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2024
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Magwebu, Yoyisani Gcisa . (2024). The adoption of multi-sided market platforms within the South African creative economy [Master's dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg].WireDSpace.https://hdl.handle.net/10539/43931

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The adoption of multi-sided market platforms within the South African creative economy

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management in the field of Digital Business

Johannesburg, February 2024

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the adoption of multisided marketplace platforms (MSMPs) within the South African creative economy, given the limited evidence of their adoption, explicitly focusing on the visual art domain participants. By applying a phenomenological design, the study aimed to understand how the phenomenon of marketplace platform adoption can create value for all stakeholders within the visual art ecosystem and develop a conceptual framework which addresses the unique needs of the visual art sector whilst providing valuable insights for future researchers to expand. A qualitative research approach was used to gather data from semi-structured interviews with ten visual art value chain members. Participants included actors representing the primary market, secondary market, support services and reception of the visual art ecosystem.

The interview data were examined using thematic analysis, including inductive and deductive analysis. The study findings highlight the potential MSMPs have in creating value for all ecosystem actors within the South African visual art value chain. The research suggests that implementing appropriate platform policies and governance and positive experiences through platform features, functionality, design, layout, and social influence can increase adoption and retention with ecosystem members. Furthermore, the study suggests that co-creation impacts the adoption and sustained usage of MSMPs.

KEYWORDS

Multisided Marketplace Platforms (MSMPs), adoption, creative economy, visual arts

DECLARATION

I, Yoyisani Gcisa Magwebu, declare that this research report is my work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. I also declare that an AI generative tool, Grammarly Premium, was used to improve the readability and language of the submitted work and edit the submitted work. Human oversight has been applied to ensure the work is correct, complete, and free from bias. As the author, I am responsible and accountable for the contents of the work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Management degree in Digital Business at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

Name: Yoyisani Gcisa Magwebu Signature:

Signed at Johannesburg

On the 22 day of February 2024

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to unreservedly acknowledge my Heavenly Father, El Roi, my All Knowing, Ever Present Help, who provided support through the following people on this journey,

- My husband, Bongani, and my sons, Qhayiya and Bukho. Ndiyabulela maYirha, thank you for bearing with my absence for the past two years and for your love and encouragement.
- My right hand and helper in managing our home, Latiswa, sisi God knows. Enkosi kakhulu.
- My family and friends for the encouragement that often strengthened me at very dark moments and your prayers, particularly my mother and sister.
- My employer, Absa, for sponsoring me through my postgraduate and master's. The financial support has empowered me.
- My supervisor, Dr Nakuze Chalomba, thanks for your patience and insights on this journey.
- My colleagues from WBS, Absa, and the industry, thank you for sharing your knowledge, tips, and guidance throughout this journey. To team discipline, Tshegofatso Betha, Namhla Motsukunyane and Linda Shandukani you were God sent, thank you for keeping me sane on this journey and the psychological safety you provided.
- Amahle Gaba for assistance with the platform review, check and challenge
- Last but not least, all the participants who contributed to this study. Thank you for your time and invaluable insights.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Definition
DAC	Department of Arts and Culture
E-Commerce	Electronic commerce
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
MSMP	Multisided marketplace platform
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
UN	United Nations
UTAUT	Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
WEF	World Economic Forum
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organisation

CHAPTER 1.INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of purpose

This qualitative study explores the adoption of multisided marketplace platforms (MSMPs) within the South African creative economy, focusing on the visual art domain participants.

1.2 Background of the study

The European Commission (2017) mapping the creative value chain in the digital age stated that the South African visual art industry has undergone significant digitalisation, resulting in efficient production and market expansion. However, Jonker (2019) cites that traditional intermediaries and dominant players within this industry still control the market mainly composed of small or micro enterprises (SMEs). The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted this market imbalance as major industry leaders were able to successfully transition their activities online, monetising digital ventures compared to the SMEs who were highly impacted by the imposed restrictions (South African Cultural Observatory[SACO], 2022).

Armstrong and Lee (2021) and Zeng et al. (2019) suggest that digital platform/s have become widely used in Industry 4.0 due to digitisation and are associated with various innovations across industries. Digital platforms also offer businesses opportunities to compete globally and influence how organisations view customers, partners, suppliers and complementors. Whilst there is extensive literature on digital platform business models, what is evident is that the definition of those models is just as broad. These definitions are influenced by varying disciplines from management, information systems and economics (Poniatowski et al., 2022); consequently, no one framework exists to analyse digital platform businesses. Armstrong and Lee (2021) offer a simplistic definition of a digital platform business being a business that uses digital technologies to connect buyers and sellers, thereby creating network effects reducing transactional

friction and converting physical assets into digital assets. Literature reviews identified two main platforms: internal platforms developed by the firm or strategic suppliers to manage internal processes, operations, systems and industry platforms facilitating interactions between firms within a specific industry or sector (Gawer & Cusumano, 2014). These are consistent with the platform types identified by Armstrong and Lee (2021), who further define multisided market platforms as a market that brings different groups of users, such as buyers and sellers of products or services, together. They go on to state that by facilitating these interactions and transactions frictionlessly, the platform creates value for the different groups through network effects that grow and sustain their user/ customer base (Armstrong & Lee, 2021).

Like digital platforms, the creative economy has broad definitions influenced by sociological and anthropological perspectives on cultural and heritage views. In contrast, others are more focused on creativity from an economic perspective. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development [UNCTAD] ,United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2022) highlights these varying perspectives, namely, The World Intellectual Property Organisation's (WIPO) definition focuses on copyright and the legalese aspect of industries dedicated to creating, producing, representing, exhibiting, communicating, distributing or retailing creative content/material. The United Nations Education Science and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) definition adopts an economic view. It focuses on the formal segments within cultural and creative industries involved in creating, producing, and commercialising creative content, including intellectual property, performing arts, visual arts, design, media and entertainment, heritage, and cultural tourism. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) definition goes beyond the economic and intellectual property view and sees the creative economy as knowledge-based economic activities that can generate income, jobs, and export earnings while promoting social inclusion, cultural diversity and human development. Examples of creative economy industries include advertising, arts and crafts, fashion, media, video games, and architecture (UNCTAD, 2022).

Therefore, the creative economy can be considered an industry incorporating creative, cultural, and technological activities within an economy with various domains (Hubert, 2022).

According to the United Nations (UN), in 2020, the creative economy contributed just over 6% to global gross domestic product (GDP), averaging between 2-7% of national GDPs globally (The Policy Circle, 2023). Oxford (2022) posits that the creative economy can generate income, jobs, and export earnings while promoting social inclusion, cultural diversity, and human development in line with the UN's Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDGs) for 2030. Visual arts are among the most significant contributors to revenue and employment globally within the creative economy after television and music, respectively. In South Africa, the creative and cultural industries collectively form the creative economy comprised primarily of SMEs. The South African creative economy comprises informal and formal businesses, including intermediaries across the industry and related industries mainly concentrated in metropolitan cities (South African Cultural Observatory [SACO] , 2022).

1.3 Research problem

According to Lerro et al. (2022) there are limited studies and attention paid to the creative economy understanding of the opportunities which digital technologies present for entrepreneurs in the sector. Despite the extensive research exploring multi-sided platform business models that have surfaced over the last decade, few have focused on the potential these models have for disrupting established markets and businesses within the visual art industry. As the World Economic Forum highlights, marketplaces are the key to driving value for the firm, society, and the broader ecosystem as customers increasingly demand innovative and holistic solutions. It is, therefore, crucial for businesses to transition from merely digitising their offerings to digital business models that can effectively compete with digital natives and capture value across the value chain (The World Economic Forum, 2021; Zeng et al., 2019).

While visual artists have migrated to social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram, and other visual art ecosystem participants may use digital technologies to automate processes and expand their market share, there is limited evidence of widespread adoption of multisided market platforms in the sector. SMEs' adoption of digital platforms as a

business model needs to be improved, as the current poor adoption hinders their access to market opportunities. With the visual art and crafts sector accounting for 15% of the South African creative economy's GDP, ranking third among creative domains, digital transformation should be improved to foster competition, innovation, and value creation across the value chain, leading to economic growth and employment opportunities and unlocking the sector's entrepreneurial potential (Department of Sports, Arts and Culture South Africa[DAC]2019) . Moreover, the literature suggests that industries should not be fragmented to extract value from the platforms but viewed as an interdependent ecosystem that enhances the relationships of its ecosystem participants (Fiaz, 2023; Trabucchi & Buganza, 2020).

1.4 Research questions

This study answers the following questions:

1. What are the opinions of visual arts ecosystem actors regarding the factors that promote or hinder their adoption of MSMPs?

2. What are the benefits and impacts of using MSMPs in the visual art industry, as perceived by its members?

1.5 Rationale

Physical galleries and auction houses have traditionally dominated the visual art market. However, the emergence of online MSMPs presents a new opportunity for artists, collectors, suppliers, and collaborators to be connected and not be confined by internal limitations or industry gatekeeping. This research explores the adoption of MSMPs by visual arts domain actors by identifying facilitators and barriers affecting their adoption, including policy and governance, social network effects, and their perceived value. By exploring the unique challenges and opportunities within the South African context, this study seeks to contribute to understanding how adoption of MSMPs can extend the value

within the visual art domain (Galindo-Martin et al., 2019; Gawer & Cusumano, 2014; Poniatowski et al., 2022).

Armstrong and Lee (2021) state that MSMPs rely on attracting and retaining both buyers and sellers to remain competitive. However, the exact mechanisms by which platform features and functionality influence user adoption are only sometimes well understood. This paper, therefore, explores the impact of platform features such as search functionality, payment options, and platform layout and design on user adoption, focusing on understanding different stakeholder perspectives within the ecosystem. By examining the role of these features in the adoption process, this paper contributes to developing best practices for platform design and management within the visual art domain (Li & Sun, 2020).

Social influence and belonging can play an essential role in adopting MSMPs, as users are often influenced by the opinions and actions of their peers (Galindo-Martin et al., 2019). This is particularly true within the visual art domain with the increased usage of social media platforms during and post the COVID-19 pandemic to connect buyers and sellers (SACO,2022). Exploring the impact of social influence on adopting MSMPs, focusing on different types of social influence, such as peer recommendations and social media marketing, provides insights into how platforms can effectively leverage social influence to drive adoption and engagement to extract more value across the value chain.

1.6 Delimitations of the study

In keeping with the expanded definition of MSMPs tabled by Armstrong and Lee (2021) and taking on board the recommendations of the World Economic Forum that marketplaces are the future for driving value for firms, society, and the broader ecosystem to keep come with increased customer demand (The World Economic Forum, 2021) this research focuses on;

I. Adopting MSMPs
II. The visual art domain within the South African Creative economy. All other domains within the creative economy are excluded.

III. The adoption of MSMPs by actors across the visual art value chain using the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) combined with evolutionary economic theory and how this can spur innovation and expand economic activity for SMEs within the ecosystem.

IV. Examining the perceived value of such adoption within the visual art ecosystem and its economic impact.

1.7 Definition of terms

To provide a better understanding of the study, the following key terms have been defined for context.

Adoption: Refers to how much new tech or service is used. It depends on usefulness, ease, and support (Given, 2016).

Creative economy: Creative economy uses creativity, technology, and IP for growth, jobs, and cultural exports (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development 2022) .

Multisided market platforms: A market that connects different users, enabling them to buy and sell, creating value through network effects easily (Armstrong & Lee, 2021).

Perceived value: This concept refers to users' subjective assessment of benefits and costs influencing digital platform adoption (Chen et al., 2010).

Social network effects: These arise from users interacting on a platform, enhancing value through feedback, content sharing, community, identity, and social norms (Ellison et al., 2007).

Visual arts domain: The visual art domain encompasses traditional and emerging forms of art involving creation, exhibition, sale, production and curation (DAC ,2019) .

1.8 Assumptions

The following assumptions were made in the study,

1. Based on the reviewed literature in Table 1, Chapter 2, section 2.2, existing frameworks must adequately address adoption determinants within the visual art domain.
2. As highlighted by WEF, MSMPs are becoming increasingly important for firms to remain competitive and drive value. Adoption is a critical factor for success in the creative economy, and it is informed by various factors.
3. Participants across the creative chain, including artists, galleries, collectors, buyers, framing suppliers, material suppliers, logistic and transport providers and even conservators, all play a critical role in adopting and succeeding MSMPs in the visual art domain as ecosystem members.
4. By adopting MSMPs, SMEs in the visual art domain can experience more significant innovation, economic activity, and growth potential, unlocking the platforms' perceived value.

1.9 Chapter Outline

This study report is made of six chapters, which include this introduction and the following-

Chapter 1- Introduction

Chapter 2- Literature review and theoretical framework

Chapter 3- Research Methodology

Chapter 4- Presentation of findings

Chapter 5- Discussion of findings

Chapter 6- Conclusion and Recommendations

CHAPTER 2.LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to contextualise MSMPs within the visual art domain and outline the definitions and characteristics of MSMPs used in this study. It provides an overview of the South African visual art domain and a critical literature review informing the study. Additionally, management theories that contextualise this study are discussed. Finally, the report presents the conceptual model used to unlock value across the visual art ecosystem in Figure 6, section 2.5.2.

Contextualising of MSMPs within the visual art domain

According to The World Economic Forum (2021), the increased popularity of MSMPs as business models rather than simple channels that connect various stakeholders within the digital ecosystem has been a topical point in recent years. Armstrong and Lee (2021) posit that the proliferation of these digital platforms is an indicator of how they have managed to disrupt traditional business models and transform industries such as transportation (e.g., Uber), accommodation (e.g. Airbnb) and e-commerce (e.g., Amazon). Furthermore, they note that multisided marketplaces, known as two-sided markets in some literature, are not new and predate the digital era. Industries have always had platforms that aimed to enable commercial interactions between willing sellers and buyers, with potential gains for facilitating such interactions (Rochet & Tirole, 2006). The authors theorise that two-sided markets differ from one-sided markets in that the value of the platform's use is derived by the end user/consumer and extends to other actors/agents of the platform. Historically, these interactions facilitated by platforms, intermediaries, or marketplaces are characterised by indirect networks where the value of being on the platform increased as more participants joined, creating a similar effect to economies of scale (Evans & Schmalensee, 2013). Traditional two-sided markets are also characterised by reduced

transaction costs, specifically search costs on both sides (Armstrong & Lee, 2021) . Art galleries, whether in their physical or digital form, are a multisided marketplace platform connecting two distinct customer groups: art buyers and artists. As per the studied literature on multisided markets, shown in *Table 1*, these platforms generally rely on indirect network effects, where their value as a platform to one group of customers increases as more members join the platform. The value of the art gallery platform to art buyers increases as more artists display their work in the gallery, and the value of the platform to artists increases as more art buyers attend the gallery and purchase their work. This interaction between the two groups creates a feedback loop where the platform's success depends on the size and composition of both groups (Armstrong & Lee, 2021). As an intermediary that facilitates the exchange of art between the two groups, the art gallery as a platform also balances the interests of both groups by charging a commission. It reduces search costs by providing a space where buyers can easily view and purchase artwork while also serving as a platform for artists to showcase and sell their work to a broader audience.

2.2 Definition of multisided marketplace platforms

As noted in Chapter 1, section 1.2, MSMPs have been the subject of various studies, each with different definitions based on the particular areas of focus and the researchers' backgrounds (Poniatowski et al., 2022). Digital multisided marketplaces are viewed by some literature as connecting independent actors from a demand and supply side through matching buyers and sellers, facilitating transactions, and leveraging information technology effectively to provide the institutional infrastructure to do so (Bakos, 1998). Others consider multisided platforms enabling commercial transactions between buyers and sellers, viewing marketplaces as a subset of a multisided platform between the strategic choice of being a marketplace or reseller and not a standalone business model (Hagiu & Wright, 2015).

A more open view of a digital multisided marketplace platform is depicted in Figure 1 below, which provides critical elements defining a multisided marketplace platform as

cited by (Armstrong & Lee, 2021). Going beyond the traditional requirements of connecting independent actors from a demand and supply side, it suggests that;

a) Interactions can be direct or indirect,
b) Commercial transactions can be initiated and realised on either side.
c) The institutional and regulatory framework be put in place,
d) The platform offers goods/services extending beyond the platform owners

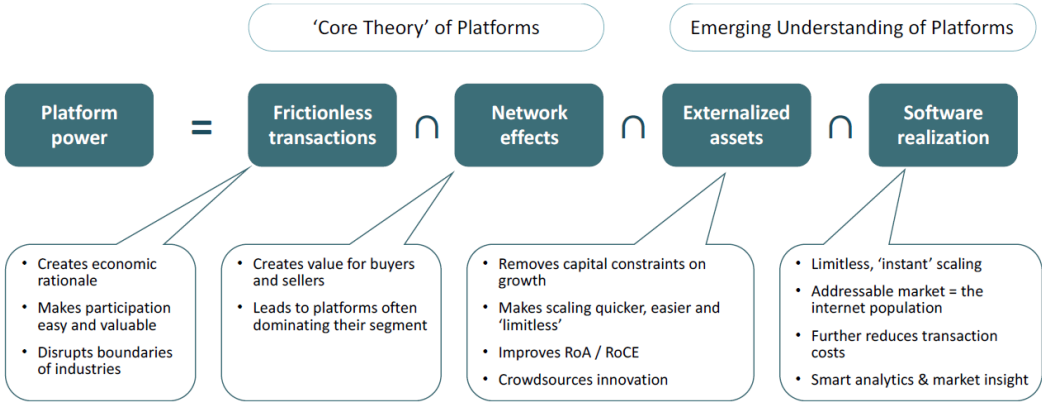

Figure 1 : Key elements of MSMPs (Armstrong & Lee, 2021, p. 470)

To understand and capture the actual value of digital MSMPs, it is increasingly accepted that a more holistic business model view that incorporates the broader ecosystem and society is required (The World Economic Forum, 2021). *Figure 1* shows that digital marketplaces in the current digital environment consist of more than just sellers and buyers, with enablers playing a critical role in value creation and exchange.

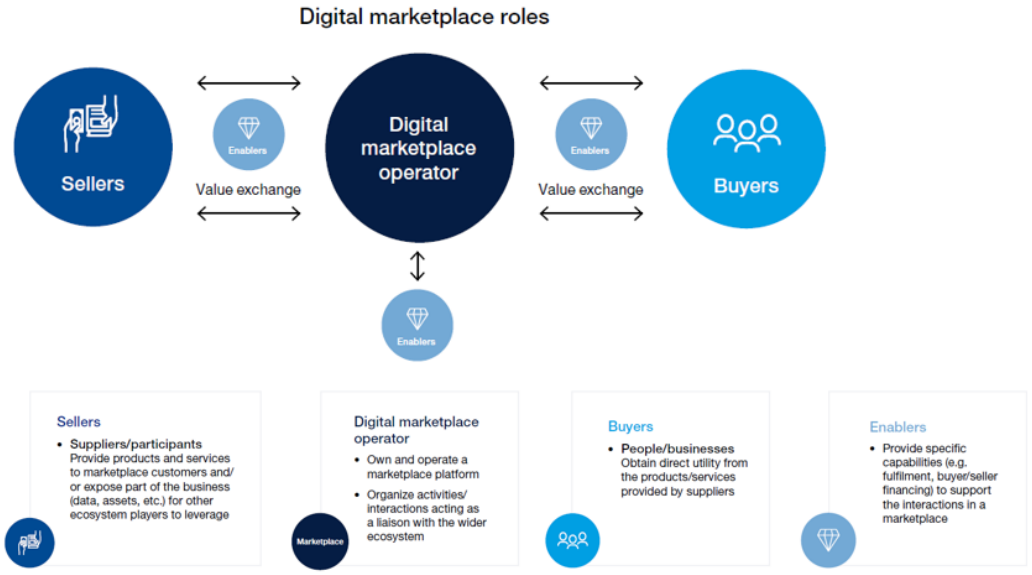

Figure 2 Digital marketplace definition and roles (The World Economic Forum, 2021, p. 10)

While the above models provide insight into what constitutes digital MSMPs and the complexities of the roles within them, a review of over 20 papers revealed common factors displayed in *Table 1* in no particular ranking or order. The factors that drive their adoption were also examined.

