

**THE USE OF FACEBOOK FOR MARKETING PURPOSES OF SMALL FAST-FOOD  
BUSINESSES IN MANKWENG, LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

by

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## DECLARATION

I declare that **'THE USE OF FACEBOOK FOR MARKETING PURPOSES OF SMALL FAST-FOOD BUSINESSES IN MANKWENG, LIMPOPO PROVINCE,'** hereby present this submission to the University of Limpopo for the Master of Arts in Media Studies, affirming that it has not been previously submitted to this institution or any other. Additionally, I declare that the design and execution of this work are entirely my own, and any sources, ideas, or thoughts from others that have been utilised or quoted are explicitly identified and fully acknowledged through comprehensive referencing.

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## **DEDICATION**

To my dearest Mom and Dad, whose love and sacrifices have been the bedrock of my existence, thank you for shaping me into who I am today. Your unwavering support fuels my aspirations. To my supervisor, your mentorship has been invaluable, igniting a passion for learning within me. In this journey of purpose, yet to fully unfold, with faith and gratitude, I embrace the uncertainty and growing chapters, confident that clarity will come in time. I thank God for all that is and that is to be.

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## ABSTRACT

The study investigates the use of Facebook as a marketing tool for small fast-food businesses operating in Mankweng, South Africa. Employing a qualitative approach and an exploratory research design, this research aims to comprehensively explore how these small fast-food businesses harness the power of Facebook for marketing purposes. This study's theoretical framework incorporates Chaffey's theory of social media marketing, which provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the dynamics of social media as a marketing platform. In addition, the Technology Acceptance Model is utilised to examine the factors influencing the adoption and acceptance of Facebook as a marketing tool among small fast-food business owners in Mankweng. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a diverse group of small fast-food business owners. The qualitative nature of the study allows for an in-depth exploration of their experiences, practices, and perceptions concerning the use of Facebook as a marketing tool.

The findings of this research illuminate both the opportunities and challenges that emerge when small fast-food businesses use Facebook as a marketing tool. While Facebook offers cost-effective means for brand visibility and customer engagement, challenges arise from the need for technical proficiency, content management, and handling customer feedback effectively.

In a rapidly evolving digital landscape, the importance of Facebook as a marketing tool for small fast-food business owners in Mankweng cannot be overstated. It serves as a cost-effective channel for brand promotion and enables direct customer engagement, real-time feedback, and the establishment of a robust online presence. In an increasingly competitive market, embracing Facebook as a marketing platform emerges as a strategic imperative, ensuring these businesses remain relevant, competitive, and poised for sustainable growth. Small fast-food business owners in Mankweng, South Africa, can leverage Facebook to adapt to changing consumer expectations and behaviours, positioning themselves for success in the contemporary marketplace.

**Keywords:** *Facebook, Marketing, Small fast-food businesses, Social media marketing, Customers*

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

SNTs - Social Networking Sites

Www - World Wide Web

SMEs - Small and Medium Enterprises

TAM - Technological Acceptance Model

IT - Information Technology

SMMEs - Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises

BBS - Bulletin Board System

AR - Augmented Reality

CNBC - Consumer News and Business Channel

FB - Facebook

PU - Perceived usefulness

PEOU - Perceived ease of use

TA - Thematic Analysis

TREC - Turfloop Research Ethics Committee

UVP - Unique Value Proposition

ROI - Return on Investment

## CHAPTER 1

### BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

An astounding amount of change has occurred in digital media marketing. In the past, technology has played a significant role in people's daily lives (Manzoor, Baig, Hashim, & Sami, 2020). The way individuals use technology is constantly evolving and advancing (Soegoto & Utomo, 2019). Even though the world has transformed into a digital society, not everyone is accustomed to this new way of doing things, which is why it is so fascinating (Tiautrakul & Jindakul, 2019). Additionally, Soegoto and Utomo (2019) postulated that more advanced information and communication technologies have accelerated the transition from traditional to modern communication, which is a digital lifestyle. Credit is due to technology; business owners know the value of using online platforms to market and sell their goods and services. With online platforms, businesses have also discovered that marketing their goods and services is less expensive, making it easier to sell specific products and reach segmented customers (Omodho, 2019). Social networking sites (SNTs) through online resources are not a new concept; the development of the World Wide Web (WWW) is a significant online endeavour that has given rise to several digital communities and groups (Abdalli & Hassan, 2019).

All facets of people's lives have undergone tremendous alteration due to technology (Manzoor et al., 2020). Moreover, over the past few decades, social networking has aimed for enormous acceptability, usage, and appeal worldwide in developed and developing countries (Wenninger, Krasnova, & Buxmann, 2019). New tools and ideas were created as a result of the advancement of technology. Because of this, entrepreneurs are utilising technology to their advantage, through social media and other marketing techniques (Soegoto & Utomo, 2019).

Currently, communication is characterised by profound changes that are happening rapidly. This calls on communicators to adjust to the new realities, particularly in light of technological advancement (Szabo, 2021). These networking sites are expanding quickly, and as they get less sophisticated over time, more people of all ages are using them (Kalasi, 2014). The recent development of social networks has led to more intricate, varied, and intense relationships between businesses and their clients. Moreover, businesses

often use social media platforms to broaden the geographic reach of their clientele (Budree, Fietkiewicz, & Lins, 2019).

Again, Van Dijk (2017) highlighted that more people today have access to mobile devices than computers, and it is essential to remember that many online service users are accustomed to utilising social networking applications on their phones. Additionally, Chatterjee and Kar (2020) noted that Facebook, as one of the most popular social networking sites, serves as a platform for individuals to engage in online activities, sell their goods, and even make effective comparisons while making decisions. Facebook has also evolved into a conduit between small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and the community of potential customers. Silva, Gerwe, and Becerra (2017) point out that social media can increase corporate income and productivity.

The study Kumar (2018) further explained that social networking sites are a fundamental part of everyday life for most people. Recently, most companies have taken advantage of social media to provide consumers with better service and support. Mowafy (2018) added that the use of social networks is prevalent because of their ability to give users the freedom and flexibility to use the platform in any way possible. Social media can also be used as a marketing tool. Business owners can communicate effectively with their customers, which helps to ensure flexibility and good business and customer relations.

People can access digital platforms at any time and from any location. Therefore, businesses should switch from traditional to digital marketing strategies (Bennett, 2017). The researcher further explained that companies would lag in this age if they did not use the Internet platform to advertise their goods and services (Bennett, 2017). Furthermore Bilgin (2018), providing customers with information at a meager cost is highly practical for increasing brand recognition and familiarity with the company's goods and services on social networks, where millions of users are registered. Moreover, online social marketing professionals know the advantages and attractions of using social media as a component of their marketing plan.

Small enterprises serve as a conduit for fostering individuals' engagement in the economy within African nations, particularly in regions where a significant portion of the economy operates informally. As a result, SMEs, especially fast-food SMEs, are a vital part of the economies of many African countries (Bvuma & Marnewick, 2020). The rise in fast-food

consumption in African countries at large can be attributed to several factors, particularly in South Africa, which includes the rising household incomes, an expansion of the black middle class, an increase in the number of people earning a profit, an increase in the value of family time, and, most importantly, the penetration of fast-food restaurants into the country's townships and rural areas (Mhlanga, 2018).

The ability to respond to changes in market conditions is an internal factor that determines corporate performance. Owners of small fast-food restaurants cannot afford to be pleased with their current customer base and must be inventive in establishing and building relationships with customers. Hence, using social media platforms like Facebook to refine marketing efforts and retain customers is vital. Electronic media replaced the social and personal interactive norms of the 1960s. Nowadays, developing a marketing strategy without considering social media is impossible. As a result, the study intended to explore the usage of Facebook marketing for small fast-food enterprises in Mankweng, Limpopo Province.

## **1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM**

The revolution of technology, particularly the internet, was suggested to have important implications for global marketing strategies (Li, Kim, & Choi, 2021). The business environment has evolved due to the development of information technology and the internet. These developments have forced entrepreneurs to review their marketing strategies (Rahardja, 2022). The internet gave birth to many social media platforms, such as Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), WhatsApp, LinkedIn, and TikTok, the most used platforms in South Africa. Furthermore, businesses have stepped on the social networking bandwagon, significantly increasing sales and reducing marketing expenses. Small and medium-sized businesses are recognised as significant drivers of job growth. They give low- and middle-income nations around the world a means of subsistence (Khamis, 2018). All companies have a presence on social media to maximise profit from its widespread use, and marketers and advertisers are excitedly incorporating social media into their digital strategy (Voorveld, 2019). Hanaysha (2022) submitted that more fast-food businesses have used electronic marketing due to the rising popularity of social media marketing among consumers to connect with their target audiences. It is assumed that social media has contributed to a lazy generation. Thus, for instance, there are more sales in big corporations like Steers, Wimpy, Mug, Bean, etc. Moreover, the sales occur online

rather than physically. This is a serious threat to the township economy, e.g., burgers from big corporations replace the sales of “kotas.”

One of the townships challenged by the big corporations’ presence in fast-food sales is Mankweng Township. Individuals increasingly allocate greater financial resources to online content consumption, necessitating a swift adaptation for businesses that have yet to integrate this paradigm shift into their advertising approaches. Digital platforms have become a bigger part of people’s lives daily because of the increased amount of time they spend online. The area of Mankweng in Limpopo Province comprises mostly small fast-food business enterprises, and most of them cannot afford to advertise their products through mainstream media (broadcasting and print media). Most of these businesses’ customers are youth, especially the university, which they operate next to because it houses their target market (young people in the form of students). Young people, including tertiary students, are regarded as heavy users of social media. Thus, it is significant for these businesses to utilise these platforms to maximise their customer base. Therefore, there is a need to explore the use of Facebook as a marketing tool employed by small fast-food businesses in the Mankweng area.

### **1.3 ROLE OF THEORY IN THE STUDY**

This study was grounded on two theories: Chaffey’s Theory of Social Media Marketing and the Technology Acceptance Model (De Wever, Schellens, Valcke & Van keer, 2006). Chaffey's theory was chosen for the study because it suggests that through developing long-term relationships with clients, social media marketing can significantly improve business performance. Supervising and enhancing customer engagement, participation, and interaction through digital channels to foster positive connections with a company and its brands, leading to economic value. The primary purpose of the Technology Acceptance Model is to comprehend the revenue potential, accompanied by additional benefits such as guiding owners in charting their future course, early visibility into competitors, and offering a current reference point for evaluating the fit of a product in the market.

#### **1.3.1 Chaffey’s Theory of Social media marketing**

The essential tenets of social media marketing, according to Chaffey (2007), were intended to establish and maintain a vibrant online community of supporters. When correctly implemented, this method builds brand loyalty by increasing consumer knowledge of the product and motivating them to locate, acquire, use, and repurchase the

online-market good. Online marketing, according to Omodho (2019), highlights the importance of communication in all marketing plans. Social media accomplishes this by encouraging frequent user interaction on its various platforms. This builds an enduring bond between customers and the brand. Social media marketing uses these channels to influence consumers' impressions of various goods and services, leading to purchases and even long-term brand loyalty.

According to Cornellia, Hermanwan, and Sinangjoyo (2022), audience engagement, social media presence, viral marketing, and consumer feedback are all part of small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs). A crucial type of digital advertising is online networking display, which promotes client mailings on a company's website or on social media sites like Facebook or X, as well as web magazines and debates. It can be connected to more conventional forms of communication. For instance, businesses can utilise Facebook to communicate with clients or partners who have chosen those platforms. As it were, maintaining relationships with clients is crucial to maximising the potential of online networks (Chaffey, 2007).

Thus, to encourage positive involvement with a firm and the brand that creates business value, social media and marketing tracks facilitate customer interaction, engagement, and sharing across digital media. A company website, social media, and other websites run by third parties may also be used for interactions. The world of online marketing, which revolves around interacting with customers on websites or social media platforms like Facebook and X, is incomplete without social media marketing (Alalwan, 2018).

### **1.3.2 Technology Acceptance Model**

In 1986, Davis created the Technological Acceptance Model (De Wever et al., 2019). Davis's technique, a modification of the Theory of Reasoned Action, assumes that the decision to embrace technology is decided by the cognitive process and attempts to pleasure the user or maximise the technology's usefulness. The goal of this model is to explain the key aspects that influence user behaviour towards the adoption of technology users. Explain in greater detail the acceptance of information technology (IT), with several dimensions that can affect the user's acceptance of IT (Irfan et al., 2018).

IT adoption and utilisation can provide businesses and individuals with both short-term and long-term benefits such as enhanced productivity, cost and time savings, and



convenience. People's openness to emerging technologies has long been considered in IT management studies due to the potential for technology to be beneficial. The study of technology adoption gained prominence in the 1980s, coinciding with the increased use of personal computers (Marikyan & Papagiannidis, 2022). TAM, on the other hand, concentrates on the individual psychological level of technology acceptance, with less emphasis on the social context surrounding the user, such as social networks (Iacurci, 2021).

A study suggested that social media could influence the acceptance of technology. They do this because social networks contain a particular set of connections between a defined group of people (Johar & Awalluddin, 2011). The main goal of TAM was to elucidate the principles underpinning the acceptance of technology for behaviour prediction and to provide a theoretical explanation for the effective use of technology (Marikyan & Papagiannidis, 2022).

#### **1.4 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section, the literature review, examined current studies that focused on the use of Facebook for marketing purposes by small fast-food businesses. This phenomenon has only developed within the last decade. The relevant and recent literature on Facebook and social media marketing, their opportunities and challenges for marketing purposes, and marketing strategies for maximising profit are reviewed in this section.

##### **1.4.1 Facebook**

The advent of social media commenced over a decade ago, with LinkedIn pioneering the market in 2003, followed by the introductions of Myspace and Facebook in 2004. In less than a decade, Facebook has witnessed a substantial surge in its user base, now boasting billions of users globally. Presently, Facebook has accumulated 250 million active users, with over five billion minutes spent on the platform daily and an impressive rate of over one million posts generated on an hourly basis (Subathra, Senthilkumar, Prabhavathy, & Jinu, 2023). Establishing a presence on Facebook can prove advantageous for any small business. With a vast user base exceeding 2.91 billion, Meta, the rebranded entity for the Facebook Company, provides myriad opportunities for small businesses to promote their services, augment sales, and enhance overall visibility on the Facebook platform (Piranda, Sinaga, & Putri, 2022).

### **1.4.2 Social media marketing**

Enhancing website traffic or visibility through social networking platforms is recognised as a strategy for social media marketing (Khamis, 2018). Small business leaders, such as small fast-food business owners, must create marketing plans that contribute to the efficient use of resources and enhance profitability (Irfan et al., 2018).

Social media platforms play a pivotal role in the effectiveness of online marketing strategies (Irfan et al., 2018). The utilisation of social media has seen significant growth in recent years, with an increasing number of adults engaging in social media activities (Anantasiska, Suhud, & Usman, 2022).

The use of social media has expanded in recent years (Anantasiska, Suhud, & Usaman, 2022), and the use of social media has increased among adults (Cotton, Schuster, & Seifert, 2022). The importance of social marketing was further emphasised when researchers found that integrated marketing promotional messages might successfully alter consumers' opinions of a product's image and encourage consumption behaviour. Social networks can also make interactions between the user and the application more enjoyable. Social networks provide users with a sense of power, and in the end, they can pique users' curiosity by introducing them to something new and fascinating. Furthermore, it is increasingly used to help with consumer and company communication (Knowles, Ettenson, Lynch, & Dollens, 2020).

According to Lin and Rauschnabel (2016), marketers can use the Facebook platform effectively and efficiently. Effective use of social media is how organisations use social media to achieve their own goals, such as employer branding, promotion, sales, branding, and customer relationship management. Beyond marketing, social media platforms aid small fast-food enterprises in fostering customer trust and cultivating brand loyalty by providing customers with convenient access to information about the company and its offerings. The strategic utilisation of social media involves organisations leveraging these platforms to fulfil various objectives, including employer branding, promotional activities, sales initiatives, brand enhancement, and effective customer relationship management. In addition to marketing, it helps companies build customer trust and brand loyalty by making it easier for customers to learn about the company and its products (Puspaningrum, 2020). Additionally, social media marketing has a positive relationship with customer loyalty and trust (Khoa, 2020). Businesses can easily use social media to increase business

performance and build their brand (Sullivan & Koh, 2019). SMM can help MSMEs improve their performance (Chatterjee & Kar, 2020).

### **1.4.3 Opportunities and challenges of using Facebook as a marketing tool**

When it comes to Facebook advertising, there are certain limitations in addition to certain strengths. Major disruptions in social media advertising can result from problems like aggressive advertising, ignorance of e-commerce, user privacy violations, and certain legal pitfalls, among others. Lack of core and basic characteristics of personal connections, such as empathy and personal touch, is one of the main problems with new digital communication (Chatterjee & Kar, 2020). Facebook marketing has transformed consumers into marketers by giving them the ability to comment on different products and services and brands and then exert pressure on businesses. This is one of the most crucial considerations the company must make (Hanaysha, 2022). The untapped potential of social media is another barrier, as shown by a pronounced tendency toward technology acceptance and readiness (Iacurci, 2021).

