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IIE Bachelor of Arts Honours in Communications

Uses and Gratifications and social media: a cross-sectional quantitative questionnaire explaining the perceived role of organisational social media communication on customer loyalty in South Africa

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the IIE Bachelor of Arts Honours in Communications degree to the Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

Dylan Jacklin

29/10/2018

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ABSTRACT

This research investigated the perceived role of organisational social media communication on customer loyalty in South Africa. The report argued, in line with the hypothesis, that organisational social media communication does have a role in establishing customer loyalty. The problem was that there was insufficient research on social media and customer loyalty in a South Africa context thus, more research was needed on the topic in South Africa. Uses and Gratifications Theory was used as a theoretical foundation to guide the study, applying two selected concepts, surveillance and personal relations. Data was collected using an online questionnaire of which 20 respondents, 10 males and 10 females were randomly selected. Data was compiled from the responses and analysed using descriptive statistics. This was done to quantitatively present a large number of responses within the context of the study. The findings were that organisational social media communication does have a role in establishing customer loyalty. This study has contributed additional findings in the fields of Media Studies and Customer Loyalty and provided organisations with information on how to better utilise social media to enhance customer loyalty.

Key words: Social media, customer loyalty, uses and gratifications, surveillance, personal relations.

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TITLE

Uses and Gratifications and social media: a cross-sectional quantitative questionnaire explaining the perceived role of organisational social media communication on customer loyalty in South Africa

INTRODUCTION TO REPORT

This study investigated the perceived role of organisational social media communication on customer loyalty in South Africa. This was done by firstly analysing the background, rationale and relevance, problem statement, purpose statement, the research question, and hypothesis in the introduction section. Secondly, the literature review section analysed and applied Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G Theory) followed by the literature review and operationalisation. This was followed by the methodology section discussing sections such as the research paradigm, design, population, sampling, data collection method, data analysis method, and validity and reliability. The data presentation and analysis section then presented and interpreted the findings followed by the conclusion section which included the research hypothesis and question being analysed, the problem statement being addressed, implications of findings, ethical considerations, limitations, and heuristic value.

1 INTRODUCTION

In the following section, the research report was introduced. This was done by providing the background and contextualisation, rationale and relevance, problem statement, purpose statement, research question, and hypothesis of the study.

1.1 Background and Contextualisation

Social media is an online communication platform which allows individuals and businesses to create online profiles to communicate and interact with others around the world. Some social media sites include *Facebook*, *Instagram*, *Twitter*, and *LinkedIn* (Dewing, 2012). Between the period of 2009 and 2014 companies in South Africa were increasingly using social media for marketing purposes and to create brand awareness (Geyer, 2014). With social media becoming popular, it has become a prominent medium being used by organisations to engage with customers to try and enhance customer loyalty (Olsen, 2014).

This study focused on this as it was investigated if an organisation's social media communication had a perceived role in establishing customer loyalty in South Africa. While some authors found it not to have a role in establishing loyalty (see Olsen, 2014), other authors discovered social media did have a role in establishing loyalty (see Hajli, 2014; Hayoz, 2016; Laksamana, 2018; and Wilimzig, 2011). Most of the research surrounding this topic had not been done within a South African context and this lack of research was addressed in this study as it investigated the topic of social media and customer loyalty in South Africa. This study adopted a Uses and Gratifications (U&G) Theory approach by focusing on two of its four needs, surveillance and personal relations. What needed to be known surrounding this topic was if organisational social media communication did have a role in establishing loyalty in South Africa or not. This topic required investigation because if organisational social media communication did have a role in establishing customer loyalty with regards to needs of surveillance and personal relations being gratified by customers, it would be useful for South African organisations. This was because they will know if they needed to adapt their social media communication or utilise it more to establish customer loyalty.

1.2 Rationale and Relevance

Regarding rationale, a News24 reporter (2017) wrote an article which suggested social media can be more harmful to a brand in establishing customer loyalty while other sources such as Hayoz (2016) suggested it was beneficial for an organisation. These conflicting sources initiated interest in this research. While analysing the hypothesis of this study, this study had the perception that organisational social media communication did have a role in establishing customer loyalty. This study also applied U&G Theory in a South African context, further enhancing the application of this theory in an under researched context (see Asayesh, Mousavi, & Rad, 2015; Hakkanson & Witmer, 2015; Hayoz, 2016; Karjaluo, Munnukka, & Tiensuu 2015; Jin, Kim & Phua, 2016; Jahn, Kunz, & Meyer 2013).

This study was also relevant as it added value to the field as researchers such as Olsen (2014) only examined one social media platform and suggested all platforms should be analysed in future research. This study examined all social media platforms such as

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn thus contributing to the Media and Communication field as all platforms were analysed. Findings may also be beneficial for organisations as they may assist organisations on how to use social media communication and inform them if they need to utilise the platforms more to obtain customer loyalty. This was because researchers found social media to be beneficial in obtaining customer loyalty (see Asayesh *et al*, 2015; Conduit, Dolan, Fahy, Goodman, 2014; Hajli, 2014, Jahn, Kunz, Meyer, 2013; Jin *et al*, 2016; and Wilimizig, 2011).

1.3 Problem Statement

Research on social media and customer loyalty was limited, especially within a South African context and thus more research on the topic was needed in South Africa. Most research on this topic of social media and customer loyalty had not been done within a South African context and thus this needed to be investigated more in South Africa (see Asayesh, *et al* 2015; Hakkanson, *et al* 2015; Hayoz, 2016; Jin, *et al* 2016; Karjaluto, *et al* 2015; Kunz, 2013). Past studies were done in locations such as Iran, Sweden, and Switzerland. This was a problem because it was unknown if these findings would be the same in a South African context and because customer loyalty is important for business success (Hayoz, 2016) and it needed to be known if social media could provide a platform for this to occur in South Africa.

1.4 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative study was to describe the perceived role an organisation's social media communication had on customer loyalty among South African social media followers. These followers included South African males and females between eighteen and twenty five years old. A questionnaire was used of which the responses from the respondents were analysed using descriptive statistics such as bar graphs and frequency tables. Respondents included individuals whom are South African citizens and included individuals from different races and genders so that responses reflected the diversity of South Africa. Numbers were used to code responses with nominal and ordinal scales. U&G Theory was used applying only selected concepts of surveillance and personal relationships to determine if social media could be used to establish customer loyalty.

1.5 Research Question

What perceived role does an organisation's social media communication have on customer loyalty, using U&G Theory, among South African adult social media followers?

1.6 Hypothesis

A company's social media communication has a role in establishing customer loyalty among South African adult social media followers.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section analysed the theory used to guide the research report and a review of past literature was conducted to analyse what has been discovered on the research topic already. The operationalisation of key concepts was also addressed.

2.1 Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation of this study related to the metatheoretical position of the paradigm. This applied to the theory being used in the current study which was U&G Theory. This theory is usually applied in a quantitative manner and that was how it was applied in the current study (see; Conduit, *et al* 2015; Jin, *et al* 2016; Jahn, *et al* 2013; Wilimzig, 2011). U&G Theory was developed by Blumberg, Gurevitch, and Katz in 1974. However, Ruggiero (2000) examined this theory in a contemporary context in 2000 in relation to new media. In the current study, social media was the focus, hence why the work of Ruggiero (2000) was applied as it is a form of new media. This theory has assisted in solving the research problem because as seen in the literature review, most studies on customer loyalty and social media have used U&G Theory. Therefore this theory was used to research these concepts in a South African context. This theory suggests people use the media to fulfil certain needs such as surveillance, personal relations, personal identity, and diversion.

Although there are four needs from U&G Theory, only personal relations and surveillance were relevant in the current study because these concepts could be used to measure aspects of customer loyalty (see Conduit, *et al* 2016 & Jin, *et al* 2016). Surveillance entailed the need for information and personal relations referred to a need to have relationships with others or to feel connected to something or someone (Ruggiero, 2000).

These two concepts have been elaborated on in the operationalisation section. An example of a surveillance need may be a customers need for information on upcoming specials or events and a personal relations need may be a customers need to feel familiar with the organisation. To critically analyse this theory, a limitation includes that it works well in a media context and Ruggiero (2000) further adapted it for a social media context. Therefore it would be a downfall when wanting to apply it outside of a media context. However, this was not a downfall in the current study because the researcher specifically focused on a media context. A strength however was that this theory was adapted for a social media context and this is the same field focused on in the current study.

This theory was relevant as it related to the Media and Communication Field and so was the current study (see; Conduit, *et al* 2015; Jahn, *et al* 2013; and Wilimzig, 2011). This theory also related to the current study as organisations have a need to enhance customer loyalty (Olsen, 2014). As the theory suggests that an individual or an organisation's use of the media is active and goal orientated, it could be and was applied to this study. This was because a customer of an organisation may have a need for surveillance regarding an organisation and therefore use social media to fulfil this need. In doing so, and if the organisation provided the required information through its social media communication it would lead to the customer gratifying their need of surveillance which lead to increased customer loyalty depending on this level of need gratification.

This theory could further be applied with the need of personal relations as customers may seek to establish personal relations with organisations through social media communication. If the utilising of social media leads to the gratification of this need it could lead to customers becoming more loyal. The focus is that if the organisation's social media communication fulfils these needs of surveillance and personal relations it will possibly have a perceived role in establishing customer loyalty depending on the level of need gratification. This shows how, in accordance with the U&G Theory, that an organisation's social media communication could allow customers to gratify their needs of surveillance and personal relations which could lead to the establishment of customer loyalty for organisations in South Africa. This needed to be known as it was unknown as stated earlier in the problem statement section.

2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1 Introduction to literature review

This research study investigated the perceived role of organisational social media communication on establishing customer loyalty in South Africa. According to Olsen (2014) organisations need to enhance customer loyalty and this study analysed the perceived role organisational social media communication had in achieving this. This review will only analyse current research conducted after 2013 to ensure relevance except for Ruggiero (2000) as it provides the theoretical foundation for the current study and Wilimzig (2011) as the study is still relevant today which will be stated why in the literature review. Outdated research will not be included as outdated results will not be applicable due to them being less current. The literature included only focuses on social media and customer loyalty as these were the key concepts that were examined. The research problem was emphasised in this literature review as all research except for Scarth (2017) was conducted outside of South Africa.

As previously mentioned in the problem statement section, the research problem was the limited research on social media and customer loyalty in a South African context (see Asayesh, *et al*, 2015; Hakkanson, *et al* 2015; Hayoz, 2016; ; Karjaluto, *et al* 2015; Jin, *et al* 2016; Kunz, 2013). This was a problem because if an organisation's social media communication did have a perceived role in establishing customer loyalty in one country, it may not mean it will have the same role in South Africa. This review addressed this problem by analysing what recent studies have found regarding solving this problem and determining if these can be applied in a South African context.

