessment of the behaviour outlined by consumers since it shows evidence of customers being not sure before buying something, based on the online reviews about the kind and level of loss that is likely to result because of what is bought (Falco et al., 2021).

The perceived risk concept entails that customers are likely to be influenced from what they find out from others when they seek to make an online purchase and this factor changes their mind-set and actions taken when shopping (Baird and Parasnis, 2016). Perceived risk therefore fundamentally determines a buyer's approach when buying from the internet and in the same line his or her eagerness to actually buy (Falco et al., 2021). Research that has been done in the past shows that risk perception operates in a negative manner and connects directly with purchase intention (Pophiwa et al., 2021; Stephen, 2016). It must be noted that the traditional inventory that serves the purpose of assessing perceived risk cannot be related analysing online customer's perceived risk. Previous research further shows that the buying risk perception of a customer network includes his or her opinion and judgement of probable negative occurrences that may be introduced through the actions taken while buying (Baird and Parasnis, 2016).

Online shopper's perceived risks can be categorised in terms of five factors as identified by Baird and Parasnis (2016) and highlighted below:

- Perceived store-opportunism risk,
- Perceived commodity-performance risk,
- Perceived financial risk,
- Perceived delivery risk, and
- Perceived privacy risk

The internet risk perception when making a purchase can be defined as customers' opinion and judgement of probable negative implications that are introduced through his or her actions when he or she decides to make a purchase (Yu, 2016). Consumer behaviour assessment refers to observation of the interactions that occur with entities like the customers, products or services and activities like buying, saving and choosing a brand. In light of the above, Helal et al. (2018) concludes that with the introduction of online reviews, commodities became readily available for the consumers to check before purchasing and this has greatly affected their purchasing behaviours, both negatively and positively. Taylor (2015) maintains that the modern buyer has evolved from just being a "buyer" to an active user. Thus, there is a need of vast insightful data for the purpose of analysing the actions of customers.

2.10 Effects of Viral Content on Consumers' Perception

Viral marketing has been defined by Marino and Prestti (2018) as a system that uses internet channels and have the effect of urging people to spread marketing information to others. Souiden (2002) maintains that the viral marketing refers to the concept that entails that people communicate and spread marketing-relevant data that was purposely divulged by a brand to promote and exploit "word-of-mouth behaviour." The aforementioned definitions, point out that viral marketing refers to a marketing approach with the aim of communicating data and points of view pertaining to a commodity or business offering from one individual to another, usually through unusual ways like the internet or email (Simkin, 2018). Viral content is distributed in form of memes, reels and videos.

A study by Rosen (2018) revealed that there are certain variations in the passing of viral content among Facebook users, which also affects the behaviour of the consumers. The study examined the possible connection between being active on Facebook and viral promotions output and the findings showed that college-age Facebook users are a part of activities that show more willingness to share their subjective points of view and have a positive outlook towards social media and promotions as compared to non-group members (Rosen, 2018). However, according to the study, being active in Facebook groups lacks the impact on users' viral promotional strategies of pass-on behaviours. There are disparities in the assessments of pass-on behaviours when it comes to group members and non-members; hence, the outcome possesses theoretical and managerial propositions pertaining to viral business promotion on Facebook (Rosen, 2018).

Harris (2019) establishes that viral marketing is important due to its credibility and informativeness, which can positively influence consumer behaviour. A study conducted by Huddson (2013) revealed that trust does not in any way affect the consumers' perceptions in using viral marketing, thereby having a positive influence on their purchasing behaviour. Most viral content has nothing to do with the brand but is entertaining enough to watch and forward, and companies often add a caption referring to their brand but the idea behind viral marketing is to capture attention (Hussain et al., 2018). Consumer trust may not always have an impact on the consumers' perceived usefulness when it comes to being active in activities involving viral promotions but influences the consumers' approach and ambition to be a part of viral marketing (Islam et al., 2018).

According to Hassan and Craft (2015), viral marketing is important, especially in influencing the referral behaviour of consumers, which has a huge impact on their purchasing behaviour. Hassan and Craft (2015) analysed a three-stage model of consumer referral behaviour through mobile devices in a research area involving an enterprise-generated mobile viral promotion strategy. Results of the study showed that customers that outline much significance to the purposive value and entertainment value of data provided to them, have a bigger chance of making it to the interest and referral phases. Lagrosen and Grunden (2014) maintain that viral promotion strategy ushers a vital aspect in influencing consumer purchasing actions especially through referrals.

2.10.1 Perceived Informativeness

Perceived informativeness refers to "the ability of advertising to inform consumers of product alternatives so that purchases yield the greatest possible satisfaction (Winfield and Richardson, 2016)." The standards of data portrayed on the official internet page of a firm affects the opinions of customers towards its commodities and business offerings (Taylor, 2015). Thus, data that is passed on to consumers using mobile devices, must also portray qualitative elements, for example accuracy (alcohol content), timeliness (expiration dates), and importance of the product or service to a customer (Hassan and Craft, 2015). Taylor (2015) maintains that data consists of an essential aspect in mobile advertisement since recipients respond optimistically to strategies that include incentives.

Perceived informativeness outlines the way consumers consider data to have complete value (Pongpaew et al., 2016). Since the decision to buy a commodity or service comes from data that has been communicated and can be assess using online portals, consumers look at the

Internet as trustworthy pool of data; therefore, the focus of marketers is on viral marketing (Stephen, 2016). Rosen (2018) highlights that usually an appropriate trail of responses from consumers, pertaining to commodities or services they come across, occurs when they view the viral promotional information as associated, trustworthy and relevant to them.

2.10.2 Perceived Entertainment

Urumsah (2015) says that entertainment is the gratification acquired by consumers after their pursuance of something that distracts them and offers virtual and affective pleasure. To add on to this, entertainment remains a vital space that can be used for marketing and has so much power of attraction towards customers and their buying attitudes (Winfield and Richardson, 2016). Perceived entertainment can be assumed to be enjoyable, satisfactory, amusing, and exciting to individuals when they are exposed to it (Simkin, 2018). Popphiwa et al. (2021) suggest that marketers should invest heavily in the fun and exciting elements promotion strategies so that they can improve the strength of their marketing; the funnier the advertisement, the more attention it gets. A direct connection exists between entertainment or actual pleasure and marketing strength and hedonic joy, for instance, excitement or esteem, significantly impacts attitudes in terms of the promotion efforts. Furthermore, entertainment dynamics create significance for the customers as well as building their devotion to a brand; hence, entertainment is the most important feature affecting consumer attitudes towards advertising (Rosen, 2018).

Pongpaew et al. (2016) maintain that customers' moods towards fun aspects of brand promotion have a vital element in influencing their opinions; thus, viral marketing communication must be straightforward, not vague and easy to understand so that the customers interest is acquired. Entertainment services contribute to the customers and promote their devotion towards a product or service, thereby leading to positive consumer attitudes (Urumsah, 2015). Entertainment can be seen as a vital measurement element of the importance online marketing strategies and, thereby, indicates their competence (Winfield and Richardson, 2016). Fascinating and fun marketing strategies possess a positive influence towards customers' attitudes in terms of brands and are the strongest element that has an impact on the customers' attitudes with regards to viral marketing (Baird et al., 2016).

2.10.3 Irritation Perception

Bruwer and Li (2017) argue that brand promotions that uses irritating, vulgar, disrespectful, or mainly manipulative strategies are brushed aside by customers. Mobile advertising incorporates a wide range of data that may be misunderstood by consumers and result to so much distraction and leave others overwhelmed (Campbell et al., 2014). Therefore, complicated mobile marketing could annoy customers, and lead to the reduction in the output of marketing strategies of a brand produce negative responses from customers (Campbell et al., 2014). In addition, customers tend to get irritated because of so many unwanted messages being sent by a brand, referred to as spam, which, according to Chahine and Malhotra (2018), intrude on consumer privacy and stifle consumer acceptance.

Irritation perception can be described as negative emotional state of mind, like, discontentment, distress and infatuation (Winfield and Richardson, 2016). In addition, customers tend to be annoyed in situations where they are bombarded with promotions from a brand or advertisements that use excessive techniques intended to infuriate, upset, or be rude to them; consequently, customers reaction ends up being negative (Chahine and Malhotra, 2018). Annoyance that comes about because of unpleasant viral promotional messages usually influences negative customer mind-set with regards to viral marketing (Bruwer and Li, 2017).

Sharma and Lambert (2016) maintain that recipients of viral marketing messages become annoyed where marketers utilize strategies that are infuriating, rude, or have negative slurs towards them. Furthermore, where the information that is being passed has been extremely manipulated, its audience may become annoyed and induce negative consumer attitudes (Pongpaew et al., 2016).

Bruwer and Li (2017) note that the frequency of marketing messages towards customers increases their irritation levels and affects their attitude towards a brand. Consequently, irritation may be minimised through the communication of the appropriate messages that aim for a specific audience (Urumsah, 2015). Annoyance that may come about because of short message service (SMS) marketing may be minimised through utilisation of the permission-based marketing concept. In conclusion, well-constructed and pitched mobile viral marketing influences positive consumer attitudes (Stephen, 2016).

2.10.4 Perceived Source Credibility

Perceived source credibility refers to the level credibility that is portrayed by an entity and the way it is viewed by the general receiving audience (Razaei and Ismail, 2018). As personalisation assumes a vital stand in social media, customers could have a sense of irritation or become annoyed because of marketing communication that is carried out through unwarranted ways or, much graver means like providing of someone's personal data; hence, an individual can refrain from engaging with a promotional campaign of a brand when it is considered to not be reliable (Ngai et al., 2017). Therefore, perceived source credibility can be regarded as one of the key customers perceptions pertaining to viral advertisement and social platform promotion (Razaei and Ismail, 2018). Source credibility is the reason why companies employ the services of influencers to promote their products.

A key aspect that relates to viral marketers is based on credibility (Amine and Smith, 2019). Credibility is one of the main impacts of appropriate marketing and that serves as the glue to bond customers and the commodities or services being shown (Amine and Smith, 2019). A key reality includes that powerful and more trustworthy marketing induces a big number of customers that embrace it and purchase. Thereby, such an entity carrying out marketing generates more revenue sales. This is because credibility increases the, market value of a product or service, more commonly where information emanates from a trustworthy and dependable entity (Stephen, 2016). Nevertheless, it must be emphasised that the higher the degree of trust placed with regards to the viral message platform, the lower the associated risk. The risk may be low because of the degree of truth and meticulousity.

2.11 social media and Alcohol Consumption

The global cider market, which is currently holding the lion's share in the global alcohol market, is expected to increase by around six million dollars by 2023 (Allied Market Research, 2017). With many contributions from the Distell Group, in combination with the Hunter's and Savanna ciders doing well in the South African market, the country has become recognised as part of the biggest cider producers in a global context (Clark, 2012). Cider is an alcoholic beverage produced by the fermentation of apple juice (Jarvis, 2014).

Currently, distilleries and the liquor industry market themselves through online social platforms to influence and encourage the purchase and consumption of alcohol. Online social platforms have been used as a promotional ground by various companies, selling a fantasy

of pleasure under the influence of alcohol (Tafesse and Wien, 2018). Studies have shown that the use of social online platforms for the liquor sector for marketing is valuable since it offers the chance of reaching a big audience of up to 600% return on investment (Noel and Lakhan 2020). Since the target audience of many brands is increasing its use of social platforms for its daily networking and entertainment, liquor promoters are finding new ways to influence and interact with consumers (Lobstein et al., 2017). Online social platform includes a distinct way that alcohol companies can advertise, as it provides a two-way communication where consumers can engage, share and express their opinions, whether positive or negative (Noel and Lakhan, 2020; Tivaratchai, 2018). According to Carah et al. (2018) Facebook is the key player in shaping alcohol marketing activities because it has recorded and increased more consumer engagements than any other social media app, especially amongst young adults. Lim et al. (2016) also agree that alcoholic brands are more successful at reaching a number of audiences through this medium than any other social media platform.

Research suggests that alcohol companies will post content that is considered pleasurable and attractive for users in order to initiate and engage with the brand (e.g., fashion, music, sporting, cultural or comedic events created/sponsored by alcohol companies) by checking in or tagging friends in that event on social media. There is great value for business entities that occur as a result of events that are considered as being socially acceptable, which increases exposure and users are less critical of such marketing techniques (Santini et al., 2020). According to Westberg et al. (2018) the likelihood of the youth to partake in liquor consumption is elevated in situations where there is a positive response to online social communication of a liquor brand and customers are more to 'like' or 'share' the information being divulged (Westberg et al. 2018). Ali and Dwyer (2010) explain that online social platforms encourage communication and connections among peers and alcohol distributors through alcohol advertising. Companies have adopted the use of influencers, celebrities and socialites in promoting products, including the popularization of alcohol through celebrity endorsements whereby they have videos on YouTube and reels on Instagram while celebrating with bottles of alcohol in their hands (Malik and Sudhakar, 2014).

The use of social networking sites has normalised the consumption of alcohol, where being exposed to alcohol-related posts can increase consumption six months later (Robertson et al., 2018; Hendriks et al., 2018). Findings by Branley and Covey (2017) suggest risky online content increased offline risky behaviours where there was excessive alcohol use; however,

there is little evidence to suggest social media is the cause of the high alcohol consumption. Review highlights from Westgate and Holliday's (2016) study also show varying results pertaining to the connection that exists between the utilization of the online social space and degree of liquor intake of people.

2.12 Social media marketing and alcohol consumption

The Room & O'Brien (2021) study looked at the relationship between social media platforms and alcohol marketing and how it might affect the general public's health. The study emphasised that alcohol business had increasingly and successfully used social media as a forum for advertising and to promote its products. The study considered the amount and types of content relating to alcohol on various social media platforms, the tactics used by alcohol companies, and the possible effects of such marketing on children and other vulnerable groups. Thus, the study paid more attention at addressing the health issues pertaining to alcohol use. Thus, that was a different angle to the study at hand. Regardless, the study managed to indicate that the use of social media had an immense influence on the consumers of alcoholic beverages.

The Alhabash, Park, Smith, Hendriks, & Dong (2022) study considered the relationship between social media marketing and alcohol consumption. The study considered a comprehensive set of studies over a ten-year period, 2009 to 2019. The study found that social media had a direct relationship with the consumer uptake of alcoholic beverages, with an overwhelming majority of 93.10% of the studies encompassed within the 10-year period. The study shown that more particularly, consumers of social media that were avid in discussing or providing information of alcoholic use were much prominent in influencing other users. Thus, this study serves as a strong authority between the relationship between social media marketing and alcohol usage.

Jernigan (2013) explained that the proposed ban on alcohol advertising in South Africa in 2013 was an appropriate response, along with other evidence-based measures, in a region where alcohol is the leading cause of death and disability and where alcohol companies are investing billions of dollars to increase consumption of their products. This is due to the high rates of abstainers in many African countries. Thus, this indicates the direct relationship that exists between alcohol marketing and consumption.

A study by Barry, Bates, Olusanya, Vinal, Martin, Peoples, Jackson, Billinger, Yusuf, Cauley & Montano (2016), investigated whether alcohol businesses limit young people's and adolescents' access to, participation in, and exposure to their social media marketing. The study found that the suggested self-regulation criteria for digital marketing communications on Instagram are being broken by the alcohol industry. Twitter's age-gate effectively prevented direct phone updates, but posting was still open to all users. Fictional profiles, including those of children as young as 13, received daily communications from the alcohol business and marketing materials on their phones. This finding is not in line with the study at hand but it still shows that there is a strong connection between the use of social media and access to information pertaining to alcohol. Thus, online alcoholic platforms have a strong tool that they can use for the promotion of their product.

A study by Hlatywayo, Moyo & Osunkunle (2014) sought outlined that teenagers in South Africa frequently consume alcohol, particularly those who are enrolled in high school. The study focused on a few high schools in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa and examined the extent to which alcohol advertising affects teenagers. The study's findings showed that alcohol advertising played a significant role in the majority of adolescent alcohol consumption, however other factors such as social media, peer pressure, the impact of friends, and family issues also played a role. This study also showed that teen awareness of various companies is increased by alcohol advertising. Students are ultimately encouraged to drink alcohol as a result of this information because it helps them feel connected to alcohol advertising.

In a South African study by Morojele, Lombard, Burnhams, Williams, Nel & Parry (2018), the study looked at how demographics, exposure to alcohol marketing, and like of alcohol commercials affected older teenagers in Tshwane, Gauteng Province, South Africa, who had used alcohol in the previous six months. According to the study, adolescents' use of alcohol was linked to exposure to alcohol marketing and a lack of significant aversion to commercials for alcohol brands and goods. The findings have consequences for South Africa's alcohol marketing regulations. Thus, this study strongly suggests the close connection between social media marketing and alcohol consumption in South Africa.

2.13 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed and discussed literature related to the online social space and the impact that it has on customers' behaviours and perceptions in the liquor sector. The secondary data sought to understand consumer buying behaviours and how this behaviour can be impacted by online social platforms. Chapter 2 also discussed various concepts, including online social platforms, consumer behaviour and their perceptions, and the appropriate theoretical framework for the research.

The secondary data was searched and constructed based on the research objectives and main questions. Social media influences consumer buying decisions because online shopping is on the rise and individuals have the tendency of using online social platforms for a long time daily. The online platform influencers tend to spend four times as much on purchases as the non-influencers. Social media can also allow companies to identify their target market as well as market and advertise products online. The next chapter provided the study's methodology and its justification for each choice made by the researcher.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 provided and discussed the secondary data that has appropriate background pertaining to social media and its influence on consumers' behaviours and perceptions. The primary focus of the literature review was to fully comprehend consumer buying actions in addition to the way these behaviours are influenced by social media. Chapter 3 conferred the study's methodology and design that was followed. The quantitative research method was adopted in this study and as such quantitative methods such as probability simple random sampling, questionnaires and descriptive statistics are used to select a sample, generate and analyse the research data. The chapter also discussed issues to do with validity and reliability, limitations of the study, as well as ethical issues that were considered during the data collection process.

3.2 Research Design

A research design includes the complete plan, structure and strategy that serves the purpose of connecting a study's questions and the process of carrying it out (Cooper, 2019). Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016) observe that research design refers to "a planned strategy of how the researcher goes about generating data and responding to the research question." Numerous research designs are available and include, but are not limited to, correlational, case study, descriptive, explanatory, experimental, causal-comparative, survey and exploratory research design (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

According to Haradhan (2017), descriptive, explanatory, causal-comparative, correlational and experimental research design are the most commonly used designs in quantitative research. Considering the above, this research used a descriptive research design for the purpose of assessing the influence of online social platforms and consumer actions among SDC customers from Durban Central Business District (CBD) in KwaZulu-Natal. Descriptive research according to Polit and Beck (2017), aims to gain an accurate and clear-cut description of contexts, events, people or situations. Haradhan (2017) asserts that the descriptive research "answers to the questions where, how, what, when and what instead of why with the purpose of showing exactly the characteristics of a specific state or position of

the group". The use of descriptive research in this study helped in providing answers on how social media influences customer behaviours, especially alcohol sales.

Quantitative methods were used in the data collection and analysis processes. Quantitative research methods are beneficial due to the descriptive nature of their data, which is precise, clear, and objective (Kothari, 2010). This enabled the researcher to ascertain a wide-ranging understanding of a phenomenon and make inferences and conclusions from the data. This study used quantitative research methods as it enabled the researcher to acquire descriptive data and describe the influence of social media on consumers' purchase decisions. Quantitative research allowed for statistical analysis of the results, which was presented in Chapter 4 using tables and graphs.