Inadequate brand control risks exist for product brands when using social network advertising. Social media is a form of user-generated content where customers share their opinions on services, goods, customer care, etc. Organisations have little influence over what end-users communicate on their social networks, and their content may be crucial to the goods and services. It is essential for goods and services businesses to keep track of how people feel about their brands online and to respond to topics raised by users (Behera & Balaji, 2019). The risks associated with social networks include cybercrime, which consists of the sale of personal information, identity theft, cyber espionage, or the gathering of information about an individual through social media, as well as various manifestations of political extremism, religious, cultural, and ethnic intolerance, or the promotion of hatred. However, on the other hand, free access to social media and priced technologies makes it possible for criminal, espionage, and extremist organisations, as well as paedophiles, to operate without difficulty (Simić, Petrovic, & Anicic, 2019).

Social media is widely used these days and makes it easier for customers to learn about brands. Brand recognition will rise when good content is spread, and consumers encounter it. One advantage of social media is that happy customers begin to tell their friends and other users about their positive experiences. Small fast-food business owners do not have

to spend much money on marketing or on celebrity endorsements because of an increase in shares and likes (Gryzenhout, 2022).

By tailoring information for each customer, social media marketing companies may foster relationships and create goods and services tailored to each customer's demands. For example, online seat assignments and control are feasible through Internet platforms. As observed in successful fast-food businesses, social media networks can streamline customer-company interactions that traditionally require direct communication (Behera & Balaji, 2019).

When consumers begin discussing, liking, and sharing content, the brand benefits from free publicity. The brand would become more well-known thanks to the exposure it would have gained through traditional marketing (Gryzenhout, 2022). Individualisation of marketing is aided by social media marketing, which allows small fast-food businesses to communicate with customers and offer tailored replies and answers (Jacobson, Gruzd, & Hernandez-Garcia, 2020).

Since personalised offers increased sales by over 10% and resulted in a return on investment on marketing expenses of five to eight times, marketers may utilise social networks to generate offers and content that are especially suited to their target market (Bushara et al., 2023). This made them develop strong customer relationships, which is the primary goal of marketing programs, and customer relationships are enhanced through social media. The main objective of marketing initiatives was to help them establish solid consumer ties and social media was used to foster these interactions. Social networks allow marketers to personalise offers and communications for their target market (Bushara, Abdou, Hassan, Sobaih, Albohnayh, Alshammari, Aldoreeb, Elsaed, & Elsaied, 2023). User-generated material on social networks was issued to draw users in two-way online social interactions, which are used to keep users around, and member relationships are used to keep users around (Jacobson et al., 2020). Providing appropriate information in the proper time and developing personal contact with consumers are essential components of effective customer relationships.

#### **1.4.4 Marketing strategy for maximising profit**

Small fast-food restaurants require suitable social media channels to advertise effectively. Although it may appear basic, their target audience is active on extensive social networks

(Jha & Shanker, 2018). Social networking is rapidly expanding. Social media helps increase awareness and inquiries, improve customer relationships, increase the number of new consumers; improve the ability to reach customers on a global scale, and promote local businesses, which enhances the image of small enterprises (Jha & Shanker, 2018).

Through social media, customers can effortlessly engage with novel products, services, and brands. Social platforms are perceived as more cost-effective, user-friendly, and adaptable. Integrating social networks into business practices has spawned innovative business models like social commerce. This is often seen as a technique to enable people to engage in online activities such as marketing prospects and comparing buying and selling interests to make the best choice. Social media can help small businesses expand overall. Small businesses can use social media to gather customer feedback and build their brands (Chatterjee & Kar, 2020).

The initial literature review introduced crucial concepts employed in this study. This step is imperative as it lays the groundwork for comprehending the concepts extensively elaborated upon in Chapter 2, the literature review.

## **1.5 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

This study employed a qualitative research methodology for data collection and analysis. Qualitative research focuses on multiple methods, which implies an interpretative and naturalistic approach to its subject. This paradigm assisted the researcher in studying the issue at hand by gaining access to the participants' opinions (Brodsky, 1968). This approach also helped the researcher discover the meaning that people attach to the events they experience.

The research embraced an exploratory research design, employing qualitative research methodologies. It delved into the use of Facebook for marketing by small fast-food businesses. The research design encompasses the systematic collection, analysis, interpretation, and presentation of data within a research project. It is the general strategy for linking theoretical research topics with relevant empirical research. Furthermore, the study design outlined how the pertinent data was gathered, analysed, and applied to answer the research question (Rivas, 2012).

Through interviews, the researcher acquired qualitative data regarding participants' attitudes and perceptions about services, ideas, and programmes using an exploratory

study methodology. It also depicts behaviours, attitudes, needs, or relationships about the entities being studied in regions with little prior knowledge.

## **1.6 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

### **1.6.1 AIM OF THE STUDY**

The study aims to explore the use of Facebook marketing purposes of small fast-food businesses in Mankweng, Limpopo Province.

### **1.6.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of the study are namely to:

- Examine how small fast-food businesses use Facebook for marketing purposes in Mankweng.
- Establish the opportunities and challenges of using Facebook as a marketing tool for small fast-food businesses; and
- Analyse how Facebook marketing-strategy impacts profit in small fast-food businesses

## **1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The working and business environments are slowly changing into a new era of digital generations, and only businesses that change will have a growth advantage. In the current business period, there is no more organisational or geographical hierarchical separation within organisations, and they may collaborate closely with advancements in communication technologies. There was a need for leadership that would view these trends favourably and conglomerate, merging suitable resources in response to these special opportunities in social media (Behera & Balaji, 2019). The study's primary purpose was to explore the use of Facebook for marketing purposes in small fast-food businesses. The study contributed to the existing body of knowledge regarding the use of social media in general, and Facebook for marketing small fast-food businesses.

## **1.8 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

The present study evaluates the use of Facebook as a marketing tool for small fast-food businesses in Mankweng, South Africa. The researcher selected small fast-food owners around Mankweng because it is the most used advertising social media platform for their small fast-food businesses. Digital media in general and social media have penetrated

various facets of lives, and there is no exception in marketing and communication. Social media platforms have enhanced how business owners market their products and quickly reach potential customers without spending excessive money on marketing through mainstream media channels. These leading streaming media platforms include radio, newspapers, and television. Thus, it is important to investigate how small business owners use social media channels such as Facebook to market their products.

## 1.9 CHAPTERS OUTLINE

<b>CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION</b>
This chapter discusses the context and justification behind the research. Additionally, it addresses the issue at hand, exploring the significance of Chaffey's social media marketing theory and the technology acceptance model. The researcher also clearly defines the study's objective.
<b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>
This chapter presented a quick overview of literature at both local and national levels. It introduced the most prevalent phenomenon studied in brief. Additionally, it delved into examining Facebook for marketing, focusing on the ethical considerations of utilising online media platforms. The chapter outlined using Facebook as a marketing tool by exploring its features and organisational aspects. Furthermore, it investigated the efficacy of employing Facebook as a marketing tool, addressing the challenges and opportunities associated with its use.
<b>CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY</b>
This chapter delineated the methodology and research framework employed in the study, offering a concise overview of a qualitative research approach. The research methodology involved the utilisation of semi-structured interviews for data collection. The chapter provided an in-depth exploration of the data analysis process. Population and sampling procedures were clearly outlined. Additionally, quality criteria were applied to assess the collected data's reliability. The chapter emphasised the ethical considerations implemented to safeguard the individuals participating in the study.
<b>CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS</b>

The primary emphasis of this chapter lies in the interpretation and analysis of data. Thematic analysis was the chosen method for scrutinising the gathered data. The findings of the study were substantiated by drawing on relevant literature and theory.

## **CHAPTER 5: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented the findings and recommendations of the study, offering a theoretical interpretation of the results. Additionally, it included suggestions for future research and outlined the study's limitations. The conclusion was presented to provide a final overview of the research.

### **1.10 DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS**

**Facebook-** The Oxford English Dictionary defines Facebook as an online social media platform founded in 2004, enabling registered users to create personal profiles, connect with friends, and engage in various forms of communication, including posting text, photos, and multimedia content.

**Social media-** The Collins English Dictionary defines social networks as online platforms and websites that allow users to create and share information, participate in virtual communities, and participate in social networks. Representative examples are Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

**Advertising-** According to the Oxford English Dictionary, it is the act of promoting a product, service, or idea through various means to reach and persuade an audience. This enables the creation and distribution of messages to influence consumer behaviour and increase awareness.

**Marketing-** Marketing involves a spectrum of actions and procedures focused on developing, conveying, delivering, and exchanging valuable offerings for customers. This broad field comprises various activities, such as advertising, sales, distribution, and market research.

**Social media marketing-** Leveraging platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter strategically for the promotion of products or services is defined as social media marketing. This marketing approach encompasses the creation and sharing of content to actively engage a specific audience, enhance brand awareness, and attain marketing goals.



**Small fast-food business-** A compact business enterprise in the fast-food industry is usually characterised by a modest physical footprint, a concise menu, and an emphasis on providing convenient and fast-service meals to customers.

**Page-** A distinct section of a publication or website is often identified by a page number or URL. In the context of the internet, a web page is a document accessible through a browser containing text, images, and multimedia elements.

**Followers-** Individuals who subscribe to or regularly read updates from a person or organisation on a social media platform. Followers are notified of posts and content shared by the account they follow.

**Like-** A positive reaction or expression of approval. Thus, to express approval or agreement with something, often by clicking a button on social media platforms.

**Customers-** Individuals or organisations that buy goods or services from a seller. Customers contribute to the economic success of businesses by engaging in transactions.

### **1.11 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 1**

In summary, the Facebook application serves as an alternative to contemporary marketing methods for small fast-food businesses. The application's primary focus is not on facilitating new online connections, but rather on fostering connections between small business owners and their customers. Additionally, the study addressed the research problem and its objective, which sought to investigate the utilisation of Facebook for marketing by small fast-food businesses in Mankweng, Limpopo Province.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides an overview of research on using Facebook as a marketing tool for small fast-food businesses. The author conducts a literature review to summarise the existing literature on this topic, identify gaps in knowledge, and suggest areas for future research. In recent years, Facebook has emerged as a potent platform for businesses to connect with their target audiences and advertise their products or services. Consequently, the concept of Facebook marketing has received considerable attention from practitioners and researchers. A 2019 literature review examined the current knowledge of Facebook marketing, including its advantages, challenges, and best practices. Significantly, research conducted by Hootsuite and We Are Social revealed that as of 2020, Facebook had emerged as the most widely used social media platform globally, boasting over 2.7 billion active users (Hootsuite, 2020). This prominence positions Facebook as an ideal platform for small businesses seeking to engage a vast audience and showcase their products or services. Furthermore, the literature review contributes valuable context to the study, substantiating its importance.

#### **2.2 HISTORY OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

The history of social media dates back to the 1970s, with the creation of the first electronic bulletin board system (BBS). Furthermore, since then, social media has evolved significantly, with the emergence of numerous platforms and innovations that have revolutionised how people communicate and interact with each other. Here is a brief history of social media:

In 1978 Ward Christensen and Randy Suess created the first electronic bulletin board system (BBS) (Hughes, 2022). In 1997, Andrew Weinreich created Six Degrees' first social networking site. This allows users to upload information and make friends with other users (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Friendster was launched in 2002 as the first modern social networking site, allowing users to create profiles, connect with friends, and join groups (Bratton, 2022). Consecutively, Facebook was founded by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004. However, this specific social platform

was initially tailored exclusively for Harvard students. Its scope rapidly broadened to include other academic institutions and eventually evolved into a service accessible to the general public (Java, Song, Finin, & Tseng, 2007).

Then followed YouTube, which launched as a platform for sharing and viewing videos in 2005 (Cheng, Dale, & Liu, 2007). In 2006, X was launched as a microblogging platform that allows users to send and receive short messages or tweets (Java et al., 2007). As the number of social media platforms that offer the sharing of pictures and videos expanded, in 2010, Instagram was launched as a photo-sharing app, which was later acquired by Facebook (Menon, 2022). Snapchat was established 2011 as a messaging app that allows users to send photos and videos that disappear after a set time (Swathi & Sujatha, 2022).

Since then, social media has continued to evolve, with new platforms and innovations such as TikTok, LinkedIn, and various forms of live streaming. Moreover, social media has become ubiquitous in modern life, with billions of people worldwide using it daily to communicate, share information, and connect with others.

### **2.3 FACEBOOK**

Technology has fundamentally altered individual lifestyles and the business landscape, offering companies strategic and tactical tools to enhance their efficiency and competitive edge (Tanushev, 2022). Additionally, it has revolutionised various economic sectors, notably small fast-food businesses, by introducing websites, blogs, applications, and social media networks that dismantle geographical constraints and generate new opportunities (Rugova & Prenaj, 2016).

Facebook is a social media platform that allows users to create a personal profile and share photos, videos, and other content. It also allows those users to connect with friends, family, and acquaintances. As of 2019, Facebook had over 2.4 billion active users worldwide, making it one of the world's most widely used social media platforms (Ortiz-Ospina & Roser, 2023). Facebook was founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, and it quickly grew in popularity, especially among young people. In addition to personal profiles, Facebook allows users to create pages for businesses, organisations, and public figures. One of the key features of Facebook is its News Feed, which displays a constantly updating stream of content from the user's friends and the pages they follow (Constine, 2017). Facebook also offers a messaging service that allows users to communicate with each other privately.

Facebook is a social media platform that was founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, Dustin Moskovitz, and Eduardo Saverin (Ortiz-Ospina & Roser, 2023). Here is a brief history of Facebook:

The history of Facebook began in 2004 when Mark Zuckerberg, then a sophomore at Harvard, created a social networking site exclusively for Harvard students called "Facebook" (Ortiz-Ospina & Roser, 2023). The site expanded to other universities in 2005, including Stanford, Columbia, and Yale (Ortiz-Ospina & Roser, 2023). In 2007, Facebook introduced the News Feed, a personalised feed of updates from friends and pages that is displayed on users' homepages (Constine, 2017). By 2008, Facebook had surpassed MySpace as the most popular social networking site in the world (AlKoheji, Hamdan, & Hakami, 2023).

In 2012, Facebook went public with an initial public offering (IPO) that valued the company at \$104 billion (Ortiz-Ospina & Roser, 2023). In 2015, Facebook introduced live video streaming, allowing users to broadcast live video to their friends and followers (Newaz, Chandna, Daa & Arnett, 2023). However, in 2018, Facebook faced a major scandal when it was revealed that the data of millions of users was harvested by a political consulting firm called Cambridge Analytica (Constine, 2017). In 2021, Facebook announced that it was rebranding the company as "Meta" and shifting its focus to virtual reality and the metaverse (AlKoheji, Handman & Hakami., 2023).

Facebook stands out as one of the most globally renowned social media platforms, boasting over 2.8 billion monthly active users as of December 2021 (Ortiz-Ospina & Roser, 2023). Facebook has had a huge impact on social life and continues to shape how people work and communicate. Despite some concerns about its negative effects, Facebook remains an essential tool for social connection, information sharing, and work in modern society.

## **2.4 SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING**

Social media marketing is a facet of digital marketing that entails utilising social media platforms to advertise brands, products, or services to a specific audience. It enables businesses to generate and disseminate marketing content on social media platforms like Facebook, X, Instagram, LinkedIn, and others, aiming to enhance brand recognition, interact with customers, and boost website traffic and sales (Jun & Yi, 2020). Additionally, it employs data and analytics to assess the efficiency of social media campaigns. According to Li, Larmo, and Leonidou et al., (2021), social media marketing is a powerful tool for

companies to connect with customers and create meaningful relationships. The authors note that social media marketing offers a variety of benefits, including increased brand recognition, increased customer engagement, and the ability to collect leads, great ideas, and customer feedback. In 2019, Budree et al. (2019) conducted a study on the usage and benefits of social media marketing in the present business world. In their research, they highlighted how social media marketing can benefit start-ups and well-established businesses (Li et al., 2021a). They further added that social media marketing is an essential component of a comprehensive marketing strategy, enabling small businesses to connect with customers in real time and respond quickly to their needs and concerns. The authors stress the importance of developing a clear social media strategy, identifying target audiences, and selecting the appropriate social media platforms to reach them effectively. Additionally, they emphasise the need to create engaging and relevant content that resonates with the target audience to maximise the impact of social media marketing efforts.

Marketing strategies and their impact on business performance can assist in making business decisions. The study by Anantasiska et al., (2022) explored the impact of social media marketing on business performance. The authors argued that social media marketing can improve brand recognition, customer engagement, and lead generation. Moreover, another study explored how social media marketing can build brand awareness and generate customer engagement. The study emphasises the importance of creating compelling and shareable content, engaging with followers, and using analytics to measure performance (Budree et al., 2019).

It is evident from the literature that social media has the potential to increase the perceived value of products and services and that social media advertising can be more effective than traditional advertising methods. Al-Hadban, Handeel, Al-Hassoun, and Hamdi (2014) argue that social media marketing can enhance brand equity, customer engagement, and customer loyalty. The study by Bartosik-Purgat, Michal, and Michal (2021) explored the theoretical foundations of social media marketing. The study argues that social media marketing is a dynamic and ever-evolving field that requires ongoing experimentation and adaptation. Social media marketing is a crucial marketing communication strategy that significantly impacts brand performance and customer loyalty (Bilgin, 2018). However, success requires a deep understanding of social media platforms and a strategic and data-driven approach (Abbes, Hallem, & Taga, 2020). Previous research on social media

marketing has been considered a new marketing tool that can influence brand loyalty (Chen & Qasim, 2021).