The purpose of this review was to critically analyse previous literature which had been conducted on social media and customer loyalty. This literature will then be applied to the current study while arguing that an organisation's social media communication does have a role in establishing customer loyalty. The reasoning for this argument was based on the findings of most literature being analysed in this review. This review was a historical theoretical review. A historical review entails reviewing the literature in a chronological order and a theoretical review involves analysing theoretical developments of how a theory has developed and been applied over time (Howard, 2014). This was because it

will show how research on this topic and findings have changed over time and how theoretical developments in the theories used have been applied.

2.2.2 Review of past literature

This literature review is analysing and critiquing previous literature which has been conducted in the same or similar field as the current study. This review is using three themes to structure this literature review, namely, U&G Theory applied to social media and customer loyalty, social media, and customer and brand loyalty. Each source is first explained and then critically analysed in terms of how it can be applied to the current study.

2.2.3 U&G Theory applied to Social Media and Customer Loyalty:

This theme analyses literature which used the U&G Theory as a theoretical foundation to investigate topics similar to that of the current study.

In 2000, Thomas Ruggiero published 'U&G Theory in the 21st Century' focusing on U&G Theory in the United States of America (U.S.A). Although published in 2000, this article is relevant as it is the seminal work of Ruggiero (2000) who adapted the U&G Theory to computer mediated communication and it is the theoretical basis of this study. The study entails how the U&G Theory has more significance with regards to computer mediated communication rather than traditional media. This relates to the current study as social media is the focus.

A strength is that this study focuses on how the U&G Theory is being applied to computer mediated communication and social media is a form of this which is the focus in the current study. The current study is incorporating this theory to guide the research and anticipate possible findings. In contrast, a downfall is that it was written in 2000 which is when social media was still new and thus, Ruggiero's work is more focused on aspects such as e-mail and the internet, with little emphasis on social media. The current study is overcoming this by analysing new social media platforms.

The previous study examined U&G Theory in a computer mediated context whereas the next study conducted by Wilimzig (2011) used this theory in the study 'Online Communities: Influence on Members Brand Loyalty and Purchase Intent'. This study

incorporated U&G Theory and analysed brands using social media to interact with consumers to establish brand loyalty. This study focused on online brand communities which are online networks where members have a common interest in a brand (Wilimzig, 2011). The study found that the information shared in these communities led to higher purchase rates which supports the argument that social media communication can have a role in establishing customer loyalty as customer loyalty includes purchase rates according to Khadka & Maharjan (2017).

Although conducted in 2011, this study is still relevant as it researched the U&G Theory in relation to social media in application with similar concepts such as brand loyalty as is the current study which is investigating social media and customer loyalty. This study also used a quantitative survey which the current study is using. A positive of this investigation is that it uses the same theory in the same field of social media and analyses how using social media to gratify a need may lead to an individual being more loyal to the brand depending on the gratification of that need. A downfall within the context of the current study is that it was conducted in the United States of America (USA) and thus the results may not be applicable when applied in the South African context of the current study.

Another USA study conducted by Jahn (*et al*, 2013) found similar results to Wilimzig (2011) titled 'The Role of Social Media for Luxury Brands'. The study investigated how social media pages of luxury brands can lead to brand loyalty among customers. A key finding is that a brand's social media page was only found to establish brand loyalty if the page entailed high levels of interactivity with followers. This supports the argument of this review in that organisational social media communication can have a role in establishing customer loyalty but only if high levels of interactivity are present.

A strength of this study is that it uses the U&G Theory as it examines the level of need gratification obtained by the customers through an organisation's social media and how this leads to customer loyalty. The current study is applying this theory in the same manner in terms of how the level of need gratification enhances customer loyalty. Secondly, this study uses a quantitative questionnaire to obtain results which is the same quantitative method being used in the current study. A limitation of Jahn *et al* (2013) is that it focused on luxury brands whereas the current study is not only focusing on luxury

brands. This makes its findings limited in application to the current study as organisations in general are being investigated, not only luxury brands.

A study conducted in 2014 by Conduit (*et al*, 2014) in Ireland titled 'Social Media Engagement Behaviour: A Uses and Gratifications Perspective' found similar results to Jahn (*et al*, 2013) in that for social media to have any positive role, interactivity must occur between the organisation and customer. This study observed how organisations use social media to discover what customers want from an organisation's social media page. It found that customers engage with an organisation's social media page for information and if they get the information they need, attitudes towards the company improved.

A strength of this study is that the need of surveillance is examined. Surveillance is also a key concept being applied in the current study and this article analyses how if this need is fulfilled, when using social media to obtain information about an organisation, it leads to the customer viewing it more positively and being satisfied. This may lead to increased customer loyalty which is why this can be said to support the argument that social media communication can play a role in establishing customer loyalty. This is because according to Khadka (*et al*, 2017) viewing the organisation positively is an aspect of customer loyalty. However, this study did not specifically look at customer loyalty but rather engagement behaviour and it was conducted in Ireland which does limit its scope because of the different country contexts to the current study. Therefore the current study is attempting to overcome this by conducting the research in South Africa.

An investigation titled 'Gratifications of using Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat to Follow Brands' conducted by Jin (*et al*, 2016) differed to Jahn (*et al*, 2013) in that the sample included college students. The study analysed gratifications of using social media sites in relation to brand engagement and commitment. Adopting U&G Theory, a main finding was that *Instagram* was most effective as it encouraged engagement with brand-related activities which influenced stronger brand loyalty. This finding thereby supports the argument of this review as it shows social media engagement can lead to customer loyalty.

This source is also credible as the population consisted of undergraduate students which is a similar age being analysed in the current study. This makes results somewhat

applicable and a quantitative questionnaire was used which is the same method being applied in the current study. Unlike Olsen (2014), this study looked at all social media platforms and this is what the current study is also analysing as it is analysing all social media platforms in general. However, a weakness of this source is that it does not mention where the study took place making it difficult to apply the findings to a South African context.

2.2.4 Social Media:

This second theme analyses literature of which primary emphasis is placed on social media when analysing concepts related to customer loyalty.

Similarly to Jin (*et al*, 2016), the first source in this theme was also conducted outside South Africa. Written by Nick Hajli (2014) in London in 2014 the study is titled 'A Study of the Impact of Social Media on Consumers'. This emphasises the research problem as this is the fifth article being examined in this review and still not one study has been conducted in a South African context. This study investigated social media interaction between the organisation and the consumer and how it has a role in shaping customer trust and their purchase intention. The result was that the organisation's social media interaction with customers had an impact on customer trust which further leads to increased purchases. This study also used a quantitative questionnaire and used the Likert scale and so is the current study.

The findings of this study are a strength as it supports the argument being made because according to Khadka (*et al*, 2017) increased purchases is an aspect of customer loyalty and Hajli (2014) found social media to have an impact on this. Therefore it can be said that an organisation's social media communication does have a role in establishing customer loyalty. Although the article is relevant, a weakness is that the sample of the study only came from one city, London, and city dwellers in London may have different perceptions to people in rural areas or cities in South Africa. This sample did not look at South Africa, thus the generalisability of the findings are limited when applied to the current study.

In the same year as Hajli (2014) a study was conducted in Copenhagen by Olsen in 2014 titled 'Brand Loyalty on Social Media – Can Images make you more Loyal?' A mixed

methods approach was used focusing on the online customer experience and how it impacts brand loyalty. Specifically analysing the impact *Instagram* images have on brand loyalty. It found to not have an impact on brand loyalty whereas the previous literature analysed in this review did. This study only focused on *Instagram* and no impact was discovered however, Jin (*et al*, 2016) also only examined *Instagram* but found that it did have an impact. These discrepancies will be addressed in the current study as all social media platforms are being analysed to determine if a perceived role exists.

A positive aspect of this source is that it presents different findings to the other sources consulted and gives rationale as to why this topic needs further research. In line with the research problem, this study did not include South Africa in its scope. The study only analysed *Instagram* which makes it difficult to apply the results to the current study as it is focusing on all social media platforms. This study also used a quantitative survey and qualitative interviews to gather findings and the research study being conducted is only using a quantitative questionnaire. This may produce a different type of results as qualitative interviews are not being conducted in the current study. As social media was found to not have a role in establishing customer loyalty, it does not support the argument that social media does have a role in establishing customer loyalty.

One year after Olsen (2014), in Iran, Asayesh (*et al*, 2015) published 'The Effect of Social Media on Brand Loyalty'. This study entails a case study on *Samsung* and analysed how the organisation's social media can influence brand trust and loyalty. The main finding was similar to what Hajli (2014) discovered in that social media interaction led to customer trust being established. Asayesh (*et al*, 2015) describes how brand trust further leads to brand loyalty which supports the notion that social media does have a role in establishing customer loyalty.

This source is also beneficial to the current study as it used a large sample of 384 respondents, simple random sampling was used, and a quantitative questionnaire was used to obtain results. The current study is using these same sampling and data collection methods which shows it is an effective way to conduct the research and obtain results. A limitation is that it only analysed one organisation which was *Samsung* and the outcomes may have been different if more than one type of organisation was being analysed. The

current research study is investigating organisations in general, thus results may be different.

Similar to what Asayesh (*et al*, 2015) found, Hakansson (*et al*, 2015) in the same year compiled a systematic literature review where past research also relating to social media and brand trust was analysed. In the review titled 'Social Media and Trust', ten articles were analysed whereby eight concluded that social media has a positive impact on establishing trust but two found that it had no impact. As most of the literature in Hakansson (*et al*, 2015) proved a positive role between social media and trust it can be said that this research supports the argument that social media does play a role in customer loyalty. This is because Asayesh (*et al*, 2015) stated that customer trust leads and contributes to brand loyalty.

This source is beneficial as it grouped the findings of multiple studies, instead of just one, allowing for patterns and trends in this field of study to be identified. This is evident as most articles support the argument of this review as most of the literature analysed supports that social media leads to brand trust which strengthens customer loyalty. Although only two articles found no relationship between social media and trust and customer loyalty, it shows that results differ in different contexts. Thus, no relationship between organisational social media communication and customer loyalty like these two sources in Hakansson (*et al*, 2015) may also exist in South Africa emphasising the research problem. This makes the research being conducted relevant so it can be determined if social media communication does have a role in establishing customer loyalty in South Africa.

Most literature analysed in the review conducted by Hakkinson (*et al*, 2015) found social media to enhance customer loyalty, and Karjaluoto (*et al*, 2015) found similar findings. The study titled 'The Effects of Brand Engagement in Social Media on Share of Wallet' analyses how organisational social media engagement effects 'Share of Wallet' (SOW) which according to Karjaluoto (*et al* 2015) is the amount of business received from individual customers. According to Karjaluoto (*et al*, 2015), customer loyalty involves repeat purchases and organisational engagement on social media increased SOW thus

this study supports the notion that social media does have a role in establishing customer loyalty.

