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# An Investigation on Consumer Perceptions of Email and Social Media Marketing: An Advertising Case in South Africa

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**ABSTRACT**

Due to the increasing usage of digital marketing to advertise to consumers in recent years, there has been a growing interest in determining which digital marketing channels are the most effective in not only successfully getting the brand message across to the consumer, but also generating the most return on investment in the form of greater consumer purchase intention. As such, the objective of this research was to determine how the antecedents, perceived benefit, perceived risk, and organisational trust influenced consumer attitudes towards these two digital marketing channels. Furthermore, the effect of consumer attitudes on consumer purchase intention and hence post-purchase behaviour were also examined. The research was conducted using a quantitative approach by means of a survey in the forms of a questionnaire that was distributed to participants using a combination of the convenience and snowball sampling methods. A sample size of 262 respondents was used, and the requirements to participate in the study were for the individual to be over the age of 18 and be a consumer based in South Africa. The data was subsequently analysed using SPSS 27 for descriptive analysis and hypothesis testing respectively. The proposed hypotheses were tested to understand the relationships between the study's constructs. Ultimately, the study found that consumers who form a positive attitude towards a brand advertising via email or social media will have a higher intention to purchase the brand, and will more likely make repeat purchases of that brand. The limitations of the study are discussed and future research direction is proposed.

**Keywords:** Email Marketing, Social Media Marketing, Consumer Attitude, Consumer Purchase Intention, Perceived Benefit, Perceived Risk, Organisational Trust
**JEL Classifications:** M3; M30; M31; M310

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Digital marketing comprises display media, performance media, social media and mobile media. Digital marketing as defined by Kannan and Li (2017) is "the adaptive, technology enabled process by which firms collaborate with customers and partners to jointly create, communicate, deliver and sustain value for all stakeholders". Whereas Zahay (2021) defined digital marketing as "any digital technology to facilitate the marketing process, with the end goal of facilitating customer interaction and engagement."

Over the past 10 years, the current status quo on marketing has seen tremendous destabilising, catering for a digital future and this is evident in the introduction of a plethora of digital marketing tools in the market. Social and digital marketing offers significant opportunities to organizations through lower costs, improved brand awareness and increased sales (Carlson et al., 2021). Digital marketing has low barriers to entry and high returns on investment (ROI). In 2021, the total number of internet users globally was estimated at 4.66 billion (Statista, 2021). Studying digital marketing trends is vital to ensure that managers are constantly aware of the changes in consumer preferences. Topics such as big data are novel in the

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marketing world, deemed to be a critical step for the successful transition to industry 4.0 (Lee and Cho, 2019), and it involves managers gathering, analysing, and using massive amounts of digital information to improve business operations. With data being available in real-time and anywhere, managers can react to the data and can adapt their strategy accordingly. Although, the increasing pace of data generation has made it challenging to capture data from various sources and extract valuable business insights (Keogh et al., 2020).

Digital technologies are reducing information and time asymmetries between customers and sellers in significant ways (Kannan and Li, 2017) resulting in consumers having more information to consider moving through the different stages in the buying process; awareness, familiarity, consideration, evaluation and purchase. Consumers are acquiring information concerning goods or services in a variety of ways, Chikweche et al. (2021) concluded that early global consumers in Africa are more likely to be influenced by the media whilst middle class African consumers are influenced more by peers. Highly valuable information concerning such products or services are available online and lead to repeat purchases in brand communities (Zaglia, 2013; Hua et al., 2015), focused information available on search engines and other customers' reviews that are on retailers' sites or third-party forums not controlled by the seller (Court et al., 2009). Consumers are continuously monitoring brands leading to Consumer Based Brand Equity (CBBE), which is the consumer's perception about the relative position of a brand among its competitors (Chakraborty and Ghosh, 2020). With globalisation intensifying competition it is imperative that the organisation focuses on building a credible brand (Hemsley-Brown, et al., 2016).