According to the authors, in the research conducted by (Ibrahim, Aljarah, & Ababneh, 2020) emphasised the significance of social media marketing activities in establishing robust customer relationships and cultivating brand loyalty. Consequently, when a fast-food business actively engages in increased interactions and communication with its customers, it is likely to form lucrative relationships, potentially resulting in enhanced brand loyalty.

Additionally, social media platforms are acknowledged as vital avenues for both marketing research and the promotion of fast-food enterprises (Brown & Broderick, 2017). As a result, small fast-food businesses dedicate significant time, financial investments, and other resources to self-promotion on social media, aiming to shape consumer behaviour. While the importance of social media marketing in influencing consumer behaviour is widely recognised, there is a notable dearth of empirical research that explicitly investigates its effects on brand loyalty in the context of the fast-food industry (Šerić & Praničević, 2018). This study aims to fill this gap by contributing novel insights derived from examining social media marketing features and their correlation with brand loyalty within the fast-food industry in Mankweng, Limpopo Province.

## **2.5 MARKETING EFFECTIVENESS OF MESSAGE FORMAT AND CONTENT**

Message format refers to how a message is presented and structured, including text, images, videos, and other multimedia elements. The format of a message can affect how it is perceived and understood by the recipient and can influence the effectiveness of communication and marketing efforts. Furthermore, Facebook stands out as a preeminent social media platform, boasting over 2.8 billion active users. Enterprises leverage Facebook to showcase their offerings, enhance brand recognition, and establish connections with their customer base (Parker, 2020). Nevertheless, distinguishing one's business on Facebook has become increasingly formidable in the face of escalating competition. This literature review aims to provide insights into the effectiveness of Facebook message format and marketing strategies.

Diverse attributes within message formats present possibilities for a more unified communication strategy. These message formats also enable companies to anticipate the efficacy of their messages and promote positive responses to comments on social media. (Molina, Gomez, Lyon, Aranda, & Loibl, 2020). In their study on Instagram's algorithm, Bilgin

(2018) found that the use of visual elements such as images and videos can significantly increase engagement and reach on social media platforms. The authors also noted the importance of using clear and concise captions to complement the visual content. Cheung et al. (2019) also found that the use of visual elements such as images and videos in Facebook ads can significantly increase engagement and click-through rates. The authors also noted the importance of using a clear and concise message in conjunction with visual content to convey the intended message effectively.

In a study on the use of chatbots in customer service, Holt (2016) found that the use of multimedia elements such as images, videos, and GIFs in chatbot messages can improve the user experience and increase customer satisfaction. The authors also noted the importance of using a conversational tone and personalizing messages to enhance engagement. In a study on the effectiveness of virtual events, Jang, Lee, and Jung (2022) found that the use of interactive elements such as polls, quizzes, and virtual reality can enhance engagement and participation in virtual events. The authors further explored the importance of using a variety of multimedia elements, including videos, images, and live streaming, to create a dynamic and engaging virtual experience.

The study by Molina et al., (2020) highlights the importance of creating engaging content, leveraging user-generated content, and using social media analytics to measure effectiveness in social media marketing, including Facebook. The authors also emphasise the need for businesses to adapt continuously to changes in social media platforms. The authors of the study by Alalwan (2018) explore the impact of social media, including Facebook, on small business marketing. The authors highlighted the benefits of using Facebook to reach a broader audience, build brand awareness, and engage with customers. Furthermore, the authors also emphasise the importance of creating engaging and shareable content, using Facebook groups to build communities, and leveraging Facebook's advertising platform to target specific demographics.

This study by Sharma, Fadahunsi, Abbas and Pathak (2022) provided an insight into the latest trends and best practices in social media marketing, including Facebook. The study emphasises the importance of personalised and authentic content, social media influencers, and optimising Facebook ads for maximum reach and engagement. Moreover, the authors discuss social media's role in building brand loyalty and customer relationships.

Authors in the study Chen and Qasim (2021) focus on the role of interactive features in enhancing brand engagement on social media platforms, including Facebook. The author provides insights into the effectiveness of these features in increasing user engagement, driving customer loyalty, and improving brand reputation. The author discusses the importance of personalisation and gamification in creating a unique and memorable user experience on Facebook. Le, Nguyen, Le, Nyuyen and Vu (2023) systematically review social media marketing, including Facebook, in the post-pandemic era. In this study, the authors highlight the importance of using social media to reach consumers who increasingly rely on digital channels for shopping and entertainment.

However, the literature suggests that message format plays a significant role in the effectiveness of communication and marketing efforts. Businesses should consider using a variety of multimedia elements, including images, videos, and interactive features, to create engaging and memorable messages that resonate with their target audience. Additionally, using clear and concise language and a conversational tone can enhance engagement and improve user experience. Businesses can effectively leverage Facebook for marketing by creating engaging content, leveraging user-generated content, using social media influencers, and optimising Facebook ads for maximum reach and engagement. Small fast-food businesses should also adapt to changes in social media platforms, such as the rise of video content and interactive features, to stay ahead of the competition. Moreover, small fast-food businesses should consider changing consumer behaviour and preferences in the post-pandemic era to tailor their social media strategies to reach and engage with their target audience effectively.

## **2.6 FACEBOOK MARKETING OF SMALL FAST-FOOD BUSINESSES**

Recently, Facebook has emerged as a robust platform, enabling businesses to connect with their desired audience and advertise their goods and services. Because of this, the topic of Facebook marketing has received much attention from researchers and scholars. A literature review conducted in 2019 by Behera and Balaji explored the current state of knowledge on Facebook marketing, including its benefits, challenges, and best practices.

Wright, Gaber, Ribin, and Cai (2018) conducted a study on the effects of social media marketing on small businesses in the food industry, specifically focusing on Facebook marketing for small fast-food businesses. They found that Facebook marketing can increase brand awareness, customer engagement, and sales for small fast-food businesses.



Mhlanga (2018) examined the role of Facebook marketing for small businesses in the food and hospitality industry. They found that small businesses can use Facebook marketing to build brand loyalty, attract new customers, and communicate with existing customers. It was found that Facebook marketing can increase customer satisfaction and loyalty by providing valuable information, promoting positive interactions, and enhancing the customer experience (Conlin, 2023). The study by Jang et al., (2022) explored the use of Facebook marketing for small fast-food businesses in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. They found that Facebook marketing can help small businesses stay connected with their customers during times of crisis and that businesses can use Facebook to promote safety measures and communicate service changes. Chueng, Pires, and Rosenberger (2020) conducted a study on the effects of Facebook marketing on customer engagement and loyalty for small fast-food businesses. They found that Facebook marketing can increase customer engagement and loyalty by providing personalised and relevant content, building relationships, and enhancing the overall customer experience.

From a marketing strategy perspective, social media interactions involve a process through which businesses and consumers can exchange resources. According to Jun and Yi (2020), customers may devote manager and manager resources when interacting with a firm. Notably, customer-to-customer interactions occur (Chen & Qasim, 2021).

The idea of brand loyalty has been widely explored by numerous marketing researchers and academics (Aljumah, Nuseir & Islam, 2020). In recent times, social media platforms have garnered heightened attention from marketers seeking to promote their products and impact consumer purchasing behaviour (Chetioui, Butt & Lebdaoui, 2021). Devoted customers tend to speak positively about the brand and recommend it to others. Moreover, they exhibit a decreased inclination to switch to alternative brands, even in the face of better prices or exposure to advertisements from competitors (Sharma, Fadahunsi, Abbas & Pathak, 2022).

According to a study by Sullivan and Koh (2019), it is reported that Facebook stands as the most widely used social media platform globally, boasting over 2.7 billion active users as of 2020. The distinctive features of Facebook position it as an ideal platform for small businesses to engage with a broad audience and effectively promote their products or services. Furthermore, Facebook offers an array of tools and functionalities that can assist small businesses in their marketing endeavours, including:

Facebook Pages: Small fast-food businesses can establish a Facebook Page to display their brand and engage with their customer base. Utilising Facebook Ads, these businesses can target particular audiences to endorse their products or services. Additionally, they can participate in or establish Facebook Groups to connect with potential customers and disseminate information about their business (Szabo, 2021).

Facebook Insights: Small businesses can use Facebook Insights to track the performance of their Facebook pages and ads and make data-driven decisions to improve their marketing efforts. Facebook is an essential platform for small businesses to reach and communicate with their audience, and many marketing tools and features help businesses directly promote their products or services (Hanaysha, 2022).

One of the review's key findings was that Facebook marketing can be an effective tool for businesses to increase brand awareness, engagement, and sales. However, the success of a Facebook marketing campaign depends on several factors, including the quality of the content, the targeting strategy, and the use of metrics to measure performance. The review also highlighted some of the challenges associated with Facebook marketing, such as the increasing competition for users' attention and the need for businesses to keep up with the platform's constantly changing algorithms and features. In addition, the review noted that the effectiveness of Facebook marketing can be influenced by factors such as the size and nature of the target audience, the type of product or service being promoted, and the level of engagement and trust established with customers (Manzoor et al., 2020).

Overall, the literature shows that Facebook marketing can be a powerful tool for businesses to reach a target audience to promote their products and services. Still, it requires a strategic approach and data to be successful.

## **2.7 OPPORTUNITIES OF USING FACEBOOK AS A MARKETING TOOL**

According to Gryzenhout (2022), as of 2019, 94% of businesses use Facebook as one of their marketing tools. Facebook offers highly targeted and cost-effective advertising, making it an ideal platform for businesses to promote their products or services. Dwivedi, Ismagilova, Hughes, Carlson, Filieri, Jacobson, Jain, Karjaluo, Kefi, and Krishen (2021) added that Facebook's algorithm allows businesses to reach their target audience through the use of demographic, geographic, and interest-based targeting. Facebook also allows businesses to track and analyse their ad performance, enabling them to make data-driven decisions to improve their marketing strategy.

Indeed, the determinants influencing brand loyalty in the online realm diverge from those in traditional environments. Consequently, brands should focus on factors associated with the online context, such as interactivity, convenience, customisation, and perceived relevance (Alalwan, 2018). Empirical research in the literature has consistently affirmed the favourable influence of social media marketing features on brand loyalty (Bilgin, 2018). According to the research conducted by (Abbes, Hallem, & Tyga, 2020) concluded that social media ads perceived as entertaining and enjoyable have an impact on brand loyalty. Likewise, a positive relationship exists between social media interactivity and customers' brand loyalty.

In addition, entertainment has become a social media marketing activity. It exists when marketers use social media channels to drive positive customer experiences and develop fun activities through online games, photos, contests, and videos (Cheung et al., 2019). Entertainment occurs when companies provide consumers with memorable experiences on social media channels that are perceived as fun and enjoyable (Cheung et al., 2019). Therefore, entertainment advertising content is primarily used to develop social media marketing strategies to increase awareness and loyalty.

Finally, blogging has been considered a text-centric social media marketing activity. Information refers to the marketer's ability to inform consumers about the products or services available, allowing them to choose between alternatives and make a purchase decision (Sharma, Fadahunsi, Abbas & Pathak, 2022). Awareness is also defined as a brand's ability to inform its target customers through various media channels to facilitate purchase decisions. Awareness refers to the marketer's ability to attract and influence consumer responses to the brand (Kang, Shin & Ponto, 2020).

In 2020, Facebook's potential for marketing increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to GlobalWebIndex, 41% of Facebook users spent more time on the platform during the pandemic, increasing engagement and business exposure. Facebook introduced new features like lookalike audiences and dynamic ads to improve ad targeting and engagement. Video content also became more popular on Facebook, allowing businesses to create engaging video content to promote their products or services (Jang, Lee & Jung, 2022).

In 2021, Facebook introduced new e-commerce features, such as Shops, which allowed businesses to sell products directly on the platform. Messenger marketing also became more popular, with businesses using Facebook Messenger to engage with customers and

provide personalised customer service. Instagram integration was another opportunity for businesses to create a comprehensive social media marketing strategy (Bartosik-Purgat, Michal & Michal, 2021).

In 2022, Facebook continued to innovate and offer new business opportunities to reach its target audience. Facebook introduced Augmented Reality (AR) ads, allowing businesses to create interactive ads that enable users to try products before purchasing them. Facebook also increased its focus on personalised advertising, allowing businesses to create customised ads for individual users. Virtual events became increasingly popular, allowing businesses to connect with customers in new ways and provide immersive experiences (Javaid, Khan, Suman & Khan, 2023).

Moreover, Facebook provides businesses many opportunities to reach a vast audience and create a comprehensive marketing strategy. Its highly targeted and cost-effective advertising, integration with other marketing channels, and innovative features have made it a valuable business platform. With the continued growth of Facebook's user base and its commitment to innovation, it will likely remain an essential part of the marketing strategy for businesses for years to come (Camilleri, 2019).

## **2.8 CHALLENGES OF USING FACEBOOK AS A MARKETING TOOL**

Despite the many opportunities that Facebook offers as a marketing tool, businesses face several challenges in using the platform effectively. This literature review explores the challenges of using Facebook as a marketing tool (Behera & Balaji, 2019). One significant challenge that businesses face when using Facebook is the platform's constantly changing algorithms. Facebook's algorithms determine which content appears on users' newsfeeds, and businesses should adapt their marketing strategies to ensure that their content appears in front of their target audience. In 2019, Facebook made significant changes to its algorithm, prioritising content from family and friends over business content. This change made it more challenging for businesses to reach their target audience (Behera & Balaji, 2019).

Another challenge that businesses face is the high level of competition on Facebook. According to a study by Javaid et al. (2023), the average Facebook user sees approximately 1,500 daily posts, making it difficult for businesses to stand out and grab their attention. The abundance of Facebook content means businesses should create high-quality, engaging content to capture users' attention.

In 2020, businesses faced additional challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many businesses experienced a decline in revenue, leading them to cut back on their marketing budgets. As a result, businesses had to find ways to maximise their marketing efforts on Facebook with limited resources. Additionally, the pandemic led to changes in consumer behaviour, making it challenging for businesses to understand and adapt to these changes effectively (Khan, 2019).

Another challenge that businesses face when using Facebook is privacy concerns. In recent years, Facebook has faced several high-profile scandals related to data privacy and security, leading users to become increasingly concerned about the safety of their data on the platform. Businesses must protect their users' data and maintain trust to avoid damaging their reputation (Li & Zhang, 2021).

While Facebook offers many opportunities for businesses to reach their target audience, they also face several challenges in using the platform effectively. The constantly changing algorithms, high levels of competition, and privacy concerns require businesses to stay updated with the latest trends and adapt their marketing strategies accordingly (Khan, 2019).

## **2.9 MAXIMISING PROFIT**

A marketing strategy is the set of activities and tactics a business uses to promote its products or services and reach its target audience. Maximising profit is a common objective of marketing strategies, and small fast-food businesses use various techniques to achieve this goal. Here is a literature review on marketing strategies for maximising profit.

One key marketing strategy for maximising profit is identifying and targeting high-value customers. This approach involves analysing customers' data to determine which customers generate the most revenue for the business and then tailoring marketing efforts to retain and upsell these customers. A study by Bvuma & Marnewick (2020) found that focusing on high-value customers can lead to a 20-40% increase in revenue growth. Another marketing strategy for maximising profit is to use price optimisation techniques. Price optimisation involves setting prices that maximise revenue and profit, considering factors such as product demand, competition, and customer behaviour. A study at the University of California found that price optimisation techniques can increase revenue by up to 10% (Bartosik-Purgat et al., 2021).

Another marketing strategy for maximising profit is to focus on customer retention. Research shows that acquiring a new customer costs up to five times more than retaining a new customer. Therefore, small fast-food businesses can maximise profit by implementing strategies that encourage customer loyalty, such as offering loyalty programs, providing excellent customer service, and personalising the customer experience (Bvuma & Marnewick, 2020). Finally, businesses can also maximise profit by using data analytics and marketing automation tools to improve the effectiveness of their marketing campaigns. These tools can help small businesses analyse customer data, segment their audience, and deliver targeted marketing messages. A study by Forbes found that businesses that use marketing automation software see an average increase in revenue of 10% (Bartosik-Purgat et al., 2021).

Furthermore, businesses can use several marketing strategies to maximise profit, including targeting high-value customers, using price optimisation techniques, focusing on customer retention, and using data analytics and marketing automation tools.

## **2.10 FUTURE OF SMALL FAST-FOOD BUSINESSES**

Small fast-food businesses' future is shaped by various factors, including changing consumer preferences, technological advancements, and the impact of global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Here are some references that discuss the future of small fast-food businesses (Jha & Shanker, 2019). They report the emerging trends in the fast-food industry, including the adoption of technology such as self-service kiosks and mobile ordering and the demand for healthier and more sustainable options.

Small fast-food businesses can survive in the age of giants. (Wright et al., 2018) article discusses the challenges faced by small fast-food businesses in competing with large chains and suggests strategies such as focusing on niche markets and offering personalised experiences to attract customers. The authors (Tiautrakul & Jindakul, 2019) explore the impact of technology on the fast-food industry, including the use of automation, artificial intelligence, and data analytics to improve efficiency and customer experience. The swift advancements in emerging technologies have led to the creation of novel social media channels, offering marketers efficient means to communicate, collaborate, and engage with their customers at any time and reduced costs. The rapid expansion of information and digital technologies has compelled companies to escalate their utilisation of social media advertising to enhance brand building (Hanaysha, 2022).

