

**DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**

**THE ROLE OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN THE SURVIVAL OF  
PIETERMARITZBURG'S SMALL, MICRO AND MEDIUM-SIZED BEAUTY  
BUSINESSES.**

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**MARCH 2024**



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PIETERMARITZBURG'S SMALL, MICRO AND MEDIUM-SIZED BEAUTY  
BUSINESSES.**

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## DECLARATION

I, Amanda Zamaswazi Makalima hereby declare that this research study, entitled "**The role of digital marketing in the survival of Pietermaritzburg's small, micro and medium-sized beauty businesses,**" is my own original work and that it has not been submitted to any other university for any other degree.

In the reference section, all sources utilised in this work have been appropriately acknowledged and attributed. I confirm that this thesis is entirely my own work and that no element of it has been plagiarised from other sources.

Furthermore, I declare that all research was carried out with integrity, objectivity, and honesty, and that all data collected and analysed in this study is accurate, reliable, and genuine.

05 March 2024

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Student: Makalima A. Z.

Date

08/03/2024

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Supervisor: Dr. Zogli L. J.

Date

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## **DEDICATION**

In loving memory of my late little brother, Siyamthanda Mkhize, and my late uncle, Ntokozo Mlangeni. They embarked on this journey with me but, unfortunately, could not witness its completion. This thesis is dedicated to their memory. May they continue to rest in peace.

## **ABSTRACT**

Digital marketing has become increasingly important as a marketing communication tool. The rapid advancement of technology and increased internet access has transformed the way businesses interact with their customers. The beauty industry, being one of Africa's fastest-growing sectors, has also embraced digital marketing strategies to effectively engage with customers and drive business growth. This research aims to explore the role of digital marketing in the survival of small, micro, and medium-sized beauty businesses in Pietermaritzburg, Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa.

Through qualitative research, this study investigates how beauty businesses in Pietermaritzburg incorporate digital marketing into their overall marketing strategies. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 22 small salon owners in the area, using purposive sampling. The data collected was analysed through content analysis, employing the NVIVO software.

The findings demonstrate that digital marketing plays a significant role in boosting revenue for beauty businesses. Among various digital marketing tools, social media platforms emerged as the most effective and widely utilised due to their accessibility and diverse features. While themes such as email marketing and websites also surfaced, they were not as dominant as social media. Interestingly, when examining the survival factor, this research confirms that digital marketing is indeed a valuable medium for beauty SMMEs (Small, Medium, and Micro-sized Enterprises) to attract and retain customers while driving revenue growth. However, it highlights the continued importance of personal connections. Business owners cited challenges related to digital marketing, including technical incompetency, resource constraints, and difficulty in measuring effectiveness. Nevertheless, despite these challenges, they acknowledged digital marketing as the best investment for the survival of their businesses, considering it the future of the industry.

Furthermore, recommendations are proposed to enhance the role of digital marketing in the survival and growth of Pietermaritzburg's beauty SMMEs. Networking and knowledge sharing initiatives are recommended to improve digital marketing strategies, with a focus on creating forums for owners to exchange experiences and stay updated on industry trends. Collaborating with digital marketing experts is

encouraged to gain valuable insights and support tailored campaigns. The study advocates for continuous adaptation of digital marketing strategies, emphasizing regular monitoring of performance indicators and experimentation with new approaches.

Overall, the study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on digital marketing in the beauty industry and provides practical insights for small salon owners in Pietermaritzburg. The findings emphasise the importance of embracing digital marketing strategies to stay competitive in today's digital era. Ultimately, this research highlights the relevance and effectiveness of digital marketing as a vital tool for the survival and success of beauty businesses.

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### **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

SMMEs	Small Micro Medium Enterprises.
PMB	Pietermaritzburg
SEO	Search engine optimisation
PPC	Pay-Per-Click

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

---

### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

Digital marketing has become a vital component of modern business strategies, enabling companies to reach and engage their target audience through various online channels. In the beauty industry, digital marketing has gained significance, with large companies adopting it as their primary marketing strategy. However, the role and utilisation of digital marketing in small beauty small, micro, and medium-sized enterprises (SMMEs) remain relatively unexplored, leading to a gap in understanding its impact on their survival and growth. Considering the substantial contribution of SMMEs to the economy, it is essential to explore the factors that can enhance their sustainability.

The beauty industry has always been regarded as an evergreen sector, resilient to changing market dynamics. As we enter a new era of technological advancements and evolving consumer behaviours, exploring the potential of digital marketing in such industries becomes crucial. This study aims to investigate the roles of digital marketing in beauty SMMEs and its influence on their survival and success. By examining the adoption and effectiveness of digital marketing strategies in these businesses, valuable insights can be gained to support their growth in an increasingly competitive market landscape.

This chapter provides an overview of the research by establishing the background and context of digital marketing in the beauty industry. It identifies the research problem and presents the research aim, objectives, and questions that guide the study. Additionally, the significance of the research is discussed, emphasising the importance of understanding the role of digital marketing in the survival of beauty SMMEs. Finally, the limitations of the study are acknowledged, providing a transparent perspective on the boundaries and constraints of the research.

Akinro and Mbunyuza-Memani (2019) assert that beauty businesses play a major role in the global economy. The beauty industry has progressed from being a major sector

only in Western countries to being a major industry in the African continent, with global revenues topping \$400 billion (Akinro and Mbunyuza-Memani 2019). Roberts (2021) discovered that the global beauty industry grew from \$483 billion in 2020 to \$511 billion in 2021 and is being predicted to be more than \$716 billion by 2025 and \$784.6 billion by 2027. This shows that the beauty industry is growing rapidly. Beauty SMMEs must therefore be aware of the steps they may take to not only improve their business performance but also capitalise on the industry's anticipated expansion. With the world moving towards being more digital, it is important now more than ever for business owners to have access to digital platforms to ensure that their businesses are part of the growth that is expected in the industry. Digital marketing is a crucial marketing technique for big businesses and other industries. However, in Pietermaritzburg, there is no proof of how small businesses use digital marketing. Every company seems to require an online footprint as the world is becoming increasingly paperless. Small, micro, and medium-sized (SMMEs) beauty businesses must find new ways to sell themselves to remain relevant. With digital marketing being the future of marketing, and marketing being the oxygen of the business, as Kaur and Kumar (2021) put it, beauty businesses must be aware of digital marketing techniques to ensure their growth and survival. There is a growing consensus amongst researchers that a company's online presence influences customers' adoption or purchase decisions of certain products. Pietermaritzburg beauty business owners should take advantage of this to ensure their survival in the rising sector. According to Łopaciuk and Łoboda (2013), the beauty industry is divided into five main categories: skincare, haircare, make-up, fragrances, and toiletries. This study is based in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu Natal with reference to beauty businesses that specialise in hair care, skincare, and make-up. Plenty of research has been done on digital marketing used by different industries, however, there seems to be a lack of research focused on digital marketing affects the beauty industry. The scarcity of scholarly work necessitates this study as this study will be a help in understanding the role of digital marketing in the survival of beauty SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg.

## **1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The business landscape has witnessed a notable shift in communication strategies, marked by the transition from traditional to digital marketing. Digital marketing, as

defined by Kannan (2017), serves as a means for companies to establish, sustain, and cultivate direct relationships with consumers. In addition, it offers a platform for online advertising of goods and services (Yasmin, Tasneem and Fatema 2015). While digital marketing was already in existence before the global COVID-19 pandemic, its significance magnified during the crisis, with an increased adoption by companies and heightened accessibility to digital platforms among the general population (Lemenager et al., 2021).

Despite the extensive utilization of digital marketing by major corporations and industries such as tourism, academic literature on the application and impact of digital marketing in small, micro, and medium-sized enterprises (SMMEs) in the beauty sector, particularly in Pietermaritzburg, is notably lacking. The pandemic not only underscored the importance of digital marketing but also illuminated its potential as a primary strategy for business promotion, as indicated by Herhausen et al. (2020).

### **1.3. AIM OF THE STUDY**

This study aims to comprehensively examine the current utilization of digital marketing by beauty SMMEs in the Pietermaritzburg area. It focuses on identifying the factors that influence the selection of digital marketing tools among these businesses and endeavours to gain insights into their perceptions regarding the contemporary benefits of digital marketing. The beauty industry in South Africa has experienced a commendable annual growth rate of 6.7%, with further anticipated expansion (Sub-Saharan Africa: Africa's beauty trendsetters, 2020). Online sales in the beauty industry are expected to witness a 3.4% growth between 2018 and 2023. However, there is a notable dearth of studies exploring the role of digital marketing and its impact on the business performance of smaller beauty enterprises in Pietermaritzburg, Kwa-Zulu Natal.

This research holds immense significance as it strives to bridge the existing gap in the literature by examining the industry's evolution and its adaptation to technological changes, especially in the aftermath of the pandemic. The study aims to contribute valuable insights that can aid SMMEs in the beauty sector in navigating the digital landscape, fostering growth, and ensuring resilience in an increasingly digitized business environment.

#### **1.4. MOTIVATION OF STUDY**

The motivation behind this research is to contribute to the development of a digital marketing framework specifically tailored for beauty SMMEs. By examining the issues and benefits associated with the use of digital marketing, this study aims to provide recommendations on the most effective digital marketing tools that beauty SMMEs can utilise. Additionally, the research seeks to uncover new ideas, emerging trends, and future potential in relation to the use of digital marketing by SMMEs.

The significance of this study lies in its ability to provide up-to-date information on the current state of digital marketing practices in the beauty industry. By gaining insights into the utilisation of digital marketing by beauty SMMEs, this research will assist in enhancing their understanding and adoption of effective digital marketing strategies. Overall, this study aims to contribute to the growth and success of beauty SMMEs by providing valuable insights and recommendations for leveraging digital marketing to their advantage.

#### **1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The aim of this research is to explore the role of digital marketing in the survival of beauty SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg. The primary objective of this study is to understand how beauty SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg utilise digital marketing as a marketing strategy and to gain insights into the knowledge and awareness of digital marketing among business owners in the Pietermaritzburg beauty industry.

By investigating the role of digital marketing in the survival of beauty SMMEs, this research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the strategies and practices employed by these businesses to leverage digital marketing effectively. The findings of this study will contribute to the knowledge base and provide valuable insights for beauty SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg to enhance their digital marketing efforts and improve their chances of survival and success in a competitive market.

This research has multiple contributions. Firstly, it addresses a crucial aspect of the sustainability and growth of beauty SMMEs by exploring the role of digital marketing in their survival. Understanding the effectiveness of digital marketing tools will provide valuable insights for these businesses to thrive in a competitive market.

Additionally, this study aims to develop a tailored guideline for beauty SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg, providing best practices and effective strategies for implementing digital marketing. This guideline will serve as a practical resource, assisting business owners in navigating the digital landscape and making informed decisions about their marketing efforts.

The research will also identify the most effective digital marketing platforms for different types of beauty businesses. This insight will enable beauty SMMEs to focus their efforts on platforms that yield the highest returns and effectively reach their target audience, thus increasing visibility, attracting customers, and improving overall success.

Furthermore, this research will provide fresh insights and perspectives for digital marketers operating in the beauty industry. By understanding the specific challenges and opportunities faced by beauty SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg, marketers can tailor their strategies and services to better support these businesses, fostering mutually beneficial partnerships.

Lastly, this study will highlight the cost-effectiveness of digital marketing as a valuable tool for promoting products and services within limited budgets. By demonstrating the importance and benefits of digital marketing, it emphasises an affordable and efficient marketing approach that can help Pietermaritzburg's beauty SMMEs thrive.

In conclusion, this research aims to shed light on the significance of digital marketing for the survival and success of beauty SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg. It offers practical guidelines, platform insights, and valuable knowledge exchange opportunities, enabling these businesses to adapt, enhance their online presence, and improve their long-term viability in the beauty industry.

## **1.6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What are the most employed digital marketing methods used by beauty SMMEs?
2. How does the utilization of digital marketing contribute to the survival and resilience of beauty SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg?
3. What specific constraints and challenges do beauty SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg face when implementing digital marketing strategies?

4. How do business owners in the beauty industry perceive the future of digital marketing?

### **1.7. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

**The objectives are as follows.**

1. To determine the digital marketing methods used by the beauty SMMEs.
2. To assess the role of digital marketing in the survival of beauty SMMEs.
3. To determine the constraints businesses, face in using digital marketing in Pietermaritzburg.
4. To understand the perception of business owners about the future of digital marketing in the beauty industry.

### **1.8. RESEARCH METHODS**

This study employed the qualitative research method, which, as recommended by Ambert *et al.* (1995), is suitable for exploring small groups of people. Qualitative research, as noted by Wallace (1984) offers valuable insights into various marketing problems and, with appropriate interpretation, can provide detailed solutions. This justifies its use in examining the realm of digital marketing. Qualitative research is particularly useful for delving into participants' experiences with the use of digital marketing in the survival of beauty bars.

The target population for the study comprised of all beauty SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg that utilise digital marketing as part of their marketing strategy. These participants were expected to provide the rich data and experiences required to draw appropriate conclusions. However, due to practical constraints, it is not feasible to include all beauty SMMEs in PMB. Therefore, a purposive sampling technique was employed to select a sample that would represent the population. As explained by Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2016) , purposive sampling is a non-random technique that does not require underlying theories or a specific number of participants. In essence, the researcher identified the necessary information and sought out individuals who could provide it based on their knowledge or experience. This method aligned well with the objectives.

The data collected will be analysed using thematic analysis. According to Vaismoradi *et al.* (2016), this approach involves organising the data into categories and themes, thereby providing insights into each theme. By employing thematic analysis, the study aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the data and extract meaningful findings.

### **1.9. LIMITATION OF STUDY**

This study was based in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu Natal. From the preliminary research, it was found that only four beauty categories were available: skincare, haircare, lipstick, and fragrances. This limited the ability of the study to be generalised for other beauty categories.

The study focused on specific key aspects of digital marketing, namely social networking, SEO (search engine optimisation), email marketing, YouTube, and PPC (pay-per-click) advertising. It is important to note that these aspects do not cover the entirety of digital marketing tools, as the field is broad and diverse. However, during the pilot testing phase, these tools were found to be commonly used by beauty SMMEs in PMB. The primary objective of the thesis was to shed light on the significance of these digital marketing tools by thoroughly investigating their use and effectiveness.

### **1.10. OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH CHAPTERS**

In Chapter 1, the context and introduction were provided, as well as the objective and significance of the study. The study's limitations were explored. A brief explanation of the study's essential concepts was provided.

The available literature was evaluated in Chapter 2, with an emphasis on the survival indicators of beauty SMMEs because of the usage of digital marketing. In addition, the chapter presented the theoretical framework and framework connected to the function of digital marketing on beauty SMMEs.

The use of a qualitative, exploratory research approach was defended, and the overall research design, including limitations, was explored in chapter 3. This chapter focused on defining the study type, research design, research approach, target population,

sample size and selection, sampling technique, instrument design, and data collecting and analysis processes.

In Chapter 4, the research analysed, discussed, and presented the research findings in relation to the research topics. The NVIVO statistical application was used to analyse the data. Direct quotations from the participants, word bubbles of the most mentioned statements by participants were used in the presentation and discussion of the data to provide a clear understanding of the analysis.

The key findings of the research study as they related to the research objectives were discussed in Chapter Five, based on the data reported in the prior chapter. The findings' relevance was described and linked to the four study objectives. Directions for future research were discussed. Conclusions and recommendations were presented and discussed.

### **1.11. CONCLUSION**

This chapter was an introductory overview of the study. The background and context of the study were explained. Furthermore, the problem statement was clearly described, the research questions, the aims, benefits, and importance of the research were highlighted.

The following chapter focuses on the literature review and providing the knowledge gaps that the study intends to fill. This chapter also outlined the conceptual and theoretical framework.

# CHAPTER 2

## LITERATURE REVIEW

---

### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

Businesses have traditionally relied on marketing to spread the word about their goods and services to a wider audience. In the past, traditional marketing strategies like print advertisements (ads), billboards, and television commercials have proved successful. The emergence of the internet and the digital age, however, has altered how companies approach marketing. To reach their target demographic and grow their consumer base, businesses are using digital marketing more and more frequently.

This chapter will look at how marketing has evolved, and what it can do for beauty SMMEs around Pietermaritzburg. It will also emphasise the theoretical frameworks of previous researchers while presenting the conceptual framework of the research. The literature discussion will be organized and structured around the primary topics, themes, and theories addressed in the study. In the research, pertinent information was sought using academic textbooks and research tools such as Google Scholar and Ebscohost. Special attention was given to peer-reviewed journal articles published within the past five years to ensure that the data collected was current and based on credible sources.

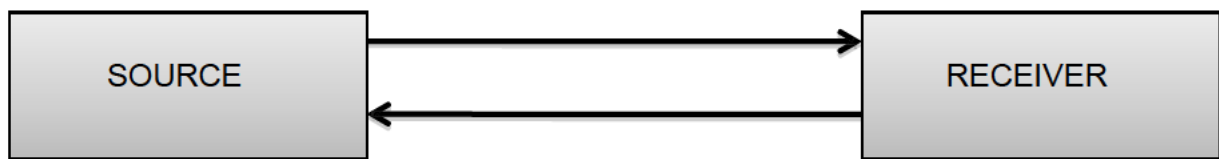
### **2.2. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Earlier studies have demonstrated the importance of SMMEs to the economy. Similar to this, Pietermaritzburg's small, micro, and medium-sized businesses contribute to the city's economy. This does not, however, prevent these businesses from encountering obstacles. The development of digital marketing strategies has given these businesses new opportunities to boost their survival and competitiveness. The objective is to assess the significance of digital marketing for the sustainability of small, micro, and medium-sized beauty enterprises in Pietermaritzburg, utilising the theoretical framework of e-Word of Mouth (eWOM).

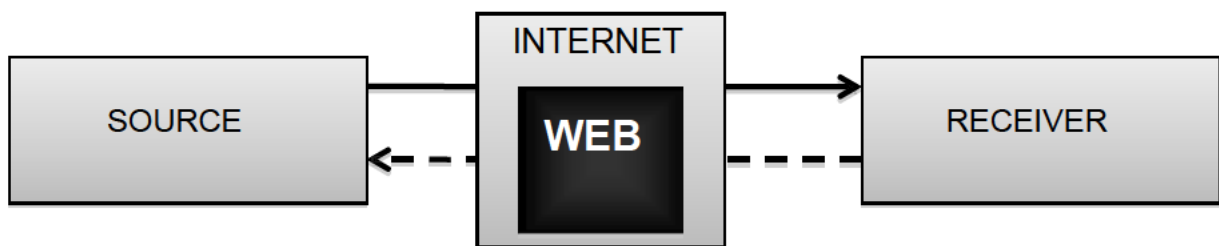
### **WORD OF MOUTH**

Word of mouth, often known as WOM, has been around for more than 50 years because it first appeared in the academic sphere in 1950, claims Nhlabathi (2016). As a result, this theory has been defined differently by many academics. Word of mouth can be conversational advice regarding goods, services, and social issues for some people (Huang et al. 2011). Word of mouth is defined by Litvin, Goldsmith and Pan (2008) as "all informal communications directed at consumers through Internet-based technology related to the usage or characteristics of particular goods and services, or their sellers." Electronic word of mouth, or e-WOM, has replaced traditional word of mouth due to the internet's explosive growth in popularity (Reyes-Menendez, Saura and Martinez-Navalon 2019). Online reviews and online opinions can be categorized as electronic word-of-mouth (Ewom). According to Yoo, Sanders and Moon (2013), having an online presence is crucial for firms. The following example shows how WOM and e-WOM differ:

#### **WOM**



#### **E-WOM**



Source (López and Sicilia 2014)

Figure 4 WOM/ e-WOM

According to Asada and Ko (2023) consumers consider e-WOM to be more credible when making buying decisions than advertising, hence he views e-WOM as a successful strategy for attracting new clients. According to a study done in 2010, between 20% and 50% of consumer buying decisions are influenced by e-WOM. Ahmad et al. (2020) hint that e-WOM is a significant role in the choices that customers make when they make purchases to support this analysis.

For beauty SMMEs, e-WOM is used in the following ways:

In the realm of social media, there exist influential content creators known as social media influencers (SMIs), who boast large audiences (followers) ranging from thousands to a million. These influencers capture their followers' attention through paid partnerships with businesses and advertising on their platforms (Gräve, 2019). Many SMMEs in the beauty industry collaborate with social media influencers to market their goods. These SMIs propose products to their followers by leveraging their influence. Given that it originates from a source that customers trust, this form of electronic word of mouth can be powerful.

Using "User-generated content" is another option. According to Daugherty, Eastin and Bright (2008) , this term refers to media content that has been created or produced by members of the public rather than by professionals who are being paid and is predominantly shared online. Beauty SMMEs urge their consumers to post pictures on social media of themselves using their products. This user-generated content, featuring actual customers using and enjoying the items, holds the potential to be a potent form of electronic word of mouth.