Due to 818 respondents answering the quantitative questionnaire it makes the study reliable. However, 67% of respondents were males and more females could have made the results more generalisable. The current study is overcoming this by having an equal number of males and females in the randomly selected sample. A strength of this study used the same data collection method as the current study, a quantitative questionnaire, validating its ability in measuring this topic. However, only *Facebook* and *Twitter* were considered in this study and there are many more platforms which were excluded such as *Instagram* and *LinkedIn*. The current study is analysing all social media platforms in general and not only *Facebook* and *Twitter*, thus findings may differ and add more insights.

The research problem is emphasised by all of the above research being conducted outside of South Africa such as Karjaluoto (*et al*, 2015) which was conducted in Finland, a study conducted by Scarth in 2017 is the only source in this review conducted in SA. Titled 'The Influence of Social Media Communication on South African Millennial Consumer Purchase Intentions over Motor Vehicle Brands'. The study found similar findings to Olsen (2014) in that organisational social media communication did not influence brand equity which refers to how perceptions of a brand influence future commercial transactions thus having a correlation with customer loyalty. The findings of Scarth (2017) contradict the argument, suggesting social media does not play a role in establishing customer loyalty.

This study was conducted in South Africa making it useful as it is the only one which analyses a similar topic of the current study in a South African context. Individuals between 18 and 39 years old were included in this study and the current study is investigating individuals between the ages of 18 and 25, both analysing a younger group. Therefore these findings gathered from this age group are relevant to the current study. Consequently, the sample included 182 respondents which is not as large in comparison to other samples used in other literature in this review and the study only analysing motor

vehicle brands. Therefore findings may differ as the current study is analysing all organisations in general.

2.2.5 Customer/Brand Loyalty:

The studies being reviewed in this final theme researched social media in specific relation to brand and customer loyalty.

A study conducted by Hayoz (2016) titled 'The Influence of Online Brand Community on Brand Loyalty and the Role of Brand Commitment' took place in Switzerland. This study focuses on online brand communities similar to Wilimzig (2011). However, Hayoz (2016) analysed its effect on brand loyalty and Wilimzig (2011) focused on purchase intent. Hayoz (2016) was unable to prove any possible relationship between these variables as stated in Hypothesis H3a which was not tested as results obtained were not robust enough to validate the model used. Thus, findings were unable to support the notion that social media can have a role in establishing customer loyalty.

This source is beneficial to the current study because it used purposive sampling which has also been applied to inform the current study and select respondents which meet the population parameters. It also used the internet to administer quantitative surveys and the current study is using an online quantitative questionnaire, this shows administering them on the internet can be successful. However, as the results were not robust and the model used proved unsuccessful, the findings are not credible to apply to or support the argument of this review. This provides the current study with an opportunity to show that using the existing U&G Theory might be more appropriate to use when analysing and measuring these similar variables. This supports the reasoning for using U&G Theory in a new context as it has already been applied in past studies focusing on social media and customer loyalty such as Wilimzig (2011) and Jahn (*et al*, 2013).

Another study conducted in the same year as Hayoz (2016) was compiled in Iran by Kouhbani, Mousavi, and Rad in 2016 which analysed how social media impacted customer loyalty and the customer-product relationship. Titled, 'The Effect of Social Media on Customer-Product Relationship and Customer/Brand in Brand Loyalty', the key finding is that social media was found to positively impact customer trust which made customers more loyal to the organisation showing similar findings to that of Hajli (2014). This

supports the argument that social media does have a role in establishing customer loyalty. Kouhbani (*et al*, 2016) did however find it to have more a significant impact than Hajli (2014).

These authors used a quantitative questionnaire to obtain results and this is the same data collection method informing the current study thereby making this study relevant. The authors also researched the same concepts as the current study which also makes this source beneficial. Although descriptive statistics were used, only the results of these were described. The frequency tables were not provided which questions the reliability of the findings and the study was not done in a South African context. This is not a weakness in itself but it is a weakness when applied to the contextual application of the current study.

Using the same quantitative data collection method as Kouhbani (*et al*, 2016), Huang, Liao, Lin, and Wang (2018) published 'How does Social Media Interactivity Affect Brand Loyalty', analysing social media followers of Super Basketball League teams on *Facebook* and how interaction with these followers enhanced brand loyalty. This study found that social media interaction led to followers having a sense of membership and more knowledge about the various teams which led to brand loyalty thereby strengthening the argument that social media does have a role in establishing brand loyalty.

A strength of this study is that it investigated how social media communication enhances ones knowledge about the organisation and how this led to loyalty being established. The current study is analysing surveillance as a form of information gathering and how this may lead to loyalty and this study shows it can be a factor in establishing loyalty. In addition, this study was published recently which makes it relevant. Consequently, the sample only consisted of Super Basketball League team *Facebook* followers and customer loyalty may not be established in the same way or magnitude when investigating social media followers of organisations in general as the current study is doing.

While Huang (*et al*, 2018) only analysed *Facebook*, a study in 2018 conducted by Laksamana (2018) in Indonesia used a quantitative questionnaire in a study titled 'Impact of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Intention and Brand Loyalty' analysing all social media platforms. This study focused on social media marketing and its effect on customer loyalty while researchers such as Scarth (2017) focused on social media communication.

This study strengthens the argument as it found that social media marketing does lead to customer loyalty. Although social media marketing is different to social media communication it shows the effectiveness of the medium in establishing loyalty hence why it can be applied to the current study.

This study investigated individuals between the ages of 21 and 30 which is similar to the age being analysed in the current study, making the results applicable. However, this study used a different theoretical framework to the current study using the Hierarchy of Effects Theory, the Theory of Reasoned Action, and the Theory of Planned Behaviour. This may lead to different results being found in the current study. This is because these theories guide the research in different ways to U&G Theory making the theoretical foundation of this source a weakness when applied to the current study. This is due to the current study using U&G Theory and this study is not however, the topic still relates to the current study which is why this source has been included in this review.

2.2.6 Conclusion of literature review

This literature review has analysed the research problem related to the literature and to the field of social media and customer loyalty. Although most of the literature supports the argument that organisational social media communication does have a role in establishing customer loyalty (see; Asayesh *et al*, 2015; Hajli, 2014; Hakkinson *et al*,; Wilimzig, 2011) the lack of research done in a South African context limits the application of these findings to the current study. However, as most of these sources had similar results and found similar patterns on this topic, similar results may be found in South Africa. As the researcher going forward with the current study, this review will aid in anticipating findings due to the evident pattern of social media being found to have a role in establishing customer loyalty.

2.3 Operationalisation

Operationalisation refers to explaining how the researcher will measure each concept (Harvey, 2018). The key concepts of this study were social media followers, social media communication, surveillance, personal relations, and customer loyalty.

Social media followers are individuals which have 'liked' or 'followed' an organisation's social media page to gain access to that organisation's social media account (Scarth,

2017). This concept had to be defined so that as the researcher, the people that were investigated were well understood so that when they were chosen to answer the questionnaire, the right people had been selected. The following question determined if the respondent was an organisational social media follower as it asked if they follow organisations on social media thereby allowing this to be determined.

‘Do you follow organisations on Social Media?’

Yes	1
No	2

Social media communication is communication that takes place on a social media platform such as an organisation sharing content with or interacting with followers on a social media platform (Scarth, 2017). This concept was relevant in the current study because social media communication was the focus in terms of how companies communicate on social media and which communication methods are most preferred by customers. If organisational social media communication was found to increase customer loyalty it will be necessary to know which type of social media communication was most beneficial in achieving this. By giving various options, the following question determines what form of social media communication they preferred when communicating with an organisation on social media.

‘What form of social media communication do you prefer when communicating with an organisation on social media?’

Live Videos	1
Personal Messaging	2
Interacting through comments	3
All of the above	4
Other	5

Surveillance needs refers to an informational need and the ability of a medium to provide the media consumer with relevant information (Conduit, *et al.*, 2013). In this study, this concept was being examined because it was determining if a customer follows an organisation on social media to obtain information from it, and if this need for information was obtained, if it made the customer more loyal. The following question measured surveillance needs as surveillance entails informational needs and the question specifically referred to information.

‘I follow organisations on social media to obtain information about them regarding their products and services, events, or other information?’

1. Agree	2. Neutral	3. Disagree
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Personal relations needs is a need which entails a consumer’s need of companionship and to have a relationship with something or someone (IIE, 2014). The relevance of this concept in this study was that it was being analysed if a customer followed organisations on social media to become socially connected and familiar with them and if this made them more loyal. By asking the following question it measured if consumers use social media to form relationships with organisations as feeling socially connected is a characteristic of personal relations needs.

‘I follow organisations on social media to feel socially connected with them?’

1. Agree	2. Neutral	3. Disagree
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Customer Loyalty refers to an organisation’s durable relationship with customers including customers making repeat purchases, referring the organisation, and having a positive view of the organisation (Khadka, *et al* 2017). This concept was important in the current study as it was the main concept being measured. The question of if social media communication enhances customer loyalty was the focus of the current study thus customer loyalty needed to be measured to answer the research question. By asking the following question it measured customer loyalty and if it existed as making repeat purchases is a characteristic of customer loyalty.

'When I find information about an organisations products and services, events or other information on social media I will make repeat purchases from the organisation?'

1. Agree	2. Neutral	3. Disagree
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3 METHODOLOGY

This section focused on the methodology that was used in this report. This entailed sections such as the research paradigm, research design, the population, sample, and the data collection and analysis method used.

3.1 Research Paradigm

The paradigm was Post-Positivism which evolved from Positivism and included moving from only a pure objective perspective and using more descriptive statistics (RePrac, 2016). In the current study, a descriptive statistical analysis was conducted rather than an inferential statistical analysis. This paradigm is objective and focuses on examining observable criteria which can be used to prove something (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014: 24-25). Post positivism involved giving explanations quantitatively, as objectively as possible, with the use of statistics. Hence why this paradigm was followed as the current study used a descriptive statistical analysis to observe how an organisation's social media communication had a perceived role in establishing customer loyalty. These statistics were interpreted to explain this perceived role and demonstrated how social media did have a role in establishing customer loyalty. This paradigm also focuses on generating generalizable results (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014: 24-25). Therefore, findings can be applied to all members of the target population of organisational social media followers between the ages of 18-25.

A paradigm such as Interpretivism does not focus on establishing results which are generalizable, instead, individual interpretation of phenomena are valued (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014: 27-28). This was why post positivism was being used as creating generalizable results was a primary focus. Due to the limited scope of the current study, an implication was that results will not be generalizable but, the aim was to create results which were as generalizable as possible.