3.3 Research Philosophy

The set of beliefs, presumptions, and attitudes that support and direct how researchers perform their investigations and approach knowledge development is referred to as research philosophy (Zukauskas, Vveinhardt & Andriukaitienė, 2018). It provides the framework and foundation for the entire research process, impacting the research design, data gathering techniques, data analysis, and conclusion interpretation. In academic research, three basic paradigms or research philosophies are frequently used, as discussed below:

Positivism is a scientific, unbiased method of investigation is referred to as positivism. Positivist researchers hold that there is an objective reality that can be viewed and assessed through empirical data (Park, Konge & Artino, 2019). They strive for objectivity, attempting to reduce prejudice and individual perceptions. Positive thinking is frequently associated with quantitative research techniques that entail the gathering and examination of numerical data.

Constructivism, also known as interpretivism, is a philosophy that emphasizes the subjectivity of human experience as well as the influence of meanings and interpretations on social reality (Zukauskas et al, 2018). Interpretivist researchers hold that human perceptions and interpretations are essential for comprehending the social world. They place a strong emphasis on using qualitative research techniques to delve deeply into meanings and contextual elements, such as interviews, focus groups, and participant observation.

Pragmatism is a more adaptable philosophy that blends positivism and interpretivism's best ideas (Elder-Vass, 2022). Pragmatists hold that the research question and practical concerns

should guide the selection of the research methodology. Depending on what best matches the research setting and goals, they are open to combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

The study followed the the positivism research philosophy. The positivism research philosophy was selected for the study since the researcher sought to assess the phenomenon under the study from an objective reality that can be viewed and assessed through empirical data. The researcher hypothesised that there was an influence of social media on consumer behaviour of SDC. Thus, the positivist research philosophy enabled the researcher to carry out this exercise.

3.4 Target Population

The target population includes the full sum of subjects that suit the study's conditions and most likely possess a wide range of characteristics (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Saunders et al. (2016) suggest that the target population includes the collective number of the complete components that can be used to acquire a sample from. The researcher identified the study's target population to include consumers of SDC from 18 years old and above, as 18 years is considered the legal age for the consumption of alcoholic beverages. The exact total number of SDC consumers in the Durban CBD could not be determined; however, according to the KwaZulu-Natal Liquor Authority, the total number of Savanna Dry Cider consumers is estimated at 200 000 (KZNLQA, 2020). However, due to the nature, time and funding limitations of this study, the whole population was not considered to provide data for this study; only a sample was selected.

3.5 Sampling Size

Bechhofer and Paterson (2012) define a sample as a small number of subjects from the total population that is selected for the purpose of a study to learn about its entirety. Johnston, Lakzadeh and Donato (2019) indicates that an effective sampling strategy requires adequate knowledge about the population to select relevant and appropriate participants. Sampling guarantees that the units that have been chosen in a study are representative of the population's characteristics, allowing accurate deductions and inferences to be made from the findings (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). Bullen and Brack (2021) indicates that a sample size of 100 is the minimum needed for meaningful results in quantitative survey studies, and in situations with fewer than 100 people, researchers should survey everyone in the area.

Taking note of the above, the sample size of this study was 120 participants identified by the researcher as active consumers of SDC on social media. The sample size was calculated on the basis of the following formula $n = \frac{Z^2 P(1-P)}{d^2}$ in terms of populations that were not known, where: n = sample size, Z = confidence level, P = estimated proportion, and d = precision/acceptable margin of error (Naing et al., 2006). The Table 3,1 below presented the proportion of the sample sizes concerning the different liquor sales outlets, which for ethical reasons will be named Liberty Liquors and Tops North Beach. The full rate of the sample size is 120 when one applies the above formula based on the following formula: P = 0.7, d = 0.05, and Z = 1.96.

Table 3. 1 Sample Size Proportions

LIQUOR STORES	SAMPLE SIZE PROPORTION
Liberty Liquors	60
Tops North Beach	60
TOTAL	120

3.6 Sampling Method

Haradhan (2017) defines sampling as a technique of choosing a unit or small number of subjects from an entire target population so that conclusions can be drawn from them that can be generalised. Probability and non-probability are two sampling methods used in social science research (Saunders et al., 2016). According to Saunders et al. (2016) probability sampling links with quantitative research and uses the following sampling techniques: simple random, systematic, cluster and stratified sampling. However, non-probability sampling, links with qualitative method and the following sampling techniques are associated with it: quota, snowball, convenience and purposive sampling (Creswell and Creswell, 2017).

Probability-simple sampling method was observed in this research to select its participants. The probability sampling method ensures that each unit, element, or component from the predetermined target population possesses a similar chance of being included in the sample (Saunders et al., 2016). Creswell and Poth (2018) state that probability sampling is usually needed in a situation where research utilises a sampling frame. Simple random sampling was followed by the researcher for the purpose of choosing 120 consumers since that was the justifiable manner of choosing a sample without negate the presence of bias. Bristowe, Selman and Murtagh (2015) contend that simple random sampling allows a study to acquire a sample which shows the characteristics of accounting for the entire population that is being investigated.

In addition, Merriam and Grenier (2014) explains that simple random sampling enables researchers the chance of coming up with appropriate generalisations since the units that are chosen to follow probabilistic methods. Therefore, the benefit of the technique includes that the generalisations have a bigger chance of being considered to possess outside external validity (Saunders et al., 2016). A total of 120 participants was selected for this study, and they were drawn from off-site alcohol consumption retail outlets in the Durban CBD. The reason for choosing off-site consumption outlets was to mitigate against poor quality and inaccurate data from participants in an on-site consumption space who might be too intoxicated to fill out the questionnaire truthfully. The two selected off-site consumption liquor stores, Liberty Liquors and Tops North Beach, were selected because they possessed the appropriate participants with the necessary characteristics that would enable the study to attain its research objectives. The SDC consumers that purchase from the off-site consumption liquor stores were 18 years and above and resided in the Durban CBD.

3.6.1 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Gray, Grove and Sutherland (2016) defined inclusion criteria as a set of “predetermined characteristics or features used to identify research participants.” Exclusion criteria, on the other hand, refer to characteristics or factors that render the enlisted population unqualified or unsuitable to participate in the research study. Haradhan (2017) and Polit and Beck (2017) maintain that exclusion and inclusion criteria are part of the eligibility or selection that applied the principles of “rule in or out the target population for research.” Considering the above inclusion and exclusion requirements for this study, the researcher included the following to be part of the study for reliable empirical data.

Being a consumer of SDC
Being active on social media
Being above 18 years old

These were operationalized in form of a series of screening questions and participants that were unable to meet the requirements were not involved in answering the questions.

3.7 Research Instrument

Polit and Beck (2017) define a research instrument as a technique or instrument that is used in research to collect or generate data from the participants for analysis purposes. Social science researchers employ various research instruments to generate data from their research subjects and some study instruments available were, even though not only the following: interviews (interview schedule), observations (checklist), questionnaires, telephone interviews and focus group discussions, among others (Creswell and Poth, 2018). The researcher selected self-administered questionnaires to generate primary information from the participants. Questionnaires are tools instrument that serve the purpose of gathering data from participants, in addition to containing a sequence of questions and other stimuli (Creswell and Creswell, 2017).

Haradhan (2017) observes that researchers use a questionnaire because: it is affordable to administer, quick and the self-administration factor minimises the chances of bias because of varying elements that may occur during administration. A questionnaire may be made up of closed-ended or open-ended questions, depending on the type of data the researcher seeks to gather (Saunders et al., 2016). Open-ended questions seek to elicit broad responses from the participants as they provide further probes, whereas closed-ended questions seek straight-to-the point responses such as “agree” or “disagree” and “yes” or “no” (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

The use of the self-administered questionnaire in this study provided primary data, which is advantageous because it is a reliable source of up-to-date information in line with new trends. The questionnaire also yielded better accuracy in comparison to secondary data because the information gathered was solely focused on meeting this study’s specific research objectives. In addition, the use of the self-administered questionnaires slowly gave the sample size an adequate period that enabled it to assess it and deliberate carefully about their answers.

The questionnaire contained English and IsiZulu, had closed-ended queries and was influenced by the secondary data, research objectives and other studies from different contexts or backgrounds. The questionnaire took approximately 10 minutes and was designed as follows;

Section A was comprised of the instructions and screening questions.

Section B constituted the participants' demographics such as age and gender. The remaining sections C-E provided knowledge on how social media and E-WOM influences consumer behaviour and decision-making process.

3.8 Data Collection

Polit and Beck (2017) define data collection as the process of generating or gathering data from research subjects with the intention of analysing it to derive meaning from it. In other words, data collection refers to the manner in which the researcher gathers or collects data from the research subjects. Considering the above, information was gathered using a self-administered questionnaire that was physically provided to the participants upon entrance into the liquor outlet by a field worker who was hired and trained by the researcher before the data collection process. Before completing the questionnaire, informed consent was given to the participants by explaining to them the purpose of the study and how its findings would be used. Once their consent was received, the participants were given the questionnaire along with a letter of information and consent. Participants could either sign or place their right thumbprint as a form of consent.

3.9 Data Analysis

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016), data analysis serves the purpose of describing evidence, ascertaining patterns, coming up with explanations, and testing hypotheses. The raw information is arranged and presented in a strategic way so that important data can be acquired. Quantitative data from questionnaires that were responded to were entered and coded using Microsoft Excel spread sheets, which were processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 27 software. Descriptive and inferential statistics served the purpose of analysing the information collected. Descriptive statistics includes a method of data analysis through which data can be transformed, organised and significant information that can be readily understood becomes apparent and is interpreted (Franzese and Luliano, 2019; Sharma, 2019).

Inferential statistics, on the other hand, include a system that serves the purpose of coming to valid conclusions and investigate the elements pertaining to a population with regards to its sample information that has been acquired (Wisniewski et al., 2019). Taylor (2019) explains that inferential statistics are derived from advanced mathematical calculations that enable a researcher to come up with similarities or commonalities that are present in a target population with regards to its acquired sample. The researcher adopted inferential statistics for the purpose of assessing the connection that was present in a sample and thereafter to come up with justifiable generalisations or predictions pertaining to the variables from the target population.

3.10 Pilot Study

According to Majid (2018), it is always recommended to pre-test the data collection instruments prior to using them for study purposes, this reduce the chances of acquiring data that has been compromised with errors by misleading questions or misunderstood by participants. For this study, a pilot study was carried out on 10 participants drawn from the target population, for the purpose of assessing the feasibility and validity of the proposed research tool. The researcher followed this exercise for the purpose of gauging whether participants understood the questionnaire and also identify other weaknesses that may arise during the information collection activities. The results of the pilot study demonstrated that the pilot sample size understood the questions that were being asked, and as such, no major changes were made except for a few grammatical changes, which were included in the questionnaire used for the main research.

3.11 Validity and Reliability

Validity includes the level that the measurement activities outline in terms of being uninfluenced from both systemic and random errors (Taherdoost, 2016). Creswell and Creswell (2017) note that validity includes the extent of the data being able to assess the aspects that it is supposed to. The formulation of a quantitative research, entail that the most important question pertains to the realisation of valid conclusions, acquired from research, bearing in mind to its design and controls (Ihantola and Kihn, 2011). In this study, validity was measured during questionnaire pretesting so that was capable of clearly speaking to all the areas of the research. Salazar, Crosby and DiClemente (2015) describe reliability in terms of the extent that it is seen to be consistent or dependable. Cronbach's alpha was adopted for

the purpose of assessing the reliability of data collecting tool. An alpha score above the measurement of 0.70 outlines that an instrument is reliable (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

The face validity of the questionnaire was assessed through specialists with regards to consumer behaviour, that were able to evaluate and interrogate it and discover if it met the research objectives. The point of view acquired from them directed the process of making the questionnaire more appropriate. A consideration of face validity included the assessment of the questionnaire conducted using an ethics specialist, academic and statistician. Furthermore, for the purposes of making the validity of the questionnaire better, the researcher carried out a pilot study using 10 randomly chosen participants that emanated from the study area, and based on the feedback; a few grammatical adjustments were made to the questions that sounded vague and meaningless.

The researcher carried out principal component analysis (PCA) and principal axis factoring (PAF or PFA) with regards to the information from the ten subjects. The researcher assessed the subjects based on high and low factor loadings, that informed 0.499 as the minimum acceptable factor loading (Ramrakhiani, 2017). It is required that a component possess not less than three variables contributing to its load, and a coefficient measure of 0.7, with a coefficient of 0.3 seen as acceptable as a minimum (Cole, 2017). The researcher utilised the PCA with varimax rotation for the purpose of finding the scale's construct validity. The researcher conducted two statistical tests for the purpose of measuring whether the subscales were appropriate in terms of a factor analysis. The initial one included the Bartlett Test of Sphericity, that assessed if the subscales of the scale were inter-independent. This was followed by the Kaiser-Meyer Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO), that assessed the sample sufficiency.

3.12 Limitations and Delimitations

The location of the research was the Durban CBD area and only included participants who are both consumers of SDC and social media users. These limitations imply that the results of the research lacked the characteristic of being generalised to explain non-SDC consumers' opinions and purchase behaviour. Furthermore, the area of the Durban CBD was chosen due to its practicality and feasibility. Due to time and financial constraints, the research failed to cater for the whole population of the Durban metropolitan area; thus, the results do not possess the characteristic of being generalised to other locations within the province. The other limitation of the study was that of repeated lockdown restrictions, which impacted buying

behaviours as well as affecting the findings of the study. The recent looting of liquor outlets in the Durban CBD caused delays in gathering data as some of the outlets took a long time to resume their operations and attract customers.

3.13 Anonymity of Participants

Researchers have the responsibility of securing the privacy of the participants when conducting research. In order to protect the participants' anonymity in this research, data was collected from participants without obtaining any of their personal or identification information (Coffelt, 2017). All questionnaires did not require the participants to fill in their names. The letter of information (see Annexure A) provided the participants with a guarantee in writing at the time of making the request for access. All electronic copies were password-locked on the researcher's computer; the password was known only to researcher and her supervisor. This data collected during the research will be destroyed after five years; that is, physical documents will be torn and recycled as compared to being thrown away. The data that was saved on a computer hard drive will be deleted completely with programs that nullify data fully.

3.14 Ethical considerations

It is vital for a study to ensure that it safeguards the welfare and privacy of those that are involved in it (Wassenaar and Mamotte, 2012). Research involving human subjects is required to adhere to ethical procedures by acquiring the permission that comes from the institution's Research Ethics Committee before a study commences (Madushani, 2016). Taking note of the above, the ethical issues discussed below were considered in this research.

3.14.1 Informed Consent

Informed consent in research is very important, as it gives the participants time or the chance to ascertain whether they intend to be involved in a research study or not (Saunders et al., 2016). Considering the above, researcher was obliged to ensure that the participants obtain informed consent before conducting research (Haradhan, 2017). Informed consent was given to participants by explaining to them what the research or study is all about, what and how they will benefit from it, as well as how they were supposed to participate (Saunders et al., 2016). The researcher informed the sample size about the purpose of the study, how they

were chosen, and the way data that was obtained was going to be published (Rani and Sharma 2012). Participants signed a written informed agreement after being informed of their rights to participate or not participate without being coerced.

3.14.2 Privacy

According to Majid (2018), the privacy of participants should be respected when conducting research. No confidential information of the participant should be made public without the participants' permission. In this study, privacy of information was guaranteed and the sample size was also informed that it could withdraw from participating at any given point (Mollet, 2011). The researcher informed the sample size that final results will be shared with the participants in stakeholder engagement. Protection of confidentiality and anonymity was assured throughout the research process.

3.14.3 Obtaining Permission

An ethical clearance was obtained from the Durban University of Technology's Ethical Clearance Committee, granting the researcher permission to conduct research on the proposed sample. A written ethical clearance letter was sought before administering questionnaires to respondents.

3.15 Conclusion

Chapter 3 presented and justified the research methodology and design that the researcher adopted. The researcher followed the quantitative research approach for this study, and as such, quantitative methods such as probability simple random sampling, questionnaire and descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used to select a sample to generate and analyse the research data. The chapter also discussed issues to do with validity and reliability, the limitations, as well as ethical issues that were considered during the data collection process.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS, INTERPRETATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS OF PRIMARY DATA

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of the research was to ascertain the impact of social media with regards to actions of SDC consumers. Thus, this section presents the primary data that was collected from the target population, which consisted of consumers of SDC that were above 18 years or older and were residents around the Durban Central Business District (CBD). The primary data was collected based on the study's objectives below:

- To investigate the impact of social media on SDC cider consumers
- To determine whether online reviews and comments about the brand have an impact on consumers' perceptions and purchases;
- To identify the effects of viral content on consumers' perceptions of the brand; and
- To identify the factors that drive customer loyalty (or attraction) to a brand via social media.

The researcher gathered primary information through a questionnaire tool. The data was coded and evaluated through the means of the SPSS 27 software. The results were outlined as descriptive statistics using tables and, graphs.

4.2 The Sample

The researcher presented 130 questionnaires to the target population. A total number of 120 questionnaires were recovered, and the respondents qualified as consumers of SDC that were 18 years or above and reside in the Durban CBD. Thus, the response rate of the study was 92.3%. This response rate was positive and suitable for achieving the objectives of the study.

4.2.1 The Research Instrument

The study instrument was made up of 20 elements consisting nominal and ordinal levels of measurement. The questionnaire tool that was used in the research had 5 sections as indicated below:

Question 1 – Screening question

Question 2 – Biographical data

Question 3 – The impact of social media SDC consumers

Question 4 – The effects of online reviews, comments, and viral content on the consumers perceptions of the brand

Question 5 - The factors that drives customer loyalty (or attraction) to a brand via social media,

4.3 Reliability Statistics

Validity includes the level that the measurement activities outline in terms of being uninfluenced from both systemic and random errors (Taherdoost, 2016). Creswell and Creswell (2017) note that validity includes the extent the data being able to assess the aspects that it is supposed to. The formulation of a quantitative research, entail that the most important question pertains to the realisation of valid conclusions, acquired from research, bearing in mind to its design and controls (Ihantola and Kihn, 2011). In this study, validity was measured during questionnaire pretesting so that was capable of clearly speaking to all the areas of the research. Salazar, Crosby and DiClemente (2015) describe reliability in terms of the extent that is seen to be consistent or dependable. Cronbach's alpha was adopted for the purpose of assessing the reliability of data collecting tool. An alpha score above the measurement of 0.70 outlines that an instrument is reliable (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Table 4.1 below outlines the Cronbach's alpha scores of the study:

Table 4. 1: Cronbach's Alpha Scores

Sections	N of items	Cronbach's Alpha
3. The role of social media to Savanna Dry ciders consumers	10 of 10	0.739
4. The effects of online reviews, comments, and viral content on the consumers perceptions of the brand	5 of 5	0.638

5. The factors that drives customer loyalty (or attraction) to a brand via social media	5 of 5	0.665
Overall	20 of 20	0.681

Table 4.1 above illustrates that the overall reliability score is 0.681. This is not over the advisable Cronbach's alpha score of 0.700. Thus, the 0.681 score uncovered by the study does not indicate a high degree of acceptability. There is only one section in Table 4.1, Section 3, that has a score of 0.739, which is above the advisable Cronbach's alpha score of 0.700. However, according to Belaja, Sai, and Lin (2012) a Cronbach score that ranges from 0.6 to 0.7 can be accepted, despite the fact that it will be considered questionable. Therefore, regardless of the overall reliability score of 0.681, it can still be acceptable.

