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the online purchasing intention of Telecommunication Consumers
in Gauteng**

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Abstract:

With the digital age vastly progressing, many companies including the South African telecommunications company 'Rain' are utilising social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram to advertise their products and services to obtain a greater target market and profit. The aim of this study understands the extent to how 'Rain' social media advertisements influence its consumers intention to purchase its products online. The study used the theory of planned behaviour to understand how consumers interpret and process the information in 'Rains' social media advertisements to understand the perceived impact it has on the consumers purchasing intention. Semi-structured interviews were conducted online with five participants (all of whom are Rain consumers). The responses were analysed using thematic analysis whereby six key themes were identified. It was found that other factors added to the perceived influences of online purchasing intention such as word-of-mouth and online safety and television advertisements seem to have a greater influence on the consumers purchasing intention than social media advertisements, differing from the previous literature. The results suggest that Rain's social media advertisements is not a perceived influence of consumers online purchasing decisions as other forms of communication outweigh social media advertising.

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1. Research Title

The perceived impact of social media advertising on the online purchasing intention of Telecommunication Consumers in Gauteng

2. Introduction:

2.1. Contextualisation:

As of 30 March 2020, South Africa's investment grade rating was downgraded to "Junk status", many companies and brands are desperately trying to compete with one another in order to gain market share and a larger target market (Wasserman, 2020). 'Junk status' "means that the government may not have enough money to pay back what it has borrowed" (Investec, 2020: 1), because of this many jobs could be at risk and with fewer employed people the government will receive less taxes (enca, 2017). "The Treasury could find itself forced to increase tax rates in order to draw more money into the fiscus, this once again leaves the consumer poorer thereby resulting in fewer goods being purchased" (enca, 2017: 1). Many companies, whether large or small, public or private, are continually seeking new ways in which to market their products, gain a larger target market and generate a larger profit. With the development of Web 2.0, which ultimately led to the proliferation of social media, internet users are able to interact and communicate with one another (Nelmapius & Boshoff, 2016). Online social networks are by far the most popular Web 2.0 application and many companies have taken advantage of these social media platforms by using them as a marketing tool (Nelmapius & Boshoff, 2016). "Worldwide it was estimated that social media networks will generate \$43 billion (USD) in advertising in 2020 (Hootsuite, 2020). Internet technologies have evolved from one-sided, consumer-based to interactive and collaborative, providing new ways for organisations and customers to connect (Nelmapius & Boshoff, 2016). With the digital era vastly progressing, individuals are engaging with social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, allowing for companies to use these social media platforms to advertise their products and services in order to reach more people and make a greater profit (Wasserman, 2020). Advertising is sometimes the only way that a company gets word out to its audience. Social media

is seen as a great platform to advertise on as more people are joining these sites daily (Zeljko et al., 2018), however, advertising is quite costly and requires skill, therefore this study plans to determine if social media advertising is beneficial to companies and if they should invest into it.

Rain is a fairly new South African telecommunications company that was established in 2018, it was formally known as Wireless Business Solutions (WBS) and then rebranded to Rain to launch a full mobile data service using its state-of-the-art LTE-A network which is unlike other telecommunication companies in South Africa (businesstech, 2017). Rain's only service is mobile data and also sells a range of modems and routers (fin24, 2018). Rain is solely an online company that does not have any physical stores where consumers may shop. All shopping is done online and queries are made online and telephonically. Due to the nature of this new online company, just like any other company, it is important to market the company and its products effectively in order to become well know and generate a larger target market therefore generating a greater profit (Zeljko, Jakovic & Strugar, 2018). Therefore, the researcher believes that since social media advertising has become so popular it would be important to investigate and gain an understanding into the perceived influence of this type of adverting on the purchasing intention of Rain consumers'. One of the main questions this research is trying to answer is whether or not Rain's social media advertisements are persuading its audience to purchase its products online.

The South African telecommunications company 'Rain' use social media platforms to advertise its products. As of 27 October 2020, 'Rain' has 13.2 k followers on Instagram and over 74 k followers on Facebook. This study aims to understand the extent of how 'Rain' consumers' feel 'Rain's social media advertisements are influencing them to make a decision on whether or not to purchase one of its products online and whether companies should be investing in social media advertising based on consumers perspective of social media advertisements.

2.2. Rationale:

Concepts such as online shopping, online sources and social media are continuing to grow in the modern-day brand environment. Limited studies have been conducted on this topic in South Africa and particularly on the consumers perspective therefore,

this study will be filling an academic gap in knowledge. As this study is exploring the role of Rain's social media advertisements on its consumers online purchasing intention, many other South African companies may benefit from this research by gaining knowledge of the perceived influences of social media advertising and be able to make judgement on whether or not to invest in it which may change the way they advertise to better their company.

Instagram and Facebook are part of the top five most used social media platforms in South Africa as of 2019 (Lua, 2019), and Facebook and Instagram are the top two best social networks for e-commerce advertising and which 'Rain' advertisers on. Therefore, Instagram and Facebook will be the two social media platforms that this study will focus on.

The goal of this research study is to interpret, through thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews, to what extent 'Rain's social media advertisements are perceived to be impacting 'Rain' consumer's online purchasing intention. Findings may also be beneficial for other organisations as it may assist on how to use social media communication to portray a particular position or light in the eyes of their audiences.

Advertising is an effective marketing tool when communicating with a large audience, however it is expensive and companies need to ensure they are getting the best possible return on interest (Geldenhuys, 2013). Online advertisements deliver a return of investment of R2.30 for every R1.00 spent while television advertisements have R1.30 Return on Investment (Lancaster, 2020). "Online advertising provides the best return on investment for South African companies, as confirmed by Nielsen's Advanced Analytics team" (Lancaster, 2020). Online advertising outperforms print, cinema, television, radio and billboard advertising" (Lancaster, 2020). An exploration of this topic is necessary to understand how advertisements influence social media users to purchase products online and whether companies benefit from investing in it.

This study will assist these companies on the essential components that consumers look for when deciding on purchasing a product online after exposure to a social

media advertisement. The findings from this study may enhance marketers' and businesses' chances of succeeding in the e-commerce sector by understanding what influences the decisions of their consumers on whether or not to purchase a product online after viewing a social media advertisement. The researcher also hopes to explore the nature of Rain consumers' attitude towards social media advertisements.

This study is worth conducting as it would benefit other brands and companies who are considering using social media platforms as a marketing tool. This study is relevant to the field of communication as it is focused on the audience's interpretations of social media advertising on their online purchasing intention. This topic falls under marketing, communication and media therefore it is relevant and important to the Bachelor of Arts Honours in Communication qualification offered at Varsity College. This study is of great importance as the researcher intends to identify the participant's perspective of the perceived impacts of Rain's social media advertisements on their online purchasing intention as the consumers perspective has not been taken into consideration in previous study's of a similar topic.

2.3. Problem Statement:

Many companies are competing with one another to gain a larger profit (Mkhabela, 2020). With the digital era vastly progressing, individuals are engaging with social media platforms, allowing for companies to use these social media platforms as a marketing tool for their products (Mkhabela, 2020). Advertising is expensive yet essential for business to succeed, especially within the online platform (Zeljko et al., 2018). For this reason, the problem that needs to be explored is to what extent does 'Rain' social media advertisements influence its consumers intention to purchase its products online?

The South African telecommunications company Rain, uses these platforms to advertise their products and services making it easily directable to the website for online purchases.

Studies have been conducted on this topic by Ramalingam, V et al (2006) and Donga (2017) on advertising and mobile marketing which focuses on television advertising and SMS advertising in general. These studies have concluded that in

most cases, television advertising and SMS advertising does influence the viewers purchasing intention in a positive way (Ramalingam et al., 2006). This study incorporates a single brand's social media advertising rather than focusing on social media advertising in general. This study aims to provide an understanding of the fact that social media advertising has a positive perceived influence on consumers' purchasing intention. For this reason, the study aims to explore the influence of Rain's social media advertisements on the online purchasing intention of its customers'.

The theory of planned Behaviour is commonly used within quantitative data collection and analysis methods (Sanne & Wiese, 2018). However, this study will apply the theory in a qualitative way using semi-structured interviews as the aim was to understand the perceived impact that Rain's social media advertisements has on its consumers intention to purchase Rain products online and to contribute further understanding of this theory in a qualitative way. The qualitative application of this theory should provide different insights compared to the original quantitative application.

2.4. Purpose Statement:

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceived impact of social media advertising on the online purchasing intention of Rain consumers.

This study can be beneficial to other companies who are using social media as a marketing tool for online products as well as to assess whether it is beneficial for companies to invest in (Mkhabela, 2020).

2.5. Research Question:

Primary Question:

What are the perceived impacts of social media advertising on the online purchase intention of Rain consumers'?

Secondary Questions:

1. What is the relationship between Rain's social media advertising and the consumers intention to purchase a Rain product online?
2. What are the perceived perceptions of Rain's social media advertisements on its consumers?

2.6. Objectives:

- To explore the role of social media advertising in particular, Facebook and Instagram on the customers' online purchasing intention.
- To gain deeper knowledge of the perceived impact of Rains' social media advertisements on its consumers' purchasing intention.
- To explore whether social media advertising would be a beneficial marketing tool for organisations to invest in.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Theoretical Foundation and how it links to the research problem:

The theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) was the main theory considered for this research paper as it captures the characteristics that are associated with the perceived influence of social media advertisements on the online purchase intention of Rain consumers'.

The TPB is a psychological theory that was introduced by Icek Ajzen in 1985 (Ajzen, 2011). This theory has been used on multiple occasions when studying or attempting to predict and explain human social behaviour (Ajzen, 2011). In this study, the researcher aims to explain the perceived influences of Rain's social media advertisements of purchasing products online.

The TPB also supports intention-behaviour (Ajzen, 2011), which answers the question of why individuals behave in a certain way. The perceived intentions capture the motivational factors that lead individuals to perform the behaviour (Ajzen, 2011). However, motivational factors would be measured in a quantitative study and for this qualitative study, the TPB was used to comprehensively understand Rain's social media advertisements perceived impact on individual's decisions to purchase products online.