Table 1 Identified adoption factors (authors own)

Adoption factors	*Sources*
Trust	(Barkley, 2016);(Li & Sun, 2020);(Bakos, 1998); (Poniatowski et al., 2022);
Security	(Li & Sun, 2020);
Network Effects	(Gawer & Cusumano, 2014); Poniatowski et al., 2022);(Barkley,2016);(Rochet & Tirole, 2006);(Armstrong & Lee, 2021);(Silvab, 2019);(Abdelkafi et al., 2019)
Critical Mass	(Sanchez-Cartas & Leon, 2019);
Features and Functionality	(Li & Sun, 2020); (Gawer & Cusumano, 2014);(Abdelkafi et al., 2019);(Kapoor et al., 2021);(Venkatesh et al., 2003)
Policy and Governance	(Evans & Schmalensee, 2013);(Gawer & Cusumano, 2014);(Poniatowski et al., 2022);(Armstrong & Lee, 2021);(Boudreau & Hagiu, 2009) (Abdelkafi et al., 2019);(Kapoor et al., 2021);(Ng, 2022);(Otto & Jarke, 2019);(Jia et al., 2019);(Badran, 2021); (Hagiu, 2014)
Innovation	(Galindo-Martin et al., 2019); (Gawer & Cusumano, 2014); (Hein et al., 2019)
Incumbent Resistance and Disruption	(Hein et al., 2019);
Pricing and Revenue Model	(Rochet & Tirole, 2004);
Digital Transformation	(Hein et al., 2019)
User Experience	(Hänninen et al., 2019);(Venkatesh et al., 2003)
Entrepreneurship	(Galindo-Martin et al., 2019);
Social Influence	(Hein et al., 2019); (Evans & Schmalensee, 2016);(Kapoor et al., 2021);(Venkatesh et al., 2003)
Co-creation and Collaboration	(Sinclair, 2017); (Kaj et al., 2012); (Lerro et al., 2022) (Trabucchi & Buganza, 2020); (Ali et al., 2023)

With the study's purpose in mind, the focus areas for this research were identified as policy and governance, features and functionality, social influence, and co-creation and collaboration. These areas were explored to determine the extent to which the adoption of these platforms opened up access to markets and created opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) within the visual arts value chain.

Overview of visual art domain within the South African creative economy

According to the South African Cultural Observatory (2022), The contribution of the visual art domain to South Africa's GDP is deemed significant, exhibiting a growth rate of 5.3% between 2016 and 2018 and 15% in 2020. This report continues to state that a substantial proportion of creative and cultural jobs, accounting for 43.8%, are also provided by this sector. Furthermore, the report found that economic activity in the visual arts domain is concentrated in Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban, posing challenges for artists outside these areas. The primary market involves direct sales from artists, while the secondary market includes resale through auction houses and is more exclusive. Gatekeeping and the lack of regulation further complicate the relationship between artists and market agents. Due to the high exhibition costs, artists rely heavily on networks to market themselves. However, despite being the primary revenue source, artists and SMEs in the sector are often the lowest earners (DAC, 2010).

The sector comprises various actors contributing to the value chain, as shown in *Table 2*. Galleries and artists comprise the most significant portion of entities, with education, training, and support services also playing a substantial role within the sector. Auction houses and private dealers have a smaller share, while reception entities have the least representation. The data provided by the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) highlights the inequality in the sector and the need to empower artists and support

services, raising questions about the economic dominance of actors in the secondary market despite their smaller presence in the industry.

Moreover, the adoption of digital technologies that enable efficient production and distribution of goods, services, and communication is envisioned by the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) to transform the sector and push digital innovation (South African Cultural Observatory & Department of Sport, 2019).

This study examines the key factors of MSMP adoption within the visual arts domain. Its aim is to determine whether MSMPs' business model can democratise the sector while breaking down physical constraints for artists. MSMPs also provide opportunities to broaden the value derived by all actors within the value chain and expand the value chain itself.

Table 2 South African visual art industry value chain (DAC, 2010, p. 27)

Table 1: List of types of Visual Arts Industry entity, organised according to Value Chain	
Education, training and development	☐ education and training provider – public and private ☐ community arts centre (independent) ☐ arts development organisation (non-profit) ☐ artists/arts association
Support services	☐ materials manufacturer ☐ materials supplier ☐ arts consultant/consultancy (including curators, managers) ☐ art restorer/conservator ☐ technical services provider framer ☐ framing supplier
Distribution/presentation - primary market	☐ gallery/dealer - commercial/private ☐ artist studio galleries ☐ artist-run gallery/project space ☐ on-line artist portfolio or gallery ☐ art museum/collections
Distribution/presentation - secondary market	☐ dealer ☐ private collector ☐ auctioneer
Reception	☐ art publisher ☐ art journalist/critic ☐ arts media specialist/publicist

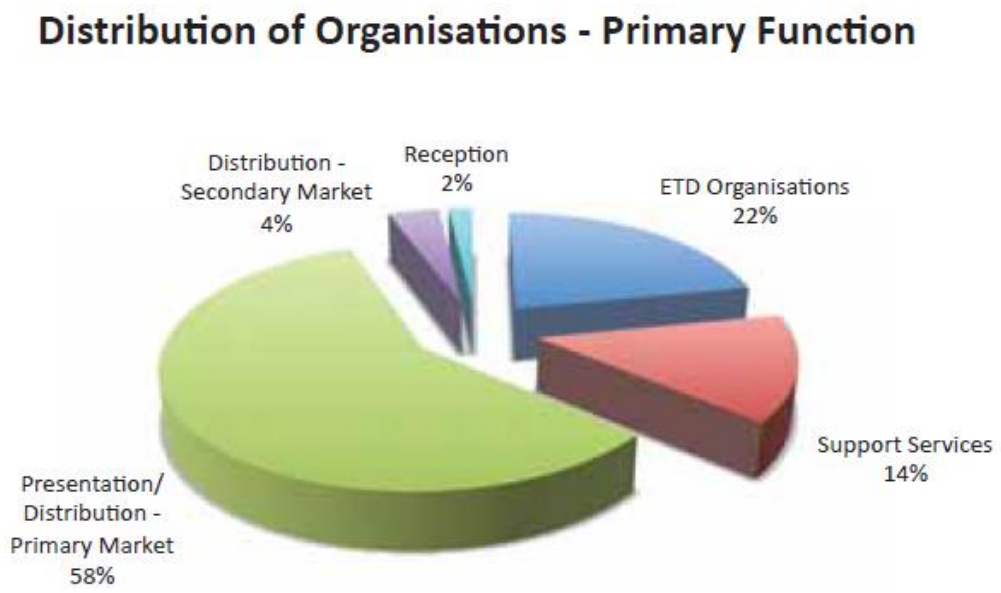

Figure 3 Visual art value chain distribution by entity(DAC, 2010, p. 46)

2.3 Key factors that enable or restrict the adoption of MSMPs.

The literature review contextualised relevant literature on policy and governance, features and functionality, social influence, and co-creation and collaboration within the context of MSMPs. The findings were critically analysed and synthesised to provide a detailed literature overview. The conclusion draws on the key themes and insights from the review.

2.3.1 *Policy and Governance*

The literature review revealed that policy and governance structures are required to regulate MSMPs and ensure that they function in a manner that adds value for all parties within the platform ecosystem (Boudreau & Hagiu, 2009). Various interpretations exist in the literature regarding the degree of regulation and the exact mechanisms used to implement it. While some literature acknowledges economic mechanisms such as pricing structures of MSMPs as crucial factors of adoption (Armstrong & Lee, 2021), there is

evidence of consensus that non-price tools are needed to regulate interactions across various actors within the platform environment (Abdelkafi et al., 2019). Governance is also seen as an enabler for ecosystem members and participants to invest in and produce complementary innovations within the multisided marketplace platform business model while ensuring all stakeholders' protection through promoting mechanisms that build trust, security and data control (Otto & Jarke, 2019). Establishing boundaries for the platform to operate within increases the willingness of actors to adopt the platform, ensuring their success and sustainability in the long term (Kapoor et al., 2021). In the study by Poniatowski et al. (2022) investigating the complexities of digital multisided platforms, the authors emphasised that all components of the platform, the information system, actor engagements and the broader ecosystem are interconnected and influence platform governance. They argued that governance covers factors such as pricing, revenue sharing, IP rights, rules, and regulations that govern third-party behaviour on the platform and determine value creation. This view is similar to the argument posed by Armstrong and Lee (2021), which also looks at the regulation of third-party interactions and their effect on the value of the platform ecosystem, including the customer value proposition. The authors further state that governance should be deployed as a tool to determine the degree of openness of the platform, taking into consideration trade-offs between the number of adopters and the quality of those adopting the platform. Whilst both these views emphasise the regulation of third-party interaction and the importance of price as a mechanism, the study by Otto and Jarke (2019) of the International Data Spaces initiative looks at the importance of ecosystem coordination and shared interest in developing rules in a collaborative manner to foster the adoption of Multisided platforms in the context of alliances. Even though the study conducted by Otto and Jarke is based on a single case study. It focuses on specific dimensions at the early stages of platform design, and it aids in contextualising data as a boundary resource to regulate the ecosystem and benefit it.

By establishing controls through policies and governance to regulate platform activity, such as access and roles of various actors, a multisided platform is likely to attract and retain various actors within its ecosystem and assist in preventing market failure (Hagiu, 2014). A qualitative case study of the OpenSea NFT marketplace demonstrates the

importance of governance and how blockchain technology is used for provenance and smart contracts within the visual art domain (Ng, 2022). Looking beyond the platform owners, government policy and strategy towards digital platforms also play an essential role in driving the adoption of MSP (Badran, 2021). The case study by Badran which examines Jumia, Egypt's digital platform, emphasises the need for government support in enabling and supporting legal e-business conditions through electronic signature, contracting and tax breaks for SMEs using digital platforms. Equally, the author affirms that governments and national policies are also required to safeguard user data while ensuring that such policies do not restrict access to the market (Badran, 2021).

In conclusion, the literature review revealed that policy and governance are facilitating and limiting factors in adopting MSMPs. The presence of well-balanced policies and governance that promote the use of digital platforms while protecting all platform actors are facilitating adoption factors. In contrast, the lack thereof is a limiting factor.

2.3.2 *Features and functionality*

The literature review in this category has revealed that the acceptance and use of MSMPs by various actors within the platform ecosystem are influenced by their design features, functionality, and technical aspects. This view aligns with the observations made by Venkatesh et al. (2003), who posits that performance and effort expectancy are the most substantial factors influencing adoption. The authors further state that these factors may be influenced by age, gender, and experience in terms of effort. As seen in the qualitative study of the OpenSea marketplace platform by Ng (2022), platforms that enable frictionless user experience by being user-friendly, having low registration requirements, and having high privacy settings proved to attract artists. Although this case study may not be a fully representative sample, as only four artists were interviewed, it gives insight into features and functionalities that make artists' lives easier. Li and Sun (2020) highlight five specific factors and their nineteen sub-factors related to design and functionality, which impact customer experience and security. Although their study focused on B2C e-commerce websites, these factors are applied to understand the adoption of MSMPs in line with the OpenSea case study.

The five factors impacting adoption, as stated by Li & Sun are;

I. Design which includes attractiveness, easy navigation, content, speed and mobile compatibility
II. Functionality includes practical search tools, availability of information to compare across alternatives and contact information.
III. Service Quality encompasses trust, payment alternatives, one-time delivery and easy returns.
IV. Security/Privacy, including account security, secure payments, and protection of personal information.
V. Customer Support incorporates feedback mechanisms, order tracking and assisting in resolving disputes.

The platform architecture also serves as an essential factor that impacts ecosystem participants and encourages third-party complementors to contribute to the development and value of the ecosystem (Jia et al., 2019).This view is supported by Otto and Jarke's (2019) study, which discusses the design considerations for multisided data platforms based on findings from the International Data Spaces case. This study emphasises the importance of determining the shared interests of multiple actors in architecture design and obtaining buy-in from ecosystem actors in the design process. The authors argue that an alliance approach to platform architecture drives the adoption, innovation, and scaling of the multisided platform. A similar approach was taken by Abdelkafi et al. (2019), who argued that the design of the multisided platform should be determined by its purpose and targeted stakeholders.

Furthermore, the authors assert that platform functionalities contribute to its evolution but that this needs coevolution with the various actors in the platform ecosystem. Although the authors provide no empirical evidence, they argue that more valid design principles and criteria for multisided platforms are needed.

In conclusion, features and functionality impact the adoption of MSMPs, and these should not be viewed in isolation from the broader ecosystem. The design of MSMPs should be

determined by their purpose and targeted stakeholders, with the architecture taking an alliance approach to drive adoption, innovation, and scaling. Valid design principles and criteria for multisided platforms are needed to promote their evolution and continued success.

2.4 Potential value creation within the visual art ecosystem and its economic impact

2.4.1 *Value creation through social influence and networks*

The importance of social influence in relation to technology adoption has been a well-established area of research. Previous studies have focused on users' intentions to use technology, often attributed to peer pressure and conformity to organisational expectations (Venkatesh et al., 2003). However, with the advent of digitalisation, there has been a paradigm shift in the literature. Social influence is now seen more as a function of the social norms that have emerged due to the Web 2.0 era and its resultant socio-economic structures, such as free-of-charge platform services (Colombo, 2018). The ubiquitous access to social media platforms has enabled people to be more active online and connect with audiences across the globe, thus removing physical restrictions (Ng, 2022). Social media is considered a significant driver of social influence within the creative industries. New content can be produced by artists, shared, and audiences engaged in real-time on platforms such as Instagram (Colombo, 2018). This view is supported by Hein et al. (2019), who argue that social media can be viewed as a demand-pull factor where social influence affects how people communicate, share, and recommend products and services through social platforms. This trend is associated with the liberalisation of the visual art ecosystem, where actors within the system can also influence and inform their ecosystem instead of it only being able to influence them (Hein et al., 2019).

A coherent understanding of how social systems align technical changes and innovation within the platform ecosystem has been called for by Kapoor et al. (2021). Online ecosystems and digital marketplaces support virtual entrepreneurship by facilitating

collaboration, knowledge sharing, and market access within cultural and craft industries (Chandna & Salimath, 2020). The authors hypothesise that supporting and promoting peers creates virtual camaraderie and increases online social capital or connectedness. The qualitative study of virtual entrepreneurs within cultural and craft industries by Chandna and Salimath revealed that online social capital and sharing assist organisations within an online intermediary community with performance gains and increased satisfaction. Through e-word of mouth and e-community support, ecosystem participants can share better connections, resulting in improved economic value across the value chain (Chandna & Salimath, 2020).

Similarly, a study by Ellison et al. (2007) found that using social media platforms, specifically Facebook, helps community members build social connections and trust, thereby contributing to the community's social capital. Whilst the study's focus is limited to college students, it provides insight into the importance of social capital within online communities. Furthermore, the research study of Potts et al. (2008) extends beyond social capital. It explores how digital platforms create new opportunities for creativity and innovation within creative industries by facilitating collaboration between creatives and expanding the reach of creative content. The authors assert that the emergence of new forms of cultural expression through digital platforms and social networks drives economic and socio-cultural co-evolution within creative industries. However, the study also highlights the challenges digital platforms pose for creative industries, such as copyright infringement, the dominance of a few large platform providers and the challenge of monetising creative content (Potts et al., 2008).

2.4.2 *Value creation through co-creation and collaboration*

The co-creation and collaboration by various actors using different resources have been covered in literature considering various applications and industries. Storbacka et al. (2012) focus on the value extracted through the involvement of customers and ensuring that business models align elements contributing to value creation as network actors collaborate and create shared definitions of co-creation. Similarly, Sinclair (2017) observes the role of customers in forming the value proposition and the importance of

business model innovation and consequently improved revenues within a multisided platform ecosystem. However, this research by Sinclair focuses more on the key role partners play in designing these multisided platforms and posits that these platforms are inherently ecosystems of value co-creation. Moreover, the authors emphasise the importance of understanding the ecosystem requirements to ensure customer and partner buy-in while using co-creation to unlock differentiation. Firdaus et al. (2023) expand further on the importance of customer involvement in the co-creation process, adding that when customers have a positive co-creation experience, they are likely to keep using and promoting the platform.

Recent research by Zainal-Abidin et al. (2023) looks into the importance of online platforms, such as websites migrating to digital platforms, that foster collaboration and are more effective in meeting people's needs and utilising technology. Though focused on the tourism sector, the study highlights the importance of how different businesses within a sector can collaborate better through multisided platforms than maintaining traditional websites. Furthermore, the authors argued that successful digital collaboration depends on trust, leadership and control of the multisided platform. In contrast, a study by Lerro et al. (2022) found that digital technology can be used to build platforms for the creative and cultural industries that connect different actors, enabling them to share knowledge, exposure to a broader range of influences from different industries improves the virtual entrepreneurship facilitated by online platforms.

In conclusion, the literature review highlights that social media platforms are significant drivers of social influence within creative industries and contribute to social capital for ecosystem actors. Additionally, they enable a bidirectional flow of information, allowing ecosystem members to produce and share content in real-time whilst providing access to global audiences. The online social capital further enhances performance within the community, leading to improved economic value across the value chain. However, challenges such as copyright infringement and monetisation were also noted. Moreover, the literature review revealed that online ecosystems and digital marketplaces support virtual entrepreneurship and foster collaboration and knowledge sharing. Likewise, the review also highlighted the importance of migrating beyond websites and owned platforms to digital ecosystems that foster more effective collaboration.

The literature further identified multisided platforms as environments for value co-creation whilst emphasising the importance of involving multiple stakeholders in the co-creation process and aligning business models. Furthermore, it was found that positive co-creation experiences impact the retention and promotion of the platforms.

2.5 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

A multidisciplinary approach was deemed necessary to assess the theoretical frameworks that applied to the nature of the study. It was evident from the objectives and supported by the literature review that the study touched on technological, social, and economic aspects within the visual art value chain. Therefore, a comprehensive framework was required to analyse both the adoption factors and perceived value creation of MSMPs within the visual arts industry.

2.5.1 *Theoretical Framework informing the Study*

a) Technology Adoption Framework

The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) by Venkatesh et al. (2003) was the first theory applied in this study to assess the likelihood of success when introducing new systems/technology. The model by the authors was used to focus on less likely users adopting and using new technology and to understand technology acceptance better. The study by Venkatesh et al. (2003) Identified four core factors: performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions. The model also included four moderators: gender, age, experience, and voluntariness. Despite acknowledging that the technology acceptance process can be complex, the authors observed that literature often oversimplifies it, which has been a criticism of previous versions of the model, such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The UTAUT model was initially used to explain and predict technology acceptance within an organizational context. However, it has become a widely used theoretical model across various contexts (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

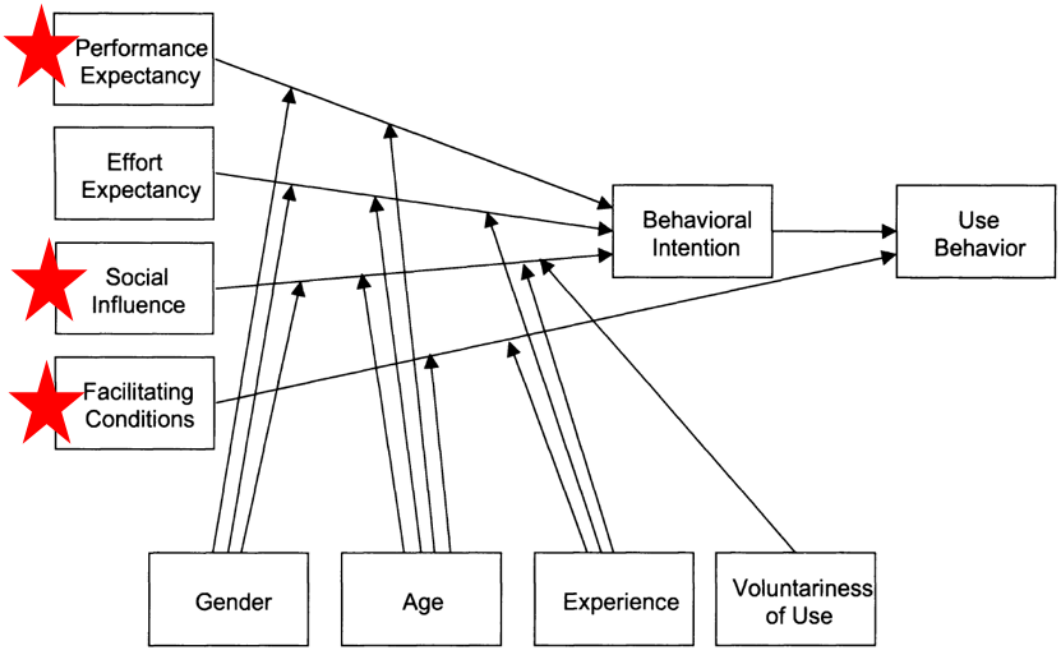

Figure 4 UTAUT model(Venkatesh et al., 2003, p. 447)

An illustrative view of the UTAUT model is provided in *Figure 4* above, depicting the relationship between the four core factors and four moderators. The model shows three direct factors of intention to use: performance expectancy, effort expectancy, and social influence, and two direct factors of usage behaviour: intention and facilitating conditions.