### 1.1. Research Problem and Gap

There is little research on the comparison between email marketing and social media marketing in terms of which has better customer perceptions attached to it. This paper aims to fill that research gap through the conceptual framework that has been designed. There is research which examines perceived risk (Popli and Mishra, 2015; Pappas, 2016) and perceived benefit (Tanadi et al., 2015; Al-Debei et al., 2015) as antecedents of online purchase behaviour, however there is no link between a company's marketing efforts through email or social media and the way this affects the consumer's perceived risk/benefit of online purchases. Furthermore, the studies done on the above antecedents and their effects did not take into account post-purchase behaviour, and rather stopped at consumers' purchase intentions (Popli and Mishra, 2015; Pappas, 2016; Tanadi et al., 2015; Al-Debei et al., 2015). In this paper, examining the role that post-purchase behaviour plays in the conceptual model will enrich this field of study by understanding the long-term effects of email and social media marketing. With people having access to more information, biases will be constantly prevalent no matter the information the company puts out, therefore a deeper analysis is needed to understand which medium is the most effective for marketers to communicate with their customers.

## 2. THEORETICAL GROUNDING

The Expectation Disconfirmation Paradigm Theory will justify which of the two mediums are most effective in meeting customer satisfaction. "Expectation disconfirmation is generally defined as the discrepancy between two concepts, respectively the discrepancy between a pre-purchasing standard (such as expectations or desires) and actual performance" (Spreng and Page, 2003). Consumer's satisfaction and the later studies in the field of service perceived quality have observed disconfirmation as the difference between a standard (expectations or wishes) and the perceived level of any attribute. (Jiang et al., 2000; Berry et al., 1988). Satisfaction as defined by Oliver (1997) is "the consumer's fulfillment response, a judgment that a service or product provides (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment, including levels of under- or over fulfilment". Thus, the displeasure of under fulfillment typically is dissatisfying, however, overfulfillment may be dissatisfying if it is unpleasant (Oliver, 1997).

Although Burton et al. (2019) found that purchase intentions were higher when consumers saw an advertisement more than 10 times, this is contrary to prior findings. Chang (2014) performed several experiments on university students relating to commercials to investigate whether a brand's previous advertisements create expectations against which consumer's compare its new advertisements. The results found that prior commercials, in terms of humour, specific spokes character or creative idea have a significant influence on expectations in the new commercial which could potentially increase or decrease their brand attitudes (Chang, 2014).

## 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 3.1. Digital Marketing Overview

Digital marketing is transforming the manner in which businesses operate because target audiences can be segmented precisely using artificial intelligence and specific information can be leveraged to influence customers in a more personalised manner. Due to the increased advances in new technologies in business, marketers have become more and more reliant on digital marketing (Demba et al., 2019). Digital marketing allows organisations to create personalised connections with leads and build long-term relationships with existing customers (Stokes et al., 2018). Although the firm must not solely rely on paid media, (Agnihotri et al., 2019) found that in emerging markets owned media and digital inbound marketing play a bigger role in influencing customer acquisition. Content marketing has been a contemporary addition to the marketing arsenal and its benefits include consumer engagement, trust, and value (Hollebeek and Macky, 2019). The positive influence of content marketing on consumer purchase intention has been suggested in the past (Calder et al., 2019), who explored it from a business-to-business perspective. In addition other digital marketing aspects have received a considerable amount of attention which include, search advertising (Repovienė, 2017), social media communities (Du Plessis, 2017; Singh and Mathur, 2019), user generated content or electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) (Müller and Christand, 2019; Al-Adamat and Al-Gasawneha, 2020; Liu et al., 2018) and 'luxury branded' content on YouTube (Xie and Lou, 2020). Digital marketers have the capabilities of measuring performance of marketing

campaigns precisely, analysing which platforms perform optimally and which platforms provide the most benefit (Stokes et al., 2018). With organisations opting to go digital, certain capabilities and data is available to marketers that drives continuous improvement. Certain software can give a better understanding of the performance of the organisation thus data driven conclusions are the predominant and most effective outcome of digital marketing platforms (Stokes et al., 2018).