The TPB is comprised of three conceptually independent determinates of intention, namely: attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 2011). Behavioural intent was used as a predictor of actual behaviour and indicates how

much an individual is willing to put into performing a behaviour, and therefore, the stronger the intention to perform the behaviour, the more likely the behaviour is to be performed (Sanne & Wiese, 2018). “Thus, the TPB states that the more positive the attitude towards social media advertising is, the more peers are perceived to encourage the behaviour (subjective norms), and the greater the individuals perception that they are free to engage or not engage with the advertisements (perceived behaviour control), the stronger the intent to engage with social media advertising (behavioural intent), which will in turn predict the actual performance of the behaviour to comment, like or share the advertisement (behaviour)”. (Sanne & Wiese, 2018).

The TPB has successfully been used in previous studies to understand intentional human behaviour (Ajzen, 2011). Sanne and Wiese (2018) have found that the TPB may be applied to most contexts where humans are involved. Sanne and Wiese (2018) also found that the TPB has been used to study the use of online services as well as social networking sites paired with e-commerce. Due to the fact that the TPB has successfully been applied to studies within the context of social media, this theory is appropriate for this study.

The TPB pays attention to the motivational factors of individual's behaviour when considering the likelihood of an individual performing a certain behaviour (Sanne & Wiese, 2018). This theory will assist the researcher understand that the participants' online purchasing intentions is based on their individual motivations. This study will therefore focus on Rain's social media advertisements and investigate the perceived influence it has on the participants individual motivations that lead Rain's consumers to purchase its products online and render its services.

The TPB has also been used to understand the human mind for processing and understanding information in many psychological studies (Littlejohn, Foss & Oetzel, 2017), and is useful in this study as the objectives focus on the perceived impact that social media advertising has on their online purchasing intention. The participants mind is responsible for processing information in the advertisements and making a purchasing decision based on their perceptions.

The advantage of using the TPB in this study is that it has been well researched and applied to other similar studies on social media (Sanne & Wiese, 2018).

A disadvantage of using the TPB is that it could be considered outdated since it was developed in 1985, however, it is still relevant as it has been applied to studies in more recent times (Sanne & Wiese, 2018).

This study was constructed primarily for application in a quantitative way and this study has overcome this by applying it in a qualitative way to offer different insights of this theory (Sanne & Wiese, 2018).

3.2. Review of Previous Literature:

Introduction

In this section, the researcher explored five themes that are relevant to this study which were used to develop interview questions and understand the data collected during the data analysis phase. The five themes discussed in the review of previous literature are: social media usage and attitudes, social media advertisements, trust, online purchasing behaviour and factors that may be influencing purchase intention. The researcher will address gaps in the previous literature and discuss how those gaps will be filled.

Social media usage and attitudes

It was found that the majority of people spend nearly a quarter of their lives surfing through different social networking sites (Arceo, Cumahig, De Mesa, Buenaventura & Tenerife, 2018). The relationship built by social media platforms between companies and customers were perceived to increase the returns for marketers (Arceo et al., 2018). This information is important to this study as the researcher will expand on this knowledge by targeting Rain consumers on how they perceive social media advertising to shape their decision to purchase a product from Rain's online store.

As the rate of online users are continuing to grow, so are the online advertisements (Jadhav & Khanna, 2016), because a larger audience can be reached. Users that are included in a social group on social media platforms are more likely to share personal information and posts viewed on their social media feed than people who

are not in social media groups. Group participation and engagement with social media advertisements require a higher level of interpersonal information because users openly reveal their connections with their online groups and promote brands and products to their friends and family (Chu 2011). Social media platforms have an option to share a post with friends (sending it to them so that they are able to see the post as well) thereby reaching more people and allowing the users to become the marketers, which is not only cost effective but generates a larger target audience (Cheung, Liu & Lee, 2015). Although the researcher will not be exploring social media group participation nor the participants friends or family, it is important to remember that adverts on social media are being shared through electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) which could be a perceived impact of social media advertising on the participants online purchase intention.

Studies show that several other types of marketing media such as television commercials, newspaper adverts and billboards have a negative effect on individuals due to the fact that their entertainment needs have changed (Nelmapius & Boshoff, 2016), and do not focus on those forms of advertising as they are spending more time in front of their smartphones instead of using old forms of mass media (Lancaster, 2020). With this in mind, as well as the 2020 Covid-19 Lockdown restrictions and social distancing measures and with more people working remotely from home – the power of social media advertising is expected to increase (Lancaster, 2020). For example, people are now viewing online articles and images on social media pages instead of in traditional newspapers or magazines. (Kaushik & Baliyan, 2017). People are now turning to social media, and this increase in social media usage not only due to consumers mounting mistrust of corporate communication, but is also because of the weakening of their emotional connection to traditional brands (Nelmapius & Boshoff, 2016). With the increase of social media also comes the increase of the distribution of fake news which may actually have a negative effect on consumers online purchasing intention as they experience trust issues (Le Roux & Maree, 2016).

Nelmapius and Boshoff's 2016 study on a 'Motivational perspective on the user acceptance of social media' as well as Lata et al, 2016 study on the 'Use of advertising on social media by online shopping sites' supports the fact that more

people are moving to social media sites ,therefore becoming more exposed to social media advertisements, however the participants intentions for using social media platforms is outside of the scope of this study. This study will be focusing on the perceived impact of participants online purchase intention after viewing Rain's advertisements on a social media platform.

Social media advertisements

Akkaya et al. (2017) found that social media advertisements are better than conventional media advertising as they encourage people to communicate with their friends and other real people by sharing social media advertisements that have grabbed their attention thereby generating a larger target audience for the company advertising. This is important to note as the third research objective of this study aims to explore whether social media advertising would be a beneficial marketing tool for organisations to invest in.

Social media advertisements contain hyperlinks to the homepage of the site therefore, allowing for ease of use and convenience which should be encouraging consumers to purchase products (Lata & Singh, 2016), and in this way users can directly be transferred to Rain's website where they are able to view the products' prices and reviews which should further increase their intention to purchase a product (Akkaya et al., 2017). In this study, the researcher is more interested in the participants interpretations of the advertisement and how it was perceived to influence their online purchasing intention as well as how the participants felt about the advertisement.

Social media advertisements are increasing social media user's knowledge on brands' products and services that are being advertised (Lata et al., 2016). This is important to note as studies such as Zeljko, Jakovic & Strunger study on 'New methods of Online Advertising', social media influences emphasise the fact that passive buyers are continually searching for ample information about the brand and its products before investing. The researcher will expand on this in the study by asking participants questions related to whether the information from the advertisement provided knowledge about the products which may have been perceived to influence them to purchase a product online.

Trust:

Users are more likely to consume and trust information coming from friends and family, therefore when content is being shared from friends and family on social media, a user is more likely to receive that information in a positive manner and are more likely to be persuaded by it (Cheung et al., 2015), therefore it is important to investigate and explore the factors of social media advertising that are perceived to be impacting the audience's intent on purchasing Rain's product. Even though this study will not focus on the friends and family of the participants in this study, previous studies on social media advertising conducted by Cheung et al in 2015; Fotis in 2015 as well as Erkan and Evans study in 2018 all emphasise that social media users are more likely to purchase a product that has been recommended by a family member or friend on social media therefore, the participants in this study will be asked what type of posts they share or are shared by others to them to gain insight into the perceived impacts of social media advertising.

Companies tend to reassure their audience that their website is safe by providing information about their official websites on the homepage on their social media platforms (Le Roux & Maree, 2016). This is important as audience members will feel more comfortable with the brand and would feel more comfortable to purchase from them. Not much research has been found on how Rain creates trust with their consumers therefore, the researcher will investigate qualitatively whether participants feel as though Rain's website is safe, what they do to make sure that they are using a trusted site and what they feel Rain has done to protect their consumers and provide online safety and trust.

Online Purchasing Behaviour

It has been identifying that social media has a huge impact on consumer decision making and intention to purchase products online (Le Roux & Maree, 2016). Previous studies have added purchasing intentions as a vital pointer of the success of online advertisements such as Akkaya et al. (2017) study on 'The effect of consumer perceptions on their attitude, behaviour and purchase intention in social media advertising'. Sanne and Wiese (2018) explains that purchase intention is a mental process of social media users and consumers. Thus, Rain' social media advertisements provide information about the products and services being sold

before consumers make the decision to commit themselves to purchase the product. After evaluating previous literature on online purchasing intention, the researcher found that online purchasing behaviour was measured quantitatively. This is a qualitative study and the researcher intends to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants in-depth interpretation of Rain's social media advertisements on their consumers online purchase intention.

Factors that may be influencing purchase intention

Menon (2018) identified that the fact that social media advertisements contain hyperlinks which direct users directly to the website to purchase products online is quite convenient. Consumers and social media users are drawn towards convenience, and this is a factor that increased online purchase intention (Menon, 2018). Menon's 2018 study on 'Influence of Customer Tech Savviness and Proneness to Social Media Facilitating Online Purchase intention supplemented through firms content generation in Facebook' is quantitative in nature and was measuring convenience and tech savviness in relation to online purchase intention (Menon, 2018), however in this study the researcher attempted to identify qualitatively their attitudes of convenience and tech savviness that may be perceived to influence them to purchase online. "A positive attitude of the brand will increase buying intent" (le Roux & Maree, 2016: 4). Customer engagement creates a positive attitude with the brand.

Quantitative variables and factors were identified in previous studies and since this is a qualitative study, the researcher will gather interpretations and in-depth information on the participants perceptions, attitudes and their perceived impact that Rain's social media advertisements on their intention to purchase products online.

Conclusion:

In conclusion this literature review has provided an analysis of past literature related to the context of social media marketing and online purchase intentions of consumers. Most literature revealed that the social media marketing industry is continuing to increase as social media platforms are gaining popularity. Social media advertising is facilitating more convenient online purchasing opportunities for social media users.

In contrast other studies were quantitative in nature and most of the literature provided figures and variables that were measured to achieve an overall generalised percentage of each of the impacts of social media advertising on online purchasing intention. This study will be gathering some new qualitative information that will help other qualitative researchers as well as the marketing sectors that are involved with social media advertising. This literature review identified that not much research has been done on social media advertising and online purchasing intention in South Africa. This study will provide a new dimension of knowledge by exploring a method that has not been used in the context of this study.