According to Mudambi and Schuff (2010) online reviews and ratings are peer-generated product evaluations posted on a business or third-party website. Since prospective customers are more likely to believe the opinions of other customers than the claims of the company itself, these reviews could serve as an electronic word-of-mouth advertising. According to Gavilan, Avello and Martinez-Navarro (2018) , society increasingly relies on online peer evaluations. The evaluations and ratings that the beauty SMMEs employ to establish an online reputation will assist them in attracting new clients.

In general, e-word of mouth is an effective technique for beauty SMMEs since it enables them to connect with a wide audience and win over potential clients. SMMEs

in the beauty sector can leverage reviews and ratings, collaborate with influencers, and harness the power of e-word of mouth to support and have an impact on the survival and success of their companies.

### **2.3. MARKETING**

Palmer (2013) describes marketing as the activity of recognizing, foreseeing, and meeting the requirements and desires of customers through the development, advertising, and distribution of goods and services. Familmaleki, Aghighi and Hamidi (2015) elaborate that marketing is the process of capitalizing on the needs and interests of the consumer or customer by creating products that demonstrate an understanding of consumer behavior and preferences, create products that meet their needs, and communicate the value of those products to prospective customers through various channels, such as advertising, public relations, and sales promotions. Similar to this, Kotler, Tait and Armstrong (2016), define marketing as the process by which businesses create value for their clients and forge lasting relationships with them. According to Lamb *et al.* (2019), marketing is "the activity, set of institutions, processes for creating, communicating, delivering, exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large." Marketing's fundamental goal is to recognise and profitably address client demands. Deep knowledge of market trends, consumer behavior, and rivalry are necessary for this.

Kotler, Tait and Armstrong (2016) assert that marketing includes a wide range of activities intended to draw in and keep customers. They further categorize these activities into four primary divisions, which are referred to as the marketing mix or the 4Ps of marketing. Borden (1964) is credited for developing the idea of the "marketing mix" and highlighting the responsibility of the marketing manager to continuously develop cutting-edge marketing strategies and tactics to build a successful business (Borden 1964). According to Išoraitė (2016) the marketing mix is a collection of pertinent elements and strategies that help customers fulfill demands and reach company objectives. The marketing mix, which explains the important decisions managers must make when developing products that satisfy consumer demand, is a conceptual framework rather than a scientific theory. Both tactical initiatives with rapid

turnaround times and long-term strategies can be developed using these resources (Goi 2009).

The marketing mix, according to Riaz and Tanveer (2012), is a group of manageable marketing instruments that a business uses to get the right response from its target market. These instruments were named by, Kotler, Tait and Armstrong (2016). According to Kotler, Tait and Armstrong (2016) definitions, each tool is:

1. **Product:** This is the name for the items or services that a company provides to its clients. The product must be created to satisfy the demands of the intended market and set itself out from alternatives.
2. **Price:** This is the sum clients are prepared to spend on the good. To make sure the product is competitive in the market and cheap, pricing tactics must be carefully evaluated.
3. **Promotion:** This entails informing prospective buyers about the benefits of the product through advertising, public relations, and other promotional activities.
4. **Place:** This relates to the distribution routes by which consumers can purchase the product. To maximize client convenience, the product must be made available at the appropriate time and place. (Kotler, Tait and Armstrong 2016)

Overall, marketing plays a crucial role in a business's ability to develop and maintain relationships with customers, increase brand recognition, and boost sales. Businesses must adapt to shifting consumer tastes and market trends in order to be competitive in this dynamic and continuously changing industry.

#### **2.4. A SHIFT FROM TRADITIONAL MARKETING TO DIGITAL MARKETING**

According to Lawrence, Deshmukh and Navajivan (2018) traditional marketing is a conservative form of advertising that has been practiced since the inception of the industry. It entails promoting goods and services through media channels like television, print media, radio, flyers, billboards by roads and highways, and pamphlets. Since the early days of trade, marketing has advanced significantly. The Marketing Museum places the beginning of marketing at 400 AD, or more than 400000 years ago. Creativity in humankind had flared in specialty items like jewellery to show it off

and have an exchange of goods before it was understood to be labelled as "marketing". According to historians like Eric H. Shaw, marketing techniques have been used for at least 40.000 years.

However, starting in the 19th century, when marketing was increasingly concentrated on product creation, distribution, and pricing, Kumar (2015), demonstrates the timelines of marketing in great detail. While Cant (2011), asserts that as marketing evolved over time, businesses adapted to fresh ideas and concepts, it passed through different stages of development. Most corporations adopted the "production" strategy between the middle of the 18th and the early 20th century. The premise behind this notion was that customers liked simple, affordable things. At this period, the business concentrated on mass production, and managers addressed production-related difficulties (Cant 2011).

Large-scale production gave rise to the following phase, known as the "product concept," which was centered on delivering high-quality services and products. Managers that adhered to this concept were those who thought that customers purchased their products because of particular distinctive and superior attributes (Kotler and Keller 2009). The development of high-quality products became their primary objective, instead of mass production (Kotler and Keller 2009).

As the idea for the product developed, it became clear that creating a product alone was insufficient; it also needed to be aggressively sold. This led to the development of the "selling concept," which emphasised aggressive sales techniques. However, this strategy resulted in companies ignoring the demands of their clients and concentrating only on their own supply and demand requirements. According to Solomon *et al.* (2013) businesses that adopt the selling concept place a high priority on getting products out of the warehouse promptly to avoid stock piling up. Salespeople are therefore urged to concentrate more on generating one-time sales than repeat business.

The selling concepts were created, according to Cant (2011) , to be able to reach the market by making sure the items are publicized and consumers knew about them. This was done in response to difficulties in reaching the market and competition. This was consistent with Kumar (2015) who claim that by the 1920s branding, sales, and advertising were all part of marketing. Businesses had a new platform to market their

goods and services thanks to the development of mass media in the middle of the 20th century.

The internet completely changed how organisations conducted marketing in the 1990s. Businesses could now offer their goods and services online thanks to the development of digital tools. Online marketing has grown in popularity as a means of reaching consumers (Clark 1985). Although businesses had few options for digital marketing at the time because the internet was still in its infancy, this gave them a greater opportunity to reach customers and engage with them more. According to an analysis by Veerasamy and Govender (2017), customers are more likely to utilise the internet to look up general information, how-to manuals, or practical advice.

Based on the data and insights they obtain from digital platforms, consumer internet searches are a key determinant of their purchasing decisions. This highlights the significance of online engagement and presence. Constant connection and interaction with customers is one approach to increase engagement. The internet and digital marketing tools are referred to as "a hub of conversation" by Stokes (2011), who supports the notion of engagement.

To determine if these online talks have a positive or detrimental impact on the survival of Pietermaritzburg's beauty enterprises, this study will explore how these conversions affect the survival of small businesses. Based on the Rashid *et al.* (2021), study, it is clear that smaller SMME enterprises are completely prepared to employ digital marketing tools in their company activities. Previous studies have shown that businesses with an online presence survive. The survey unequivocally shows that internet marketing tools may help small businesses grow. The findings are consistent with earlier research by Derguti and Shabani (2015) and ; Rahayu and Day (2017) that discovered internet enterprises can boost sales among SMMEs.

## **2.5. THE EMERGENCE OF DIGITAL MARKETING**

Digital marketing, according to Lekhanya (2015) is any marketing plan that reaches a target audience using digital platforms. He continues by stating that social media, email, search engines, and mobile devices are examples of digital channels. The 1980s saw the introduction of the first personal computers, which is when digital marketing began (Cortada 2013). Digital marketing did not start to take off, though,

until the internet's boom in the 1990s. Businesses mostly employed email marketing in the early years of the internet to connect with their target market.

Ray Tomlinson is credited for sending the first email and creating the technology that made it possible for people to transmit and receive data using various machines, according to Desai and Vidyapeeth (2019). To do this, promotional messages had to be sent to a list of subscribers who had consented to receive them.

According to Kumar (2015), as the popularity of search engines like Yahoo! and Google grew in the late 1990s, companies started to tailor their websites for search engine rankings. Today, search engine optimisation, or SEO, is still a crucial component of digital marketing.

According to Desai and Vidyapeeth (2019), internet usage increased in the 2000s. Pay-per-click (PPC) advertising, which allowed businesses to publish adverts on search engines and only pay when a user clicked on their adverts, became more popular in the early 2000s. This was a game-changer for digital marketing since it made it possible for companies to reach their target demographic and gauge the effectiveness of their efforts more effectively. As soon as digital marketing tools were accessible and available, which started to happen in the early 2000s, beauty businesses began employing them.

When social media sites like MySpace and Facebook first appeared in the mid-2000s, companies soon recognised their marketing possibilities. Businesses started using social media marketing, which has now become a crucial part of digital marketing, to increase brand recognition, interact with customers, and generate traffic for their websites (Edosomwan *et al.* 2011).

In 2010, the number of mobile devices increased, and companies started to improve their websites for mobile users, claim Coe and Yang (2022). Businesses started using mobile apps, SMS marketing, and mobile apps to reach their target audience as mobile marketing gained importance. Search engine optimisation, PPC advertising, social media marketing, email marketing, content marketing, mobile marketing, and other strategies are all included in today's definition of digital marketing (Bala and Verma 2018).

For beauty businesses to remain competitive in today's quick-paced, technologically advanced market, digital marketing is essential. Beauty businesses may reach a larger audience, raise brand awareness, and foster client engagement by adopting digital marketing tools. Additionally, digital marketing offers useful data insights that can assist beauty businesses in identifying their target market and creating efficient marketing plans. To be relevant and competitive in the beauty sector, beauty organisations must include digital marketing tools into their overall marketing strategy.

## **2.6. DIGITAL MARKETING**

Digital marketing is a broad phrase that encompasses a variety of strategies that employ digital technologies, such mobile phones and the internet, to promote goods and services online. It is sometimes referred to as online marketing, internet marketing, or web marketing. It is a general phrase that covers a variety of marketing operations carried out through digital platforms, according to Kusumawati (2019). According to Bhandari and Sin (2023) the act of providing a good or service using digital distribution channels in order to draw customers in a useful way is known as digital marketing.

According to Stokes (2011) digital marketing makes use of the internet's potential to generate demand from consumers and find creative ways to meet that demand. As stressed by Kusumawati (2019), the majority of organisations in today's digital environment need to implement digital marketing strategies to stay competitive. Today, we exist and live in a digital environment. The majority of consumers have adapted to digital tools.

According to Budree, Fietkiewicz and Lins (2019) South African businesses are realizing the value of viewing digital marketing tools as part of an integrated system rather than as standalone platforms. Businesses can effectively sway online users using this strategy. The authors contend that users engage across many digital platforms, suggesting that they may employ a variety of complementary or alternative platforms to satisfy their social demands. Additionally, beauty SMMEs may adjust their marketing initiatives to attract a bigger audience and get greater results by understanding the numerous digital platforms that customers utilise.

Digital marketing takes place online, and a 2017 study by Reddy revealed that internet usage is widespread in South Africa, as seen below. The statistics below show that firms may use digital marketing as a crucial platform to connect with customers. According to Reddy (2017), 24% of the population utilises social media while 49% of people use the internet.



Source Reddy (2017)

Figure 1 Digital in South Africa

### 2.6.1 Types of digital marketing tools used in South Africa

According to Stokes (2011) the following tools are digital marketing tools:

#### 2.6.1.1. Email Marketing

According to Christina, Fenni and Roselina (2019) email marketing is a type of digital marketing that is regularly used to consumers within the mail and is typically employed in outside contact from company to customer to push the purchasing desire and branding. According to Christina, Fenni and Roselina (2019), the email may include promotional offers that point users to the website for further information. According to Fariborzi and Zahedifard (2012) one of the benefits of email marketing is that clients may choose whether they wish to be contacted by email, which is known as permission marketing.

Email marketing is a useful technique for beauty SMMEs in PMB to update customers about new product launches and their advantages. This may spark curiosity and excitement, which would increase sales. Additionally, by offering clients educational

content like skincare advice, makeup tutorials, or fashion trends, email marketing can help these SMMEs become recognised as industry authorities. SMMEs can enhance sales and customer loyalty by establishing themselves as reliable authority in the beauty sector. This will help SMMEs establish credibility and trust with their clients (Fariborzi and Zahedifard 2012).

#### **2.6.1.2. Online Advertising**

Online advertising is also known as display advertising, according to (Bostanshirin 2014). This sort of marketing is described as internet advertisements by Stokes (2011) and Bostanshirin (2014) Online advertising is the most well-known tool of digital marketing, Bostanshirin (2014) alludes that online advertising is the most know tool of digital marketing. While using the interruption factor, online marketing is similar to TV advertising in that it is more creative. The beauty SMMEs can target potential clients who are looking for beauty products and services online with the help of Google Adverts, an effective advertising tool.

#### **2.6.1.3. Affiliate Marketing**

Affiliate marketing can be a successful strategy for SMMEs in the Pietermaritzburg (PMB) beauty sector to advertise their goods and services and grow their clientele. Affiliate marketing, as defined by Bostanshirin (2014), is a web-based marketing strategy that pays affiliates for each customer, visitor, or sale they bring to a company through their marketing efforts.

The SMMEs can encourage affiliates to promote their brands and products to their audiences by providing a commission and other incentive for successful referrals, ultimately resulting in greater sales and revenue. Affiliate marketing, which is defined by Stokes (2011) as being about online product marketing and getting paid for referrals, can be a successful method for SMMEs in the beauty industry in PMB to reach new clients and expand their business.

#### **2.6.1.4. Search Engine Marketing**

Search engine marketing (SEM) can be an effective tool for SMMEs operating in the beauty sector in Pietermaritzburg (PMB) to boost web traffic and increase their exposure to potential clients. In order to increase a website's exposure in search engine results pages, SEM practitioners utilise strategies including search engine optimisation (SEO) and sponsored search advertising, as defined by Bostanshirin (2014). SEM is both an art and a science. This can involve enhancing the content of

websites with pertinent keywords and phrases, constructing reliable backlinks, and implementing focused pay-per-click (PPC) adverts. According to Stokes (2011), pay-per-click is a form of online advertising in which the advertiser gets charged for each click on their advertisement. Beauty SMMEs may boost their online visibility, raise their search engine ranks, and draw more potential clients to their website by investing in SEM.

Similar to how Stokes (2011) defined it, search engine marketing is all about marketing for online searches. This could involve utilising search engine marketing strategies like SEO for SMMEs in the beauty sector in PMB to make sure their website appears at the top of search engine results pages for pertinent keywords and phrases connected to their business. Beauty SMMEs may increase their chances of being found by potential clients looking for beauty products and services online by optimizing their website content, metadata, and other technical features for search engines. For beauty SMMEs in PMB looking to expand their clientele and boost sales, search engine marketing may be a potent tool when used in conjunction with other digital marketing techniques like social media marketing and email marketing.

#### **2.6.1.5. Social Media Marketing**

According to Stokes (2011) social media is an online platform where users produce, distribute, and share material including blogs, photos, and videos. Utilising social media marketing can be a formidable strategy for beauty SMMEs to connect with potential clients and expand their brand. According to Budree, Fietkiewicz and Lins (2019) South Africa is one of the nations on the African continent with the highest percentage of mobile social networking users, which gives beauty SMMEs in PMB an opportunity to engage with and reach potential clients on social media. Beauty SMMEs in PMB can promote their goods and services, interact with their target market, and increase brand recognition by setting up and maintaining an active social media presence. To contact potential clients who are likely to be interested in their goods and services, social media can be a useful avenue for SMMEs to undertake focused advertising campaigns. By doing so, they can increase return on investment and make the most of their marketing budget (Bostanshirin 2014).

Social media marketing offers a big opportunity for beauty SMMEs in PMB to reach and engage with potential clients, promote their brand, and expand their businesses because of the large number of mobile social networking users in South Africa.

## **2.7. SMALL AND MICRO MEDIUM – SIZED BUSINESSES (SMMES)**

### **2.7.1. DEFINING SMALL AND MICRO MEDIUM – SIZED BUSINESSES (SMMES)**

According to Chittithaworn *et al.* (2011), there is no single definition for small and medium-sized firms, as evidenced by the variety of standards that different countries and corporations have opted to use. A small business, as defined by South Africa's National Small Business Act of 1996 (No. 102), is a separate entity that can be managed by one or more owners. It includes any branches or subsidiaries if applicable and operates predominantly within any sector or subsector of the economy. (South Africa 1996b). On the other hand, some contend that the definition of SMMEs may change based on the factor being taken into account, such as the quantity of employees or the cost of real estate (Ismail, Jeffery and Van Belle 2011).

In South Africa, SMMEs are categorized based on the number of employees, yearly revenue, and assets. The many divisions of SMMEs are summarized in the table that follows.

According to Chimucheka (2013), an SME in South Africa often distinguished by possessing one or more of the following characteristics:

1. Staff members that are fewer than 200 people.
2. A yearly turnover of less than 64 million rands.
3. Investing assets that are under R10 million.
4. Direct ownership and management engagement.

### **2.7.2 CATEGORISATION OF SMALL BUSINESS ENTERPRISE IN SOUTH AFRICA**

In the context of South Africa, small business enterprises can be categorized into five parts (South Africa 1996a). The five categories are discussed below:

#### **2.7.2.1. SURVIVALIST ENTERPRISES**

Survivalist businesses generate income that is less than the minimum wage and the poverty line. These businesses, which include subsistence farmers, hawkers, and sellers, are known as pre-entrepreneurial. Although they are sometimes classified as micro-enterprises, their primary focus is on basic survival rather than corporate growth.

### *2.7.2.2. MICRO ENTERPRISES*

A micro enterprise is a business with an annual turnover that is less than the VAT registration threshold, which is presently R150 000. These businesses, which include spaza stores, minibus taxis, and domestic industries, generally operate without legal registration. Furthermore, micro businesses often have a small workforce of no more than five employees.

### *2.7.2.3. VERY SMALL ENTERPRISE*

A very tiny enterprise is one that employs fewer than ten paid employees, excepts for the mining, electrical, manufacturing, and construction industries, which have a barrier of 20 employees. These businesses are part of the formal market and have access to technology.

### *2.7.2.4. SMALL ENTERPRISES*

The maximum number of employees for a small business is 50. They are more established than extremely tiny businesses and have more sophisticated business practices.

### *2.7.2.5. MEDIUM ENTERPRISE*

Finally, a medium enterprise is defined as a company with fewer than 100 employees, or 200 in the mining, energy, manufacturing, and construction industries. These businesses have a decentralised power structure with an additional management layer.

**TABLE 1: SMMES DEFINITION**

<b>SMMES DEFINITION - NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS ACT</b>				
<b>Size of business</b>	<b>Total Staff members</b>	<b>Annual Revenue</b>	<b>Gross assets minus fixed assets</b>	
Medium	Fewer than 100 to 200, depending on industry	Less than R4 million to R50 million, depending upon industry.	Less than R2 million to R18 million, depending on industry.	

Small	Fewer than 50.	Less than R2 million to R25 million, depending on industry.	Less than R2 million to R4,5 million, depending on industry.
Very Small	Fewer than 10 to 20, depending on industry.	Less than R200 000 to R500 000, depending on industry.	Less than R150 000 to R500 000, depending on industry.
Micro	Fewer than 5.	Less than R150 000	Less than R100 000

Source: (Falkena *et al.* 2002)

*Table 1 SMMES DEFINITION*

This research will be looking at Beauty SMMEs, and a beauty business is defined as a business typically involves the creation and sale of products that are designed to enhance personal hygiene and physical appearance. These products can include items like bath and shower products such as soap, deodorants, dental and hair care products, skincare products, fragrances, makeup products such as lip, nail, facial, and eye makeup, men's grooming products including shaving creams, and baby care products by (Jones 2011). The beauty industries faced significant challenges in terms of product and marketing innovation, according to Dyer, Dalzell and Olegario (2004).

The table below illustrates the existence of beauty businesses in South Africa in global

<i>World beauty market</i>				
	<i>1950</i>	<i>1959</i>	<i>1966</i>	<i>1976</i>
<i>Africa</i>	12	18		
South Africa	7	11		141
Nigeria		8		49

economy

Source (Jones 2011)

*Figure 2 Beauty business existence*

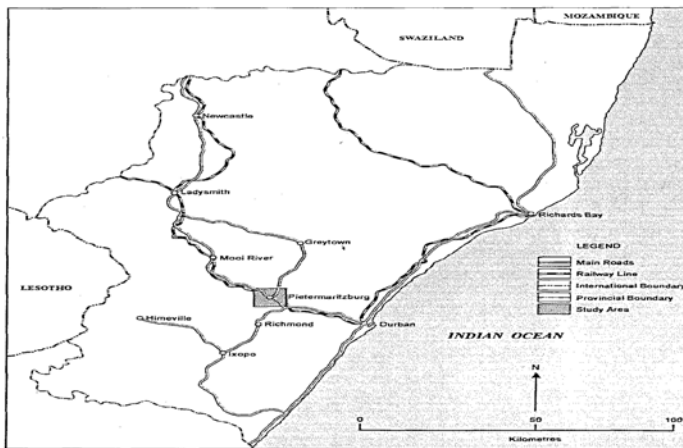
The growth of small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) in South Africa's beauty sector has closely tracked the economic and political changes in that nation. These SMMEs have been essential in creating job opportunities and accelerating economic growth. According to a recent study by Kokong and Naidoo (2022) self-image investments are rising due to the growing significance of physical attractiveness and self-presentation across genders and age groups. Rambe and Mpiti (2017) observed that the South African hairdressing sector makes a sizable socioeconomic contribution. The hairdressing sector is predicted to contribute R24.85 billion, or 0.62% of South Africa's overall GDP, according to the Services Sector Education and Training Authority (South Africa 2016).