The UTAUT framework was deemed suitable for understanding how likely various actors within the visual art ecosystem would adopt a multisided marketplace platform, considering that the South African industry is perceived to resist adopting new technologies. The factors marked with red were the focus areas and informed the conceptual framework.

b) Evolutionary Economic Theory Framework

The second theory applied in the study was the evolutionary economic theory, an alternative to neoclassical economic theory inspired by Schumpeter's Theory of Economic Development (Nelson, 2008).This theory focuses on innovation,

entrepreneurship, and industrial and institutional dynamics rather than profits. Whilst the literature on evolutionary economic theory has been available since 1982, according to Nelson (2008), studies examining economic growth as a product of the co-evolution of technologies, firms, and industry structures supported by governing institutions in a complex modern economic climate needed to be revised.

Dopfer et al. (2004) adopt a perspective that views economic evolution as a growth of knowledge process; the authors posit that a unifying analytical framework is needed to understand open system processes of change. Additionally, they argue that economic evolution is not simply the sum of individual actions from micro to macro. Instead, it is a complex process that emerges from the interactions of different rules, carriers, and trajectories within a micro-meso-and macrostructure (Dopfer et al., 2004). Moreover, they argue that the meso level is the most crucial level for understanding economic evolution as this is where the rules, carriers, and trajectories interact to produce economic change. They also argued that the meso level is the most crucial level for policy intervention because policies that target the meso level can directly impact the rules, carriers, and trajectories, leading to more effective economic change. The meso level, as cited by Dopfer et al., is represented by industries and regions, and economic evolution is driven by origination, adoption, and retention. Furthermore, the authors revealed that as industries originate new technologies, they adopt and retain them over time, adding that regions can also play a role in economic evolution by providing a supportive environment where innovation and entrepreneurship thrive.

The graphical representation of the meso trajectory and how the framework's micro, meso, and macro levels are interconnected and depict their relationship with each process is shown in *Figure 5* below.

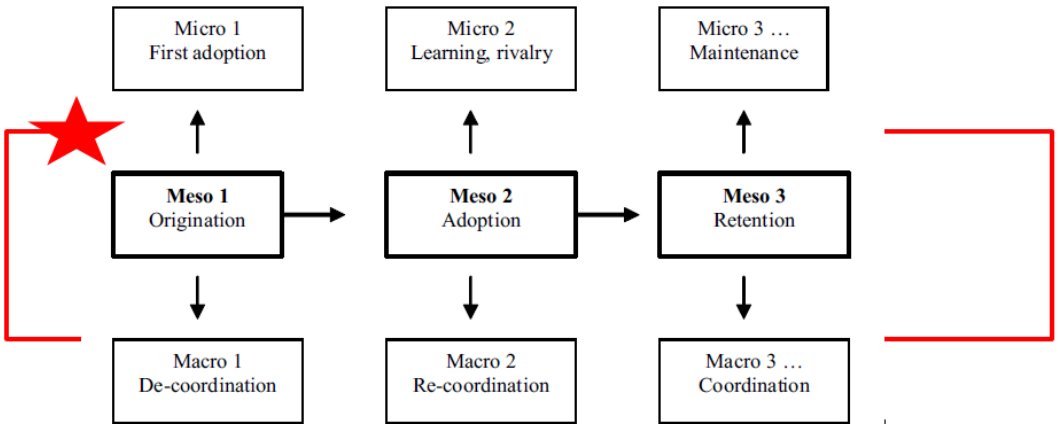

Figure 5 Analytical structure of meso trajectory(Dopfer et al., 2004, p. 273)

The framework's limitations lie in its complexity in measuring various rules, carriers, and trajectories in open complex adaptive economic systems, notwithstanding its potential to assist in comprehending economic phenomena and developing appropriate policies to stimulate economic development (Dopfer et al., 2004).

To create the conceptual framework, this study focused solely on the meso level, in line with the findings of Dopfer et al., as depicted in red in Figure 5. This study highlights the significance of the meso level for policy intervention within industries, thereby aiding in originating, adopting, and retaining new technologies over time.

2.5.2 *Conceptual Framework Shaping the Study*

Upon conducting a thorough review, no evidence was found of similar studies being conducted within the visual arts domain in South Africa. Sinclair (2017) explored one study that aimed to design a multisided platform business model and innovate it to create a competitive advantage within the platform ecosystem. Jonker (2019) developed another framework to determine the contribution of creative industries to the South African economy. Due to the need for more research focusing on the visual art domain, this study put forward a comprehensive framework to understand the adoption factors of MSMPs and the resultant perceived value of their adoption within the visual art ecosystem. The

framework aims to inform policy interventions within the industry and guide the design and development of MSMPs, which may facilitate their widespread adoption by various actors.

With gatekeeping cited as a prevalent challenge within the visual art industry by (Jonker), the proposed framework addressed the disintermediation of traditional power centres within the industry by the origination and application of MSMPs. It also demonstrated how an online marketplace can promote and support actors within its ecosystem, thereby creating value for the platform ecosystem. The UTAUT framework and evolutionary economic micro-meso-macro framework by Dopfer et al. were therefore combined and adapted to suit the study, which assisted in a deeper understanding of MSMP adoption within the visual art ecosystem. The conceptual framework is presented in *Figure 6* below, followed by its explanation.

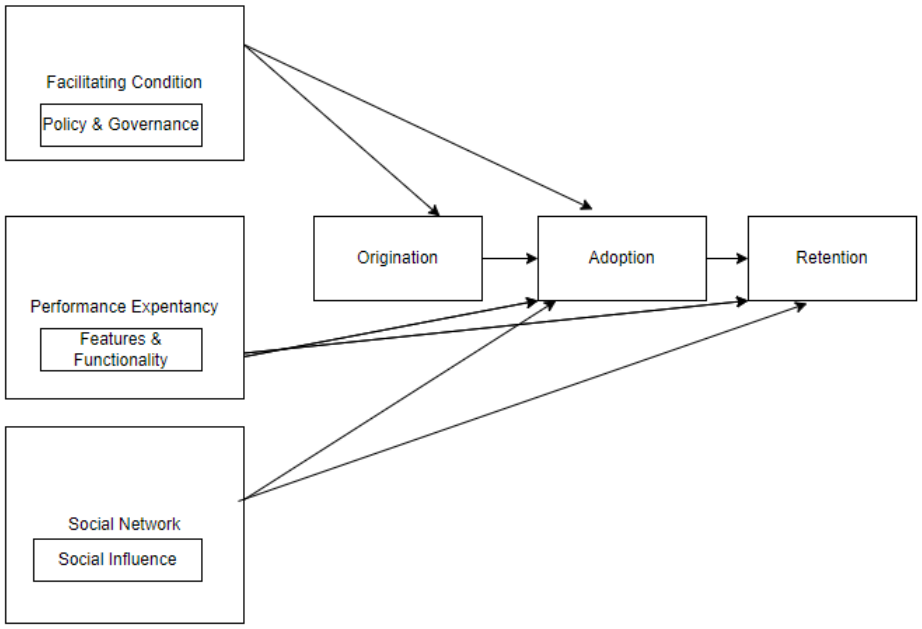

Figure 6 Multisided marketplace platform conceptual adoption framework

Facilitating conditions explain how supporting policy, and governance provides a conducive environment for the origination of MSMPs and facilitates their adoption

through the availability of resources and infrastructure. When actors within the platform ecosystem believe that policies and governance exist to support their platform use, they are likely to adopt it (Venkatesh et al., 2003). Platform policy and governance are the strongest factors, as these ultimately determine the platform controls and degree of openness.

Performance expectancy explains how actors within the visual art value chain are more likely to adopt a multisided marketplace platform if they perceive the performance benefits of the platform worth their time (Venkatesh et al., 2003); this includes ease of use, helpful in assisting them in carrying out their respective roles and also provides added value by enabling them to do things they could not do on their own. Co-creation of the platform features and functionality by platform actors increases support and widespread adoption and ensures that the platform can retain its actors (Sinclair, 2017).

Social networks drive the platform ecosystem value through social influence, increasing adoption and helping retain users on the platform (Potts et al., 2008). As platform actors continue to derive perceived ongoing benefits of platform usage, and through e-word of mouth and recommendations, communicate these within the ecosystem, they encourage adoption. Supporting and promoting peers within the ecosystem increases online social connectedness and community, contributing to platform maintenance and retention through continued engagement.

2.6 Conclusion of Literature Review

In conclusion, the literature review shows that MSMPs as a business model within the visual art domain can significantly impact social and economic activities within the platform ecosystem. The review further highlights the importance of policies and governance within the platform ecosystem to drive adoption, which should be supported by features and functionality aimed at simplifying use for platform actors and ultimately creating value for all ecosystem stakeholders. A key insight from the review is that the value creation within the ecosystem stems from social networks and not individual firm networks, highlighting the importance of community and co-creation within the sector. However, the review also identifies the need for more research, specifically empirical

research exploring the practical application of MSMP platforms within the visual art domain in South Africa. This research would provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of these platforms on the industry and also aid in informing sector policies and regulations.

2.6.1 *Research Propositions*

I. ***Proposition 1***

Policy and governance act as facilitating conditions which influence the origination and adoption of MSMPs.

II. ***Proposition 2***

Platform features and functionality determine the performance expectancy of platform actors, increase support and widespread adoption, and promote retention.

III. ***Proposition 3***

Social networks drive social influence, which influences adoption and retention.

IV. ***Proposition 4***

The origination of co-created MSMPs informs their adoption and continued use and retention.

V. ***Proposition 5***

The perceived value creation of adoption within the visual art ecosystem and its economic impact will be driven by all three factors: policy and governance, features and functionality, and social influence, with policy and governance being the most substantial factors followed by social influence.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology employed to investigate the adoption of multisided marketplace platforms within the visual art domain is discussed in this chapter. An overview of the research process is also provided, including the research approach, design, and sampling method. The data collection method and procedure are explained, along with the target population and sample selection. Furthermore, the research instrument and study limitations and challenges are explored, including the reliability and validity of the findings. The chapter also examines the data analysis strategies, rationale, and ethical considerations and concludes with the research schedule and timelines.

3.1 Research approach

This study used a qualitative research approach with semi-structured interviews conducted for data collection. The qualitative research approach was better suited to the study's objectives as it allowed for in-depth exploration and understanding of the complex dynamics of adopting MSMPs within the visual art ecosystem and capturing subjective experiences (Cresswell, 2007). It also provided the flexibility and richness needed to uncover insights and generate meaningful interpretations. It would be challenging to capture these using a quantitative approach more applicable to understanding phenomena expressed in quantity, focusing on numerical data and statistical analysis (Kothari, 2004).

3.2 Research design

A phenomenological design was applied in the study to understand better the phenomenon of multisided marketplace platform adoption within the visual arts domain. Phenomenological studies capture the lived experiences of individuals to understand the essence of what all participants have in common as they experience the phenomenon (Cresswell, 2007).

In-depth interviews with various actors within the visual art ecosystem were conducted using open-ended questions that enabled exploring their experiences, perceptions, and challenges related to adopting MSMPs. This design enabled thematic analysis of the rich data gathered through the interviews and its categorisation to inform the research findings.

Although the selected design provided the flexibility needed to uncover insights and generate meaningful interpretations, it also had its disadvantages, one being the selection process of participants within the visual art domain to ensure that biases were not introduced by having particular perspectives or experiences over or under-represented in the sample (Cresswell, 2007).

Additionally, an examination of South African platforms within the visual art industry was conducted to provide additional insights and context for the study.

3.3 Data collection methods

Primary data was obtained through individual in-depth interviews using a semi-structured interview guide. These interviews were conducted face-to-face, and where it was not practical to reach participants physically, they were conducted online via MS Teams. The audio was recorded for both physical and online interviews to ensure the integrity of the data.

Using open-ended questions enabled the exploration of various actors' experiences, perspectives, motivations, challenges, and perceived value related to adopting MSMPs within the visual art ecosystem to be well understood. These data collection methods allowed for questions to be adjusted for the different actors based on their role within the value chain, and also, where the information provided in the responses was insufficient, participants were probed further ensuring relevant data was sourced.

A comprehensive examination of existing platforms provided insights into the various MSMPs utilised within the visual art ecosystem. This review allowed for a greater understanding of the extent to which these platforms were being adopted and the diverse ways in which industry players were leveraging them. Comparing and triangulating the findings from the review with the primary data collected through interviews with platform

actors assisted in corroborating evidence and shedding light on perspectives (Cresswell, 2007).

3.4 Population and sample

3.4.1 *Population*

The target population for the study comprised various actors within the visual art ecosystem who were deemed relevant to the adoption of MSMPs.

The platform review included South African platforms utilised by various actors within the visual art domain.

3.4.2 *Sample and sampling method*

The sample represented key actors within the visual art ecosystem, from the primary market, secondary market, support services and reception as identified in *Table 2* and *Figure 3* from the visual art value chain.

Given the qualitative design of the study, Purposive sampling was used to enable the intentional selection of participants with valuable insights related to the studied phenomenon. The snowballing strategy was applied where initial respondents were targeted through industry networks, and they were asked to refer the study to other individuals within the ecosystem in their professional networks across South Africa. A total of 12 respondents were targeted, which is in line with the recommended sample of 5-25 respondents for a saturation phenomenological study (Cresswell, 2007).

Table 3 below provides a summary of the target and achieved sample for this research. Ten interviews were completed against a target of 12. Due to time constraints, the remaining two interviews were abandoned, as participants could only reschedule in January 2024.

Table 3 Target versus achieved sample (authors own)

Visual art industry entity	**Target sample**	**Achieved sample**
Primary market	5	5
Support services	5	4
Secondary market	1	1
Reception	1	0
Proposed target sample	**12**	**10**

A targeted selection based on relevance to the study was used for the platform review of South African platforms within the visual art industry to ensure a deeper analysis compared to analysing the entire population.

3.5 The research instrument

The study used a semi-structured interview guide with open-ended questions and prompts. The interview guide covered topics informed by the research questions proposed in Chapter 1, ensuring that the study adequately covered these. The guide also included probing questions that delved deeper into specific areas of interest to ensure that participant experiences and perceptions were well documented.

While a single interview guide was designed, participants were informed that these questions would be adjusted to align with their specific roles as and when necessary before the interview commenced. The research purpose and questions were also included in the participant and consent form provided in *Appendix A*, while *Appendix B* contains the interview guide.

A checklist was developed for the platform review to assess if the platforms are multisided marketplaces based on the expanded definition adopted by WEF in *Figure 2, seen in Chapter 2, Section* 2.2. The checklist ensured consistency in evaluating the platforms. The platform review checklist is provided in *Appendix C*.

3.6 Procedure for data collection

The process for the in-depth semi-structured interviews was implemented as follows:

I. Participants used in purposive sampling were identified and recruited through professional networks.
II. Due to the initial low response and commitment, social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp were used. Call-to-action posters were shared when possible, within specific art-related groups. Again, these channels were purposively identified as channels used by members of the visual arts industry. Please refer to Appendix E for call-to-action posters.
III. The interview guide was developed but kept from participants.
IV. Data was collected during the period October 2023 to November 2023.
V. The participation information sheet and consent form were distributed to participants before the interview on the invite.
VI. Participants were interviewed in a comfortable setting, either physically or via MS Teams video conferencing. The interview guide was used to frame the discussion but allowed for organic exploration and follow-up questions.
VII. Notes were taken to record nuances and non-verbal cues, and the interview was recorded with the participant's permission.

VIII. The audio recordings were transcribed using MS Teams and uploaded to the Otter.ai subscription package to access their full functionality. The transcriptions were then downloaded and saved in Microsoft Word format for analysis purposes.

IX. All transcripts were quality-checked, and all personal identifiers were removed before the data was analysed.

X. All research reporting, including verbatim quotes referenced in the report are anonymised.

XI. Copies of all the research data, including audio recordings, anonymised transcripts and analysis files, will be stored on a secure computer in line with approved ethics clearance.

Similarly, the process for the platform review was conducted as follows:

XII. The platform review checklist was developed.

XIII. Relevant platforms within the South African visual art domain were identified and compiled into a list for analysis.

XIV. The identified platforms were reviewed per the developed checklist in *Table 7*, and the findings were recorded and documented.

3.7 Data analysis strategies and interpretation

Thematic analysis was used for data collected from the transcripts of the interviews to identify patterns or themes within the qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Inductive analysis was initially used to categorise emerging themes from the bottom up, followed by deductive analysis to review the themes, assess if any themes were excluded and determine whether further information was required (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018).

3.7.1 *Analysis approach*

Due to time and resource constraints, the data was analysed manually using Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel and ChatGPT. The analysis of the data started with organising all participant responses by question in Microsoft Word, followed by a line-by-line reading

to get a sense of the responses. The coding and theming of the data then followed using the below systematic approach;

i. Inductive coding using structural coding hierarchy in *Table 4* was used for each participant's response (AU, 2023) .
ii. Once all the participant responses were coded, the data was copied onto a Microsoft Excel sheet for each question and sorted.
iii. A ChatGPT template, which can be seen in Appendix D, was developed and used to generate potential themes. Full oversight was applied, and themes were then reviewed, checked, and challenged to see if they adequately addressed the question and did not contain any bias or harmful language. Where generated themes were not suitable, they were discarded. Where they were found to be suitable, they were kept and slightly modified, then inputted onto an Excel sheet for analysis.
iv. Analysis was conducted in Excel using Excel tools.
v. A deductive analysis using pre-established codes and themes from the literature review in chapter 2 was then conducted to review, check, and challenge the emerging themes from the inductive analysis.

Table 4 Structural coding hierarchy(AU, 2023)

	Code	**Description**
1	Question no	The question being answered, e.g. Q1
2	Participant no	Number of participants interviewed e.g. P1
3	Structure code	What//how/where/
4	Descriptive code	Single word/phrase that encapsulates the general idea of what is being said
5	Invivo Phrase	Exact text/ quote /response from respondent

A summarised codebook is provided in Appendix E.

3.8 Possible limitations and challenges of the study

The practical limitations encountered because of the research design and methodology in the study were;

I. Degree of variability in interview questions: Conducting semi-structured interviews with various ecosystem participants necessitated that the questions be adjusted to better align with the specific roles of the various participants. This meant that responses to questions might not be directly comparable, as identified by (Cooper & Schinder, 2014).
II. Ability of participants to articulate themselves: Due to the technical nature of the research topic, some participants may have needed help to articulate themselves and understand concepts dealt with in the interviews (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018).