4.3.1 Factor Analysis

Creswell and Creswell (2017) claim that factor analysis can be referred to as a statistical system that aims at data minimisation. A factor analysis can be adopted in a survey for the purpose of representing questions that are composed of hypothetical factors. A good example may be a survey that is carried out to investigate research about political opinions in a country. However, when the questions are presented together, they have a higher chance of measuring the attitude more accurately. The matrix tables outline a general illustration showing the outcome of the KMO and Bartlett's Test. Research requires that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy be above 0.50 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity below 0.05. The sums of the cases ensure that the conditions are met for an appropriate factor analysis procedure. The factor analysis is carried out for items that are designed based on a Likert scale. These are some elements that are broken into finer components. Table 4.2 illustrates the component matrix:

Table 4. 2: Component Matrix

Sections	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		
		Approx. Chi-Square	of	Sig.

3. The role of social media to Savanna Dry ciders consumers	.687	202.348	78	.000
4. The effects of online reviews, comments, and viral content on the consumers perceptions of the brand	.669	131.929	10	.000
5. The factors that drives customer loyalty (or attraction) to a brand via social media	.706	127.079	10	.000

Table 4.2 above shows that the sum of the requirements for the factor analysis were met. Thus, the variables that made up the instrument were appropriate for the measurement of the component. Therefore, the sections that have been shown in this instrument measured all the aspects that they intended to.

4.3.2 Rotated Component Matrix

Creswell and Creswell (2017) suggest that the factor analysis can be referred to as a numerical system that aims at data minimisation. A factor analysis is used in a survey for the purpose of representing questions that are composed of hypothetical factors. Tables 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 that are depicted below followed these forms of analysis:

- The researcher selected the extraction system as the main method of analysis. The selected rotation system included the varimax with Kaiser normalisation. The varimax with Kaiser normalisation includes the orthogonal rotation system where there is a reduction in the number of variables that portray high loadings on each factor. The varimax with Kaiser normalisation assists with the interpretation of factors.
- The factor analysis or loading in Tables 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 below follows outlines of inter-correlations between variables.

- The interview questions reflected in Table 4.3 below show measurements pertaining to likable elements. A test of the subjects that loaded on or over 0.5 ensured that they measured along the several elements. Tables 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 below indicate the roles of social media to SDC consumers.

4.3.3 The role of social media to SDC consumers

Table 4. 3: Role of social media to SDC consumers

Component Matrix ^a				
	Component			
	1	2	3	4
From the below table, which social media site do you normally use?	.160	-.037	.813	-.221
On average how many hours do you spend a day on social media?	-.371	.211	-.175	.525
How often have you came across information regarding Savanna Dry cider on social media?	.643	-.045	-.364	-.051
Regarding Savanna Dry Cider do you "like" or "follow" any of their social media pages?	.767	-.203	-.075	.173
To what extent does the brand's social media presence influence your buying decision?	.751	-.144	.102	-.159
Has any social media posts regarding Savanna Dry Cider ever prompted you to purchase this product spontaneously?	.651	.324	-.095	.352
Have you ever come across any social media contests/promotions featuring Savanna Dry Cider?	.607	.156	.313	.319
Which social media promotions on Savanna Dry Cider are likely to influence your purchase decision?	.058	.781	-.086	-.125
Are you familiar with any social media Ads (video, pictures) on Savanna Dry Cider?	.253	.373	-.285	-.625
Which of the social media Advertisements from Savanna Dry Cider would you likely be attracted to?	-.102	.672	.307	.087

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 4 components extracted.

Table 4.3 measured SDC consumers' perceptions of the role of social media. These sections did not load well on some factors because the section induced indifference.

4.3.4 The effects of online reviews, comments, and viral content on the consumers perceptions of the brand

Table 4. 4: Effects of online reviews, comments, and viral content on consumers' perceptions of the brand:

Component Matrix ^a		
	Component	
	1	2
Information from social media has contributed to my knowledge about Savanna Dry Cider.	.850	-.129
I feel like I receive a tremendous amount of knowledge on social media concerning Savanna Dry Cider, through posts and reviews.	.843	.080
Hearing or reading a positive response about Savanna Dry Cider has influenced my decision about buying this product.	.809	.109
Hearing or reading a negative response about Savanna Dry Cider has influenced my decision about buying this product.	.362	-.605
If I see a viral post on social media connected to Savanna Dry Cider I forward/ share it with friends/ family and associates.	.208	.835

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 2 components extracted.

Table 4.4 outlines two sub-themes that were loaded. The reason for the section loading two sub-themes was that the participants identified varying trends within the section. The table shows that the questions resulted in positive and negative considerations in the section.

4.3.5 The factors that drive customer loyalty (or attraction) to a brand via social media.

Table 4. 5: Factors that drives customer loyalty (or attraction) to a brand via social media.

Component Matrix ^a		
	Component	
	1	2
I always have a good experience with Savanna Dry Cider brand.	.675	.376
Savanna Dry Cider has differentiated packaging in comparison to other cider brands.	.685	-.159
The different pack sizes offered by Savanna Dry Cider plays a role in my purchase decision.	.042	.937
Satisfaction with Savanna Dry Cider stimulates me to make repeat purchase of the brand.	.846	-.020
I'm satisfied enough with Savanna Dry Cider to recommend it to friends/ family and associates.	.822	-.204

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 2 components extracted.

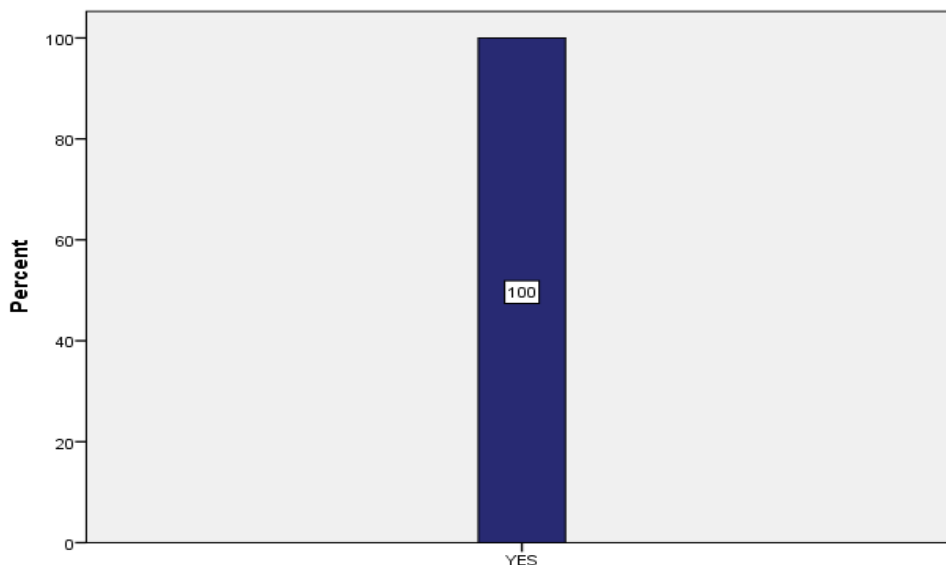
Table 4.5 outlines that it loaded two components. Table 4.5 further shows that the questions resulted in positive and negative considerations in the section.

4.4 Screening Questions

There were screening questions for participating in the study. The researcher was looking for a specific sample based on the following three characteristics: participants must be 18 years or above, consume SDC, and use online social platforms. Thereby, a sample of 120 participants was identified by the researcher as active consumers of SDC on social media.

Figure 4.1 illustrates the first mandatory requirement:

Figure 4. 1: Participants' age from 18 year and older



The study inquired about the age of its participants. Figure 4.1 illustrates that 100% participants responded with a “yes”, and thereby qualified to be a part of the sample of the study.

Figure 4.2 illustrates the mandatory requirement that the participants must consume SDC.

Figure 4. 2: Consumption of SDC

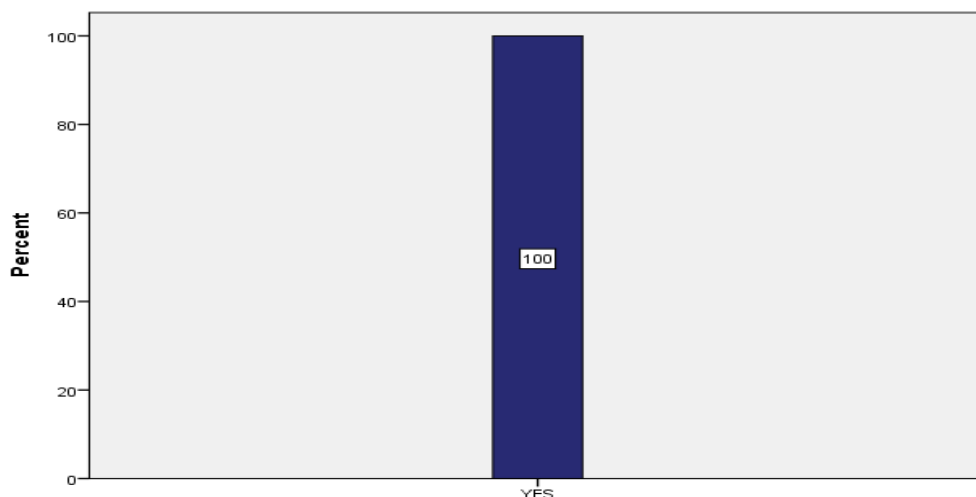


Figure 4.2 shows that 100% of the participants responded with a “yes”, and thereby qualified to be a part of the sample of the study.

Figure 4.3 illustrates the final mandatory requirement that participants must be social media users.

Figure 4. 3: Social media participation

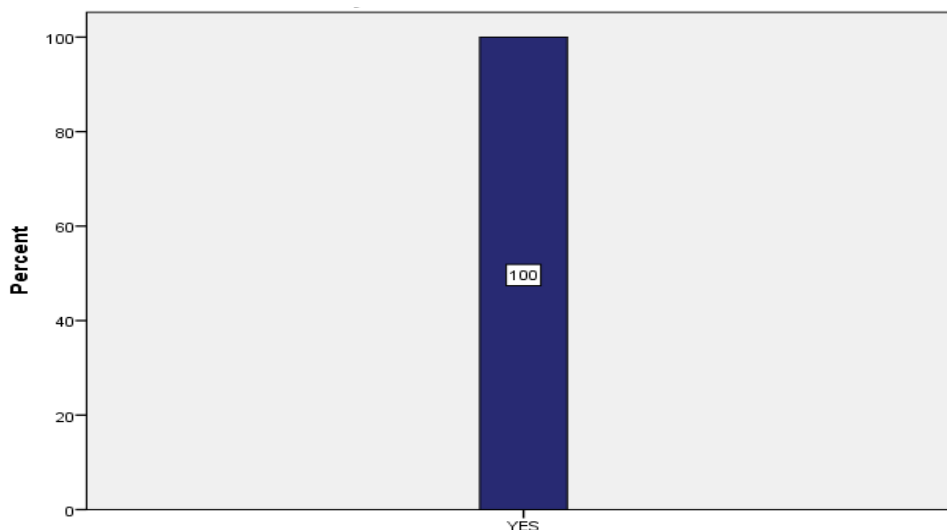


Figure 4.3 outlines that 100% of the participants responded with a “yes”, and thereby qualified to be a part of the sample of the study.

4.5 Demographics of the Study

4.5.1 Gender

A balanced gender distribution is significant for a study since this ensures that its validity, rigour, and relevance are enhanced (Rich-Edwards, Kaiser, Chen, Manson and Goldstein, 2018). In some studies, based on the phenomenon that is being investigated, the responses may vary based on the gender of the participants. Therefore, it is important to have a balanced in terms of gender attributes. The study asked its participants to indicate their gender. Figure 4.4 illustrates the gender of the participants:

Figure 4. 4: Participants' Gender

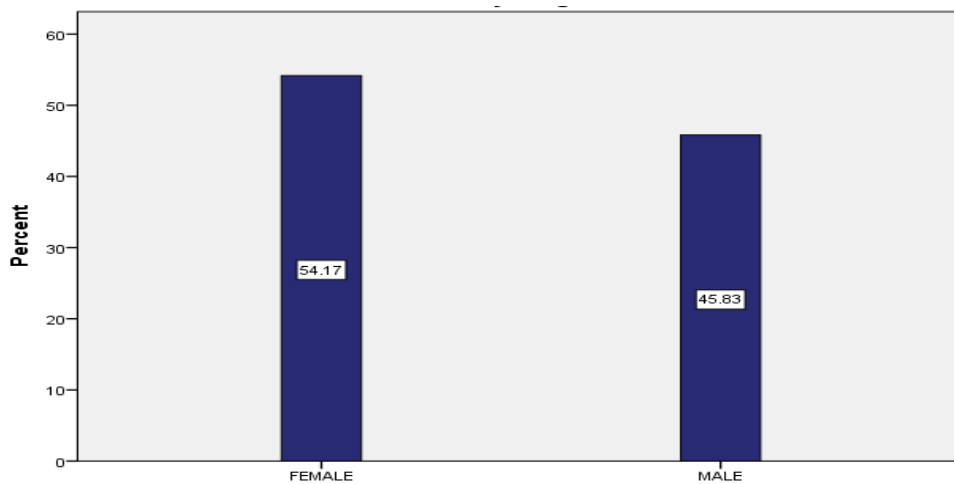


Figure 4.4 shows that the participants were made up of 54.17% females and 45.83% males. This gender representation is not too far apart and is balanced. Therefore, the responses that would be acquired from this sample would be representative of gender. Thus, it is an appropriate gender balance that would be capable of meeting the study objectives.

4.5.2 Ethnic Group

It is sometimes necessary to balance the ethnic makeup of a sample to obtain a variety of responses from participants of different backgrounds (Ross, Hart-Johnson, Santen and Zaidi; 2020). This ensures that the data that is collected reflects the general truth of the target population based on ethnicity and the set of variables pertaining to the phenomenon. Figure 4.5 illustrates the ethnic groups of the study:

Figure 4. 5: Participants' Ethnic Group

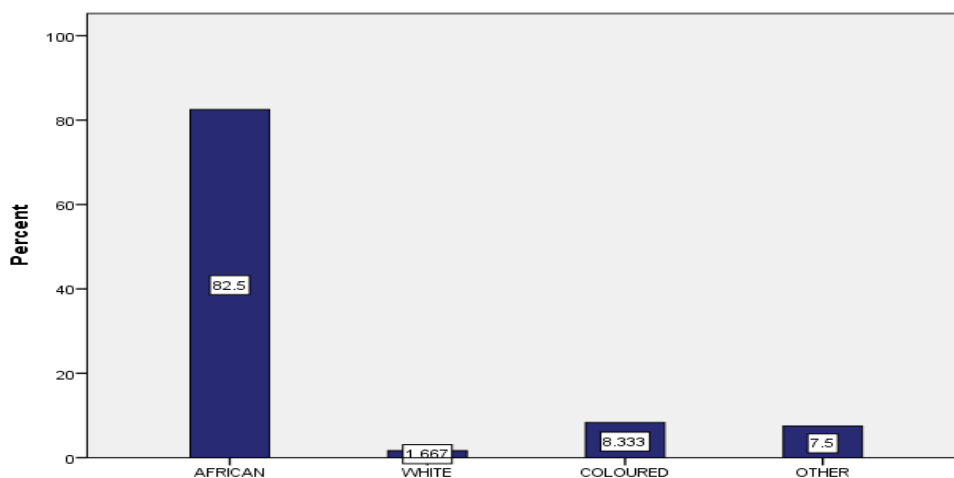


Figure 4.5 illustrates that 82.5% of the participants were African, 1.667% were white, 8.333% were coloured and 7.5% were other. The ethnic groups that made up this study were not balanced. This was possibly because of the location of the study. However, the imbalance in the ethnic makeup did not affect the attainment of the research objectives.

4.5.3 Age Group

The sample of a study must be made up of a balanced age group (Pickering, 2017). A balanced age group promotes the variation of the responses that are acquired pertaining to the phenomenon. This is because certain ages may have different outlooks with regards to the phenomenon. Figure 4.6 illustrates the age group of the study.

Figure 4.6: Age group

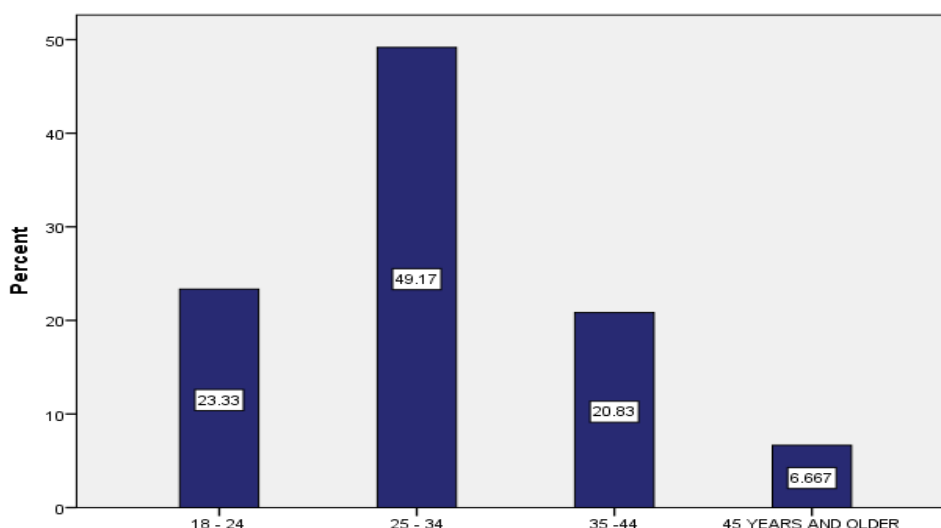


Figure 4.6 illustrates that there were 23.33% in the 18 – 24 age group, 49.17% in the 25 – 34 age group, 20.83% in the 35 – 44 age group, and finally, 6.667% in the 45 years and older group

The age groups represented in this study covered most of the people who would possess information pertaining to the phenomenon being investigated. There were enough participants in the age groups to provide the necessary data and promote the achievement of the study's objectives.

4.6 Presentation and Discussion of Results

The research objectives of the study influenced the creation of the questionnaire. Thus, the primary data collected sought to respond to the questions of the study. This section strategically presented each research objective and discussed what was uncovered from the primary findings. The primary data was compared with the secondary data that the researcher found and used in the study.

4.6.1 Social media usage, Consumer behaviour and Decision-making

The first objective that was being investigated in the study concerned social media usage, consumer behaviour and decision-making. The researcher devised several queries in the questionnaire and sought responses from the participants of the study. These are presented and discussed below.

4.5.1.1 Social media site normally used

The researcher asked its participants to provide the online social sites that they normally used. Figure 4.7 below outlined the social media site that the participants normally used.