The study by Gebashe *et al.* (2022) gives an overview of the growth and development of the beauty sector in South Africa with an emphasis on the role of SMMEs, highlight the necessity for beauty SMMEs in the countries.

Madzimure and Tau (2021), explore the rise of SMMEs in the beauty and hair care industries in South Africa as well as the difficulties they encounter, such as gaining access to markets, financing, and training. Overall, these studies show the significance of SMMEs in the beauty industry in South Africa as well as the difficulties they encounter in gaining access to markets, financing, and training. Despite these difficulties, beauty SMMEs continue to support South Africa's economic development and offer numerous job opportunities.

## **2.8. THE CITY OF PIETERMARITZBURG AND BEAUTY SMMES**

Pietermaritzburg can be classified as one that balances the old and the new in a smooth and graceful way, all while set inside a picturesque ring of lush hills, according to Ngcaweni's assessment in 2000. According to the map below from Ngcaweni (2000) Pietermaritzburg is situated in the Natal Midlands along the N3 route that connects Johannesburg and Durban. Located roughly 70 kilometers to the west of Durban.



Source (AfrGIS (Pty) Ltd 2023)

*Figure 3 Pietermaritzburg Map*

For Pietermaritzburg's SMMEs in the beauty industry, digital marketing has emerged as a crucial instrument for selling their goods and services to a wider clientele. Many SMMEs in the beauty industry in Pietermaritzburg are active on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, where they share images and videos of their work, customer testimonials, and other content. Beauty SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg will need to keep up with new trends and strategies as social media continues to develop to compete in the market.

## **2.9. USE OF DIGITAL MARKETING TOOLS IN PIETERMARITZBURG**

Write (2015) conducted a survey on internet users in South Africa, found that Pietermaritzburg has 1.18% of internet users. According to Tlapana and Dike (2020), the top three most used social networks are Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram respectively, with Twitter having the most users (over 216 billion). In South Africa, Facebook seems to be the most popular social network with 16, 1 million South Africans using Facebook (Tlapana and Dike 2020).

### ***2.9.1 Digital marketing and how it affects the survival of business.***

Ford (2018), claims that while small SMMEs contribute significantly to the economy, they typically don't last more than five years. This is odd because Suraya (2020) claims that the survival of the firm is the main objective of every business. Suraya, Azis and Abd. Majid (2020) define business survival as the capacity of a business to continue operating indefinitely. Businesses engage in a continuous process of construction and

reorganization to keep up with the activities required for their operations, which can be complex and involve factors like leadership styles. Adeoye (2012) defines business survival as the business ensuring their continued existence.

#### *2.9.1.1 SURVIVAL MEASUREMENT*

Survival can be measured through various means, such as:

1. Positively influencing the workforce.
2. Fostering a climate that is business friendly.
3. Developing a product's brand and image.
4. Fostering the innovation of products
5. Having an effect on society socially (Suraya, Azis and Abd. Majid 2020).

These businesses face several obstacles that put their survival in danger, such as rising competition, shifting consumer preferences, and resource scarcity. To remain sustainable, SMMEs in particular must adapt to the environment in which they operate (Ciano, 2011). In the beauty sector, digital marketing has become a vital tool for SMMEs to survive and thrive. Due to its affordability, scalability, and capacity to reach a larger audience, digital marketing has grown in popularity among SMMEs. Digital marketing has been demonstrated to be essential to the survival of SMMEs in the beauty sector.

Several studies have highlighted the following ways in which digital marketing influences the survival of beauty SMMEs.

#### **1. INCREASED BRAND AWARENESS**

According to Gustafson and Chabot (2007) brand awareness is the degree to which customers and potential customers are aware of the company, its activities, and its products. Beauty SMMEs can expand their audience and raise brand awareness by using digital marketing. SMMEs now use social media sites like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter to market their goods and services to prospective clients. Beauty SMMEs can expand their audience and raise brand awareness by using digital marketing. SMMEs now frequently use social media sites like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter to market their goods and services to prospective clients. According to Majeed, Owusu-Ansah and Ashmond (2021), , social media marketing has a favorable impact

on customer brand recognition and purchase intent. Since brand recognition boosts repeat purchases, Gustafson and Chabot (2007), argue that beauty SMMEs must use digital marketing strategies to both attract new and retain existing customers. According to Shabbir, Khan and Khan (2017) , gaining brand awareness may be accomplished by effective marketing strategies, which in this case include digital marketing.

## **2. IMPROVED CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT**

According to Marbach, Lages and Nunan (2016), customer engagement can be characterised as a multifaceted notion that reflects a psychological state brought on by interactive consumer encounters with focal objects within service interactions. While, Vivek, Beatty and Morgan (2012), define customer engagement as an emotional bond between a company's patrons that is centered on patron participation and interaction. Beauty SMMEs can interact with their clients through digital marketing and establish lasting relationships with them. Particularly social media platforms give SMMEs a platform to communicate with their clients, answer their questions, and give them useful information. Abror *et al.* (2020) and Chen and Xie (2019), found that customer engagement has a beneficial impact on customer loyalty and purchase intention.

## **3. COST-EFFECTIVE MARKETING**

According to Bala and Verma (2018) and Bostanshirin (2014), when compared to conventional marketing channels, digital marketing is the most cost-effective. This is crucial for beauty SMMEs since they operate with little resources. By expanding their reach while spending the least amount of money possible, they were able to expand their customer base. More exposure, as was already said before, was essential for their survival.

## **4. IMPROVED SALES PERFORMANCE**

Sales performance was described by Zallocco, Bolman Pullins and Mallin (2009) as the evaluation of salespeople taking into account both their sales outcomes and sales practices. Beauty SMMEs can boost their sales revenue by utilising digital marketing strategies, which is essential for their survival in a fiercely competitive industry.

The existence of beauty SMMEs is critically dependent on digital marketing. SMMEs may raising brand awareness, enhancing customer interaction, thereby attracting new consumers, retain old ones, as a result booth sales performance and offer cost-effective marketing. SMMEs must implement digital marketing strategies as the beauty industry develops to compete and thrive in an economically challenging environment.

## 2.10. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study's conceptual framework is built around three important components: Digital marketing, survival and SMMEs.

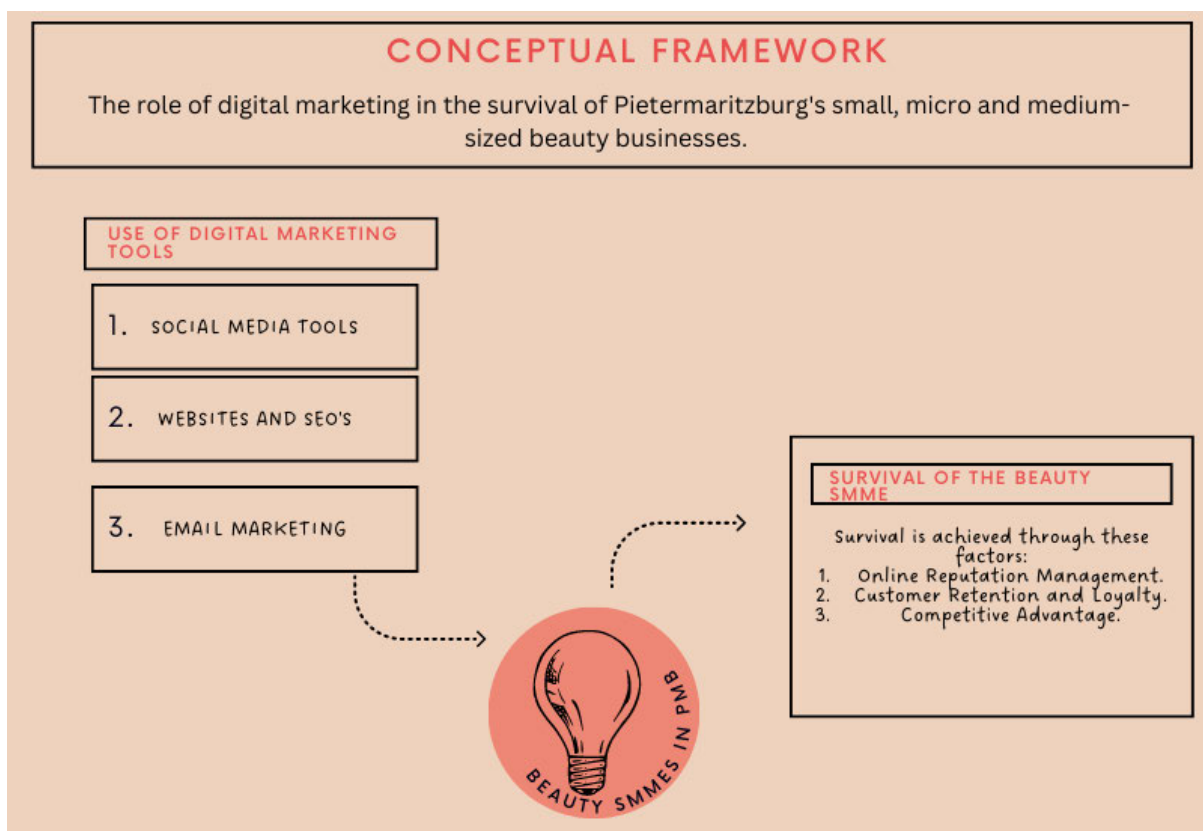


Figure 4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1. Digital marketing: According to Desai and Vidyapeeth (2019) digital marketing is the use of online tools to communicate with clients in the places where they feel most at ease and where they spend the majority of their time. Online marketing, email marketing, social media marketing, text messaging, affiliate marketing, search engine optimisation (SEO), and pay per click (PPC) are just a few of the several digital marketing methods described by Yasmin, Tasneem and Fatema

(2015). This component acknowledges the importance of leveraging digital marketing tools to engage with customers effectively.

2. Survival: According to Suraya, Azis and Abd. Majid (2020) business survival is the ability of a business to maintain its business operations without a time limit. For this study, it specifically pertains to the survival of beauty SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg.
3. SMMEs have different definitions in different countries, according to Cronje et al. (2001:494).

As shown on figure 1: The suggested conceptual framework provides a thorough platform for analyzing the relationship between digital marketing, survival, and SMMEs in the context of the beauty sector in Pietermaritzburg. It creates a framework for studying the unique digital marketing tools and methods used by beauty SMMEs and investigates how these practices help them survive. The study intends to produce insights into the efficiency of digital marketing tools in promoting the survival and expansion of beauty SMMEs by investigating the relationships between these components. The findings of this study can advise the beauty SMME owners about the best ways to harness digital marketing for the benefit of small, micro, and medium-sized enterprises in Pietermaritzburg's beauty sector.

## **2.11. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the purpose of this study was to explore the impact of digital marketing on the survival of beauty SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg. This chapter extensively covered the theoretical framework underpinning the current research and also reviewed relevant literature on the influence of digital marketing on beauty SMMEs and its effect on their survival. The next chapter, Chapter Three, will focus on the methodology employed for conducting this study.

# CHAPTER 3

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

The research methodology, as well as how the research questions and objectives will be addressed, are covered in Chapter 3. The chapter will explain briefly what is meant by methodological framework, the research design that will be used in this study, and why a qualitative approach is seen to be the best way to answer all research questions while also meeting the objectives and aims. This chapter will also go through the research approach and plan. This chapter will cover data collecting and analysis.

The semi-structured interviews were discussed as the data collecting instrument, and the data were analyzed using NVIVO version 12. The target population, which comprised beauty SMMEs in the PMB area, and the sampling method were thoroughly discussed. When performing qualitative research, a touch of validity and reliability was required. All ethical considerations explored throughout the investigation were concluded in this chapter.

### **3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN**

Research design, as highlighted by Pandey and Pandey (2021) and Chawla and Sodhi (2011), serves as a guiding framework for investigations, providing effective direction for the study. Kothari (2017) underscores the importance of research design in steering research efforts and ensuring the collection of pertinent data and information. According to Hoe and Hoare (2012), research designs can be broadly classified into two major categories: qualitative and quantitative.

Quantitative research, as described by Hoe and Hoare (2012) involves the use of techniques to test hypotheses, establish causal relationships between variables, and measure the frequency of observations. Almalki (2016) characterizes quantitative research as a deductive approach, wherein researchers perceive the world as an objective reality independent of their observations. Quantitative researchers believe

that by breaking down this reality into manageable pieces, a comprehensive understanding can be achieved.

In contrast, qualitative research, as outlined by Hoe and Hoare (2012) focuses on exploring new topics and understanding the human experience by interpreting phenomena in terms of the meanings individuals attribute to them. Almalki (2016), emphasizes the qualitative approach's emphasis on exploration and understanding, diverging from the deductive nature of quantitative research.

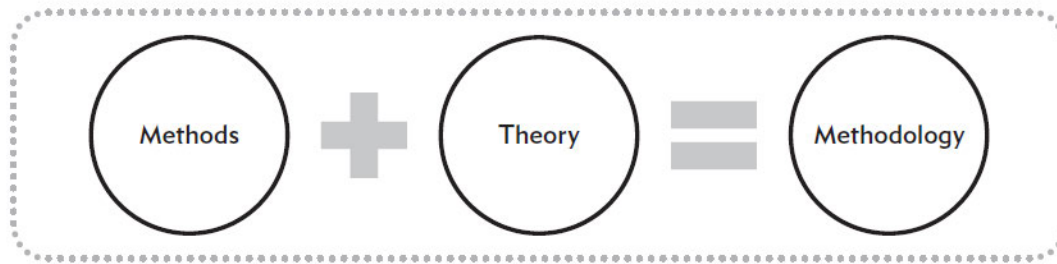
In contrast, qualitative research, as outlined by Hoe and Hoare (2012), focuses on exploring new topics and understanding the human experience by interpreting phenomena in terms of the meanings individuals attribute to them. Almalki (2016) emphasizes the qualitative approach's emphasis on exploration and understanding, diverging from the deductive nature of quantitative research.

The chosen research design for this study is exploratory in nature, driven by a limited understanding of the topic. Exploratory research, according to Chawla and Sodhi (2011), allows researchers to gain insight into a subject. This type of research is flexible, not bound by testing propositions, and has the potential to lead to testable hypotheses (Chawla and Sodhi 2011).

Utilizing interviews, the researcher sought to comprehend participants' lived experiences with digital marketing. This method served as a lens through which the researcher could glean insights, learn from participants, and appreciate the significance of digital marketing (Teherani *et al.* 2015). Additionally, the exploratory nature of this study aligns with Patricia (2017a) assertion that qualitative research is the most suitable approach when researchers lack knowledge about important variables in a topic that has never been addressed.

### **3.3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

According to Patricia (2017a) methods and theories work together to form a research methodology. As demonstrated in figure 3.1. Where the methods are referred as techniques to collect and analyse data Scotland (2012: 9). Additional, Salmons (2014) refers to methods as practical steps used to conduct the study.

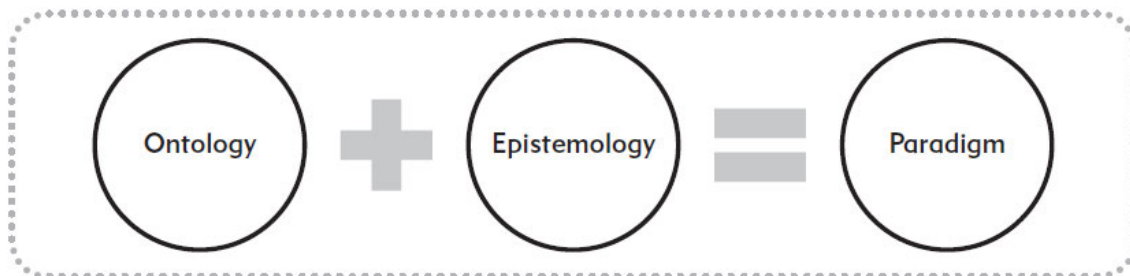


Source Patricia (2017a)

*Figure 5 Research Methodology.*

### 3.4. RESEARCH PARADIGM

A research paradigm is a lens that alters our perception of the world and influences how information is viewed and interpreted (Khaldi, 2017). While Creswell and Creswell (1994), argues that research is guided by a set of beliefs and that those beliefs make up the research paradigm. Patricia (2017a) clarifies that a research paradigm is made up of ontology and epistemology.



Source Patricia (2017a)

*Figure 6 Research paradigm*

Ontology is referred to by Scotland (2012) “as a study of being”, it explores the nature of existences. According to Smith (2012)ontology has 2 type which is realism which is the world of objectivity and the second type is relativism which is governed by subjectivity. This study was guided by relativism. This was seen to be best as this study is built on people’s experiences, making it subjective, as each experience is different for each participant.

Epistemology, on the other hand, is characterised as scientific theories of knowledge and perception (Breukers and Hoekstra 2004). Epistemology, according to Teherani *et al.* (2015), explores questions such as "How do we know what we claim to know?"

According to Audi (2010), epistemology follows three assumptions; positivism, post-positivism and interpretivism.

## **1. Positivism**

According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), positivism is defined as a worldview based on scientific and empirical research methodologies. It is based on the assumption that reality exists independently of humanity and is guided by laws rather than our sensory experiences (Kivunja and Kuyini 2017). According to Ryan (2018), positivistic research employs a process in which researchers define a concept, construct a hypothesis, or make estimations about a phenomenon, and then undertake a study to validate or reject the theory. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), agree, adding that researchers that use this paradigm often base their ontological observations on quantitative measurements, equations, and mathematical computations.

This positivistic paradigm is inappropriate for the present study. As Pham (2018), reminds, because thoughts, perceptions, and intentions are not directly observable, they cannot be quantified. The goal of this study is to explore the perceptions and thoughts of beauty SMMEs, which cannot be captured exclusively through quantifiable measurements.

Therefore, this study does not adopt the positivism paradigm, as it seeks to gain insights into subjective experiences and perspectives rather than focusing solely on quantification and empirical validation.

## **2. Post-Positivism**

Panhwar, Ansari and Shah (2017) present a paradigm that combines positivism and interpretivism to provide a balanced approach. This paradigm recognises the ability of researchers to use a variety of research methodologies depending on the nature of their subject. It enables data collecting from diverse perspectives, allowing for a full grasp of the research issue.

However, in the context of this study, a different strategy is taken. The qualitative research method was utilised, which predominantly employed semi-structured interviews with participants. This method allows for in-depth study and comprehension of beauty SMME views and experiences. The study's focus on qualitative data collecting aims to uncover rich and nuanced insights that quantitative methodologies may not fully convey.

As a result, while the Panhwar, Ansari and Shah (2017) paradigm permits the use of numerous research methodologies, the current study opts for a single research method matched with the qualitative approach. This purposeful choice promotes a thorough analysis of beauty SMMEs' opinions, viewpoints, and experiences, adding to a full knowledge of the significance of digital marketing.

### **3. Interpretivism**

Interpretivism, as described by Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), is a research paradigm that emphasises the study of the world through opinions and lived experiences. In this research, the philosophical theory employed was interpretivism. According to Alharahsheh and Pius (2020), the interpretivism paradigm allows researchers to explore a phenomenon from a behavioural perspective, based on the participants' own realities.

The qualitative nature of this study aligns with the interpretivism paradigm, as it enables the researcher to gain a comprehensive understanding of the significance of digital marketing in the survival of beauty SMMEs. According to interpretivism, reality is constructed through the ways individuals generate meaning from their lived experiences (Creswell and Creswell 1994). In this study, the focus was on the experiences of beauty SMMEs, drawing upon the participants' theories, knowledge, and their own experiences with digital marketing.

By adopting an interpretivist approach, this research aims to capture the subjective viewpoints and insights of beauty SMMEs, recognizing the importance of individual perspectives and lived experiences in shaping the understanding of digital marketing's role in their survival.

### **3.5. RESEARCH APPROACH**

According to Kothari (2004), there are two ways to research: quantitative and qualitative. According to Creswell and Creswell (1994), quantitative research is a strategy that uses postpositive assertions to build knowledge. It applies inquiry strategies such as experiments and surveys, and collects data on pre-set instruments that give statistics data. Fossey *et al.* (2002) describe qualitative research as the use of unstructured exploratory approaches using small samples to acquire a deeper knowledge of a topic. The purpose of qualitative research is to gain a thorough understanding of the underlying causes, beliefs, and motives (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree 2006).

According to Creswell and Creswell (1994), in a qualitative research approach, the researcher collects open-ended questions that generate new data with the primary purpose of establishing themes from the data. In this study, a qualitative, exploratory design was used. Beck (2003) finds the qualitative paradigm to be flexible because there are no predetermined methods to follow, and this type of design cannot be precisely duplicated. It is regarded as the best method of study because it is seen to be more efficient and useful in bringing new and significant knowledge. As a result, qualitative research would be the greatest strategy for gathering rich data and knowledge from study participants.