In application to the current study, the positivist implications of axiology, epistemology, ontology, metatheory, and methodology are evident. Axiology refers to the study of values and in line with Post-Positivism, the axiological position is that truth, objectivity, and reason are valued (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014: 27). With the current study using a quantitative questionnaire, interpretations were measured but in a quantitative manner such as with the Likert scale to ensure objectivity. The descriptive statistics which were analysed generated from the results of the objective questionnaire thereby also ensured objectivity and reason.

In terms of epistemology, it refers to the study of knowledge and empirical observation is a suitable way to create credible knowledge in a Post-Positivist study (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014: 25). In the current study, the researcher deemed knowledge as external to the subjective experience of the person and deemed how people experience reality of social media and customer loyalty. This was done by using this quantitative questionnaire to collect the information from respondents to then conduct the statistical analysis.

The ontological position is the study of reality and in Post-Positivism it is that reality is external to the individual and objective and laws which govern reality can be made known (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014: 25-26). In the current study, reality relating to social media and customer loyalty was measured external to the subjective experience of the individual which were measured with a quantitative questionnaire of which results surrounding these phenomena were analysed to determine the reality of these concepts.

Metatheory is the theoretical basis which provides direction for research to take place (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014: 26). In this study, U&G Theory related as it is usually applied in a quantitative approach and it is being examined in the same manner for the current study. This shows that U&G Theory was a good and applicable metatheoretical approach for the current study.

Methodology entails the research methods which are appropriate to analyse and collect data, and in Post-Positivism it involves reliability and the use of methods which are objective and quantitative (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014: 26-27). This is evident in the current study as an objective questionnaire and statistics were generated to analyse results with

the use of bar graphs and frequency tables which are quantitative and objective, but, were still interpreted.

3.2 Research Design

Within the Post Positivist paradigm, the current study used a quantitative approach. As mentioned in the paradigm section the epistemological and ontological positions of post positivist research are gaining knowledge and determining reality with factual and statistical data. Therefore, statistical data was gathered from respondents to observe if organisational social media communication did have a role in establishing customer loyalty. This was determined on a cross-sectional basis and this refers to conducting a study at one point in time (du Plooy Cilliers and Cronje: 149). The current study was cross sectional as it investigated if there was a perceived role at a specific time. This was due to the limited time frame. The research question also did not want to measure perceptions over time, it only wanted to measure them in the present. Deductive reasoning entails selecting a theory before initiating a study and applying its key concepts to the study (Bezuidenhout, 2014: 49). In the current study U&G Theory was chosen before the study started. The key concepts of U&G Theory were applied to the current study and to the respondent's answers to answer the research question. A non-experimental design entails avoiding test groups and therefore this is a non-experimental design as that was not chosen. The purpose of this study was to measure the perceived role social media communication had on customer loyalty and statistics were needed to measure this which have been presented in the form of descriptive statistics generated from the respondent's responses. These descriptive statistics have been interpreted from which conclusions have been made.

3.3 Population

The target population is everyone that meets the population parameters (Pascoe, 2014: 133). Therefore, in the current study, it was all South African social media followers which followed organisations on social media between eighteen and twenty-five years old. The population needed to include different genders and cultures to represent the diversity of South Africa. The accessible population is the section of the population that can actually be included in the study but still meet the population parameters (Pascoe, 2014: 133). In

the current study it was respondents that met the parameters of the current study which the researcher had access to through *Facebook*. The unit of analysis was the answers from respondents as it was the perceptions revealed in the answers of individual social media followers which needed to be analysed and were required to answer the research question.

Population parameters are the shared characteristics of respondents that respondents need to meet to be included and the following parameters were required (Pascoe, 2014: 133).

- Eighteen to twenty five years old – This was because this was the age group being investigated in the current study as researchers such as Hajli (2014) and Laksama (2018) investigated older individuals.
- South African citizens – respondents had to be South African citizens as the current study was conducted in a South African context due to the lack of research on the topic in South Africa as stated in the problem statement. Respondents could come from rural or urban areas as long as they were a South African citizen which follows organisations on social media.
- Follow organisations on social media – Respondents had to follow organisations on social media as an individual would not have been able to answer the questions if they did not and their answers would not have been applicable.
- Different genders and races to represent diversity of South Africa – South Africa is a diverse country with people of different genders and races, thus, the population needed to represent this diversity as much as possible within the limited scope of the current study so that findings represented the diverse South African population.

3.4 Sampling

As mentioned above, the unit of analysis were the perceptions revealed in the answers from respondents as it was the answers of individual social media followers which were required to answer the research question. Probability sampling was used as generalisation (within the limited scope of this study) is required in quantitative studies. Purposive sampling, which is purposefully selecting respondents the researcher wants to include in the study based on set criteria was used first (Pascoe, 2014: 142) .This was

because from the respondents which answered the questionnaire, only those meeting the population parameters could be included and were therefore purposively selected. Thirty seven respondents responded of which twenty were chosen to be included in the study. Stratified sampling entails splitting the population into two sections and then selecting the sample from there (Pascoe, 2014: 139-140). This was then used by dividing the answers into two sections, consisting of males and females, to ensure both genders were included. From those two sections of answers simple random sampling which is randomly selecting respondents was used on each section to get ten males and ten female respondents of whose answers were analysed to conduct the study (Pascoe, 2014: 138). This was done by using an online programme (see <https://www.randomizer.org>). This ensured an equal number of males and females and people from different races were included in the study to reflect the diverse South African population as far as possible within the limited scope of the current study.

3.5 Data Collection Method

A questionnaire entails administering a set of questions to obtain information about attitudes, ideas, or beliefs (Maree and Pietersen, 2016: 176). An online questionnaire was used to collect data from respondents. A pilot test was also conducted to determine the reliability of the questionnaire with respondent's which represent the population parameters but who were not part of the actual sample. The invite to answer the questionnaire was posted on *Facebook*. This was because information was required from a large number of respondents as the current study was a quantitative study and posting it on *Facebook* was an efficient way to achieve this. This may however been a negative as individuals on *Facebook* consisted of the researcher's friends but the researcher was aware of this and hence why stratified and random sampling were used to select the sample included in the study. According to Maree (*et al*, 2016: 183) an advantage of this method is that it entails closed ended questions which are easy and quick to answer. This was beneficial in the current study as it enabled respondents to answer the questionnaire in a timely manner, which could have encouraged participation. Maree (*et al*, 2016: 183) also suggested that closed ended questions make coding and statistical analysis easier. In the current study, numbers were used to code respondent's answers which made it easier to conduct the statistical analysis. However, closed ended questions are very

simple and have limited detail and it was easy to answer any question even if it was misunderstood (Maree *et al*, 2016: 183). The researcher tried to overcome this potential disadvantage by conducting pilot-tests of the questionnaire to ensure all questions were well understood.

3.6 Data Analysis Method

Once the data was collected, descriptive statistics were used to analyse and present the data from respondent's answers using frequency tables and bar graphs. Descriptive statistics entails various statistical methods used to present and organise data such as bar graphs (Maree *et al*, 2016: 204-217). This was an appropriate method to quantitatively present a large number of responses gathered from the questionnaire. These descriptive statistics were interpreted to make sense of the respondent's answers within the context of the current study. These were interpreted by linking findings back to the key concepts of the questions and U&G Theory, the problem statement, as well as the findings of past literature. Steps involved in this analysis entailed capturing all the data on a spreadsheet, generating descriptive statistics from the data, describing the statistics by linking back to U&G Theory, past literature, the research question and the hypothesis. Inferential statistics were not used as the limited scope of this study did not require findings to be generalised to the wider population (Maree *et al*, 2016: 220).

When evaluating this data analysis method it was beneficial as it provided an overview of findings. It also showed the answers of many respondents in a visual manner which allowed the researcher to easily identify patterns, allowing the data to be interpreted easier in a visual manner. However, this method does not give the reader an in-depth understanding of data as no relationships or inferences are shown but this was not a limitation in the current study as the research question did not require relationships or inferences to be made (Maree *et al*, 2016: 204-217).

3.7 Validity and Reliability

In quantitative research, validity refers to if the research measured what it set out to measure. It entails the extent which the instrument used to collect data represented the reality of the concepts which are being measured (Koonin, 2014: 256). Validity was ensured in the current study as the questionnaire actually measured if organisational

social media communication had a perceived role in establishing customer loyalty. The questionnaire used focused on the reality of the key concepts of the current study being measured which were social media, customer loyalty, personal relations, and surveillance thus further ensuring validity. U&G Theory also informed the design of the questions in the questionnaire thereby making it valid. The questions were based on reputable theory and literature which has been read.

This study focused on construct validity which refers to if what was meant to be measured was measured (Koonin, 2017: 256). This was applied as when the questions for the questionnaire were designed using U&G Theory, the way researchers in previous literature used the theory to measure needs was done in the same manner in the current study (see Wilimzig, 2011; Conduit *et al*, 2015). It also entailed sampling validity which according to Koonin (2014: 256) refers to if the sampling was valid. This was because the correct sampling method was chosen to obtain a representable sample and probability sampling was used. For validity, face validity was avoided as this entails considering an instrument to be valid because it looks to be (Maree *et al*, 2016: 240). Content validity analyses how the instrument includes the content of the construct being measured (Maree *et al*, 2016: 240). For example, as seen in operationalisation section, when measuring what types of social media communication is preferred, an 'other' category is used to ensure all possible types are included.

Reliability focuses on consistency and analyses if the method and instrument being used in the research is reliable. To ensure this, the same results need to be produced if the study was repeated by another researcher using the same instrument and method (Koonin., 2014: 254). Reliability was ensured as the questionnaire is provided and the questions were designed based on existing theory and concepts in other literature. The researcher designed the questionnaire so therefore any other researcher that decides to continue with this study can repeat it using the same questionnaire thereby making it reliable. This showed that the instrument being used was consistent and thus also reliable. Reliability also involves generalisability (Koonin, 2014: 255). Within the limited scope of the current study, results have been made as generalizable as possible so if the research was conducted again, similar results may be obtained, further ensuring reliability.

As reliability has been discussed in general, it is important to note that there are types of reliability such as inter-rater or inter-coder, test-retest, parallel forms, and split halves however, this study specifically focused on the internal consistency type. Internal consistency refers to measuring how consistently each item measures the same aspect (Koonin, 2014: 255). This is usually done by calculating the Cronbach Alpha score for each question (see: Siegle, 2013). The Cronbach Alpha scores show if questions used had internal consistency thereby ensuring reliability. This is because the scores show if there are inconsistent variations in the answers given with a score of 1, showing perfect consistency. Lower scores may show that there were too many variations in the respondent's answers decreasing the internal consistency and therefore reliability. The scores are calculated using answers from 10% of respondents however, due to 10% of the sample size in the current study (4 participants) it does not result in an accurate score.