Figure 4.7: Social media sites usage

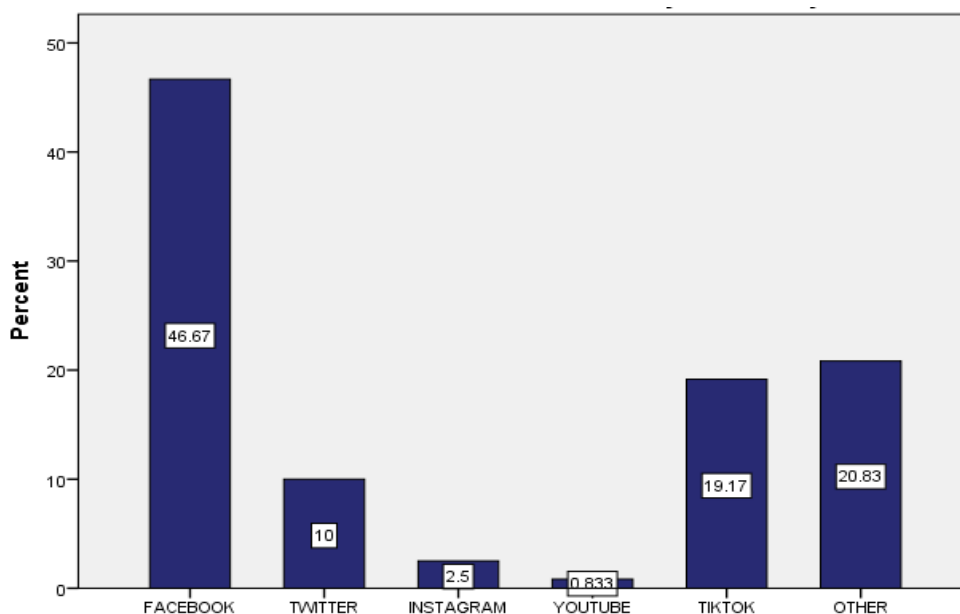


Figure 4.7 shows that 46.67% of the participants normally use Facebook; 10% of the participants normally use Twitter; 2.5% of the participants normally use Instagram; 0.833%

of the participants normally use YouTube; 19.17% of the participants normally use Tik Tok, and finally, 20.83% of the participants normally used other social media applications.

The primary data resonates with the secondary data. There are various popular social media platforms, like the following: Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn (Razaei and Ismael; 2018). The primary finding agrees with the secondary findings since so many of the participants use these social media pages. There was a good representation of the participants on many social media sites. This promoted the chances of achieving aim of the research.

In addition, Carah et al. (2018) points out that Facebook is the key player in shaping alcohol marketing activities as it has recorded increased consumer engagements more than any other social media app, especially amongst young adults. The authors' assertion resonates with the primary findings since most of the people who drank the SDC normally use Facebook. To add on to this, Curran et al. (2011) state that about 1 out of 13 human beings at the global scale have a Facebook account. Thus, the online social platform presents a big opportunity that brands can use to promote their commodities or business offering. This finding shows that there were endless marketing possibilities and benefits from using social media.

The Consumer or Buyer Decision-making Process Model's theoretical framework was applicable to this finding. This is because, as Pesonsen (2013) indicates, the purchasing process is consistently transforming from traditional shopping practices to new and innovative ones that use social media. Thus, the prevalence of people on so many social media networks has opened access to a big market that is open 24 hours a day and is accessible by the marketers of the SDC brand.

Therefore, this entails that alcoholic beverages marketers must take social media promotion campaigns more seriously. The ones that already use them must ensure that they strengthen this channel to realise the utmost results. The alcoholic beverages companies that are yet to use social media marketing must ensure that they fully understand their target market, the use of online platforms and implement the most appropriate strategies that would result in successful campaigns.

4.5.1.2 Hours spent on social media.

The research asked its participants to show the time that they were active a day on average

on social media. Figure 4.8 illustrates number of hours a day that the participants spent on social media.

Figure 4. 8: Average hours spent on social media

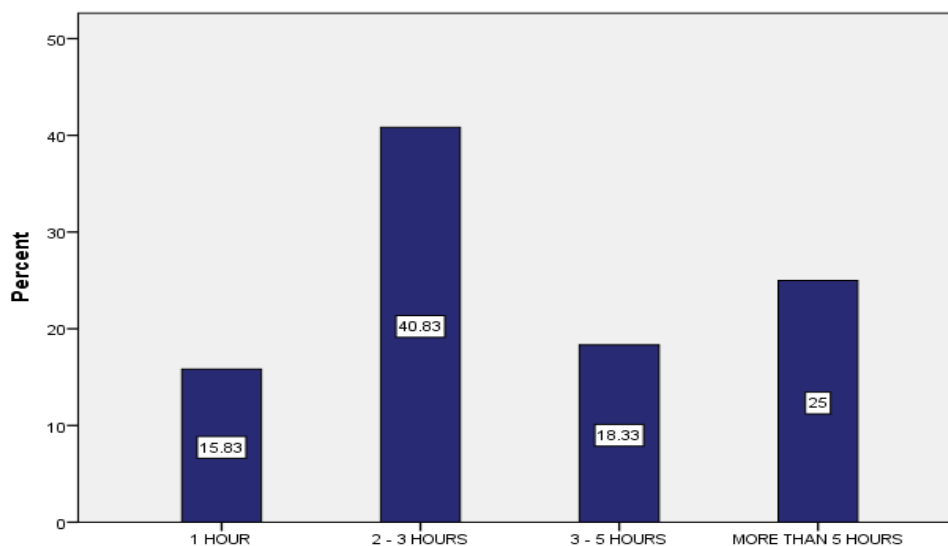


Figure 4.8 showed that 15.83% of the participants spent an hour daily on online social platforms. 40.83% spent 2–3 hours a day on social media; 18.33% spent 3–5 hours daily; and finally, 25% spent more than 5 hours daily on social media.

The primary findings resonate with the literature review. The literature indicates that online social platforms have completely changed the business world as it is an easy, fast and accessible tool to reach consumers and conduct business (Advanced Recovery Systems, 2021). With a wide array of options in products, services, and electronic payment systems, social media has become the hub of business all over the world. This is the reason so many of the participants spent so much time on social media each day.

The fact that there are online users that are current and potential consumers of SDC means that alcoholic beverages organisations must remain active. Marketers that belong to the alcoholic brands should ensure that they maintain a “24/7” type of communication so that they can be able to engage with current and potential consumers. This would promote their marketing campaigns since they would be first in line to access significant information about their consumers and also interact with them at all times.

The Consumer or Buyer Decision-making Process Model’s theoretical framework was applicable to this finding. This is because, as Pesonsen (2013) indicates, the purchasing

process is consistently transforming from the traditional purchasing practices new ones that incorporate social media. Thus, as more and more people spend so many hours on social media on a daily basis, there is a large market that can be accessible by the marketers of SDC 24 hours a day.

4.5.1.3 Information regarding SDC on online social platforms

The study asked its participants how frequently they came across information about SDC on social media. Figure 4.9 below illustrates the findings to this query.

Figure 4. 9: Information regarding SDC on social media

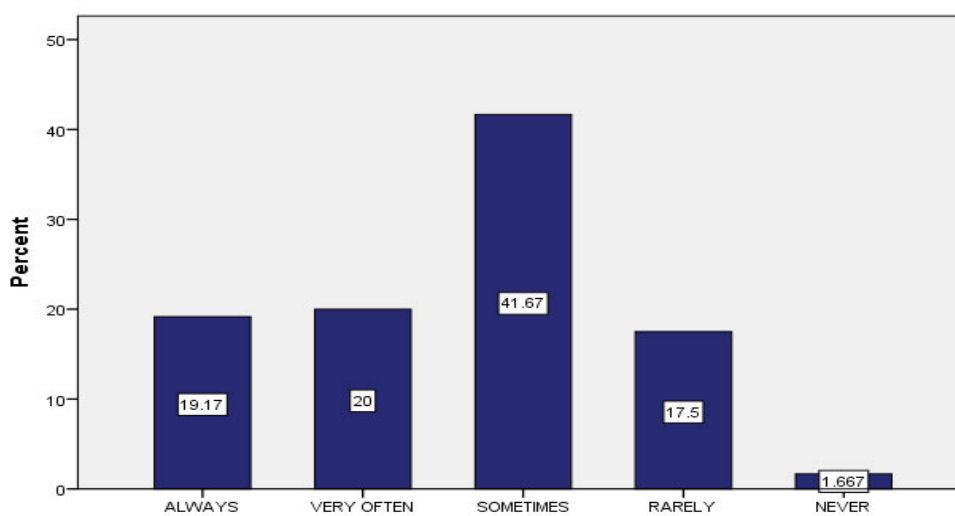


Figure 4.9 showcases that 19.17% of the participants always came across information regarding SDC on social media. 20% of the participants very often came across information regarding SDC on social media; 41.67% sometimes came across information regarding SDC on social media; and 17.5% rarely came across information regarding SDC on social media; and finally, 1.667% of the participants had not come across information regarding SDC on social media.

The primary findings indicate that most of the participants came across information regarding SDC from online social platforms. This agrees with Winfield and Richardson (2016), who explain that the rapid increase in the popularity of online social platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp and Instagram brings about the necessity across industries to select it for advertising.

Thus, the evidence that SDC consumers access information from online social platforms builds into the fact that alcoholic brands must ensure that they use this marketing channel to the maximum. Alcoholic brands must ensure that this channel is managed effectively and efficiently so that it can be able to provide all the needs of the current and potential consumers.

The Consumer or Buyer Decision-making Process Model's theoretical framework was applicable to this finding. Crittenden, Peterson and Albaum (2017) postulate that "nowadays, customers have realised that they can take advantage of finding out more about a brand and also interact with it and other customers on social media. Thus, most of the participants were able to access information pertaining to SDC using social media.

4.5.1.4 "Like" social media posts or "Follow" social media pages of SDC

The research enquired whether the participants "liked" the social media posts or "followed" any of the social media pages of SDC. Figure 4.10 outlines the findings pertaining to this query.

Figure 4. 10: Regarding SDC, do you "like" any of their social media posts or "follow" social media pages?

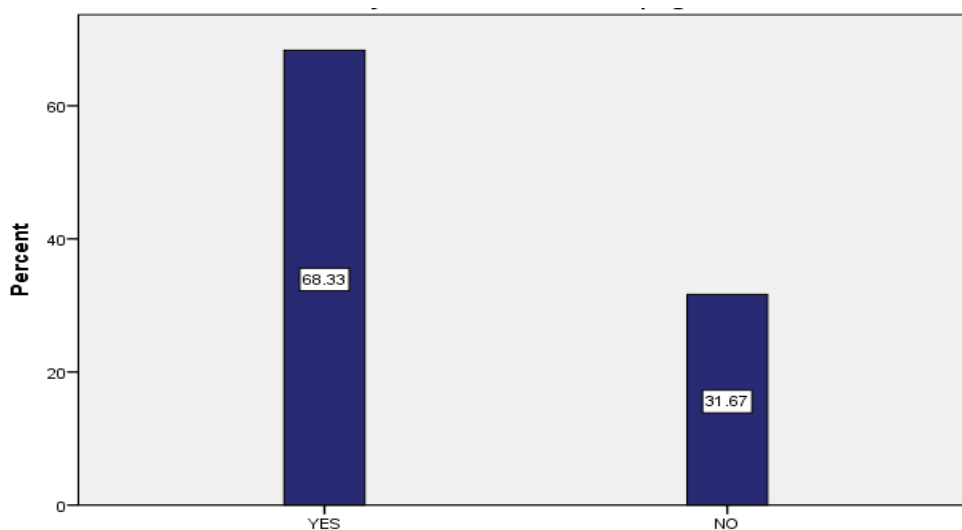


Figure 4.10 indicates that 66.33% of the participants responded "yes" they had "liked" a social media post or "followed" a social media page that belonged to the SDC stakeholders. 31.67% of the participants responded "no" to the query: "liking" a social media post or "following" a social media page promoting the SDC.

Figure 4.10 displays that most of the participants had liked or followed a social media post or page promoting SDC. This finding agrees with the literature review used in the study. Most companies nowadays have increased their media presence due to the impact social media has on consumer behaviour compared to the traditional methods of advertising (Campbell et al., 2014). It is clear that online social platform is beneficial because of the information, they provide pertaining to the actions of consumers., Therefore, brands have the chance of adding online social platform marketing to their chain of value (Pophiwa et al., 2021; Winfield and Richardson, 2016). Hence the prevalence of people involved with the social media posts and pages of SDC.

The Consumer or Buyer Decision-making Process Model's theoretical framework was applicable to this finding. Crittenden et al. (2017) postulate that modern customers have realised that they can use online social platforms to find out information about a commodity or business offering and interact with other customers and the brand. In addition, Pesonsen (2013) indicates that the purchasing process is consistently transforming from the traditional system to one that incorporates social media. Thus, there is a prevalence of people on so many social media networks who "like" the SDC posts and "follow" the SDC social media pages.

4.5.1.5 The SDC brand's social media presence's influence on people's buying decisions

The researcher asked about the extent the SDC brand's social media presence influences the participants' buying decisions. Figure 4.11 shows the responses from the sample.

Figure 4. 11: SDC's social media presence on buying decision

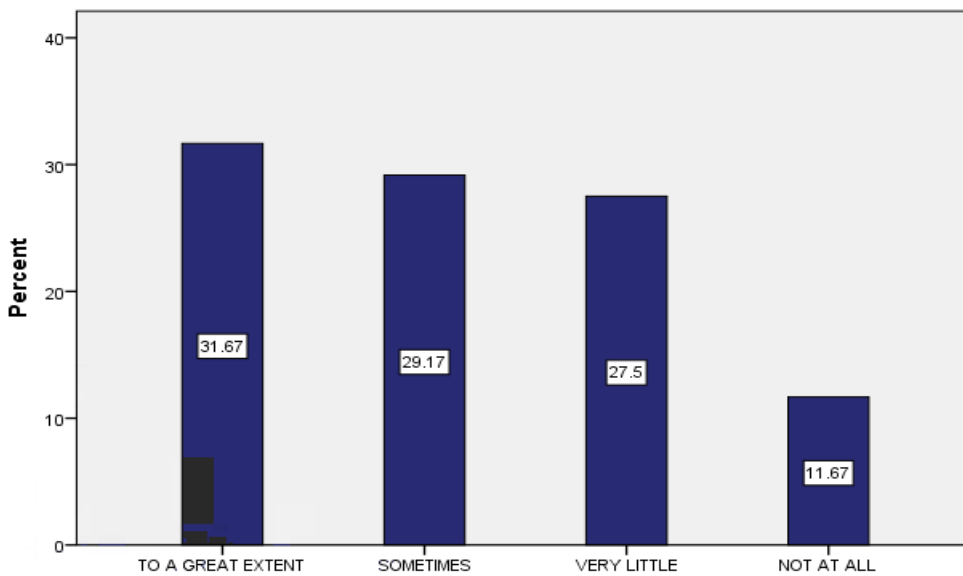


Figure 4.11 illustrates that 31.67% of the participants indicated that the SDC's media presence influences their buying decisions to a great extent. 29.17% of the participants indicated that the SDC's media presence sometimes influences their buying decision; 27.5% of the participants indicated that the SDC's media presence has very little influence on their buying decision; and 11.67% of the participants said that the SDC's online social platforms' presence has no impact on the consumers purchasing decision.

The finding indicates that most of the participants indicated that the SDC's media presence influenced their purchase decisions. The literature review showed that many organisations globally have invested in social media and social networking for the purpose of promotion for their commodities and business offerings (Mishra and Ayatham, 2017). A few examples of such organisations or companies are The Absolut Vodka Company, which runs an online video and at the same utilises its Facebook fan page, Top Bartender, to connect with different bartenders online and advertise its products, in that way. Thereby, the soaring levels of customers' purchase decisions are influenced by the fact that SDC has a constant presence on social media. The SDC brand uses the Siyavana campaign to advertise its ciders by making it seem easy to connect with people personally because of the drink they are having. Thus, more people are exposed to the brand and are encouraged to purchase it.

The influence that social media platforms have on SDC consumers serves to point to the fact that this marketing channel is one of the most important for its campaigns. Therefore, there is a need of its marketers taking it more seriously and finding ways of ensuring that they can

acquire as much benefits as possible from its use. SDC marketers must ensure that they make this channel effective and efficient to enable maximum success levels, since it has all the potential to assist the brand reach its objectives.

The Consumer or Buyer Decision-making Process Model's theoretical framework was applicable to this finding. The secondary data used showed that different types of marketing exist, but shopper marketing includes a modern notion that introduces an innovative meeting angle where businesses and consumers converge (Mishra and Ayatham, 2017). In the liquor industry, this could be girls "chilling" at the club, sipping wine or cocktails, or viral videos of consumers dancing to "Amapiano" with a bottle of SDC in their hands, as commonly seen in South Africa. Shopper marketing is "the planning and execution of all marketing activities that influence a shopper along, and beyond, the entire path of purchase, from the point at which the motivation to shop first emerges through purchase, consumption, repurchase, and recommendation" (Shankar et al., 2011). Thus, the presence of SDC on social media has a positive influence on people's purchase decisions. The more people see it, the more they associate it with positivity and enjoyment and have the urge to purchase it.

4.5.1.6 SDC prompting people to purchase the product spontaneously

The study sought to find out from its sample if social media posts regarding SDC ever prompted them to purchase the product spontaneously. Figure 4.12 outlines their responses.

Figure 4. 12: Social media posts regarding SDC that prompt purchase

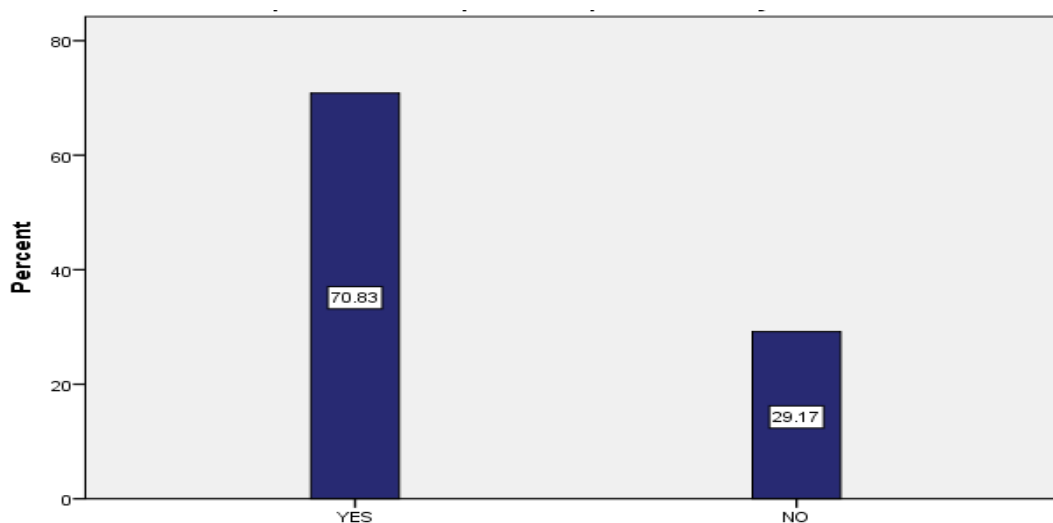


Figure 4.12 illustrates that 70.83% of the participants responded “yes” to indicate that social media posts regarding SDC prompted them to purchase this product spontaneously. 29.17% of the participants responded “no” to indicate social media posts regarding SDC have never prompted them to purchase this product spontaneously.