Consumer purchasing decisions have been studied in modern marketing literature. Salem (2018) expressed that it is a process that begins when consumers recognise a need, search for options, evaluate others, and then select specific products and services. Therefore, the purchase decision can be considered a series of steps consumers take before purchasing. There are many factors, such as what to buy, when, where to buy, what brand or model to buy, what payment method to use, and how much to spend. Purchase decisions are made based on the customer's perception of the company's product offerings and brand. Consumers' buying behaviour is determined by their previous experience using fast food products and the ability of the purchased product to satisfy their needs. Marketers can also stimulate consumer buying behaviour by developing advertising and promotional campaigns that can elicit consumer responses. Many online media channels have emerged in recent years to promote companies' products and guide consumers' purchasing decisions. These channels emerged due to the advancement of information and communication technologies (Voorveld, 2019).

How small, independent restaurants can compete with fast food chains by the Consumer News and Business Channel (CNBC) article discusses the importance of differentiation and innovation in the face of competition from large fast-food chains and the potential advantages of offering customers more personalised and authentic experiences.

The future of small fast-food businesses is likely to be shaped by a combination of technological advancements and evolving consumer preferences, as well as the ability of these businesses to adapt and innovate in response to changing market conditions. More than any other motivation, satisfying the most basic human need—food—gave rise to the restaurant and food service industries. However, the financial motivation function and the ease of planning, managing, and setting up a restaurant or fast-food restaurant also come into play. In addition to all aspects, the participation of family members, especially women, developed the basis of the business on Facebook. As a result, the operation of restaurants and fast-food places is the first family business to start (Watson, Taheri, Glasgow, & O'Gorman, 2021). On the other hand, the intensity of competition has negative consequences; the benefits above lead to the weakening and bankruptcy of companies, even though sufficient financial and non-financial resources and a long work experience cannot remain competitive. Therefore, employers must consider new plans and strategies to maintain market share by improving current processes and optimising the resources and

tools at their disposal through developing new practices and improving processes and service quality (Gryzenhout, 2022).

Of course, this can be considered for all companies, but small and large companies have less access to financial resources than large corporations to remain competitive, so they must rely on other strengths. Knowledge Therefore, these companies should also try to generate, communicate, and share experiences, ideas, and thoughts within the business strategy framework (Rezaei, 2018).

Now, restaurants must jump on the cool bandwagon, which may steal some business from QSRs but encourage innovation. The best way to manage the transition from face-to-face interactions is digital (Tsao, hen, Tisseverasinghe, Yang & Butt, 2021). Klein added that the main features restaurant customers want are convenience and convenience and the way they want their food is digital. COVID-19 has increased the focus on contactless services and eating out, but it may not return to previous levels (Tsao et al., 2021).

## **2.11 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.11.1 Technology Acceptance Model**

The contemporary aim of the Technology Acceptance Model (De Wever et al., 2019) theory remains consistent with its original intent, which is to explain and predict users' acceptance and adoption of technology. Recent research on TAM has focused on refining and extending the model to enhance its applicability and explanatory power in various technological contexts.

The primary aim of the Technology Acceptance Model (2019) theory is to explain and predict users' acceptance and adoption of technology. The model seeks to understand the factors influencing an individual's attitudes and behavioural intentions toward using a particular technology. Specifically, TAM aims to elucidate two key factors shaping users' acceptance of technology: perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU). Perceived usefulness refers to an individual's subjective assessment of how much a technology can enhance performance, productivity, or task accomplishment. On the other hand, perceived ease of use pertains to users' perceptions of the effort required to understand and utilise the technology effectively.

Perceived usefulness (PU): This factor indicates the user's belief or opinion that technology will improve performance or provide other tangible benefits. Users are more likely to accept



and adopt a technology if they consider it helpful in achieving goals or improving efficiency (Simić et al., 2019). Perceived ease of use (PEOU): This factor is related to the user's perception of the ease of learning and using the technology. If a technology is easy to use, users are more likely to accept and adopt it. Conversely, users may resist adopting a technology if they find it challenging to understand (Ibrahim et al., 2020).

The TAM suggests that PU and PEOU directly influence user's attitudes toward using a particular technology, which, in turn, affects their intention to adopt the technology (Singh, 2022). Additionally, the model suggests that external factors, such as social influence or organisational support, can indirectly influence users' attitudes and intentions through their impact on PU and PEOU. By investigating the relationships between these factors and users' attitudes and intentions, TAM aims to comprehensively understand the acceptance and adoption process. Furthermore, TAM can also serve as a theoretical framework for assessing the impact of various external variables, such as system and user characteristics, on technology acceptance (Rauniar, Rawski, Yang, & Johnson, 2014).

One aim of recent TAM studies has been to explore the role of additional variables that may influence technology acceptance beyond the core factors of perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) (Durodolu, 2016). Researchers have investigated factors such as social influence, trust, perceived risk, subjective norms, and facilitating conditions to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the technology acceptance process. These additions to the TAM framework aim to capture the complexity of users' decision-making and shed light on additional factors that may impact their acceptance behaviour (Iacurci, 2021). Furthermore, recent studies have sought to validate and adapt the TAM theory across domains and user populations. TAM has been applied to diverse areas such as e-commerce, mobile applications, healthcare, education, and social media. Researchers have sought to examine the generalisability and validity of TAM in these varied contexts, contributing to the theory's robustness and expanding its applicability to different technological settings (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000).

Additionally, recent TAM research has aimed to explore the mediating and moderating effects of various variables on the relationship between PU, PEOU, and technology acceptance (Portz, Bayliss, Bull, Boxer, Bekelman, Gleason & Czaja, 2019).

Studies have examined individual differences, technology characteristics, organisational context, and cultural influences to uncover how these variables can shape TAM

relationships and influence technology adoption behaviour (Marikyan & Papagiannidis, 2022).

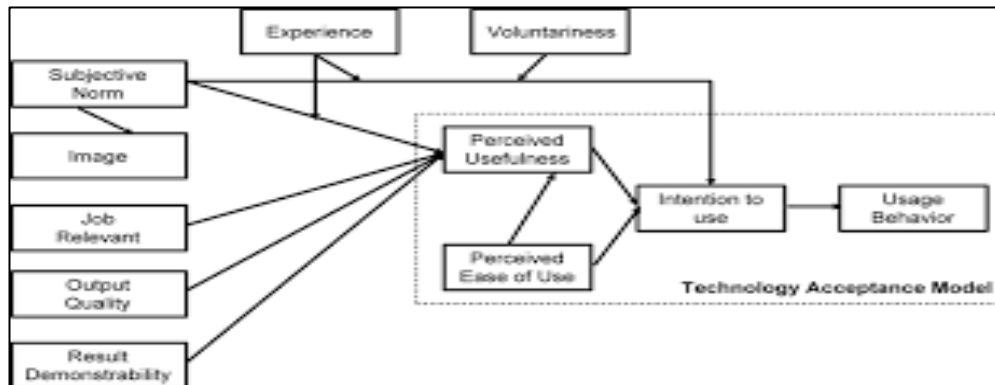


Figure 1: Technology Acceptance Model (De Wever et al. 2019)

Over time, researchers have extended the TAM by introducing additional variables to enhance its explanatory power. Some of these extensions include:

**Perceived enjoyment:** This factor considers the user's perception of the enjoyment or pleasure derived from using the technology. It recognises that positive emotions associated with technology use can influence acceptance and adoption.

**Subjective norms:** This factor refers to the perceived social pressure or influence from others to use a particular technology. It acknowledges that social factors can significantly shape individuals' attitudes and intentions toward technology adoption.

**Facilitating conditions:** This factor represents how users perceive the availability of resources, support, and infrastructure necessary to use the technology effectively. It recognises that facilitating conditions can influence users' perceived ease of use and, consequently, their acceptance of the technology.

The TAM has been widely used in research and practice to understand and predict users' acceptance and adoption of various technologies, from computer systems and software to e-commerce platforms and mobile applications. It provides a valuable framework for designers, developers, and marketers to evaluate and improve the acceptance and usability of their technological innovations (Johar & Awalluddin, 2011).

Overall, TAM aims to offer researchers and practitioners a robust model that can be applied across different technological contexts to gain insights into the factors influencing users' acceptance and adoption behaviour. By understanding these factors, stakeholders can

make informed decisions regarding technology implementation and devise strategies to promote technology acceptance and successful integration into various domains and user populations (Singh, 2022).

In summary, TAM theory has aimed to refine and expand the model by investigating additional variables, validating its applicability in diverse domains, and exploring the mediating and moderating effects within the TAM framework (Iacurci, 2021). These aims contribute to a deeper understanding of the technology acceptance process and facilitate the development of more effective strategies for promoting technology adoption in different contexts

### **2.11.2 Chaffey's Theory of Social Media Marketing**

The study conducted by Cornellia, Hermanwan, and Sinangjoyo (2022) reveals that the implementation of social media marketing strategies confers numerous advantages upon small and medium-sized enterprises (SMMEs), including enhanced audience engagement, the establishment of a robust social media presence, the adoption of viral marketing techniques, and the acquisition of valuable consumer feedback. A pivotal component of the digital advertising landscape, particularly for these enterprises, is the utilisation of online networking display, which encompasses the dissemination of customer mailings through an array of channels, encompassing corporate websites, popular social media platforms such as Facebook and X, as well as web-based magazines and discussion forums. This innovative approach represents an effective complement to more conventional modes of communication, enabling businesses to effectively and efficiently interact with clients and partners who prefer such platforms. Consequently, fostering and nurturing strong customer relationships assumes an utmost significance, as it serves as a crucial mechanism for capitalising on the immense potential offered by online networks (Chaffey, 2007).

To engender positive customer involvement and business value, social media marketing serves as a facilitator and overseer of customer interactions, level of engagement, and the dissemination of content across an expansive array of digital media platforms. These interactions can materialise across diverse digital touchpoints, from a company's official website and designated social media channels to third-party platforms. Indeed, the pervasive influence of social media marketing is indispensable in the realm of online marketing, given its inherent proclivity to forge and foster customer interactions across websites and the omnipresent social media dominions such as Facebook and X.

Furthermore, business owners can actively and effectively engage with their customers through the strategic utilisation of supplementary avenues, such as blogs or dedicated forums (Puspaningrum, 2020). Chaffey's work provides practical frameworks, models, and best practices for digital marketing, including social media marketing (Chaffey, 2007).

## **2.12 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 2**

This chapter discussed important concepts related to the study, including Internet and web development, a detailed explanation of Facebook, social media marketing, and Facebook marketing for small fast-food businesses. This is especially important because it provides a basis for understanding the research. Moreover, the ethical principles of social media were discussed to understand how fast-food companies can adhere to their ethical standards while participating in social media. The history of Facebook was also discussed to show how the site became a place for marketing. The researchers also discussed the challenges and opportunities Facebook is taking for marketing. In addition, the future of cheap fast food was discussed. The researcher also discussed the technology acceptance model and Chaffey's social marketing theory.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter describes the methods used in the study. In addition to helping the researcher achieve the research objectives, the methods selected helped the researcher clarify the issues described in Chapter 1. As started by Moustakas (1990), methodology involves a thorough grasp of the complete research process, encompassing considerations of its social-organizational context, philosophical assumptions, ethical principles, and the political ramifications stemming from the new knowledge acquired through the research endeavour. On the other side, methods pertain to the precise techniques applied in a study, spanning the selection of cases, measurement and observation of social life, refinement of data, analysis of data, and subsequent reporting of results.

This chapter focuses on discussing the methods used for data collection, the research design, and the methods used in this study. This chapter also includes a thorough understanding of data collection and an in-depth knowledge of the selected methods. We also explored ethical considerations during data collection. A qualitative approach was used in this study.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

This study is qualitative in nature and has adopted an exploratory research design to explore how fast-food companies use Facebook for marketing purposes. According to Akhtar (2020), research design refers to the plan or structure that guides the research and describes the methods, techniques, and strategies that are employed for data collection and analysis. It is a road map for researchers to achieve their research goals and answer their research questions. A well-designed research plan ensures that the study is systematic, dependable, and effective.

The researcher employed an exploratory research design to gather comprehensive insights into the utilisation of Facebook for marketing purposes by small fast-food businesses in Mankweng, located in the Limpopo province. It focused on exploring areas where there was no prior information and documenting the behaviours, trends, interests, and themes that emerged from the data.

### **3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research methodology refers to the systematic approach used by researchers to design, conduct, and analyse their studies. It encompasses various techniques, strategies, and processes aimed at obtaining reliable and valid results. Research methodology is a critical aspect of the research process as it guides the researcher in making informed decisions about study design, data collection methods, analysis techniques, and interpretation of findings (Kumar, 2018). On a contrasting note, Creswell (2018) supports the idea that research methodology aims at the application of appropriate procedures to discover solutions. It is intriguing to observe that research methodology serves as the foundation, setting the stage for the proper execution of research methods. In the context of scientific or non-scientific research, research methodology marks the initiation, while research methods represent the culmination.

This study used a qualitative research approach. Since this research is a unique topic, qualitative research methodology is essential. The significance of employing a qualitative methodology lies in its capacity to facilitate narrative presentation, enabling the researcher to articulate crucial rationales and participants' perspectives regarding the phenomenon under study. According to Blessing, Chakrabarti and Wallace's qualitative research methods emphasise the exploration and understanding of how individuals or groups relate to social or human problems (Creswell, 2018). The historical origins of qualitative research come from anthropology, sociology, anthropology, and evaluation studies. Qualitative research designs use open-ended questions to generate non-quantitative data (Chivanga & Monyai, 2021). This approach allows the researcher to understand a problem by examining it in its own specific context and the meaning that the individual brings. The first purpose is to create a meaning, theme, or reality from the thoughts and experiences of the participants (Alamri, 2019).

The authors of the study (Gale, Heath, Cmeron, Rashi, & Redwood, 2013) employ a qualitative research methodology that places its emphasis on comprehending and interpreting human behavioural experiences and social phenomena within a comprehensive and contextual framework. This methodology aims to delve into the profound meanings, motivations, and intricacies underlying the actions and interactions of individuals. Unlike quantitative research, which deals with numerical data and statistical analysis, qualitative research is concerned with non-numerical data sources, including text, images, videos, and observations. In this context, the study advocates for the use of a qualitative approach as

the most suitable structure for comprehending the factors contributing to the efficacy of Facebook in marketing endeavours.

### **3.4 RESEARCH METHODS**

This section focuses on sampling techniques and the value of population selection. To achieve the research objectives, the researcher used semi-structured interviews and observations. As a result, it is important to establish a clear sampling strategy and define the study population.

#### **3.4.1 Population**

The researcher chose Mankweng fast-food entrepreneurs and owners as the study was influenced using Facebook marketing by small fast-food businesses on a daily basis. This trait that Facebook uses by small fast-food business owners on its own made them relevant to the study. According to Chivanga and Monyai (2021), population is the totality of people, sampling units, or elements with which a particular research problem is concerned. These fast-food business owners are situated in the Mankweng Business Center, near the University of Limpopo. There are about 30 fast-food businesses operating in the Mankweng business centre. Their main customers are comprised of university students and nearby community members.

#### **3.4.2 Sampling**

In this study, the purposive sampling technique under the non-probability sampling technique was used to select the sample participants. Purposive sampling guides researchers to select participants based on specific characteristics relevant to the situation being studied. Consequently, this technique was used when the researcher sought participants who provided insights into partially known issues. The participants chosen for this study are all small fast-food business owners, who have Facebook accounts. A total of 4 small fast food business owners participated in the study. The sampled participants are all owners of small fast-food businesses operating at the Mankweng business center in Limpopo. There are many other social media platforms that small fast-food business owners use to market their businesses, such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and X. However, the researcher purposefully chose Facebook since it is the most used social media account with many followers.

According to Chivanga and Monyai (2021), purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique employed to intentionally choose particular individuals or groups

according to predetermined criteria that align with the research objectives. Purposive sampling focuses on selecting participants who possess relevant knowledge, expertise, or experiences related to the research topic (Bhardwaj, 2019). This method is particularly useful when researchers seek to gain in-depth insights or specific perspectives from individuals who are most knowledgeable or relevant to the study's goals. Purposive sampling allows researchers to target a particular sub-group of the population that can provide valuable information, making it a strategic approach for qualitative research and studies with specific criteria in mind (Berndt, 2020).

According to Bhardwaj (2019), the sample is a small but representative part of the target population. One of the criteria for determining sample size is to obtain information in depth until saturation is reached. In addition, Bhardwaj (2019) posits that it is difficult to manage exceptionally large samples. For research purposes, participants had to meet certain criteria, including being a small fast-food entrepreneur. Therefore, the researcher selected small-scale fast-food entrepreneurs in Mankweng District of Limpopo Province.

### **3.4.3 Data collection**

To address the issue and fulfil the research objectives, the researcher gathered data, a process facilitated by the careful selection of appropriate data collection tools for the study. According to Lochmiller (2021), data collection is the act of gathering information, facts, and observations for research, analysis, or decision-making. It involves the systematic collection of relevant data from various sources, using appropriate methods and tools. The collected data can be used to answer research questions, test hypotheses, support conclusions, inform policies, or better understand a particular phenomenon. This study employed semi-structured interviews as a suitable tool for the data collection process.

#### **3.4.3.1 Semi-structured interview**

The choice of a semi-structured interview by the researcher is driven by its impact on question formulation and the acquisition of detailed information. Moreover, the interview format allows the researcher to capture diverse perspectives on the studied phenomenon. In the context of this study, the semi-structured interview method facilitated the collection of both verbal and non-verbal expressions from the participants.