### 3.2. Email Marketing

Email marketing is considered to be a very prevalent way for companies to reach consumers and gain additional customers (Atshaya and Rungta, 2016). Even with the introduction of other forms of digital marketing, email is still, today, a popular channel used by marketers, with 3.8 billion email users being recorded at the end of 2018 and around 281 billion emails being sent around the world every day (Forbes, 2018). Aside from it having a very high return on investment (ROI) of $44, 25 for every $1 spent (Liimatainen, 2020), there are many advantages that come with email marketing. This channel of marketing is often favoured over other channels because it is less costly (sending out emails is practically free), time lags from creation to being sent is significantly less than other marketing content; meaning marketing emails can be sent frequently (Bawm & Nath, 2014). Marketers can segment their audience by several defining factors, they are better able to send the right message to the right people at the right time and can even measure the success of their campaign by analysing open rates, clickthroughs, and leads (Liimatainen, 2020).

On the other hand, email marketing also comes with some drawbacks, the biggest being the issue of marketing emails being sent directly to the spam folder and never being opened by many customers. Additionally, if your message is not directed at the correct consumers, they may unsubscribe from your mailing list. Another issue is the time and resources that it takes to set up email marketing tools, analyse data such as click-throughs and open rates, and manage leads (Grewal & Stephen, 2019). Finally, the person who is responsible for email marketing for the company needs to have the correct skill set in order to create effective email marketing campaigns, otherwise the company's email marketing efforts will be a waste of time (Liimatainen, 2020). Consumers' perception of email marketing is generally positive, and consumers seem to be trusting of the brands who send them advertisements (Khan et al., 2016). However, according to GhavamiLahiji (2016), it is generally younger people and more often females who have a preference for email marketing. This study indicates that people in higher education levels are more likely to have a positive perception of email marketing.

### 3.3. Social Media Marketing

The impact of social media on consumer's perception, buying behaviour and attitudes have been examined extensively in previous literature (Drews and Schemer, 2010; Powers et al., 2012; Whiting and Williams, 2013; Gironda and Korgaonkar, 2014; Hamilton et al., 2016; Zhu et al., 2016; Erkan and Evans, 2016; Appel et al., 2019). Whiting and Williams (2013) concludes that social media is used for social interaction, relaxation, information seeking, expression of opinion, passing time. In addition, it is also used for communicatory utility, convenience utility, entertainment, information sharing and surveillance/knowledge about others. Consumer's decision to engage through online social networks is a social phenomenon whereby the use and interaction of users is the dependent factor - usage is either based on internal satisfaction or the ability to influence and be influenced by social interaction (Cheung and Lee, 2010). According to Internet World Stats (2021), 34.5 million South Africans were actively using the internet with 22.89 million social media users. The most popular platforms in a South African context: Facebook (24 670 000 users), followed by Messenger (22 120 000), LinkedIn (8 560 000) and Instagram (5 427 000) (Napoleon Cat, 2021). Social media is a platform that allows a touchpoint between users and brands allowing each to connect and interact with each other, marketers can use the various channels and capabilities to fulfil their marketing and advertising needs and meet the user's social and psychological needs.

### 3.4. Perceived Benefits

Email marketing may be a great technique to enlarge market share, but social media channels have a much higher engagement rate than email marketing Beleraj (2019) concluded that social media should be used for driving traffic to the website. Al-Debei et al. (2015) noted in the words of Kim et al. (2008), that perceived benefits could be described as "a consumer's belief about the extent to which he or she will become better off from the online transaction with a certain Web site". This definition can be applied not only to websites, but to any interaction a consumer has with a given company. The marketing efforts of a business either through email or social media channels is likely to have an impact on the consumer's formulation of these perceived benefits. Jarvenpaa and Todd (1996) explain that the perceived benefit of internet shopping is significantly related to consumers' attitude toward it and intention to shop online (Tanadi et al., 2015). From this information, it could be speculated that consumers who perceive many benefits from receiving email promotions or seeing social media adverts would develop a more positive attitude towards the brand and subsequently purchase and even repurchase goods from the company. Along the same vein, determining which marketing channel (email or social media) has more perceived benefits will determine which marketing channel would be better to use to improve consumers' attitudes towards the brand and hence increase purchase intention.