The findings indicate that most of the participants responded positively. This primary finding agrees with the secondary data used in this study. Winfield and Richardson (2016) explain that the rapid increase in the popularity of online social platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp and Instagram introduces the necessity across industries to adopt it as a channel for advertising. In addition, most companies nowadays have increased their media presence due to the power that online social platforms exercise on the actions of customers as compared to traditional methods of advertising (Campbell et al., 2014). SDC's posts directly contribute to the reason more participants purchased from the brand following the posts. The lack of their presence on social media would also mean that there are fewer purchases made as compared to other brands using this channel.

Based on the findings, alcoholic brands must ensure that they begin or increase their social media presence. Marketers from alcoholic brands must ensure that they take social media more seriously and realise the potential and access to consumers that it has. In addition, they must realise that it is one of the most affordable strategies of acquiring real contact with consumers.

In application of the Consumer or Buyer Decision-making Process Model theoretical framework, shopper marketing includes “the planning and execution of all marketing activities that influence a shopper along, and beyond, the entire path of purchase, from the point at which the motivation to shop first emerges through purchase, consumption, repurchase, and recommendation” (Shankar et al., 2011). Thus, the presence of the SDC on social media has a positive influence on people’s purchase decisions.

4.5.1.7 Social media contests/promotions featuring SDC.

The study asked its participants if they had ever come across any social media contests/promotions featuring SDC. Figure 4.13 outlines their responses.

Figure 4. 13: Social media contests/promotions featuring SDC

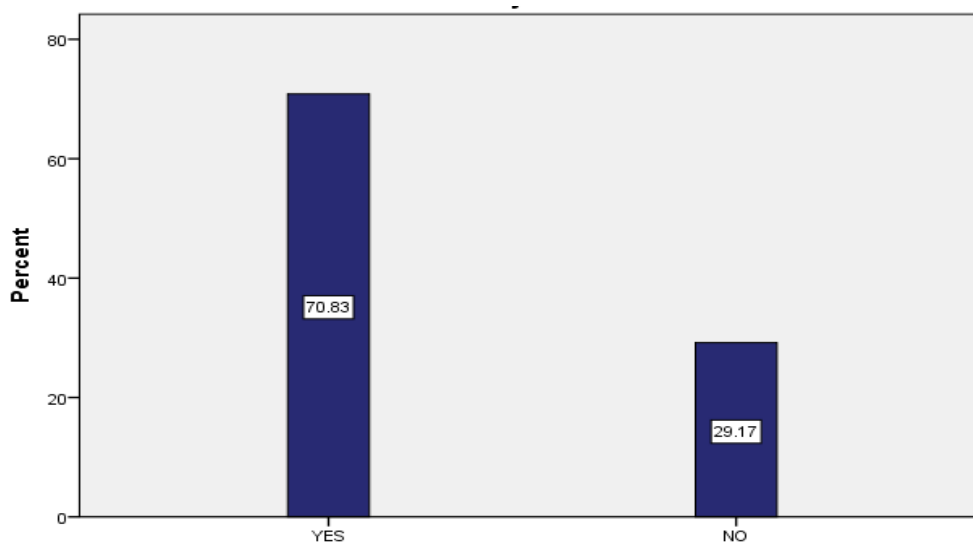


Figure 4.13 shows that 70.83% of the participants answered “yes”, meaning that they have come across a social media contests/promotion featuring SDC. However, 29.17% of the participants responded “no”, meaning that they have not come across any social media contests/promotions featuring SDC.

Most of the participants responded positively to this query. Balci and Celtin (2017) pointed out that social media has been instrumental in impacting on the actions taken by customers in that it is key to the creation of a participatory culture where users of social media platforms interact with other like-minded consumers, sharing information, monitoring updates, and requesting as well as analysing all kinds of products and information on the available services. Thereby, the SDC brand realised this and ensured that it engaged current and potential customers through this type of marketing. Urumsah (2015) maintains that the sense of being socially linked remains a vital factor for the psychological aspects of being a part of a community. This resulted in trends and challenges that a host of consumers participated in online due to the fear of missing out; for example, the Savanna Dry “*Tshayi mpembe*” challenge, where people danced with a Savanna Dry bottle in hand while whistling to the beat of the “*Amapiano*” song “*Tshayi Mpembe*”. Therefore, it was highly likely that so many people would come across these modes of marketing connected to the SDC brand.

Therefore, alcohol brand marketers must be active on social platforms so that they can take advantage of trends that emanate. The marketers must then be able to strategically use such trends to promote their alcoholic brands in a way that is appealing to both current and potential consumers.

4.5.1.8 Social media promotions on SDC likely to influence purchase decision.

The study asked its participants which social media promotions on SDC were likely to influence their purchase decision. Figure 4.14 illustrates their input.

Figure 4.14: Social media promotions on SDC's influence on purchase decision

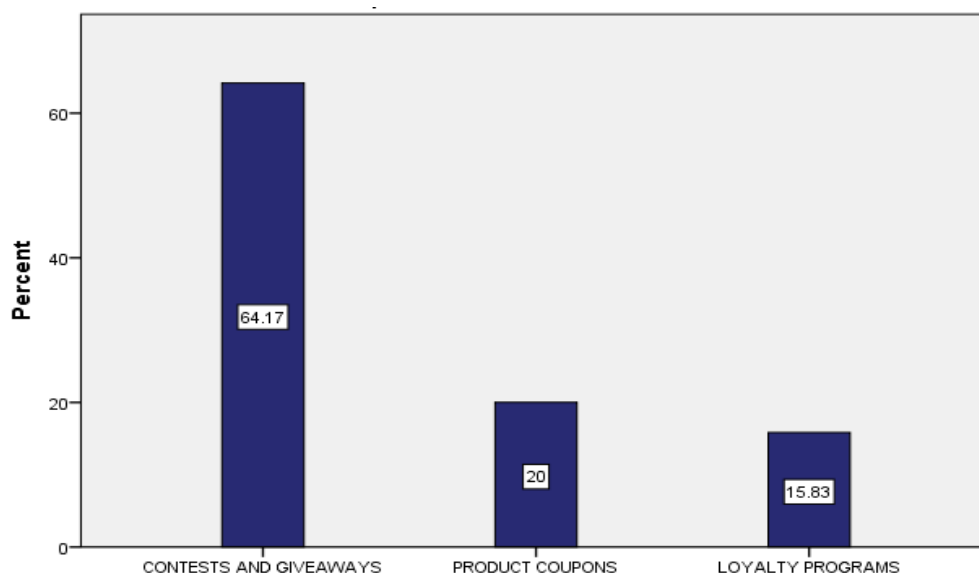


Figure 4.14 illustrates that 64.17% of the participants stated that “contests and giveaways” were the social media promotions on SDC that were likely to influence their purchase decision. 20% indicated that “product coupons” were the social media promotions on SDC that were had a bigger chance of impacting on the buying decision; and finally, 15.83% indicated that “loyalty programs” were the social media promotions on SDC that had a bigger impact to their purchase actions.

Most of the participants showed that contests and giveaways are had a bigger chance of impacting on their buying decisions. The literature review showed that customers log on to online social platforms media mostly for the purposes of staying informed about their favourite brands' commodities as well as marketing services (Duncan, 2013). In terms of the Consumer or Buyer Decision-making Process Model theoretical framework, the needs of the customers must be considered. Maslow's hierarchy of needs point out that needs and wants are the result of growth in social stature or influences (Rosen, 2018). Marketers must anticipate consumers' needs in order to determine when the ideal time would be to advertise; hence, brands currently seek and are encouraged to use line online social platform initiatives and channels for the purposes of touching base with their customers. Thus, people want to be

excited and involved, and benefit when interacting with brands. That is why contests and giveaways are a strong marketing angle.

Brands that engage their current and potential consumers through contents and giveaways serve the point of remaining memorable. Such brands are associated with fun, excitement and positivity. This is an important marketing angle for alcoholic brands that seek to mark a mark and remain relevant. Thus, alcoholic brands must ensure that they carry out contents and giveaways as much as they can to promote their products.

4.5.1.9 Familiarity with social media advertisements (videos, pictures) on SDC

Participants were asked if they were familiar with any social media advertisements (videos, pictures) on SDC. Figure 4.15 shows their responses.

Figure 4.15: Familiarity with any social media advertisements

(videos, pictures) on SDC

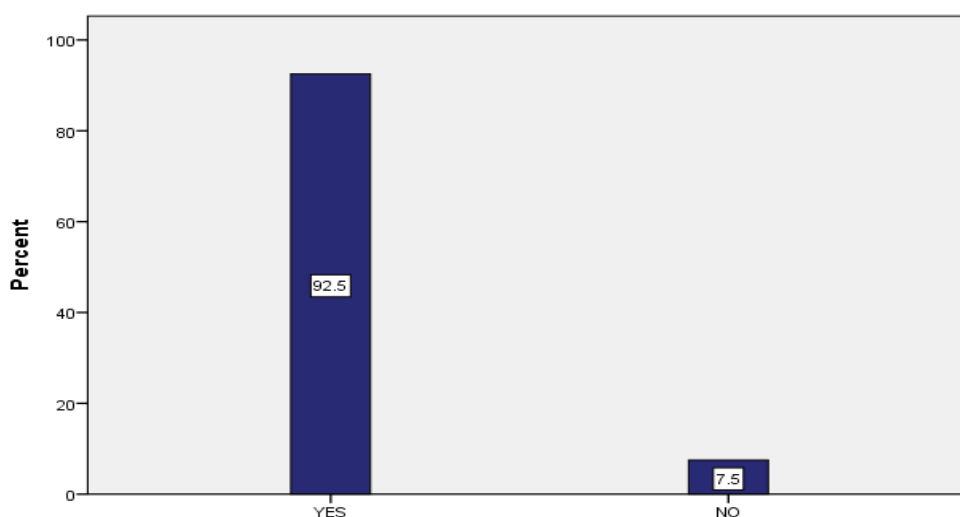


Figure 4.15 illustrates that 92.5% of the participants answered “yes”, indicating that they were familiar with social media advertisements (videos or pictures) on SDC; 7.5% of the participants responded “no”, indicating that they were not familiar with any social media advertisements (videos or pictures) on SDC.

Figure 4.15 shows that most of the participants were familiar with SDC social media advertisements. Balci and Celtin (2017) pointed out that social media has been instrumental in impacting the actions taken by customers in that it is key to the creation of a participatory culture where users of social media platforms interact with other like-minded consumers, sharing information, monitoring updates, and requesting as well as analysing all kinds of

products and information on the available services. Thereby, the SDC brand realised this and ensured that it engaged current and potential customers through this type of marketing. Urumsah (2015) maintains that possessing the sense being a part of the social community serves as an important mental factor for so many people across the globe.

In application of the Consumer or Buyer Decision-making Process Model theoretical framework, the millennial customers have emerged as the biggest purchasers of commodities and inducing their interest means that brands must switch from the traditional systems of promotion and incorporate online social platforms (Mishra and Ayatham, 2017). Thus, it follows that so many people would be familiar with SDC's social media advertisements in the video or picture form.

4.5.1.10 SDC social media advertisements people are likely to be attracted to

The study asked its respondents to indicate which of the SDC's social media advertisements they would likely be attracted to. Figure 4.16 below illustrates the primary findings pertaining to this query.

Figure 4. 16: Social media advertisements and attraction

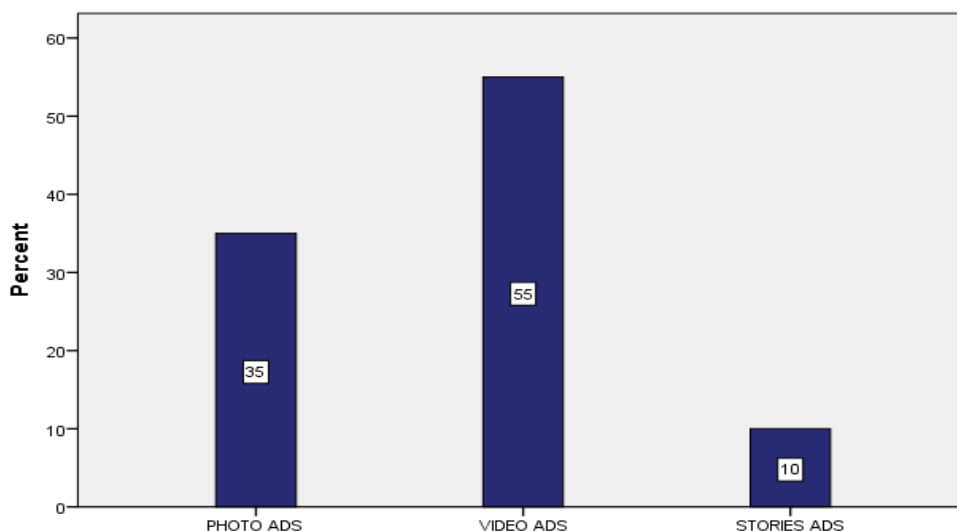


Figure 4.16 shows that there were 35% of the participants that indicated that “Photo Advertisements” were the social media advertisements from SDC that they would likely be attracted to. There were 55% of the participants that indicated that “Video Advertisements” were the social media advertisements from SDC that they would likely be attracted to. Finally, there were 10% of the participants that showed that “Stories Advertisements” were the social

media advertisements from SDC that they would likely be attracted to.

Most of the participants in this study indicated that they would likely be attracted to “video advertisements.” This agrees with the secondary data from this study. Many organisations globally have invested in social media and social networking for the promotion of their commodities and business offerings (Mishra and Ayatham, 2017). A few examples of such organisations or companies are The Absolut Vodka Company, which runs an online video and at the same utilises its Facebook fan page, Top Bartender, to connect with different bartenders online, and in that way, it advertises its products. Savanna uses the Siyavana campaign to advertise its ciders by making it seem easy to connect with people personally because of the drink they are having. Thus, the video advertisements are more appealing and popular with the sample of the study.

Video advertisements are an important tool since current and potential consumers’ interest is stimulated through seeing promotions or campaigns. It is important for the consumers to be able to receive a message that they can clearly understand and relate to. Thus, video advertisements are a channel that alcohol marketers must continue to use, however, in a strategic manner to avoid passing the wrong message or acquiring a negative response.

This is consistent with the contribution of the Consumer or Buyer Decision-making Process Model’s theoretical framework. The needs of the customers must be considered. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs points out that needs and wants are the result of growth in social stature or influences (Rosen, 2018). A marketer’s role is to anticipate marketing needs; hence, brands pay attention to online social platform initiatives and channels extend their grasp to their customers. Thus, people want to be able to see, get excited about and be involved in the marketing process. Video advertisements are popular because they are a good strategy.

4.5.1.11 Information from social media’s contribution to knowledge about SDC

The research sought to find out from its participants if the information from social media had contributed to their knowledge about SDC. Figure 4.17 below shows the findings from this query from the sample of the study.

Figure 4. 17: Social media contribution to knowledge regarding SDC

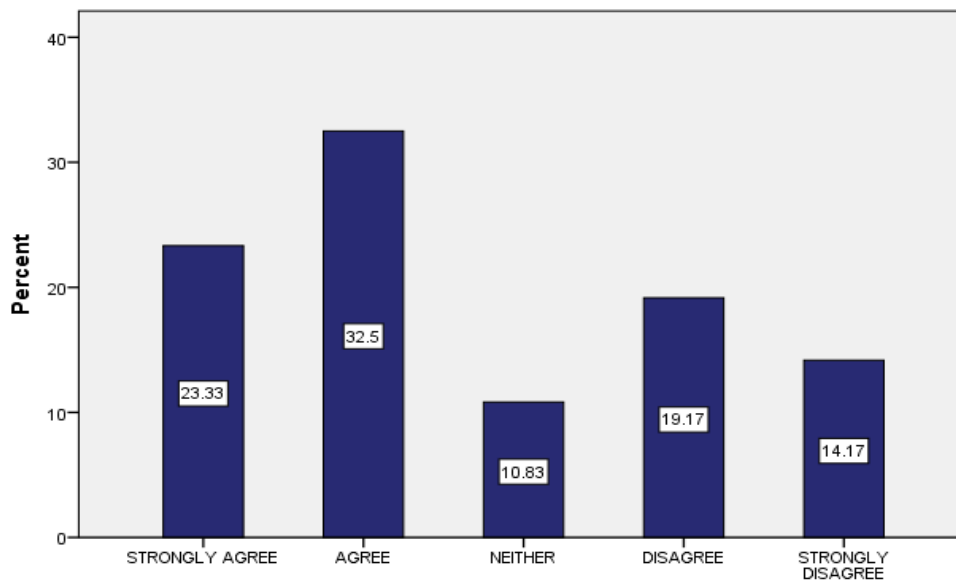


Figure 4.17 illustrates that 23.33% of the participants strongly agreed, 32.5% agreed, 10.83% neither agreed nor disagreed, 19.17% disagreed, and finally, 14.17% of the sample strongly disagreed that information from social media had contributed to their knowledge about SDC.

Most of the sample showed that they answered positively to this query. Many organisations globally have invested in social media and social networking for the purpose of promoting and marketing their commodities and business offerings (Mishra and Ayatham, 2017). Savanna uses the Siyavana campaign to advertise its ciders by making it seem easy to connect with people personally because of the drink they are having. Thus, the video advertisements are more appealing and popular with the majority of the sample in the study.

The Consumer or Buyer Decision-making Process Model's theoretical framework directly applies to this finding in terms of information search. This is the stage where the consumer looks for information on the intended product. The process is consistently shifting from traditional buying systems to modern and innovative ones that incorporate social media (Pesonsen, 2013). Crittenden, Peterson and Albaum (2017) postulate that nowadays customers log on to online social platforms to find out more about commodities and business offerings and also to interact with other customers and the brand. Thus, the sample was able to find information pertaining to SDC on social media. The information has been placed there strategically by the SDC brand because it is aware that consumers are located there and are constantly looking for information of this nature, or for the sake of just exposing it to them.

4.5.1.12 Received a tremendous amount of knowledge on social media concerning SDC through posts and reviews.

The study asked its participants to indicate if they felt like they received a tremendous amount of knowledge on social media concerning SDC through posts and reviews.

Figure 4.18: Knowledge on social media concerning SDC, through posts and reviews

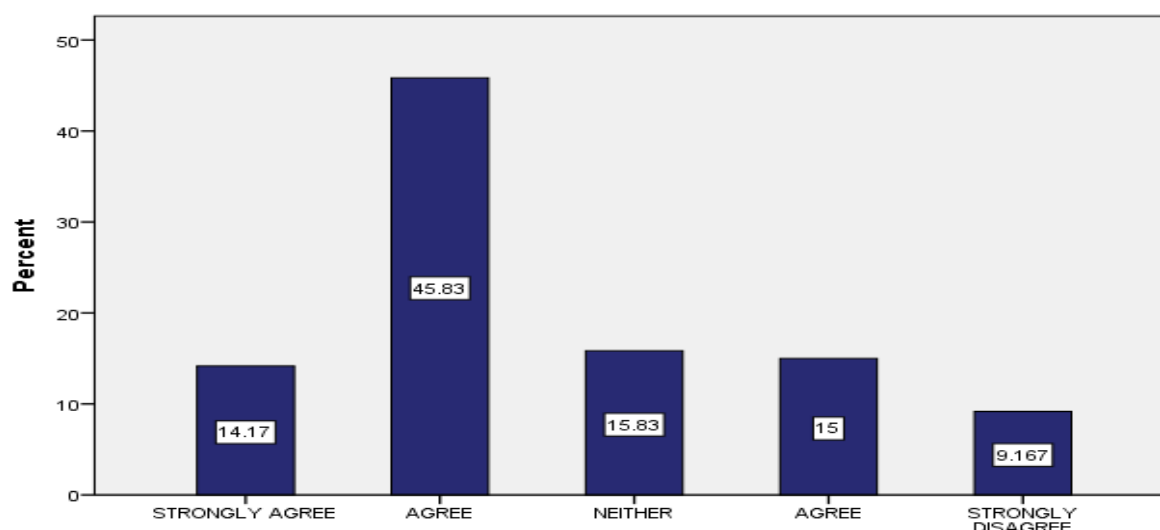


Figure 4.18 illustrates that 14.17% of the participants strongly agreed, 45.83% agreed, 15.83% responded neither, 15% disagreed; and finally, 9.16% strongly disagreed with the statement.