3.3. Conceptualisation

Concept	Definition	Connotative definition
Purchase intention	Purchase intention refers to how willing a customer is to purchase a product that has been advertised (Akkaya et al., 2017).	This term refers to the fact that the customer or audience members have made a conscious decision on whether or not they would like to buy a product online based on the advertisement of that product posted on a social media platform.
Social Media	Social media is internet-based applications that are used among those who have an established internet connection, where they are able to view content in the form of video, images and audio (Chu, 2011).	In this study social media refers to one of the two internet-based application platforms namely: Instagram and Facebook being used to view content in the form of photos or videos which may include advertisements.
Online	Online refers to an internet-based service or application that may only be operational when the device in use is connected to the internet (Skoeld, 2012). Online is a virtual space that is facilitated by a network of computers where people are able to interact (Skoeld, 2012).	For the purpose of this study, online refers to Rain's virtual store on Rain's website where people may purchase products.
Engagement	Engagement refers to the fact that people are actually utilising social media	For the purpose of this study, engagement refers to the act of browsing

	platforms to view content (Fotis, 2015). The users browse through social media platforms, like posts, sometimes comment on the posts and most importantly they share these posts with their friends who are also using these social media platforms (Fotis, 2015).	through social media thereby being exposed to Rain's social media advertisements and being able to like, comment on and share the advertisements with other users on the same or a different social media platform.
Social media users	A social media user is an individual who has signed up and created a profile on a social media platform (Fotis, 2015).	In this study, social media users refer to individuals who have profiles on either Instagram or Facebook. These individuals are required to be active users meaning that they use these social media platforms often, at least weekly.
Social media advertising	Social Media Advertising is a paid form of mass marketing in which ideas, products and services are presented by an advertiser on a social media platform to persuade users to purchase their product. (Fotis, 2015). It is a form of marketing (Fotis, 2015).	In this study, social media advertising refers to an organisation posting a picture or video on either Instagram or Facebook where they market their products, services and/or brand. (An advertisement viewed on a social media platform).
Behaviour	Behaviour refers to the way in which an individual act (Fotis, 2015). A behaviour is an action (Fotis, 2015).	In this study behaviour refers to the action of the participant based on their perception of Rains' social media advertisement.
Electronic word-of-mouth	Electronic word-of-mouth refers to the viral spread of information through comments, discussion forums and the private direct message features on social media platforms (Rambe & Jafeta, 2017).	For the purpose of this study, electronic word-of-mouth refers to Facebook and Instagram users sending direct messages concerning Rain's social media advertisements to other users on these social media platforms.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY:

4.1. Research Paradigm:

The term paradigm was first used by Thomas Kuhn in 1962 when he was attempting to designate a conceptual framework in order to find solutions to identified problems (UNISA, n.d.). The term refers to a set of beliefs, values and assumptions about a particular phenomenon in a field of study (UNISA, n.d.). In research, a paradigm may also be described as a worldview or particular perspective of the way in which a topic is studied (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014).

In this study, the researcher aimed to explore the perceived impact of social media advertising on Rain consumers' online purchase intention therefore, the paradigm selected for this study is Interpretivism. Interpretivism refers to studying people in their environment (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). "The aim of interpretivist research is to gain an in-depth understanding of peoples experiences" (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014:28). Therefore, interpretivism will be an appropriate paradigm to use for this study as it will be attempting to gain an understanding of the perceived impact that Rain's social media advertisements have on its consumers decision to purchase their products online. The participants in this study have different perceptions of Rain's social media advertisements and how these advertisements are viewed as having a perceived influence on their decision to purchase a product online. The focus on the participants individual perceptions reflects the importance of the hermeneutic tradition in this study (Thanh & Thanh, 2015).

Interpretivist researchers aim to understand the world of human experiences (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). Since the researcher is taking into consideration the participants individual experiences and interpretations of social media advertisements, the interpretivist paradigm is considered a relevant choice for this study. An interpretivism framework will be followed as the aim of this study is to explore the role of social media advertising rather than creating general cause and effect assumptions. This study aims to gain knowledge and an in-depth understanding for that knowledge (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014).

In interpretivist studies, qualitative methods are usually used (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). Interpretivism aims to uncover the meaning of the participants in the study in order to

better understand the topic (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). The qualitative approach of this study will enable the researcher to obtain an in-depth understanding of the participants, unlike the past literature that was predominantly quantitative in nature which did not allow for as much detail of the consumers perspective of social media advertising.

Ontology is one of the dimensions of a paradigm and has to do with the nature of reality and what is understood about it (UNISA, n.a.). Within the interpretivism paradigm, multiple realities may be established and explored through human interaction. These realities are subjective and unstable meaning that each participant may experience different realities based on their environment and beliefs and these may change over time (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). In this study, the reality is that Rain is spending a large amount of money on social media advertising in order to persuade its consumers' into purchasing its products but the consumers may not be interpreting the advertisement in the same way Rain intends them to.

Epistemology is another dimension of a paradigm and refers to the study of knowledge (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). Knowledge is created through individuals' experiences in real life and the interpretations of their experiences (UNISA, n.a.). In this study, the participants (who are Rain consumers) all experience the advertisements on social media differently and Rain's advertisements influence them differently. These influences are subjective to the individual, and are bound by the individual's interpretations of Rain's social media advertisements.

The interpretivism paradigm is relevant to this study as it will assist in obtaining a deeper understanding of the topic through the identified patterns and themes from previous literature as well as the individual experiences and perceptions from the participants in this study in order to establish shared meaning.

As this study is exploring human behaviour in relation to the perceived impact of Rain's social media advertising, it is significant to mention that the interpretivism paradigm was well aligned with the nature of this study.

4.2. Research Approach and design:

A cross-sectional qualitative approach was used as the nature of this study is subjective and requires an in-depth understanding of the data collected (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). Qualitative methods assist in acquiring in-depth understanding and insight of the perceived impact of social media advertising on the online purchasing behaviour of Rain consumers' (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014).

Qualitative research focuses on the underlying qualities of subjective encounters as well as the meanings associated with a specific phenomenon (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). Using a qualitative research approach together with an interpretivist method allows the researcher to obtain in-depth data which will be used to understand the participants subjective experiences. This research study aims to explore, understand and describe the using an interpretivist qualitative research approach, not measure, predict and generalise findings as quantitative researchers do (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014).

This study is exploratory. The aim of exploratory research is to identify and collect new information about a topic (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). As previously mentioned, not much research has been conducted on social media as a marketing tool on a specific company in South Africa and this study will fill this gap in knowledge.

This study is cross-sectional, which refers to research that is conducted once off meaning that data will only be collected from participants once and it will not be repeated (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). This time frame will be beneficial for this study as the research conducted will be from the most current time frame, therefore, this study will provide the most updated research on the perceived impact of Rain advertisements on its consumers purchasing intentions. The time frame for this study is one-year as required for an Honours Research course, therefore a cross-sectional approach would be most appropriate.

Deductive theorising will be used in this study. It involves reasoning from general assumptions to more specific assumptions as the researcher investigates broad aspects of theory then applying it to the specific topic of study (du Plooy-Cilliers et

al., 2014). This study will use an existing theory and previous studies before applying it to this research topic. Deductive theorising allows for the researcher to test an existing theory (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014).

Deductive reasoning will be applied because the Theory of Planned Behaviour is an already established theory with its own assumptions guided by its key concepts. This theory will be applied to this study to make more precise assumptions about the perceived impacts that Rain's social media advertisements has on its consumers purchasing intention by applying the theory's general key concepts in the interview questions and themes for data analysis for this study (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014).

4.3. Population:

4.3.1. Population:

It is a group of people from whom information will be required. (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014). Due to the fact that the population consists of so many people it is usually impossible to reach all of them (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014), therefore we need to narrow the population down to the target population and the accessible population.

4.3.2. Unit of Analysis:

The units of analysis refer to the shared characteristics of the people in the population. (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). The participants in this study are South African citizens who reside in Sandton, Johannesburg.

4.3.3. Target and accessible population:

Target population:

The target population refers to everyone that falls within the nature, size, and the unique characteristics of the population (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014). In this study the target population is all Rain consumers in Gauteng.

Accessible population:

The accessible population refers only to the section of the population that will be included in this study (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). In this study, the accessible population is all the Rain customers residing in Johannesburg that are currently using Rains' services and are active on social media.

4.3.4. Population Parameters (Characteristics):

The parameters refer to the characteristics of the population in the study (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). The population parameters are the shared characteristics such as the nature, size and unique characteristics of the population in the study. (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014). In this study, the population parameters are the participants who have purchased a product online from Rain. They are aged between 18 – 65 years old. They are Rain consumers and are active on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram where Rain advertises on.

The participants in this study may be part of any race, gender or culture as this study represents the South African population as much as possible for the scope of this study.

4.4. Sampling:

4.4.1. Non-probability sampling:

Non-probability sampling is used when it is nearly impossible to determine who the entire population is or when it is difficult to gain access to the entire population specifically in exploratory and qualitative studies (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). The researcher is unable to access the entire target population and this is an exploratory qualitative study, therefore non-probability is best suited to this study.

4.4.2. Sampling Method:

Convenience Sampling is a non-probability sampling method where the participants are known to the researcher (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). Convenience sampling is used in order for the researcher to easily and quickly gain access to the participants and is most often used in exploratory research studies (Jadhav & Khanna, 2016). In this sampling method, units of the target population fall into the criteria such as being easily accessible and the geographical proximity, the fact that the target population

will be available during a given time as well the willingness of the target population to participate in the study (Jadhav & Khanna, 2016).

It has been chosen as participants are easier to access and are more willing to participate (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown regulation in South Africa, having face-to-face interviews would be difficult therefore gaining access to the participants may only be available online through video calling platforms such as Zoom, WhatsApp video calling and Facetime in order to conduct interviews. Since convenience sampling will be used, the researcher personally knows the participants and contacted to find out if they would be willing to participate and then sent them a consent form and set up an online interview on a date when the participant was available. The researcher ensured that the participants were Rain consumers that had access to zoom, WhatsApp calling and Facetime and a good internet connection. In the case where participants may have had to withdraw from the study for any reason, the researcher had a list of possible participants that also fell into the target population. One participant did withdraw and the researcher had to contact another person on the list.