### **3.6. POPULATION**

According to Ayala and Elder (2011), the target population is the total group that a researcher is interested in studying and will be drawing conclusions from. The study was conducted among beauty SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg. The population was made up of SMMEs active in the makeup, perfume, and cosmetics industries. The key informants were carefully chosen, with the researcher visiting beauty salons and pubs to make contact, explain the goal of the study, and schedule interviews. The only requirement for selecting key informants was that they had to own a SMME in Pietermaritzburg. The study's population consisted of registered beauty SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg. According to Yellosa (2021), Pietermaritzburg has approximately 8,300 registered firms, which include beauty SMMEs. 67 are beauty professionals and 59 are beauty salons in this area.

**TABLE 2: TYPES OF SMMEs.**

<b>Type of SMMEs/ Category</b>	<b>Number of companies.</b>
Beauty Professionals	67 Beauty professionals
Beauty Salons	59

*Table 2 Beauty SMMEs category.*

### **3.7. SAMPLING**

Morse (1991) describes sampling as a process used in extracting a predetermined number of observations from a larger population. Maree (2016) adds that there are two types of sampling, namely probability and non-probability. The term "probability sampling" refers to the fact that every element in the population has an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample (Acharya *et al.* 2013). Taherdoost (2016) adds that the probability techniques include simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified random sampling and cluster sampling.

According to Maree (2016) a non-probability sample is one that is chosen based on the researcher's personal judgement rather than random selection. Taherdoost (2016) agrees with this concept and suggests that non-probability methods are commonly utilised in qualitative studies. He implies that non-probability sampling includes purposive sampling, convenience sampling, quota sampling, and special technique sampling, such as snowball or network sampling. For the purposes of this study, purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling was used.

#### **3.7.1. Purposive Sampling:**

Purposive sampling is solely based on the judgement of the researcher (Maree 2016). Purposive sampling is described as an approach in which specific situations, people, or events are purposefully chosen to offer crucial information that cannot be obtained through other options (Taherdoost 2016). This was supported by Patricia (2017b) when he mentions that purposive sampling are normally used in qualitative studies. The researcher utilised her discretion in selecting the beauty SMMEs that use digital marketing since they would be best suited to answering all of the research questions and assisting in the achievement of the study's objectives. This sampling technique

was chosen in light of the support offered by Gelo, Braakmann and Benetka (2008), who stated that a qualitative approach typically employs purposive sampling.

### **3.7.2. Sample Size**

The sample size is defined as the number of people that will be included in the study (Draugalis and Plaza 2009). When performing qualitative research, Dworkin (2012) states that a sample size of 5 to 50 is appropriate. In agreement with Dworkin (2012), Draugalis and Plaza (2009) , recommends a small sample size when conducting a research for which knowledge is limited, to gain a better grasp of a topic. Due to potential time and cost constraints, the researcher created a manageable sample size. The sample was 30 small beauty businesses. In this study, data was gathered until data saturation is reached. Braun and Clarke (2021), refer to data saturation as the point in data collection where no new topics or themes are arising in the process. At this point, it is recommended that data collection ceases.

## **3.8. RECRUITMENT PROCESS**

There are three basic techniques to recruit participants in qualitative research, according to Berman (2021). Telephones, referrals, and intercepting persons at certain areas were the three methods used during the study. People were recruited over the phone and by physically visiting the SMMEs. Berman (2021), suggested grouping the results of the phone calls in this form of recruitment (CB-Call back). Other SMMEs were recruited by directly approaching them or searching online databases. Once recruited, these SMMEs were issued a confirmation letter and a content letter. The researcher hoped to gain access to a diverse range of beauty SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg using a variety of recruitment tactics, which might lead to a thorough assessment of the impact of digital marketing on their survival. This method allowed for a larger perspective while also increasing the validity and dependability of the study's findings.

## **3.9. INCLUSION CRITERIA**

According to Stern, Jordan and McArthur (2014), inclusion criteria refer to the persons who will be included in the study based on their capacity to meet the qualities of those needed in the study's sample. Stern, Jordan and McArthur (2014), stressed the

importance of clearly defining the inclusion criteria. The beauty SMMEs chosen included those that specialise in hair, cosmetics, and fragrances. These businesses must employ digital marketing and be in PMB. Furthermore, the volunteers must be fluent in isiZulu or English, the languages with which they would be familiar during the research. Participants must own or manage SMMEs in the beauty industry.

### **3.10. EXCLUSIVE CRITERIA**

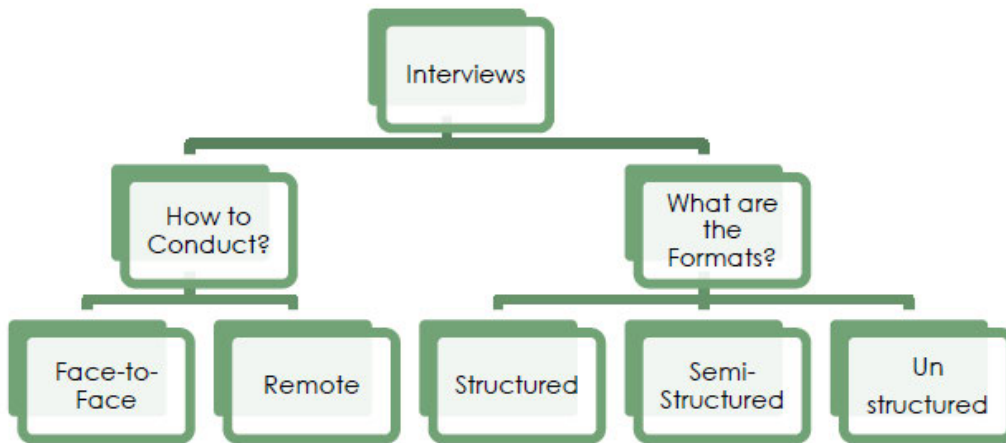
Exclusion criteria are defined by Meline (2006) as "characteristics that may be owned by participants that may affect the accuracy of the results". All beauty SMMEs who have been in operation for less than six months in the were excluded as the researcher felt they might lack experience.

### **3.11. DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

Data was collected as guided by the research questions and objectives, over a period of 4 weeks following the approval of the DUT ethics committee. The research was administer over 30 minute interviews with 22 beauty SMMEs around PMB.

### **3.12. RESEARCH INSTRUMENT**

The research used interviews as the main research instrument. Pandey and Pandey (2021) define an interview as a two-way process that allows for the exchange of ideas and information. Taherdoost (2022) points out that interviews can be classed in two ways based on how they are conducted and how they are formatted. This is depicted in Figure 3.4, and the principles will be highlighted further.



Source (Taherdoost 2022)

*Figure 7 Interview.*

How will the interviews be conducted?

1. Face-to-Face Interviews: According to Taherdoost (2022), this type of interview is a data gathering method in which the interviewer talks directly with the participants.
2. Remote Interviews: Remote interviews are also known as online interviews (Taherdoost 2022). According to Salmons (2014) online interviews are interviews that are conducted through computer-mediated-communication (CMC). Salmons (2014) further explains CMC as using cell phones, computers, or cell mobile devices.

According to Lynn Silipigni and Marie (2017) telephone interviews can be used alone or in conjunction with face-to-face interviews or observations, and that telephone interviews can be used in conjunction with a site visit. The researcher has used this method when collecting data, due to the nature of the participants. This was done to allow the participant to choose which method they are comfortable with. Any telephone interview was followed up with a face-to-face interview.

### **3.12.1. Types of Interviews**

1. Structured Interviews: Salmons (2014) describes structured interviews as “standard” questions. Taherdoost (2022) agree with this and add that the structured interviews have protocol that the researcher and participants both need to follow. Both authors agree that this type of interview does not allow any flexibility to

redirect or elaborate the questions. Additionally, Taherdoost (2022) does not recommend this for qualitative studies. This was the reason the researcher did not choose to use to this type of interview.

2. Unstructured Interviews: Salmons (2014) describes this type as a “conversation” between the participant and the researcher. Taherdoost (2022) discourages this as this method is noted as time consuming as it starts with broader topics before the actually question needed for the research questions to be fulfilled.
3. Semi-Structured Interviews: The researcher adopted the semi-structured interviews approach. Taherdoost (2022) explained that semi-structured interviews consists of predetermined question however leave room for the researcher to ask more or seek clarity where necessary. According to Salmons (2014) the researcher comes up with interview questions, but remains flexible to additional information and open to new questions. According to Taherdoost (2022) semi-structured interviews provides the opportunity of gathering rich data, and capturing new concepts.

Use of semi structured interviews, according to Kothari (2004) allows the flexibility to use different approaches to the different interviewees, while talking about the same area of data. After preparing the interview protocol, the researcher sent and scheduled the interview through emails, WhatsApp messages, and messages. The researcher visited the potential participant to enhance their cooperation and comfortability so that all questions are responded to accurately. These interviews were scheduled to last between 30-50 minutes. Interviews were conducted in Zulu or English and translated where necessary.

Vass, Rigby and Payne (2017) expressed the importance of interviews being recorded as they play a vital part in the data analysis. These interviews were recorded using a cellphone to ensure that the accuracy of the conversation, and each recording were labelled with the name of the beauty business to avoid confusion. The researcher took notes throughout the interviews as well. Later, all the data was stored in an encrypted zipped folder with a password to ensure the security and protection of all the information.

Before the interviews started, the researcher obtained consent from each participant, as this was regarded as an ethical practice enhancement (Pip Cresswell and Jean

Gilmour 2014). Additionally, the participants were reminded of the privacy and confidentiality of the study, and they were informed throughout the study that they could withdraw at any time.

### **3.12.2. Interview questions construction**

According to Turner III (2010) emphasises the significance of constructing effective interview questions. He advises researchers to ask questions that enable participants to delve deeper. The aim is to obtain maximum data about the participants' knowledge on a specific topic.

The following guidance have been provided as part of the construct effective interview questions:

1. Should be open ended questions. Open ended question are describes as questions that allow the participants to expressed their opinion without the influence of the researcher (Reja *et al.* 2003).
2. Questions should be asked in their natural form
3. The questions should be asked one at a time.
4. The question should be clear and easy to understand.
5. The researcher should avoid why questions. (Turner III 2010)

Additionally, Castillo-Montoya (2016) adds the importance of the flexibility of follow up questions.

The interview consisted of 20 open-ended questions, all established from reviewing existing literature. These questions aimed to deliberate the role played by digital marketing in the survival of beauty SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg. The participants were interviewed to gain their understanding of digital marketing, its necessity, and the role it played in their beauty SMMEs.

The first section (Section A) of the interview consisted of the gender, the age, size of the business, and whether they used digital marketing. The second part of the interview (Section B) consisted of the type of digital marketing tools, role played the digital marketing and the perception of the beauty SMMEs about the future of digital marketing in their businesses.

### **3.12. DATA SATURATION**

Data saturation, according to Shaheen, Pradhan and Ranajee (2019) is related with the circumstance where a new set of data delivers little in the way of "additional themes, insights, viewpoints, or information." Maree (2016) explains that according to analysis conducted after approximately 12 interviews, almost 92% of the study themes are covered, however adds that they are no specific measure of when data will reach saturation.

### **3.13. DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis is a report on how the researcher organised, maintained, and analysed data to produce findings, as well as how the researcher interpreted the findings (Ma *et al.* 2017). The data was analysed using content analysis, with the NVIVO, version 12 software.

#### ***Content Analysis:***

Content analysis is described as a technique of summarising qualitative data by identifying patterns and themes in acquired data (Drisko and Maschi 2016). While, Stemler (2000) offers a broader definition that content analysis is a systematic, repeatable process for condensing large quantities of information into fewer segments using specific coding criteria. The study used the NVivo software to group the themes and to identify the patterns in the interview transcripts. This software highlighted the words and themes that stand out.

#### ***NVIVO VERSION 12:***

According to Castleberry (2014), NVivo enables researchers to collect, organize, and analyse a wide range of data types. This software includes a feature that allows documents to be imported from Microsoft Word (.doc and.docx), Portable Document Format (.pdf), rich text (.rtf), and plain text (.txt) formats. Additionally, most types of audio, photo, and video files, as well as excel spreadsheets, can be imported into the software (Castleberry 2014). According to Theron (2015) the NVivo software is a usefully tool for beginner qualitative researcher as the words used by the participants in the study are used as the codes.

Through NVIVO, one can

Keeping track of all materials in a single project file, spend more time on research and analysis rather than administrative activities, and work in a systematic manner to guarantee that the researcher does not overlook any data. Additionally, NVIVO is good for questioning the data and revealing subtle correlations in ways that are impossible to do manually. The data can be backed up results and tacked in a sigle file.

This study analysed all the data collected using content analysis based on the Tesch's Approach:

#### *8-STEP TESCH'S APPROACH:*

Tesch (1992: 142-145) provided a guideline that will assist in organising of qualitative data. According to Theron (2015) this approach has eight steps to the analysis the qualitative data. These steps and how they will be used in the study are detailed below

##### **STEP 1**

Read through all the data: The researcher must read and re-read all the transcripts to get the overall meaning. Theron (2015) advises that the researcher in this step is jots down their general ideas of the data as they read. In this study, the researcher thoroughly read and re-read all the transcripts, gaining an overall understanding of the data. For example, during the analysis of interviews with beauty SMME owners, the researcher made initial notes about recurring themes like "social media usage" and "challenges faced."

##### **STEP 2**

Theron (2015) suggests that the researcher should go each document, while they are working on the document question themselves by asking "What is this about?". This question will not be referring to the content that is on the document but more about the topic. Therefore, advises that that once the researcher finds the topics mentioned above, write these topics in the margin of the document (Theron 2015). The researcher questioned each document, asking, "What is this about?" For instance, when analyzing an interview transcript, the researcher questioned the document's essence, leading to the identification of topics such as "digital marketing strategies" and "business challenges."

##### **STEP 3**

Theron (2015) advises that after doing this process for many documents, the researcher should proceed and make a list of all the topics, one column per data document, placing all the columns in the same sheet. The researcher is further advised to proceed and group the similar topics together, write these groups in columns with headings that will be a representation of major topics, the unique topics and the leftovers (Theron 2015). In the study, after identifying topics in multiple documents, the researcher created a list of all topics in separate columns. Topics like "social media engagement" and "resource constraints" were grouped together under major headings, offering an initial structure to the data.

#### **STEP 4**

The researcher must now abbreviate these topics as code, then proceed and go back to the data and write the code next to the relevant segment of the data. The researcher is further advised by Theron (2015) to be open to new categories and codes that may emerge. The researcher should have analytic memos, should any idea about data come to mind, the researcher will write it down. The researcher's identified topics were abbreviated as codes, and the researcher assigned these codes to corresponding segments in the data. For instance, the code "SME01" might represent a segment discussing social media engagement strategies, and this code was applied consistently across relevant transcripts.

#### **STEP 5**

The researcher needs to find the most suitable descriptive words for the topics, which have now begun to turn into categories. The researcher needs to group similar categories together, this is done to reduce the number of categories. Theron (2015) states that the normal number of categories is between 20-50, as this is the organizing system for the data. As topics evolved into categories, the researcher found suitable descriptive words. For example, categories like "Online Presence" and "Resource Management" emerged, encapsulating related codes to provide a clearer understanding of the content.

#### **STEP 6**

The researcher is advised to make a final decision on the abbreviation of the categories and alphabetizes of the code to avoid duplication(Theron 2015). Lastly

Theron (2015) adds that a segment of data can fit more than one categories (two or three categories). The researcher finalized abbreviations for categories, ensuring an alphabetized code system to prevent duplication. Codes like "OPR" for Online Presence were adopted, enhancing clarity.

## **STEP 7**

The researcher is advised to perform a preliminary analysis by putting data belonging to each category and looking at all the materials in one category at a time. The researcher needs to now focus on the content of each category, keeping the research question in mind, with the intention to discard irrelevant data (Theron 2015). A preliminary analysis involved reviewing data within each category. For instance, all data related to "Social Media Strategies" was examined collectively. The researcher focused on refining categories, discarding irrelevant data, and gaining deeper insights into each thematic area.

## **STEP 8**

The last steps requires for the researcher to recode the existing data (Theron 2015). The organizing system helps the research to give structure to their research (Theron 2015). In the final step, the researcher recoded existing data based on insights gained during the preliminary analysis. Adjustments were made to ensure the data aligned with the refined categories. This step finalized the qualitative analysis, providing a comprehensive and well-organized presentation of findings.

## **PILOT TESTING**

Pilot testing, according to Van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001: 62), is a "trial run" of the research instrument. Kallio *et al.* (2016), on the other hand, refers to this as a way of pre-testing the study instrument. Dikko (2016) advises that pilot testing should be done to a smaller number of participants that have the main characteristics of the target population of the study. Pilot testing, according to Van Wijk and Harrison (2013), can boost the credibility of a research study. Therefore, the researcher conducted pilot testing on 3 beauty SMMEs in PMB, this helped the researcher ensure that the questions asked were easy to understand and will cover the scope the research intends to cover. The researcher also discovered if the questions asked provided the

relevant information needed. This ensured that the interview stuck within the stipulated time. According to Dikko (2016), this allowed the researcher to practice and perfect her interviewing tactics.

### 3.14. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Smith (1984) stated that there's no place for discussions about validity in qualitative research. While, Cope (2014) argues that it is vital that validity to be considered. Gray (2009) attests with this and proposed that they are different types of validity, namely: Descriptive, interpretive and theoretical validity. Validity is described as ensuring that the instrument use measure what it is intends to measure (Gray 2018). Dikko (2016) emphasises the importance of validity as it ensures that the research collects and presents true findings of the research. According to Cope (2014), the major criteria used to assess the trustworthiness of qualitative research findings are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

The study adopted the model of Guba, in ensuring the maximum level of trust worthiness. His model consisted of four strategies

**TABLE 3: VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY**

Strategy	Criteria
Credibility	Member checking.
	Persistent Observations.
	Peer- debriefing.
Transferability	Having a sampling that truly represents the population.
Dependability	Code and recode procedures.
Confirmability	Reflective project appraisal.

Source: (Guba 1981)

### *Table 3 Validity and Reliability measures*

Table 3, demonstrated how trustworthiness was reached in this study. Additionally, the research was guided by Burnard *et al.* (2008) and the following methods were implemented to ensure that accurate data was collected.

- The researcher spent enough time on the field with the various participants and used the member checking strategy, where the researcher summarized what was said by the participants to ensure the accuracy of the information captured. These strategies ensured credibility in the data collected.
- The research context was explained and lined out broadly, and the participants' description was included to ensure transferability.
- To confirm dependability, the research made use of coding and recoding. The researcher coded one portion of the data and recoded it after 10 days, comparing the results.
- A field journal was kept, which included thorough notes on decisions taken throughout the research process, enhancing the confirmability of the study.

### **3.15. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Patricia (2017a) stressed the significance of obtaining ethical approval from "Institutional Review Broad." Furthermore, Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) are created in universities to verify that ethical standards are followed. This necessitated the researcher seeking ethical permission from the Durban University of Technology's Institutional Research Ethic Committee (IREC), which was granted (see Appendix A). The primary concern was to ensure that no physical or psychological harm was inflicted upon the participants. It was imperative that participants provided their informed consent before taking part in the study. Participants were not exposed to any situations that could be considered mentally or physically harmful. Their involvement was limited to participating in an interview session, and no medical or other types of examinations were required. It is important to note that participation in this study was entirely voluntary, and participants were explicitly informed in writing that they had the right to withdraw at any time without the need to disclose their reasons, this was guided by Israel and Hay (2006).

Patricia (2017a) emphasised the significance of obtaining ethical approval from the Institutional Review Board. These boards are established in universities to ensure adherence to ethical standards. As such, the researcher sought ethical permission from the Institutional Research Ethics Committee (IREC) at Durban University of Technology, which was granted (see Appendix A). The research further obtained a certificate of ethics training.

Israel and Hay (2006) describe ethical considerations as ethical standards or criteria for the successful conduct of research.

This study took into consideration the following ethics

- Respondents were informed of the study's purpose and that the findings would be shared with anyone interested.
- The researcher began the interviews by reading a letter of informed permission that assured respondents of confidentiality.
- It was explained to respondents that they were under no obligation to complete or participate in the study. The consent form was carefully explained to the responders, who were required to sign indicating that they understood what was expected of them.

### **3.15.1. Anonymity and confidentiality:**

According to Wiles *et al.* (2008), anonymity and confidentiality are two separate yet closely connected notions. According Wiles *et al.* (2008), confidentiality describes information that is shared in confidence and given a duty of secrecy. On the other hand, anonymity, as defined by Novak (2014), is connected to ideas like identification, secrecy, privacy, and protection but is related with unknown authorship and identity.

To ensure the confidentiality of participants all written or recorded materials will be safely held in a locked space to prevent unwanted access. To ensure confidentiality, participant names and contact information will not be included in online interview transcripts. If, for any reason, participant names are mentioned, permission will be sought from the participant(s) beforehand, as suggested Fouka and Mantzorou (2011).