According to Bauer and Anderson (1998), a semi-structured approach is typically chosen when researchers intend to collect information about the actions of participants and their



thoughts or feelings regarding a specific phenomenon. In semi-structured interviews, researchers pose prepared questions to participants, carefully observing their responses to gather valuable insights. Additionally, follow-up questions are posed to delve deeper into emerging topics, as suggested by Rauniar et al. (2014). Interview questions were audio recorded for the purpose of proper transcription analysis with the consent of the participants. The interview sessions were documented to facilitate data transcription, and participants were presented with informed consent forms before addressing the questions. Furthermore, Alamri (2019) provides additional insight by delineating the four components of semi-structured interviews. To begin with, semi-structured interviews foster a conversational interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. Secondly, the formulation of questions encourages active engagement from the interviewee in responding to inquiries throughout the interview. Thirdly, the researcher can analyse the gathered information to uncover and elucidate emerging themes. Lastly, there is guidance on the context in which data should be cultivated within the communication framework.

The researcher opted for semi-structured interviews as a means to investigate the researched phenomenon comprehensively. Furthermore, these semi-structured interviews facilitated a deeper exploration of the subject under investigation. Consequently, as outlined by Alamri (2019), the benefits of implying semi-structured interviews encompass the following aspects:

- Interviewers can prepare questions in advance to guide the conversation and maintain focus on the research topic.
- It permits participants to provide open-ended responses, yielding more in-depth information.
- Encourages interactive communication between the interviewer and respondent.
- Provides an opportunity for interviewers to gain insight into participant's answers and the underlying reasons.
- Allows participants to comfortably discuss sensitive issues.
- Generates qualitative data that can be compared with past and future data sets.

Incorporating semi-structured interviews into a study can offer numerous advantages. By preparing questions in advance, the researcher was able to ensure that the conversation remained focused on the research topic while allowing participants to provide open-ended

responses, which yielded richer data. Additionally, the researcher took advantages of the flexibility of semi-structured interviews to create a comfortable environment for discussing sensitive issues, enhancing the likelihood of obtaining candid and comprehensive data for analysis.

While semi-structured interviews were well-suited for the study, they also come with certain drawbacks. As highlighted by (Alamri, 2019), some of the disadvantages associated with semi-structured interviews are as follows:

- Conducting open-minded interviews with respondents can be time consuming.
- It demands significant resources.
- Finding an interviewer with the appropriate level of training to conduct the interview effectively can be a challenge.
- To draw meaningful conclusions and make valid comparisons, a sufficient number of interviews must be conducted.
- There is a possibility of formulating leading questions, which could introduce bias into the interview process.

To mitigate the drawbacks associated with semi-structured interviews, the researcher implemented several strategies. This included careful planning to streamline the interview process and also allocating resources efficiently. Additionally, the researcher prioritised conducting a sufficient number of interviews to enable meaningful analysis and be vigilant in crafting neutral questions to prevent bias and maintain the integrity of the data collected.

The study identified small fast-food business owners as suitable participants, extending invitations for their involvement. Participants were provided with a consent form to establish a connection and comprehend the study's terms and conditions before participating. Additionally, interviews were conducted to gain insights into the application of Facebook for marketing among small fast-food businesses. The researcher intentionally did not specify a time frame for participants, recognising and prioritising their availability as a guiding factor in the study.

### **3.4.4 Data analysis**

This segment delineates the methodologies employed by the researchers for analysing the gathered data. As posited by Li and Zhang (2022), data analysis entails the systematic procedure of scrutinising and construing the amassed data to extract significant insights, formulate conclusions, and discern implications within the specific context of a research study. This intricate process encompasses the application of diverse statistical, qualitative, or amalgamated methods to make sense of the data and effectively address the research questions or hypotheses articulated in the study.

#### **3.4.4.1 Thematic Analysis**

The data collected using the semi-structured interview method was analysed using the thematic analysis method (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). The researcher found this method valuable for uncovering emerging themes in the data and organising it into categories. The process involved transcribing the data, reading it thoroughly, and identifying significant themes. This approach aided in preventing any potential exaggeration of fabrication in the data and research findings. According to Alhojailan (2012), thematic analysis is employed when extracting meanings or concepts from data, allowing researchers to identify themes through both deductive and inductive approaches.

Anderson (2007) defines thematic analysis (TA) as a descriptive presentation of qualitative data. Qualitative data can manifest as interview transcripts gathered from research participants or other identified texts offering experiential insights into the study's subject. While supplementary forms of data such as video and images may coexist with textual data, this definition of TA specifically pertains to textual data. Various software programs are accessible to automate the labelling and grouping of texts, proving particularly beneficial in the analysis of extensive transcript collections (Dawadi, 2021). He further postulates that thematic analysis is particularly useful for written data. This is a useful approach when the researcher has a lot of recorded data to organise but no preconceived ideas or expectations about what the data will reveal about their research topic or question.

Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method used by researchers to systematically organise and examine complex data sets. This method involves a systematic exploration of themes that makes it possible to clarify the information contained in the data set. This

process involves careful reading and scanning of recorded data to identify these subjects. (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

Thematic analysis is a method characterised by ongoing comparisons, requiring systematic reading and re-reading of transcripts (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). The crucial aspect of thematic analysis lies in maintaining systematicity throughout the analytical process to ensure the high quality of the final outcomes. To uphold the necessary rigor in the analysis, the researcher can adopt the six-phase process suggested by Dawadi (2021), each of which will be detailed below. It is important to note that these analysis methods do not follow a linear sequence of steps but instead involve an iterative process that requires continuous movement between steps.

Thematic analysis is chosen primarily for its accessibility and adaptability. For individuals new to the realm of qualitative research, employing thematic analysis serves as an introduction to a research approach that might otherwise appear unclear, enigmatic, conceptually demanding, and excessively intricate. It provides an avenue into qualitative research by imparting the fundamentals of systematically coding and analysing qualitative data, establishing a foundation that can be extended to address broader theoretical or conceptual concerns. In contrast, the dynamic is often inverted for many qualitative research endeavours (Cooper et al., 2012).

The study adopted reflexive thematic analysis steps as outlined by Dawadi (2021):

#### Phase 1: Familiarisation with the data

As the name suggests, data interpretation begins with the researcher's desire to become familiar with the data. This step helps the researcher identify the types and number of themes that emerge from your data. In fact, this process is important, as it leads the researcher to other ways of working to analyse the data in an appropriate way. (Dawadi, 2021).

Common to all forms of qualitative analysis, this phase entails immersing oneself in the data through multiple readings and textual materials, such as interview transcripts or responses from qualitative surveys, and by listening to audio recordings or watching video data. If audio is available, it is advisable to listen to it at least once, particularly when the researcher did not collect or transcribe the data (Lochmiller, 2021). Making notes on the data as one reads

or listens is part of this phase. Using whichever format is most convenient (e.g., annotating transcripts, recording comments in a notebook or electronic file, highlighting sections of data) to identify elements potentially of interest Note-taking assists the researcher in transitioning from simply reading the data to reading it as data. Additionally, Dawadi (2021) emphasizes reading data, as data involves an active, analytical, and critical approach, prompting the researcher to contemplate the meaning of the data. This includes asking questions such as: How does the participant interpret their experiences? What assumptions underlie their interpretation? What kind of worldview is disclosed through their narratives?

### Phase Two: Generating Initial Codes

Phase 2 initiates the methodical analysis of the data by employing coding as its foundational element. Codes serve as identifiers and labels for characteristics within the data that hold potential relevance to the research question. The coding process can operate at the semantic level, as suggested by Lochmiller (2021). In accordance with Dawadi (2021), codes function to furnish concise summaries of data segments or articulate the content of the data. Descriptive or semantic codes, as per Dawadi (2021), usually maintain close proximity to the content of the data, aligning with the meanings ascribed by the participants.

This stage concludes when the entire dataset has been thoroughly coded and the data associated with each code has been gathered. The number of generated codes can vary based on the subject, dataset, and level of precision in coding, with no predetermined maximum. The goal is for the researcher to create a sufficient number of codes that effectively capture both the diversity and patterns present in the data. Moreover, it is desirable for codes to manifest across multiple data items.

### Phase Three: Searching for Themes

This phase, as suggested by Rivas (2012), begins with an extensive list of codes selected from the dataset. The main goal of this work is to discover patterns and relationships across the dataset, starting with a long list of codes identified across the dataset (Williams and Moser, 2019). The codes must be analysed considering how different codes are combined to create a meaningful theme (Saldaña, 2021). The codes must be analysed considering how different codes are combined to create a meaningful theme (Saldaña, 2021). This means that the main purpose of this step is to focus on the overall level of analysis of the project and not just on the codes.

According to Dawadi (2021), themes capture important data related to the research question and show some level of responses or patterns in the data set. Therefore, it is important to consider these codes as building blocks and combine similar or multiple codes to generate potential themes related to the research question (Mohajan & Mohajan, 2022). This phase is acknowledged as the most challenging in the analysis process. While developing themes, the researcher can incorporate concepts and issues previously identified in the literature review. Some themes from the literature review may hold meaningful connections, and certain codes can be subsumed under them.

In this phase, the researcher's analysis starts to take shape as they shift from codes to themes. According to Mohajan and Mohajan (2022), themes capture important data related to the research question and show some level of patterned responses or methods in the data set. Some qualitative researchers write down themes that emerge from the data. If only it were that simple. Content sourcing is a powerful process. In other words, instead of finding a project, create it yourself. Lochmiller (2021) refers to this process as finding themes, but also says that this is different from archaeologists looking for hidden themes in the data before analysis. Instead, the analyst is like a sculptor, who chooses a method to create and creates a stone, the raw data, for the analysis of a work of art. Like a rock, a data set provides a material basis for analysis and limits the possible end results, but many variations can be created when the data is analysed.

In this step, the selected data is reviewed to identify similarities and overlaps between the codes. The basic process of organising themes and subthemes (subparts of a theme) is to combine or group codes that represent shared characteristics. The goal of this classification is to introduce and reveal consistent and meaningful patterns in the data.

According to Dawadi (2021), another crucial aspect of this phase involves initiating an exploration of the connections between themes and contemplating how these themes will collectively contribute to narrating the overall story depicted by the data. Effective themes possess distinctiveness and, to a certain extent, autonomy, yet they must also synergise cohesively to form a comprehensive whole. In the researcher's analysis, one central theme or concept may draw together or underpin all or most of the other themes (Lochmiller, 2021). This includes code that does not fit anywhere and can be included as part of a new project

or thrown away. The ability to eliminate identified material and potential subjects if they do not fit the researcher's overall analysis is an important part of qualitative analysis. Remember, the researchers' task of analysing and reporting is to create a specific narrative about the data that answers the researcher's research questions. The data does not represent everything it says.

Determining the appropriate number of themes is not governed by a specific formula. There is no magic equation that dictates that if the researcher has X amount of data and is composing a Y-length report, then Z number of themes should be generated. The quantity of data correlates with the production of codes and, consequently, themes—more data often leads to more themes. Similarly, in a longer report, there is more room to discuss a greater number of themes. However, an excess of themes may result in a loss of coherence in the analysis, potentially leading to thin themes. While 1–2 themes might be insufficient for presenting a comprehensive overview of the data, they could be adequate for conducting an in-depth analysis of a specific aspect of the data.

Researchers should complete this step with a project map, or table showing candidate projects, ready to begin the project review process by collecting all abstract data related to each project.

#### Phase 4: Reviewing potential themes

This phase involves an iterative process of reviewing selected data and developing themes related to the entire data set. The main thing about quality control is that this is especially important for novice researchers, and working with exceptionally large data sets, it is impossible to keep all the data sets in your head. Dawadi (2021) further postulates that the first step is to take the collected data, identify themes, and see if the themes work with the data. If not, the researcher should delete some codes or assign them to other themes, and then the researcher can redraw the theme boundaries to capture the relevant data. If these tweaks do not work, the researcher might need to discard the theme altogether and start again. Analysis of coherence should not be forced. Key questions to ask are:

- Does this represent a theme (or might it merely be a code)? And if it is,
- What is the substance of this theme (does it furnish valuable insights into the dataset and my research question)?
- What demarcates the scope of this theme (what falls within and outside its purview)?

- Is there a sufficient volume of (meaningful) data substantiating this theme (does the theme appear substantial)?
- Are the data excessively varied and all-encompassing (does the theme lack cohesion)?

The researcher can end up collating as many topics as possible or subdividing large, broad topics into more specific topics. When there is a set of unique and consistent themes that operate within the context of the selected data collection, the researcher must perform the second stage of the review process to examine the themes that apply to the entire data set. This includes a final reading of all data to determine whether subjects capture the entire data set or parts of it. The researchers' aim is to create a set of themes that capture the most important and relevant elements of the data and the overall tone of the data related to the research question. If the project plan provides it, that is fine. Researchers can now move on to the next step. If not, it should be cleaned and re-evaluated to ensure that the data is captured correctly. Discrepancies can occur if coding occurs or is inconsistent, or if coding evolves throughout the data set and the data is not recoded using the final code set. Updates to this section may include creating additional programs or improving or removing existing programs.

#### Phase 5: Defining and naming themes

When deciding on themes, researchers should clearly state what is unique and special about each topic and test whether they can summarise the essence of each topic in a few sentences. A good thematic analysis will have themes, which are:

- (i) Do not try to do too much, as themes should ideally have a singular focus.
- (ii) Are related but do not overlap, so they are not repetitive, although they may build on previous themes.
- (iii) Directly address your research question.

Sometimes researchers may want to have sub-projects within a project. This is useful when your data contains one or two large samples that are relevant to your query, but each sample has different characteristics.

This step includes an in-depth analysis that involves a thematic analysis, which plays an important role in organising the analysis in detail. Now that the analysis has to go into



writing, the distinction between steps 5 and 6 is a bit blurred. According to (Lochmiller, 2021), this process involves selecting the areas you want to display or analyse and then organising the information for each topic around them. Best of all, each excerpt provides clear and compelling examples that clearly illustrate the elements of the analysis. Consider using extracts from all data sets to demonstrate coverage of a topic. This is especially frustrating when a font displays everything instead of using a data object.

The extracts you choose to cite and analyse provide a structure for the analysis, a description of the data, and inform the reader about the interpretation of the data and its implications. By analysing the data, researchers use it to tell stories about the data. The data does not speak for itself. Researchers should not simply cite the content of the data. The summary should tell the reader what is interesting about the extract and why. Throughout the analysis phase, the researcher has a narrative around the data, at least as much as the extracted data. Lochmiller (2021) adds that the data should be interpreted and connected to the broader research questions and disciplines they are working on. Some qualitative studies have this as a separate narrative, while others incorporate textual data into the analysis to generate findings and create a narrative. Both types are used in project analysis. Integrative approaches work best when there are strong connections to existing research and when the analysis is more theoretical or interpretive. It can also avoid duplication between products and information sections.

The analysis of this excerpt begins by highlighting some data features that provide a basis for interpreting the minimisation and individualisation of the entire dataset more broadly. It combines a detailed and precise analysis of what is happening in a particular data extract with a more concise analysis that illustrates the wider content of the material in relation to the theme. It reflects a combination of two broad thematic analyses—descriptive, where data are typically used in an illustrative way, and conceptual/interpretive, where extracts are typically analysed in more detail, often for their hidden meanings. Both provide important data analysis and serve different purposes, but they can be usefully combined. The latter can be a more difficult form of analysis to grasp as it moves from superficial or apparent meanings to latent or implicit meanings; experience may be required to view this information (Mohajan & Mohajan, 2022). While the researcher presents several brief excerpts from the data, providing an accurate account of participants' statements, the analysis transcends mere data reflection. It goes beyond merely capturing words; it involves interpretation and

the organisation of these words into a broader, overarching conceptual framework. Regardless of the modality in which thematic analysis (TA) is conducted, the analysis serves a purpose—it aims to make a point. Grounded in the research question, the analysis prompts the essential query: "So what?" What holds significance or utility in addressing the research question? This analytical storytelling process must overlay all identified themes. Moreover, each theme should not only be developed in isolation but also in correlation with the research questions and other themes. Conclusions should emanate from the entire analytical process, establishing connections between themes and offering overarching insights about the dataset.

An additional facet of this phase involves the rationale behind the nomenclature assigned to each topic. While naming may appear inconsequential, the brief title holds significant communicative value. An effective topic title should be illuminating, succinct, and memorable. The incorporation of quotations in titles serves to impart an immediate and vivid impression of the subject matter, maintaining proximity to the language and concepts articulated by the participants (Lochmiller, 2021).

#### Phase 6: Producing a report

While the ultimate phase of analysis culminates in the creation of a report, such as a journal article or dissertation, it is not a linear process. Unlike quantitative research, where the researcher typically completes data analysis before commencing the writing phase, qualitative research intertwines writing and analysis. This interconnection spans from the informal documentation of notes and memos to the more formalised procedures of analysis and report writing. The report's objective is to furnish a compelling narrative of the data rooted in the analysis. This narrative should be not only lucid and engaging but also intricate, firmly embedded within the scientific domain. Even in the context of descriptive thematic analysis, the report must transcend mere description and advance an argument pertinent to the research question. Proficiency in writing improves with practice, and it is advisable to avoid redundancy, unnecessary intricacy, paraphrasing, and passive constructions. In general, first-person active form is deemed suitable for reporting qualitative research, although specific reporting requirements should be carefully considered. The order in which the topics are presented is important; the topics must be logically and meaningfully connected and, if necessary, tell a coherent story based on the previous topics.