4 PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

In this section, the data collected from the questionnaire was analysed and interpreted. This was done by using themes related to the questionnaire. These themes were respondent selection questions, demographic questions, social media preferences, surveillance and customer loyalty, and personal relations and customer loyalty.

4.1 Parameter Selection Questions

This theme analysed questions 2, 3, and 6 and all respondents needed to answer 'yes' to these questions to be included in the study. These questions analysed citizenship, age and whether or not the respondents followed organisations on social media.

Table 1: South African citizen question

Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Yes	20	100%
No	0	0%
Total	n = 20	100%

Table 2: Age question

Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Yes	20	100%
No	0	0%
Total	n = 20	100%

The three questions in this section stated 'Question 2 - Are you a South African citizen?' 'Question 3 – Are you between the ages of 18 and 25 years old?' 'Question 6 – Do you follow organisations on social media?' In Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3 it can be seen that all respondents selected were all South African Citizens, were the correct age, and that all respondents followed organisations on social media. This can be seen as in Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3, 100% of the respondents said 'yes' to all three questions. This ensured that the respondents selected met the population parameters and could therefore be included in the study. Specifically referring to Table 3, this question was significant because if the respondents were not organisational social media followers they would not have been able to correctly apply the key concepts of U&G Theory (surveillance and personal relations) to a social media context. In addition, past research has emphasised

the importance of this parameter being met prior to respondents taking part in the questionnaire to ensure one had sufficient knowledge to answer the questions correctly and give valuable insight to the questions (see; Scarth, 2013 and Jahn *et al*, 2013).

Table 3: Organisational social media follower

Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Yes	20	100%
No	0	0%
Total	n = 20	100%

4.2 Demographic Questions

This theme focused on the demographic aspects of the respondents. The questions which this theme analysed were questions 4 and 5 which analysed race and gender.

Table 4: Race question

Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
White	13	65%
Black	2	10%
Indian	1	5%
Coloured	1	5%
Other	3	15%
Total	n = 20	100%

Question 4 asked 'What race are you?' This question was asked to analyse if the respondents that had been randomly selected reflected the diverse South Africa population. In Table 4 it can be seen that 65% of the respondents were white making it the majority race included in the study. Although there was a respondent from each category (see Figure 1), the researcher wanted a wider diversity so that the answers were more representative of the racial diversity of South Africa. However, the researcher did try achieve this as much as possible within the limited scope of the study. The 'other' category did hinder the interpretation of these results as it was unclear what race these respondents belonged to which made it harder to determine the racial diversity of the sample.

Figure 1: Race question

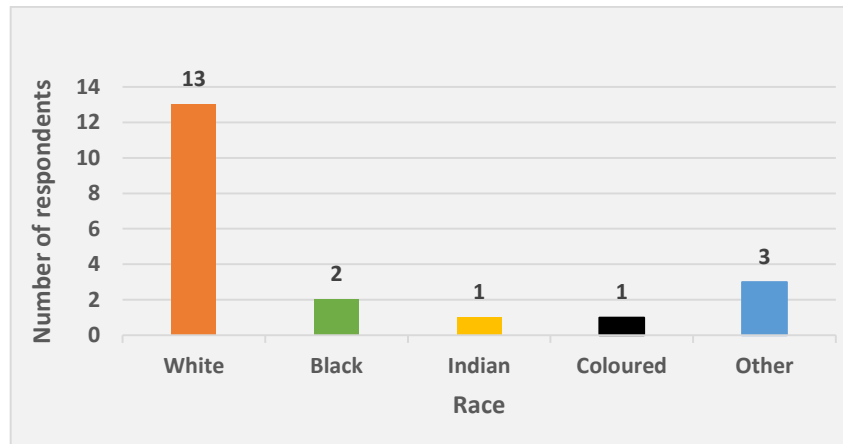
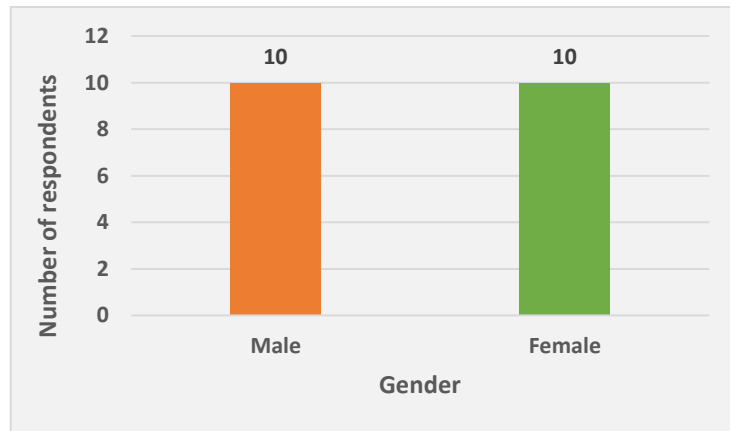


Table 5: Gender question

Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Male	10	50%
Female	10	50%
Total	n = 20	100%

Question 5 asked ‘What gender are you?’ To make sure that the data collected represented the perceptions of males and females equally, 10 males and 10 females were randomly selected (see sampling section). Table 5 shows this as 50% of the sample were males and 50% were females. Figure 2 also represents the equal number of males and females with both columns totalling to the same number of 10. This was to ensure data collected did not reflect perceptions of one gender only, thereby allowing the results to be more generalizable.

Figure 2: Gender question



4.3 Social Media Preferences

The following theme analysed question 7 which determined preferences respondents had in relation to social media communication. It had to be determined what method was preferred when communicating with an organisation on social media.

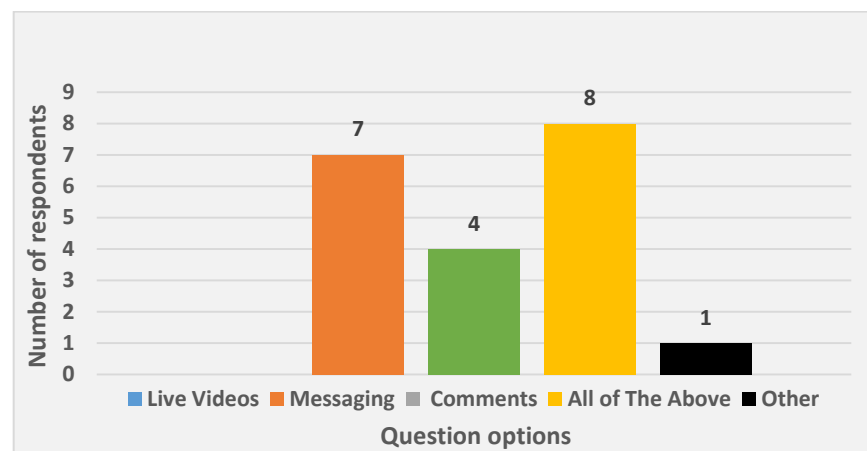
Table 6: Preferred form of social media communication.

Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Live Videos	0	0%
Personal Messaging	7	35%
Interacting through comments	4	20%
All of the Above	8	40%
Other	1	5%
Total	n = 20	100%

Question 7 asked 'What form of social media communication do you prefer when communication with an organisation on social media?' This question determined which form of social media communication respondents preferred. As it can be seen in Table 6 n=8 which is 40% of respondents for the 'all of the above' category making that the most common answer. However n=7 which is 35% in the 'personal messaging' category as well. These were the most significant findings because these were the most common answers and all respondents were almost evenly decided between 'all of the above' and 'personal messaging'. It was also significant because 35% of respondents specifically chose messaging instead of all of the other options showing that personal messaging was one of the preferred methods. This could also be valuable to industry as it shows that

personal messaging can be an effective method to use when engaging with customers on social media. Figure 3 also shows that nobody selected the live videos category showing that this method is ineffective when compared to options such as personal messaging. Therefore, other mediums such as the ones provided should be incorporated and utilised more by industry. However, past literature has found customers to utilise comment sections to a greater extent going against this finding (see; Conduit *et al*, 2014; Jahn *et al*, 2013; and Hajli, 2014).

Figure 3: Preferred form of social media communication.



4.4 Surveillance and Customer Loyalty

This section focused on the questions which analysed the need of surveillance in relation to customer loyalty. This included question 8, 9, 10, and 11.

Table 7: Following organisations on social media for information.

Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Agree	19	95%
Neutral	1	5%
Disagree	0	0%
Total	n = 20	100%

Question 8 stated 'I follow organisations on social media to find information about them regarding their products, services, events, or other information.' This question analysed if respondents followed organisations on social media to obtain information about them. In Table 7 it can be seen that n=19 which is 95% in the 'yes' category which shows that

respondents do follow organisations on social media to fulfil the need of information. Not one individual disagreed to this question which can be seen on Figure 4. This finding could be linked with past literature such as Jin *et al* (2016) which also found that this key concept of surveillance from U&G Theory was a common reason for individuals following organisations on social media. U&G Theory also states that individuals use the media to fulfil this need and this finding corroborates this notion.

Figure 4: Following organisations on social media for information.

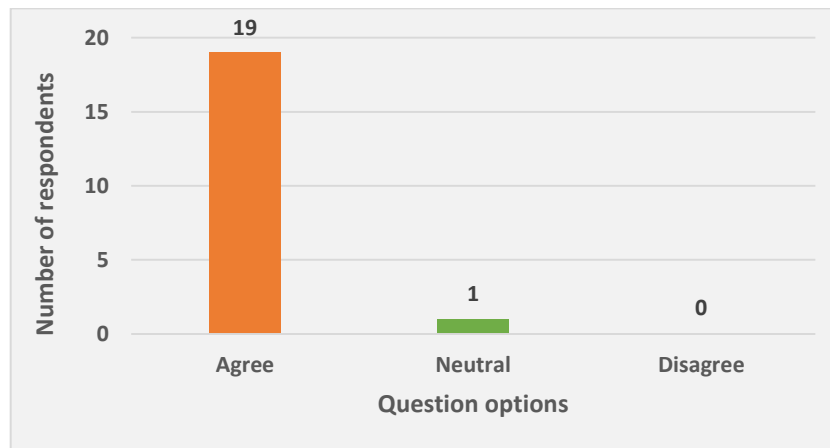


Table 8: Obtaining information and repeat purchases.

Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Agree	12	60%
Neutral	8	40%
Disagree	0	0%
Total	n = 20	100%

Question 9 stated 'When I find information about an organisation's products and services, events, or other information on social media I will make repeat purchases from the organisation.' This question measured the need of surveillance from U&G Theory relating to information and how if this need was fulfilled that it would lead to individuals making repeat purchases. Thus the key concepts of the study measured in this question were surveillance and customer loyalty. Table 8 shows that n=12 in the 'agree' category which was 60% of respondents and n=8 in the 'neutral' category which was 40% of respondents. This is also shown in Figure 5 where the tallest column indicating 12 respondents relates

to the 'agree' category. This then showed that organisational social media communication does have a role in establishing customer loyalty as 60%, which is more than half of the respondents stated they would make repeat purchases if their need for information, emphasised by U&G Theory, was fulfilled. This finding can also be corroborated by 3 other studies which also found that if a customer's need for information was fulfilled that it would lead to repeat purchases (see Wilimzig, 2011; Hajli, 2014; and Karjaluoto *et al*, 2015). This question then supported the hypothesis in that organisational social media communication can result in customer loyalty. This also helped answer the research question which questions if organisational social media communication can have a role in establishing customer loyalty. This is because according to Khadka (*et al*, 2017) repeat purchases is an aspect of customer loyalty and this question showed that organisational social media communication can lead to this if the need for information is fulfilled.

Figure 5: Obtaining information and repeat purchases.

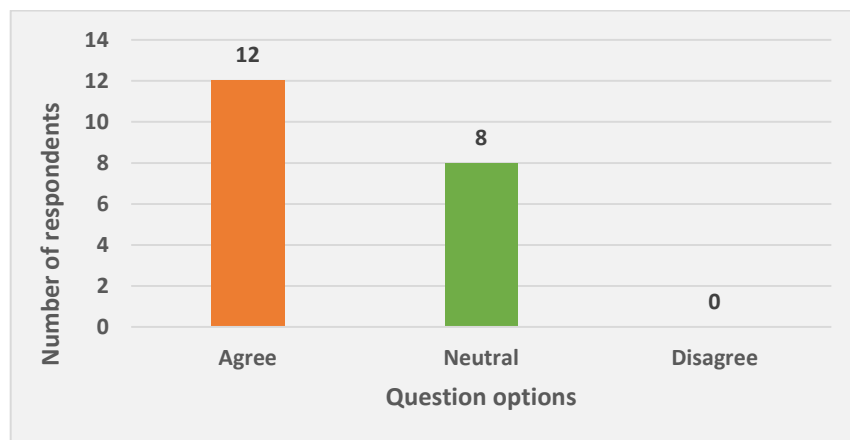


Table 9: Surveillance and recommending the organisation to others.

Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Agree	13	65%
Neutral	6	30%
Disagree	1	5%
Total	n = 20	100%

Question 10 stated 'When I find information about an organisation's products and services, events, or other information on social media I will recommend this organisation

to others.’ This question analysed the need of surveillance from U&G Theory and how if this need for information was fulfilled, it may lead to customers recommending the organisation to others. The key concepts measured in this question were surveillance and customer loyalty. Table 9 indicates n=13 in the ‘agree’ category which is 65% of respondents saying that if they fulfil the need for information they will recommend the organisation to others. This was the most significant finding because it showed that fulfilling one’s need for information through organisational social media communication could lead to recommending the organisation to others. This would be important for industry to consider because if customers were not fulfilling this need of U&G Theory customers may not encourage others to do business with that organisation. Past literature stated that 72% of respondents would recommend the organisation to a friend or an associate due to obtaining information through online social media communication with a brand (see Wilimzig, 2011) and the current study found similar results which can be seen in Figure 6. This supported the hypothesis and helped answer the research question in that organisational social media communication can have a role in establishing customer loyalty. This was because this question showed that if the need for information was fulfilled organisational social media communication can lead to recommending the organisation to others which according to Khadka (*et al*, 2017) is an aspect of customer loyalty.

Figure 6: Surveillance and recommending the organisation to others.

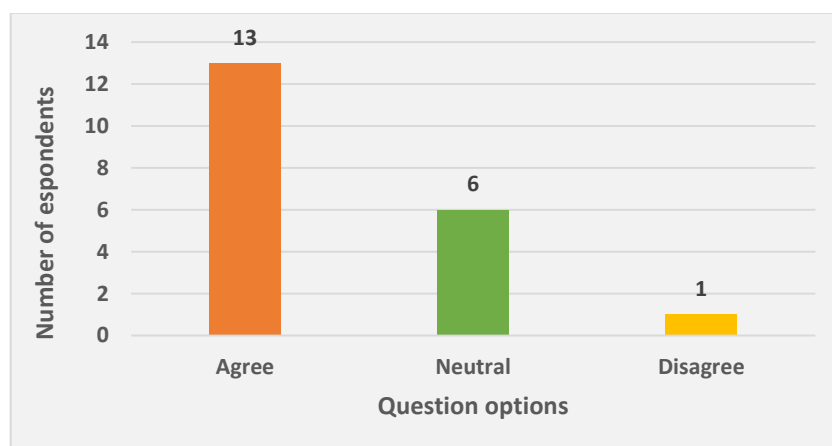
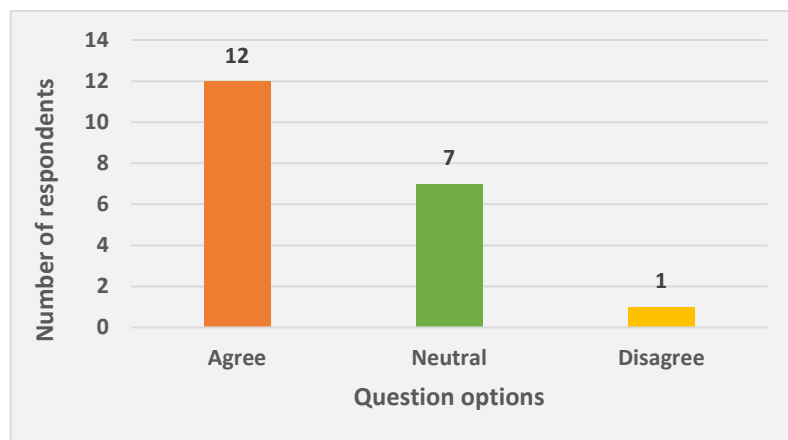


Table 10: Surveillance and viewing the organisation positively.

Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Agree	12	60%
Neutral	7	35%
Disagree	1	5%
Total	n = 20	100%

Question 11 stated 'When I find information about an organisation's products and services, events, or other information on social media I view the organisation positively.' This question also analysed the need of surveillance from U&G Theory and how fulfilling this need may lead to customers viewing an organisation positively. The key concepts analysed in this question were surveillance and customer loyalty. Table 10 showed that n=12 which is 60% of respondents in the 'agree' category. This was the key finding as it showed majority of respondents feel that if they get the information they need from the organisation on social media the organisation will be viewed positively (see Figure 7). This was significant because if the informational need from U&G Theory was not fulfilled it could lead to not viewing the organisation positively which may affect the corporate image of the organisation. This finding can be linked to past literature which found that customers engage with organisations on social media to obtain information and if this information is obtained, attitudes towards the company improve thereby suggesting the organisation will be viewed positively (see; Conduit *et al*, 2014). This finding then corroborates with the hypothesis as it suggested organisational social media communication does have a role in establishing loyalty. This helps answer the research question in that organisational social media communication can have a role in establishing customer loyalty. This is because according to Khadka (*et al*, 2017) viewing the organisation positively is an aspect of customer loyalty and this question proved organisational social media communication can lead to this if the need for information is fulfilled.

Figure 7: Surveillance and viewing the organisation positively.



4.5 Personal Relations and Customer Loyalty

The final theme of this section analysed the need of personal relations in relation to customer loyalty. This included question 12, 13, 14, and 15.

Table 11: Following organisations on social media to feel socially connected.

Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Agree	12	60%
Neutral	5	25%
Disagree	3	15%
Total	n = 20	100%

Question 12 stated 'I follow organisations on social media to feel socially connected with them.' This measured the need of personal relations from U&G Theory. The question was about feeling socially connected thereby measuring personal relations. The key concept being measured in this question was the need for personal relations. In Table 11 n=12 in the 'agree' category which is 60% of respondents showing that most respondents feel socially connected to organisations followed on social media. Figure 8 also showed how the majority of respondents agreed to this question. Past research also found that customers follow organisations on social media to fulfil this relational need (see; Jin *et al*, 2016 and Jahn *et al*, 2013). This also showed that fulfilling the personal relations need from U&G Theory was a primary reason for following organisations on social media. U&G Theory also states that individuals utilise the media to fulfil this need and therefore this

finding supports this as it showed that respondents actively utilise this media to gratify this need.

Figure 8: Following organisations on social media to feel socially connected.

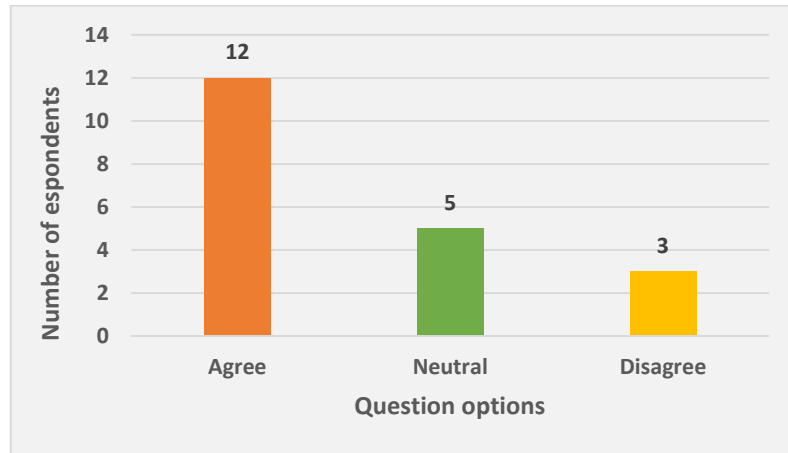


Table 12: Social connection and repeat purchases.

Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Agree	12	60%
Neutral	6	30%
Disagree	2	10%
Total	20	100%

Question 13 stated 'When I feel socially connected to organisations on social media I make repeat purchases from these organisations.' This question analysed the need of personal relations from U&G Theory and how if it is fulfilled it may lead to repeat purchases. The concepts that were measured in this question were personal relations and customer loyalty. In Table 12 n=12 in the 'yes' category which is 60% of respondents, therefore being the most significant finding. As 12 respondents agreed to the question (see Figure 9), it shows that if customers feel socially connected to an organisation on social media they will make repeat purchases from the organisation. This was significant because it showed that if no social connection (personal relation need from U&G Theory) was present, customers would be less inclined to make repeat purchases, showing that industry should focus on this aspect when implementing a social media strategy. Past literature viewed interaction between the organisation and customer on social media as a

process which may entail feeling socially connected and found this to have a direct impact on purchase intention thereby corroborating this finding (see; Hajli, 2014). This supported the hypothesis in that social media communication can have a role in establishing loyalty and it helps answer the research question in that organisation social media communication does have a role in establishing loyalty. This is because repeat purchases is an aspect of customer loyalty and this question showed organisational social media communication can lead to this if the need to feel socially connected is fulfilled (see: Khadka et al, 2017).