Figure 4.18 demonstrates that most of the sample size responded positively to the statement. This finding agrees with the literature review in this study. Customers are interested in knowing how a product or service feels like or seek to experience it and so conduct evaluations before buying; therefore, data that is available with regards to a brand's offerings tends to be largely personal and analysis are carried out in terms of experience (Taylor, 2015). Therefore, posts made by other consumers are influential in their subjective decision-making process. Popphiwa et al. (2021) maintain that consumers are much interested in data pertaining to reviews of an experience commodity as compared to a search commodity because they need be able to feel and experience the business offering before buying it. In the same vein, it is evident that some customers rely on the data that emanates from online reviews before buying a brand's business offerings (Pesonsen, 2013; Rosen, 2018).

Therefore, it follows that the sample in this study paid more attention to posts and reviews

about SDC to receive knowledge about the product. Thus, alcohol brands' marketers must ensure that they provide actual opportunities that allow their current or potential consumers to experience their products. The marketers must find ways of ensuring that the current or potential customers have access to experiences that they require before they purchase any of the products. This would promote the purchasing chances of the consumers.

The Consumer or Buyer Decision-making Process Model's theoretical framework is applicable based on the information search factor. Bernoff and Li (2010) identified five varying forms of social behaviours, which are creators, critics, collectors, joiners, and spectators. The creators are responsible for issuing and sustaining data and ensuring that there is communication, critics put their minds and comments on it, collectors spread information, joiners link and present data to people and spectators take the information in (Bernoff and Li, 2010). The impactful aspect is concerning the customers that are involved in making comments pertaining to the commodities and business offerings on social platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to gain information on their brands of choice. As part of the consumers, the sample reads the posts and reviews made by the other influential stakeholders on social media. Thereafter, there is the process of evaluating the alternatives. At this stage the consumer starts asking questions such as: Is the item the appropriate commodity to buy? or is there a need of an alternate commodity? In the case where the responses are either "No it's not right" or "Yes, I need a different product", it entails that the second phase can restart (Pesonsen, 2013). The sample would be involved in such deliberation as it decides if it would like to purchase from the SDC brand or not.

4.5.1.13 Hearing or reading a positive response about SDC has influenced my decision about buying this product

The research enquired from its participants if hearing or reading a positive response about SDC influenced their decision about buying this product. Figure 4.19 outlines what the primary study uncovered from the sample.

Figure 4.19: Positive response regarding SDC and influence on buying decision

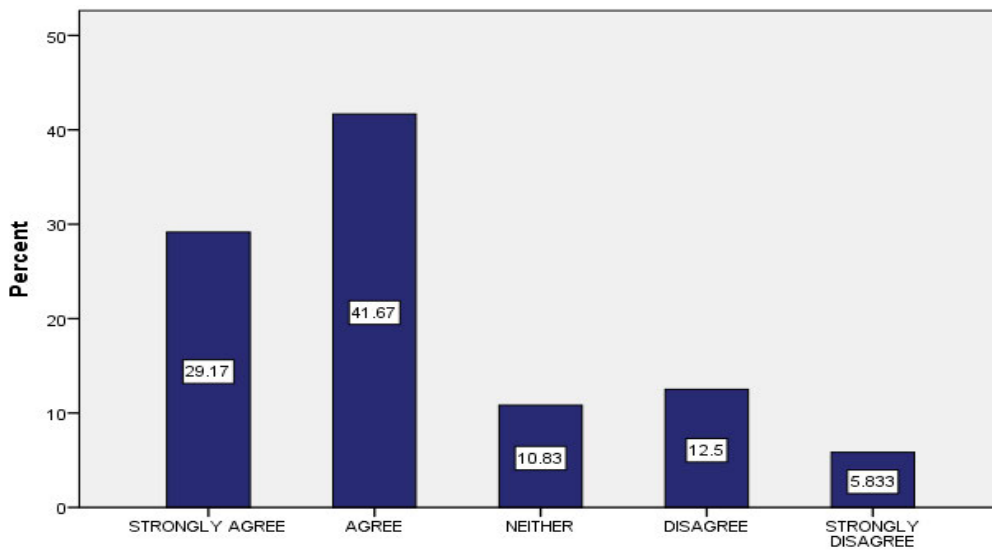


Figure 4.19 outlines that 29.17% of the participants strongly agreed, 41.67% that agreed, 10.83% responded neither, 12.5% disagreed, and finally, 5.833% of the sample strongly disagreed with the query saying that hearing or reading a positive response about SDC has influenced my decision about buying this product.

Most of the participants responded positively to this statement. The literature review agrees with this finding. Simkin (2018) observed that customers, that would like to purchase a commodity or service from a brand, find themselves in a situation where they are exposed to some level of risk. The perceived risk notion entails that consumers tend to be motivated from the outside in situations where they would like to buy from the internet, and this alters their mental state and opinion and accordingly influences their buying behaviour (Baird and Parasnis, 2016). Perceived risk therefore fundamentally determines the customer's approach in terms of buying on the internet, which then impacts on his or her inclination to buy and actual buying actions (Falco et al., 2021). It has been indicated by scholars that risk perception possesses a negative link to the buying intention (Pophiwa et al., 2021; Stephen, 2016). Thus, the participants in the study considered the negative perspectives of other consumers or influential stakeholders in their purchasing decisions. Fortunately, the prevalence of positive responses about the SDC ultimately resulted in influencing them to make a purchase.

Therefore, marketers must ensure that they show current and potential consumers that there is no risk in purchasing their product. Being able to reassure consumers in whatever way would result to more purchases and favourable and positive brand reputation. On the contrary, if a brand does not rid the chances of being viewed with risk, current and potential consumers would shun away from purchasing or engaging with it.

In application of the Consumer or Buyer Decision-making Process Model theoretical framework, there is the evaluation of alternatives. This is the stage when the consumer starts asking questions such as: Is the commodity the appropriate one to buy? or is there an alternative commodity that I could purchase? Where the responses include either “No, it’s not right” or “Yes, I need a different product”, that indicates that the second phase may restart (Pesonsen, 2013). The sample would be involved in such deliberation as it decides if it would like to purchase from the SDC brand or not. The responses from participants showed that positive reviews will influence their decisions to make a purchase.

4.5.1.14 Hearing or reading a negative response about SDC has influenced my decision about buying this product

The study sought to find out from its participants if hearing or reading a negative response about SDC had influenced their decision about buying the product. Figure 4.20 outlined the responses from this statement.

Figure 4. 20: Negative response regarding SDC and influence on
buying decision

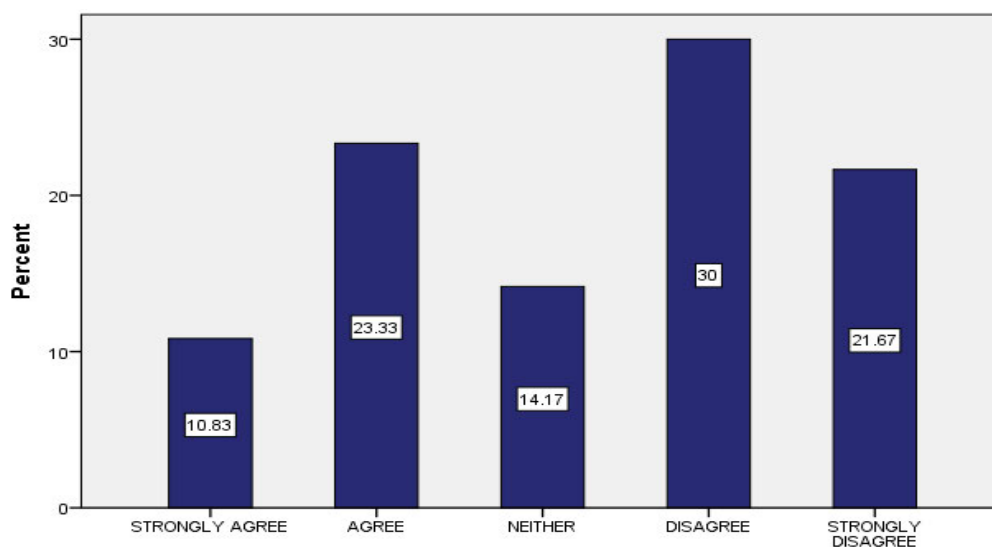


Figure 4.20 indicates that 10.83% of the participants strongly agreed, 23.33% agreed, 14.17% responded neither, 30% disagreed, and 21.67% of the participants strongly disagreed with the query that hearing or reading a negative response about SDC has influenced their decisions about buying this product.

Most of the participants responded negatively to this statement. This finding follows from what the secondary data indicated. Simkin (2018) observed that customers that want to buy a commodity come across some level of risk involved when selecting it and the way they can purchase it. The perceived risk notion entails that customers tend to be motivated from the outside in a situation where they purchase online and this alters their mental state and opinion and thus impacting on their buying behaviour (Baird and Parasnis, 2016). Perceived risk therefore fundamentally determines the customer's approach in terms of internet purchases that could have an effect on the inclination to buy or on the actual buying behaviour (Falco et al., 2021). Many scholars argue that risk perception possesses adverse linked attributes in terms of buying intention (Pophiwa et al., 2021; Stephen, 2016). Thus, the participants in the study considered the positive and negative perspectives of other consumers or influential stakeholders in their purchasing decision. Thereby, the differences in the final decisions of the sample were shown by most of them responding negatively and only a few of them responding positively.

This finding agrees with the contribution of the Consumer or Buyer Decision-making Process Model theoretical framework. The assessment of other products or services phase includes when a customer starts asking questions like: Is this the appropriate commodity to buy? Or Do I require an alternate commodity. Where the responses include either "No, it's not right" or "Yes I need a different product", thereafter the second phase 2 may restart (Pesonsen, 2013). As the sample decides whether to purchase from the SDC brand, it will be involved in such deliberations. As a result, most of the sample responded negatively, while a few responded positively, demonstrating the differences in their final decisions.

4.5.1.15 If I see a viral post on social media connected to SDC, I forward/share it with friends, family and associates

The study sought to find out from its participants if, they forward/share a viral post on social media connected to SDC, with friends, family and associates whenever they see it. Figure 4.21 below shows what was uncovered from the sample of the study.

Figure 4.21: Forwarding/sharing viral posts connected to SDC with friends, family and associates.

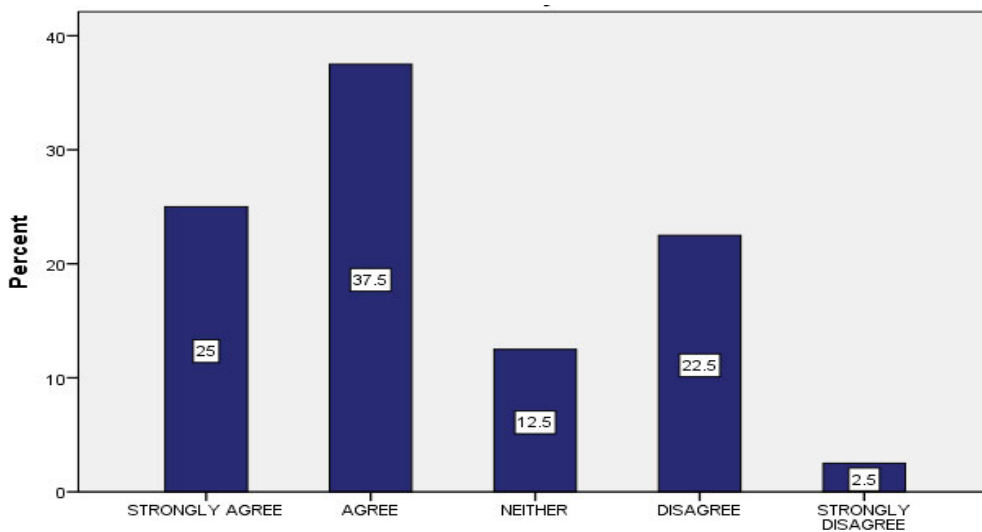


Figure 4.21 shows that 25% of the participants strongly agreed, 37.5% agreed, 12.5% neither agreed nor disagreed, 22.5% disagreed, and finally, 2.5% strongly agreed with the statement that they forward or share a viral post on social media connected to SDC with friends, family and associates.

Most of the participants in this study responded positively to this statement. This finding correlates with the secondary data utilised in this study. Harris (2019) establishes that viral marketing is important due to its credibility and informativeness, which can positively influence consumer behaviour. A study conducted by Hudson (2013) revealed that trust does not in any way affect the consumers perceptions of using viral marketing, thereby having a positive influence on their purchasing behaviour. Most viral content has nothing to do with the brand but is entertaining enough to watch and forward, and companies often add a caption referring to their brand, but the idea behind viral marketing is to capture attention (Hussain et al., 2018). This is the reason why the majority of the sample showed a positive response to forwarding or sharing the viral post connected to SDC on social media with friends, family and associates. This may include trends like the Siyavana campaign and the “*Tshayi Mpembe*” challenge.

This agrees with the contribution of the Consumer or Buyer Decision-making Process Model theoretical framework. Bernoff and Li (2010) identified five varying kinds of social behaviours, which are creators, critics, collectors, joiners, and spectators. The creators’ issue and keep data and circulate messages, critics put forward their minds and make comments, collectors

spread it, joiners link and direct the masses to the data and spectators consume it (Bernoff and Li, 2010). The aspect of impact occurs when the customers comment pertaining to the commodities and business offerings on online social platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, among others, to gain information on their brands of choice. Thus, the sample in this study showed that they were spreading the information, since it is viral.

4.5.1.16 Experience with SDC brand

The researcher asked the participants if they always had a good experience with the SDC Brand. Figure 4.22 shows the primary data that was uncovered.

Figure 4. 22: Experience with the SDC brand

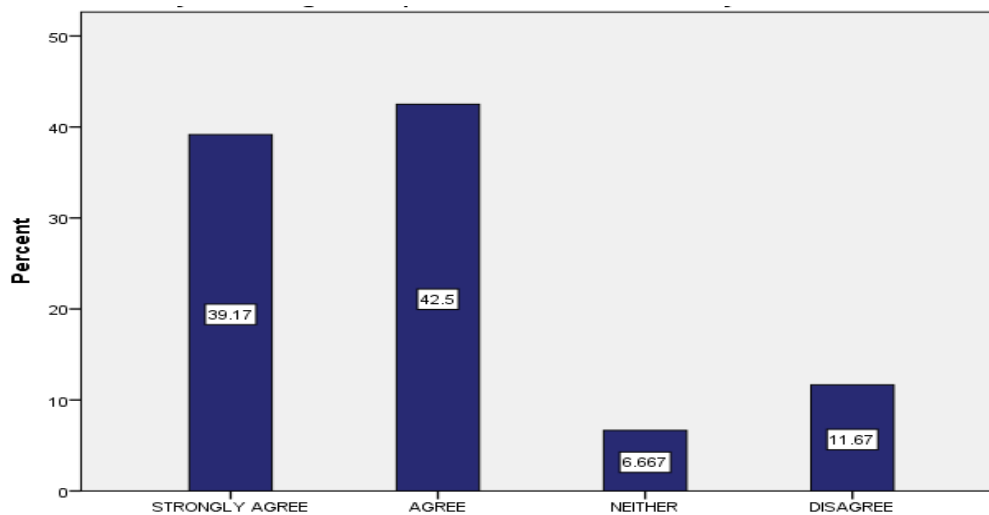


Figure 4.22 shows that 39.17% of the participants strongly agreed, 42.5% agreed, 6.667% neither strongly agreed nor disagreed, and finally, 11.67% of the participants disagreed with the statement: I always have a good experience with the SDC brand.

The findings indicate that most of the participants in the study responded positively to this statement. This finding agrees with the secondary data. With many contributions from the Distell Group and with much success from the Hunter's and Savanna cider brands, South Africa has become known to be a big player in cider production on the global context (Clark, 2012). Therefore, it becomes quite clear why so many of the participants responded positively and had good experiences with the SDC brand.

The above finding agrees with the contribution of the Consumer or Buyer Decision-making Process Model's theoretical framework based on post-purchase satisfaction or

dissatisfaction. The review stage operates as a vital phase for a brand and its consumers. Questions like the following can be ask periodically: Was the commodity able to offer what it promised based on its promotional initiatives? Did the commodity reach or surpass its expectations? According to Bernoff and Li (2010), this is the stage where consumers review and critique the product and consumers place additional belief in the commodity because of information generated by other customers as compared to that from its owners. Customers get access to other customers written points of view for the purpose of minimising the risks and acquire data before buying; thus, other customers' knowledge comes up as much significant as compared to advertising (Shankar et al. 2011). Therefore, the sample at the end goes through the deliberation pertaining to various aspects of the SDC brand and indicates its satisfaction levels. The research showed that, most of the sample size was happy with the brand.

4.5.1.17 SDC has differentiated packaging in comparison to other cider brands

The study asked participants to indicate if SDC had differentiated packaging in comparison to other cider brands. Figure 4.23 below shows the primary data from the participants of the study

Figure 4. 23: Differentiated packaging compared to other cider brands

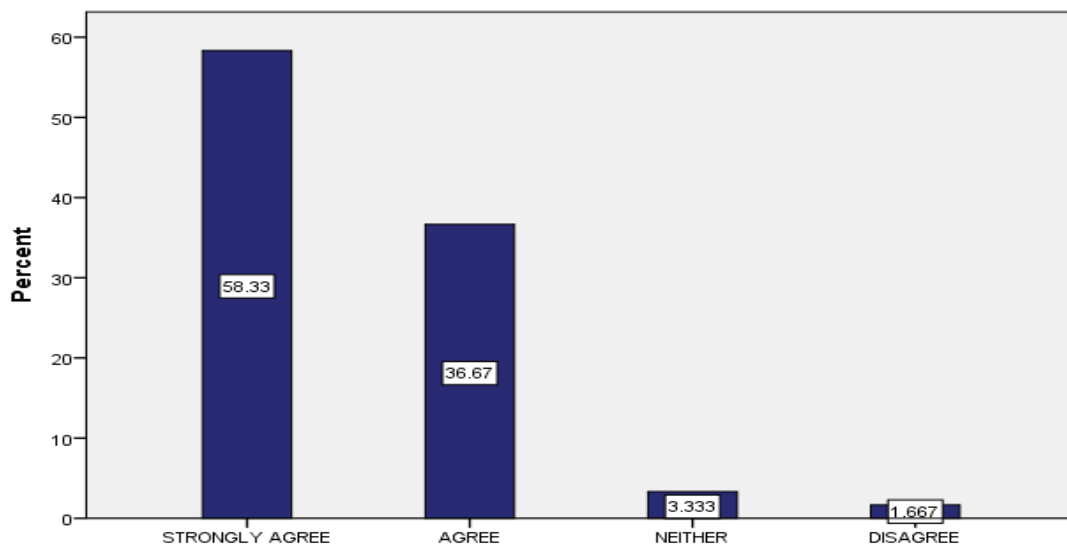


Figure 4.23 shows that 58.33% of the participants strongly agreed, 36.67% of the participants agreed, 3.333% of the participants neither strongly agreed nor disagreed, and finally, 1.667% of the participants disagreed with the statement that SDC has differentiated packaging in comparison to other cider brands.