### 3.5. Organisational Trust

(Kim et al., 2008) concluded that consumer's trust directly and indirectly affects consumer's purchasing intention. A consumer's organisational trust has a strong positive effect on purchasing intention and a strong negative effect on consumer's perceived risk. Whilst it also found that consumers' Security Protection (SP) and Perceptions of Privacy Protection (PPP) had a strong negative impact on trust (Kim et al., 2008). Chen et al. (2020) found that in the real estate brokerage industry, trust had a significant impact on attitude and further on loyalty. It has also been found that perceived privacy and subsequent trust had a significant impact on attitude towards an advertisement and further onto purchase

intentions (Zhu and Kanjanamekanant, 2021). Trust has a direct positive and significant effect on intention (Aritonang and Lerbin, 2017) which is also consistent with Colquitt et al. (2012) who maintained that trust acts as both an exchange deepener and an uncertainty reducer. Research conducted on the antecedents of satisfaction in business-to-business relationships in South Africa also revealed that commitment and trust were perceived to be most important with trust being a premise to commitment (Lombard et al., 2019). This aligns with Chauhan et al. (2017) who concluded that perceived organizational support, in the Nigerian public sector, positively connected to organizational trust which in turn increases employee's willingness to contribute to the well-being of the organisation hence showing their commitment to the organisation.

### 3.6. Consumer Attitudes

Mitchell and Olson (1981) found that a consumer's attitude towards a brand is based on the attribute beliefs that are formed about the brand and is influenced by the consumer's general like or dislike of the advertisement, as well as the visual stimulus presented within it. From this statement, the idea that a consumer's attitude towards a brand can be directly influenced by an advert they are shown by that brand is confirmed. In a study done by Al-Debei et al. (2015), it was found that more perceived benefits, and a high level of consumer trust affect consumer attitude. Additionally, it has been noted that perceived risk has a negative effect on consumers' attitude toward online shopping (Popli and Mishra, 2015). This means that, in the context of this study, the advert shown to a consumer would need to elicit many perceived benefits, few perceived risks, and a high level of organisational trust in order for the consumer to develop a positive attitude towards the advertisement, and hence the brand (Aroean, et al., 2020). In the study done by Spears and Singh (2004) it was found that there is a significant positive relationship between consumer attitude toward the brand and consumer purchase intention. Additionally, Zhu and Kanjanamekanant (2021) state that "ad-attitude is found to have stable positive direct relationships with purchase intentions". The implications for this study are that, if a consumer has already developed a positive attitude towards the brand based on the advertisement they have been shown, their intention to purchase from the brand will increase.

### 3.7. Purchase Intention

There is a strong connection between entertainment offered by brands on social media and emotional connection with a brand as a way, satisfaction and further loyalty can be achieved (Sheth and Kim, 2017; Aritonang and Lerbin, 2017). In luxury brands it was found that there is a positive effect of social media marketing and customer relationships on consumers' purchase intentions, although customer relationships had a greater effect (Gautam and Sharma, 2017). The results are similar to that in email marketing campaigns, Haq (2009) shows that consumers' attitude toward advertising value and advertising via e-mails are strongly related to the frequency and content of the advertising message sent via emails; the advertising message mainly influences its value and consumers' attitude (Haq, 2009). However, other studies have shown that frequency of emails are important factors that influence customers' response rate (Namira and Wandebori, 2016).

### 3.8. Post-purchase Behaviour

If consumers receive value consistently by purchasing a brand, they are more likely to become loyal customers (Edelman and Singer, 2015) and in order to achieve this loyalty with customers, if the firm would like to enhance post-purchasing experiences it must ensure that it factors six dimensions. The dimensions include; delivery, product-in-hand, customer relationship management (CRM), benefits, feel good factors and return and exchange. Firms need to research the number of adverts that a person should see before disconfirmation arises and it must also be aware that impulse buying influences post-purchase regret (Awang et al., 2020). The interaction between expectations and a positive brand image elicits two key emotions: gratitude and guilt (Soscia, 2007). Gratitude leads to positive word of mouth and repurchase intentions whereas guilt, when consumers accept their responsibility for prior actions and the negative outcome, inhibits negative word of mouth and complaining behaviors (Soscia, 2007). This is similar to what Anjaly and Kumar (2017) found, in instances of confirmation (disconfirmation), positive (negative) confirmation develops into two post-purchase attitudes: proactive (avoidance) repeat purchase intentions and satisfaction (dissatisfaction) with past purchase.