4.4.3. Sample Size:

The Sample size refers to the unit number included in a sample population and for this study it included five participants because qualitative research usually focuses on a limited number of participants as opposed to quantitative research (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). This will be a fair enough sample size for a cross-sectional qualitative study to gain enough in-depth responses that will add more information to the topic in study.

4.5. Data Collection:

4.5.1. Data collection method:

Semi-structured interviews were used as they are less time consuming than in-depth interviews and allowed for subjective answers from the participants that still provide enough detail which is needed for this study (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). It involves for formal interviews to be conducted whereby the interviewer follows structured questions that are predetermined according to the research problem. The

interviewer has the option to probe the participant during the interview when required (UNISA, n.d.). Semi-structured interviews will be used as it enables the researcher to collect subjective data regarding the topic which will be obtained through personal conversation which are not possible through questionnaires (UNISA, n.d.).

4.5.2. Data collection application:

The researcher contacted members of the target population by telephone to find out if they would be interested in participating in this study and if they had access to the video calling platforms such as zoom, WhatsApp and/or Facetime as well as a stable internet connection. Once the researcher had enough participant for this study (five) that meet all these requirements, the researcher sent each of the participants a consent form via email explaining the study and what is required of each participant for them to sign and agree to participate in the study as well as a consent form for the participant to sign and agree to be recorded for the purpose of this study's data collection. Once the consent forms were signed and returned to the researcher via email, the researcher scheduled a date and time for the interview to take place and then sent them an email with the zoom call link.

(The interview schedule may be found in Annexure B).

All interviews took place via a zoom video call as all participants had access to this platform. Before the interview had begun, the researcher provided some information to the participants about the study similar to what was explained in the consent form. The researcher asked if the participants had any questions before the interview began and reminded them that this is completely voluntary and if the participants wish to withdraw from the study, they should not hesitate to let the researcher know. The researcher also explained that the video should take approximately 20 minutes maximum and that if either the researcher or the participants were experiencing internet connectivity issues that they should wait two minutes, maybe exit the zoom application and then login again. If the problem was still not resolved, then the researcher would contact the participant telephonically and ask to either reschedule the interview or try the interview on another platform.

During all five interviews – there were no interruptions so this was not necessary but this precaution had to be put in place in case of technical issues.

The zoom call was also recorded on the zoom application so that a backup recording was available should the audio stop recording by any chance. The researcher then began the interview by recording the interview using the audio voice memo application on the researcher's mobile device, asking the participants the pre-determined questions while the participants answered and the researcher asked probing questions where necessary. When all questions were answered the researcher thanked the participants for participating and reminded them that if they should have any questions, queries or concerns they should contact the researcher via the contact details provided to them in the consent form. The recording was then stopped and stored on the researcher's computer.

Semi-structured interviews gave the participants freedom to express their views and this study will rely on the participants responses to effectively contribute to the knowledge of the study. Probing place where necessary to gather clear and detailed explanations to the participants responses (UNISA, n.d.). It is intended that each interview should be conducted face-to-face with the participants in a setting of privacy allowing for them to freely express their opinions for in-depth data to be collected however due to the strict regulations on gatherings imposed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, interviews took place online via Zoom and were recorded on the researchers mobile device as well as the record option on zoom to make sure that no content was lost during the process. The negatives of using an online video calling platform when conducting the interview is that the participant or the researcher could lose signal or internet connectivity. In this case, the person experiencing connectivity issues would have to wait a few minutes and reconnect and if that was not possible, the interview would need to be rescheduled. Fortunately, no connectivity issues were experienced during the online interviews. The advantages of using an online video calling platform like zoom for the interview is that Participants are in the comfort of their homes so privacy should still be ensured.

The interviews took between thirteen and twenty-one minutes.

4.6. Data Analysis:

“Data analysis is the most complex phase of qualitative research, and one that receives the least thoughtful discussion in literature” (Nowell, Norris, white, Moules, 2017: 1).

Thematic analysis was used as it was helpful with critically analysing the unique, individual and subjective answers of the participants by identifying themes within the data to assist with the findings (du Poooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). It is a method for identifying, analysing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set (du Poooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). Thematic analysis is a process for encoding information qualitatively (Fotis, 2015).

A theme refers to a pattern identified in the data that the researcher has inspected (Fotis, 2015). The themes are generated deductively from theories as well as previous literature (Fotis, 2015). This data analysis method required the researcher to identify key words that are commonly used in the transcription of the interview. Themes are identified when they are commonly used in the same context and have a similar meaning (Nowell et al., 2017).

4.6.1. Data analysis method

There are six phases of thematic analysis that were followed by the researcher (Nowell et al., 2017).

Phase one was familiarising oneself with the data (Nowell et al., 2017). This phase is concerned with keeping record of all interview notes, jotting down important potential themes that might arise (Nowell et al., 2017). The researcher went about this by jotting down important notes and transcribing each interview on a word document. Once the interviews were transcribed. The researcher made sure to store this information in a well-organised archive.

Phase two is ‘Generating initial codes’ (Nowell et al., 2017). In this phase the researcher would need to start an audit trail of code generation (Nowell et al., 2017). Here, the researcher went about coding by colour coding the responses of each participant. If the responses were similar or the same then they would be highlighted in the same colour.

Phase three is ‘Searching for themes’ and in this phase the researcher used the data from the interviews to develop a hierarchy of themes and concepts that was found in the data by critically analysing it (Nowell et al., 2017). Here the researcher jotted

down possible themes by reading through the transcription of the interviews and identifying common responses from the participants. The researcher examined the participant responses that were colour coded in the same colour and came up with a common phrase or word for all the similar responses.

Phase four is 'Reviewing themes' and here the researcher will provide themes and subthemes that have been identified in the raw data (Nowell et al., 2017). Here, the researcher put each of the themes in a table. Each theme was in a different colour. Each theme was then assigned a code number. For example, theme one was word-of-mouth and theme two was advertisement.

Phase five is 'Defining and naming themes' (Nowell et al., 2017). During this step, the researcher created another table where the codes were assigned to the participants that used those codes. For example, for participant one, word-of-mouth was the identified theme they had used which is theme 1 therefore participant one was assigned the number "01" along with the other participants that used this theme in their response in the interview.

Phase six is 'Producing a report' and is the final stage of thematic analysis. In this phase the researcher will "report on reasons for theoretical, methodological, and analytical choices throughout the entire study" (Nowell et al., 2017: 4). In this final phase, the researcher explained the information in the tables for each question identified which where the most common responses in the interview as well as the least common responses.

Thematic analysis is a useful data analysis method to use as it does not require in-depth theoretical knowledge of other qualitative methods. It is useful for examining the unique perspectives of each participant by highlighting the similar and different responses of the interview questions (Nowell et al., 2017).

"Thematic analysis is also useful for summarizing key features of a large data set, as it forces the researcher to take a well-structured approach to handling data, helping to produce a clear and organised final report" (Nowell et al., 2017:5). Even though there are many advantages of thematic analysis, the disadvantages should also be acknowledged.

“While thematic analysis is flexible, this flexibility can lead to inconsistency and a lack of coherence when developing themes derived from the research data. Consistency and cohesion can be promoted by applying and making explicit an epistemological position that can underpin the study’s empirical claims”. (Nowell et al., 2017: 2).

4.6.2. Data analysis application:

Here the data analysis for the first question is provided. Data analysis for questions 2 – 15 are provided in Annexure E.

Thematic Analysis: Coding the participants responses into themes:

(P1 represents participant 1, P2 represents participant 2 and so on)

Question 1: Where did you first hear about Rain?

- P1: My grandfather told me about Rain as he is involved in the company.
- P2: My boyfriend told me about Rain, thereafter I’ve come across Rain advertisements on radio, Instagram and TV.
- P3: I saw a Rain advertisement on TV.
- P4: My daughter told me about Rain.
- P5: The first time I heard of Rain was on a TV advert.

Themes and subthemes for question 1

Word-of-mouth	01
Advertisement	02
- Radio	
- TV	
- Social media	

	Question 1
P1	01
P2	01, 02
P3	02
P4	01

P5	02
Most common response	01, 02
Least common response	01, 02

When the participants were asked where they had first heard about Rain, they listed the following reasons: through word-of-mouth and from viewing Rain advertisements. (3/5 – 60%) said that they had first heard about Rain through word-of-mouth and the other two participants said that they first heard of Rain when viewing advertisements. This shows that more people are coming to know about Rain through word-of-mouth and advertisements rather than social media advertisements (Facebook and Instagram).

5. FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS:

Table of the key themes identified and used in this section is found in Annexure D.

Theme 1: Exposure to 'Rain'

In question 1, participants were asked where they had first heard about Rain. 60% of participants said that they had first heard about Rain through word-of-mouth, while 40% of participants stated that they first heard about Rain when viewing advertisements on television. This shows that more people are coming to know about Rain through word-of-mouth and advertisements mainly on television rather than social media. The study by Nelmapius and Boshoff (2016) and Lancater (2020) contradicts the researcher's findings by stating that television advertisements are no longer grabbing people's attention as people are turning to social media for content. The responses from participants' 2, 3 and 5 strongly implies that television advertisements are grabbing people's attention. Even though the participants regularly use social media, they still consume television advertisements and other advertising mediums such as radio as mentioned by participant 2.

Theme 2: The consumers perceived influence of 'Rain'

This theme consists of interview question 2, 3 and 4. In question 2, participants were asked what made them make their first purchase from Rain. 80% of participants

mentioned that they purchased a Rain product because they needed it while participant 3 said that after viewing a Rain advertisement on Instagram, they were persuaded to purchase the product. Participants that stated that they needed the product also mentioned that the product was affordable. Participant 2 mentioned that positive reviews had an influence on purchasing a Rain product online and participant 1 stated that they had been referred to Rain.