3.9 Quality Assurance

3.9.1 *Transferability*

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of a study can be applied or transferred to other contexts or settings (Flick, 2022). The study provides the following information to enable future research into the broader creative economy and other fields,

a. The research problem statement and rationale contextualised the adoption of MSMPs within the visual art industry in South Africa, enabling future research exploration in other creative industry fields.
b. A description of the criteria used for selecting participants was provided.
c. Data collection methods are articulated, including semi-structured interviews and platform reviews.

d. Thematic analysis approach used to identify patterns and themes within the qualitative data has been described.

3.9.2 *Credibility*

The study's credibility has been enhanced by comparing the primary data collected through interviews and platform reviews. Combining evidence from different sources strengthens validity and provides valuable insights into various perspectives, as discussed by Creswell and Miller (2000) and Cresswell (2007).

3.9.3 *Dependability*

The study's dependability was achieved by implementing the strategies discussed by Creswell and Miller (2000) and Morse (2015), namely;

a. Transparency and reproducibility were ensured by maintaining detailed documentation of the research process, including data collection procedures, analysis methods, and decision-making processes in the research report.
b. Standardised protocols and guidelines were followed for data collection, analysis, and interpretation consistency.

3.10 Ethical considerations

a) The WBS ethics form was completed per requirements.
b) Ethical clearance was obtained per university requirements before commencing data collection and can be found in Appendix G.
c) Informed consent was obtained from all identified participants. All participation and consent forms will be emailed to participants before the interview; if a participant did not have access to email, the forms were printed and handed to them on the interview day.

d) Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and confidential and, should they wish to, could stop participating at any time.
e) Participants obtained consent for snowball sampling referrals, and it was explained to them that their referrals were voluntary. Clarity and guidance were provided, and the participant should obtain consent from the individual referred before sharing their details or involving them in the study.
f) Complete transparency was provided to all participants about the purpose and objectives of the study, and they were informed how their contributions would be used in the study.
g) Participants were informed that their identity and responses would be anonymised in the raw data and the final report. They will only be referred to by their respondent-assigned number, for example, respondent 1.
h) The study adhered to all data protection regulations and guidelines; for example, the data was only collected and used for its intended use, being the research study, and stored in a password-protected computer. The anonymised data will be destroyed after three years to allow for a rigorous review of the study.
i) No participant-identifiable data was entered into ChatGPT.
j) All data entered into ChatGPT was fully anonymised, as seen in Appendix D.
k) Human oversight was provided on all generated results, and human judgement was applied to ensure context, cultural, language, emotional and other considerations were observed.

3.11 Proposed schedule and timelines

The milestones for the research report are listed below in *Table 5*:

Table 5 Research schedule and timelines (authors own)

Activity	Milestone Deadline

1. Identify research participants	21 July- 31 July 2023
2. Obtain ethical clearance for data collection	04 August - 4 October 2023
3. Distribute the participation information sheet and consent form	05 October – 13 October 2023
4. Set-up participant interviews	13 October – 24 November 2023
5. Proceed with participant interviews	21 October - 29 November 2023
6. Identify relevant platforms for the platform review	02 December- 5 December 2023
7. Analyse the identified platforms and record and document the findings	09 December-13 December 2023
8. Convert research proposal to report	02 December- 5 December 2023
9. Start data analysis	20 December- 31 December 2023
10. Write report findings	2 January- 10 January 2024
11. Review research report	11 January - 12 January 2024

12. Submit to supervisor for review	12 January 2024
13. Incorporate feedback from the supervisor	27 January -4 February 2024
14. Final review and edit of research report	7 February -24 February 2024
15. Submit the final research report	26 February 2024

CHAPTER 4. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the study's findings using the design methods articulated in Chapter 3 for the 10 semi-structured interviews conducted. The results are presented per proposition with supporting quotes from participants that are applicable to validate the findings.

All participants are referred to by identifying numbers allocated during analysis.

Table 6 indicates the participants by the visual art industry entity they present, the province they originally come from, and where they work. Participants consisted of various visual art ecosystem actors representing the value chain's primary market, secondary market, support services and reception entities. While most of the sample was comprised of practising artists, it was noted that they often performed more than one role within the value chain, crossing over into education providers, art critics, and content creators, demonstrating that most artists are multidisciplinary.

Table 6 Participants by visual art industry entities, by geography (authors own)

Participant	Theme	Sub-Theme	Original Home Province	Working Province
P1	Support Services	Entrepreneur	Gauteng	Gauteng
P2	Primary Market	Artist	Limpopo	Gauteng
P3	Support Services	Entrepreneur	Gauteng	Gauteng
P4	Primary Market	Artist and Education provider	Free State	Free State

P5	Primary Market	Artist	Eastern Cape	Western Cape
P6	Primary Market	Artist and Education provider	Northwest	Gauteng
P7	Primary Market & Reception	Artist & Content Creator	Western Cape	Western Cape
P8	Secondary Market	Consumer	Western Cape	Western Cape
P9	Primary Market & Reception	Artist & Art Critic	Northwest	Northwest/ Gauteng
P10	Support Services	Logistics	KwaZulu Natal	Western Cape

Count of Participant	Working Provin				
Original Province	Free State	Gauteng	Northwest/ Gauteng	Western Cape	Grand Total
Eastern Cape				1	1
Free State	1				1
Gauteng		2			2
Kwazulu Natal				1	1
Limpopo		1			1
Northwest		1	1		2
Western Cape				2	2
Grand Total	**1**	**4**	**1**	**4**	**10**

Figure 7 Distribution of participants by geography

Row Labels	Count of Descriptive Code
how	**18**
users not fully utilising functionalities on platform	1
Communication Issues	1
Compliance Enforcement	1

Conduct & Usage policies and guidelines	4
Determination of categories and tiers	1
Enforcement of community rules	3
Exposing users to inappropriate content	1
impact of contractual terms with creatives	4
Verification Process	2
what	**24**
Compliance Requirements	5
Conduct & Usage policies and guidelines	15
Intellectual property ownership	4
Grand Total	**42**

Row Labels	Count of Descriptive Code
how	**18**
users not fully utilising functionalities on platform	1
Communication Issues	1
Compliance Enforcement	1
Conduct & Usage policies and guidelines	4
Determination of categories and tiers	1
Enforcement of community rules	3
Exposing users to inappropriate content	1
impact of contractual terms with creatives	4
Verification Process	2
what	**24**
Compliance Requirements	5
Conduct & Usage policies and guidelines	15
Intellectual property ownership	4
Grand Total	**42**

As seen in *Figure 7*, while participants originally come from seven of the nine South African provinces, most are based mainly in Gauteng and the Western Cape for work, each with 40% representation.

4.2 Results pertaining to Proposition 1: Policy and governance act as facilitating conditions which influence the origination and adoption of MSMPs.

Participants were asked if they had used online platforms or websites to showcase, sell, purchase, or collaborate with other value chain members and how they experienced these interactions.

4.2.1 *Online platform use and experience*

All ten participants indicated that they use digital platforms, with the most prevalent use being social media, followed by websites and marketplaces. As seen below in Figure 8, only 40% of participants use actual marketplace platforms.

Questic	Particip	Structu	Descriptive Code	Theme	Sub-Theme
Q2	P1	what	3. Bark.com	Marketplace	Various professional services
Q2	P1	what	4. Snape	Marketplace	Creative professionals
Q2	P2	what	2.Takealot	Marketplace	e-commerce marketplace
Q2	P5	what	3. Facebook Marketplace	Marketplace	
Q2	P7	what	4. Takealot Marketplace	Marketplace	e-commerce marketplace

Figure 8 Digital platform usage

In response to their experiences on general platform usage, a low frequency was observed in themes such as trust, security and governance.

Participant 5: *"But I just make sure that if I see a post about something that I want to buy on marketplace, I make sure that this person is like, legit, it's not a scam, you know, and so that by the time maybe I get a number we talk on WhatsApp"*

Participant 7: *"I feel like the only spaces where online purchases are select mainstream is on your big marketplaces, like, take a lot. You can get an idea of what's available, what it costs, you can get a review on the seller, and you know, take a lot also sometimes steps in as a mediator if something went wrong or guarantees being on it."*

All participants were also asked for examples of specific policies or guidelines that have impacted their use of online platforms. In analysing their responses, three themes with seven sub-themes emerged for specific policies, guidelines, or rules, as seen in Figure 9.

The three themes identified were conduct and usage policies and guidelines, compliance requirements, intellectual property, and ownership.

Theme and Sub-Theme	Count of Descriptive Code
what	**24**
Compliance Requirements	**4**
Credit Limits	1
Vetting Process	3
Conduct & Usage policies and guidelines	**16**
Communication policy	1
Group management guidelines	1
Platform usage policy	7
profiles and content management	7
Intelectual property ownership	**4**
(blank)	4
Grand Total	**24**

Figure 9 Policy and guidelines frequency by theme and sub-theme

4.2.2 *Conduct & usage policies and guidelines*

Conduct and usage policies and guidelines had the highest frequency, with a count of 16 and 50% of participants referring to them. Four sub-themes were identified in this theme: communication, group management guidelines, platform usage policy and profiles and content management.

Profile, content management, and platform usage policy were both observed to have frequencies of 7.

I. *Profile and content management*

The poor management of inappropriate content across social media platforms was cited by participant 4 *"I think there are things that bother me, and that they should be maybe*

more rules like there are certain not appropriate kind of profiles that pop up on Instagram."

Another observed challenge potentially contradicting the above one is the perceived strict policies in deleting posts that are reported with Participant 6 referring to malicious reporting by other users; *"In regards to Instagram, they policy it's too strict in a sense where like, In regards to Instagram they policy it's too strict in a sense where like they could say, maybe if I posted myself with you and you this big shot person, they able to block you for some reason thinking that you are fraud or something you claiming."*

Some participants referred to being part of groups on social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook and talked about the poor management of such groups and the regulation of how group members are assigned to membership to the group. This is noted in the comment by Participant 2; *"And I think that that works better. Like if, if really, it's specifically designed for this one thing and strictly one thing, and everything can only be posted through this person and stuff. They can regulate what people see maybe it would, it would be more effective."*

II. *Platform usage policy*

Closely related to the profile and content management is the platform usage policy mentioned by participants, indicating their awareness of these rules as seen below,

Participant 5: "On my own Facebook, they're kind of like those rules of like, um, how you should like to connect with people when you're interested in whatever that they are selling or advertising."

Participant 6: "So, apparently, there is somebody who can report you on that incident. If a person is jealous, you know, this industry."

4.2.3 *Conduct & usage policies and guidelines*

Participant 1 gave insights into the terms and conditions and account registration requirements on platforms, which included maintaining credit limits and undergoing a vetting process to use the platform.

Participant 1 *sights the limitation of the credit limit; "The only thing is that the only limit or whatnot is that after your credit is exhausted, you can't really do much. You have to top up the credit"*

Participant 1 also mentions the stringent requirements on government platforms vs other platforms; *"With the government system is maybe there was a bit of regulation. Yes, from a platform perspective. I mean, yeah, I mean, my BEE documents expired, I think three days ago. So I have to now go run update it so I have to just make sure that all my documents are in order It's got more compliance checks.";" Though Bark and Snape, they do require a website or social media account I guess that's the only vetting they do."*

Participants were further asked how these rules and regulations either helped or hindered them from using these platforms. Only 50% of participants responded to this question. The analysis of how these rules and regulations and their implementation affect the participants, as depicted in Figure 10, surfaced four themes: diminished interest in using platforms, diminished user experience, impact engagement with platforms, and influenced business legal jurisdiction and operations. Three sub-themes were noted within impact engagement: limited usage, negative engagement, and positive engagement.

Impact of rules and regulations	Count of Descriptive Code
how	**6**
Diminished interest in using platform	**1**
na	1
Dinimished user experience	**1**
na	1
Impact engagement	**3**
limited usage	1
Negative engagement	1
Positive engagement	1
Influenced business legal jurisdiction and operations	**1**
na	1
Grand Total	**6**

Figure 10 Impact of rules and regulations on participants

Participant 1 displayed diminished interest in using the CSD government platform due to the lengthy registration process, showing how compliance requirements can hinder platform use; *"Oh, yeah, it had many steps. It should. I think it I took two hours to complete, the CSD Yeah. It's like an exam of writing an exam. It feels like it's too long. Yeah. You really have to go in and apply yourself."*

Participant 6 experienced diminished user experience by the blocking of their account and mentioned how the experience of stringent conduct and usage policies and guidelines resulted in them not enjoying using social media platforms whilst acknowledging that it does not stop their use of them; "*But you don't stop because it's just part of the challenges get so it's a matter of just telling yourself this happened. It's okay. It's fine. If you get unblocked, there's a way forward. It made me not enjoy using social media."*

Participant 2 mentioned how their engagement with platforms had been both positively and negatively impacted by conduct and usage policies and guidelines, positively by the use of algorithms that enhance their experience through the compelling profile and content management rules and negatively by the lack or poor management of group management policies on platforms; "*the algorithm I mean, what you usually go for is you choose who to follow. Yeah, flow."; "I feel so because from time to time, I've also go search on these groups and sometimes I actually miss that this is really interesting. So I*

think yeah, and yes, some did hinder me and some actually working. So, we just need some proper control and regulation."

Participant 7 expressed that due to the limitations of international property ownership policies in South Africa, which spill over into the platforms, they influenced their choice of business legal jurisdiction and operations; *"Well, they affect me in the sense that I don't use them. So, my business is an LLC, and because of that, it is protected with American law, the majority of my service providers, collectors and clients are in the developed world. And they play by the by those rules, like they understand."*

Participant 9 shared that due to the negative impact of contractual terms of intellectual property policies and other challenges, they limit their usage of social media platforms.; *"I am happiest chap around, you know, because remember, I said I'm not crazy about these platforms at all. I actually, frankly, don't care about posting on those things. So how this, like things going on with artists and their galleries and whatnot, the ecosystem has affected me is to vindicate me, that actually, this is why I don't like doing some things through these platforms. It has actually proven me right that one needs to actually tread carefully in how you conduct your work and your business over the platforms."*

Analysis of the interviews reveals that governance of the platform ecosystem impacts the platform users and how they interact with it. The governance through various policies and guidelines can either facilitate or hinder the adoption of platforms, including that of MSMPs.

4.3 Results pertaining to Proposition 2: Platform features and functionality determine the performance expectancy of platform actors, increase support and widespread adoption, and promote retention.

Participants were asked what the important features and tools on these platforms were, which made it easier or harder for them to use, to gain an understanding of the importance of platform features and functionality within the visual art sector. Over and above that,

participants were further asked to describe how these features and tools contributed to their ease or difficulty in using platforms.

Nine themes were identified in total, with 11 sub-themes per Figure 11. The most significant features and tools mentioned by participants as contributing to the ease or difficulty of platform use were platform functionality, with a frequency of 14, followed by platform layout and design, with a frequency of 6.

Theme	Theme count
Platform layout and Design	1
Predictive analysis and recommendation	1
Ease and accessibility	1
Platform functionality	1
Customerisation	1
Verification and review mechanisms	1
communication and engagement	1
Content	1
Cloud solutions and affordability	1
Total	**9**

Sub-Theme	Sub-theme count
Design	1
Payment gateways	1
checkout and purchases	1
Direct sales capability	1
in-platform communication and notification	1
Order tracking	1
Usability	1
Product management tools	1
Multi angle viewing capabilities	1
Geotagging and loacation based search	1
Billing and pricing	1
Total	**11**

Row Labels	Count of Descriptive Code
how	**26**
communication and engagement	2
Ease and accessibility	6
Platform functionality	18
what	**41**
Cloud solutions and affordability	3
Content	7
Platform functionality	14
Platform layout and Design	6
Predictive analysis and recommendation	5
Verification and review mechanisms	3
Customisation	3
Grand Total	**67**

Figure 11 Platform features and functionality themes & sub-themes including frequency

4.3.1 Platform layout and design

Platform layout and design are also noted as contributing to the ease or difficulty of platform use, with 50% of participants mentioning these. Design and usability were two strong sub-themes that emerged, with participants mentioning the importance of simplicity in layout and presentation. The importance of visual connection was also noted for the actors within this sector. The need for visual connection is further supported by the need for platforms to present products, whether artwork or materials, realistically and appealingly.

Participant 1 refers to the importance of simplicity in design but also the use of language on the platform; *"I think its easy language simplicity, about the about the design, in a way things are just laid out in an organized way."*

Participant 9 mentions, that ultimately, ease of use is significant; "*the ease of use for the artist, you know, on the on the on the face of it."*

Participant 8 emphasises the need for good photography; *"Definitely good photography. I mean, that's a given."*

Participant 4 reflects on challenges with navigating platforms and shares that there is often a learning curve associated with familiarising one with the platform navigation features and tools; *"So there's definitely a learning curve that happens. And for me, like literally just learning how to navigate, and how to make a real, how to add music, how to fit it into my, like, sometimes I will make a reel, and now I'm posting that tomorrow"*

Whilst the content and predictive analysis have high frequencies of seven and five, these were only mentioned by two and three participants, respectively. These have, however, been noted as potential key features and functionalities.

Analysing how platform features and tools contribute to the ease or difficulty of use for various participants revealed three themes: platform functionality, ease and accessibility and communication and engagement.

4.3.2 Platform functionality

80% of participants mentioned the importance of various platform functions, with four sub-themes identified within this theme: direct sales capability, multi-angle viewing capabilities, product management tools, geotagging, and location-based search. There was also an overlap with the specific features and tools and how they are used in participant responses. The responses below highlight that functions of platforms enable various actors across the ecosystem to perform tasks important to them;

Participant 8; *"What I don't find often is a close-up section would be useful. Just to see the brush strokes or a little bit more detail. If it's a sculpture something slightly more detailed."*

Participant 5; *"And also stating when like the item has been sold so that people don't bother you asking, so like notifications or even removing it like from a platform okay, maybe like just indicating if this this item has been sold? Yeah".*

Participant 1; *"So I know with the government one you fill in your banking details. And then what they do is they verify with your bank to see if your banking details are correct."*

Participant 3; *"the important basics on you know, a transaction, payment, address for delivery or email address for communication"*

Only 40% of participant responses fell under the ease and accessibility theme, making some of the insights that emerged from it easy to dismiss, such as the challenges associated with platforms' complex processes. Cloud solutions and affordability also had a low count, with only 20% of participants referring to them, but again, they revealed essential insights for platform owners.

It is also evident that the ability to transact and communicate on platforms is key for most participants, with 70% expressing the need for basic transaction capabilities such as direct sales capability, payment gateways and in-platform communication and notification.

Participant 7 addresses the minimum features and tools that platforms should have and expresses that these already exist for most platforms; "*the important basics on you know,*

a transaction, payment, address for delivery or email address for communication, that's already all there."

Participant 6 addresses the importance of payment alternatives and gateways: *"They give you alternatives where you pay with your card or EFT, you know, so there's this new stuff. I don't know what's paid back or something. I don't know what was it called? Like? There's like almost four options or close to five options that they give you. It's inclusive."*

Participant 9 touches on direct sales capabilities with checkout facilities: "Having an option for checkout, you know, where if someone wanted to buy the work directly, they would *just go to checkout, and then be able to translate it and complete the transaction."*

Participants were asked to share their experiences where features have influenced their usage of online platforms and how this impacted their continued use to gain insights into how features and functionality affected the retention of platform actors.

What relates to the personal experiences of participants where these features influenced their usage, and how relates to how it impacted their continued use of them 70% of participants responded to this question. Two themes emerged when examining their personal experiences: the positive and negative experiences of features and tools on platforms, with negative experiences, mentioned slightly more than the positive experiences with frequencies of eight and seven, respectively, as displayed in Figure 12.

Row Labels	Count of Descriptive Code
how	**10**
Abandoned use	1
Continued use of platform	4
Low engagement with platform	1
No impact on usage	2
Poor continued use	2
what	**15**
Negative Experience	8
Positive Experience	7
Grand Total	**25**

Figure 12 Features and functionality impact on user retention

4.3.3 *Negative Experience*

Negative experiences were attributed to various factors, including unappealing platform layout and design, complicated platform usage, unfriendly user registration, and personal preference for physical stores, as Participant 1 and Participant 2 cited.