To protect the identities of participants, anonymity must be maintained. All participants will be referred to collectively as "respondent" rather than by their individual names to ensure this. This strategy helps maintain participants' anonymity throughout the study and avoids personal comments from being associated with particular people. The research study seeks to prioritize participant anonymity and confidentiality by putting these precautions in place. These actions help to create a safe and secure atmosphere where participants can freely express their ideas and opinions without worrying about their identities being revealed. They also ensure that ethical issues are met.

### **3.16. DATA STORAGE**

#### ***Secure External Hard Drive:***

All electronic copies were saved in a secure external hard drive kept in a locked cabinet or drawer in your supervisor's office. The external drive is password-protected.

#### ***Cloud Storage with Encryption:***

Currently utilizing a google cloud storage service with strong encryption features and data is stored in an encrypted format and access is restricted to supervisor and my self.

#### ***Password-Protected PDFs:***

All important documents have been put into a password-protected PDFs. These files have been upload to the cloud storage mention above

### **3.17. CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, several key points are highlighted, Firstly, the research conducted in this study is of an exploratory nature. It adopts a qualitative research design, utilising semi-structured interviews as the primary method for data collection. The population under study includes beauty SMMEs operating within the Pietermaritzburg Central Business Districts (CBDs), as defined by the South African Small Business Act of 2003. The sample size for the study was determined to be 30 beauty SMME owner/managers. To ensure the validity of the interviews, they were subjected to a panel of scrutiny. A request was made to business owner/managers to actively

participate in the study, contributing their insights and experiences. The collected data was meticulously analysed and coded using NVIVO version 12, a software tool for qualitative data analysis. The results of the data analysis will be presented in detail in Chapter 4. Overall, these key points provide a comprehensive overview of the research approach and methods employed in this study.

# CHAPTER 4

## DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

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### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings and analysis of the study. The main objective of this chapter is to showcase the emerging themes derived from the analysis of respondents' feedback and provide a comprehensive analysis of these findings. The data was collected through 30-minute semi-structured interviews, which offered valuable insights into the digital marketing practices of the targeted beauty SMMEs.

Although the initial goal was to conduct interviews with 25 beauty SMMEs, only 22 interviews were successfully completed. The reason for this discrepancy was the occurrence of data saturation. Data saturation is a point in research where the inclusion of additional data sources no longer provides new themes, insights, viewpoints, or significant information (Shaheen, Pradhan, & Ranajee, 2019). In this study, data saturation was reached when 88% of the intended interviews were completed, which resulted in the target response rate of 100% not being met.

Despite the slightly lower number of interviews, the rich and diverse data obtained from the participants' responses ensured the attainment of substantial findings. The following sections will delve into the detailed analysis and interpretation of these

findings, shedding light on the digital marketing methods utilised by beauty SMMEs in the industry.

**4.1.1. Research Objectives:**

The study aimed to achieve the following objectives:

1. To determine the digital marketing methods used by the beauty SMMEs.
2. To assess the role of digital marketing in the survival of beauty SMMEs.
3. To determine the constraints businesses, face in using digital marketing in Pietermaritzburg.
4. To understand the perception of business owners about the future of digital marketing in the beauty industry.

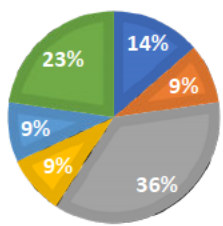
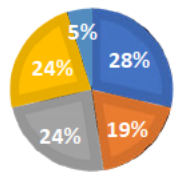

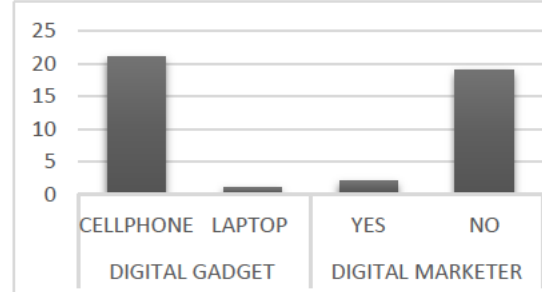
**4.2. SUMMARY PARTICULARS**

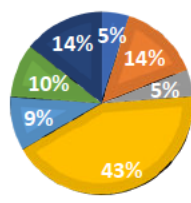
According to Connelly (2013) demographic data play a crucial role in research and should be given careful consideration. Researchers commonly collect demographic information to characterise the individuals or organisations included in their studies. In the context of this study, the demographic data primarily focuses on capturing details such as the number of years in business, the nature of the business, and the utilisation of digital marketing techniques.

Connelly (2013) further highlights that demographic data are typically presented in a narrative or tabular format. These data provide valuable insights into the characteristics and profiles of the participants, enhancing the overall understanding of the study population. Given the significance of demographic information, it is essential to thoroughly explore and analyse these data as an integral part of the study. By exploring the demographic factors, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the specific context and characteristics of the participants, which ultimately contributes to the overall findings and conclusions of the research.

The table below illustrates the demographic data:

DEMOGR APHIC		NO.	ILLUSTRATION
Type of beaut	Nails.	3	
	Makeup.	2	

	Hair.	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: blue;">■</span> Nails.</li> <li><span style="color: orange;">■</span> Makeup.</li> <li><span style="color: grey;">■</span> Hair.</li> <li><span style="color: yellow;">■</span> Eyelashes.</li> <li><span style="color: blue;">■</span> Eyelashes.</li> <li><span style="color: green;">■</span> Mixed beauty SMME.</li> </ul> 
	Eyelashes.	2	
	Eyelashes.	2	
	Mixed beauty SMME.	5	
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>	
Level of study of participants	Matric/Grade 12	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: blue;">■</span> Matric/Grade 12</li> <li><span style="color: orange;">■</span> Currently studying</li> <li><span style="color: grey;">■</span> Degree Level</li> <li><span style="color: yellow;">■</span> Diploma Level</li> <li><span style="color: blue;">■</span> Unknown</li> </ul> 
	Currently studying	4	
	Degree Level	5	
	Diploma Level	5	
	Unknown	1	
Gender	Females	22	 <p><b>100% FEMALE</b></p>
Number of years in business		5,3 YEARS AVERAGE	
Number of years using digital marketing tools		3.56 YEARS AVERAGE	
Previous Employment	Information Technology	1	
	Administration	3	
	Social media influencer	1	

	No experience	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Information Technology</li> <li>■ Administration</li> <li>■ Social media influencer</li> <li>■ No experience</li> <li>■ Education sector</li> <li>■ Food sector</li> <li>■ Unknown</li> </ul> 
	Education sector	2	
	Food sector	2	
	Unknown	3	

## DISCUSSION OF SUMMARY PARTICULARS

The findings indicate that a significant majority of the beauty SMMEs surveyed (36.36%) specialise in hair services, with 8 participants specifically focusing on this area. It is noteworthy that all participants (100%) in the study were females, which aligns with the findings of a previous study conducted by Ting *et al.* (2015) where a similar trend was observed.

In contrast to the average lifespan of SMMEs reported by Strydom (2017) , which is typically less than five years with a high failure rate of over 80% within that period, the findings reveal a different scenario. The average lifespan of the beauty SMMEs was 5.3 years, suggesting a relatively longer survival rate compared to the industry average.

The educational background of the participants emerged as an important factor investigated in this study. Most of the participants possessed degrees and diplomas, indicating a higher level of formal education. Additionally, 27% of the participants had a grade 12/matric education. These findings are consistent with a study conducted by Soriano and Castrogiovanni (2012) , which highlighted the positive relationship between profitability, productivity, and industry-specific knowledge possessed by CEO-owners prior to starting their firms, as well as the general business knowledge acquired during the firm's operation.

Exploring the education level of the participants was particularly relevant as the study revealed that only 9.5% of the participants had a dedicated digital marketer, while the

majority handled digital marketing activities themselves. This finding underscores the importance placed by beauty SMMEs on digital marketing, as they recognise the value of leveraging personal gadgets, primarily smartphones, to effectively promote their businesses in the digital landscape.

Previous work experience was investigated as well, the study aimed to investigate the participants' previous employment experiences, with the initial assumption that most participants (90.5%) who had the ability to use digital marketing may have had prior experiences in the IT industry. However, the findings revealed surprising results, challenging the initial assumption. The findings revealed that most of the business owners did not have any experience, with 40.9% with no experience, the rest were in other sectors like education, administration. With 9% with social media and IT background. These findings are surprising, as they demonstrate that participants with diverse backgrounds, unrelated to the IT industry, possess knowledge and skills in navigating digital platforms for marketing purposes. The assumption that only participants with IT backgrounds or those who were social media influencers would excel in digital marketing tools has been challenged by these findings. The findings highlight that individuals from different professional backgrounds can effectively leverage digital platforms, showcasing the adaptability and resourcefulness of the participants in incorporating digital marketing into their business strategies.

Overall, the study findings highlight the specialisation in hair services among beauty SMMEs, the predominance of female ownership, a longer average lifespan compared to industry norms, the influence of education on profitability and productivity, and the significance of digital marketing strategies implemented by the SMMEs using their personal devices.

### **4.3. CATEGORIES AND THEMES**

The table shows the categories and themes for the current study:

**TABLE 4 - CATEGORIES AND THEMES**

Categories	Themes
4.3.1. Digital Marketing Methods Used by Beauty SMMEs	4.3.1.1. Social Media Platforms

	<p>4.3.1.2. Email Marketing</p> <p>4.3.1.3. Websites.</p>
4.3.2. The Role of Digital Marketing in the Survival of Beauty SMMEs.	<p>4.3.2.1. Increased revenue.</p> <p>4.3.2.2. Provides visibility.</p> <p>4.3.2.3. Personal Connection.</p>
4.3.3 Challenges of Using Digital Marketing in Pietermaritzburg beauty SMMEs.	<p>4.3.3.1 Technical Incompetence.</p> <p>4.3.3.2. Resource constraints.</p> <p>4.3.3.3. Effectiveness Measurement Challenges.</p> <p>4.3.3.4. Accessibility.</p> <p>4.3.3.5. Digital Engagement</p>
4.3.4. Perception of Business Owners on the Future of Digital Marketing in the Beauty Industry	<p>4.3.4.1 Beauty industry's future.</p> <p>4.3.4.2. New digital tools.</p>

*Table 4 Categories and themes.*

#### **4.3.1. DIGITAL MARKETING METHODS USED BY BEAUTY SMMES**

Small, medium, and micro enterprises in the beauty industry have various obstacles in efficiently promoting their operations and reaching their target clients in today's digital age. As a result, digital marketing tools have become critical for the survival and growth of beauty SMMEs. The purpose of this category is to offer the findings on the digital marketing tools used by beauty SMMEs in PMB, with an emphasis on three important themes: social media platforms, email marketing, and websites.

#### **4.3.1.1. Social Media Platforms**

This outcome is congruent with the findings of a recent study conducted by Kaur and Kumar (2022) in which social media was defined as a "blessing" for businesses. During the interviews, beauty SMMEs were asked about their online marketing methods, and the results revealed that the most often mentioned social media platforms by the respondents were Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok, Twitter, and having a website. The dominance of social media platforms emerged as a prominent theme, highlighting their popularity and effectiveness in promoting businesses in the beauty industry.

Specifically, Instagram was mentioned 14 times, Facebook was mentioned 12 times, and WhatsApp was mentioned 11 times as the preferred platforms for online business marketing among the participants. These findings diverge from He *et al.* (2017), who reported that Facebook was more dominant in terms of usage for business promotion which research was done amongst small businesses. This gap reflects the dynamic nature of social media platforms as well as the changing preferences of beauty SMMEs in picking their preferred platforms for online marketing. However, participants expressed their frequent use of Facebook and highlighted its advantages in reaching a large audience, particularly among those who are familiar with their businesses. Respondent 5 acknowledged Facebook as their primary platform for customer acquisition. They highlighted the presence of loyal customers who order frequently and engage with their posts. In contrast, Instagram was seen as a platform to connect with new potential customers.

*"I mostly use Facebook as that's where I get most of my customers, Facebook you get people that know you, and people that order quite a lot on Facebook and share our posts." "Facebook – 500 active followers that includes my buyers and people that buy in bulk. Yesterday I celebrated 500 followers." - Respondent 5*

Facebook is a valuable marketing tool for beauty SMMEs. Its ability to facilitate interactions, reach a wide audience, and cultivate a loyal customer base makes it an essential platform for promoting giveaways, promotions, and sharing business-related content. The findings also revealed that the beauty SMMEs had both personal and

business pages on Facebook. The number of followers varied, ranging from 500 to over 870 on business pages and 1,000 to over 2,000 on personal pages.

Instagram emerged as the dominant platform among the participants for content creation, inspiration, and marketing purposes. This is concurrent with Kaur and Kumar (2020) who found that Instagram and Facebook as dominating tools for digital marketing in businesses in a similar industry. Several respondents highlighted the benefits and features of Instagram that make it their go-to platform for promoting their businesses. The following participants mentioned their use of Instagram:

1. Respondent 16 acknowledged Instagram as the primary platform due to the high level of interaction, individual pages, and the use of hashtags. *“Honestly I think if you look at all the platforms that we have I think it's Instagram basically because in Instagram each person has their own um page and in that sense there's more interaction on Instagram and the fact that we have hashtags so even if the post is posted by a stylist it's it has a hashtag that we are then able as other stylists to repost and so forth”.* – Respondent 16
2. Respondent 2 emphasised using Instagram for inspiration, learning from other businesses, and staying updated on trends. They also mentioned TikTok as a platform for engagement and receiving questions about their business. *“I use Instagram the most because that's where I get a lot of inspiration from other businesses. South African cosmetics businesses and you know and international. Because cosmetics businesses, that's where I learn from, and I create my content based around something like the big business and what they also have. That's where I can get the trending. I can see what's trending so that I know that I can associate my business if I can be able to associate my business with that trend, I'll do it. And if it just doesn't go with us with our image.”*
3. Respondent 11 simply stated that they use Instagram frequently and have a significant number of followers on the platform. *“Instagram – I have more followers on it.”* – Respondent 11

The participants' reliance on Instagram is further supported by the findings that most businesses have both a personal and business page on the platform. The number of followers varied, ranging from 200 to over 1,102 on business pages and 195 to over

3,060 on personal pages. These insights highlight the significant role Instagram plays in the digital marketing strategies of beauty SMMEs. Its user-friendly features, content creation capabilities, and wide reach make it a valuable tool for promoting and growing their businesses online.

Participants expressed their preference for WhatsApp due to its convenience, wide user base, and direct interaction with clients. Respondent 1 emphasised the widespread usage of WhatsApp among their clients, making it an ideal platform for communication. They also appreciated the feature of making calls even without airtime and forwarding specials to their contacts.

*“WhatsApp, I use WhatsApp everyday as most of my clients use WhatsApp, and almost everyone has WhatsApp, and it’s easier to use. WhatsApp you are allowed to make calls even when you don’t have airtime. You can even forward specials on WhatsApp” - Respondent 1.*

The findings indicate that WhatsApp plays a crucial role for beauty SMMEs in engaging with clients, sharing promotional content, and facilitating business-related interactions. The range of WhatsApp interactions varied among participants, with status views ranging from 40 to 468, and contact lists ranging from 100 to over 200 contacts. WhatsApp's accessibility, versatility, and ability to establish direct communication channels have made it an essential tool for marketing and client engagement in the beauty SMME sector.

#### **4.3.1.2. Email Marketing**

Email marketing was mentioned by some respondents as a tool used to market their businesses. Although not as frequently mentioned as social media platforms, email marketing still played a role in the digital marketing strategies of a few participants. This was similar to a study conducted by Wisdom (2015) that was in this area, however in the tourism industry, that study found that email marketing is used as a form of marketing but is not as dominant. Below are some examples:

1. Respondent 8 mentioned utilising an email clip or email system as part of their business marketing efforts. This suggests that they actively engage with their customers through email campaigns, potentially sharing promotions or updates. *“I market my business through ... email clip – email system” – Respondent 8*

2. Respondent 16 indicated that they also incorporate email communication in their business operations, using it as a means to interact with their clients. This implies that they recognise the importance of maintaining a direct line of communication through email channels. *“We also use emails to communicate with our clients”* – Respondent 16.
  
3. Respondent 18 highlighted their utilisation of automated Google emails due to budget constraints, as they were unable to afford a website. This approach demonstrates their resourcefulness in leveraging email marketing through a Gmail account to maintain communication with clients and potentially disseminate important information. *“So, I paid a fee also with Google as well I had a Gmail account with my clients’ details, I couldn’t afford a website, so I had automated Google emails to my clients”* – Respondent 18

The above responses are evidence that though email marketing was not as frequently mentioned as social media platforms, these participants recognised its value in their overall marketing strategies. This is no surprise as Rehman *et al.* (2014) did a study comparing two digital marketing tools and found email marketing as less efficient and impactful than the other digital marketing tool. Email campaigns provide an avenue for personalised communication, delivering targeted messages and updates directly to customers' inboxes (Elrod and Fortenberry 2020). While social media platforms often facilitate broader reach, Ha (2002) explains that email marketing allows for more tailored messaging and a more intimate connection with customers. The acknowledgment of email marketing by these participants highlights its relevance and effectiveness in specific contexts within the industry.

#### **4.3.1.3. Websites**

While not as commonly mentioned as social media platforms, some participants included having a website as part of their overall marketing strategy. Geissler (2001) notes that having a website as a tool for marketing, allows the business to build customer relationship. Having a website as part of the overall marketing strategy complements the use of social media platforms and offers participants additional channels to connect with their target audience, showcase their expertise, and facilitate

customer interactions. It serves as a vital tool in expanding their online presence and establishing a strong online brand presence. Here are some examples that are concurrent with Geissler (2001):

1. Respondent 8 indicated having a webpage that appears first in Google search results. This implies that they have invested in search engine optimisation (SEO) techniques to ensure their website receives prominent visibility, potentially driving traffic and attracting potential customers. *“On google search I pop up first – and I have a webpage” – Respondent 8*
2. Respondent 15 mentioned utilising a booking platform called My Appointment, indicating that they have a dedicated webpage where clients can schedule appointments. This suggests that they utilise their website to streamline their booking process and provide convenience for their clients. *“We have a booking platform that we use – My appointment.” – Respondent 15*
3. Respondent 16 noted their presence on Google, suggesting that they have taken steps to establish their business listing on Google My Business. This enables them to enhance their online visibility, appear in local search results, and provide relevant information to potential customers. *“We are on Google” – Respondent 16.*

Looking at the responses given by the participants having a website contributes to participants' digital marketing strategies by expanding their online presence beyond social media. Websites provide a central hub for businesses to showcase their offerings, share information, and facilitate online transactions. This is concurrent with a study conducted by Wisdom (2015) who found that a website is important to building relationships with customers' and 'customer comments are important to you of your website'.

#### **4.3.2. THE ROLE OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN THE SURVIVAL OF BEAUTY SMMES**

This study looks at the important role of digital marketing in guaranteeing the survival of beauty SMMES, with a focus on three core themes: increased revenue, visibility, and developing a personal relationship with clients. Increased revenue is the first

theme that sheds light on the transformative impact of digital marketing methods on the financial success of beauty SMMEs. While Dahnil *et al.* (2014) found that quantifying revenue and profits using digital marketing tools can be difficult, all participants were able to quantify the positive returns on their digital marketing investments.

The second theme, visibility, emphasised the importance of digital marketing in increasing the visibility and brand presence of beauty SMMEs. According to Kaur and Kumar (2020), visibility is critical for firms to take their operations to the next level. Establishing a strong online presence is critical for beauty SMMEs to differentiate themselves in an increasingly competitive market.

The third theme, making a personal connection, emphasises the need of developing genuine relationships with clients through digital marketing initiatives. Digital marketing allows beauty SMMEs to directly engage with their target audience in an industry that depends on trust, tailored experiences, and customer happiness. This aligns with Kaur and Kumar (2020) study, which demonstrated the multifaceted utility of digital marketing for marketing, customer interaction, and electronic word of mouth .

Direct quotes from participants are used throughout this section to provide real-life viewpoints and experiences that reinforce the significance of these themes. We get significant insights into the critical role digital tactics play in driving increased revenue, establishing visibility, and fostering personal connections with clients by investigating the interplay between digital marketing and the survival of beauty SMMEs.

#### **4.3.2.1. Increased Revenue**

The findings indicate that digital marketing has been instrumental in the growth of their businesses, as expressed by most respondents. Strategies such as consistent posting, audience engagement, and the use of hashtags on popular social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp have proven effective in attracting more clients. This is consistent with a study done by Whiting and Williams (2013) that found that digital marketing, is best for interactions with clients. While some respondents experienced limited growth, most agree that digital marketing has played a vital role in their overall business growth. Additionally, employing distributors to reach a wider customer base and engaging with clients through live videos have been

successful strategies. One respondent highlighted the importance of an appointment system in effectively managing clients.