Participant 3's response supports the study by Nelmapius and Boshoff (2016) as well as Zeljko, Jakovic and Strunger's study (2018), whereby it is mentioned that people are turning to social media for their media consumption needs and social media adverts are grabbing more people's attention than other forms of mass media, however only one participant stated that it was an Instagram advertisement that influenced them to purchase a Rain product. Le Roux and Maree's 2016 study explained that "A positive attitude of the brand will increase buying intent" (le Roux & Maree, 2016: 4). Having a product that is affordable can create a positive attitude about Rain which seems to be the case in question 2.

In question 3, participants were asked to describe their experiences on choosing a product to purchase online. All five participants mentioned that they consider the safety of the website before making a purchase. The study by Le Roux and Maree (2016) confirms that consumers who are more comfortable with the brand and would feel more comfortable to purchase from them therefore companies reassure the safety of their website by providing information about their official websites and reviews from other customers to ensure trustworthiness and safety for their consumers.

In question 4, participants were asked to describe their perception of 'Rain'. All five participants stated that Rain is a great company which offers good services and products and that they would recommend Rain to others.

According to Sanne and Wiese's (2018) study on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), the more positive the attitude towards social media advertising, the more peers are perceived to encourage the behaviour. This statement contradicts the participants responses as it seems that they have a positive attitude with the

company 'Rain' and this positive attitude towards 'Rain' and not specifically social media advertisements which are encouraging online purchasing behaviours.

These findings have been used to understand the research problem by establishing that other factors such as positive reviews, trustworthiness have an influence on consumers online purchasing intention.

Theme 3: Consumers interpretation of Rain's social media advertisements

Question 5 asked participants in what way does social media advertisements grab their attention. 60% of participants stated that Rain social media does not grab their attention, while participant 1 stated that they only pay attention to certain advertisements on social media with Rain being one of those and participant 5 mentioned that they pay attention to all the content posted on social media including advertisements. Here, the findings indicate that most participants are not interested in social media advertisements which contradicts studies conducted by Nelmapius & Boshoff (2016) where it had been established that social media advertisements tend to be more attractive as more people are using social media. Participant 3 and 4 indicated that they view advertisements on other mass media platforms.

In question 6, 80% of participants stated that they do not see Rain advertisements as often as they did before they had purchased a product from Rain.

Participant 2, 4 and 5 stated that they view advertisements on other mass media platforms such as Radio, television, and YouTube.

In question 7, participants were asked to describe their attitude towards Rain's social media advertisements. 60% of participants had a positive attitude towards Rain's social media advertisements while the other two had a negative attitude as they felt the advertisements were annoying. These findings contradict Lata and Singh's (2016) study which explains that users are more exposed to social media advertisements since more people are using social media sites. The TPB states that the more positive the attitude towards social media advertising, the more peers are perceived to encourage in their online purchasing behaviour (Sanne & Wiese, 2018), however the researcher's findings seem to contradict this statement.

The findings related to this theme suggests that advertisements on social media are not the main driving force that influences consumers to purchase products online

however it could indicate that Rain is no longer targeting consumers on social media as they have already purchased a product therefore, they are not noticing these social media advertisements as often.

Theme 4: Consumers interaction with Rain's social media advertisements

In question 8, participants were asked to explain whether or not they used the hyperlink found at the bottom of the advertisement after viewing one of Rain's social media advertisements on social media. 60% of participants stated that they did use the hyperlink to access Rain's website while the other two participants stated that they prefer not to use hyperlinks at all. Participant 4 and 2 had some concerns of the safety of the social media platform therefore are a bit wary when it comes to hyperlinks. Participant 2 did mention that hyperlinks are convenient. The TPB reinforces the researcher findings as it suggests that engagement with social media advertisements will increase online purchasing behaviours (Sanne & Wiese, 2018). Majority of the participants were engaging with the advertisement and did purchase a Rain product through this engagement.

In question 9, participants were asked if they would be more inclined to purchase a product after viewing it online. The researcher found that all five participants would be more inclined if they have an interest in the product. 60% of participants said that they research the product and then decide whether they would buy it. Participant 1 explained that they would need to trust the website first and participant 5 said that they prefer not to shop online because of trust issues with online websites.

Theme 5: Electronic word-of-mouth

In question 10, 11 and 12, participants were asked if they share Rain social media advertisements with their friends or family as well as the kinds of posts are being shared between them and their social media friends and family. 60% of participants stated that they do not share Rain advertisements on social media whereas the other two participants do because they knew of people who needed the product. Only participant 2 said that they share other social media advertisements while the rest share other content unrelated to Rain and advertising. These findings do not align with Erkan and Evans (2018) study where it was explained that sharing of

social media advertisements creates trust and increases the consumers online purchasing intention as the advertisements are not usually being shared.

Participant 1 and 3 did mention that they do receive social media advertisements from friends and family. The findings imply that there is not as much focus electronic word-of-mouth as stated in Cheung, Liu and Lee's (2015) study.

Theme 6: Influences on online purchasing decisions

Question 13 and 14 attempted to find out information from the participants perspective of any perceived influences by asking about factors that have had a role in the participants purchasing decisions. 60% of participants explained that it's not social media but rather other mass media platforms that have influenced them to purchase products online. The study by Zeljko, Jakovic and Strunger's (2018) contradicts the researcher's findings as the participants are still influenced by television advertisements. 60% of participants did mention that word-of-mouth did contribute to their online purchasing behaviour rather than electronic-word-of-mouth mentioned in the literature. 80% of participants stated that they will purchase a product online if they have a need for the product and 60% of participants said that safety of the website is a big factor in their purchasing decisions as well as their previous experience with the company or online purchasing.

In question 15, participants were asked about the trustworthiness of Rain's website and all five participants stated that Rains website is indeed safe and trustworthy as Rains' website as they are informative and consistently send valid communication. This supports Le Roux & Maree, (2016) study whereby it is explained that companies tend to reassure their audience that their website is safe by providing Information.

6. TRUSTWORTHINESS OF FINDINGS:

It is important for a study to be trustworthy in order for the results of the study to be credible and provide useful knowledge to the topic of study (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). The qualitative nature of this study requires it to be trustworthy. There are four criteria of a trustworthy study namely: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). Credibility refers to the researcher ensuring that the interpretation of the qualitative data is accurate (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). In order to

uphold the credibility, the researcher aligned the research questions and methodology to the theoretical foundation by using semi-structured interviews to gain an understanding of the perceived impacts of Rain's social media advertisements on its consumers purchasing intention.

Transferability refers to the findings generated in this study being similar to other similar studies such as the ones mentioned in the previous literature (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). When a similar topic of study is conducted which has generated a similar result, transferability has been achieved. The researcher found that transferability has not been achieved as the findings are not similar to another study of similar interests (Nieuwenhuis, 2016).

Dependability is exhibited through the detailed process of collecting data and the reflective appraisal of the final report (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). The researcher ensured dependability by allowing others who have access to the original raw data to critically revise and interpret the codes, sources and the data collection method that were documented during the data analysis process.

Confirmability refers to the objective nature of the findings that have been formed by the participants of the study (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). The researcher ensured that confirmability was upheld by including direct quotes from the participants' responses and this will endorse the interpretation and applications of the main concepts of the theory of planned behaviour helping the researcher avoid quoting the participants words out of context.

7. CONCLUSION:

7.1. Summary of findings as they relate to the research question, problem and objectives:

Objective 1: To explore the role of social media advertising in particular, Facebook and Instagram on the consumers' online purchasing intention.

The researcher has found that the role of social media advertising on the consumers' online purchasing intention is relatively low compared to the role of word-of-mouth and other mass media platforms where advertisements are viewed. Three

participants believe that social media advertisement have not had any influence of their online purchasing decision as they commonly consume Rain advertisements via television, radio or other social media platforms besides Facebook and Instagram. The responses of these participants align with the study conducted by Ramalingam, Palaniappan, Panchnatham, and Palanivel (2006) where it is mentioned that in most cases, television advertising and SMS advertising does influence the viewers purchasing intention in a positive way however is contradicted by Nelmapius and Boshoff's more recent (2016) study that stated television advertisements are failing to grab viewers' attention.

However, participants stated that they still come across social media advertisements and engage with them by using the hyperlinks to gain access to Rain's website and two participants indicated that they shared these social media advertisements to their friends and family which supports the study by Chu (2011) where it is mentioned that sharing advertisements and content on social media may be perceived as an influence of online purchasing intention.

Objective 2: To gain a deeper knowledge of the perceived impact of Rain's social media advertisements on its consumers' purchasing intention

When reviewing the participant's responses to the interview questions, it can be determined that there are many perceived impacts of Rains social media advertisements such as trust. All five participants agree that Rain's website is safe due to their experience of using Rain's website, however the main concern is to how to establish whether a website is safe and trustworthy because safety is a main concern when purchasing online. Studies conducted by Fotis (2015), Erkan and Evans (2018) and Cheung et al., (2015) all mention that trust of a website can be gained through sharing social media content and advertisements with those who a person trust. The findings of this study have shown that the perceived impact of social media advertisements are not as relevant as other mass media platforms.

Objective 3: To explore whether social media advertising would be a beneficial marketing tool for organisations to invest in.

It has been established the other forms of media such as television, radio and other social media platforms besides Facebook and Instagram are still being used and viewed today with 3/5 participants stating that consume advertisements on television, radio and YouTube.

The research question states, 'What are the perceived impacts of social media advertising on the online purchase intention of Rain consumers?' The problem is to what extent do Rain social media advertisements influence its consumers intention to purchase its products online.

The researcher found that the anticipated conclusion (social media advertising does have an influence on consumers online purchasing decisions) differed from the findings of this study as it has been concluded that television advertisements, word-of-mouth and positive reviews seem to be major perceived influences in the online purchasing intention of Rain consumers.

The research problem had been addressed through the interview questions which helped the researcher understand whether Rains' social media advertising is influencing Rain consumers purchasing intention. Other studies conducted on purchasing intention behaviour did not incorporate telecommunication companies and were mostly international and quantitative in nature. This study has contributed to another perspective for other researchers.

7.2. Anticipated contribution of the study (Implications of findings):

The aim of the researcher was to identify the motive that drives individuals to purchase products online by uncovering whether or not Rain's social media advertising is perceived to be impacting Rains consumers' online purchasing intention. The researcher intended to provide other businesses with a knowledge by building on existing knowledge around the online marketing field. The researcher hoped to discover and construct more knowledge relevant to the South African context as there is not much literature on the consumers perceptions around online purchasing in South Africa. The researcher did achieve this however the previous literature and quantitative studies regarding this topic is far different from the findings of this study. This study contributed academically to the media and marketing fields.