Participant 1; *"I think the CSD as much as you know once you've registered you feel like you've passed an exam they lay out lay out the font size of the letters it's just tiring, it's exhausting."*

Participant 1; *"so there's no you don't feel like going back. Whereas now with the other platforms, you know, they're a bit more colourful and I'm always there, but I know that there's no commitment from the buyers so I'm not going to gamble it that much. The opportunities are great with the CSD, but you don't engage with it as often because of the user experience and design, the platforms are more inviting but not incentivizing and I think what keeps me going back is just hope that one day I log in and things will have changed but still the same."*

Participant 5; "*Sometimes. Now I rely more on kind of like, let's say if I want to buy my materials I, I prefer going to, like a leather wholesale because I know. I will know if what I'm looking for is not there is it's difficult to kind of like rely on buying stuff on online platforms. For me. That's what I think. Because I'm always worried about if, if it's not, if it's not what I'm looking for, you know, because I relied on images. So yeah, sometimes it does affect me to kind of like, maybe would rely more on online platforms for buying stuff, you know? Yeah."*

External factors such as platform owners' decisions to discontinue services or features give preference to specific markets, and excessive control by third parties was also observed in contributing to negative experiences, particularly for complimentary service providers.

Participant 7; *"And for the time being, that functionality is only available to American businesses. So, I might be able to utilize that because I have my LLC, and art is a different thing to sell than a t-shirt. So, to see if I'll investigate that. But that is a limitation I've experienced because of my geographic sort of like location, like, because I am South African, I don't have access to something that I used to have access to. It's affected some of the services that I used to use, but I'm no longer using. So, I still use those platforms. But I am not, I'm not listing my products the same way I did."*

Participant 3; *"in terms of the other online or web platforms, where people are selling art, because I'm not a gallery, some of the galleries or even the marketplace where you can buy art from anywhere everywhere, they would often have a page where they say you can, or you have an option to frame this piece, you can contact us, but they don't actually allow for somebody like me to have a full-on page where I can also control the storytelling or the service offering. They seem to block or gatekeeper that. So, I don't have access to the people that are paying or querying, or I don't have access to the database and have to see whether people are even clicking on that page. So, it's just always a simple question of if you're interested in framing services, please email us and then it ends there."*

As a result of these negative experiences, two participants proceeded with poor continued use of platforms they engaged with; one abandoned use of the platform they were experiencing challenges with, and the other participant's continued usage was not impacted.

4.3.4 *Positive Experience*

Positive experiences were attributed to factors ranging from easy platform use to the appreciation of assistance and notifications, as noted in Participants 6 and Participant 1. Participant 9 and Participant 3 liked the element of control that came with the use of certain platforms.

Participant 6; *"Uhmm because it was just too easy. Like everything, you just follow the instructions. So maybe if you just follow the instructions and read carefully and just purchase the right stuff, then you're good to go. It is just easy to use and no hassles, no*

hassles, and if you have any problems, you can still go back and contact them since they have like contact numbers and emails and all that. We can just call and say like, Yo, I don't understand this how to is there an alternative of having to do certain things? Not so it's that way it's just too easy. Simple."

Participant 3; *"the positives is a convenience that I can order or see or engage from anyway, in my own leisure time, leisurely time, and being able to go through a decision-making process without somebody standing in front of me expecting me to decide almost immediately. So, there's that luxury Oh, going back and forth revisiting adding into a cart, going back online, doing more research on other platforms, maybe on the artist or on an art piece, and then finally making my decision in my own leisurely time, I think is a good thing for me viewing rooms have been quite nice. It's almost like this new technology where you can do a viewing room."*

Participant 9; *"I know on Artsy, for instance, so Artsy like, I mean, they're probably I don't know, hundreds of 1000s of artists in Artsy. So, I mean, in an artist entry is almost like a, an account, for example, on Twitter, or Instagram, where one can choose to follow in artists, you know, in their progress over the platform. So, I think for me, it has been important that like, someone sitting some, in some faraway place, they could just, you know, click to follow me and like, be able to follow my progress. And know, some time, you know, down the line, they can then be able to make contact with me."*

As a result of their positive experience, these participants were happy to continue using the platforms they referenced.

As seen in the above responses and themes, platform features and functionality determine the performance expectancy of platform actors and can either positively or negatively impact retention. These positive or negative responses are heavily influenced by how the actors experience these features and tools and their functionality.

4.4 Results pertaining to Proposition 3: Social networks drive social influence, which influences adoption and retention

In determining the extent to which social networks drive social influence, participants were asked how the opinions of friends, colleagues, collaborators or followers influenced their choice to use social media platforms.

Participant responses were analysed in two parts: firstly, understanding the factors that influence participants' choice to use social media platforms, and secondly, the ways in which these opinions affect them.

The majority of participants reported that the opinions of friends, colleagues, collaborators or followers positively influenced their choice to use platforms; this can be seen in the high frequency of 18 compared to the three neutral in descriptive codes. 55% of participants mentioned that this was specifically true for social media, and 45 % sighted this being true for general platforms, as seen in the structure code in Figure 13

Row Labels	Count of Descriptive Code
how	**19**
Considered adoption	**3**
No not adopt	**1**
Promoted adoption	**15**
what	**21**
Positive influence	**18**
Opportunities	7
Strategic use	11
Neutral	**3**
(blank)	3
where	**11**
CSD platform	**1**
General platforms	**3**
Instagram	**4**
Online shops	**1**
Social media platforms	**1**
X	**1**
Grand Total	**51**

Figure 13 Factors influencing choice to use social media and effect of opinions

Participant 1; *"I've got two friends who have been very successful on this CSD platform one was even much younger than me, he was in his early 20s and bought his Toyota cabs Hilux and I was like How do you it so this CSD is working? So that did influence that's when I registered when I saw that I thought okay, it is working."*

Participant 2; *"So it's been positive opinions mostly. So, people's opinions of being online and they recommendations of like saying I found this collector online and collaborated with this person online have positively influenced me. Yeah,"*

Participant 8; *"Positively? Yes, not negatively. So, I think if I had a friend who also collected and I have a couple of friends who I regard as having similar orientation to me, if they were to say to me, Oh, my word, I've started to actually really look hard online and it's working so well, I think I'd be more open to it and potentially follow. So be a word of mouth."*

For most participants, the positive influence promoted the adoption of the platforms, as seen in the responses below;

Participant 3 shares how the feedback received from stakeholders promoted their adoption and using social media, specifically Instagram, and how it also encouraged them to be transparent and share their process; *", I think people gain trust from seeing the work that you've done. And so, the influence or the feedback that I get is, Oh, I heard that you are a framer, can I see the work that you've done? So that type of feedback, then, you know, influences me to be transparent, open, and honest about the space"*

Participant 4 also shares the impact of positive feedback in influencing them to use social media platforms, specifically Instagram; *"So I think the belief and feedback from the people are very, very important. And it encourages me to continue or discourages me like I guess at the moment, I'm less encouraged with the website platform, and much more is definitely very encouraged with the Instagram."* This participant also mentions how adopting this platform makes them consider themselves as a currency and validates their work; *"So it's important in terms of, like your personal currency. That the belief that is people are able to see and witness what you do, and they believe in what you're doing and the significance of it and also reaching a large amount of people. Yeah. So, then*

people, their opinions matter, because it allows you to demonstrate this. It definitely does matter."

Within positive influence responses, it was observed that participants used these platforms for both strategic use and opportunities.

Participant 10; *"Like I said, it's very much a business relationship to fulfil my clients wants and needs that has driven us that's definitely what has influenced us. If I didn't have clients who thought the particular tool or that particular direction was useful to them then I wouldn't use that but yeah, that's been very much the driving factor and that's to what we select on using."*

Participant 7; *"So keep in mind that the majority of my ecosystem is outside of southern Africa. So I have mentors and peers based in Europe and in North America. And I'm very easily swayed by their opinions. So if they come to me and say, use this platform, use that tool, are you aware of XY and Z, I pay attention and more often than not, if it benefits me, I will adopt."*

Participant 1; *"I am more concerned about the results of using the platform so which is why the friends success advocates more than their opinion to use it."*

Participants were also asked if they had connected with other value chain members through social media platforms like Instagram or Facebook and what the result of that connection was.

Row Labels	Count of Descriptive Code
how	**14**
Direct engagement	9
Exploit opportunities	4
Social events networking	1
what	**26**
Exploit opportunities	3
Initiating connections	10
Knowledge sharing	1
Networking and collaboration	9
Strategic partnerships	3
where	**13**
Art Bank	1
digital platforms	1
Facebook	1
Facebook page	1
Instagram	6
VANSA	1
Physical	1
X/Twitter	1
Grand Total	**53**

Figure 14 Connections with value chain members on social media platforms

90% of participants confirmed that they had connected with other value chain members through social media platforms, with Instagram having the highest frequency with six mentions.

In analysing their responses to understand the nature of these connections, five themes were observed, as shown in Figure 14: exploiting opportunities, initiating connections, sharing knowledge, networking and collaboration, and strategic partnerships. Both initiating and networking connections had the highest frequency, with ten and nine counts, respectively.

Social media platforms have assisted participants in initiating connections with various value chain members from counterparts, third parties, curators, artists, and many others.

Participant 5 talks about how the platform has assisted with people reaching out to them; *"Yeah, yeah. Artist. Curators. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, I have uh huh. Yeah, it's mostly artists and mostly artists and curators. Also, people who appreciate my work," "I started*

speaking to this, gallerist on social media, he reached out to me and I don't know how he got to know about my work, but started reaching out on Instagram. I've been talking ever since. Yeah, so it's only gonna be now that I'm gonna start working with someone from outside South Africa through an investigation that started on social media."

Participant 8 mentions connecting with an artist after seeing their work on their feed and appreciating the authentic interaction; *"Have I connected specifically with somebody whose work I've liked? Yes, actually, I have. Yes, I have. I've been on in fact, funnily enough on social media on Instagram. They've been two artists that I didn't know before that came up on my feed. And I did connect with them. Yes." I think direct contact with the artist definitely leads to better and authentic engagement."*

Participant 9 mentions third party introductions; "*I think some of them that comes to mind now would have been through I don't know if I should call it almost like third party. where someone in France somewhere, who's a writer and curator, had seen my work and my practice they were gonna make a multidisciplinary curator project in Cape Town and whatnot to sort of like and publish a book, sort of get in contact with me, to invite me into the, into the project as an artist and writer. So I guess, then the answer is yes, that like, the connection happened over, you know, starting from a digital platform,"*

Participant 10 talks about how social media platforms-initiated connections with counterparts in different countries; *"Yes. Quite a few our counterparts in different countries were looking for a clearing agents or freight forwarder to get things out of South Africa into South Africa and came across us on Instagram and reached out to us and we picked up the conversation from there."*

Networking and collaboration are also a key outcome of connecting with value chain members on social media, as seen in the responses from participants below;

Participants 3, 4 and 5 mention international networking and collaboration;

Participant 3; *"I've got a friend who's in the south of France, that actually focuses on giving exposure to emerging artists from South Africa and the continent. And even though she's there, we have intentionally collaborated on Instagram and Facebook. And*

strategically use both of our services or our expertise, to educate in clients, whether in South Africa or around the world."

Participant 4; *"Yes, definitely. I've, I've managed to network with artists to meet other artists that have an academic connection now."*

Participant 6; *"what I do I have an international Facebook page Cast glass page I follow. So because most of the techniques we do not know, especially this side so there is this international page where you ask a question, if you don't understand they tell you okay, if you use this and that this is the result you get because we still growing, so still learning. So it's always nice to ask. And they're quick to respond."*

In analysing the specific instances when participants connected with value chain members, two themes were noted, also seen in Figure 14: direct engagement and exploit opportunities. Direct engagement had the highest frequency at 9 with exploiting opportunities with 4.

Direct engagement shows how participants mostly connected with various value chain members such as curators, collectors, industry peers, and others through direct channels such as DMs, using platforms to engage directly with collaborators.

Participant 7; *"The majority of breakthrough I've had is on X or Twitter. Okay. Okay. And that is that's very prevalent in the web three space through that mechanism, I have secured the majority of my art collectors, my NFT collectors, but also garnered relationships for websites and potential projects I'll be developing. So yeah, very, very cool. Platform, especially in the digital art space."*

Participant 2; *"think I've had a random DM from someone who looked up my work and then they were they were good collector actually. This guy still they still with me even today. And then through this, it's actually helped me in to get introduced to other guys. They saw my work there and then I had this gig with this guy in his restaurant."*

30% of participants spoke about exploiting the opportunities presented by the connections for their benefit, as these connections resulted in further leveraging the community to refine their practice or participate in collaborative projects.

Participant 6; "*and with the others that I met the time I was in US, so we still kept in contact. So because their more advanced so every time if I struggle and maybe if I don't even struggle, maybe if they see a technique and they know I work with it, they refer me to like the information they give me information."*

Although it had a low frequency, strategic partnerships were an unexpected theme to emerge, indicating that some participants do see the potential of strategic partnerships even if it is not immediately, as seen by a comment from Participant 4; *"I've networked with and believe we will have future opportunities with that person. And then the other one was the gallery, the curator who invited me I feel like there's been quite a few. You extend your network much, much more quickly."*

Based on the above responses, social networks in the form of social media drive social influence and, in turn, influence the adoption and retention of these social platforms for value chain members.

4.5 Results pertaining to Proposition 4: The origination of co-created MSMPs informs their adoption and continued use and retention.

To better understand the degree to which co-creation of MSMPs would inform their adoption, continued use, and retention, participants were asked if they had come across any platforms that were collaboratively created by artists and other value chain members.

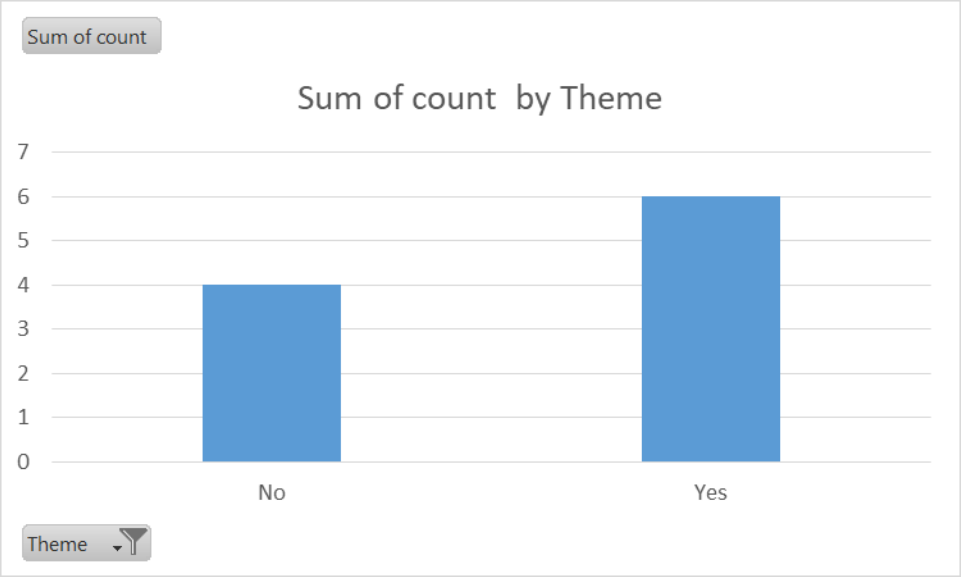

Figure 15 Knowledge of co-created platforms by artist and other value chain members

60% of participants were aware of platforms that were collaboratively created by artists and other value chain members within the visual art sector, as seen in Figure 15.

Participant 2 referred to a platform named Assemblage, co-created by artists, which enabled artists to sell their work and also had physical studios in Johannesburg. *"Which one can I think assemblage was one of those."; "Those girls were artists. They also made a platform for artists to sell they even had physical studios in Newtown that was great."*

Participant 3 referred to two platforms: the African Cultural Fund and Occupying the Gallery. Whilst the African Cultural Fund was founded by an artist and his peers in Mali, the participant mentioned that it operated in South Africa and across the continent; "*the African cultural Fund, which is its inception is from Mali is a platform. I know actually, it is in South Africa. African culture fund is a platform that was started by an artist and his fellow peers from Mali. And it's, it's gone it's spread quite nicely across the continent to support and to feed into the creative economy."*; Participant 3 also mentioned that Occupying the Gallery was started by two South African artists, which fosters collaboration with other artists and is centred on supporting their artistic processes. ; "*Who else occupying the gallery, which is something that was started by Marry Sibande and Lawrence Lemaona. Occupying the gallery which they kick started, I think this year*

in June and they call collaborate with other artists seeks to build programs to support their processes and their specialities in art, whether you're a photographer or sculptor, artist or painter."

Participant 5 referred to VANSA, a website where artists can find various opportunities which they use for information on art competitions; *"VANSA Yeah, they have online they have a website. Um, it's basically for artists like opportunities where there are open calls it's just to keep artists like updated with what is happening around the visual arts you know, open calls, competitions you know."*

Participant 8 referred to a platform that they engaged physically called Art Under the Bed and mentioned that this platform has a social media presence on Instagram. The participant specifically liked that the artists looked out for each other; *"Physically yes I've engaged with, with artists that have created their own platform. I mean, they have a social, they don't have a website, but they have a social media. Presence. And they're fantastic because they look out for each other."*

Participant 9 referred to Made You Look, a collective with an interactive website focused on curating projects with various practitioners; *"the collective here in Joburg, I think made you look, they have a platform like that, you know, where they a website but it's interactive, you know, it's, you know, projects are constantly being curated the practitioners, you know, invited to engage and collaborate."*

Participant 10 mentioned Art Admin, specifically created by the artists to assist with the business side of being creative and mentioned that they were on Instagram and had a website; "*I think Art admin was the was the first thing For that, that was created by artists for artists to assist with running the business side of being a creative, they have Instagram, they have emails, websites, but most of it, it was you don't have to, you don't have to physically be they just send them an email you call them or you or you reach out to them and they can do the business end of your of your work for you via digital channel. And I think it was created by two artists actually, back in the day".*

An interesting observation is that all the platforms mentioned above had a low frequency and were only mentioned once by each participant. The low frequency is indicative of

the issue raised by Participant 1, who commented that they were not aware of any co-created within the sector; *"I've never found them or seen them or interacted with them."* This participant further elaborated that such platforms most probably do exist, but that their lack of awareness may be attributable to poor marketing or awareness with other value chain members; "*I think if they do exist, it's only to that small market you know."; "I think, you know, platforms like that need more marketing for people like us? To bring us on board."*

Most of the mentioned platforms refer more to physical spaces with an online presence, mainly in social media, not actual MSMP or digital platforms per se.

Participants were further requested to share their views on involving broader value chain stakeholders in creating platforms for the visual art community and how they believed this would impact the usability and success of these platforms.

80% of participants support the co-creation of MSMPs for the visual art sector, while 20% of the participants appeared to be neutral. This support emphasises the importance of co-creation and gives insight into how platforms are initiated and developed, impacting their adoption and sustained usage.

Participant 1; *"I think it's a great initiative because we sometimes tend to exist in silos."*

Participant 2; *"My perspective in terms of the entire value chain collaborating and being involved in creating a platform for the arts community? I think it'll be wonderful."*

Participant 3; *"it is important"*

Participant 4; *"I think it would be great. I don't think it makes sense to, to make it too broad."*

Participant 5; *"yeah, I think there should be more"*

Participant 7; *"I think there is enormous value."*

Participant 8; *"I think it should be something that should be pursue."*

Participant 9; *"most definitely I like the idea inviting broader stakeholders, because remember, art making, and indeed, art itself, the actual art that an artist present is actually about the broader community."*

Four key themes emerged in analysing the data being a centralised platform, the positive impact of collaboration, sustainability and long-term success and undesired stakeholder impact. Sustainability and long-term success had the highest frequency, with a count of 10. Although supportive of broader collaboration within the industry, some participants were cautious, which is observed in the theme of undesired stakeholder impact with a frequency of 5 per *Figure 16*.