Overall, there is a consensus among the participants that digital marketing has significantly contributed to attracting new clients and driving business growth. It is important to note that while digital marketing is a key factor, it is not the sole strategy employed. Most respondents (11) recognised and affirmed the significant role of digital marketing in increasing their businesses' revenue. Yasmin, Tasneem and Fatema (2015) notes that digital marketing tools have a positive relation with revenue. They emphasised that consistent posting, responsive engagement with followers, and the utilisation of hashtags have been instrumental in attracting more clients and contributing to revenue growth as detailed below.

*"Close to 100% honestly it plays a huge role in increasing my revenue."* - Respondent 18

*"More than 90% of my clients are from digital marketing."* - Respondent 10

*"I think like 90% comes from digital marketing."* - Respondent 12.

*"90% of sales comes from people online, it basically comes from digital marketing."* - Respondent 2

These responses demonstrate the evident and significant impact of digital marketing tools on the revenue generation of beauty SMMEs. Bala and Verma (2018) notes that digital marketing is cost effective.

#### **4.3.2.2. Provides Visibility**

The experiences shared by the participants strongly reinforce the notion that digital marketing plays a pivotal role in enhancing the visibility of beauty SMMEs. As mentioned, digital marketing has significantly contributed to the growth and success of their businesses. By actively engaging with the public through online platforms, posting appealing visuals, and leveraging social media, participants have witnessed a notable increase in referrals, shares, website visits, and positive interactions. These testimonials emphasise the indispensable impact of digital marketing in augmenting the visibility and exposure of beauty SMMEs, enabling them to thrive in the competitive market. This is concurrent with Kovalenko and Kuzmenko (2020) who found a positive correlation between the internet marketing and the visibility of small organisations.

*“Yes, after posting pictures online and engaging with the public I noticed my business started growing I had a lot of referrals and people started sharing my work, visiting my page liking my photos etc. Digital marketing immensely assisted the survival of my business.” – Respondent 6.*

*“I honestly feel like it has I feel like the only reason why I'm so here is because of the marketing so and I use digital marketing so I feel like it has got my business a lot most of the customers are people that I don't know personally or people that I've never met physically but I've met them through digital marketing which is social media so I really feel like it has grown my business if it wasn't for it I wouldn't have that amount of clients that I have. Reason why it's the main reason why my business is still here today” – Respondent 14.*

*“I am living proof that digital marketing is the main reason why my business is surviving I had an incident where I lost my phone and my phone was not working clients could not get hold of me, I couldn't post, and no one came no one came to do their hair. I went to work every day hoping that people will just walk in but there was no walk in there was nothing. So, I realised there that digital marketing is so important” – Respondent 15.*

Respondent 6 observed a substantial growth in their business. Respondent 14 strongly believes that their business owes its success primarily to digital marketing.

The opinions indicated by the respondents about the importance of digital marketing, particularly social media platforms, in their businesses' success are supported by a several studies. According to Kingsnorth (2022), social media platforms are becoming increasingly important for businesses to use to communicate with their target market and keep their online exposure.

In line with the Respondent 15's personal experience, Veleva and Tsvetanova (2020) highlights the vital importance of internet presence for business sustainability. They discovered that companies that actively communicate with their audience through digital marketing channels, such social media platforms, enjoy better levels of consumer contact, brand awareness, and client loyalty.

Additionally, Sharma and Bahl (2019) emphasises the beneficial effects of public participation, and sharing client testimonials on business success. They discovered

that companies using these digital marketing techniques see improvements in client acquisition, visibility, and business performance. These supplementary studies confirm the testimonials of the participants and highlight the significance of digital marketing for the survival and expansion of beauty SMMEs. The results show how utilising digital marketing tools and techniques improves online presence while also promoting consumer interaction, customer acquisition, and successful business outcomes.

#### **4.3.2.3. Personal Connection**

While not as prominently discussed as the previous themes, two participants emphasised the significance of word-of-mouth and personal connections in their business success. They acknowledged that digital marketing is not the sole factor in their business survival but recognised its role in reaching potential customers more efficiently. Here are the interpretations of the participants' statements:

1. Respondent 12: Respondent 12 expressed belief in the importance of word-of-mouth for their business. They suggested that even without digital marketing, their business could potentially survive due to positive referrals from satisfied customers. This indicates the value of personal connections and the trust established through word-of-mouth recommendations. While digital marketing may not be essential for their business survival, it is likely to play a supporting role in expanding their reach and acquiring new clients. *“Yes, I believe so because at the end of the day I don't think that I would have a business I don't think my business would be standing I think maybe by word of mouth”* – Respondent 12. This response is in line with the study by Reichheld (2003) who describes a strong correlation between word-of-mouth recommendations and growth and survival of a business.
2. Respondent 16: Respondent 16 shared insights about their business's history and how it initially thrived without relying on digital marketing. They mentioned that, despite not having digital marketing tools 23 years ago, they still made a profit and had a clientele. However, upon investing in digital marketing, they observed accelerated client growth. The participant acknowledged that their business could survive without digital marketing but emphasised the challenges of acquiring clients through traditional means, such as creating pamphlets and

relying on newspaper advertisements, which may no longer be as effective in reaching their target audience. This implies that digital marketing has facilitated client acquisition, making it easier and more efficient to connect with potential customers. *“That’s a tough one for this business because this business started 23 years ago and at that time digital marketing was not a thing and however, we still made a profit regardless and we still had a clientele even though we did not have the digital marketing. However, when we started investing in digital marketing our clients grew even faster if you look at the rate from the time that we didn’t have digital marketing. Yes, we made a profit 23 years ago but the amount of clients that will meet would take us almost six months as compared to now where you are able to reach a huge our clientele in less than a month so to be honest it did grow our business in that sense.” “To be honest I believe that the business could still survive regardless of digital marketing, but I don’t think it would be this easy-to-get clients. It would be so much work to have to go out there and get clients and make pamphlets and people don’t necessarily read the newspaper anymore so it will be very hard.” – Respondent 16*

In summary, these participants acknowledged the importance of word-of-mouth and personal connections in their business operations. They recognise that their businesses could potentially survive without digital marketing, relying on positive referrals and existing client relationships. However, they also highlighted the value of digital marketing in expanding their reach and acquiring new clients more effectively. While word-of-mouth and personal connections remain important, digital marketing complements these efforts and provides a more efficient avenue for business growth and client acquisition (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick 2019).

#### **4.3.3. CHALLENGES OF USING DIGITAL MARKETING IN PMB BEAUTY SMMEs**

The beauty sector SMMEs confront difficulties when utilising digital tactics to promote their companies in the continually changing world of digital marketing. This category investigates the particular difficulties faced by Pietermaritzburg (PMB)-based beauty SMMEs while using digital marketing. The themes cover technical incompetence, resource constraints, effectiveness measurement challenges, accessibility, and digital engagement.

The first theme, technical incompetence, shows the challenges that SMMEs in the beauty industry have as a result of their lack of knowledge and expertise in digital marketing. Keeping up with the newest technology and trends can be overwhelming because the digital landscape is continuously changing, especially for people without technical ability. Their capacity to effectively employ digital marketing tools and tactics may be hampered.

Resource constraints stand out as yet another major issue for beauty SMMEs in PMB. Taiminen and Karjaluoto (2015) highlighted that the biggest obstacle to adapt digital tools would be lack of resource. Their ability to invest in digital marketing strategies may be hampered by scarce money resources, time restraints, and a lack of devoted staff. Because of this, many SMMEs could find it difficult to compete with bigger companies that have more resources at their disposal.

For SMMEs in the beauty industry, measurement issues of effectiveness are another barrier. It can be difficult to assess the results and return on investment (ROI) of digital marketing campaigns, particularly when there are no sufficient resources available for data tracking and analysis. Similarly Dahnil *et al.* (2014) reported that indeed it is difficult to measure return on investment when using digital marketing tools. The challenges that these businesses have when trying to measure the success of their digital marketing strategies are explored in this theme.

#### **4.3.3.1. Technical incompetence**

This theme focuses on the challenges faced by participants who lack technical knowledge in the field of digital marketing. Some participants expressed feeling overwhelmed by technology, while others admitted to having limited knowledge about digital marketing strategies. This knowledge gap creates difficulties when it comes to running effective social media pages and creating content that effectively reaches their target audience. This is in line with results from you Royle and Laing (2014) that also found lack of technical knowledge as a huge problem, while Pefanis Schlee and Harich (2010) noted that skills gaps negatively impact digital marketing by businesses. However, despite these challenges, participants also shared their strategies for overcoming them. Here are the examples provided by participants:

1. *“Not having enough information and knowledge about digital marketing, I am learning on the go. Running pages is challenging, technology is hard.”* - Respondent 7.
2. *“As I said, I am not a social media person, technology is not my thing. I believe that working people who are my target also are not that into tech things.”* - Respondent 1.
3. *“As I’ve already mentioned, I’m not a person of technology, and my business goes way back from 2005. There are clients that know me from that time, so those are my regular clients, and they come all the time. I post when business is dry, when my regular clients don’t have money, then I post. But other than that, I don’t post a lot. I post when I remember or when maybe a client is thanking me for a beautiful hairstyle, then I would screenshot that and post it.”* - Respondent 21.

Despite the challenges, participants also provided strategies for overcoming them:

1. *“I think I will ask friends who are knowledgeable in IT to help me out and teach me more about digital marketing tools and how to use them.”* - Respondent 7.
2. *“I believe I need to take it slow. As much as I want to be active on social media, due to the challenges I have, I have chosen to focus more on the basics, giving people great service, making sure that I have all the products, and ensuring that all the therapy rooms are set. I will incorporate digital marketing as I go.”* - Respondent 1.
3. *“Due to people stealing my work, I’ve decided not to post my work because of that. I don’t have a solution as to how I will prevent people from stealing my work.”* - Respondent 21.

This theme highlights that while participants face challenges due to their limited technical knowledge in digital marketing, they demonstrate a willingness to overcome these challenges. Participants seek assistance from knowledgeable friends, adopt a gradual approach to incorporating digital marketing, and consider precautions to protect their work. Their experiences show that with perseverance and the right support, these challenges can be overcome, and participants can enhance their digital marketing capabilities.

#### **4.3.3.2. Resource constraints**

This theme revolves around the challenges participants face in managing their digital marketing presence due to limitations and resource constraints such as time. Nadaraja and Yazdanifard (2013) and Barefoot and Szabo (2009) attests that time constraints as digital marketing takes a lot of time. Many participants expressed difficulties in finding the time to effectively engage with their digital marketing tools, often due to busy work schedules. They highlighted missed opportunities and the overwhelming nature of managing digital marketing alongside other responsibilities. In addition, participants mentioned that digital marketing can be expensive, requiring additional resources or financial investment. Brooks (2004) noted SEO/ website as an expensive digital marketing to run which is concurrent with what participants were saying.

*"Data and connectivity and time-consuming in this fast industry." - Respondent 6*

*"Time because if you post something that causes a lot of traffic on Instagram, your phone will blow up the whole day, and you need to respond to questions. And mind you, Ahmed works, I can't respond to these questions promptly. Another thing would be the flakiness in social media. I've had a lot of cases where someone would send me a proof of payment being fake. Safety is another problem of digital marketing working from home, so people collect stuff in my home, and that was dangerous for me because some people pretend to be kind but they're not really clients. Another thing will be the expenses that are involved in digital marketing; digital marketing needs you to have data needs you to have Wi-Fi." - Respondent 18*

*"Scheduling my time, and I also tell my customers to tag me on their posts; therefore, it is easier to get most of my work." - Respondent 19*

*"Time is a problem; honestly, it takes a lot of time to be able to post." - Respondent 22*

When asked about how they overcome these challenges, participants provided the following responses:

*"Scheduling my time, and I also tell my customers to tag me on their posts; therefore, it is easier to get most of my work. For example, sometimes clients*

*want me to post a picture after their face beat; they want to post the picture once they are fully dressed for the occasion."* - Respondent 6

Respondent 18 did not comment on how they overcome the challenge of time.

*"Scheduling my time, and I also tell my customers to tag me on their posts; therefore, it is easier to get most of my work."* - Respondent 19

*"In terms of time, time management is the best. I'm trained to juggle both works, my nine-to-five job, studying, and different types of businesses. Honestly, I don't find the time, but I'm trying to, and I hope that soon I will be able to run with all my platforms."* - Respondent 22

This theme highlights the time constraints and resource limitations that participants face in their digital marketing efforts. Despite these challenges, participants employ strategies such as effective time management, leveraging customer engagement through tagging, and prioritising their tasks to mitigate the impact of these constraints.

#### **4.3.3.3. Effectiveness Measurement Challenges**

This theme revolves around the challenge participants face in accurately measuring the effectiveness of their digital marketing efforts and translating engagement into tangible business growth. Desai and Vidyapeeth (2019) highlights the difficulties attached to measuring the effectiveness of digital on key performance indicators on a study they conducted. While participants acknowledged that digital marketing could generate interest and views, they expressed difficulties in determining whether these engagements are translating into actual customers and meaningful impact on their businesses.

Examples of participant responses illustrating this challenge include

1. *"Challenges?? ... I think if I'd say one thing about digital marketing, you post, and you have over a thousand views that does not mean a thousand people will come to your business; it is indeed deceiving."* - Respondent 3
2. *"Getting clients is a bit slow. It is not as quick as I would like it to be. People are viewing the stories and videos, but not a lot are getting bookings. The number of views does not necessarily mean better bookings."* - Respondent 4

When asked about how they overcome these challenges, participants provided the following responses:

1. *"Let me think, what have I done? Currently, nothing. I am still looking for solutions myself."* - Respondent 3
2. *"Offering promotions and discounts to clients who refer my business to people. Offering specials on different months, such as August, as it is known as women's month. This increases client bookings."* - Respondent 4

This theme highlights the difficulty participants face in accurately measuring the effectiveness of their digital marketing efforts. While they recognise the engagement and views generated, they struggle to determine whether these interactions result in actual business growth. Participants acknowledged the need to explore solutions and strategies to overcome this challenge, such as implementing referral programs, offering promotions, and experimenting with different marketing approaches.

#### **4.3.3.4. Accessibility**

This theme revolves around participants expressing concerns about the accessibility of their business to customers, particularly those who are not locally based. Participants highlighted difficulties in managing bookings and schedules when using platforms like WhatsApp and Instagram, leading to double bookings and confusion. The lack of a centralised and easily accessible platform made it challenging for participants to expand their reach and cater for customers.

Example of a participant's response illustrating this challenge:

*"Another challenge is not being accessible. As much as I'm getting customers, however, I'm not reaching that worldwide, right? The people worldwide do not have the access. If you are overseas, it's a hassle to just, you know, you must go in your DM's and now DM me to buy this product. Whereas if you just had the website, you put it on your bio, people click the link, the shop whatever they want, add to cart, make payments, and then all we must do is ship them. So, I'm trying to make it. But a website is expensive."* - Respondent 2

To overcome this challenge, the participant mentioned their efforts to establish a website to improve accessibility:

*"I post every day to remain relevant. I'm trying to finish my website so that customers can have easy access because at the moment, it is not that much of an easy access because you still must go through chatting with me to tell me what you want. You know, show me the picture of the lip gloss that you want. See, I haven't really launched my website yet, so the challenge now is I'm selling through my DMs, and as much as I am getting customers, however, I'm not reaching that worldwide, right? The people worldwide do not have the access. If you are overseas, it's a hassle to just, you know, must go in DM to buy this product. Whereas if you had the website, you put it on your bio, and people click the link and shop whatever they want, add to cart and make payments, and then all we have to do is ship the orders." - Respondent 2*

This theme highlights participants' concerns about accessibility and the limitations they face when relying solely on platforms like WhatsApp and Instagram for business transactions. The participant acknowledges the need for a website to provide a more streamlined and accessible experience for customers, allowing them to browse products, make purchases, and simplify the overall process. The focus is on expanding reach and catering to customers worldwide, with the website acting as a centralised platform for customers to easily access and engage with the business.

#### **4.3.3.5. Digital Engagement**

**Quality of Service:** Most of respondents (14 out of 22) expressed satisfaction with the quality of service at the salon. They praised the staff for their professionalism, expertise, and friendliness. However, a minority of respondents (4 out of 22) reported dissatisfaction, citing issues like long waiting times, inadequate attention from staff, and unsatisfactory results.

**Cleanliness and Hygiene:** A significant number of respondents (10 out of 22) commended the salon for its cleanliness and hygiene. They appreciated the efforts of the staff in maintaining a clean and tidy environment. However, a few respondents (5 out of 22) noticed cleanliness issues such as dirty tools and towels, suggesting room for improvement in this area.

**Price:** Most of respondents (12 out of 22) considered the salon's prices to be reasonable and on par with similar establishments in the area. However, some

respondents (8 out of 22) felt that the prices were too high and expressed a desire for more affordable options.

Ambience: A few respondents (3 out of 22) mentioned their appreciation for the salon's ambience. They highlighted elements like music, decor, and lighting as contributing factors to the overall atmosphere.

Location and Convenience: Some respondents (4 out of 22) found the salon's location to be convenient, appreciating its proximity to public transport and other amenities. However, a couple of respondents (2 out of 22) felt that the location was too far from their workplace or residence.

Overall, the feedback provided by the respondents was predominantly positive, with many expressing satisfaction regarding service quality and cleanliness. However, areas for improvement were also identified, such as price competitiveness and reducing waiting times. The salon owner may consider implementing suggestions provided by respondents to enhance the overall experience for clients.

#### **4.3.4. PERCEPTION OF BUSINESS OWNERS ON THE FUTURE OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN THE BEAUTY INDUSTRY**

The use of new digital tools has opened a world of limitless options for organisations, giving them unrivalled chances to engage, enthrall, and convert customers. This is in line with Kalendra (2020) who refers to digital marketing as a "game changer". It is critical to understand how business owners view the future of digital marketing and how it will affect their businesses as the tides of innovation continue to wash over the beauty industry.

We can fully comprehend the existing status of the sector, spot upcoming trends, and foresee the potential disruptive effects of new digital tools by looking at their points of view. In response to questions like "How do business owners envision the future of digital marketing within the beauty industry?" and "How are these business owners adapting their strategies to stay ahead in an increasingly digitized world?" two themes emerge: the future of the beauty industry and new digital marketing tools. By providing answers to these questions, the potential opportunities that lie ahead for the beauty

industry are revealed , highlighting the road to achievement in an era characterised by innovation.

#### **4.3.4.1. Beauty Industry's Future**

Based on the responses provided, it is evident that digital marketing is seen as the future of the beauty industry. Digital marketing is viewed as an effective tool to reach a wider audience, and it is faster, easier, and more convenient for the public. This is in line with the study conducted by Dunakhe and Panse (2022) that saw digital marketing as an ever changing topic, as everything technology related is getting smarter by the day. He encourage that it can be further inferred that researchers are studying the digital marketing at their own geographic location. The use of digital marketing allows businesses to learn from their competitors and engage with customers (Luo 2021). Digital marketing is also seen to reshape the dynamics of the competitive commercial space in the beauty industry, as it allows businesses to target audiences, find influencers, and market their brands. Overall, digital marketing is viewed as a crucial component for the success and growth of beauty businesses, especially in the current age where people spend a lot of time on their phones and social media platforms.

*“I think that digital marketing is the future in general, it is the future of any business as everyone is on their phones these days.” – Respondent 2.*

*“The future for beauty industry is digital marketing as it allows everyone to learn from completitor and improve. We get to see that a certain angle works, and seeing how customers engage with them on posts that allows to learn and is the future for my business, talking now I am just releasing the role played by it in my business.” – Respondent 5.*

*“It is an effective tool to reach a wider audience, it is faster and easier and convenience for the public. The survival of a business in the 21 century is indeed connecting digitally with the audience and public. It has helped me immensely and I do see the importance of it.” – Respondent 6*

*“I think people are quiet visual, and they like to see pictures of work you have done, a lot I slack but, I think people a lot of people would go to someone whose work they have seen weather its online or in person, so its important to just get your work out there and that's the future.” – Respondent 9.*

“Digital marketing for beauty industry is reshaping the dynamics of the competitive commercial space. The beauty industry will rely on digital marketing to target audiences, find influencers, and market their beauty brands. When done the right way, it will help businesses target more refined segments. The use of digital marketing seems to grow in the future and shows no signs of slowing down.” – Respondent 11.

*“Yes it is firstly beauty we will always love as women to take pictures of ourselves and with this starting with this digital marketing starting honestly we'll keep posting and posting and posting it boosts our self esteem when people opposed it's and you see that they are beautiful or there's there's something that enhances their beauty you will go back and ask her to wait where did you do it so it will always be there honestly cause if we go back to traditional ones where I have to go to town and give out Flyers I will not need the people that I have on on these platforms because I only I can only like meet so many people in one day so it means that and there's so many so many people in pietermaritzburg that go even to turn so it will be more time more effort at least people digital marketing has to be the future” – Respondent 12.*

*“I feel like digital marketing is the future in general for everything even for our businesses especially in the beauty industry people will not not want to see pictures of you if you do something I think that women prioritize their beauty and their appearance a lot and if you post and more people see and you get more word of mouth through the Internet which you've said that is e-word of mouth so for me I feel like it will always be the future for us and that's where our businesses will grow , that where you'll get more people I think for now and on my Instagram I've put my radius to be PMB and that's just goes as far as Hammersdale ,Hilton but what if I extend my radius? Where will that take me” – Respondent 14.*

Twelve of the 22 participants (54.55%) expressed agreement that digital marketing is the future of the beauty industry. They emphasised its effectiveness in reaching a wider audience, the importance of online presence, and the potential for growth through digital marketing strategies.