7.3. Ethical Considerations:

Ethical considerations are important for participants and researcher's safety and reputation (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). There are separate ethical considerations for the participant and the researcher (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). In order for the participants to be protected, the researcher needs to ensure that they get the participants permission to participate in the study by providing them with a consent form with a detailed explanation of the study and what is required of the participant to sign (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). When collecting data, the researcher ensured that the participants remained anonymous so that their personal information is protected (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). The researcher ensured that the participants were in a private setting when the interview took place and that only those authorised to view the data will do so by advising the participant to sit in a quiet room with no one around while the online interview was conducted. The researcher needs to avoid causing harm to the participants during the study by not making the participants feel embarrassed when probing questions or asking overly sensitive information. All participants were debriefed about the entire study by the researcher to ensure they fully understand the study. The researcher was honest with the participants and avoided deception at all costs.

The researcher's approach to the study was ethical as well. The researcher did not falsify information by deliberately changing data. The researcher did not distort results to justify the relevance of the study (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). The researcher did not misuse information. The data collected is to be strictly used for this study only (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). The researcher made sure that this study was ethical and up to research policy and standards.

7.4. Limitations of the study:

Limitations include any potential problems you may have when conducting the research study (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). Anything that may threaten the validity of the research study can be viewed as a limitation (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014).

This research study only had a sample size of 5 therefore, limiting the amount of information the researcher was able to collect, more participants may have resulted in better understanding of participants perceptions. In addition, this was the researcher's first time doing a research study which may have limited the study due

to a lack of expertise in research. The Covid-19 pandemic also poses as a limitation as it affects accessibility to participants as not all participants had a stable internet connection during all times of the day.

Moreover, this research study had a financial resource limitation as there was no budget involved in this study, therefore no additional help and a small sample size making accessibility another limitation. Lastly, this research study was also limited with time as it had to be completed within one year.

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9. Annexures:

9.1. Annexure A – Consent Form



CONSENT FORM TEMPLATE

Explanatory information sheet and consent form for participants
To whom it may concern,
My name is Brogan Joseph and I am a student at The IIE Varsity College, Sandton. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Alecia Fourie about exploring the influence of a telecommunications company's (Rain) social media advertising on the online purchasing intention of its consumers in Gauteng. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of social media advertising and will assist marketing agencies with the consideration of investing into digital marketing to increase their online market. This study also contributes academically to the media and marketing fields. The aim of the researcher is to identify the motive that drives individuals to purchase products online by uncovering whether or not Rain's social media advertising is perceived to be impacting Rain's consumers' online purchasing intention. The researcher intends to provide other businesses with a knowledge by building on existing knowledge around the online marketing field. The researcher hopes to discover and construct more knowledge relevant to the South African context as there is not much literature on the consumers' perceptions around online purchasing in South Africa. I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.
What will I be doing if I participate in your study?
I would like to invite you to participate in this research because I would like to find out some of the perceived impacts of the advertising on the online purchasing intention of Rain consumers. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to conduct an interview where you will be required to honestly answer a few questions based on the company Rain and their social media advertising. You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.
Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study?
Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might, however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about your experiences with social media advertising particularly with Rain as well as purchasing a product online while using a social media advertisement. If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.
Do I have to participate in the study?
• Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary;

- If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so;
- Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.

Will my identity be protected?

I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my supervisor, I and possibly a professional transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at The IIE Varsity College, Sandton will have access to your interview information. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the findings of the research, but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.

What will happen to the information that participants provide?

Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my Bachelor of Arts Honours in Communication. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.

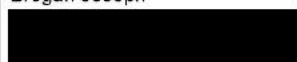
What happens if I have more questions about the study?

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

My contact details are as follows:

Brogan Joseph



The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:

Alecia Fourie



Consent form for participants					
I, _____, agree to participate in the research conducted by Brogan Kairo Joseph about the perceived impact of social media advertising on the online purchasing intention of telecommunication consumers in Gauteng. (How consumers make decisions to purchase products online based on Rain's social media advertisements). This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that: • I agree to be interviewed for this research. • My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private. • My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research. • I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview. • I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.					
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Signature	Date				



CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO OR VIDEO RECORDING

Consent form for participants	
I, _____, agree to allow Brogan Kairo Joseph to audio record my interviews as part of the research about exploring possible motives that drive individuals to purchase products online by uncovering whether or not Rain's social media advertising is perceived to be impacting Rains consumers' online purchasing intention. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that: • My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private. • The recordings will be stored in a password-protected file on the researcher's computer. • Only the researcher, the researcher's supervisor and possibly a transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings.	
Signature	Date

9.2. Annexure B – Interview Schedule

Question 1: Where did you first hear about Rain?

Question 2: What made you make your first online purchase from Rain?

Question 3: When making a purchase online, could you please describe your experience on how you choose to purchase a product from a particular company?

Question 4: Could you please describe your perception of the company 'Rain'?

Question 5: In what way does social media advertisements grab your attention?

Question 6: How often do you notice a Rain advertisement on social media platforms?

Question 7: Describe your attitude toward Rain's social media advertisements.

Question 8: Explain whether or not you took an interest in Rain after viewing one of their social media advertisements on social media by using the hyperlink found at the bottom of the advertisement.

Question 9: After viewing an advertisement on social media, would you be more inclined to purchase that product being advertised

Question 10: Do you ever share Rain advertisements with your family and friends on social media? Why?

Question 11: what kinds of posts do you send to your friends and family on social media?

Question 12: what kind of posts does your family and friends on social media share with you?

Question 13: Besides social media platforms, explain whether any person or any other medium had a role in your online purchasing decisions?

Question 14: What would you think influence you to purchase a rain product or any other product online?

Question 15: In your opinion, is Rain's website safe and trustable? Elaborate.

9.3. Annexure C – Ethical Clearance Letter



24 JULY 2020

Student name: Brogan Joseph
Student number: 17230170
Campus: IIE's Varsity College

Re: Approval of Bachelor of Arts in Communication Proposal and Ethics Clearance

HONOURS ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

Your research proposal and the ethical implications of your proposed research topic were reviewed by your supervisor and the campus research panel, a subcommittee of The Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee.

There are some aspects that you still need to address in your proposal. You will need to address these aspects in consultation with your supervisor before you may proceed (see below):

Please discuss with your supervisor/navigator/lecturer how you will address these issues listed below:

Please note: **Your fieldwork may only proceed once you address the following issues:**

- Please make all the changes suggested/recommended by your supervisor.
- Title suggestion: *The perceived impact of social media advertising on the online purchasing intention of telecommunication consumers in Gauteng.*

In the event of you deciding to change your research methodology in any way, kindly consult your supervisor to ensure all ethical considerations are adhered to and pose no risk to any participant or party involved. A revised ethical clearance letter will be issued.

We wish you all the best with your research!

GENERAL CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED IN RELATION TO RESEARCH

Permission is granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted.

Please note: The panel has not considered the merits, accuracy or ethical soundness of the research. The only merits examined are the use of The IIE as a sample.

Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The researcher(s) will need to obtain informed consent in writing from all of the participants in his/ her sample if the study is not anonymous.
2. The researcher(s) may only use the data collected for research purposes and in no other way.
3. Photographs of human subjects may only be taken if relevant to the research, informed consent was obtained, and even with informed consent, the photographs may not be published on any online platforms.
4. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
5. No names or identifying information of participants may be used within the research and the research must be voluntary.
6. Please make it clear that the information will not be used punitively in any way and participants may in no way be counselled/advised based on this.

Supervisor:



ALECIA FOURIE

Campus Postgraduate Coordinator (CPC):



JENNA-LEE RAMNARAIN

9.4. Annexure D – Examples of Data Collected

Question 2: What made you make your first online purchase from Rain?

- P1: **though referrals** from family and through **Rain advertisements on Instagram**.
- P2: online I **always check the reviews**, **affordable data**, because I **don't have Wi-Fi at home**, I bought the rain product. I'll look on a company's Instagram page or website **for high ratings and positive reviews** and then if I see enough to satisfy me then I consider buying the product.
- P3: I had **seen an advertisement on social media actually on Instagram**.
- P4: during the COVID-19 lockdown period I had to work from home and **because I didn't have Wi-Fi at home**. I remembered my daughter was telling me about rain in the **affordable data rates**.
- P5: during the lockdown period I had to look after my grandchildren and they couldn't go to school so they had to do school work online and **I didn't have any Wi-Fi at home** and **it was affordable**.

Themes and subthemes for question 2

Referrals	03
Positive reviews	04
Need for the product	05
Advertisement	06
- TV - Social Media	
Affordability	07

	Question 2
P1	03, 06, 05

P2	04, 07, 05
P3	06
P4	05, 07
P5	05
Most common response	05
Least common response	03, 04

When the participants were asked what made them make their first online purchase from Rain, they listed the following responses. Referrals, positive reviews, need for the product, advertisements on social media and TV and affordability. Most participants (80%) said that they made their first online purchase from 'Rain' because they were in need of the product. This indicates that when people are in need of a product, they will purchase it and preferable at the most affordable rate as that was another common theme listed.

Question 3: When making a purchase online, could you please describe your experience on how you choose to purchase a product from a particular company?

- P1: I look mostly at the **website's functionality**. If it is **a trustworthy website**, I tend to be more likely to purchase from them I also **look at the reviews** as well as **what people are saying about it**.
- P2: First I **search for information about a product** of interest as well as the **product's reviews**. If the products reviews are generally good then I would probably buy that product. But if I'm using a website that I've never used before, **I'd ask around to make sure the site is safe to use**.