Figure 9: Social connection and repeat purchases.

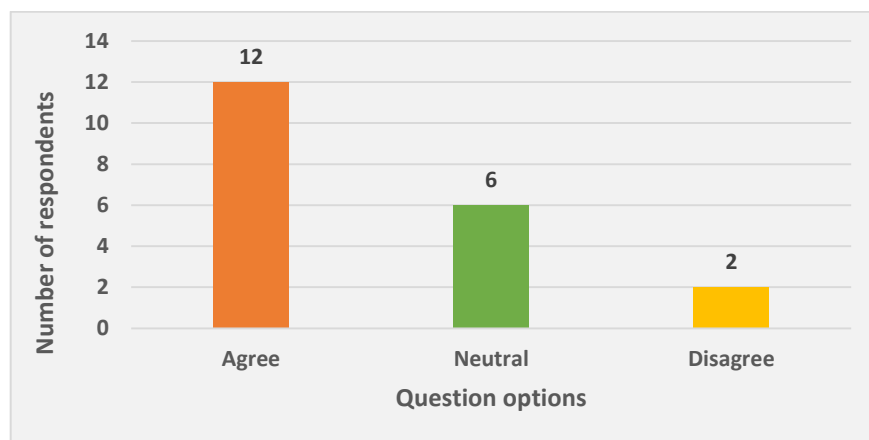


Table 13: Social connection and recommending the organisation to others.

Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Agree	11	55%
Neutral	9	45%
Disagree	0	0%
Total	n = 20	100%

Question 14 stated 'When I feel socially connected to organisations on social media I recommend these organisations to others.' This question analysed the need for personal relations from U&G Theory and how if this need is fulfilled it may lead to recommending the organisation to others. The key concepts that were measured were personal relations and customer loyalty. In Table 13 it showed n=11 in the 'agree' category which was the majority of respondents. This showed organisational social media communication can

have a role in establishing loyalty and therefore supports the hypothesis of this study. Past research found similar findings in that organisational social media communication can lead to customers recommending the organisation to others whether it be with friends or associates (see; Wilimzig, 2011). This question also helps answer the research question as according to Khadka (*et al*, 2017) recommending the organisation to others is an aspect of customer loyalty and in this case the question proves feeling socially connected to an organisation on social media leads to this if the need for feeling socially connected is fulfilled. Although Figure 10 showed majority of respondents agreed, it also showed that nearly half of the respondents were neutral, making this the question where respondents were most unsure, meaning that feeling socially connected to the organisation on social media and that leading to recommending the organisation to others was the least likely aspect to lead to customer loyalty in this study. This is because in the other questions the 'agree' category had a higher difference to that of the neutral one.

Figure 10: Social connection and recommending the organisation to others.

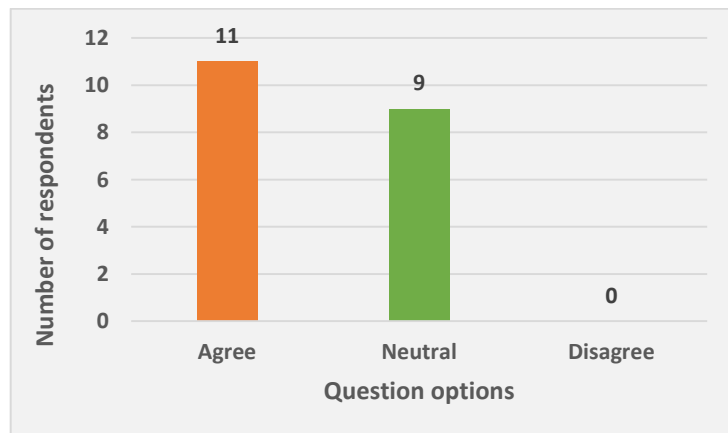
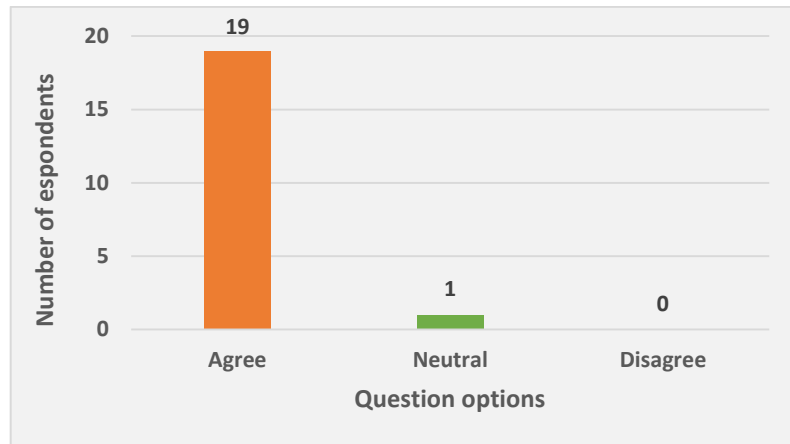


Table 14: Social connection and viewing the organisation positively.

Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Agree	19	95%
Neutral	1	5%
Disagree	0	0%
Total	n = 20	100%

Question 15 stated 'When I feel socially connected to organisations on social media I view these organisations positively.' This question analysed the need for personal relations from U&G Theory and how if this need was fulfilled it may lead to viewing the organisation positively. This question measured the concepts of personal relations and customer loyalty. In Table 14 it showed that n=19 which is 95% of respondents in the 'agree' category. This was the most common question which can also be seen in Figure 11. Due to the strong level of agreement it can be said that organisational social media communication can have a role in establishing loyalty which therefore supports the hypothesis. This also shows that feeling the need to socially connected from U&G Theory and its ability to leading to viewing the organisation positively is the strongest way social media communication can have a role in establishing customer loyalty in this study due to this question having the highest level of agreement. Past literature has also found that if needs from U&G Theory such as personal relations were fulfilled from organisational social media communication it leads to customers having better attitude towards the organisation (see; Conduit *et al*, 2014). This finding also helps answer the research question as viewing the organisation positively is an aspect of customer loyalty and in this case organisational social media communication proved that it led to this if the need of personal relations is fulfilled (see; Khadka *et al*, 2017).

Figure 11: Social connection and viewing the organisation positively.



4.6 Conclusion for Data Presentation and Analysis

This section presented the data collected from the online questionnaire. This was done by generating descriptive statistics which were then analysed and interpreted in a meaningful manner by linking the statistics to past literature, the research question, hypothesis, and U&G Theory.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 Research Hypothesis and Question Analysed

The hypothesis in this study was that a company's social media communication has a role in establishing customer loyalty among South African adult social media followers. The above findings supported this hypothesis. This is because the questions analysed how organisational social media communication can lead to customer loyalty in three forms namely; repeat purchases, recommending the organisation to others, and viewing the organisation positively. All questions measured these aspects of customer loyalty and found that majority of respondents in every question said organisational social communication will lead to them either making repeat purchases, recommending the organisation to others, or viewing the organisation positively. Not one question found the majority of the individuals disagreed or were neutral to the questions. This assisted answering the research question which stated, 'what perceived role does an organisation's social media communication have on customer loyalty, using U&G Theory, among South African adult social media followers?' This was because due to the above findings it could be said that organisational social media communication does have a role in establishing customer loyalty among South African adult social media followers.

5.2 Research Problem Solved and Addressed

The research problem was that there was insufficient research conducted within the field of organisational social media communication and customer loyalty in a South African context. There was sufficient research on the topic however most of which had been conducted outside of South Africa, thus, it was a problem as findings could therefore not be applied in a South African context. Customer loyalty was also identified as essential to business success and it needed to be known if it would be attainable for organisations in South Africa by using social media. This research study solved and addressed this problem by conducting research on this topic of social media and customer loyalty in South Africa thereby solving the problem within the confines of the limited scope of this study. This has helped increase the limited research conducted on this field in a South African context and could potentially encourage more South African researchers to study the topic further. This will be elaborated on in the Heuristic value section. In addition, as the study has found that organisational social media communication does have a role in

establishing customer loyalty, it can be made known to South African organisations which could potentially benefit them.

5.3 Implications of Findings

The implications of the findings are that they show that they corroborated with the findings of most past literature analysed in the literature review. This is because all sources found organisational social media communication to have a role in establishing customer loyalty except for three (see; Scarth, 2017; Olsen, 2014, and Hakansson *et al*, 2015). Another implication of the finding was that a number of respondents answered 'neutral' to some questions in the questionnaire. Although the majority 'agreed' in all questions, it is unknown as to whether or not respondents were more inclined to 'agree' or 'disagree' to certain questions where they chose neutral. Since this was unknown, this was an implication because those that said 'neutral' may be more inclined to either 'disagree' or 'agree' which could have changed the results. Another implication of the findings is that the communication method most preferred when communicating with an organisation on social media to fulfil needs is personal messaging, interacting through comments, and live videos as most respondents chose the 'all of the above' option which included these forms of social media communication. Overall, the implications of the findings are valuable because it gave the researcher data to answer the research question. This also made the findings valuable as they provided information which was generally unknown in a South African context and that organisations can use in their business practices.

5.4 Ethical Considerations

5.4.1 Researcher

Regarding the researcher, misusing information was important to avoid and this has been ensured as the findings have only been used for purposes of this research and no other (Louw, 2014: 271). Bias was a second ethical consideration which Louw (2014: 271) mentioned and in this study the researcher was not biased. The researcher has avoided bias as randomizer.org was used to randomly select respondents of which the responses of those that were randomly selected were used to generate the statistics. This ensured no bias manipulation and the researcher has kept all responses from respondents available should anybody wish to view them. These will be kept for a period of five years.

Distortion of results has also not taken place as the results of the research were not interpreted in a specific way to achieve a desired outcome and certain aspects have not been over emphasised against others to distort results. This is further supported in that all responses from all respondents will be kept for a period of 5 years should anybody wish to see them. According to the *IIE Research policy* (2017), ethical clearance is required before research is conducted and the researcher was given ethical clearance (see Appendix A)

5.4.2 Respondents

Ethical considerations regarding the respondents have also been ensured as informed consent was required to participate and respondents could have withdrawn at any time (see consent form – Appendix C) and this was emphasised in the *IIE Research Policy* (2017). The signature section has been adapted as the questionnaire was done online thus, respondents were unable to sign. Table 15 also showed that all respondents consented to answering the questionnaire. The research has not involved a sensitive topic such as discrimination which is important according to the *IIE Research Policy* (2017). Offering incentives, according to Louw (2014: 264) to encourage respondent participation can affect how questions are answered and thus this study has not used incentives to encourage participation. Respondents have also not been misled regarding the research as they were given an explanatory information sheet of the study (see Appendix B).