The participants' focus on websites and social media platforms reflects their recognition of the potential of digital marketing tools in expanding their reach, engaging with specific target audiences, and establishing a strong online presence.

#### **4.4. CONCLUSION**

Based on the analysis of the interviews conducted with beauty SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg, the findings reinforce the significance of social media platforms, namely Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp, as the primary digital marketing methods used by these businesses. These platforms are recognised for their extensive reach, allowing beauty SMMEs to effectively engage with their target audience and promote their products and services. The popularity and effectiveness of social media platforms underscore their vital role in the digital marketing strategies employed by beauty SMMEs.

However, the study also highlights the challenges faced by some beauty SMMEs in effectively harnessing digital marketing tools. Some respondents expressed struggles with marketing and a lack of a strong online presence, indicating the need for additional support and resources to enhance their digital marketing capabilities. Addressing these challenges can empower beauty SMMEs to fully leverage the benefits of digital marketing and maximize their business potential.

Moreover, the findings strongly suggest that digital marketing is perceived as the future of the beauty industry by a most of the participants. They acknowledge the effectiveness of digital marketing in reaching a wider audience, its convenience and speed, and its potential to reshape the competitive landscape. Participants recognise that digital marketing enables businesses to learn from competitors, engage with customers, enhance self-esteem and confidence, and effectively target specific audiences through influencer marketing and brand promotion. Given the prevalence of digital devices and social media platforms today, the importance of digital marketing for the success and growth of beauty SMMEs is evident.

In conclusion, the research highlights the pivotal role of social media platforms in the digital marketing strategies of beauty SMMEs. It also sheds light on the challenges faced by some businesses in effectively utilising digital marketing tools. The overall perception of digital marketing as the future of the beauty industry further emphasises

the need for beauty SMMEs to embrace and enhance their digital marketing efforts. The next chapter will provide a comprehensive conclusion to the research, offering recommendations and suggesting avenues for future studies in this domain.

# CHAPTER 5

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

In the previous chapter, the study results were presented, which were obtained through interviews conducted with owners of Beauty SMMEs in Pietermatizburg. These results were analysed using NVIVO version 12 software. The main objective of this chapter is to delve into the study's summary, draw conclusions, and provide recommendations on how beauty SMMEs in PMB can utilise digital marketing as a survival tool. Furthermore, this chapter will discuss the findings established in Chapter 4. The research aims to explore the role of digital marketing in the survival of beauty SMMEs in Pietermatizburg, focusing on the following objectives:

1. To determine the digital marketing methods used by the beauty SMMEs.
2. To assess the role of digital marketing in the survival of beauty SMMEs.
3. To determine the constraints businesses, face in using digital marketing in Pietermaritzburg.
4. To understand the perception of business owners about the future of digital marketing in the beauty industry.

### **5.2. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

#### CHAPTER 1

In this chapter, the research aims, objectives and questions that guide the research study were formulated. The central focus of this chapter was to conceptualize the topic "The role of digital marketing in the survival of small, micro, and medium-sized beauty

businesses in Pietermaritzburg,” through emphasis of relevance of the topic and highlighting its significance and impact. Furthermore, the chapter delves into the significance of key concepts such as SMMEs, beauty SMMEs, and digital marketing. In addition, a concise overview of the study's plan and the forthcoming chapters is provided.

## CHAPTER 2

This chapter constitutes the literature review of the research study. Its significance lies in its ability to highlight and further support the research problem by providing the rationale for conducting the study. It serves as the foundation upon which the entire study is built.

The literature review was conducted by grouping and organizing the concepts previously highlighted in Chapter 1. These concepts encompassed digital marketing, beauty SMMEs, and others. The definition and understanding of SMMEs were derived from South African official policies, which were discussed in detail. Furthermore, the chapter explored the importance of SMMEs in contributing to economic growth.

Within the literature review, a comprehensive discussion was undertaken regarding the various definitions of digital marketing and e-marketing, as proposed by Bhandari and Sin (2023). The different types of digital marketing tools were also explored, highlighting their significance. While previous studies, such as Madoda (2016), emphasised the importance of digital marketing, they primarily focused on industries other than the beauty sector. Consequently, the current research investigation aims to fill this gap.

## CHAPTER 3

The third chapter of this research study is dedicated to the research methodology. The methodology was guided by the work of Kothari (2004), who extensively explored different layers of research methodology. Considering that this study was the first of its kind with limited existing literature, a qualitative explanatory approach was adopted, which was supported by Beck (2003).

The data collection method chosen for this study involved conducting semi-formal interviews lasting approximately 30 minutes. The interview questions were carefully crafted and pilot testing was carried out to ensure their effectiveness. The chapter then

delved into the process of analyzing the raw data, determining that NVIVO version 12 was the most suitable software for the task.

To determine the population of the study, methods outlined by Dworkin (2012) were employed, leading to the calculation of the study sample. The chapter also discussed the recruitment process, as well as the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Ethical considerations relevant to the study were thoroughly covered in this chapter. These ethics encompassed vital aspects such as data storage, anonymity, confidentiality, and overall ethical conduct during the data collection phase.

## CHAPTER 4

This chapter presents the findings and analysis of the study, which aimed to determine the digital marketing methods used by small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) in the beauty industry. The chapter begins by summarizing the research questions and objectives, followed by an overview of the research design and data collection process. The primary focus of this chapter is to present the themes that emerged from the analysis of the respondents' responses and provide a comprehensive analysis of these findings. The researcher provided evidence from the participants by use of direct quotations from the participants.

## CHAPTER 5

Chapter five is a presentation of the conclusion and recommendations.

### **5.3. UNVEILING INSIGHTS: ADDRESSING KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

#### ***5.3.1. The Most Popular Digital Marketing Methods and Their Perceived Effectiveness:***

According to the study's findings, social media platforms are the most commonly used digital marketing tactics by beauty SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg. Participants emphasized the prominence of social media methods, with a particular emphasis on platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. Despite their broad use, the effectiveness of these platforms is viewed as nuanced. While social media is recognized as a helpful tool for increasing visibility, the number of followers is not considered a solitary determinant of success. Business leaders stressed that

engagement indicators like as likes and interactions might be deceptive and may not be directly related to consumer acquisition.

### ***5.3.2. Digital Marketing's Contribution to Growth and Profitability:***

According to business owners, digital marketing is critical to the growth and profitability of beauty SMMEs. Effective techniques include consistent social media posting, intelligent hashtag use, and connection with followers. According to the participants, digital marketing allows firms to access a larger audience, enhance visibility, and attract potential clients. Sales are significantly impacted, with estimates ranging from 60% to 100% attributing their sales to digital marketing efforts. Furthermore, digital marketing is recognized for generating credibility and trust with clients, which contributes to the overall success of beauty SMMEs.

### ***5.3.3. Digital Marketing Constraints and Challenges, and How They Are Addressed:***

The study revealed several challenges, including technical ineptitude, resource restrictions, difficulty measuring effectiveness, and accessibility issues. Business owners emphasized the importance of technical skills, the time and resources required for continuous posting, the limitations in accurately quantifying performance, and the difficulties in maintaining an active presence across several platforms. Businesses are addressing these difficulties by overcoming technical knowledge gaps through learning and training, improving resource allocation, getting expert support when needed, modifying assessment methodologies, and emphasizing platform accessibility.

### ***5.3.4. Perceptions and Expectations of the Future of Digital Marketing:***

Business owners are optimistic about the future of digital marketing in the beauty industry. According to the report, they see digital marketing as a revolutionary force that has the potential to redefine the competitive landscape. Business owners expect digital marketing to help them target specific audiences, find influencers, and effectively promote their businesses. There is a significant desire to improve online visibility through websites and booking apps, highlighting the belief that digital marketing will continue to play an important part in future success and growth. In an increasingly digital-driven world, the participants

intend to use online platforms to reach a broader audience and expand their enterprises.

#### **5.4. REVIEWING IF THE STUDY OBJECTIVES WERE MET**

##### ***5.4.1. Objective 1: To determine the digital marketing tools used by the beauty SMMEs.***

The study successfully achieved Objective 1. The participants shared their digital marketing strategies during the interviews, revealing that the most prevalent tools used by the businesses were social media platforms. However, it was noted that the number of followers on social media platforms was not necessarily the sole determinant of success. Participants highlighted that numbers such as likes and interactions on posts could be deceptive and not directly correlated with the number of actual customers acquired.

Furthermore, the study revealed variations among the businesses in terms of their posting frequencies and strategies on social media platforms. Some businesses posted multiple times a day, while others posted once a month. The reasons for posting also differed, with some businesses focusing on showcasing their work and building their brand, while others prioritized communication and updates with their clients. However, the type of content posted was found to be similar among the businesses, with pictures and videos being the most frequently used formats.

Overall, Objective 1 was successfully achieved, as the study provided insights into the digital marketing tools utilised by beauty SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg, highlighting the dominance of social media platforms and the variations in posting frequencies, strategies, and content types employed by the businesses.

##### ***5.4.2. Objective 2: To assess the role of digital marketing in the survival of beauty SMMEs.***

The study effectively achieved Objective 2. The findings suggest that digital marketing has played a crucial role in the growth and survival of these businesses.

The participants emphasised the importance of consistent posting and paying attention to the preferences and responses of their followers. They highlighted the effectiveness of using hashtags as a strategy to reach a wider audience and increase

visibility. Additionally, participants expressed that digital marketing enabled them to reach more customers, and they specifically mentioned the effectiveness of live video as a strategy to engage and attract potential customers.

The responses from the participants indicated a positive impact of digital marketing on sales, with estimates ranging from 60% to 100% of sales being attributed to digital marketing efforts. This demonstrates the significant contribution of digital marketing in driving business growth and ensuring the survival of beauty SMMEs.

Moreover, the participants acknowledged that digital marketing and social media platforms played a crucial role in establishing credibility and building trust with potential customers. This aspect was identified as a vital factor in the success of their businesses.

In conclusion, the study findings confirm that digital marketing has played a substantial role in the survival and success of beauty SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg. The consistent posting, use of hashtags, engagement with followers, and leveraging live video have proven effective in reaching and attracting customers. Digital marketing has become an essential tool for beauty businesses to grow their customer base, increase sales, and establish credibility in today's competitive market.

***5.4.3. Objective 3: To determine the constraints businesses, face in using digital marketing in Pietermaritzburg.***

Objective 3 was effectively addressed by identifying the constraints that beauty SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg encounter when utilising digital marketing. The study revealed several challenges faced by businesses in implementing digital marketing strategies.

- A. Technical Incompetence: Participants expressed that digital marketing requires a certain level of technical expertise, and the absence of this knowledge hinders their ability to fully leverage digital marketing tools and techniques.
- B. Resource Constraints: The continuous and consistent posting required for effective digital marketing demands significant time and resources. Many businesses struggle to allocate sufficient time due to their direct involvement with clients. Additionally, reaching a wider audience often entails financial constraints, as some digital marketing tools may require payment. In certain cases, businesses may

need to hire an expert to handle digital marketing activities, further adding to the resource burden.

- C. Effectiveness Measurement Challenges: Participants highlighted the challenge of accurately measuring the effectiveness of digital marketing efforts. They acknowledged that numbers and metrics in the digital realm do not always directly translate into the number of actual customers acquired or business success. This difficulty in measurement poses a constraint for businesses in assessing the true impact of their digital marketing strategies.
- D. Accessibility: Businesses recognise the importance of being present on multiple digital platforms to enhance their reach and visibility. However, maintaining an active presence on various platforms can be challenging, as it requires time and effort. There is a risk of being double-booked or unable to effectively manage and engage with customers across all platforms.

Despite these challenges, the study revealed that businesses have taken individual steps to overcome these constraints. While their efforts may not be entirely sufficient, they signify a positive initiative in the right direction. Overcoming technical knowledge gaps through learning and training, optimizing resource allocation, seeking expert assistance when needed, adapting measurement strategies, and prioritising platform accessibility are among the strategies employed by businesses to address the identified constraints.

In conclusion, Objective 3 was successfully met, as the study identified and elucidated the constraints faced by beauty SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg when utilising digital marketing. The challenges of technical knowledge, time and resource constraints, difficulties in measurement, and platform accessibility were acknowledged by the participants. The findings provide valuable insights into the obstacles businesses encounter, thereby highlighting areas for improvement and offering opportunities for addressing these constraints to enhance the effectiveness of digital marketing efforts.

#### ***5.4.4. Objective 4: To understand the perception of business owners about the future of digital marketing in the beauty industry.***

Objective 4 was successfully achieved by capturing the perspectives of business owners regarding the future of digital marketing in the beauty industry. The findings indicate an overall positive perception and recognition of the significance of digital

marketing in shaping the future of beauty businesses. Participants expressed that digital marketing has the potential to reshape the competitive landscape of the beauty industry by enabling businesses to target specific audiences, identify influencers, and effectively promote their brands. They acknowledged that digital marketing has become a vital tool for success and growth in the industry, particularly in an era where people spend a significant amount of time on their phones and engaging with social media platforms.

Moreover, the participants emphasised their desire to enhance their online presence to reach a wider audience and expand their businesses. Many expressed the need for a website to establish a professional online presence, while those offering services expressed a desire for a booking app to streamline customer bookings and appointments.

The study findings highlight the recognition among business owners of the transformative power of digital marketing in the beauty industry. It is evident that they perceive digital marketing as a critical component for the future success of their businesses, enabling them to leverage online platforms and engage with customers in an increasingly digital-driven world.

In conclusion, Objective 4 was successfully met, as the study shed light on the perception of business owners regarding the future of digital marketing in the beauty industry. The findings indicate a positive outlook, with digital marketing being recognised as a pivotal factor in reshaping the competitive dynamics of the industry and providing opportunities for businesses to reach wider audiences and expand their operations. The desire to improve online presence through websites and booking apps further emphasises the significance of digital marketing in the future growth and success of beauty businesses.

## **5.5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The adoption of digital marketing has the potential to have a substantial impact on the survival and expansion of Pietermaritzburg's beauty SMMEs. The recommendations in this section, which are based on the study's findings and are intended to help Pietermaritzburg's beauty SMMEs better utilise digital marketing, are presented. The recommendations include networking and knowledge sharing, engaging with

specialists in digital marketing, ongoing testing and adaptation, as well as ideas for future study.

5.5.1. **Recommendations for beauty SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg:** Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the role of digital marketing in the survival and growth of Pietermaritzburg's beauty SMMEs:

- **NETWORKING AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING:** The interviews with participant show evidence that not all beauty SMMEs owners have information about the different features of the digital marketing tools, some owner use the same tools but are not using them to the fullest like others. So, creating networks and forums where beauty SMME owners can exchange experiences, share best practices, and learn from one another is recommended. Engaging in peer-to-peer knowledge sharing can help businesses stay updated on the latest digital marketing trends and strategies. This recommendation is supported by the findings of Yao *et al.* (2020) who found a considerably beneficial association between information sharing and innovation capability. Therefore, it is essential for SMMEs in the beauty industry to embrace sharing information because it not only improves their digital marketing strategies but also sparks their potential for total innovation. These businesses may get new ideas, acquire priceless experience, and stay at the forefront of the changing digital marketing scene by actively participating in networking and knowledge sharing efforts.
- **COLLABORATION WITH DIGITAL MARKETING EXPERTS:** Beauty SMMEs should consider partnering with digital marketing experts or IT experts. These experts can provide valuable insights, guidance, and support in developing and implementing digital marketing campaigns tailored to the specific needs and goals of each business. Collaborative efforts can lead to more targeted and impactful digital marketing initiatives.
- **CONTINUOUS ADAPTATION AND EXPERIMENTATION:** Given the dynamic nature of the digital landscape, it is crucial for beauty SMMEs to continuously adapt their digital marketing strategies and experiment with new approaches. Regular monitoring of key performance indicators, data analytics, and customer feedback can provide insights for refining and optimizing digital marketing

efforts. Embracing a culture of innovation and adaptation will enable businesses to stay competitive in the ever-evolving digital marketplace. As highlighted by Dunakhe and Panse (2022) the field of digital marketing is always evolving, demanding ongoing evaluation and modification. Beauty SMMEs must be aware of the changing nature of digital marketing and proactively adapt their strategy in response. Businesses can seize new opportunities and adapt to changing customer preferences by staying flexible and open to new trends and practices.

***Recommendations for future research:***

- The researcher recommends that in future longitudinal studies are conducted, as this would be beneficial to observe the long-term impact of digital marketing on the survival and growth of beauty SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg. By tracking businesses over an extended period, researchers can assess the sustained effects of digital marketing strategies and identify any changes and adaptations that occur over time.

**5.6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study focused solely on digital marketing as the key survival factor for beauty SMMEs. However, it is important to acknowledge that the survival of a beauty SMME is influenced by various factors beyond digital marketing, these facts were not explored in this study. The findings are specific to the context of Pietermaritzburg and may not be readily generalizable to other areas, even those with similar beauty SMMEs. The unique characteristics, market dynamics, and consumer behaviours in Pietermaritzburg may differ from other regions, potentially limiting the applicability of findings to broader contexts. The study's sample size of beauty SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg may be limited due to practical constraints and time limitations. The findings may not fully capture the nuances and diversity within the beauty SMME community in Pietermaritzburg.

**5.7. CONTRIBUTION**

By investigating the role of digital marketing in the survival of small, micro, and medium-sized beauty businesses in Pietermaritzburg, this study offers valuable

insights and practical implications for businesses in various stages of growth and development. One key contribution is the development of practical guidelines for beauty SMMEs regarding the effective use of digital marketing as a survival tool. The findings shed light on the digital marketing methods employed by beauty SMMEs and identify which platforms and strategies work best for different types of beauty businesses. This information can assist beauty SMME owners in making informed decisions and optimizing their digital marketing efforts. From an academic perspective, it contributes to literature in terms of beauty SMMEs and digital marketing. The study adds to the limited body of research focusing on beauty SMMEs in South Africa. Lastly, the findings and insights from this study can serve as a foundation for further research in this area, stimulating academic discussions and encouraging future investigations into the role of digital marketing in other industries and regions.

## **5.8. CONCLUSION**

Chapter 5 of this thesis aimed to unpack the summary of the study, draw conclusions, and provide recommendations on how digital marketing can be utilised as a survival tool by beauty SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg. The research objectives focused on determining digital marketing methods used by beauty SMMEs, assessing the role of digital marketing in their survival, identifying constraints faced in using digital marketing, and understanding business owners' perception of the future of digital marketing in the beauty industry.

Through interviews with beauty SMME owners in Pietermaritzburg and analysis using NVivo version 12 software, valuable insights were obtained. It was established that beauty SMMEs employ various digital marketing methods, such as social media marketing, website development, and email marketing, to enhance their visibility, attract customers, and boost sales. Digital marketing was found to play a significant role in the survival and growth of these businesses, serving as a cost-effective tool for reaching target audiences and increasing brand recognition. However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The focus on digital marketing as the key survival factor may overlook other critical elements affecting business survival. The study was conducted in Pietermaritzburg and may not be readily generalizable to other regions, even those with similar beauty SMMEs. The reliance on qualitative research

methods and the limited sample size may also impact the generalizability of the findings.

Despite these limitations, the study has important implications and contributions. It provides practical guidance for beauty SMMEs in utilising digital marketing effectively, offering recommendations on the selection of platforms and strategies based on specific business types. Additionally, the study contributes to the existing academic literature on digital marketing and SMME survival, particularly within the South African context.

In conclusion, this research sheds light on the crucial role of digital marketing in the survival and growth of small, micro, and medium-sized beauty businesses in Pietermaritzburg. The study's findings provide practical insights and academic contributions that contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field. By leveraging digital marketing effectively, beauty SMMEs can enhance their competitiveness, attract a wider customer base, and achieve long-term sustainability in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A (I): IREC LETTER



**Institutional Research Ethics Committee**  
Research and Postgraduate Support Directorate  
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[www.dut.ac.za](http://www.dut.ac.za)

4 July 2022

Miss A Z Makalima



Dear Miss Makalima

**The role of digital marketing in the survival of Pietermaritzburg's small, micro and medium-sized beauty businesses.**

I am pleased to inform you that Full Approval has been granted to your proposal.

The Proposal has been allocated the following Ethical Clearance number **IREC 087/22**. Please use this number in all communication with this office.

Approval has been granted for a period of **ONE YEAR**, before the expiry of which you are required to apply for safety monitoring and annual recertification. Please use the Safety Monitoring and Annual Recertification Report form which can be found in the Standard Operating Procedures [SOP's] of the IREC. This form must be submitted to the IREC at least 3 months before the ethics approval for the study expires.