## 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 4.1. Research Design

The study adopted a quantitative approach and made use of the survey method. This was to obtain objective findings from the participants. Objective findings would provide better understanding of consumers' perceptions toward the effectiveness of email and social media marketing in advertising.

### 4.2. Sampling Technique and Data Collection

Due to the difficulty in obtaining a sampling frame, convenience sampling, a form of non-probability sampling. This sampling approach was then used to determine suitable participants for the study. In terms of data collection, an online questionnaire was administered where 262 useable response were obtained which were later used for analysis.

### 4.3. Questionnaire Development

The survey used was in a form of a structured questionnaire divided into two sections of closed questions. The first section consisted of demographic questions such as the respondent's age, gender, education and occupation. Additionally, other contextual questions about the respondent's technology usage were asked. These questions checked whether the participants were computer literate, used social media, the number of email addresses they used as well as whether they shop online. Furthermore, the respondents were also asked if they used smartphones/laptops/desktops to receive email/social media marketing. They were also asked whether they consider email and social media marketing to be important as well as their views on online privacy and security while shopping. The second section of the survey was developed from five-point Likert scale which measured perceived risk, perceived benefit, organisational trust, consumer attitudes, purchase intention and post-purchase behaviour.

### 4.4. Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results

As far as the analysis of data was concerned, SPSS 27 was used to analyse demographic data and test hypotheses respectively. The analysed sample comprised of frequency distributions of age, gender, education level as well as occupation and questions based on consumer perceptions on email and social media marketing. Chi-square tests were conducted to measure goodness of fit based on checking differences between variables from the sample. In terms of reliability checks, the Cronbach's alpha was conducted. Both these tests were conducted in SPSS. Results from the hypotheses testing are presented in Figure 1 to reveal whether proposed the hypotheses were supported or not as well as relationship strengths. The study's conceptual model is presented in Figure 2.

The following section presents the findings of the study followed by the conclusion and proposed further research on the topic.

## 5. RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 5.1. Demographic Statistics

Table 1 shows that most of the participants were between the ages of 21 and 23 while a few participants were between the ages of 30 and 32. It is also observed that the 21-23 age group accounted for 46.2% while the 24-26 age group accounted for 16.9%. In addition, 30-32 only accounted for almost 2% and last, the 33 and older represented almost 26% of the sample. The following tables provide a greater insight into the cohort under study. As depicted below, on the Bar Graph, Gmail (90%) was the most used emailing prover with Outlook being used by 35% of the respondents under study.

Bar Graph 2 depicts respondents most used social media platforms. Instagram (76%) is the most used platform with Facebook (62%), YouTube (57%) being the second and third most popular respectively (Figure 3).

The Table 2 represents the reliability analysis for each construct, which was done using Cronbach's alpha.

The above reliability results based on the Cronbach's alpha reveals that all proposed hypotheses exceeded the required threshold of 0.6 necessarily to confirm reliability. These values ranged from 0.664 to 0.810. The following section presents the results of the chi-square tests.

### 5.2. Chi-square Test of Analysis – Association between Gender and Number of Email addresses Used Gender and Number of Email

The Chi-square test of independence is to assess whether gender and number of email addresses are two categorical variables.