- P3: I do not purchase online often but when I do, I tend to see **how much I trust the company**. The size of the company would be one factor, how other people would refer them **and my overall experience of the website**.
- P4: Actually I don't really trust online shopping, I just prefer to go to the shop and buy things because I don't know if it's a scam or not I don't know **if I can trust this online site or not** so usually what I do is I'll ask people about it and what they think of it and if they think it's **a safe website** to use. Then **sometimes I just search on the website** I just do a Google search and I search for a product that I need to see if it's safe and **I look at the reviews of the site** if the reviews are high and they recommend a product. I purchase from the company if **they have good services**.
- P5: So usually when I'm looking for a product that I can't find in the shops then I will just I will just maybe **Google search** to see which products come up and on which websites I can find them. Usually I **prefer to buy things on Takealot because I trust it** and at the usually have a lot of stuff that I can find so usually **I would use the app**.

Themes and subthemes for Question 3:

Easy to use	08
Safety	09
Positive Reviews	04
Gathering Information	10

	Question 3
P1	08, 09, 04, 10
P2	10, 04, 09
P3	09, 08
P4	09, 10, 04, 08
P5	10, 09
Most common response	09
Least common response	08, 04

In this question, the participants answers were quite similar, and every participant (100%) did mention concerns of their safety online and the websites safety. Consumers seem to be quite concerned with the trustworthiness and safety when using unfamiliar online platforms.

Question 4: Could you please describe your perception of the company 'Rain'?

- P1: I see Rain as a forward moving company very modern. I've noticed that they include lots of racial groups which is a good thing and their campaigns are modern they use a lot of hashtags and one of the best campaigns was the cricket campaign which I thought was a really cool idea. I highly rate their products and they service because I think that they fill a gap in the market that isn't there and they do provide quick speeds at relatively low prices.

- P2: I think they are a good company. I have both a 4G and 5G sim at home and they both work great. I get great coverage for such a low and affordable price. I would recommend them.
- P3: I think Rain is a good company and to my experiences they provide me with good service. I would recommend them.
- P4: Now that I have been using the product, I think that rain is an excellent company, the service was actually great, I ordered the stuff online and they delivered my product the next day and the set up was so easy and simple and the product works fantastic. I would recommend the product for these reasons.
- P5: I think Rain is a good company as everything seems to be working excellently so I think that the service is very good I remember when I ordered the product it was even during lockdown level I think it was level four and am they actually deliver that to me The day after I ordered it on the website so I think that the service is excellent. I would definitely recommend it to others.

Themes and subthemes for question 4:

Modern - Cool campaigns	11
Inclusive - Accommodating to all	12
Good service	13
Recommend	14

	Question 4
P1	11, 12, 13
P2	11, 13, 14
P3	13, 14
P4	13, 14
P5	13, 14
Most common response	13

Least common response	12
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When the participants were asked to describe their perception of Rain, (5/5 – 100%) of the participants said that Rain's service is excellent. Participant 1 answered the question a little differently whereas the other participants focused on their experiences that has an influence on their perception of Rain as well as mention that they would recommend Rain to others.

Question 5: In what way does social media advertisements grab your attention?

- P1: It doesn't grab my attention too much but it does bring my attention to the company better than any other platform. It depends if I have the need for the product or not or an interest in it but most of the time, I do use tend to skip passed them.

- P2: It always grabs my attention. I always take note of it but sometime when I see other adverts then I just skip past it. I think I'm just familiar with Rain so I just pay attention to it.
- P3: I mainly notice it through adverts on YouTube or just by scrolling through Instagram. I usually skip the ads but there have been times on Instagram where I have swiped up and followed the links to the site.
- P4: It doesn't really grab my attention on social media because I don't have time to be looking at adverts but sometimes when I watch TV I see the adverts and it actually grabs my attention on TV because I see Rain and I notice that's the product I have. But on social media I actually think that it's quite an irritation I don't want to see adverts popping up all the time I don't like that also it doesn't grab my attention at all but It does on TV.
- P5: I would have to say that it does grab my attention. When I do see the advert on Facebook and it grabs my attention because I just see the price the price is actually what grabs my attention. I don't skip through things they are always check just to make sure maybe there is some important information because I like to follow pages like of the news so there might be something important.

Themes and subthemes for question 5:

Effectiveness	15
- Social media advertising effective	
Familiarity	16
Skip	17

Uninterested	18
Using other platforms - Adverts Other social media platforms - Adverts on TV	19
Annoying	20

	Question 5
P1	17, 18
P2	15, 17, 16
P3	19, 17
P4	15, 17, 18, 19, 20
P5	15
Most common response	17
Least common response	16

When participants were asked In what way does social media advertisements grab your attention, (4/5 – 80%) of the participants mentioned that they usually skip through the advertisements on social media as it does not grab their attention, however they did mention that Rain advertisements on television grab their attention so it seems as though television advertisements are still widely viewed and taken note of.

Question 6: How often do you notice a Rain advertisement on social media platforms?

- P1: I wouldn't say as often as I've noticed others but I guess that could be compare to my searches and interests and the data that has been gathered on. I would say once every two months maybe.

- P2: Before I used to see it quite often but now, I don't really see it much. I usually see rain ads on tv. I haven't seen a Rain advert on Instagram for months.
- P3: I would say that when I had been searching for Wi-Fi, I noticed it more. So, at that point I would say maybe twice a month.
- P4: I haven't seen a rain advertisement on social media in months. Before the lockdown I used to see a few adverts before I bought it but I've seen rain adverts on other platforms like I've seen it on the news 24 app and I've seen it also on TV.
- P5: I used to see it quite often but after I actually got the Wi-Fi, I don't seem to see it often now. I just sometimes I hear it on the radio when I'm driving and I see the adverts on TV but I don't see it on social media anymore but before I got the products are used to see it on Facebook yes.

Themes and subthemes for question 6:

Not often	21
Before purchasing the product	22
Adverts on other platforms	23
- Adverts on TV - Adverts on Radio	

	Question 6
P1	21
P2	21, 22, 23
P3	22
P4	21, 22, 23

P5	21, 22, 23
Most common response	21, 22
Least common response	23

When participants were asked how often do you notice a Rain advertisement on social media platforms, most participants explained that they used to see these adverts often before they purchased the product and now see and hear adverts on other platforms. This could indicate that Rain is no longer targeting them on social media as they have already purchased a product.

Question 7: Describe your attitude toward Rain's social media advertisements.

- P1: I enjoy their advertising campaigns and I do you like the brand and everything that it stands for and what they represent. They have a good image.

- P2: I think that it's a great form of advertising and Rain adverts always grab my attention because I have that product. the fact that it's short and simple - it has all the information I need like the price which would really grab my attention I'm sure that it grabs the attention of others as well.
- P3: I wouldn't say it's positive or negative but I don't see it too often so I'm not irritated by it often. when I see an ad a lot of times on social media it does become a bit of an annoyance.
- P4: I don't like social media adverts as I don't have time to look at adverts and that's not what I go on social media for so my attitude is negative I don't like to see this advert.
- P5: I have a positive attitude about the product so when I see the advert and if someone is sitting with me then I like to tell them that that's the product that I have and it's great so my attitude toward the adverts is very positive and I like it I like it.

Themes and subthemes for question 7:

Positive	24
Simple	25
Informative	26
Negative	27

	Question 7
P1	24
P2	24, 25, 26

P3	27
P4	27
P5	24
Most common response	24
Least common response	25, 26

In this question (3/5 – 60%) of the participants explained that they have a positive attitude towards Rain’s social media advertising, while the other 40% said that they have a negative attitude towards it as it becomes a bit annoying to see advertisements popping up constantly.

Question 8: Explain whether or not you took an interest in Rain after viewing one of their social media advertisements on social media by using the hyperlink found at the bottom of the advertisement.

- P1: From an advert I did go and see the hyperlink to see the products that they have but not through the link I prefer to see the product and then go to go onto their website but that's more of my trust against the platform then the company.
- P2: The adverts always grab my attention and the first time I saw it I did click on the hyperlink because it took me directly to the webpage which is so convenient.
- P3: That is how I got onto rains websites initially and from there I did browse other companies to provide wi-Fi and I ended up going back to Rains website but I did use the hyperlink.
- P4: I don't click on those hyperlinks because sometimes I don't trust the Internet so I rather Google search to go to Rain's website directly. I don't like to press hyperlinks, I rather go straight into the website or ask somebody else for information about the product.
- P5: I first saw the advert on television and that's how I decided to purchase it but usually when I see a product that has a hyperlink, I do click on it but I've never done that for Rain. because once I saw the advert on television.
-

Themes and subthemes for question 7:

Did click on the hyperlink	28
Trust of the platform	29
Prefer not to use the hyperlink	30
Convenience	31
Did not use the hyperlink	32

	Question 7
P1	28, 30, 29
P2	28, 31

P3	30, 28
P4	30, 29
P5	32
Most common response	28, 30
Least common response	31, 32

When participants were asked whether they used the hyperlink on the Rain advertisement on social media, (2/5 - 40%) participants said that they did use the hyperlink and (2/5 - 40%) said that they prefer not to use hyperlinks at all. This shows that social media users might not be taking all the features into account when observing the advertisement hence why they might not find the advertisement attention grabbing.

Question 9: After viewing an advertisement on social media, would you be more inclined to purchase that product being advertised

- P1: It all depends on the product if I think its good quality or something that I would like to use or need then yes, I would buy it and also then again it

depends on the website and **how much I trust the company**. And I just didn't trust the app of another company but, on the website, it was much better and there was also **issues with the dates** saying the quickest delivery is in February when I'm ordering in August for example. And that's the reason why I never use the app are use the website. Incorrect information makes the website less trustable.

- P2: It depends on the product. I much rather search for a product that I need on google and then find the best deal but if I happen to see an ad on social media **about a product that I'm interested in then I would look into it**. I also look if there's an app to download to make my purchase on there or **I do research on the company** and product before purchasing any product online.
- P3: I wouldn't say more inclined because generally if I need the product, I would look for it and if I do see it online then **I would follow the link if I have an interest in it**
- P4: Sometimes I would see an advert of **something that interests me** and then I would go into **Google and search that brand** and then go onto the website, so after viewing an advert, yes, I would be more inclined to purchasing the product if that product interests me if it doesn't if I don't care about the product then I don't even take note of that at that I don't care about it.
- P5: Yes, **I see products that I was looking for on the on the Facebook adverts and then I click on the link and I buy it if I see that the deal is good**. But then again sometimes there's a lot of scams online and sometimes I don't know if the product or **if the website is trustworthy** or not **so I always prefer to look in the shops to see if I can find a product** sometimes I search on google where can I find a certain product and Then if I really can't find him then I'll ask people about different sites to see which one to see if I can actually buy from there and they are trustworthy.