Row Labels	Count of Descriptive Code
how	**19**
Leveraging industry knowledge	8
Trust and relevance	11
what	**31**
Centralised Platform	3
Neutral	2
Positive impact of collaboration	3
Support Co-Created Multisided Marketplace Platforms	8
Sustainability and long term success	10
Undesired stakeholder impact	5
Grand Total	**50**

Figure 16 Knowledge of co-created platforms by artists and other value chain members

4.5.1 *Sustainability and long-term success*

Participant 3; *"I think that creates sustainability. And long term, building a long-term foundation for success in the business. Otherwise, I think without that, you become part of the statistics of you know, small businesses or creatives not ever making it far in South Africa."*

Participant 4; *"But I think it would be very good to very productive to get the right people. I'm not sure how to do that. But if you could to get them involved in brainstorming, what*

is what is this that we need here? And then how is this going to work? Or what is the aim of this and who needs to be involved and the function and then all of that."

Participant 8; *"And I think that, you know, if bigger stakeholders and smaller artists and everybody could actually work in collaboration on platforms that were user friendly to the consumer, I think it would really help everybody."*

Participant 9; *"most definitely I like the idea inviting broader stakeholders, because remember, art making, and indeed, art itself, the actual art that an artist presents is actually about the broader community."*

4.5.2 *Undesired stakeholder impact*

Participant 2 recommends measuring some stakeholders' involvement and suggests that some should be silent partners instead; ` *"If ideally, you'd have to have stakeholders that would just pump in that money and keep quiet. Don't try to control what's happening there."*

Participant 2 is also weary of the dangers of profit interest interfering with the purpose of the platform; *"Because sometimes you'll find that the people that actually founded that that platform had great vision about it, and obviously, you will have like a guy with deeper pockets like a bigger funder, and they will want to change this for profits you see."*

Participant 2 further highlights the negative impact that large funders could potentially have on the ecosystem; "*So I think it's nicer when maybe the relationship between the this funder of bigger stakeholders and the people running the actual programme on the ground if they really agree on many things and do not try to change it So that it benefits more the silent partner than the artists."*

Participant 10 raises the fact that some stakeholders may be reluctant to participate in broader industry collaborations to preserve self-interest, which could hinder collaborative efforts; *"for me, the stakeholders these seem to be I don't have a better word for it, but definitely reluctance."*

In analysing the" structure code of the participant's responses, which focused on understanding the processes or mechanisms described by participants in detailing how they perceive the stakeholder's participation impacts the usability and success of these platforms, two themes were identified: leveraging industry knowledge and trust and relevance with frequencies of 11 and 8 respectively.

4.5.3 *Leveraging industry knowledge*

Participant 1 gives insight into the importance of leveraging the different strengths of various industry actors*; "Where if we could come together then we collaborate to bring each other strength and we learn basically like about each other and, and about the industry we're in and we are able to see what we lack or where we lack Yeah."*

Participant 4 mentions how an interdisciplinary approach ensures different areas are catered for: *"it's interdisciplinary, because it's so very different. Maybe people who sell art people who buy art, people who make art people who make materials for art, things like that. Oh, those are very different areas."*

Participant 5 expands that all actors within the ecosystem need to participate to contribute to a centralised platform; *"if there's one platform that has everything you say, let's say I want maybe I'm looking for this particular thing and then once I while I'm looking for I'm looking for I see maybe a link to something that I didn't think I needed it, but now okay, I say it's easy for me to know, were I would get that particular thing it's gonna be easier because maybe I would have seen it while I was looking for something else."*

Participant 9 shares insight into how leveraging knowledge will ensure that the sector keeps in tune with the times; *"for the visual arts to collaborate with them in doing things and collaborating particularly through digital platforms, it sort of like becomes almost a in tune with the times, you know, because most things are done, like on digital platforms by the contemporary society."*

4.5.4 *Trust and Relevance*

; *"I would hope that having these broader stakeholders being part of the formation of the platform it builds trust and that's a positive thing because your transactions really actually happen through trusting somebody or trusting a platform."*

Participant 8 also echoes this sentiment of how collaboration results in honest platforms, which build trust in them; *"easily accessible, honest and clear."*

One can see the importance of value chain members wanting to trust the platform as there does seem to be some deficiency in trust when it comes to some stakeholders, as seen in comments by Participant 10, where perhaps the platform is viewed as a threat to their existence; *"there's a reason why a gallery is as this is why we take 20% or 50% of the cost because we do all the work that makes them survive, you know, so they do they do a bit of gatekeeping but They'll also do a bit of gatekeeping because they selves as a business have to survive."*

An interesting observation was the connection between sustainability and long-term success and how that is achieved through building trust and ensuring the platform is relevant.

In conclusion, the responses by participants highlight the importance of co-created MSMPs for the visual art industry. Participants widely believe that leveraging industry knowledge results in trust in the platforms, which ensures relevance to the sector, supporting the platform's adoption. Co-creation is also attributable to the sustainability and long-term success of the platforms, indicating continued use and retention. However, some participants also cautioned about the extent of involvement by broader stakeholders and raised that undesired stakeholder impact should be monitored.

4.6 Results pertaining to Proposition 5: The perceived value creation of adoption within the visual art ecosystem and its economic impact will be driven by all three factors, policy and governance, features and

functionality and social influence, with policy and governance being the most substantial factor, followed by social influence

Participants were asked if they thought using art platforms effectively promoted and engaged their work and if these platforms benefited them at individual and broader visual art community levels to understand their perceived value derived from using these platforms.

Participants' responses were analysed in two parts; the first was analysing their responses to understand whether using art platforms effectively promoted and engaged with their work. Two themes emerged from increased effectiveness and promotion on niche platforms and limited effectiveness and promotion. Secondly, whether platform use benefited them individually or the broader community. Three sub-themes emerged: community level, individual level and lastly, individual and community level.

Count of Descriptive Code	Column Labels			
Row Labels	Community level	Individual and community level	Individual level	Grand Total
Increased effectiveness and promotion on niche platforms	5	10	2	17
Limited effectiveness and promotion	1		2	3
Grand Total	**6**	**10**	**4**	**20**

Figure 17 Platform effectiveness for promotion and engagement at individual and community level

A high frequency of increased effectiveness and promotion on niche platforms was observed overall, with 17 counts, with the majority being at an individual and community level with ten counts, as seen in *Figure 17*.

Participant 2; *"Yes, already answered in above questions. It benefits both myself and the community"*

Participant 4; "*Yes, I think so. I think both I think, yeah; "Yes, I do think it is I can't even if it's something like latitudes, the online exhibitions or spaces, someplace, there is more engagement. Definitely. I think Instagram can be maybe or I found it to be that there is a lot of engagement and for promoting for sure."*

Participant 6; *"Yes, for me and the broader community it brings more connections brings more connections and exposure."*

Participant 8; *"Yeah, I think it would be a huge thing, because they can reach a bigger audience. You know, I don't have to go to the gallery. I can actually see them. I can look at an artist in I don't know, an island that intrigues me without having to physically be there. So I think it would be beneficial to the community answer's yes."*

It was interesting to observe two contradicting findings, with one participant sharing that they believed that platforms increased the effectiveness and promotion of the broader visual arts community. At the same time, one seemed to think that their effectiveness was limited. Even more interesting is that both these participants had inverse views on the effectiveness of platforms at a personal level.

Participant 9 believes that digital platforms in their various forms were effective in promoting the broader visual arts community; *"So most definitely, for the broader community is like, it is like, opened up, like, you know, I hope, like exciting new avenues to understand our culture and is very dynamic elements, such as visual arts.", but a person level the inverse was true; "So for me personally, so I don't think it does, to a very big extent."*

Participant 5 believes that digital platforms are very effective in promoting them on an individual level; "*I think it's very effective. And the way that sometimes people use these platforms like art related platforms, they'll give a spotlight to the certain artist. And then if you are featured on the platform, then the art community maybe gallery, curators, they read those kind of stuff. And then it's all about exposure.",* but believes the same not to be true for the collective system *"I don't think so not for the broader art community, maybe not that effective. I have noticed there's like some platforms that kind of like spotlight. Give a spotlight to maybe not only artist maybe to other initiate initiatives around art, maybe the organizations, like in the visual arts but not that much its always about artist and shows."*

A noteworthy comment was made by Participant 10 that while digital platforms are effective in promoting and engaging the visual art community, this is primarily informed

by their correct usage; *“used correctly, yes. Like I said, the education part, education part is what these artists need. If you know how to use a certain platform and get the most out of it, then you will say that the platform works for you very well. But if you don't, and you say it doesn't work very well, you know? Yeah.”*

Participants were asked if any platforms they have used or were aware of contributing to more opportunities and economic growth/activity for the art community to determine the economic impact of adopting platforms

80% of participants believe platforms contribute to more opportunities and economic growth or activity within the visual arts ecosystem. The majority of participants see the economic benefit as a result of the opportunities they can access due to digital platforms. Participant 8 did not answer the question due to technical challenges, and only Participant 1 cited that they did not believe that platforms contributed to more opportunities and economic activity.

Participant 1 was less convinced than other participants; *“For me because of the mismatch it hasn’t really happened, yeah, if I had to answer for two or three other people they too haven’t found any economic benefit, for other things yeah but not for art related things like photography, this is on Facebook marketplace. My partner sold a cupboard there it sold very quickly. If I had to sell this heater it would sell today. I think it terms of opportunities, word of mouth is better still, the reason why I say this, if I put out an ad it moves very slowly compared to someone putting out a word for me. Bark almost got the matching right but are failing on the commitment from the buyer”*

Participant 2; *"so there's much more information that you're able to access through these platforms.”; “And I think it's very vital for the, for the economy of the arts to have these platforms t they actually help and it also helps that we have the person that's posting something like the employers it also helps them to actually find a right people not just random people.”*

Participant 3; *“Oh, yeah, I think it's also, yeah, definitely, it's made everybody in the art space, see how you can have a lucrative career, sustainable career in the creative or visual space.”*

Participant 4; *"Yes, I think it does."*

Participant 5; *"I think platform not only help artists but help anyone Yeah Even with outside the broader community."*

Participant 6; *"yes"*

Participant 7; *"yes"*

Participant 9; *"So, I mean, once the opportunities to make work or apply for something it of course it translates to economic involvement. So by all means, these platforms if made it like, much more, you know, practical for us to believe that, after all, the visual arts are functioning. A great extent, that might not be perfect, but thanks to this platforms, things are happening, I mean, in a positive way."*

Participant 10; *"100% Yes, an example of that, lady Skollie. Lady Skollie about nine, eight years ago, no gallery in South Africa wanted to work with her. And then she somehow blew up on digital platforms and now she is one of the biggest cross of performance and visual artists in South Africa you know."*

4.6.1 *Interesting discoveries*

Participant 4 showed appreciation that the economic benefit is not always immediate and can be deferred but that it is a direct benefit of opportunities received through access TO platforms*; "that could give me an economic impact, I think down the down the line."*

Participant 5 shared that despite the ability to directly connect with collectors and control their sales, they still believe that being represented by a gallery would yield more economic benefits for them; *"so although as an independent like these platforms allow me to sell my work independently online, there has been economic growth that comes from that, I don't necessarily feel that that economic growth is more than what I would be making through a gallery even with commission."*

Based on the above, participants find niche platforms more effective in promoting and engaging their work, and this benefit applies to the broader community more than

individuals. Participants also believe that platforms contribute to more opportunities and economic benefits for the visual art community.

The perceived value creation of adopting MSMPs within the visual art ecosystem is driven by policy and governance, features and functionality and social influence, as seen by all the above responses from Proposition 1 to Proposition 4. Whilst platform policy and governance determine platform controls and degree of openness, they have not emerged as the most vital adoption factor. Features, functionality, and social influence emerged as more substantial factors, impacting adoption and retention. Interestingly, the co-creation of MSMPs has emerged as a stronger factor of adoption, with participants emphasising the impact of trust in relevant platforms built by leveraging industry knowledge. The emergence of co-creation as a stronger factor necessitates that the conceptual framework proposed in Chapter 2 Figure 6 should be reviewed and aligned with the above findings.

4.7 Triangulation results pertaining to platform review: A review of South African visual art industry platforms

Platform review findings

a) Ten online platforms operating within the South African visual art industry were reviewed to triangulate interview findings. Of the ten platforms reviewed, one platform, Assemblage, was no longer operational. As seen in Table 7 below, four of the nine reviewed platforms meet the definition of an MSMP; one is classified as a multisided platform, two can be classified as service-oriented platforms, and two are two-sided community platforms.
b) In terms of design and layout, most platforms were found to have acceptable design and layout, with only one platform considered to have a dated design and layout.
c) All four MSMPs have a social media presence, and ecosystem actors can connect to the platform's social media profiles from the platform. These findings corroborate the findings in 4.4 that social networks in the form of social media impact social influence and are essential for platform owners and ecosystem members.
d) Whilst each of the four MSMPs serves as intermediaries that connect various stakeholders within the industry, it was interesting to observe the difference in ecosystem stakeholders with each of the platforms, collaborating the findings in 4.6.1 that ecosystem actors value niche platforms more and that MSMP needs to serve the purpose and community for whom they are created.
e) It was also interesting to observe that MSMPs such as Latitudes and Artsconnect offer logistics support services and framers through partners. These are not necessarily listed transparently, with Latitudes specifically mentioning one supplier for framing services as their recommended partner even when they have stated that they provide a list of reputable partners.

f) None of the nine platforms reviewed served as a one-stop shop for visual art ecosystem members, collaborating sentiments by participants that they generally struggle to find this.
g) Artsconnect was the only MSMP with spaces for broader value chain members; however, these appeared underdeveloped.
h) Three of the four multisided platforms were found to foster collaboration amongst platform ecosystem actors, which was unclear with the one platform.
i) Of the four MSMPs, three are South African-owned and founded by South Africans, with the fourth being a Pan-African platform.

Table 7 South African platform review summary (authors' own)

Platform Characteristics		Artsconnect	Latitudes	Artsplit	Artmajeur	Artcentric	Winsens	Libex	VANSA	Artsouthafrica
User segmentation	No. of distinct user groups/stakeholders	4	6	4	3	2	4	4	2	3
	Distinct stakeholders	Emerging artists, cultural practitioners, buyers, learners,	Artists, gallerists, curators, collectors, interior designers	Collectors, investors, artists, art lovers	Artists, art galleries, art lovers	Established and emerging artist	Artists, art galleries, printing houses, individuals	Artist, creators, collectors, investors	Artist, organisations	Artist, Individuals interested in art
	The platform has an operator owning and operating it	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Platform has sellers	√	√	√	√	×	×	√	×	√
	Platform has buyers	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	×	√
	The platform has enablers, e.g. payment gateways,	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	×	×

	logistics, shipping providers									
Marketplaces and interaction within the visual art ecosystem	Platform offers support services	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	Limited
	The platform enables collaboration between user segments	√	Not clear	√	Not clear	×	×	√	√	Not clear
	Other Interactions/ transactions between user segments	√	√	√	Not clear	×	×	Not clear	×	√
	Social Media handles	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Platform classification	Multisided market platform	Multisided marketplace platform	Multisided marketplace platform	Multisided platform	Service-oriented platform	Service-oriented platform	Multisided marketplace platform	Two-sided community platform	Two-sided community platform
	Platform design and layout	Visually appealing,	Modern, clean with	High-quality	Intuitive design with	Simple, clean and	Design is dated and	Visually appealin	The design is clean	Simple design allows easy

		uncluttered and easy navigation	clear navigation	visuals, appealing with easy navigation.	clean layout with search and filter	modern design. Large visuals with intuitive navigation	text heavy. Navigation is easy	g, uncluttered and easy navigation	and simple, easy navigation	browsing of artwork and artist profiles
	Fully South African Platform	√	√	×	×	√	√	√	√	√

4.8 Summary of the findings

Table 8 summarises the findings by proposition as follows;

Table 8 Summary of proposition findings (authors own)

Proposition	Findings
Proposition 1: Policy and governance act as facilitating conditions which influence the origination and adoption of MSMPs.	• All 10 participants use digital platforms, with the most prevalent use being social media platforms, followed by websites and marketplaces. • Only 40% of participants use actual marketplace platforms. • Three specific policies and guidelines impact participant use on online platforms: conduct and usage policies and guidelines, compliance requirements, intellectual property, and ownership.

	• According to 50% of participants, conduct and usage policies and guidelines significantly impact them. • Communication, group management guidelines, platform usage policy, profiles, and content management were also observed as impacting participants. • Participants are more aware of platform usage policies, particularly those on social media platforms and Facebook Marketplace. • Within profile and content management, participants saw the poor management of inappropriate content across social media platforms and perceived strict policies in deleting reported posts as challenging. Groups on platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp also need to be better managed with better regulation of how group members are assigned membership to the group. • Platform terms and conditions and account registration requirements on platforms, such as maintenance of credit

	limits and vetting process to use the platform, negatively impact some participants and hinder their usage. • Stringent conduct and usage policies on social media platforms like Instagram, such as blocking user accounts, diminished user experience. However, users acknowledge that this does not stop usage. • Engagement with platforms can be positively and negatively impacted by conduct and usage policies and guidelines, positively by using algorithms that enhance user experience through effective profile and content management rules and negatively by the lack or poor management of group management policies on platforms. • Limitations of intellectual property ownership policies in South Africa can influence business legal jurisdiction and operations. • Contractual terms about intellectual property policies, specifically on social media platforms, can limit usage.

	• The platform ecosystem's governance impacts the platform users and how they interact with it. The governance through various policies and guidelines can either facilitate or hinder the adoption of MSMPs
Proposition 2: Platform features and functionality determine the performance expectancy of platform actors, increase support and widespread adoption, and also promote retention.	• 70% of participants expressed the need for basic transaction capabilities such as direct sales capability, payment gateways and in-platform communication and notification. • Platform layout and design contribute to the ease or difficulty of platform use. • Design and usability are important, with participants mentioning the importance of simplicity in layout and presentation. • The importance of visual connection was noted for the actors within this sector. Visual connection supports the need for platforms to present products, whether artwork or materials, realistically and appealingly.

	• 80% of participants regard platform functions such as direct sales capability, multi-angle viewing capabilities, product management tools, geotagging, and location-based search as important. • Platform functions enable various actors across the ecosystem to perform tasks important to them. • Cloud solutions and affordability of billing and pricing are important for subscription-based platforms. • Negative experiences with participants with platform features and functions are attributed to various factors ranging from unappealing platform layout and design, complicated platform usage, unfriendly user registration and personal preference for physical stores. • External factors such as platform owners' decisions to discontinue services or features give preference to specific markets. Moreover, third parties' excessive control also contributes to negative experiences, particularly for complimentary service providers.

	• Participants with negative experiences may proceed with poor continued use of platforms and are more likely to abandon using the platform based on experienced challenges. Some participants will continue to use platforms despite their negative experiences. • Positive experiences with platform use are attributable to factors ranging from easy platform use, appreciation of assistance, notifications and an element of control while using certain platforms. • Participants with positive experiences are happy to continue using platforms. • Platform features and functionality determine the performance expectancy of platform actors and can either positively or negatively impact retention. • How participants experience platform features and functionality also impacts performance expectancy and retention.

Proposition 3: Social networks drive social influence, which influences adoption and retention	• Participants reported that the opinions of friends, colleagues, collaborators or followers positively influenced their choice to use platforms; 55% of participants mentioned that this was specifically true for social media, and 45 % sighted this being true for general platforms. • For most participants, the positive influence promoted the adoption of the platforms. • Participants use these platforms for both strategic use and opportunities. • 90% of participants confirmed that they had connected with other value chain members through social media platforms, with Instagram being the most popular. • Networking and collaboration are also key to connecting with value chain members on social media. • Direct channels such as DMs on platforms enable participants to engage directly with fellow collaborators and connect with

	various value chain members such as curators, collectors, and industry peers. • Social media platforms have assisted participants in initiating connections with various value chain members from counterparts, third parties, curators, artists, and many others. • Networking and collaboration are key outcomes of connecting with value chain members. • 30% of participants leveraged connections over the social media community to refine their practice or engage in collaborative projects. • Social networks in the form of social media drive social influence and, in turn, influence the adoption and retention of these social platforms for value chain members.
Proposition 4: The origination of co-created MSMPs informs their adoption and continued use and retention.	• 60% of participants displayed awareness of platforms collaboratively created by artists and other value chain members within the visual art sector.