**Figure 1:** Email provider bar graph

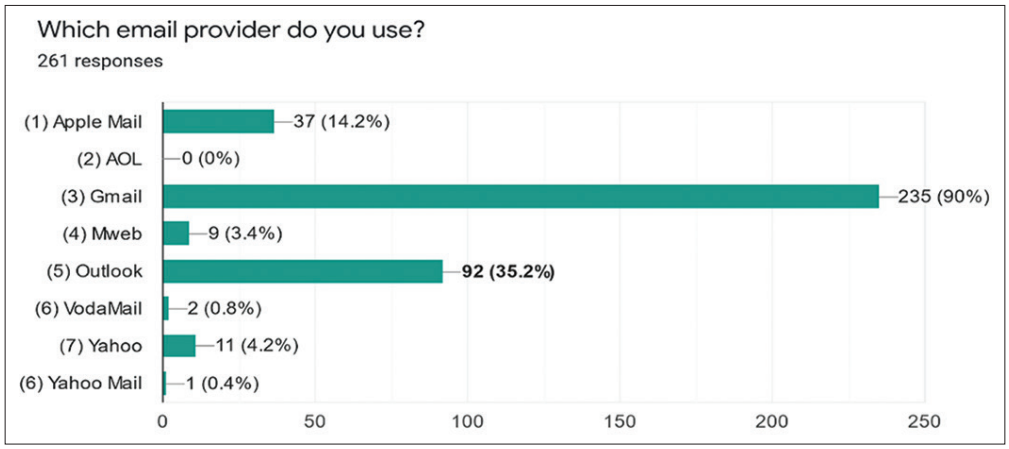



**Figure 2:** Conceptual model

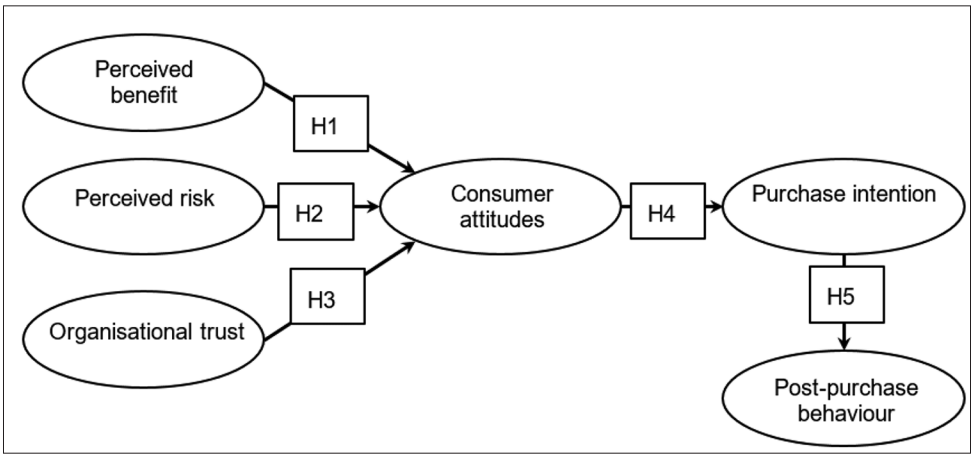
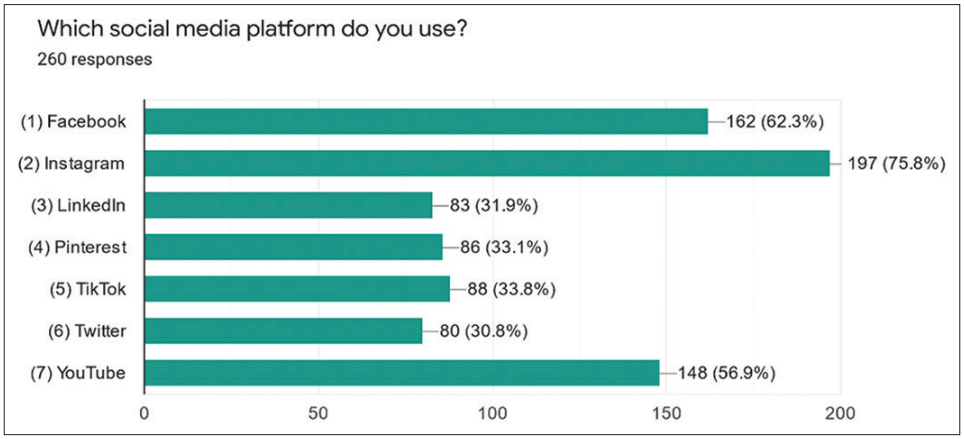


**Figure 3:** Social media platforms bar graph




The Table 3 shows there is a statistically significant association between the number of social media platforms and gender (Phi= 25.939 p-value 0.001 < 0.05).