A large contingent of the sample size responded positively to this statement. This resonates with the secondary data pertaining to the packaging of the SDC product. South African Wine Merchants (2015) point out that the Savanna Dry Cider 340ml bottle was the first cider that took a different route and moved away from the common beer-like packaging. In addition, the Staff Writer (2016) reported that the packaging for Savanna Dry Cider was redesigned after 18 years by Constantia Flexibles. Constantia Flexibles was given the responsibility of converting the Savanna Dry Cider bottle decorations from ACL to a pressure-sensitive label. This was supposed to be done while maintaining the same level of tactility (Staff Writer, 2016). The result was that the green ink on the Savanna Dry Cider bottle looked much fresher as compared to other products using ACL inks. In addition, the label application promoted the brand's flexibility within its supply chain and promotional designs. Thus, the sample of the study responded positively because the packaging of the SDC product is clearly distinguishable from that of other cider products.

Applying the Consumer or Buyer Decision-making Process Model theoretical framework, the post-purchase satisfaction or dissatisfaction elements were considered. The review phase operates as an important stage for a brand and consumer. Questions that are asked include: whether a commodity satisfied its promises in terms of its promotional initiatives? Did the commodity reach the level or surpass the expectations? According to Bernoff and Li (2010), this is the stage where consumers review and critique the product and consumers place additional belief in a commodity data that is generated from other customers as compared to that emanating from the brand itself. Customers actively read about the points of view from other customers so that they can minimise risks and acquire data before buying; thus, other customers knowledge serves the purpose of being much significant as compared to advertising (Shankar et al. 2011). Thus, the differentiated packaging may influence the sample's choices in purchasing the SDC.

4.5.1.18 The different pack sizes offered by SDC plays a role in my purchase decision

The study asked the participants if the different pack sizes offered by SDC plays a role in my purchase decision. Figure 4.24 outlines the findings pertaining to this statement.

Figure 4. 24: Different pack sizes by SDC's role in purchase decision

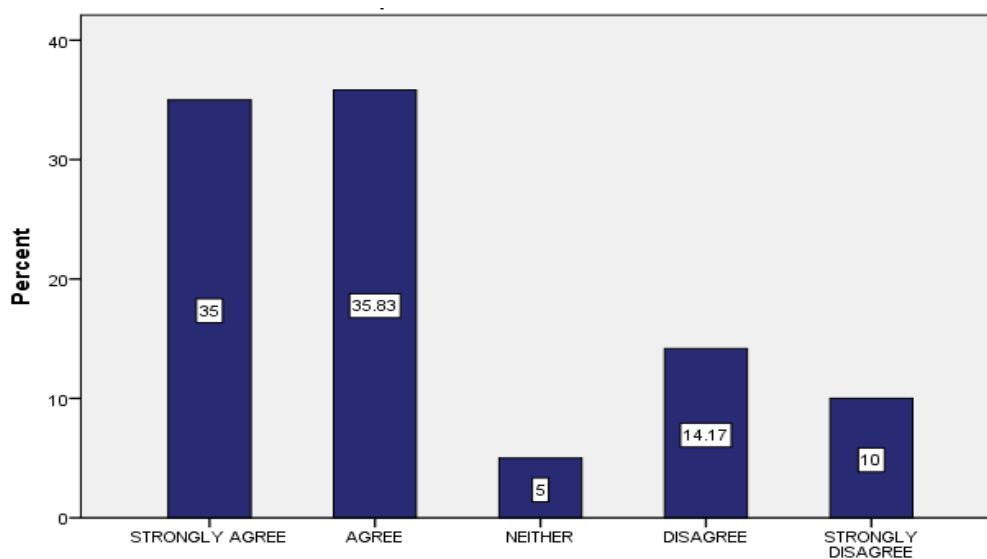


Figure 4.24 illustrates that 35% of the participants strongly agreed, 35.83% agreed, 5% neither strongly agreed nor disagreed, 14.17% disagreed, and finally 10% of the participants strongly disagreed with the query that the different pack sizes offered by SDC plays a role in their purchase decisions.

Most of the participants positively responded to this query. SDC comes in sizes of 330ml and 500ml (Trendy Drinks, 2022). This ensures that consumers can enjoy the premium cider in different quantities based on their taste, needs, occasion and many other factors. Thus, the large contingent of the sample size indicated that the different pack sizes offered by SDC influence their purchase decisions.

The Consumer or Buyer Decision-making Process Model's theoretical framework applies based on the purchase factor. Pesonsen (2013) observes that at this stage, the consumer decides to purchase what he/she desires based on his/her knowledge. The purchasing stage entails that the customer has possibly evaluated the complete facts and arrived at a reasonable conclusion, decided in terms of emotional correlations and background information from other people, has been convinced by promotional initiatives, or the sum of all of these elements. Thus, the sample places its decision on the different pack sizes of SDC. This is because it satisfies their needs based on their purchase decisions.

4.5.1.19 Satisfaction with SDC stimulates me to make repeat purchases of the brand

The study enquired from its participants if the satisfaction with SDC stimulates them to make

repeat purchases of the brand. Figure 4.25 below outlines the responses of the sample.

Figure 4. 25: Satisfaction with SDC and repeat purchase

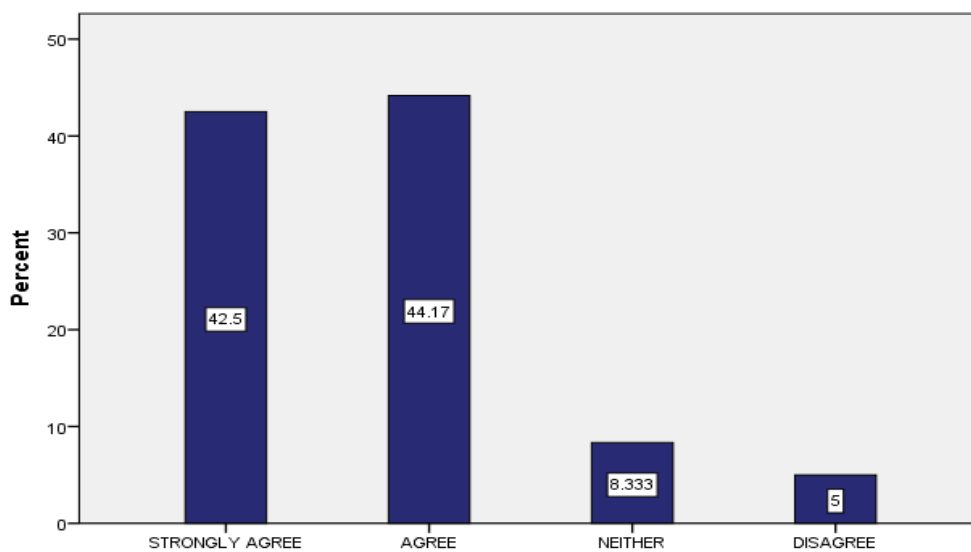


Figure 4.25 shows that 42.5% of the participants strongly agreed; 44.17% agreed, 8.333% neither strongly agreed nor disagreed, and 5% of the participants disagreed with the assertion that satisfaction with SDC stimulates them to make repeat purchases of the brand.

Most of the participants in the study responded positively to this statement. With many contributions from the Distell Group and with much success in Hunter's and SDC, South Africa is known to be one of the major cider producers in a global context (Clark, 2012). Real Cider Reviews (2016) asserts that the masses in South Africa are happy with Savanna Dry Cider, and they buy it from time to time. Thus, most of the sample from this study was satisfied with Savanna Dry Cider and would purchase it again.

The above conclusion concurs with the contribution of the Consumer or Buyer Decision-making Process Model's theoretical framework based on post-purchase satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The review phase operates as a vital stage for a brand and consumer. Questions that are asked include: Was the commodity able to achieve its promises from the promotional initiatives of the brand? Was the commodity able to reach or beat the expectations? According to Bernoff and Li (2010), this is the stage where consumers review and critique the product and consumers place much belief in the commodity data generated by other customers as compared to that from the brand. Customers pay attention to other customers' written points of view for the purposes of minimising their risks and acquiring knowledge before buying; this entails that data that emanates from other customers has more

influence than that from marketers (Shankar et al. 2011). Therefore, the sample in the end goes through the deliberation pertaining to various aspects of the SDC brand and indicates its satisfaction levels. In the end the sample indicates that it was encouraged to repeat its purchase because of the satisfaction with the SDC brand.

4.5.1.20: Satisfaction with SDC

The study asked its participants to indicate if they were satisfied with SDC to recommend it to friends, family and associates. Figure 4.26 below showcases the responses of the participants.

Figure 4. 26: Satisfaction with SDC to recommend to friends, family and associates

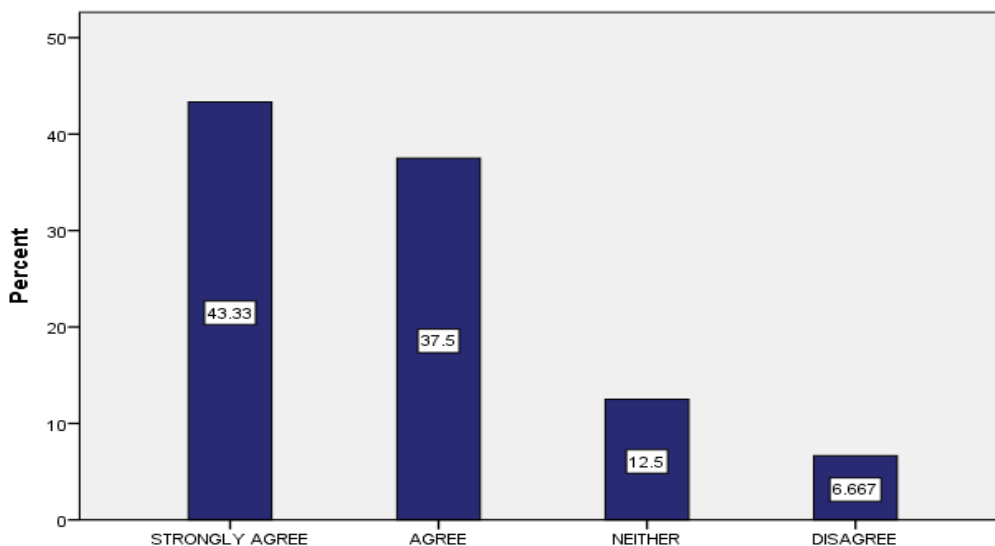


Figure 4.26 illustrates that 43.33% of the sample size strongly agreed, 37.5% agreed, 12.5% neither strongly agreed nor disagreed, and finally, 6.667% disagreed with the statement: "I am satisfied enough with SDC to recommend it to friends, family and associates".

Most of the sample responded positively to this statement because, with many contributions from the Distell Group and much success in the Hunter's and Savanna Cider brands, South Africa is known to be one of the major cider producers in a global context (Clark, 2012). Real Cider Reviews (2016) asserts that the masses in South Africa are happy with SDC, and they buy it from time to time. Thus, most of the sample from this study was satisfied with the cider and would be encouraged to recommend it to friends, family and associates.

This finding agrees with the contribution of the Consumer or Buyer Decision-making Process Model's theoretical framework based on post-purchase satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The

review phase operates as an important stage for both a brand and its consumers. The following questions are usually put across: Was the commodity able to provide on its promises based on the promotional initiatives? Was the commodity able to reach or go beyond its expectations? According to Bernoff and Li (2010), this is the stage where consumers review and critique the product and consumers place additional belief in commodity data produced by other customers as compared to that emanating from the brand and its marketers. Customers access and read other customers viewpoints for the purposes of minimising their risks and acquiring knowledge before buying; evidently the information that comes from other customers is more impactful as compared to brand's promoters or marketers (Shankar et al. 2011). Therefore, the sample at the end goes through the deliberation pertaining to various aspects of the SDC brand and indicates its satisfaction levels. In the end, the sample indicates that it would be encouraged to recommend it to friends, family and associates.

4.6 Conclusion

Chapter 4 discussed the study's primary findings and compared them to the relevant literature. The researcher gathered primary data from the target population, which consisted of consumers of SDC who were 18 or older and resided in and around the Durban CBD. This data was coded and presented using SPSS 27. The chapter that followed presented the conclusions and recommendations of the study and areas for further studies are also indicated based on the findings of this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 provided, evaluated and discussed the outcome of the primary information that was obtained via questionnaires administered to 120 participants who were 18 years or older, resided in and around the Durban Central Business District (CBD) and consumed SDC. The researcher used the SPSS 27 software for the purposes of coding and sorting out the information collected, while descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse it. This chapter provides the conclusions of the findings based on each research question and also provides recommendations to Savanna marketers and the broader alcohol industry with strategies that can positively impact consumers' perceptions and loyalty to brands, thereby promoting sales.

5.2 Aim and Objectives of the study

5.2.1 Aim

The aim of this study was to ascertain the influence of social media on behaviour of SDC consumers.

5.2.2 Objectives

To investigate the impact of social media on SDC cider consumers in the Durban CBD, KwaZulu-Natal

- To investigate the impact of social media on SDC consumers.
- To determine whether online reviews and comments about the brand have an impact on consumers' perceptions and purchases.
- To identify the effects of viral content on consumers' perceptions of the brand; and
- To identify the factors that drive customer loyalty (or attraction) to a brand via social media.

5.3 Summary of Findings

This section outlined the summary of findings and presented it in two parts. These were indicated below:

5.3.1 Findings from Primary Research

The findings from primary research found out that Facebook is the most used social media platform by consumers of SDC, with 46.67%, and most young people within the age range of 49.17% are the most users of social media. This is important because this age group is a working-class group and as such have money to buy alcohol as well as data to access the internet to read other customers' reviews as well as write their own. The results from the participants also showed that most of them came across information about the SDC online. From the findings, it can be determined that the consumers' buying behaviour of SDC is most likely to be shaped by other customers' reviews of or information related to the product, which they access online.

Furthermore, the results showed that most of the participants either 'Liked' or 'Followed' some of SDC social media platforms. From the findings, it can be determined that consumers are influenced to buy SDC by the impression they get of the product online. The results also show that there is a high level of consumer engagement and interaction with the information available on SDC social media platforms and that this information has a positive impact in shaping and informing consumer behaviour trends. Such information could be related to the following: promotions, sales, specials and draws, among others.

The research results further found that SDC's social online platform presence influences the buying decisions of most participants. Seventy-one percent (71 %) of the participants noted that they were spontaneously prompted to buy SDC by the posts from Savanna Dry that they engaged with online without even having an idea what SDC was. From the findings, it can be determined that SDC is making the most of its social media platforms to influence its consumers online, who are mostly the younger generation from the ages of 18 years and 40 years. The results also found that 70.83% of the participants acknowledged that they have come across social media posts promoting SDC. Taking note of the above, it can be determined that SDC has a strong online presence that can easily sway consumers to engage with their content and in the long run change their behaviour and perception of their brands.

The findings from primary research also found out that the majority of participants are influenced by other people's comments of the products they see online either to buy or not to buy SDC. The findings further revealed that many participants share online viral posts or content of SDC to influence other consumers. From the findings, it can be determined SDC through its viral content has managed to attract a pool of consumers online, who are mostly active social media users who can market the product to their peers unknowingly by sharing and re-tweeting its posts and in the process influencing their peers' perceptions as well as their buying behaviour.

Further, the results of the research also found that most of the sample size had good experiences with SDC. This is mainly because SDC has managed to differentiate packaging as compared to other brands. From the findings, it can be determined that SDC is loved by participants due to its appealing packaging as compared to other brands.

5.3.2 Findings from Literature Review

Literature reviewed found that technological advancements, especially utilisation of Internet and online social platforms, has affected consumers' perceptions and behaviour towards both the purchase and use of certain products. Considering the above, consumers' perceptions are influenced or affected by everything a company does; hence, the manner that the commodities or business offerings are arranged in a retail shop, their colours and shapes found on the company's emblem, the advertisement it creates and the discounts it offers all impact the customers' perceptions (Cowen and Strunk, 2015). Consumers can easily develop impressions about products when they see other's analysis, advertisements, online social platform comments and promotions connected with that commodity or business offering (Taylor, 2015). The literature review further revealed that social media like Facebook (with more than one billion global users), Twitter (with close to a billion global users) and LinkedIn (with more than 500 million users) have emerged as the current growth strategy for brands with ambitions of developing and taking centre stage in the business environment. The generation of millennial customers have developed to be the biggest consumer of commodities and inducing their interest requires brands to transform from the traditional systems of business promotion and incorporate online social platforms (Mishra and Ayatham, 2017; Holly, 2013),

Literature outcomes revealed that online social platforms resulted to acquisition growth rates of potential service marketing because of its big exposure and impact towards customers of

varying age groups and lifestyles, in terms of what they can manage to purchase and their customer behavioural characteristics (Taylor, 2015). In light of the above, Campbell et al. (2014) postulate that most contemporary companies have increased their media presence based on online social platforms have towards the actions of customers as compared to traditional methods of advertising. The literature review further found out that online products are characterised by persuasiveness and informativeness; hence, they possess a major impact towards the purchasing action taken by customers (Dibb et al. 2012). The literature found that, compared to corporate communications and mainstream media, social media has been effective because it is perceived by consumers to be more trustworthy as the information is readily available and its authenticity can be confirmed easily (Enyinda et al. 2018).

5.4 Conclusions

The researcher drew the conclusions below in terms of the key research questions:

- **Research Question 1:** Does social media influence SDC consumers in the Durban CBD, KwaZulu-Natal Province?

The results of the study emerged that the first objective had been attained. The study concludes that social media influences SDC consumers in the Durban CBD, KwaZulu-Natal Province. Most participants acknowledged that they were prompted to buy or drink SDC based on what they saw online namely attractive and catchy advertisements of products, promotions, specials, draws and sales, as well as reviews of the product from other customers. The above-mentioned factors influenced the way they saw the product and eventually changed their perception and behaviour towards it.

- **Research Question 2:** Do online reviews and comments about SDC have an impact on consumers' perceptions and purchases in the Durban CBD?

Similarly, the second objective of the research was attained. In conclusion, the majority of the participants buy SDC based on the reviews and comments of other consumers about the commodity. The research also concludes that negative reviews of the commodity deterred them from buying the product, while positive reviews made them want to purchase it more often.

- **Research Question 3:** Does viral content affect consumers' perceptions of SDC?

The researcher affirmed that the third objective was attained. The conclusion is that most consumers' perceptions and buying behaviour of SDC were affected by the viral content of the product. It can also be concluded from the study that the more viral the content gets, the more it catches the attention of many, resulting in a change of perception and behaviour about the product. The viral content mostly affected the perceptions and behaviour of the young people, especially those who were new to alcohol consumption.