	• Platforms mentioned by participants referred more to physical spaces with an online presence, specifically social media, not actual MSMPs. • 80% of participants support the co-creation of MSMPs for the visual art sector, while the remaining 20% appear neutral. • Co-creation positively impacts platform adoption and sustained usage. • Leveraging industry knowledge results in relevant platforms trusted by ecosystem members, further supporting their adoption. • Co-creation also ensures the sustainability and long-term success of the platforms, promoting continued use and retention. • The involvement of broader stakeholders must be appropriate to mitigate undesired stakeholder impact.

Proposition 5: The perceived value creation of adoption within the visual art ecosystem and its economic impact will be driven by all three factors: policy and governance, features and functionality and social influence, with policy and governance being the most substantial factor, followed by social influence	• 80% of participants believe that platforms contribute to more opportunities and economic growth or activity within the visual arts ecosystem • Niche platforms promote and engage with visual art ecosystem members more effectively. • Digital platforms provide the visual art community more opportunities and economic benefits. • Features, functionality, and social influence are stronger adoption factors than policy and governance. • Co-creation is a strong factor of adoption as ecosystem members believe that leveraging industry knowledge builds trust in the platform and results in relevant platforms.
Triangulation by platform review	• One of the initial ten platforms chosen for the review was no longer operational. • Four of the nine platforms reviewed met the definition of an MSMP.

	• All the reviewed platforms have social media handles. • Except for one of the MSMPs, the reviewed MSMPs were found to foster collaboration amongst platform ecosystem members. • Three of the MSMPs in the review are South African, with one being a Pan-African platform.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS OR FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the five propositions identified in Chapter 2 by comparing the research findings to the key findings from the literature review in Chapter 2.

Discussion pertaining to Proposition 1: Policy and governance facilitate conditions that influence the origination and adoption of MSMPs.

As identified in the research findings, governance of the platform ecosystem impacts ecosystem users and how they interact with it, aligning with findings by Boudreau and Hagiu (2009), who state that policy and governance structures within MSMPs ensure they function and add value for all parties within the ecosystem by regulating it. Research findings show that the various policies and guidelines used to effect governance can either facilitate or hinder the adoption of MSMPs, which contrasts the finding by Hagiu (2014), who found that MSMPs are likely to attract and retain various actors within its ecosystem by regulating the platform through established policies and governance therefore not accounting for the potential negative impact. While the study findings support the findings by Abdelkafi et al. (2019) that interactions across platform actors are regulated by non-price tools, they contrast

Findings by Poniatowski et al. (2022) found that pricing, revenue sharing, IP rights and regulation are governance factors governing behaviour and informing value creation on platforms. As seen in the study findings, interactions by participants with the platforms are governed more by conduct and usage policies and guidelines, compliance requirements and intellectual property, with conduct and usage policies and guidelines being more influential on platform actors. Furthermore, communication policy, group management guidelines, platform usage policy, profiles, and content management are also factors within conduct and usage policies and guidelines impacting participants.

Research findings suggest that better group management guidelines are needed to manage groups effectively on platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp, which regulate how group members are assigned membership to the group poorly. This finding is consistent with Armstrong and Lee (2021), who state that governance should be used to decide the level of openness of a platform while considering the balance between the quantity and quality of users who adopt the platform. While the findings relate to Facebook and WhatsApp groups, these can be applied to the management of any platform, including MSMPs.

Mechanisms such as platform terms and conditions and account registration requirements on platforms like maintenance of credit limits and vetting processes, though intended as security measures, were found to negatively impact platform members and hinder their usage instead of enabling it. These findings contrast with the findings by Otto and Jarke (2019), who found mechanisms that build trust, security and data control by protecting stakeholders-enabled ecosystem members.

The study also highlights how limitations of intellectual property ownership policies and contractual terms limit usage by some ecosystem members and influence their business legal jurisdiction and operations. These findings emphasise the potential inefficiencies in South African government policy in enabling platform businesses. These inefficiencies undermine the government's vision of driving digital technology adoption within the sector discussed earlier in Chapter 2.2. Badran's (2021) findings of a study conducted on the Egyptian digital platform Jumia highlight the importance of government policy and strategy that supports and enables legal e-business conditions.

In conclusion policy and governance administered in a measured manner with the strategic intention to promote the origination and adoption of MSMPs will maximise facilitating conditions and minimise factors that hinder ecosystem members.

5.2 Discussion pertaining to Proposition 2: Platform features and functionality determine the performance expectancy of platform

actors, increase support and widespread adoption, and promote retention.

As Chapter 2, section 2.3.2 established, ecosystem members' acceptance and use of MSMPs are influenced by their design, features, functionality, and technical aspects.

The research findings highlight nine factors and eleven sub-factors of platform features and functionality that determine the performance expectancy of various value chain members that impact adoption, as shown in Figure 11. The nine factors are restated below for ease of reference.

1) Platform layout and design
2) Predictive analysis and recommendations
3) Ease and accessibility
4) Platform functionality
5) Customisation
6) Verification and review mechanisms
7) Communication and engagement
8) Content
9) Cloud solutions and affordability

Participants highlighted platform layout and functionality as the dominant factors. Though stated differently, these nine factors are similar to those identified by Li and Sun (2020), who identified five factors: functionality, service quality, security/privacy, and customer support.

5.2.1 Platform layout and design

Participants indicated in the research findings that platform layout and design contribute to their ease or difficulty using digital platforms. The simplicity in layout and presentation highlights the importance of platform design and usability considerations for various ecosystem actors in adopting a platform. Due to the nature of work within the visual art

sector, it is important for participants that platforms present their products appealingly and realistically while enabling their audience to connect with products visually. These findings collaborate with the studies done by Abdelkafi et al. (2019) and Otto and Jarke (2019), which both emphasise the importance of considering the interest of multiple actors and stakeholders in the architecture design of multisided platforms and ensuring that the design of the platform is determined by its purpose.

5.2.2 Platform functionality

According to Venkatesh et al. (2003), the two most important factors influencing technology adoption are the degree to which people expect it to improve their performance and its ease of use. The research findings support this, with an overwhelming number of participants expressing the desire for capabilities like direct sales, payment gateways, in-platform communication, and notifications for increased efficiency and ease of use.

Platform functions such as multi-angle viewing capabilities, product management tools, geotagging and location-based search enhanced participant experiences on platforms and enabled them to perform essential tasks. These positive interactions contribute to the continued use of platforms. The recent study by Ng (2022) observing the OpenSea marketplace platform also found that users were more likely to use platforms that are easy to use and offer a seamless user experience, even though the study focus was more on low registration requirements and platform privacy settings.

The research found that negative experiences by participants, such as unappealing platform layout and design, complicated platform usage and unfriendly user registration, contribute to poor continued use of platforms with a higher chance of abandonment by participants. However, the study findings also show that some participants may continue using platforms despite their negative experiences.

A potential gap in the literature has been identified where factors such as discontinuation of services or features, preferential treatment of specific markets and excessive control

by third parties and platform owners may contribute to negative experiences, particularly for complimentary service providers.

In conclusion, platform features, functionality, design, and layout play a crucial role in determining the performance expectancy of platform actors. Features and functionality that enhance positive experiences increase support and widespread adoption and promote retention.

5.3 Discussion pertaining to Proposition 3: Social networks drive social influence, which influences adoption and retention

The study findings confirm that participants are influenced mainly by the positive opinions of others to use social media platforms. Social media platforms like Instagram are widely used primarily for networking by value chain members and to interact directly with people of interest using channels such as Direct Messaging (DMs) to whom they would otherwise not have access, such as artists, curators, collectors and third parties to name a few. Members of the visual art ecosystem can produce work, engage audiences in real-time and receive instantaneous feedback through these platforms. These findings are consistent with those observed in the literature that found ubiquitous access to social media platforms allows ecosystem members to be more active online while connecting them to global audiences by removing physical barriers. Furthermore, social media is seen as a demand-pull factor through social influence affecting how ecosystem actors communicate, share and recommend products and services using social platforms (Hein et al., 2019; Ng, 2022).

The study also found that participants use social media platforms for knowledge sharing, collaboration and strategic partnerships with other value chain members. Participants reported benefits such as an enhanced sense of community by participating in collaborative projects and being guided by knowledgeable peers in refining their practises, which further positively influenced adoption. These findings are similar to the literature stating that social networks are essential in driving platform ecosystem value

by supporting and promoting peers and increasing social connectedness (Chandna & Salimath, 2020; Ellison et al., 2007; Potts et al., 2008).

In conclusion, social networks in the form of social media drive social influence and, in turn, influence the adoption and retention of these social platforms for value chain members.

5.4 Discussion pertaining to Proposition 4: The origination of co-created MSMPs informs their adoption, continued use, and retention.

An overwhelming number of participants supported the co-creation of MSMPs for the visual art sector. Participants believe that leveraging industry knowledge and including other value chain stakeholders in the process creates relevant and trusted platforms, further encouraging adoption by ecosystem members. These research findings support the views of Lerro et al. (2022) (Zainal-Abidin et al., 2023), who expressed the importance of digital platforms in fostering collaboration and meeting stakeholder needs effectively, with Lerro et al. (2022) emphasising the role that digital technology plays in building suitable platforms for the creative and cultural industries whilst enabling entrepreneurship within the sector. The research findings also align with Sinclair (2017) (Storbacka et al., 2012), who emphasise the importance of collaborating with customers in the co-creation of value in businesses and aligning the business model to customer needs. Sinclair (2017) further highlights the importance of extending the co-creation pool to include partners in formulating the value proposition within multisided platform ecosystems whilst promoting business model innovation and suggests that multisided platforms inherently foster ecosystem value co-creation. Furthermore, the research findings show that co-creation plays a significant role in positively influencing platform adoption and sustained usage, supporting findings by Firdaus et al. (2023) that successful collaboration and trust positively impact the continued use and advocacy of the platform.

However, the research also found that the appropriate involvement of a broader range of stakeholders is necessary to mitigate undesired impacts on the ecosystem. This finding

supports the findings by Zainal-Abidin et al. (2023) that successful digital collaboration is also contingent on trust, leadership and platform control.

The research highlights the importance of co-creation, partner engagement, and digital platforms in fostering collaboration and driving adoption within the visual art sector. Additionally, these insights emphasise the significance of leveraging industry knowledge and involving stakeholders in the co-creation process to develop relevant and trusted MSMPs.

5.5 Discussion pertaining to Proposition 5: The perceived value creation of adoption within the visual art ecosystem and its economic impact will be driven by all three factors, policy and governance, features and functionality and social influence, with policy and governance being the most substantial factor, followed by social influence

Research findings show that while participants believe digital platforms create opportunities and spur economic growth or activity for the visual art ecosystem, niche platforms are more effective in promoting and engaging with visual art ecosystem members. Features, functionality, and social influence emerged as participants' most substantial factors of adoption, followed by co-creation, which surprisingly emerged stronger than policy and governance.

5.6 Conclusion

In summary, the research findings suggest that a measured approach in implementing platform policy and governance and the strategic origination and promotion of MSMPs

minimises hindrances and maximises adoption with ecosystem members. Furthermore, platform features, functionality, design, and layout play a crucial role in determining the performance expectancy of platform actors and increasing widespread adoption and retention through positive experiences. Social networks, mainly social media, drive social influence and influence the adoption and retention of social platforms for value chain members. Additionally, co-creation significantly influences platform adoption and sustained usage, with niche platforms being more effective in promoting and engaging with visual art ecosystem members. Finally, features and functionality, social influence, and co-creation emerged as participants' most substantial factors of adoption, followed by policy and governance.

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CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter answers the two research questions posed in *Chapter 1, section 1.4,* by synthesising proposition findings in *Chapter 5*. This is followed by stating the research limitations and recommendations and concluding with suggestions for further research. For ease of reference, the two research questions are re-stated below as,

a) What are the opinions of visual arts ecosystem actors regarding the factors that promote or hinder their adoption of MSMPs?

b) What are the benefits and impacts of using MSMPs in the visual art industry, as perceived by its members?

6.2 Conclusions regarding research question 1: What are the opinions of visual arts ecosystem actors regarding the factors that promote or hinder their adoption of MSMPs

Based on the literature review and participants' findings, the research has confirmed that the visual art industry in South Africa has been slow to adopt MSMPs despite the widespread use of digital technology by value chain actors. This study revealed that participants believe that the adoption of MSMPs within the visual arts ecosystem is influenced by several factors, as seen in the findings in *Chapter 4* and discussed in *Chapter 5*.

6.2.1 Opinions on policy and governance

The visual art ecosystem members believe that policy and governance are essential in shaping platform ecosystems through mechanisms such as conduct and usage policies and

guidelines to manage interactions within the ecosystem and promote their adoption. However, the absence of effective governance structures and policy gaps identified within terms and conditions, stringent registration processes, and poor management of groups within platform communities hinder adoption. The literature in Chapter 2 broadly supports the findings by emphasising the importance of governance structures in regulating platforms to ensure their optimum functioning mainly through the use of non–price mechanisms and determine the platform's degree of openness (Abdelkafi et al., 2019; Armstrong & Lee, 2021; Boudreau & Hagiu, 2009). Whilst the findings contrast prior studies by (Otto & Jarke and Poniatowski et al., 2022), which found mechanisms such as terms and conditions and account registration requirements as security tools which build trust and price tools as enablers of adoption, ecosystem members suggest that these deterring elements be refined to enhance platform experience thereby enabling adoption. Additionally, the study confirms the importance of effective and well-administered intellectual property ownership policies at a national level within the sector and the impact these could have in the implementation of government-driven initiatives to drive digital technology adoption within the industry, as seen in Jumia's case, which illustrates the role government policy and strategy have in enabling e-business (Badran, 2021).

6.2.2 Opinions on platform features, functionality, design and layout

The study affirms that platform features, functionality, design and layout are crucial for driving performance expectancy and adoption within the ecosystem. The findings emphasise the importance of simplistic platform layout and design, which facilitate ease of use and are believed to contribute to positive user experience, further enhancing platform adoption. Functionalities and features like direct sales capabilities and in-platform communication tools contributed to platform adoption and retention. However, negative experiences resulting from complex usage, atheistically unappealing design and layout and unfriendly registration processes may deter users. The research findings suggest that user-centric platform design and usability are crucial for promoting the adoption and continued use of MSMPs in the visual arts industry for all ecosystem members, given the importance of the atheistic in the sector. These findings align with

prior research, which found that multiple stakeholders must be considered in designing multisided platforms that align with the platform's purpose while ensuring seamless user experiences to promote adoption (Abdelkafi et al., 2019; Ng, 2022). However, a potential gap in the literature was identified in the impact of discontinued services and features previously provided by third parties or platform partners, which would have influenced members to adopt the platform initially. Moreover, the research found that platform owners sometimes appeared to have biases about what features and functionalities were deployed or enabled in specific markets, increasing negative experiences.

6.2.3 Co-creation and collaboration

The research identified co-creation as a key driver of platform sustainability and long-term success, further promoting continued use and retention amongst value chain members. The findings reveal overwhelming support for co-creation among ecosystem members, highlighting its significant role in positively influencing platform adoption and sustained usage. Furthermore, the findings emphasise the importance of leveraging industry knowledge and involving various value chain stakeholders in the co-creation process, which value chain members believe leads to developing relevant and trusted platforms. These research findings support prior literature, which found that collaborating with customers and others is good for co-creating multisided platforms but also promotes business model innovation and business value (Sinclair, 2017; Storbacka et al., 2012). Whilst a recent study by Firdaus et al. (2023) confirms that successful collaboration and trust positively impact the continued use and promotion of the platform, the research findings also underline the importance of appropriately involving broader stakeholder members to mitigate undesired impacts on the ecosystem. Overall, value chain members believed that co-creation could be an effective strategy for enhancing support, widespread adoption, and retention of platform actors within the visual arts ecosystem.

A critical observation from the research findings is how co-creation emerged as a more substantial factor for adoption for value chain members than policy and governance.

In conclusion, the opinions of visual arts ecosystem actors regarding adopting MSMPs are confirmed to be influenced by several factors. Policy and governance play a

significant role in shaping the MSMP ecosystem, impacting user interactions and adoption. However, co-creation is stronger. Platform features and functionality are also crucial for driving performance expectancy and adoption. Moreover, co-creation is a key driver of platform sustainability and long-term success, further promoting continued use and retention. While value chain members concede that platforms are not without their challenges, they essentially believe that platform owners can address these challenges and leverage co-creation in promoting the successful adoption and sustained usage of MSMPs within the visual arts sector.

6.3 Conclusions regarding research question 2: What are the benefits and impact of using MSMPs in the visual art industry, as perceived by its members?

The research findings highlight the importance of social connections and community for value chain members, as seen by the high usage of social network platforms in Chapter 4, section 4.8. MSMPs have the potential to provide an ecosystem where actors can directly engage with audiences, partners and service providers and receive instantaneous communication and feedback. The findings suggest that niche MSMPs could substantially open up global access for ecosystem actors while fostering a sense of community and encouraging collaboration, enhancing the platform ecosystem value through supporting and promoting industry peers. These findings are validated by previous studies which highlight how networking can be strengthened in a community that seeks to promote its members and enhance social connectedness, even though these studies focused specifically on social networks (Chandna & Salimath, 2020; Ellison et al., 2007; Potts et al., 2008). Furthermore, the triangulation of the findings confirmed the importance of social media presence and visibility even within the MSMP ecosystem, as seen in all the confirmed MSMPs, which all have a social media presence.

While the study acknowledges the positive economic benefits derived through MSMPs, it also acknowledges that some actors still prefer the traditional means of interacting with the broader ecosystem in the visual art industry. Additionally, the study found that whilst

MSMPs effectively promote and engage the visual art community, this can only be to the extent of their correct use and exploiting the opportunities they provide.

In conclusion, MSMPs, specifically niche MSMPs, are important for fostering social connections and community for value chain members in the visual art industry. These platforms can open up global access for ecosystem actors while fostering a sense of community and encouraging collaboration. The study also acknowledges that some ecosystem actors still prefer traditional means of interacting with the ecosystem. Using MSMPs correctly can effectively promote and engage the visual art community.

6.4 Limitations of the research

The research limitations discussed in this section refer to the general limitations of the research. For completeness, these should be read with the research design limitations discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.8.

The general limitations are stated below as;

I. The use of semi-structured interviews, coupled with the need to adjust questions to align with the specific roles of the various participants, may have impacted the comparability of the responses.

II. The technical nature of the research topic may have impacted the participant's ability to articulate themselves.

III. As no framework exists to analyse digital platform businesses, the review of the platforms conducted in the research was informed by the definitions adopted in Chapter 1, section 1.7 and Chapter 2, section 2.2, which may not necessarily be a holistic view.

IV. The research focused on the adoption of MSMPs within the visual art domain participants and excluded other South African creative economy subsets, including crafts, fashion, media, video games, and architecture.

V. The visual art chain distribution depicted in Chapter 2, Table 2, may need to be updated as the last published deep dive conducted into the sector was in 2010. The 2023 deep dive research findings have yet to be published, which

could provide further insights into how the value chain has changed, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic.

VI. Whilst the research sample endeavoured to include a representation of the broader visual art value chain ecosystem across South Africa, the participants interviewed in the research were predominantly artists working in Gauteng and the Western Cape.

6.5 Recommendations

MSMPs present an opportunity for the visual art value chain members to redefine their business models and contribute to the extension of the ecosystem. As evidenced by the findings and affirmed by their triangulation, there still needs to be more adoption of MSMPs within the South African visual industry. Moreover, whilst some existing MSMPs cater to niche communities within the broader value chain, the opportunity exists for the ecosystem to be extended and market opportunities for more SMEs within the sector to bypass industry gatekeeping.