Further analysis of the cross-tabulation table, indicates that the percentage of female respondents mainly have 2 social media accounts (55%) and males (40%). 48% of males own 3 or more social media accounts and only 30% of females use 3 or more social media accounts. Thus, these results confirm that there is no association between the number of social media accounts and gender. The data collected indicates that a large majority (90%) of respondents use Gmail over any other email provider which marketers should take advantage of when creating email ad campaigns (e.g. formatting the email so that it is optimised to be compatible with Gmail settings). Also it must be noted that Instagram (76%) is the most used platform with Facebook (62%), YouTube (57%) to follow. Marketing managers must be cognisant of these results because should they seek the greatest campaign success, South African consumers are most likely to be on these three social media platforms. The implication for marketers is that these are the social media platforms that marketing efforts should be focused on to receive the greatest ROI through these channels.

## 5.3. Gender and Number of Social Media Platforms

The Chi-square test of independence was used to assess the relationship between gender and number of social media platforms which are two categorical variables. The Table 4 shows there is no statistically significant association between number of email addresses and gender (Phi = 9.058 p = 0.17 > 0.05).

## 5.4. Hypothesis Testing

In order to test the hypotheses proposed in the conceptual model, three regression analyses are required as there are three dependent variables, namely consumer attitude (CA), consumer purchase intention (CPI), and post-purchase behaviour (PPB). Below is a summary of the hypothesis testing, which is a diagram of the proposed conceptual model including the path coefficients (standardised beta values) for all constructs and the $R^2$ values for each of the dependent variables. The $R^2$ values represent the proportion of the variance by the dependent variables explained by the independent variables. The $R^2$ value for Post-purchase behaviour of 0.47 is above 0.4 hence it's acceptable

**Table 1: Age distribution**

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid percent | Cumulative percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | | | | |
| 18-20 | 17 | 6.5 | 6.5 | 6.5 |
| 21-23 | 120 | 46.2 | 46.2 | 52.7 |
| 24-26 | 44 | 16.9 | 16.9 | 69.6 |
| 27-29 | 8 | 3.1 | 3.1 | 72.7 |
| 30-32 | 4 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 74.2 |
| 33+ | 67 | 25.8 | 25.8 | 100.0 |
| Total | 260 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Table 2: Reliability assessment**

| Construct | Cronbach's alpha | Number of items |
|---|---|---|
| Perceived benefit | 0.810 | 3 |
| Perceived risk | 0.664 | 3 |
| Organisational trust | 0.704 | 8 |
| Consumer attitudes | 0.817 | 4 |
| Customer purchase intention | 0.782 | 6 |
| Perceived purchase behaviour | 0.744 | 5 |

**Table 3: Chi-square tests**

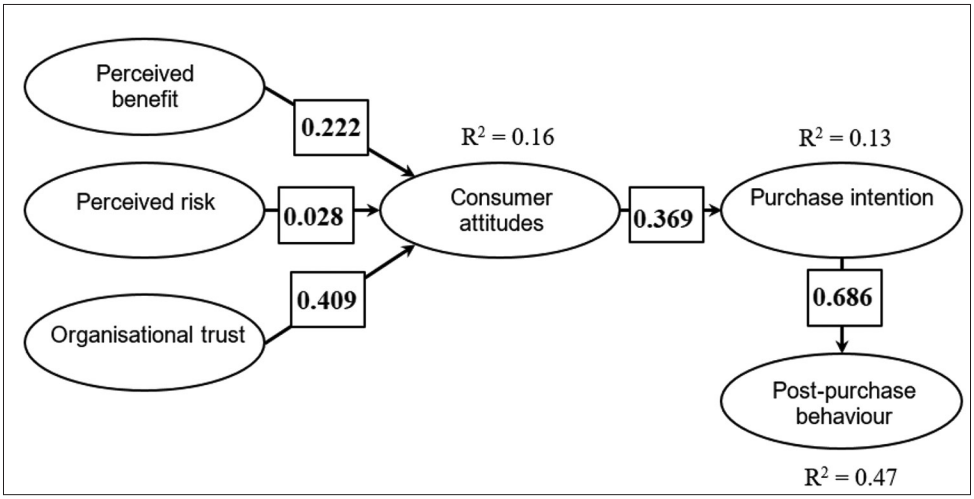
| | Number of email addresses | | | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4+ | |
| Gender | | | | | | |
| Female | 2 | 26 | 92 | 30 | 18 | 168 |
| Male | 1 | 10 | 35 | 31 | 11 | 88 |
| Other | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 4 |
| Total | 3 | 36 | 128 | 61 | 32 | 260 |