In this study, a combination of thematic analysis and semi-structured interviews offers a robust approach to understanding the multifaceted dynamics at play. Through semi-

structured interviews, the researcher was able to engage directly with small fast-food business owners, allowing for in-depth exploration for their experiences, strategies, and challenges in utilising Facebook for marketing purposes. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews enables the capture of diverse perspectives and rich qualitative data, essential from uncovering nuanced insights. Thematic analysis, on the other hand, provides a systematic framework for identifying and analysing recurring themes or patterns within the interview data, thereby uncovering key trends, opportunities and barriers related to the use of Facebook as a marketing tool. By merging these methodologies, the researcher can gain an understanding of how small fast-food businesses can use Facebook for marketing, as well as the broader implications for their success in the digital marketplace.

### **3.5 QUALITY CRITERIA**

This section examines the quality criteria that the researcher considered during research. The researcher in this study gains credibility by following reliability, transferability, trustworthiness, and verifiability. According to Jag et al. (2022), quality criteria could be seen as a set of established standards and principles used to assess the quality and accuracy of research. The researcher in this study manages credibility by following trustworthiness, reliability, transferability, and verifiability.

#### **3.5.1 Credibility**

By giving participants the chance to evaluate if the study's suggested results are consistent with their perceptions of validation and approval, the researcher made sure that the study's credibility was maintained. According to Williams and Moser (2019), theorists understand credibility as a multidimensional concept that includes the communicator's relevant knowledge, integrity, and the perceiver's assessment of good intentions towards the perceiver. Reliability is the reliability of an organization and its intent at a particular point in time. The more dependable the message source, the more likely it is to affect the recipient.

#### **3.5.2 Transferability**

It has to do with how well the results of qualitative research can be transferred to different contexts or situations with different respondents. Researchers make it easy for potential users to evaluate portability with bold explanations (Williams & Moser, 2019). The researcher provided a full explanation of the participants and the study's research procedure, allowing the reader to conclude whether the results are appropriate for their

setting. This helps the reader of the research report decide whether the findings are appropriate for their state.

### **3.5.3 Confirmability**

Confirmability means ensuring that the interpretation of data and results clearly stems from the data and not from the questioner's imagination (Williams & Moser, 2019). For this study, the researcher considered and maintained this by ensuring that the interpretation of the data is based on the data examined and collected and not on the researcher's own preferences and perspectives.

### **3.5.4 Dependability**

The reliability of the research was examined through the consistency technique, and the data collected during the interviews were consistent, although the participants were not the same people (William & Moser, 2019). Participants' ratings of the study's results, interpretations, and suggestions are utilised to ensure that they are backed up by data received from study participants.

The research adhered closely to the Code of Ethics at the University of Limpopo. To ensure the dependability of the study, the consistency method was used to evaluate the information collected during the interviews. Consistency was maintained even when the participants differed, with dependability being achieved when the chosen research techniques yielded consistent results across different situations (Dube, Mhlongo, & Ngulube, 2014).

## **3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The researcher secures ethical approval from the institution before asking participants for permission. Prior to obtaining consent, participants are informed about the study's purpose and their role in it. Ethics, delineating what is morally acceptable or unacceptable in society, play a crucial role in research endeavours. The primary aim of studies is to unveil new insights into existing phenomena and related issues, with an imperative to ensure the well-being of the population (Hersh, Israel, & Shiggings, 2022). In the study conducted by Muzari et al. (2022), ethics is defined as a branch of philosophy addressing the morality of individuals and guiding societal norms of behaviour. Furthermore, De Wever et al. (2006) underscore the significance of applying ethics in our lives, emphasising that researchers should uphold the dignity of participants and disseminate accurate results.

### **3.6.1 Permission to conduct the study**

The researcher secured approval from the University of Limpopo Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) before embarking on data collection for this study. All essential ethical protocols mandated by the University of Limpopo Turfloop Research and Ethics Committee were meticulously observed throughout the study.

### **3.6.2 Confidentiality and anonymity**

Confidentiality is defined as having an unknown name and an unknown author, whereas confidentiality is defined as being uttered or written in private and is related to secrets. Anonymity, on the other hand, is one method of implementing secrecy. Anonymity implies that no one knows the names of research participants (names, countries, ethnic origins, age, occupation, place of residence, and so on) (Dube et al., 2014). Thus, the researcher ensured that all participants' identities were concealed.

### **3.6.3 Informed consent**

Informed consent is the process of knowing important facts about a study, such as potential risks and benefits, before deciding whether to participate in the study (Hersh et al., 2022). For this study, the researcher informed the participants that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

### **3.6.4 Human dignity and respect**

The researcher ensured that the rights, dignity and respect of the participants were considered.

### **3.6.5 Aftercare of the participants**

The researcher ensured that participants were not physically or mentally vulnerable to harm. Professional experts in the form of psychologists and social workers were on standby to provide counselling to participants who would have succumbed to mental distress because of participating in this study.

### **3.6.6 Plagiarism**

According to Drisko (2023), plagiarism is taking someone else's ideas and presenting them as your own. He describes plagiarism as using someone else's work without proper attribution or copying it directly without an in-text reference or citation. In this study, the researcher took steps to ensure that all works used were properly referenced and cited.

### **3.6.7 Turnitin**

Turnitin is an online tool designed to deter plagiarism, developed by iParadigms LLC. It also assists academics in determining the extent to which a work may be copied from original sources (Ismail & Jabri, 2023). To ensure the absence of plagiarism, the researcher submitted their study to Turnitin through the dedicated webpage of the University of Limpopo.

### **3.7 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 3**

This chapter discussed the methodology and research design employed in this study. Opting for a qualitative approach was deemed apt, given the research's focal point on comprehending the human experience and behaviour concerning the utilisation of Facebook in the marketing endeavours of small fast-food restaurants in the Mankweng locality. The chosen methods for data collection encompassed semi-structured interviews and observations, aimed at capturing a comprehensive perspective. Moreover, ethical considerations pertinent to each facet of the research are thoroughly examined within this chapter.

The chapter discussed in more detail the significance and appropriateness of the chosen qualitative research design for the given study. It also covered aspects related to sampling techniques, surveying and sampling, and population. In addition, the chapter identified key quality criteria, which are transferability, reliability, verifiability, and trustworthiness. Research methodology acts as a path chosen by the researcher to achieve research objectives by providing solutions or answers to the research problem.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The research methods used to conduct the research were clearly explained in the previous chapter. Therefore, this chapter presents and analyses the data collected for this study. The purpose of the study was to investigate the use of Facebook for marketing purposes by small fast-food restaurants in Mankweng, Limpopo Province. The collected data were analysed using thematic analysis (TA), which includes the interview schedule. The determined topics are presented according to the main objectives of the study: (a) To explore the way small fast-food businesses use Facebook for marketing purposes in Mankweng, (b) Establish the opportunities and challenges of using Facebook as a marketing tool for small fast-food businesses; and (c) Analyse how Facebook marketing-strategy impacts profit in small fast-food businesses.

The themes identified in this section answered the following research questions:

- ❖ Why do fast-food business owners use Facebook as a marketing tool?
- ❖ What are the challenges and opportunities of using Facebook as a marketing tool?
- ❖ How does Facebook marketing-strategy impact profit in small fast-food businesses?

The emerging themes provided answers to the mentioned research questions and increased the deep understanding of the phenomenon under study. Therefore, this chapter represents the main themes that emerged during the data analysis.

#### **4.2 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

The subsequent steps in the process after data collection are described. Following the interviews, the audio recordings were transcribed, and both questions and participants' answers were typed for analysis. Throughout this chapter, excerpts from the interviews were utilised and presented verbatim when deemed necessary. Adhering to ethical guidelines outlined in the previous Chapter 3 to guarantee confidentiality, the study's participants are denoted by letters (e.g., participant 1-4), with any other identifying details omitted to prevent participant identification. The pertinent biographical information of the participants is also provided.

#### 4.2.1 SECTION A: Demographics of participants

The four participant's relevant demographic information is provided in table

Table 1 Demographic of the participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Nationality
P1	Male	30-35	African	South African
P2	Male	25-30	African	South African
P3	Male	35-40	African	South African
P4	Female	20-25	African	South African

#### 4.2.2 SECTION B: Description of the data collection and analysis processes

In the study by Krzaklewska (2010) the authors note that data analysis represents the most intricate stage in the qualitative research process, yet it is indispensable for imparting meaning and structure to a substantial volume of collected data (Miles & Huberman, 1984). They are highlighting its role in organising the collected data to facilitate comprehension by the researcher. For instance, it helps in understanding what the data reflects, what it does not reflect, and what might be missing. Therefore, it is imperative to systematically analyse qualitative data through a transparent approach, involving steps such as preparing the data, defining the unit of analysis, developing themes, and reporting findings and methods (Wildemuth, 2016). These steps have been discussed in the context of the present research study.

Data preparation involves the conversion of recorded (audio) data into written text, i.e. accurate transcription of all audio recordings (Patton, 1990). All audio notes were transcribed by the researcher; they are part of the data warehouse. Unit of analysis refers to the basic unit under analysis, such as individuals (Wever et al., 2006). This study examined the perceptions of small fast food restaurant owners regarding the use of Facebook as a marketing tool for their business; the unit is therefore the individual, and the sentences were made into subjects. The themes summed up this meaning.



Wildemuth (2016) underscores the necessity for the development and definition of codes and categories for their application to textual data. The process of code generation involves one of two approaches, namely emergent or predetermined. It is advisable to initially segregate codes from those already defined (Saldaña, 2021). Subsequently, emergent coding transpires during the examination and analysis of the amassed data, wherein the researcher identifies novel (emergent) codes within the data. These may encompass actions, ideas, relationships, meanings, and concepts inherent in the data (Saldaña, 2021). In this particular study, the researcher adopted open coding and systematically organized the codes into categories, conceptualizing them as topics.

The researcher draws inferences from the coded data, which is a key step in which inferences are made and conclusions are presented that convey the understanding or meaning drawn from the analysed data (Wildemuth, 2016). A summary of the results of this study is presented in this chapter.

Finally, the researcher communicates the findings. According to Wildemuth (2016), a proficient report should offer the reader ample descriptive details to grasp the researcher's intended understanding of the data. Underscoring the significance of candid and reliable reporting, as advocated by Patton (1990), reinforces the idea that it is crucial in the research endeavour.

The primary objective of this research was to investigate the utilisation of Facebook as a marketing instrument among small fast-food businesses in Mankweng, Limpopo Province. Additionally, the study sought to identify the perceived measures that could be implemented in Mankweng to assist small fast-food business owners in effectively leveraging Facebook for marketing purposes. This chapter encapsulates the empirical endeavours undertaken, involving a meticulous analysis of data derived from participant interviews. It delves into aspects such as the characteristics of the study participants, the methods employed for data collection, and the systematic steps taken in data analysis.

#### ➤ *Participants*

Small fast-food business owners were purposefully selected and interviewed in order to understand the phenomenon under investigation. All business owners interviewed were citizens of Mankweng, Limpopo Province. The small business owners are not in the same age group. Entrepreneurs of different ages were selected as an incentive to find out if there are significant differences in their technology (Facebook) usage backgrounds, i.e., whether

they were exposed to Facebook or not. Gender did not affect the selection process or interviews. However, both sexes were included in the study. A total of 4 small fast food business owners participated in the study (see table 4.1).

➤ *Data collection*

All interviews were carried out through in-person, face-to-face interactions. Prior to the interviews, participants were sought for their explicit consent, with the corresponding consent forms archived in the data repository. A commitment to anonymity was assured, and participation was entirely voluntary. The interviews were documented through a combination of audio notes and written responses.

➤ *Data analysis*

The methodical examination of qualitative data follows a structured process encompassing multiple stages, such as data preparation, delineation of the unit of analysis, formulation of codes and categories, validation of codes and categories, data coding, scrutiny of the consistency in assigned codes, drawing inferences from the coded data, and finally, reporting the findings and methodology (Wildemuth, 2016). For a comprehensive examination of these aspects, please refer to Chapter 3. Subsequently, these elements are deliberated in the context of the application employed to fulfill the empirical objective of this study.

➤ *Data preparation*

The process of data preparation involves transcribing voice notes. The researcher encountered challenges in directly translating responses from some small fast-food business owners (participants) since their native language is not English. Despite the interviews being conducted in English for this study, certain participants responded in a mixture of English and Sepedi. The researcher, fluent in both Sepedi (her home language) and English (her second additional language), took care to accurately translate their responses in such instances, ensuring alignment with the participants' intended meaning during the interviews.

➤ *Creation of themes*

In this study, 15 questions were asked to determine the use of Facebook for marketing purposes by small fast-food businesses. These questions all relate to the use of Facebook as a marketing tool for small fast-food businesses, as presented in Chapter 2 for the literature review on the use of Facebook for marketing purposes of small fast-food

businesses—History of social media, Facebook, social media marketing, marketing effectiveness of message and format, Facebook marketing of small fast-food businesses, Opportunities of using Facebook as a marketing tool, Challenges of using Facebook as a marketing tool, Maximising profit, and Future of small fast-food businesses So, in this study, conclusions drawn must accurately portray the stories told by the small fast-food business owners with regard to Facebook usage for marketing purposes of small fast-food businesses.

During this phase, the imperative task is the meticulous allocation of all identified themes. The evaluation of responses should be approached comprehensively, considering their relevance to the posed question. The generation of themes ensued from a thorough analysis of the responses provided by all four participants, as delineated in the subsequent section.

#### 4.2.3 SECTION C: Creation of themes

The table below encapsulates the objectives of the study, and the themes emerged during the data analysis process.

Table 2 Theme emerged during the study

<b>Objectives</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To explore how small fast-food businesses use Facebook for marketing purposes.</li> <li>• To establish the opportunities and challenges of using Facebook as a marketing tool; and</li> <li>• Analyse how Facebook marketing-strategy impacts profit in small fast-food businesses.</li> </ul>
<b>Themes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertising</li> <li>• Visual appeal and food presentation</li> <li>• Emotional appeal and brand identity</li> <li>• Promotions, discounts and limited time offers</li> <li>• The effectiveness uses of Facebook for marketing purposes of small fast-food businesses</li> <li>• Comprehensive understanding of customers</li> </ul>

- Building brand communities
- Standing out in a crowded market
- Creating a comprehensive Facebook marketing strategy
- Competing with other businesses
- Audience engagement and brand loyalty
- Cost-effective advertising and Return of Investment (ROI)
- Local marketing and Geo-targeting

## **Objective 1: To explore the manner in which small fast-food businesses use Facebook for marketing purposes in Mankweng**

### **Theme 1: Advertising**

The study discovered that participants in the Facebook interviews used Facebook to advertise their fast food daily. Advertising fast food on Facebook for a small fast-food business refers to the practice of promoting the products and services offered by a local or independently owned fast-food restaurant through the social media platform Facebook.

This advertising strategy involves creating and running targeted marketing campaigns that showcase the small fast-food restaurant's menu items, special deals, promotions, or any other relevant information to a specific audience. Small fast-food businesses utilise Facebook's extensive user base to reach potential customers in their local area or within a specific demographic, capitalising on the platform's ability to micro-target ads.

These advertisements can include visually appealing images or videos of food items, enticing descriptions, and direct calls to action, such as "order now" or "visit our restaurant," to attract and engage customers, driving more foot traffic or online orders to boost their business's success. It is a cost-effective and efficient way for small fast-food businesses to connect with their target audience and increase their customer base in an increasingly digital age.

*"Advertising on Facebook is both affordable and straightforward. "The app is known for its user-friendliness, making it a popular choice among many people in the Mankweng area. (Participant 1)*

The advertising feature on Facebook empowers businesses to focus on a particular audience through paid campaigns and advertisements. Facebook possesses a wealth of user information, providing a valuable asset for precision in ad targeting.

Targeted advertising can be cost-effective because it does not waste resources on reaching an audience that is unlikely to convert. Instead, it helps the small business owner to deliver the message to those who are most likely to be interested in their fast food.

“...Targeted advertising allows us to engage with individuals who have shown interest in our fast food but have not made a purchase yet. Remarketing ads can remind them of our offerings and encourage them to return...” (Participant 3)

By combining a comprehensive understanding of the audience with targeted advertising efforts, small fast-food business owners can effectively reach and engage the right customers, driving growth and profitability for their small fast-food business.

## **Theme 2: Visual Appeal and Food Presentation**

All participants interviewed used Facebook to advertise their businesses online. They also alluded to the fact that it helps them share significant information about their businesses. This sub-theme focuses on how fast-food advertisements use visually appealing imagery to showcase their menu items. It includes the use of high-quality photography, videography, and food styling techniques to make the food look enticing. It also encompasses the role of colour schemes, fonts, and design elements in creating advertisements that grab the viewer's attention and make the food appear delicious.

“Well-presented and visually appetising food can trigger cravings and hunger even before customers have tasted it. "The sight of our delicious-looking food persuades potential customers to give our fast-food offerings a try. (Participant 1).

To leverage the power of visual appeal and food presentation in small fast-food marketing, small fast-food business owners should invest in high-quality food photography and videography. Showcase their dishes in the best light, paying attention to colours, textures, and plating. Consistency in presentation across all marketing channels, from their physical store to their Facebook pages, is key to building a strong and recognisable brand identity that resonates with customers

### **Theme 3: Emotional appeal and brand identity**

Based on the interviews with the respondents, their fast-food advertisements often tap into emotions and connect with the audience on a personal level. Advertisements evoke feelings of happiness and comfort associated with fast food. It delves into the development and portrayal of brand identity, including the use of mascots, slogans, and storytelling to establish a unique and memorable brand image in the minds of consumers.