Table 15: Consent question

Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Yes	20	100%
No	0	0%
Total	n = 20	100%

5.5 Limitations Addressed

It was important to also consider the limitations of this study and the delimitations thereof. Firstly, as this was a post-graduate student research paper, access to funds was limited, therefore also limiting the sample size. A delimitation of this was that there were no funds to hire research assistants to analyse respondent's answers to avoid researcher bias or distortion of results. However, this was addressed by randomly selecting the sample used

in the study and keeping all answers from respondents for five years. The study had to be completed in nine months which posed a time constraint on the study and limited the extensiveness of it. A delimitation of this was that only one theory could be used and, in addition, due to this time constraint, only two out of the four key concepts of that theory could be applied to the study. This was addressed by applying the most relevant concepts of surveillance and personal relations to the study and stating that in the heuristic value section that future studies could focus on all key concepts. Another limitation was the research design which was a quantitative design as it limits methods available to the researcher. The delimitation of this is that the researcher was therefore unable to obtain individual perceptions of respondents, only responses in general were able to be obtained. This study also used a small sample and in quantitative studies, a larger sample is preferred so that results are more generalizable. A delimitation of this is that the findings may not be representative to the entire accessible population. Therefore, within the limited scope of this study, the results have been made as generalizable as possible to address this limitation.

5.6 Heuristic Value

Fields this study contributes to is the Communication and/or Media field. This is because this study contributed additional knowledge to these topics in an academic context. This study has also led to the development of recommendations for further study. This includes how future researchers could analyse a larger sample of respondents to make the findings more generalizable. Another recommendation may be to measure which individual social media site is the most effective in fulfilling the needs of customers in leading to customer loyalty. In addition, all four key concepts from U&G Theory could be applied and a different age group could be investigated such as individuals between the ages of 40 and 50 as this study focused on young adults and findings may be the same or different. This will aid in discovering if an older population seeks organisational social media communication to fulfil different needs and if fulfilling the same or different needs also leads to customer loyalty. This is because the current study and past research primarily focused on a younger population therefore, if an older population is investigated and similar or different findings are discovered, it will aid organisations in knowing what type of

social media strategy to adopt, depending which needs are more relevant to the age of the target audience it is being developed for.

If a specific finding is discovered regarding what type of social media strategy should be adopted it may also lead to a recommendation for practice. Recommendations for practice may include that these research findings can be provided to organisations so that they can learn how to better utilise social media to obtain customer loyalty. For instance, the findings can demonstrate organisations that if they provide customers with information they need and put effort into building a relationship and feeling socially connected with customers on social media that it could help establish customer loyalty. Another recommendation may be to suggest organisations change the way they currently conduct their social media operations and rather adapt their social media strategy to the findings of this study, ensuring their social media page allows such needs to be fulfilled thereby enhancing the chance of establishing customer loyalty.

6 CLOSING STATEMENT

In closing, this study aimed to identify the perceived role of organisational social media communication on customer loyalty in South Africa. Using selected key concepts from U&G Theory, surveillance and personal relations, this study has shown that organisational social media communication had a role in establishing customer loyalty. This was because the gratification of these needs led to individuals making repeat purchases, recommending the organisation to others, and viewing the organisation positively which are all aspects of customer loyalty. This finding also corroborated with past literature even though it was conducted in a new developing country, in a South African context. The current study also contributed to understanding organisational social media communication and customer loyalty in a valuable way. This was not only because it investigated the topic in an under researched context but, it also developed questions from U&G Theory which had not been used in any of the past literature analysed in the current study to collect data and information on this topic. However, considering the limitations of the study and recommendations for further study, this field of Media and Communication can be a relevant starting point for future research to gain more knowledge on these ever evolving fields.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ethical Clearance Letter



Appendix B: Explanatory Information Sheet

To whom it may concern,

My name is Dylan Jacklin and I am a student at Varsity College. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Natalie Emslie about organizational social media communication and customer loyalty. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of if and how organizational social media communication may be used to establish customer loyalty.

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 it is your viewpoint that is required to answer the research question. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to invite you to answer my questionnaire.

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 view on the study being conducted. 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 Varsity College, 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 recognizable 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 BA Honors Degree in Communications. 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:

Dylan Jacklin

The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:

Dr. Natalie Emslie



Appendix C: Consent Form for Participants

I agree to participate in the research conducted by Dylan Jacklin about organizational social media communication and customer loyalty.

This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:

1. I agree to be interviewed for this research.
2. My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.
3. 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.
4. I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.
5. I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.

Yes ☐ No ☐

Appendix D: Questionnaire

My name is Dylan Jacklin and I am an HBA Honours student at Varsity College. In this research study I am investigating the perceived role organisational social media communication may have on establishing customer loyalty among South African citizens between the ages of 18 and 25. This questionnaire will be confidential. The questions will take you approximately 5 minutes to answer and I thank you for your time.

1. Do you consent to this form?

1 Yes ☐

2 No ☐

2. Are you a South African citizen?

1 Yes ☐

2 No ☐

3. Are you between the ages of 18 and 25 years old?

1 Yes ☐

2 No ☐

4. What race are you?

1 White ☐

2 Black ☐

3 Indian ☐

4 Coloured ☐

5 Other ☐

5. What gender are you?

1 Male ☐

2 Female ☐

6. Do you follow organisations on social media?

1 Yes ☐

2 No ☐

7. What form of social media communication do you prefer when communicating with an organisation on social media?

1 Live Videos ☐

2 Personal Messaging ☐

3 Interacting through comments ☐

4 All of the above ☐

5 Other ☐

8. I follow organisations on social media to find information about them regarding their products and services, events or other information.

1. Agree ☐

2. Neutral ☐

3. Disagree ☐

9. When I find information about an organisation's products and services, events or other information on social media I will make repeat purchases from the organisation.

1. Agree ☐

2. Neutral ☐

3. Disagree ☐

10. When I find information about an organisation's products and services, events or other information on social media I will recommend the organisation to others.

1. Agree ☐

2. Neutral ☐

3. Disagree ☐

11. When I find information about an organisation's products and services, events or other information on social media I view the organisation positively.

1. Agree ☐

2. Neutral ☐

3. Disagree ☐

12. I follow organisations on social media to feel socially connected with them.

1. Agree ☐

2. Neutral ☐

3. Disagree ☐

13. When I feel socially connected to organisations on social media I make repeat purchases from these organisations.

1. Agree ☐

2. Neutral ☐

3. Disagree ☐

14. When I feel socially connected to organisations on social media I recommend these organisations to others.

1. Agree ☐

2. Neutral ☐

3. Disagree ☐

15. When I feel socially connected to organisations on social media I view these organisations positively.

1. Agree ☐

2. Neutral ☐

3. Disagree ☐

Appendix E: Invitation to Answer Questionnaire



Dylan Jacklin



30 August · 

Hi everyone. Please may you do me a favor and answer my questionnaire for my Research Dissertation. The two attachments before the questions are an explanatory information sheet just describing the study and the second one is a consent form. Please note this study is only looking at people between 18 and 25 years old so if you do not fit this age gap please don't answer the questionnaire. The questionnaire is completely confidential and your participation will be much appreciated.



DOCS.GOOGLE.COM

Appendix 1: Questionnaire



Good day, my name is Dylan Jacklin a...



Appendix F: Safe Assign Similarity Report

10/27/2018

SafeAssign Originality Report


(<http://safeassign.blackboard.com/>)

RESM8419_2018_HBA1_VCDW1 - RESM8419_VCDW1

Activity 5.3.2: Submitting your final report

Dylan Miles Jacklin
on Sat, Oct 27 2018, 8:58 AM
11% highest match
Submission ID: 689ec1a8-fda4-47bb-9da2-a7078d134549

Attachments (1)

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IIE Bachelor of Arts Honours in Communications

Uses and Gratifications and social media: a cross-sectional quantitative questionnaire explaining the perceived role of organisational social media communication on customer loyalty in South Africa

Supervisor: Dr Natalie Emslie

1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE

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Appendix G: Research Report Table

Title – Uses and Gratifications and Social Media: A cross-sectional quantitative questionnaire explaining the perceived role of organisational social media communication on customer loyalty in South Africa.

Research Purpose/Objective	Primary Research Question	Research Rationale	Seminal Authors/Sources	Literature Review	Paradigm	Approach	Data Collection Method	Ethics	Anticipated Findings	References
To establish the perceived role a company's social media communication has on establishing customer loyalty among SA social media followers between the ages of 18 – 25.	What perceived role does a company's social media communication have on customer loyalty among SA social media followers?	There are conflicting perspectives on this topic where some people say it does play a role and others do not.	Elihu Katz. Jay Blumler. Gurevitch. Thomas Ruggiero.	Theme 1: Social media. Theme 2: Customer and brand loyalty. Theme 3: Uses and Gratifications Theory.	Paradigm Post-Positivism Epistemology Knowledge is only valid through empirical observation and a questionnaire is being used to ensure this. Ontology Reality is external and objective and the researcher will use statistics to measure perceptions to interpret reality. Axiology Truth and reason are valued thus the study's results will be as generalizable as possible.	Quantitative.	A cross-sectional questionnaire will be used and administered on a social media platform.	No incentives. Informed consent. Topic is not sensitive. No bias. No distortion. No misuse of information.	A company's social media communication will play a role in establishing customer loyalty as Hajji (2014), Phua <i>et al</i> (2016), and Wilimzig (2011) found it did in their research.	Ruggiero, T.E., 2000. Uses and Gratifications Theory in the 21 st Century. <i>Mass Communication and Society</i> , 3(1). Pp.3-37. Jay G. Blumler, <i>et al.</i> , 1979. The Role of Theory in Uses and Gratifications Studies. <i>Communication Research</i> 6(1). Pp. 3-8.
Research Problem	Secondary Research Question/Objective	Key Concepts	Theory			Population				
Currently, there is insufficient information regarding the role that an organizations social media communication on customer loyalty coming from a South African context.	NA.	Social media communication. Customer loyalty. Social media followers. Surveillance. Mediated relations.	Uses and Gratifications theory (Ruggiero (2000)).			Individual social media followers between the ages of 18 – 25.				
						Sampling	Data Analysis Method	Limitations	Anticipated Contribution	
						Simple random sampling first and then purposive sampling.	Descriptive statistics will be used. These statistics will be analyzed to make sense of the responses within the context of the study.	Sample being used is not extremely large. The paradigm being used only gathers statistics and no in depth understanding. The study is also limited due to the scope.	All platforms of social media are being analyzed in general. Focus is not only being applied to one social media platform thus looking how social media as a whole may have a perceived role on customer loyalty.	