**Table 4: Chi-square tests**

| Chi-square tests | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Value | df | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-square | 9.058a | 6 | 0.17 |
| Likelihood ratio | 9.47 | 6 | 0.149 |
| Linear-by-linear association | 1.193 | 1 | 0.275 |
| N of valid cases | 260 | | |

a 4 cells (33.3%) have expected count < 5. The minimum expected count is 0.29.

**Figure 4:** Tested conceptual model




as it shows high correlation between the independent variable (customer purchase intention) and dependant (post-purchase behaviour). However, the $R^2$ value of 0.16 for perceived benefit and consumer attitudes shows a weak correlation between the two so does the $R^2$ value of 0.13 between consumer attitudes and customer purchase intention show a weak correlation between the two (Figure 4).

In terms of the path coefficients, the first hypothesis, H1, shows the hypothesis between perceived benefit and consumer attitudes is supported as it has a positive path coefficient of 0.222. This suggests that perceived benefit and consumer attitudes are related since perceived benefit directly and positively influences consumer attitudes. This means that the more users perceive the adoption of social media marketing of email and social media marketing the more likely their attitudes would become positive toward these platforms. The second hypothesis, H2, shows that perceived risk and consumer attitudes are related due to the positive path coefficient of 0.028. This finding suggests that perceived risk influences consumer attitudes when it comes to email and social media marketing. However, it should be noted that, of all the relationships, this was the weakest. The third hypothesis, H3, organisational trust and consumer attitudes have a path coefficient of 0.409 which means that the higher the organisational trust the more positive the consumer attitudes will be toward the adoption of email and social media marketing. The forth hypothesis, H4, consumer attitudes and customer purchase intention are related at a path coefficient of 0.369 which suggests that the two are directly and positively associated. The more positive the consumer attitudes are the higher customer purchase intention becomes. The last hypothesis, H5, this is the strongest of all test relationships. It shows that customer purchase intention and post-purchase behaviour are directly and positively related. It suggests that the higher customer purchase intention is, the more likely a positive outcome will result in post-purchase behaviour. This means that if customers' intention to adopt email and social media marketing is high, there is a greater possibility of customers using the same platforms again. The section that follows discusses the study's conclusion.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS

This research explored consumer perceptions of email and social media marketing in the advertising landscape of South Africa. The impact of perceived benefit, perceived risk and organisational trust on consumer attitudes was measured as were as that of consumer attitudes on purchase intention. Last, the relationship between purchase intention and post-purchase intention was tested. It was established that perceived risk and consumer attitudes had the weakest relationship while the strongest was that of purchase intention and post-purchase intention. This suggests that the motivations for repeat purchases played the most important role in consumers' decision-making in comparison to other factors depicted in the model. This therefore implies that marketers should put more effort and resources toward motivating purchase intention in order to increase repeat purchases. The following section explores future research direction.

The study had its fair share of limitations. Firstly, the research only focused two digital marketing platforms, email and social media marketing. This could have limited the amount of insights that could have been obtained from the research. It could be suggested that further research on the topic explore other means of digital marketing. Secondly, the present study adopted a quantitative approach which restricted respondents to only answering questions within the confines of a Likert-scale. This did not allow the respondent to fully express themselves. This could be addressed by a qualitative methodology which would make use of open-ended questions provided a clear picture of users perceptions of the effectiveness of email and social media marketing in advertising. Conceptually, there are recommendations that can be made which could involve testing of hypotheses that were not measured in the present study. For instance, a direct relationship between perceived benefit and consumer attitudes, perceived benefits and perceived risk as well as perceived risk and organisational trust. Another interesting direct relationship that could be tested is that of organisational trust and post-purchase behaviour. Testing these proposed future hypothesis could help explain the findings of the current study even further and possibly change the impact

that predictors have on the depend variables as well as ultimately changing the outcome.

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