*"...When customers feel emotionally attached to your brand, they are more likely to become loyal customers who return frequently. They may even advocate for your business, promoting it to friends and family..."* (Participant 2)

*"Developing a compelling brand identity involves storytelling. We share our small fast-food brand's history, values, and passion behind our food with our customers. This humanizes our small fast-food business and allows customers to relate to our journey."* (Participant 1)

To harness the power of emotional appeal and brand identity in small fast-food marketing, the small fast-food brand should define the brand's values, story, and personality. These elements should consistently be communicated through advertising, messaging, and customer interactions. Encouraging customer engagement and feedback to ensure the brand remains relevant and resonates with the target audience. A strong emotional connection and well-crafted brand identity can differentiate one's fast-food business and contribute to long-term success.

### **Theme 4: Promotions, Discounts and Limited time offers**

According to the findings of the study, participants use strategies employed by fast-food chains to promote their products through special deals and discounts. The strategy explores how advertisements communicate these promotions to attract cost-conscious customers.

*"Promotions and discounts are effective at capturing the attention of potential customers who may be looking for a deal or trying a new dining experience. These offers can act as a "hook" to draw people in. "We have a Wednesday special, and we have realised that our customers love it because we always have more orders on Wednesday."* (Participant 2)

*“...Limited time offers and promotions can drive immediate spikes in sales. For example, a “buy one, get one free” deal can entice customers to purchase more items than they initially intended. (Participant 1)*

The data elucidates that incorporating well-planned discounts, promotions, and limited time offers can not only drive immediate sales but also build a loyal customer base that continues to support small fast-food businesses overall. It also considers the urgency and exclusivity created by time-limits offers, such as limited-time only menu items, to drive customer engagement and sales.

## **Objective 2: Establish opportunities and challenges of using Facebook as a marketing tool**

Using Facebook as a marketing tool offers several opportunities, but it also comes with its fair share of challenges. According to the findings of the study, participants encounter opportunities and challenges by using Facebook as a marketing tool to market their fast foods.

## **Theme 5: Comprehensive understanding of the audience**

Developing an effective Facebook marketing strategy necessitates a profound comprehension of the target audience by businesses. By understanding the buyer personas of their marketing strategy, businesses can determine their Facebook audience and create content that resonates with them.

A deep understanding of the business’ target audience allows the business to create marketing messages that resonate with their preferences, needs, and values. For example, if the business owner knows his or her audience values, convenience, and speed, he or she can emphasise these aspects in the messaging.

*“Students are a significant part of our audience; we always highlight how our fast-food business can save them time when they are busy with their examinations and assignments.” (Participant 4)*

## **Theme 6: Building brand communities**

Building brand communities is a powerful strategy in small fast-food marketing that can help foster customer loyalty, drive word-of-mouth marketing, and create a sense of belonging among your customers. Facebook can be used to build brand communities and foster

customer engagement. By creating content that is relevant, authentic, and shareable, businesses can increase engagement and build brand loyalty.

Brand communities can create a sense of loyalty and attachment among customers. When customers feel like they belong to a community, they are more likely to choose your fast-food restaurant over competitors. Actively involved community members frequently transform into brand advocates, disseminating their positive encounters with friends and family. This form of word-of-mouth marketing holds substantial potential to influence the reputation and customer base of a small business.

Brand communities provide a valuable platform for collecting feedback and insights directly from your customers. You can use this information to make improvements to the menu, service, and overall customer experience. An active brand community keeps customers engaged with your business, whether it is through discussions, events, or exclusive promotions. This ongoing engagement can lead to higher customer retention rates.

*“...We try as much as we can to always engage with our customers and tell them more about what our business has to offer. We also engage in community projects around Mankweng to promote our small fast-food business so that it can be well known around the community...”* (Participant 1)

Building a brand community takes time and effort, but the long-term benefits for the small fast-food business can be substantial. By creating a sense of belonging and engagement, small business owners can cultivate a loyal customer base that not only frequents the small fast-food business but also actively promotes the brand to others.

### **Theme 7: Standing out in a crowded market**

With 1.56 billion daily active users and 70 million businesses on Facebook, businesses must stand out if they want to successfully market on Facebook. To master Facebook marketing, businesses have to be helpful, deliberate, and inbound.

Standing out in a crowded fast-food market can be a challenging but essential task for small businesses. To succeed and differentiate the small business's brand, small business owners need a well-thought-out marketing strategy.

They need to identify what makes their small fast-food businesses special and unique. Whether it is the menu, the service speed, the atmosphere or quality of the ingredients. Their Unique Value Proposition (UVP) should be at the core of their marketing message.



Instead of focusing to appeal everyone, small fast-food business owners need to focus on a specific niche within the fast-food business. For example, they could target health-conscious customers with a menu featuring nutritious options or cater to a specific cuisine or dietary preference.

Small fast-food business owners also need to share their small business stories, values, and missions with their customers. Authenticity resonates with customers who want to support small businesses that align with their beliefs and values

*"...People always ask how I produced the name of my fast-food business. I named it after my dad because he is one person I look up to, I have always loved cooking and I knew at an incredibly young age what I was enthusiastic about. It is easy for me to give my customers the best service because I enjoy what I do..."* (Participant 1)

*"...I always make sure that I buy quality ingredients for my customers, our food is different from other small fast-food businesses and that is our signature..."* (Participant 2)

Standing out in a crowded market requires a combination of creativity, customer-centricity, and a unique value proposition. By consistently delivering exceptional experiences and effectively communicating the small business brand's uniqueness, the small fast-food business can carve out its own niche and thrive in a competitive landscape.

### **Theme 8: Creating a comprehensive Facebook marketing strategy**

Developing a thorough Facebook marketing strategy encompasses the stages of planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Small fast-food enterprises must curate an optimal blend of content to yield desired outcomes, incorporate post scheduling into their editorial calendar, and explore Facebook's latest features for engaging with potential customers.

Small business owners need to gain a deep understanding of their ideal customers, including their interests, behaviour, and demographics. This information will help them tailor the content and ads effectively.

*"All our pictures are watermarked with our small fast-food logo. Our Facebook profile, cover photos, and content reflect our brand's identity and style. We believe*

*high-quality, appetising food photos are essential for our fast-food businesses.*

(Participant 4)

### **Theme 9: Competing with other businesses**

With Facebook being the most-used social media network, it is a great place for small fast-food businesses to have a presence. However, these businesses need to understand how to create a successful Facebook marketing strategy and conduct a thorough competitive landscape analysis to surpass their competitors.

Competing with other businesses in the fast-food business can be challenging, but with a well-defined strategy and a focus on the small fast-food business's unique strengths, the small fast-food business can thrive.

Small business owners must identify what sets their fast-food business apart. This could be their menu offerings, speed of service or quality of ingredients.

It is essential to understand the businesses' target audience and create marketing campaigns that resonate with their needs and preferences. Tailoring messages to specific customer segments also brings an edge.

*“Our customers are mainly students; we carefully consider our pricing strategy, which can be challenging, and we try to offer competitive prices for the value we provide to attract price-sensitive customers.” (Participant 2)*

Competition is a natural part of the small fast-food business landscape, and it can also serve as a motivation to continually improve and innovate. Focusing on the small business's unique strengths, delivering value to customers, and adapting to changing small business conditions can lead the small business to effectively compete and thrive in the business of small fast food restaurants.

### **Objective 3: Analyse how Facebook marketing-strategy impacts profit in small fast-food businesses**

#### **Theme 10: Audience engagement and brand loyalty**

Small fast-food businesses use Facebook to engage with their audience, build brand loyalty, and foster a sense of community. It includes strategies such as responding to comments and messages promptly, running engaging contests or polls, and sharing user-generated content.

Audience engagement and brand loyalty are critical pillars of successful small fast-food marketing. These aspects can help small business owners build a dedicated customer base, increase repeat business, and drive growth.

Engaging content sparks conversations and interactions. Small fast-food owners must encourage their audience to participate through likes, comments, and shares. Asking questions and running polls also foster engagement.

*“...I always encourage my customers to share their experiences by using branded hashtags because repost content shows that customers are satisfied...”* (Participant 3)

*“...Responding promptly to customer’s comments, reviews and messages on our Facebook page is a priority to us. Acknowledging and addressing their queries or feedback shows that we value their input...”* (Participant 2)

Both audience engagement and brand loyalty require ongoing effort and a commitment to delivering exceptional experiences. By actively engaging with the business’s customers and providing value beyond just the transaction, the small fast-food business can nurture brand loyalty and turn one-time customers into loyal advocates for the small fast-food business.

### **Theme 11: Cost-effective advertising and Return on investment (ROI)**

This sub-theme explores how Facebook’s advertising tools can be cost-effective for small fast-food businesses to reach their target audience. It looks at strategies for optimising ad spend, tracking conversions, and measuring return on investment (ROI) through analytics and insights.

Cost-effective advertising and return on investment (ROI) are crucial considerations for small fast-food businesses, especially those with limited budgets.

Facebook offers cost-effective advertising options with precise targeting. Small business owners can set their budgets and target audiences based on demographics, interests, and behaviours.

*“...Using Facebook allows our small fast-food business to reach a wide audience at a low cost. We showcase visually appealing images of our menu and engage with our customers directly...”* (Participant 1)

*“...Ensuring the quality and consistency of our food and service is crucial to us. I have realised that positive customer experiences lead to word-of-mouth referrals, which is one of the most effective and cost-efficient forms of advertising...”* (Participant 3)

*“...We always make sure to implement loyalty programs, have discounts and provide special offers because we have realised that they incentivise repeat business. This does not only attract customers but also encourages them to spend more over time...”* (Participant 2)

Small fast-food businesses can make informed decisions about where to allocate their marketing budget for the most significant impact by focusing on cost-effective advertising strategies and diligently measuring ROI. This approach allows small business owners to optimise advertising efforts, maximise returns, and drive sustainable growth.

### **Theme 12: Local marketing and geo-targeting**

Local marketing and geo-targeting delve into how small fast-food businesses leverage *Facebook's* geo-targeting capabilities for local marketing. It examines how businesses can promote location-specific offers, engage with local communities, and drive foot traffic to their physical outlets through targeted advertising. Local marketing and geo-targeting are essential strategies for small fast-food businesses to reach their immediate communities effectively.

Engaging with local communities through various means, such as sponsoring local events, participating in neighbourhood activities, or supporting local charities. Showing that small fast-food business owners are invested in the community can foster goodwill and customer loyalty.

*“...We make sure that we create content that resonates with our customers. We share news about our community involvement, highlight local ingredients or suppliers and showcase events or promotions that are tailored in the Mankweng area...”*  
(Participant 4)

*“...I always encourage our customers to leave reviews on our Facebook platform. I believe that positive reviews from our local customers can boost our online reputation and attract more local business...”* (Participant 3)

By incorporating local marketing and geo-targeting into their small fast-food business strategy, small fast-food business owners can connect with their local community, increase

brand visibility among nearby residents, and drive more foot traffic to their small fast-food businesses. These strategies allow small business owners to maximise the impact of their marketing efforts by focusing on the customers who are most likely to become loyal patrons or customers.

### **Theme 13: The effectiveness use of Facebook as a marketing tool for small fast-food businesses**

With a user base exceeding 2.91 billion, Facebook stands as a pivotal platform for business sales and social media marketing.

A notable advantage of Facebook lies in its capability to enable small fast-food establishments to tailor their paid campaigns and ads to specific target audiences. The platform possesses a substantial reservoir of user information, offering a valuable resource for refining the targeting of advertisements.

Furthermore, the establishment of a Facebook business page can serve as a potent marketing tool for small businesses. Comparable to a complimentary business website, a Facebook Business Page offers the opportunity to enhance the online footprint of businesses. Like a personal Facebook profile, it encompasses features for sending and receiving messages, disseminating updates, receiving notifications, and engaging with other users through actions such as liking, sharing, and commenting on content.

Engaging with customers is another way small fast-food businesses can use Facebook to promote their brand. Facebook's interactivity allows fast-food chains to get immediate feedback about what they introduce. Businesses can use the platform to engage with customers, respond to their queries, and address their concerns.

Facebook is also perceived as a credible feedback tool concerning small fast-food businesses, and social media users are affected by others' user feedback when researching a small fast-food business, they have not yet experienced.

By engaging with customers, businesses can build a loyal customer base and improve small fast-food businesses' brand reputation. Facebook Insights is another tool that small fast-food businesses can use to inform their marketing strategy. When a small fast-food restaurant owner has a business page on Facebook, they have access to customer insights and demographic information. They can use the information they receive to develop a specific demographic marketing strategy and better-targeted campaigns.

Facebook Insights can help small fast-food businesses understand their audience's behaviour, interests, and demographics, allowing them to create more effective marketing campaigns.

In summary, small fast-food businesses can effectively use Facebook as a marketing tool by creating a Facebook Business Page, targeting a specific audience, engaging with customers, using Facebook insights, and taking advantage of cost-effective advertising opportunities. Additionally, Facebook is perceived as a credible feedback tool, and small businesses can use it to grow and improve their customer base.

*“...Facebook allows us to reach a massive and diverse audience. We can target specific demographics, interests, and locations, ensuring our marketing efforts are seen by potential customers in our area...”* (Participant 1)

*“...Encouraging customers to post their photos and reviews of our food is like gold. It builds trust and authenticity, and it is free marketing that works wonders...”* (Participant 3)

*“...Facebook's algorithm updates can be a challenge, but they also push us to stay innovative, and adapt. Paid advertising can help maintain visibility during algorithm changes...”* (Participant 4)

In summary, Facebook has become an essential tool for small fast-food businesses. It helps small fast-food business owners reach a broader audience, engage with customers, and promote their food effectively. When used strategically, it is a cost-effective way to drive growth and build brand loyalty.

### **4.3 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 4**

This chapter presented results and discussed topics identified from previous research and/or theories. The biographical data of the participants were presented in a table. To ensure compliance with ethical principles, the participants were named participants A–D. The study identified fourteen themes from the accumulated data, namely: (a) advertising; (b) visual appeal and food presentation; (c) emotional appeal and brand identity; (d) promotions, discounts, and limited-time offers; (e) the effectiveness of using Facebook for marketing purposes by small fast food businesses; (f) a comprehensive understanding of customers; (g) building brand communities; (h) standing out in a crowded market; (i) creating a comprehensive Facebook marketing strategy; (j) Competing with other

businesses; (k) Audience engagement and brand loyalty; (l) cost-effective advertising and return on investment (ROI); (m) local marketing and geo-targeting. The researcher used the literature to discuss the presented topics. The themes that emerged have been organised in alignment with the research objectives, effectively addressing the research questions formulated for this study. A concise overview of the study's paramount findings will be delineated in the subsequent chapter.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The preceding chapter discussed the interpretation of the data and the study's outcomes. In this chapter, recommendations and conclusions derived from the study are presented. This segment assesses the attainment and resolution of the research aim, objectives, and research questions.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The study aimed to explore the use of Facebook for marketing purposes by small fast-food businesses in Mankweng, Limpopo Province. The objectives of the study were: (a) to explore how small fast-food businesses use Facebook for marketing purposes in Mankweng, (b) to establish the opportunities and challenges of using Facebook as a marketing tool for small fast-food businesses, and (c) to analyse how Facebook marketing strategy impacts profit in small fast-food businesses.

By employing face-to-face semi-structured interviews, the research discerned that owner of small fast-food enterprises proficiently employ Facebook as a marketing instrument to lure customers to their establishments. Notably, most of their customer base comprises students from the University of Limpopo and the broader Mankweng community. The empirical insights obtained from the study were further elucidated through thematic analysis.

Thirteen themes were identified from the analysed data, namely: (a) advertisement of fast food; (b) visual appeal and food presentation; (c) emotional appeal and brand identity; (d) promotions, discounts, and limited-time offers; (e) the effectiveness of using Facebook for marketing purposes by small fast food businesses; (f) a comprehensive understanding of customers; (g) targeted advertising, (h) building brand communities; (i) standing out in a crowded market; (j) creating a comprehensive Facebook marketing strategy; (k) competing with other businesses; (l) audience engagement and brand loyalty. (m) cost-effective advertising and return on investment (ROI); (n) local marketing and geo-targeting. These are discussed in terms of research objectives. The analysis also enabled a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study.



The study's primary aim was to investigate the utilisation of Facebook as a marketing tool by small fast-food businesses. Respondents emphasised that Facebook is a pivotal platform for advertising their food offerings. Specifically, participants disclosed employing Facebook pages to promote their businesses, as this platform enables their advertisements to reach a pertinent audience, namely their customer base. Consequently, a Facebook page is deemed the most productive social media avenue for disseminating pertinent information. The empirical insights derived from the conducted research and the literature review in the preceding chapter corroborate the effectiveness of social media platforms in effectively communicating information to relevant audiences.

In his study, 'Affordances and outcomes of targeted fast-food advertising in Kuwaiti Facebook', Alajmi (2021) found that small businesses leveraging platforms like Facebook reported significant improvements in reaching and engaging with their target audience, particularly in the fast-food industry.

The study's second objective was to discern the challenges and prospects of utilising social media as a marketing instrument. Most of the respondents indicated the utilisation of Facebook as a marketing tool for their small fast-food establishments in Mankweng, foreseeing a positive impact on the image of these businesses. The research revealed that, among various platforms, Facebook emerged as the most productive for marketing small fast-food enterprises in the Mankweng vicinity. Furthermore, the investigation established that small fast-food business owners, through implementing Facebook marketing strategies, effectively reach their intended target market and customers.