- **Research Question 4:** What are the factors that drive customer loyalty (or attraction) to the brand via social media?

Finally, the researcher affirms that the last objective was attained. In conclusion, the use of celebrities, consistent content, colourful advertisements, and the packaging of the product are some of the factors that bring customer loyalty or attraction to the brand via social media. The findings also conclude that when popular celebrities endorse brands online, consumers are most likely to buy the commodity bearing in mind that the celebrity is also using that product.

5.5 Recommendations

The following recommendations are suggested to the Savanna Cider brand in order to improve the perceptions of its online consumers.

- There is a need for SDC to put up an aggressive social media campaign to market its brand, as this will ensure that many people know about it in order to change their perceptions. Although SDC has social media platforms through which it markets its brand, efforts should be made to ensure that these platforms are available in all the official languages of South Africa in order to accommodate people of other languages, especially the minority ones.
- SDC is perceived as a brand of young ones and not old ones. In that case, there is also a need for the brand to capture the attention of the older people or those in their late 40s and 50s. This generation might know little of SDC given the fact it is a late entry and by targeting this generation through the use of a popular celebrity of their time, there are more chances that this generation's perceptions and buying behaviour about the product will change.
- SDC should always pay attention to the consumers' online reviews and feedback. This is important as it will help improve the brand in many ways, thereby positively

influencing the consumers' perceptions and buying behaviour of the product in many ways.

5.6 Conclusion

Social media and the use of the Internet are very important to contemporary businesses as they assist in the marketing and advertising of products and services. Through social media, consumers' behaviours and attitudes towards certain products, companies and organisations are changed based on what other consumers say about those products, services or organisations; hence, online social platforms are a powerful brand promotional channel. Organisations that promote their commodities and business offerings through contemporary advertising and marketing methods like online social platforms have a bigger chance of gaining a competitive advantage over those that use traditional advertising and marketing methods such as billboards, newspapers and magazines. This quantitative research investigated the impact of online social platform on customer behaviour by paying attention to SDC customers in the Durban CBD, KwaZulu-Natal. The simple random sampling method preferred for choosing 120 participants (60 from each) from two different liquor shops, Liberty Liquors and Tops North Beach in Durban Central.

The researcher gathered primary data using self-administered questionnaires. The primary data was entered and coded using Microsoft Excel spread sheets, thereafter, discussed through SPSS 27 software and analysed by means of descriptive and inferential statistics.

The research concluded that social media influences SDC consumers in the Durban CBD, KwaZulu-Natal Province. The study further concluded that most people, especially the youth from 18 and 25 years are swayed to buy or consume SDC based on the reviews and comments of other consumers about the commodity. Furthermore, negative reviews of the commodity deter people away from buying the product, while positive reviews make them want to purchase it more often. The study recommends that SDC launch an aggressive social media campaign to market its brand, as this will ensure that many people know about it in order to change their perceptions.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

TOPIC: The influence of social media on consumer behaviour: A focus on Savanna Dry cider customers in Durban Central Business District (CBD).

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

SECTION 1

Screening Questions

Please indicate your answer by ticking(X) on the appropriate box

1.1. Are you 18 years and older?	Yes		No	
1.2. Do you consume Savanna Dry Cider	Yes		No	
1.3 Are you a social media user?	Yes		No	

If you answer NO to any of the three questions above you may discontinue answering the questionnaire, otherwise kindly proceed to answer the remaining questions

SECTION 2

Demographic Information

2.1 Please indicate your gender?

Female	
Male	

2.2 Please indicate your ethnic group?

African	
White	
Coloured	
Asian	
Other	

2.3 What is your age group?

18 – 24	
25 - 34	
35 - 44	
45 years and older	

SECTION 3

Social media usage, Consumer behavior and Decision making

Please indicate your answer by ticking (X) on the appropriate box.

3.1 From the below table which social media site do you normally use?

Facebook	
Twitter	
Instagram	
YouTube	
TikTok	
Other	

3.2 On average how many hours do you spend a day on social media?

1 hour	
2-3 hours	
3-5 hours	
More than 5 hours	

3.3 How often have you come across information regarding Savanna Dry cider on social media?

Always	
Very Often	
Sometimes	
Rarely	
Never	

3.4 Regarding Savanna Dry cider do you “like” (any of their social media posts) or “follow” any of their social media pages?

Yes	
No	

3.5 To what extent does the brand’s social media presence influence your buying decision?

To a Great Extent	
Sometimes	
Very Little	
Not at All	

3.6 Has any social media posts regarding Savanna Dry cider ever prompted you to purchase this product spontaneously?

Yes	
No	

3.7 Have you ever come across any social media contests/ promotions featuring Savanna Dry Cider?

Yes	
No	

3.8 Which social media promotions on Savanna Dry cider are likely to influence your purchase decision?

Contests and giveaways	
Products coupons	
Loyalty programs	

3.9 Are you familiar with any social media Ads (video, pictures) on Savanna Dry cider?

Yes	
No	

3.10 Which of the social media Ads from Savanna Dry cider would you likely be attracted to?

Photo Ads	
Video Ads	
Stories Ads	

SECTION 4

Please indicate to what extent you agree/disagree with the following statements regarding online reviews, E-Wom and viral content:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4.1 Information from social media has contributed to my knowledge about Savanna Dry cider.	1	2	3	4	5
4.2 I feel like I receive a tremendous amount of knowledge on social media concerning Savanna Dry cider, through posts and reviews.	1	2	3	4	5
4.3 Hearing or reading a positive response about Savanna Dry cider has influenced my decision about buying this product.	1	2	3	4	5
4.4 Hearing or reading a negative response about Savanna Dry cider has influenced my decision about buying this product.	1	2	3	4	5
4.5 If I see a viral post on social media connected to Savanna Dry cider I forward/ share it with friends/ family and associates.	1	2	3	4	5

Section 5

Please indicate to what extent you agree/disagree with the following statements regarding Savanna Dry cider loyalty:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5.1 I always have a good experience with Savanna Dry cider brand.	1	2	3	4	5
5.2 Savanna Dry cider has differentiated packaging in comparison to other cider brands.	1	2	3	4	5
5.3 The different pack sizes offered by Savanna Dry cider plays a role in my purchase decision.	1	2	3	4	5
5.4 Satisfaction with Savanna Dry cider stimulates me to make repeat purchase of the brand.	1	2	3	4	5
5.5 I'm satisfied enough with Savanna Dry cider to recommend it to friends/ family and associates.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX B. IHLU LWEMIBUZO (RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE)

TOPIC: The influence of social media on consumer behaviour: A focus on Savanna Dry cider customers in Durban Central Business District (CBD).

Phendula imibuzo elandelayo ngokufaka uX. Lemibuzo imayelana noncwaningo

ISIGABA SOKUQALA

Imibuzo yokuhlola

1.1. Uneminyaka ewu 18 nongaphezulu?

Yebo		Cha	
Yebo		Cha	
Yebo		Cha	

1.2. Uke waphuza Savanna Dry Cider?

1.3 Uyangena kwizinkundla zokuxhumana?

Uma uphendule ngo CHA kulemibuzo engaphezulu, siyakukhulula ukuthi ungasaqhubeka.

ISIGABA SESIBILI

Ubulili

2.1 ungowesilisa noma owesifazane?

Owesifazane	
Owesilisa	

2.2 Uluphi uhlanga ongena kulona kulezi?

Umuntu omyama	
Umlungu	
Ikhaladi	
Eshiyeni	
Olunye uhlanga	

2.3 Iminyaka yakho ikuphi la?

18 – 24	
25 - 34	
35 - 44	
45 naphezulu	

ISIGABA SESITHATHU

Ukusebenzisa izinkundla zokuxhumana nendlela othatha ngayo izinqumo uma uthenga

Faka uX ebhokisini eliqondene nawe

3.1 Iyiphi inkundla yokuxhumana okuyona?

Facebook	
Twitter	
Instagram	
YouTube	
TikTok	
Other	

3.2 Ngosuku ungena kangaphi kulenkundla osuyibalile ngaphezulu?

1 hora	
2-3 hora	
3-5 hora	
Ngaphezu kwamahora awu5	

3.3 Uke wabona into ehlangene ne Savanna Dry Cider kuyona inkundla yokuxhumana?

Njalo	
Kujwayelekile	
Ngesinye isikhathi	
Qabukeka	
Lutho	

3.4 Mayelana ne Savanna Dry Cider kukhona imifanekiso yabo oke wakhomisa ukuthi uyayithanda noma wabalandela ezinkundleni zokuxhumana?

Yebo	
Cha	

3.5 Ikhona indlela abake bakuheha ngayo ezinkundleni la oze wabona usuyoyithenga ungaqondile?

Kakhulu	
Kuyenzeka	
Kukancane	
Lutho	

3.6 Uke wathenga lesiphuzo ungaqondile ngenxa yemifanekiso oyibone ezinkundleni zokuxhumana?

Yebo	
Cha	

3.7 Uke wabona imitilizo ngalesiphuzo ezinkundleni zokuxhumana?

Yebo	
Cha	

3.8 Iyiphi imititilizo ongayijabulela ngalesiphuzo, engakwenza uyothenga?

Imincintiswano	
Ikhuphoni	
Loyaliti	

3.9 Ikhona imifanekiso oke uyibone ngalesiphuzo ezinkundleni zokuxhumana?

Yebo	
Cha	

3.10 Iyiphi imifanekiso ongathanda ukuyibona ngalesiphuzo?

Izithombe ezikhangisayo	
Ukudlala kwevidiyo	
Izitori	

ISIGABA SESINE

Chaza ukuthi uyavuma yini ngalokhu okubhalwe ezansi mayelana nemibono nabalandeli bezinkundla zokuxhumana:

1	2	3	4	5
Ngivuma kakhulu	Ngiyavuma	Phakathi nendawo	Angivumi	Angivumi nhlobo

	Ngivuma kakhulu	Ngiyavuma	Phakathi nendawo	Angivumi	Angivumi nhlobo
4.1 Ulwazi engilitholayo kwizinkundla ludale ngazi kabanzi ngalesiphuzo.	1	2	3	4	5
4.2 Ngithola lonke ulwazi ngalesiphuzo ezinkundleni.	1	2	3	4	5
4.3 Ukubona nokufunda ngalesiphuzo ezinkundleni kushitshile isinqumo sami ngaso.	1	2	3	4	5
4.4 Ukufunda nemibono emibi engiyithola kwizinkundla kushintsha nesinqumo sami sokuthenga lesiphuzo.	1	2	3	4	5
4.5 Uma ngibona igama lesiphuzo lisabalele ezinkundleni ngiye ngibize nabangani bami bazobona.	1	2	3	4	5

ISIGABA SESIHLANU

Awu chaze ukuthi uvumelana kangakanani nalokhu okubhalwe ngezansi mayelana nokuba ikhasimende eliqavile:

	Ngivuma Kakhulu	Ngiyavuma	Phakathi nendawo	Angivumi	Angivumi nhlobo
5.1 Ngihlezi nginobugcweti njalo uma ngiphuza lesiphuzo.	1	2	3	4	5
5.2 Lesiphuzo siyabukeka ngaphezulu kwezinye.	1	2	3	4	5
5.3 Umehluko ngamabhodlela eza ngalesiphuzo uyangimangaza.	1	2	3	4	5
5.4 Indlela esakhiwe ngayo lesiphuzo sidala ukuthi ngisithenge ngiphindelele.	1	2	3	4	5
5.5 Siyangijabulisa lesiphuzo ikona ngihlezi ngitshela abangani nezihlobo ngaso.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX C: LETTER OF INFORMATION



NO 53
Durban
Durban
4000

Title of the Research Study: The influence of social media on consumer behaviour: A focus on Savanna Dry cider customers in Durban Central Business District (CBD), Kwa-Zulu Natal

Principal Investigator/s/researcher: Thobile.Shozi

Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s: Prof A.T. Agbenyegah

Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study: I am undertaking this study in order to determine the influence of social media on consumer behaviour, focusing on consumers of Savanna Dry cider in the Durban CBD. The information gathered could assist Savanna Dry cider makers in making effective use of social media and become profitable, which can be passed on to the consumers in form of improved customer service, promotions or even low prices.

Greeting: Hello

Introduce yourself to the participant: My name is Thobile Shozi and I am doing research with Albert Agbenyegah a Professor in Management Science, towards a Master's Degree at Durban University of Technology. We are calling on you to partake in a study entitled "The influence of social media on consumer behaviour: A focus on Savanna Dry cider customers in Durban Central Business District (CBD)".

Invitation to the potential participant I would like to invite you to participate in the research study, since you are over 18 years and of legal age, a consumer of Savanna Dry cider and a social media user. You will be able to provide us with the relevant information for the study on how social media influences your buying behaviour for the said beverage. You are welcome to ask any questions related to this study as it very important that you fully understand what it is about. You are also allowed to discuss the study with your family and family.

Outline of the Procedures It is vital for marketers to invest in tailor made advertising strategies that appeal to their targeted audience in order to grow their brands while creating loyalty. This research will assist Savanna Dry cider manufacture in ensuring that their advertising is aligned to their consumer. The study will employ quantitative techniques to investigate how social media influences consumer behavior. The research will determine whether online communication relating to Savanna Dry cider has an impact on purchase decision and loyalty. Data will be collected using close ended questionnaires which will be accessible online. A time commitment of 15- 20 minutes will be required to complete the questionnaire and collection of data from a sample size of 124 individuals will be analyzed using the latest version of SPSS.

Risks or Discomforts to the Participant: There are no known or anticipated risks to participants.

Explain to the participant the reasons he/she may be withdraw from the Study: An information sheet will be given regarding consent. Participation towards this research is voluntarily, and participants may withdraw at any time before submitting the questionnaire, without providing a reason. Responses will only be excluded if questionnaire is not answered honestly or it incomplete- such withdrawn participants will not suffer any negative consequences or be penalized.

Benefits: Benefits to the Researcher will include the fulfillment of a Master's Degree and presenting at a national conference. The information gathered in this study will assist Savanna Dry cider marketer in making effective use of social media, acquiring knowledge on which social media platform to focus on while gaining insight into the type of promotions that will appeal to their target audience and improving customer loyalty.

Remuneration: Participant will not receive any monetary or other types of remuneration in the study.

Costs of the Study: Participants will not be expected to cover any costs for the study.

Confidentiality: The researchers will not be aware of the names or any identifying data of the respondents as the questionnaire will not ask for any names or identifying data. Thus, the researchers will have no way of identifying the respondents.

Results: The findings for the study will be shared with Savanna Dry cider marketers and will also be available for scholars studying similar topics.

Research-related Injury: No research-related injury can be expected from completing the questionnaire as it will be done online, and therefore will not be any compensation.

Storage of all electronic and hard copies including tape recordings: Researcher will store all electronic information regarding the study on a password-protected computer for five years. Research Ethics Review and approval if necessary, will be required for any future use of the stored data. Electronic copies would be permanently deleted from the computer's hard drive with the help of a suitable software program.

Persons to contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries: Thobile Shoji can be reached on 083 478 0673 or via email at thobile.shoji@icloud.com if you would like to be kept informed of the final research findings. Using the same contact information provided, you can contact the researcher with any questions about this study. In case of questions or concerns regarding the research, you may contact Supervisor Prof Albert Agbenyegah via e-mail at Albeta@dut.ac.za or on 072 313 9423 or the Institutional Research Ethics Administrator on 031 373 2375. Complaints can be reported to the Director: Research and Postgraduate Support Dr L Langaniso on 031 373 2577 or researchdirector@dut.ac.za.

APPENDIX D: CONSENT



Full Title of the Study: The influence of social media on consumer behaviour: A focus on Savanna Dry cider customers in Durban Central Business District in Kwa-Zulu Natal

Names of Researcher/s: Thobile Shoji

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

☐ I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Thobile Shoji

about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance

Number: IREC075/22,

- ☐ I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- ☐ I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- ☐ In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerized system by the researcher.
- ☐ I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- ☐ I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- ☐ I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

_____	_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Participant Thumbprint	Date	Time	Signature / Right

I, Thobile Shoji (name of researcher) herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

Thobile Shoji

_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Witness (If applicable)	Date	Signature

_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable)	Date	Signature

APPENDIX E: GATEKEEPER PERMISSION



Gatekeepers Permission Letter

Dear Sir/Madam

Permission is granted to Miss Thobile Shoji ID number 830716 0328 085 Student number 20251310 to conduct research at our outlet Tops North Beach, for her dissertation titled- The influence of social media on consumer behaviour: A focus on Savanna Dry cider customers in Durban Central Business District (CBD). I'am aware that the project involves recruiting customers for research which will involve collection of data from our patrons.

I understand that all information collected from individuals shall be done prior to getting informed consent from the participating individuals, that customers can refuse participation without any bias or prejudice. Miss Shoji has also guaranteed our customer's confidentiality and anonymity will be protected throughout the study process.

I am also aware that this research is conducted in fulfillment of her Master's Degree at Durban University of Technology

Yours Faithfully

Jorge Farinha

APPENDIX F: GATEKEEPER PERMISSION



Robinson Liquors (Pty) Limited
t/a Liberty Liquors

Reg. No. 1999/000000/07
Vat No.: 4110110609

140 Sandile Thusi (Argyle) Road
Durban 4001

P.O. Box 47133, Greyville 4023
Tel: (031) 303 9285

reception@libertyliquors.co.za
www.libertyliquors.co.za

Gatekeepers Permission

Dear Sir/Madam

I hereby grant permission to Miss Thobile Shoji ID number 830716 0328 085 Student number 20251310 to conduct research at Liberty Liquors Queen. I am aware that the project involves recruiting customers for research which will involve data collection.

I also understand that all information collected from individuals shall be done prior to getting informed consent from the participating individuals, and that customers can refuse participation without any bias or prejudice.

I am also aware that this research is conducted in fulfillment of her Master's Degree at Durban University of Technology

Title of the dissertation: The influence of social media on consumer behaviour: A focus on Savanna Dry cider customers in Durban Central Business District (CBD).

Yours Faithfully

Chris Hensev

11.5.22

APPENDIX G: RESEARCH ETHICS CERTIFICATE

	Zertifikat Certificat	Certificado Certificate
<small>Promouvoir les plus hauts standards éthiques dans la protection des participants à la recherche biomédicale Promoting the highest ethical standards in the protection of biomedical research participants</small>		
	Certificat de formation - Training Certificate Ce document atteste que - this document certifies that Thobile Shozi a complété avec succès - has successfully completed Introduction to Research Ethics du programme de formation TRREE en évaluation éthique de la recherche of the TRREE training programme in research ethics evaluation	
Release Date: 2021/06/01 CID : WYkYctD4r		Professeur Dominique Sprumont Coordonateur TRREE Coordinator
	<small>Continuing Education Program (5 Credits) Programme de Formation continue (5 Crédits)</small>	<small>Fondazione Farmaceutica Helvetica FPH Programmes de formation continue</small>
<small>Ce programme est soutenu par - This program is supported by : European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) (www.edctp.org) - Swiss National Science Foundation (www.snf.ch) - Canadian Institutes of Health Research (http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/2891.html) - Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences (SAMS/ASSM/SAMW) (www.sams.ch) - Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries (www.krpa.ch)</small>		
<small>[REV : 20170310]</small>		