Any adverse events [serious or minor] which occur in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration must be reported to the IREC according to the IREC SOP's.

Please note that any deviations from the approved proposal require the approval of the IREC as outlined in the IREC SOP's.

Yours Sincerely

\_\_\_\_\_  
Prof J K Adam  
Chairperson: IREC

## APPENDIX B: ETHICS CERTIFICATION



# Zertifikat Certificat

# Certificado Certificate

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



## Certificat de formation - Training Certificate

Ce document atteste que - this document certifies that

**Amanda makalima**

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: 2021/05/25

CID : S20B66atA

Professeur Dominique Sprumont  
Coordinateur TRREE Coordinator



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[REV : 201701/0]

## APPENDIX C(i): LETTER OF INFORMATION



### LETTER OF INFORMATION

**Title of the Research Study:** The role of digital marketing in the survival of Pietermaritzburg's small, micro and medium-sized beauty businesses.

**Principal Investigator/s/researcher:** Amanda Zamaswazi Makalima (Btech: Management)

**Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s:** Dr Zogli Senior Lecturer (Department of Applied Management-PMB)

#### **Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study:**

Greetings I hope this finds you in a favourable light. I am a master's student in my second year at Durban University of Technology (DUT). I am currently pursuing a master's degree in Management Science (Business Admin)

I'd like to ask you to take part in this study, which is primarily focused on researching the function of digital marketing in small, micro, and medium-sized businesses (SMMES).

**What is Research** (Research is a systematic search or enquiry for generalized new knowledge)

(Address the Research Participant directly in the second person pronoun "you." Do not address the research participant as "participant," "patient", "sir" or "madam". The language must be free of jargon and unexplained acronyms and must be easily understood by the potential research participant. Technical terminology must be clear and explained. Consider the age, target population, home language, educational level, frame of mind, etc. of the participant. An explanation to the potential participant that he/she can ask as many questions as he/she wish because it is important that he/she fully understand the study. Participants are entitled to discuss the study with their family and friends and are under no obligation to commit at this stage. For this purpose, a copy of the Letter of Information document is given to the potential participant to take home.)

#### **Outline of the Procedures:**

This study aims to address the role of digital marketing in the beauty businesses in Pietermaritzburg (PMB), KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. This study has aims and objectives geared towards having a better understanding the incorporation of digital marketing by businesses in the beauty industry. This will be achieved through a qualitative research methodology – interviews will be the main method used for data generation. The interviews will be structured to ensure that the aims and objectives of the study are met. To collect data, an interview with open ended questions will be conducted. The researcher will be able to learn about the personal experiences of beauty business owners that use digital media, as well as the benefits and drawbacks. The interviews will also be utilized to see what other media techniques are being used by other industries that beauty bars may build in and learn from.

After the beauty technicians have given their informed consent to participate in the study, a meeting will be scheduled with them to conduct the interviews. To conduct the interviews, a quiet, distraction-free atmosphere will be sought. Interviews will be conducted following the interview guide, and interviews will be recorded using a phone. The NVivo software will be used to transliterate the recorded interview.

The information will be utilized to create a model that will help beauty entrepreneurs and other similar businesses survive and prosper in the digital age by ensuring that their products reach the correct individuals. The interviews are expected to last 20 to 30 minutes.

**Risks or Discomforts to the Participant:**

There are no risks associated with participating in this study. If you are uncomfortable during the interview session for any reason, we can end it right away.

**Explain to the participant the reasons he/she may be withdraw from the Study:** (That the research may be terminated early in particular circumstances viz. Non-compliance, illness, adverse reactions, etc. State that the participant is entitled to withdraw from the study at any time should they wish to do so and will still continue to receive the appropriate standard of care; Explain to the potential participant that the research may be terminated early in particular circumstances. That the researcher may, under certain circumstances, decide to withdraw the participant from the study; Explain what procedures are in place for an orderly termination of participation by the participant.) Participants have the option to withdraw at any point of interview if they so desire. Participants may be removed from the study if they are disobedient, unwell, or have an unpleasant reaction. Should a participant want to terminate or withdraw, this should be communicated with the researcher.

**Benefits:**

**To participants:** Increased understanding of digital media as a marketing tool to ensure the survival of beauty businesses.

**To researcher:** This research is necessary for the completion of the master's qualification.

**Remuneration:**

Participants will not be compensated in any way for their participation in this study.

**Costs of the Study:**

There will be no costs associated with participation in this study.

**Confidentiality:** All materials, whether written or taped, will be kept in a secure locked location. To maintain confidentiality participant names and other contact information will not be included if for any reasons named are mentioned, permission will be requested from participant(s) first.

**Results:**

The researcher will include contact information in the information book, which participants will be able to take home with them. Participants may use that information to request the findings.

**Research-related Injury:**

None, as the interviews will be done online. There are no foreseen injuries.

**Storage of all electronic and hard copies including tape recordings.**

The information will be saved in a password-protected Google compressed folder that can only be accessed with a password. The rest of the secret information will be kept in an iron locker at the Supervisor's office with a key. The data will be shredded, and electronic data will be destroyed after 5 years.

**Persons to contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:**

Please contact the researcher **Amanda Z Makalima (Researcher)** – [REDACTED] my supervisor (**Dr Zogli-** [REDACTED]) or the Institutional Research Ethics Administrator on [REDACTED]. Complaints can be reported to the Director: Research and Postgraduate Support Dr L Langaniso on 031 [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

**General:**

A copy of the information letter should be issued to participants. The information letter and consent form must be translated and provided in the primary spoken language of the research population e.g. isiZulu.

## APPENDIX C(ii): INFORMATION LETTER IN ISIZULU



### INCWADI YOLWAZI

**Isihloko Socwaningo Locwaningo** : Iqhaza lokumaketha ngedijithali ekusindeneni kwamabhizinisi anobuhle aseMgungundlovu amancane, amancane naphakathi nendawo.

**U-Principal Investigator/s/research:** Amanda Zamaswazi Makalima (Btech:Management)

**U-Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s:** Dr Zogli Senior Lecturer (Department of Applied Management- PMB)

### Isingeniso esifushane kanye nenjongo yocwaningo:

Sanibonani ngethemba ukuthi lokhu kuzonithola nisesimweni esihle. Ngingumfundi owenza unyaka wesibili eDurban University of Technology (DUT). Njengamanje ngenza iziqu ze-master ku-Management Science (Business Admin)

Ngingathanda ukukucela ukuthi ubambe iqhaza kulolu cwaningo, olugxile kakhulu ekucwaningeni umsebenzi wokumaketha kwedijithali emabhizinisini amancane, amancane, namaphakathi (SMMES).

**What is Research** (Research is a systematic search or enquiry for generalized new knowledge)

(Address the Research Participant directly in the second person pronoun “you.” Do not address the research participant as “participant,” “patient”, “sir” or “madam”. The language must be free of jargon and unexplained acronyms and must be easily understood by the potential research participant. Technical terminology must be clear and explained. Consider the age, target population, home language, educational level, frame of mind, etc. of the participant. An explanation to the potential participant that he/she can ask as many questions as he/she wish because it is important that he/she fully understand the study. Participants are entitled to discuss the study with their family and friends and are under no obligation to commit at this stage. For this purpose, a copy of the Letter of Information document is given to the potential participant to take home.)

### Uhlaka Lwezinqubo:

Lolu cwaningo kuhloswe ngalo ukubhekana neqhaza lezinkundla zokuxhumana embonini yonobuhle eMgungundlovu (PMB), KwaZulu Natal, eNingizimu Afrika. Lolu cwaningo lunezinjongo nezinjongo ezihloselwe ukuqonda kangcono ukufakwa kokumaketha kwedijithali ngamabhizinisi embonini yobuhle. Lokhu kuzozuzwa nge-qualitative research methodology – inhlolokhono iyoba yindlela esemqoka esetshenziswa ekukhiqizeni imininingwane. Izingxoxo zizohlelwa ukuze kuqinisekiswa ukuthi izinhloso nezinjongo zocwaningo ziyafezekiswa. Ukuze kuqoqwe idatha, inhlolokhono enemibuzo evulekile izokwenziwa. Umcwaningi uzokwazi ukufunda ngokuhlangenwe nakho komuntu siqu kwabanikazi bamabhizinisi wobuhle abasebenzisa imidiya yedijithali, kanye nezinzuzo nezithiyo. Izingxoxo zizophinde zisetshenziselwe ukubona ukuthi yiziphi ezinye izindlela zemidiya ezisetshenziswa ezinye izimboni izindawo zobuhle ezingakhelwa kuzo futhi zifunde kuzo.

Ngemuva kokuthi ochwepheshe bezobuhle sebenikeze invume yabo yolwazi yokubamba iqhaza ocwaningweni, kuzohlelwa umhlangano nabo ukuze baqhube inhlolokhono. Ukuqhuba izinhloko, kuzofunwa umoya othule, ongenaziphazamiso. Inhlolokhono izokwenziwa ngokulandela inhlolokhono,

futhi izingxoxo zizoqoshwa kusetshenziswa ucingo. Isofthiwe ye-NVivo izosetshenziswa ukuhumusha inhlolekhono erekhodiwe.

Ulwazi luzosetshenziselwa ukwakha imodeli ezosiza osomabhezini bobuhle namanye amabhezini afanayo ukuthi asinde futhi achume enkathini yedijithali ngokuqinisekisa ukuthi imikhiqizo yabo ifinyelela kubantu abalungile. Inhlolekhono kulindeleke ukuthi ithathe imizuzu engama-20 kuye kwengama-30.

#### **Izingozi noma Ukungaphatheki kahle Kobambe iqhaza:**

Abukho ubungozi obuhlobene nokubamba iqhaza kulolu cwaningo. Uma ungakhululekile ngesikhathi senhlolekhono nganoma yisiphi isizathu, singakuqeda ngaso lesa sikhathi.

Chazela umhlanganyeli izizathu zokuthi angahoxa Ocwaningweni: (Ukuthi ucwaningo lunganqanyulwa kusenesikhathi ezimeni ezithile okungukuthi. Ukungalandeli, ukugula, ukusabela okungekuhle, njll. Yisho ukuthi umhlanganyeli unelungelo lokuhoxa ocwaningweni. Ucwaningo nganoma isiphi isikhathi uma befisa ukwenza njalo futhi basazoqhubeka nokuthola izinga elifanele lokunakekelwa Chazela lowo ongase abambe iqhaza ukuthi ucwaningo lunganqanyulwa kusenesikhathi ezimeni ezithile Ukuze umcwaningi, ngaphansi kwezimo ezithile, anqume ukuhoxa umhlanganyeli ocwaningweni Chaza ukuthi yiziphi izinqubo ezikhona zokunqanyulwa okuhlelekile kokuhlanganyela komhlanganyeli.) Ababambiqhaza banenketho yokuhoxa kunoma yisiphi isikhathi senhlolekhono uma befisa. Ababambiqhaza bangasuswa ocwaningweni uma bengalaleli, bengaphilile, noma benokusabela okungemnandi. Uma umhlanganyeli efuna ukuyekisa noma ukuhoxa, lokhu kufanele kuxhunye nomcwaningi.

#### **Izinzuzo:**

Kubabambiqhaza: Ukuqonda okwengeziwe kwemidiya yedijithali njengethuluzi lokumaketha lokunisekisa ukusinda kwamabhezini wobuhle.

Kumcwaningi: Lolu cwaningo luyadingeka ukuze kuphuthulwe iziqu ze-master.

#### **Inkokhelo:**

Ababambiqhaza angeke banxeshelwe nganoma iyiphi indlela ngokubamba kwabo iqhaza kulolu cwaningo.

Izindleko Zocwaningo:

Ngeke kube nezindleko ezihambisana nokubamba iqhaza kulolu cwaningo.

**Ukugcinwa kuyimfihlo:** Zonke izinto ezisetsenziswayo, kungakhathaliseki ukuthi zibhaliwe noma ziqoshiwe, zizogcinwa endaweni ekhiyiwe evikelekile. Ukuze kugcinwe ubumfihlo amagama abahlanganyeli kanye nolunye ulwazi lokuxhumana ngeke lufakwe uma nganoma yiziphi izizathu ezishiwo, imvume izocelwa kubahlanganyeli kuqala.

#### **Imiphumela:**

Umcwaningi uzofaka imininingwane yokuxhumana encwadini yolwazi, ababambiqhaza abazokwazi ukuya nayo ekhaya. Abahlanganyeli bangasebenzisa lolu lwazi ukuze bacele abakutholile.

#### **Ukulimala okuhlobene nocwaningo:**

Lutho, njengoba izinhlolekhono zizokwenziwa ku-inthanethi. Akukho ukulimala okulindelwe.

#### **Ukugcinwa kwawo wonke amakhophi e-elektroniki kanye namakhophi aqinile okuhlanganisa namakhasethi aqoshiwe.**

Ulwazi luzogcinwa kufolda ecindezelwe ye-Google evikelwe ngephasiwedi engafinyelelwa kuphela ngephasiwedi. Yonke eminye imininingwane eyimfihlo izogcinwa elokhani yensimbi ehovisi likaSupervisor nokhiye. Idatha izocutshungulwa, futhi idatha ye-elektroniki izobhujiswa ngemva kweminyaka emi-5.

**Abantu ongathintwa Esimweni Sanoma Iziphi Izinkinga noma Imibuzo:**

Sicela athinte umcwaningi u-Amanda Z Makalima (Umcwaningi) - [REDACTED] umphathi wami (Dr Zogli- [REDACTED] ) noma uMqondisi Wezimiso Zocwaningo Lwesikhungo ku-[REDACTED] Izikhalazo zingabikwa kuMqondisi: Ucwangingo kanye Nokwesekwa K [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Okujwayelekile:**

Ikhophi yencwadi yolwazi kufanele inikezwe ababambiqhaza. Incwadi yolwazi kanye nefomu lemvume kufanele lihunyushwe futhi lihlinzekwe ngolimi oluyinhloko olukhulunywa abantu abaningi abenza ucwangingo isb. isiZulu.

## **APPENDIX D (i): INTERVIEW GUIDE**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

#### **Section A. Research background and purpose of the study.**

**1. Study Topic:** The role of digital marketing in the survival of Pietermaritzburg's small, micro, and medium-sized beauty businesses.

#### **2. Study Objectives:**

- To determine the digital marketing tools used by the beauty SMMEs (Small Micro Medium Enterprises).
- To assess the role of digital marketing in the survival of beauty SMMEs.
- To determine the constraints businesses, face in using digital marketing in Pietermaritzburg.
- To understand the perception of business owners about the future of digital marketing in the beauty industry.

#### **3. Introducing the researcher and the study**

The researcher introduces herself to the participant. Reminds the participants of the research topic and purpose of research. The researcher will state that the research is conducted under the supervision of the Department of Applied Management at DUT (Durban University of Technology). A discussion about ethics, how participation is voluntary. The researcher will assure the participant that what is shared will remain anonymous and confidential. The researcher will ask the participant to sign the consent form and to fill in the biographical details form. The researcher asks if she can proceed with the interview and if she switches on the recorder.

**The researcher will provide an explanation of digital marketing and enumerate a comprehensive list of digital marketing tools.**

<b>Section B: BUSINESS INFORMATION:</b>	
The sector of beauty SMME (Small Micro Medium Enterprises)	
The number of years in business	
Gender of business owner:	
Educational level of business owner:	
Previous employment of the business owner? How many years' experiences?	
What gadgets do you use to market the business online?	
Does the business have a dedicated digital marketer?	
The number of years using digital marketing	

**Objective 1: Which digital marketing method do beauty SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg use?**

- How do you market your business online?
- Which digital marketing tools do you use the most and why?
- What is the number of followers/interactions per tool?
- Describe the quantity, frequency, and type of material you post online.

**Objective 2: What is the role of digital marketing in the survival of beauty SMMEs?**

- Tell me about your experience using digital marketing to grow and sustain your business.
- Do you believe that the use of digital marketing tools is related to the survival of beauty business?
- What role does digital marketing play in increasing/decreasing revenue?

**Objective 3: To determine the constraints businesses, face in using digital marketing in Pietermaritzburg.**

- How do you incorporate customer feedback into the creation of your digital marketing content?
- What challenges have you experienced in using digital marketing as a strategy?
- What have you done to overcome these challenges?
- In your opinion, what are the limitations of digital marketing?

**Objective 3: What is the perception of beauty SMMEs about the future of digital marketing in the beauty industry?**

- In your opinion, what is the future of digital marketing in the beauty industry?
- What plans do you have for introducing new digital marketing tools to those now in use?

**Closing:** The researcher will express gratitude to the participant for sharing their experiences and time and will inquire if they have anything else to say on the topic.

## APPENDIX D (ii) : INTERVIEW GUIDE IN ISIZULU

### Interview in isiZulu

#### Isigaba A. Isizinda socwaningo kanye nenjongo yocwaningo.

##### 1. Isihloko Sokufunda:

##### 2. Izinjongo Zokufunda:

- Ukunquma izindlela zokumaketha zedijithali ezisetshenziswa ama-SMME wobuhle.
- Ukuhlola indima yokukhangisa ngedijithali ekusindeni kwama-SMME wobuhle.
- Ukunquma izingqinamba amabhizinisi, abhekana nazo ekusebenziseni i-digital marketing eMgungundlovu.
- Ukuqonda umbono wabanikazi bamabhizinisi mayelana nekusasa lokumaketha kwedijithali embonini yobuhle.

##### 3. Ukwethula umcwaningi kanye nocwaningo

Umcwaningi uzethula kumhlanganyeli. Ikhumbuza ababambiqhaza ngesihloko socwaningo kanye nenjongo yocwaningo. Ucwano luzoveza ukuthi ucwano lwenziwa ngaphansi kwezo loMnyango Wezokuphathwa Kwezicelo e-DUT. Ingxoxo mayelana nezimiso zokuziphatha, ukuthi ukubamba iqhaza kuwukuzithandela. Imvume yokurekhoda inhloko nokuqinisekisa umhlanganyeli ukuthi okwabiwe kuzohlala kungaziwa futhi kuyimfihlo. Umcwaningi uzocela umhlanganyeli ukuthi asayine ifomu lemivume futhi agcwalise ifomu lemininingwane yomlando womuntu. Umcwaningi uyabuza ukuthi angakwazi yini ukuqhubeka nengxoxo nokuthi uyasivula yini irekhoda.

#### Isigaba B: ULWAZI NGEBHIZINISI:

Ubudala

Ubulili

Izinga lemfundo

Isizinda somsebenzi

Umkhaka wezobuhle SMME

Inani leminyaka ebhizinisini:

Inani leminyaka usebenzisa ukumaketha kwedijithali:

Amathuluzi okuthengisa edijithali asetshenzisiwe kanye nenani labalandeli?

#### Isigaba C: Inhloko

##### Inhloso 1: Ukunquma izindlela zokumaketha zedijithali ezisetshenziswa ama-SMME wobuhle.

1. Iyiphi imidiya yokukhangisa oyisebenzisayo?
2. Wenza kanjani amakhasimende azi ngemikhiqizo namasevisi akho?
3. Ingabe usebenzisa inkundla yezokuxhumana? Uma kunjalo, iyiphi inkundla yezokuxhumana oyisebenzisayo?
4. Wazi kanjani ukuthi iyiphi inkundla yezokuxhumana/imidiya yedijithali elungele ibhizinisi lakho?

##### Inhloso 2: Ukuhlola indima yokukhangisa ngedijithali ekusindeni kwama-SMME wobuhle.

1. Uyazazi izinzuzo zokusebenzisa ukumaketha kwedijithali kwebhizinisi lobuhle lama-SMME?
2. Mangaki amaklayenti eza kuma-SMME wobuhle ngenxa yalokho akubona kumapulatifomu edijithali ngesonto?
3. Iyiphi indima edlalwa ukumaketha kwedijithali ekwandiseni/ekwehliseni ukuthengisa kanye nenanzuzo? Imaphi amaphesenti ukumaketha kwedijithali okunomthelela kuyo yonke imali engenayo yebhizinisi?

##### Inhloso 3: Ukunquma izingqinamba amabhizinisi, abhekane nazo ekusebenziseni i-digital marketing eMgungundlovu.

1. Yiziphi izinselelo ezinkulu zokumaketha kwedijithali?
2. Ukumaketha kwedijithali kudla isikhathi; ingabe usebenzela ngaphandle usebenzisa amapulatifomu edijithali noma amapulatifomu aphethwe abanikazi bama-SMME wobuhle?
3. Yimiphi imikhawulo yokumaketha kwedijithali?

##### Inhloso 4: Ukuqonda umbono wabanikazi bamabhizinisi mayelana nekusasa lokumaketha kwedijithali embonini yobuhle.

1. Uzama kanjani ukuqonda kangcono futhi ufake okokufaka kwamakhasimende ekukhiqizeni okuqokethwe kwakho kokumaketha kwedijithali?
2. Iyiphi inkundla yokumaketha yedijithali efaneleka kangcono ama-SMME wobuhle?

3. Yiziphi izinhlelo zakho ekwandiseni noma ekungezeni izinkundla zedijithali ngaphandle kwalezo esezivele zisetshenziswa?