The effectiveness of Facebook marketing for small fast-food businesses is supported by numerous studies and industry reports. Research in this area consistently highlights Facebook as a powerful platform for reaching and engaging with target audiences, particularly in local markets like Mankweng. For instance, a study by Muangmee (2021) found that small fast-food businesses leveraging Facebook experienced significant improvements in brand visibility and customer engagement, leading to positive impacts on business image and market reach.

The third objective of the study was to analyse how Facebook's marketing strategy impacts profit in small fast-food businesses. Participants have expressed that Facebook helps them reach their target audience and get new customers. Still, they also use other social media platforms like WhatsApp, as most people around Mankweng do. Small fast-food owners

also consider WhatsApp a marketing tool for their small fast-food businesses, as it has sharing/advertising options. It makes it easier to communicate with their customers.

The effectiveness of Facebook's marketing strategy in boosting profit for small fast-food businesses is underscored by insights from participants in the study. The participants emphasised the role of Facebook in reaching their target audience and attracting new customers to their establishments. However, the use of other social media platforms like WhatsApp alongside Facebook is also prevalent among small fast-food businesses in Mankweng. In the study 'Integrated Advertising, promotion and Marketing: Communicating in a Digital World' by Mishra and Vijay (2023) supported that dual utilisation of social media platforms reflect the diverse marketing strategies adopted by small fast-food business owners to maximise their outreach and profit. Mustafa, Abdullah and Noor (2022) added that small fast-food business owners view WhatsApp as a valuable marketing tool due to its sharing and advertising features, which streamline communication with their customer base. This integrated approach to social media marketing highlights the multifaceted nature of leveraging digital platforms to drive business growth and enhance customer engagement within the fast-food industry.

### **5.3 THEORETICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS**

The Technology Acceptance Model and Chaffey's social media marketing theory have been used as lenses for this study.

#### **5.3.1 The Technology Acceptance Model**

The Technology Acceptance Model (De Wever et al. 2019) is a widely used theoretical framework in technology adoption. It helps to explain and predict how individuals perceive and accept new technologies. Regarding Facebook usage for marketing purposes in small fast-food businesses, TAM can be applied to understand how employees or customers might get and use this technology.

TAM users are more likely to accept and use technology if they perceive it as useful. In the context of a small fast-food business, Facebook can be seen as a useful tool for marketing purposes. It can help reach a wider audience, engage with customers, and promote special offers or events. TAM suggests that technology acceptance is also influenced by perceived ease of use. Facebook is user-friendly and comes with a range of user-friendly features for business marketing, such as creating posts, running ads, and analysing performance metrics.

TAM posits that users' overall attitude toward technology, influenced by perceived usefulness and ease of use, determines their intention to use it. Small fast-food business owners perceive Facebook as a valuable and easy-to-use tool for marketing, and they have a cheerful outlook toward using it for marketing purposes in their small fast-food businesses.

TAM also recognises the influence of external variables, including factors like training and support for using Facebook effectively for marketing in the small fast-food business context. Proper training can enhance perceived ease of use and usefulness, thus increasing acceptance and usage. TAM can also be used to understand how feedback and experience with Facebook marketing can impact acceptance and usage. If the small fast-food business receives positive feedback and sees the benefits of using Facebook, this can lead to continued and improved usage.

In summary, the Technology Acceptance Model provides a framework for understanding how individuals within a small fast-food business might perceive and accept the use of Facebook for marketing purposes. It suggests that perceived usefulness, ease of use, attitudes, and intentions play a crucial role in determining whether and how Facebook is used for marketing in the context of a small fast-food business.

### **5.3.1 Chaffey's theory of social media marketing**

Chaffey's social media marketing theory can be applied to Facebook usage for marketing purposes by small fast-food businesses. Chaffey's theory defines social media marketing as "monitoring and facilitating customers' interaction, participation, and sharing through digital media to encourage positive engagement with a company and its brands, leading to commercial value." This definition can be applied to Facebook usage for marketing purposes by small fast-food businesses, as they can use Facebook to interact with customers, encourage participation and sharing, and increase commercial value.

Chaffey's theory predicts that by establishing a long-term relationship with customers, Facebook marketing significantly increases business performance. Small fast-food businesses can use Facebook to develop long-term relationships with their customers by consistently posting updates, responding to comments and messages, and offering promotions and discounts.

Chaffey's theory looks at social media marketing as an informal marketing approach. This can be applied to Facebook usage for marketing purposes by small fast-food businesses,

as Facebook allows for more casual and conversational interactions with customers compared to traditional marketing approaches.

Chaffey's theory emphasises the importance of positive engagement with small fast-food businesses and the food they sell. Small fast-food business owners can use Facebook to encourage positive engagement by posting engaging content, responding to comments and messages, and showcasing their brand personality.

Overall, Chaffey's theory of social media marketing explains how Facebook usage for marketing purposes by small fast-food businesses can lead to positive engagement with customers, establish long-term relationships, and increase business performance.

Applying Chaffey's Theory of Social Media Marketing proves relevant in utilising Facebook as a marketing tool for small fast-food enterprises. According to this theoretical framework, social media marketing encompasses overseeing and facilitating customer interaction, active participation, and content sharing through digital channels. This engagement aims to cultivate a positive connection between the company and its brands, enhancing business value (Sokolska, 2018). Small fast-food businesses can use Facebook to interact with customers, share information about their products and services, and encourage positive engagement. Using Facebook, small fast-food businesses can build brand communities and foster customer engagement (Bennett, 2017).

Chaffey's Theory of Social Media Marketing also emphasises the importance of content marketing and consumer engagement (4). Small fast-food businesses can use Facebook to create and share content that is relevant, authentic, and shareable to increase engagement and build brand loyalty (Khoa, 2020). Facebook Insights can be used to track metrics such as reach, engagement, and conversions to evaluate the effectiveness of the content strategy (Molina et al., 2020). By following Chaffey's Theory of Social Media Marketing, small fast-food businesses can effectively use Facebook as a marketing tool to increase their reach, engage with customers, and boost sales and recognition through their Facebook platform.

## **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Three recommendations were made as informed by the findings of the study:

### **5.4.1 Cost-effective localisation**

The study's first objective was to explore how small fast-food businesses in Mankweng use Facebook for marketing purposes. The study established those small fast-food businesses use Facebook to advertise their businesses to the Mankweng community, notably University of Limpopo students. Small fast-food businesses leverage Facebook as a powerful marketing tool to promote their establishments. They create targeted advertising campaigns, often featuring visually appealing images and engaging descriptions of their menu items and promotions. The study recommends that by using Facebook's user-friendly platform, they reach a specific local or demographic audience. This cost-effective approach allows them to connect with potential customers in their area and encourages them to visit their restaurant or place online orders. In addition to advertising, small fast-food businesses also use Facebook to maintain an active online presence, interact with customers, respond to inquiries, and share updates about their offerings, effectively building brand recognition and customer loyalty.

### **5.4.2 Seamless Customer Interaction**

The second objective of this study aimed to establish opportunities and challenges associated with employing Facebook as a marketing tool for small fast-food businesses. The research findings have shed light on the fact that small fast-food business owners have recognised the potential of Facebook as a valuable platform for advertising and maintaining communication with their customer base. Consequently, the study puts forth a noteworthy recommendation, suggesting that small fast-food business owners should consider establishing a dedicated Facebook page or site where customers can seamlessly place their orders. This approach not only streamlines the ordering process but also enhances convenience for small fast-food owners and their patrons, potentially boosting customer satisfaction and operational efficiency. The study underscores the untapped potential of Facebook in enhancing the marketing and customer service aspects of small fast-food businesses.

### **5.4.3 Diversifying Digital Presence**

This study's third objective focused on analysing how Facebook marketing strategies impact the profitability of small fast-food businesses. It was observed that small fast-food owners

rely on Facebook as their primary social media platform for promoting their establishments. The study recommends diversifying their social media presence by utilising various platforms, with particular attention to platforms like WhatsApp. Moreover, being widely used and equipped with a product catalogue feature, WhatsApp offers a valuable avenue for advertising food products. This multi-platform approach has the potential to significantly expand their customer base, increase online traffic, and grow their follower count across all their social media channels, contributing to enhanced business success. The study advocates for a broader social media marketing strategy to drive greater profitability for small fast-food businesses.

## **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Drawing from the empirical findings of the investigation and considering the survey's inherent characteristics, the ensuing recommendations are proposed for future research.

### **5.5.1 Longitudinal study on the use of Facebook for marketing purposes of small fast-food businesses**

Conducting longitudinal studies presents an opportunity to assess the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of employing Facebook as a marketing tool for small fast-food restaurants. This method allows for a comprehensive evaluation of the outcomes on various social media platforms, determining their efficacy in enhancing the image of small fast-food establishments.

### **5.5.2 Triangulation study incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods**

Triangulation can be effectively applied in a study akin to the present research but encompassing a larger sample size across multiple provinces in South Africa, specifically focusing on small fast-food restaurants. This approach integrates both qualitative and quantitative elements, where the quantitative aspect facilitates the generalisation of conclusions.

### **5.4.3 Policy development and practice**

It is recommended to study the policy and implementation of social media usage in small fast-food restaurants. Assisting small fast-food business proprietors in assessing their implementation and utilisation of social media for marketing purposes is crucial, particularly in the context of the ongoing shift towards a digital society within the country and at a broader national level.

## **5.6 LIMITATIONS**

The results of the study should be interpreted in the light of the limitations:

One of the limitations of the study is that only four small fast-food business owners out of thirty who operate in the Mankweng business center participated in this study. This makes up 13% of the population. Thus, the findings of this study could not be generalised to include the entire population of small fast-food business owners in Mankweng, Limpopo Province.

The last limitation of this study is that it only employed one social media platform in a form of Facebook to explore the use of Facebook marketing purposes of small fast-food businesses. The researcher acknowledges that there are various social media platforms which are being used for marketing purposes. However, for this study, Facebook was sampled due to its popularity and the high number of subscribers.

## **5.7 CONCLUSION**

This chapter summarises the results of research conducted on the effectiveness of Facebook as a marketing tool for small fast-food restaurants in Mankweng, South Africa. Although the study had limitations, it provided valuable information that may be useful for future research. The present study has significantly contributed to enhancing the knowledge of small fast-food establishments in Mankweng, South Africa, regarding the utilisation of Facebook for marketing endeavours. Despite the limited sample size, the observed phenomenon is deemed representative of the broader national landscape. Consequently, the findings of this research are anticipated to offer valuable insights to small business proprietors, decision-makers, and relevant stakeholders, aiding them in adeptly leveraging social media platforms for effective marketing and business expansion. Furthermore, the study has furnished a comprehensive understanding of the efficacy of Facebook as a marketing tool for small fast-food restaurants in Mankweng. It underscores the imperative to intensify research efforts, particularly on a national scale, with a specific emphasis on the integration of social media into business marketing strategies. The researcher contends that this study serves as a catalyst for future research endeavours, specifically focusing on assessing the effectiveness of various social media platforms in the context of small business marketing.

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## **APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM**

**Candidate: Miss M.A Machaka**

**Student number: 201707207**

University of Limpopo  
Department of Communication, Media and Information Studies  
Private Bag X 1106  
0727

E-Mail Address: meyagaboa@gmail.com

Mobile phone number: 079 552 1076

The researcher cordially invites you to take part in an MA field study to help the researcher finish the study. In this consent form, which also serves as a letter of request, you are asked to indicate your consent to take part in this study. Please check the participation box below if you are willing to help this researcher with this study.

I \_\_\_\_\_ Accept to voluntarily engage in this University of Limpopo research project. I understand that this research is designed to gather information about the use of social media (Facebook) for marketing purposes of small fast-food businesses in Mankweng, Limpopo Province.

Moreover, I understand that:

1. My participation in this research is entirely voluntary and that I will not be paid in exchange for it. In the event of discomfort, I may stop participating. My withdrawal will not have an impact on my relationship with the researcher.
2. Only if I consent to the recording process will my answers to the questions be recorded with my permission. I will not respond to the questions, though, if recording them makes me uncomfortable.

If any question makes me uncomfortable, I have the option to refuse to answer it.

3. Even if the information can be disseminated for public knowledge and to inform people, I have the right to remain anonymous, and the researcher should be unable to use the identify I gave them.
4. I agree that any information collected from me in the form of my opinions will only be used for research, and I ask to receive a copy of the completed study.

Participant

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I Meyagabo Albeauty Machaka explained to the participant the purpose of the study and his or her rights with regard to taking part in the study. He or she voluntarily consented to take part in this research.

Researcher

Signature

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## **APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE**

**Name of the researcher: MEYAGABO ALBEAUTY MACHAKA**

**Title of the study: THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA (FACEBOOK) FOR MARKETING PURPOSES OF SMALL FAST-FOOD BUSINESSES IN MANKWENG, LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

**Synopsis of the study:** The study aims to explore the use of social media for marketing purposes of small businesses in Mankweng. The study wants to identify the manner in which small businesses uses social media (Facebook) for marketing purposes. The study wishes to seek to establish the opportunities and challenges in which small fast-food businesses entrepreneurs' encounter.

**Opportunities of using social media for marketing purposes for entrepreneurs who are selling fast food**

### **Confidentiality and Anonymity**

The purpose of this interview guide is to gather data for a Master of Arts in Media Studies research project. The supplied data will be applied to this investigation. Participants' rights are consistently upheld. This study considers all of the ethical guidelines for research, including confidentiality and privacy. The subjects of the study have the right to be treated honourably and with dignity. The researcher respects their right to privacy and anonymity both during and after the data gathering respects their right to privacy and anonymity both during and after the data gathering process. It will not be required of participants to answer these questions. In this study, confidentiality will be honoured as a fundamental ethical principle. We respectfully ask that you answer the interview questions truthfully.

## **SECTION B: QUESTIONS**

➤ **Objective one: Examine the manner in which small fast-food businesses use Facebook for marketing purposes in Mankweng**

-What purpose does Facebook present for your business?

-How does your small fast-food business utilise Facebook as a platform for marketing, and what specific features does it employ to promote your small fast-food business?

-In what ways has the use of Facebook for marketing by your small fast-food business evolved over time, and are there any emerging best practices or challenges?

-How effective is your Facebook page in terms of marketing?

-Are you happy with the level of interaction you have with the customers on Facebook?  
If so, why?

-What are the benefits and possibilities associated with using Facebook marketing?

➤ **Objective two: Establish the challenges of using Facebook as a marketing tool for small fast-food businesses**

-How do you respond to Facebook comments from the public?

-What difficulties and drawbacks do you encounter when using Facebook for marketing?

-How has Facebook changed since the business first introduced it?

-What are the challenges and disadvantages do you face when using Facebook for marketing purposes?

-How are you address the identified challenges to maximise the use of Facebook for marketing purposes in your business

-What steps are you taking to overcome the obstacles in your way so that your business can use Facebook to its fullest potential for marketing?

➤ **Objective 4: Investigate how Facebook marketing-strategy impact profit in small fast-food businesses**

-How long has the business been promoting on Facebook?

- How does the implementation of Facebook marketing strategies contribute to the overall profitability of your small fast-food business?

-In what ways can your small fast-food business optimise the use of Facebook as a marketing tool to maximise profits, and are there any particular strategies that prove to be more effective than others in enhancing financial outcomes?

- What specific aspects of Facebook marketing strategies, such as targeted advertising or engagement with the online community, have a discernible impact on the financial success of your small fast-food business?

- In what ways can your small fast-food business optimise the use of Facebook as a marketing tool to maximise profit, and are there particular strategies that prove more effective than others in enhancing financial outcomes?

## APPENDIX B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



**University of Limpopo**  
Department of Research Administration and Development  
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa  
Tel: (015) 268 4713, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email: moore.hutamo@ul.ac.za

**TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**  
**ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

**MEETING:** 25 July 2023

**PROJECT NUMBER:** TREC/365/2023: PG

**PROJECT:**

**Title:** The use of Facebook for marketing purposes of small fast-food businesses in Mankweng, Limpopo Province  
**Researcher:** MA Machaka  
**Supervisor:** Dr NC Baloyi  
**Co-Supervisor/s:** N/A  
**School:** Languages and Communication Studies  
**Degree:** Master of Arts in Media Studies

**PROF D MAPOSA**  
**CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: REC-0310111-031

**Note:**

- i) This Ethics Clearance Certificate will be valid for one (1) year, as from the abovementioned date. Application for annual renewal (or annual review) need to be received by TREC one month before lapse of this period.
- ii) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee, together with the Application for Amendment form.
- iii) PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

*Finding solutions for Africa*

## APPENDIX C: EDITING CERTIFICATE



### Editing Certification

11 December 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This editing certificate verifies that this Research was professionally edited for Meyagabo Albeauty Machaka.

Thus, it is meant to acknowledge that I, DR E.J Malatji, a professional Editor under a registered company, RightMove Multimedia, have meticulously edited the manuscript from the University of Limpopo. Title: "THE USE OF FACEBOOK FOR MARKETING PURPOSES OF SMALL FAST-FOOD BUSINESSES IN MANKWENG, LIMPOPO PROVINCE".

Dr E.J Malatji

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'E.J. Malatji', is written over a horizontal line.

## APPENDIX D: TURNITIN DIGITAL RECEIPT



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