Themes and subthemes for question 9:

Interest in the product	33
Correct information	34
Prefers to shop in stores (not online)	35

Trustworthiness of the website or platform	36
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	Question 9
P1	33, 36, 34
P2	33, 34
P3	33
P4	33, 34
P5	33, 35, 36
Most common response	33
Least common response	35

When participants were asked if they would be more inclined to purchase that product being advertised After viewing an advertisement on social media, all participants (5/5 – 100%) said that if they had an interest in that product then they would be more inclined in purchasing that product. This shows that as long as advertisers are researching their target audience who are interested in the product, they should be receiving more sales.

Question 10: Do you ever share Rain advertisements with your family and friends on social media? Why?

- P1: I have because they have the lowest data rates and the person I sent it to was telling me about data problems so I thought that this would help.

- P2: **yes, I have**. I sent it to my friend. She was looking for **cheap data** and I had been telling her about Rain and then when I saw the advert, I knew that she would be interested in it.
- P3: **No, I have not**. I **haven't found the need to share** it because most of the people that I know already have a Wi-Fi provider so I've never come across it across the need to send it.
- P4: **No, I don't share anything**. I'm **quite a private person** I actually use social media to just browse through my friend's posts. I don't really share anything with them but sometimes if my friends send me messages or they want to chat, I'll just respond to them but otherwise I don't send them adverts.
- P5: **No I don't send anything** actually I **don't have much friends on Facebook** or any other social media because I only have my family on there so I don't send things and most of the time I look at posts from the news and any information that I can get so I don't really share things.

Themes and subthemes for question 10:

Yes	37
No	38
Affordability	39
No need to send it - No need for the product	40
Privacy	41

	Question 10
P1	37, 39
P2	37, 39

P3	38, 40
P4	38, 41
P5	38, 40
Most common response	38
Least common response	41

When participants were asked whether they share Rain social media advertisements with their friends and family, (3/5) participants said 'No'. This shows that not much electronic-word-of-mouth is actually taking place.

Question 11: what kinds of posts do you send to your friends and family on social media?

- P1: I mainly send Memes like comical posts.

- P2: I send memes - like funny videos and recipes and also sometimes I see other adverts of good deals like of ZAFUL and Wish. These companies have really good deals and my friends should see them.
- P3: I would send maybe things of cars to friends that I know have an interest in it.
- P4: I don't send any posts.
- P5: I don't have much friends and family I mean I will I don't have much friends on social media I have some of my family sometimes and I don't share the contents with them however if I saw something interesting when they come to my house then I will show them tell them about it but I would not share it with them on Facebook.

Themes and subthemes for question 11:

Comical posts - Memes	42
Recipes	43
Advertisement	44
No sharing of posts	45
Cars	46

	Question 11
P1	42
P2	42, 44, 43
P3	46
P4	45
P5	45
Most common response	42, 45
Least common response	43, 44, 46

Question 12: what kind of posts does your family and friends on social media share with you?

- P1: My family often send **gadgets or advertisements of products** that they find interesting and my friends share the **same posts as me**. Although sometimes we do send adverts to each other.
- P2: They share like **the same things as me**, **recipes and memes**. no, I don't think anyone's had even ever sent me a rain advert. I only see it when I'm streaming through Instagram- now one has sent it to me.
- P3: They would send **sporting events** and **cars**. Or some interesting videos mainly but **not a rain advert but they have shared links regarding other products**.
- P4: Sometimes my friends will just send me **a meme** or a motivational post or messages or **sometimes recipes** but most of the time it's just like direct messages like we just typing to each other on social media and media you know what I'm saying.
- P5: So, like a funny video they usually send me **funny pictures**.

Themes and subthemes for question 12:

Advertisements	44
Same as the posts I send	47
Public Events	48
Comical posts - Memes	42
Recipes	43

	Question 12
P1	44, 47

P2	47, 43, 42
P3	48, 47, 44
P4	42, 43
P5	42
Most common response	47
Least common response	48

The reason why some of the same themes were used from the previous question is because both these questions are relating to a similar outcome which is the media that people are sharing with each other.

Question 13: Besides social media platforms, explain whether any person or any other medium had a role in your online purchasing decisions?

- P1: Through **advertising** I have purchased through wish and **through word-of-mouth** I've purchased **through superbalist and take a lot** as well as more boutique shops online. They all gave me something that other stores couldn't so with Takealot they had the daily deals which I had an interest in and then with Superbalist they had **different clothing items that I wouldn't really find in stores that easily** and then wish just had numerous things that was either very cheap or very different and something that I thought was cool to have.
- P2: I think **word of mouth** has played a role. My boyfriend is actually the one who first introduced me to the brand. I also tend to search for reviews about the products before I buy them. **I continually hear rain ads on the radio and see them on tv and YouTube.**
- P3: **I have used applications to purchase online.** Like I said if I trust it or if I have been referred to it by other people to purchase online.
- P4: Yes definitely it's been my daughter she is the one that encourages me to buy online she's actually the one who encouraged me to buy the rain put it on so that social media doesn't really have a major impact but **I think through word of mouth I am able to purchase products online.**
- P5: The **television advert** is what first grabbed my attention and after I saw that advert, I decided that I actually do want to buy the Rain product.

Themes and subthemes for question 13:

Word-of-mouth	49
Ease and accessibility	50
Electronic platforms (TV, radio, YouTube)	51
Applications	52

	Question 13
P1	51, 49, 52, 50

P2	49, 51
P3	52
P4	49,
P5	51
Most common response	51
Least common response	50

Question 14: What would you think influence you to purchase a rain product or any other product online?

- P1: Basically, **my need for it**. I've noticed when I search something the **advertisement** normally come up on my Instagram and I noticed that recently actually so whenever I've searched something it just comes up and then if it's on my mind, I purchase it.
- P2: I'd say **that if I need the product** and see that it is a **good deal** then I'll buy it online. I'd also need to see that the **site is safe**. If I've bought from the site before and had **a good experience** I would maybe search on their site for other products if I want to buy someone a gift or if they have any other products I need.
- P3: Delivery and **overall convenience** would be one factor another one would be the ease of the site. If I find it is difficult to handle then I wouldn't really trust it and **security with payment that would help a lot**. By delivery I mean **the Courier. Is it delivering to where I currently stay or where I work?**
- P4: My daughter influences me to purchase a product if **we need a product**. I prefer purchasing things in the shop. I like to go and touch the products and look at them and test them, I don't really like buying things online.
- P5: I definitely think that **adverts** influence me to purchase online. I think I am mainly on television because that's where I see most of my adverts and also if **I need that** product and I can't find it anyway else then I will buy it online. I think that if a **website is trustable** then that's also something that influences need to purchase a product.

Themes and subthemes for question 14:

Advertisements	53
Need for the product	54
Affordability	55
Safe website	56
Good service/experience	57
Accommodating	58

	Question 14
P1	54, 53
P2	54, 55, 56, 57

P3	57, 56, 58
P4	54
P5	54, 53, 56
Most common response	54
Least common response	55, 58

Question 15: In your opinion, is Rain's website safe and trustable? Elaborate.

- P1: Yes, because I've navigated my way through the site and it is instructive to get to where you need to. It's just a nice site to be honest.

- P2: I think it's safe and trustworthy because I've used it before and haven't had a problem with it. I also asked some people about it before actually purchasing the products and they all said it was good. I also searched their social media page like on Instagram and saw how many people were purchasing products and thanking Rain for their excellent service.
- P3: Yes, because that's when you do get in contact with rain and contact with people from the company as well I have been in contact with people calling me and authorizing payments and helping me with my account so that was one aspect that helped me gain more trust in the website and also the fact that the website is simple enough to use and that they don't immediately ask for my login details They build up a representation of who I am first and then provide me with the product or service which I found was good it's hoped it helped a lot.
- P4: Rain's website is safe and trustable because I've never had any problems, they've never stolen any money from your take on more money than what needs to be taken and everything has been safe. They always send me communication on the website and I think that it is safe and trustable and I actually really like the website and I would really recommend it to other people.
- P5: Yes, I think their website is safe and trustable because I have used it before and I have seen that it was safe and trustable because I've had no issues with them.
-

Themes and subthemes for question 15:

Rain's website is safe	59
Instructive	60
Haven't come across any issues	61
Research	62

	Question 15
P1	59, 60
P2	59, 61, 62

P3	59, 62, 60
P4	59, 61, 60
P5	59, 61
Most common response	59
Least common response	62

Table 1: Key Themes

Theme	Interview Questions	Objectives
Exposure to 'Rain'	1. Where did you first hear about Rain?	Objective 3
The consumers perceived influence of Rain	2. What made you make your first online purchase from Rain? 3. When making a purchase online, could you please describe your experience on how you choose to purchase a product from a particular company? 4. Could you please describe your perception of the company 'Rain'?	Objective 1 Objective 2
Consumers interpretation of Rain's social media advertisements	5. In what way does social media advertisements grab your attention? 6. How often do you notice a Rain advertisement on social media platforms (Facebook/Instagram)? 7. Describe your attitude toward Rain's social media advertisements.	Objective 1 Objective 3
Consumers interaction with Rain's social media advertisements	8. Explain whether or not you took an interest in Rain after viewing one of their social media advertisements on social media by using the	Objective 2 Objective 3

	hyperlink found at the bottom of the advertisement? 9. After viewing an advertisement on social media, would you be more inclined to purchase that product being advertised and why?	
Electronic word-of-mouth	10. Do you ever share Rain advertisements with your friends and family on social media? If so why? 11. What kinds of posts do you send to your friends and family on social media? 12. What kind of posts does your family and friends on social media share with you?	Objective 1 Objective 3
Influences on online purchasing decisions	13. Explain whether any person or any other means besides 'Rain' social media advertisements has had a role in your online purchasing decisions. 14. What do you think influences you to purchase a Rain product or any other product online? 15. In your opinion, is Rain's website safe and trustable? Elaborate.	Objective 1 Objective 2 Objective 3

9.5. Annexure E - Research report summary document table