This study, therefore, recommends that members of the visual art value chain explore how they can apply the study findings to understand how the adoption of MSMPs can open up opportunities for them and contribute to economic value within the visual art domain.

6.6 Suggestions for further research

Based on the research findings, this topic needs to be investigated further. The following areas are recommended for further research.

I. This research should be expanded to include other subsets of the creative industries in South Africa to better understand how to effectively leverage

digital technologies such as MSMPs to increase jobs, export earnings and digital inclusion as part of the UN ‘SGD 2030 goals.

II. Further research should assess the impact of government policies on the adoption of MSMPs and how these policies support platform businesses whilst protecting the broader platform stakeholders.

III. The conceptual framework proposed in Figure 6 should be reviewed and refined to align with the above findings.

Table 9 Consistency table: research questions, propositions, data collection and data analysis

RQ #	Research Question	Prop #	Proposition	Data collection detail	Data analysis method
1	What are the opinions of visual arts ecosystem actors regarding the factors that promote or hinder their adoption of MSMPs	1	Policy and governance act as facilitating conditions which influence the origination and adoption of MSMPs.	Interview guide questions 5,6,	Inductive thematic analysis
		2	Platform features and functionality determine platform actors' performance expectancy, increase support and widespread adoption, and promote retention.	Interview guide questions 7,8,	Inductive thematic analysis

RQ #	Research Question	Prop #	Proposition	Data collection detail	Data analysis method
		4	The origination of co-created MSMPs informs their adoption and continued use and retention.	Interview guide questions 11,12,	Inductive thematic analysis
2	What are the benefits and impact of using MSMPs in the visual art industry, as perceived by its members?	3	Social networks drive social influence, which influences adoption and retention.	Interview guide questions 9,10,	Inductive thematic analysis
		4	The origination of co-created MSMPs informs their adoption and continued use and retention.	Interview guide questions 11,12,	Inductive thematic analysis
		5	The perceived value creation of adoption within the visual art	Interview guide questions 11,13,14	Inductive thematic analysis

RQ #	Research Question	Prop #	Proposition	Data collection detail	Data analysis method
			ecosystem and its economic impact will be driven by all three factors: policy and governance, features and functionality, and social influence, with policy and governance being the most substantial factors followed by social influence.		

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APPENDIX A Interview participation and consent form

Dear Sir / Madam

My name is Yoyisani Magwebu. I am a Master's student in Management Digital Business at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, under the supervision of Dr Nakuze Chalomba.

From Facebook Marketplace, Shopify, Takealot and many others, South Africa has seen a rise in online marketplaces. Various industries and sectors have adopted these platforms to increase product visibility, reach a more significant customer base, and be unrestricted by geography. These digital hubs connect multiple groups, like customers, service providers, and sometimes even advertisers and help them find what they need and make things happen. The visual art industry is no different and is catching onto the rising trend, which is the focus of my Master's research study titled: ***The Adoption of Multi-Sided Market Platforms (MSMPs) within the South African Creative Economy***.

Thank you for your willingness to contribute to the study by affording me an interview. Your valuable insights and experiences will play a crucial role in advancing our understanding of this topic. Sharing the request with colleagues and peers within the broader visual art ecosystem across South Africa will also ensure that the study is representative of the broader value chain participants, namely,

Visual Arts Industry Entity	**Value Chain Role**
Primary market	Artist, gallerist, online gallery portfolios

Secondary market	Dealers, private collectors, auctioneers
Support Services	Framing suppliers, technical service providers, materials suppliers/manufacturers, photographers, art movers
Reception	Art journalists/critics, social media influencers,

1. Study Purpose

This study aims to explore and gain deep insights into the experiences and perspectives of actors within the visual arts ecosystem regarding the adoption of MSMPs. The study also seeks to understand the economic impact of using online marketplaces in the visual arts industry.

2. Procedure to be used

In a one-on-one interview, open-ended questions will be asked about experiences with adopting MSMPs. The interview will be audio-recorded (with permission) for accurate data collection and analysis. The estimated duration of the interview is approximately 90 minutes.

3. Confidentiality

Participation is voluntary, and all information provided will be treated with strict confidentiality. Identity and responses will be anonymised in the raw data and final report to ensure privacy. Data collected will only be used for the purposes of this research study and will be securely stored on a password-protected computer. Identifiable information will be kept separate from research data to maintain confidentiality.

4. Consent and Withdrawal

Participation in this study acknowledges understanding of information and voluntary agreement to participate. Withdrawal from the study is possible without providing a reason, and there will be no negative consequences.

5. Referrals

Referrals for snowball sampling may be requested with informed consent from referred individuals.

6. Ethical Considerations and Data Protection

This study has received ethical clearance and will adhere to all applicable data protection regulations and guidelines. The collected data will be securely stored for three years and then destroyed to maintain confidentiality and allow for a thorough review of the study.

7. General Demographics Data Collection

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants in this study and to generate emerging insights, general demographic information will be collected. The demographic data collected will include age, gender and professional experience. Your participation in providing this

information is voluntary, and your responses will be confidential. Please note that this data will be analysed in an aggregate form and will not be used to identify individual participants.

8. Contact Information

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research study, feel free to contact me or my supervisor at the details listed below. If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical procedures of this research study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical) by telephone at +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za.

Yours sincerely,

Researcher: Yoyisani Magwebu

Email: 0311598p@students.wits.ac.za

Mobile: 082 899 8008

Supervisor: Nakuze Chalomba

Email: nakuze.chalomba@wits.ac.za

9. Consent

Thank you for considering participating in this research study. Your contribution is highly valued and will greatly contribute to our understanding of the adoption of MSMPs in the visual art ecosystem in South Africa.

Consent Details

Please provide your details to indicate your consent by answering Yes/ No to the below

Name:	
Gender:	Male/Female/Other
Age:	
I confirm that I have read and understood the participant information provided above	Yes/No
I consent to participate in this study	Yes/No

I consent to the recording of the interview	Yes/No
I consent to my responses anonymously being used in the report	Yes/No
I understand that no personal information will be used in the final report	Yes/No
I understand that no personal information will be used in the final report	Yes/No
I understand my participation is voluntary and I can withdraw at any time	Yes/No

By signing below, you confirm that you have read and understood the information provided, and voluntarily agree to participate in the study.

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher Signature: _____

Date: _____

Yours sincerely,

Researcher: Yoyisani Magwebu

Email: 0311598p@students.wits.ac.za

Mobile: 082 899 8008

Research Supervisor: Nakuze Chalomba

Email: nakuze.chalomba@wits.ac.za

APPENDIX B Interview guide

Interview Guide

Participant details	Responses	Notes
Name and Surname		
Age		
Gender		
Consent received	Yes	
Ice Breakers	Notes	Observation
1. Can you tell me a bit about yourself and your role within the visual arts sector?	•	•

2. Have you ever used online platforms or websites to 2? 1showcase, purchase art, or collaborate with other artists/creatives or support services providers like material suppliers or framers? If yes, can you share any experiences you've had with these platforms? If no, why not?	•	•
3. What are your thoughts on the impact of digital technology and online platforms on the visual arts industry in South Africa?	•	
Questions		
4. How do you think the rules and regulations in the art world affect the use of platforms where artists can sell their work or connect with buyers and	•	

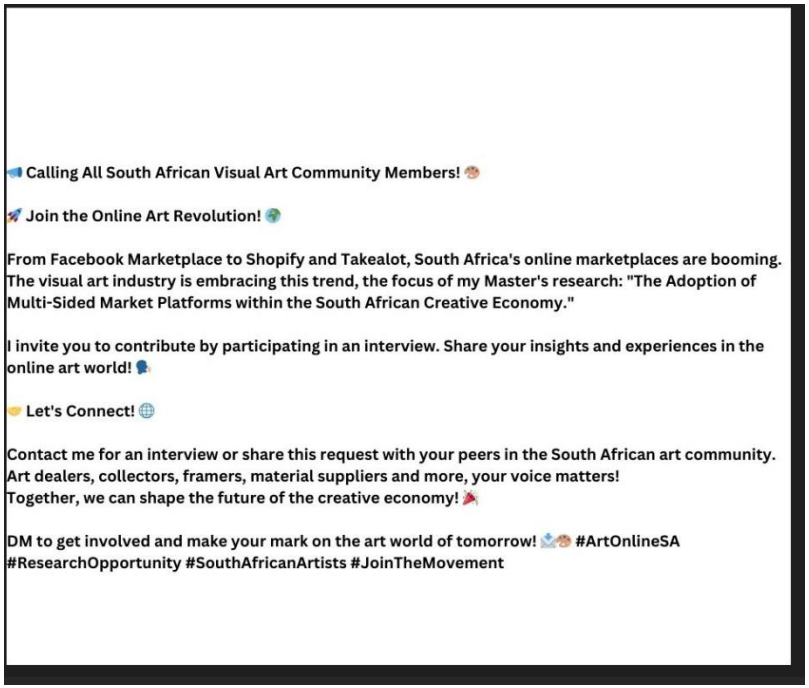
the members of the broader value chain?		
5. Can you give examples of specific policies or guidelines that have impacted the use of these online platforms?	•	
6. In your experience, how have these rules and regulations either helped or hindered you from using these platforms?	•	
7. From your point of view, what are the important features and tools on these platforms that make it easier or harder for members of the visual art community to use them?	•	

8. Could you share any personal experiences where these features influenced your usage of the online platforms? Did this in any way impact your continued use of them?	•	
9. In what ways do the opinions of friends, colleagues, collaborators or followers influence your choice to use these platforms?	•	
10. Have you ever connected with other value chain members through social media platforms like Instagram or Facebook? Can you share any specific situations where this has happened?	•	

11. Have you come across any platforms that were collaboratively created by artists and others in the art world?	•	•
12. Can you tell me a bit about your perspective on involving stakeholders in creating platforms, specifically in the context of the art community? How do you believe this impacts the usability and success of these platforms?	•	
13. Do you think using art platforms is effective in promoting and engaging with your work? And do you think it benefits you as an individual and the art community as a whole?	•	

14. In your experience, have these platforms contributed to more opportunities and economic growth/activity in the art world?	•	

APPENDIX C Social media call to action posters



📣 Calling All South African Visual Art Community Members ! 🎨

🚀 Join the Online Art Revolution! 🌍

South Africa is witnessing a surge in online marketplaces, from Facebook Marketplace to Shopify and Takealot. The visual art industry is not left behind and is a key focus of my Master's research, titled "The Adoption of Multi-Sided Market Platforms within the South African Creative Economy."

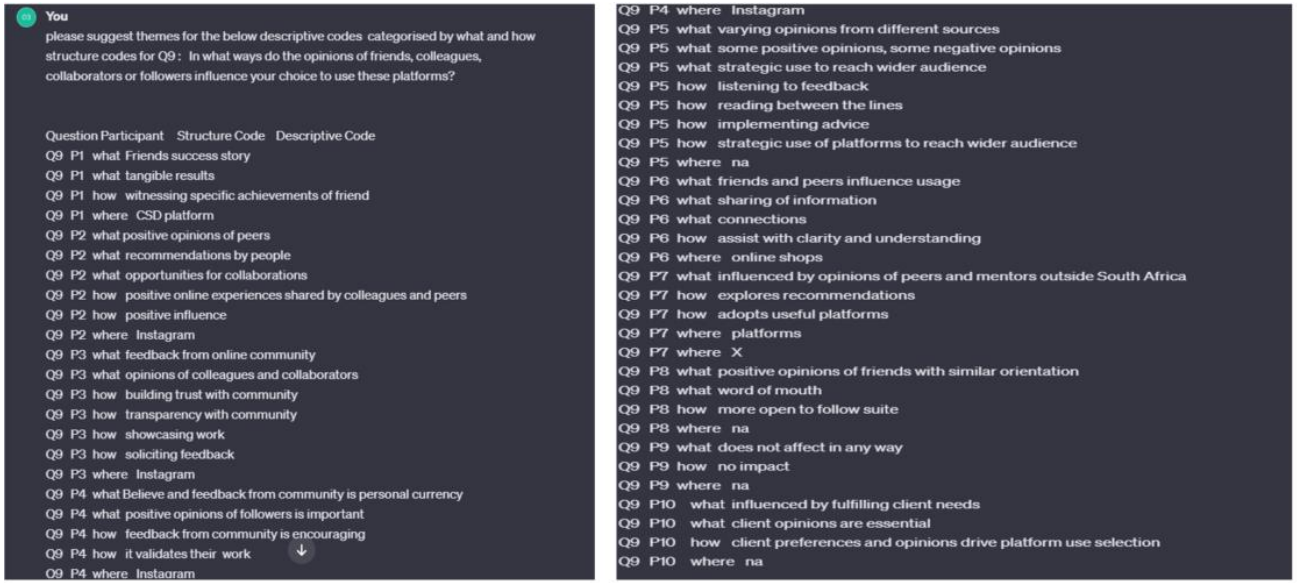
Your insights are invaluable! I invite you to be a part of this exciting research by participating in an interview and sharing your experiences in the online art world. 🗣️

🤝 Let's Connect! 🌐

Reach out to me for an interview or help spread the word within the South African art community. Together, we can shape the future of our creative economy! 🎉

Message me to get involved and leave your mark on the art world of tomorrow! 📩🎨 #ArtOnlineSA #ResearchOpportunity #SouthAfricanArtists #JoinTheMovement

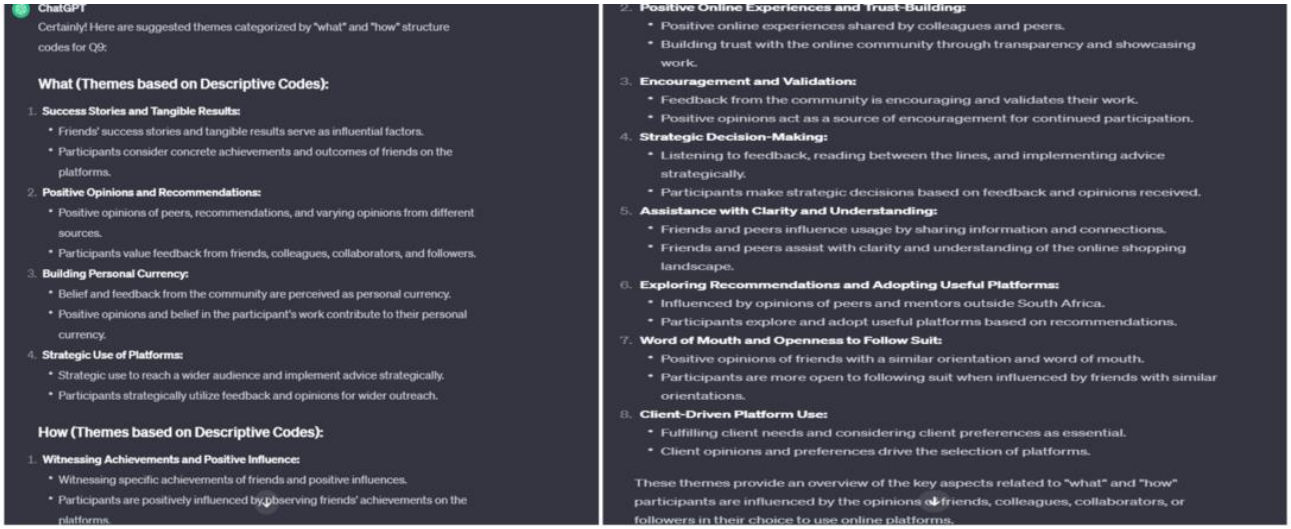
APPENDIX D Chat GPT theme template



You

please suggest themes for the below descriptive codes categorised by what and how structure codes for Q9 : In what ways do the opinions of friends, colleagues, collaborators or followers influence your choice to use these platforms?

Question	Participant	Structure Code	Descriptive Code
Q9	P1	what	Friends success story
Q9	P1	what	tangible results
Q9	P1	how	witnessing specific achievements of friend
Q9	P1	where	CSD platform
Q9	P2	what	positive opinions of peers
Q9	P2	what	recommendations by people
Q9	P2	what	opportunities for collaborations
Q9	P2	how	positive online experiences shared by colleagues and peers
Q9	P2	how	positive influence
Q9	P2	where	Instagram
Q9	P3	what	feedback from online community
Q9	P3	what	opinions of colleagues and collaborators
Q9	P3	how	building trust with community
Q9	P3	how	transparency with community
Q9	P3	how	showcasing work
Q9	P3	how	soliciting feedback
Q9	P3	where	Instagram
Q9	P4	what	Believe and feedback from community is personal currency
Q9	P4	what	positive opinions of followers is important
Q9	P4	how	feedback from community is encouraging
Q9	P4	how	it validates their work
Q9	P4	where	Instagram
Q9	P4	where	Instagram
Q9	P5	what	varying opinions from different sources
Q9	P5	what	some positive opinions, some negative opinions
Q9	P5	what	strategic use to reach wider audience
Q9	P5	how	listening to feedback
Q9	P5	how	reading between the lines
Q9	P5	how	implementing advice
Q9	P5	how	strategic use of platforms to reach wider audience
Q9	P5	where	na
Q9	P6	what	friends and peers influence usage
Q9	P6	what	sharing of information
Q9	P6	what	connections
Q9	P6	how	assist with clarity and understanding
Q9	P6	where	online shops
Q9	P7	what	influenced by opinions of peers and mentors outside South Africa
Q9	P7	how	explores recommendations
Q9	P7	how	adopts useful platforms
Q9	P7	where	platforms
Q9	P7	where	X
Q9	P8	what	positive opinions of friends with similar orientation
Q9	P8	what	word of mouth
Q9	P8	how	more open to follow suite
Q9	P8	where	na
Q9	P9	what	does not affect in any way
Q9	P9	how	no impact
Q9	P9	where	na
Q9	P10	what	influenced by fulfilling client needs
Q9	P10	what	client opinions are essential
Q9	P10	how	client preferences and opinions drive platform use selection
Q9	P10	where	na



ChatGPT

Certainly! Here are suggested themes categorized by "what" and "how" structure codes for Q9:

What (Themes based on Descriptive Codes):

1. **Success Stories and Tangible Results:**
   - Friends' success stories and tangible results serve as influential factors.
   - Participants consider concrete achievements and outcomes of friends on the platforms.
2. **Positive Opinions and Recommendations:**
   - Positive opinions of peers, recommendations, and varying opinions from different sources.
   - Participants value feedback from friends, colleagues, collaborators, and followers.
3. **Building Personal Currency:**
   - Belief and feedback from the community are perceived as personal currency.
   - Positive opinions and belief in the participant's work contribute to their personal currency.
4. **Strategic Use of Platforms:**
   - Strategic use to reach a wider audience and implement advice strategically.
   - Participants strategically utilize feedback and opinions for wider outreach.

How (Themes based on Descriptive Codes):

1. **Witnessing Achievements and Positive Influence:**
   - Witnessing specific achievements of friends and positive influences.
   - Participants are positively influenced by observing friends' achievements on the platforms.
2. **Positive Online Experiences and Trust-Building:**
   - Positive online experiences shared by colleagues and peers.
   - Building trust with the online community through transparency and showcasing work.
3. **Encouragement and Validation:**
   - Feedback from the community is encouraging and validates their work.
   - Positive opinions act as a source of encouragement for continued participation.
4. **Strategic Decision-Making:**
   - Listening to feedback, reading between the lines, and implementing advice strategically.
   - Participants make strategic decisions based on feedback and opinions received.
5. **Assistance with Clarity and Understanding:**
   - Friends and peers influence usage by sharing information and connections.
   - Friends and peers assist with clarity and understanding of the online shopping landscape.
6. **Exploring Recommendations and Adopting Useful Platforms:**
   - Influenced by opinions of peers and mentors outside South Africa.
   - Participants explore and adopt useful platforms based on recommendations.
7. **Word of Mouth and Openness to Follow Suit:**
   - Positive opinions of friends with a similar orientation and word of mouth.
   - Participants are more open to following suit when influenced by friends with similar orientations.
8. **Client-Driven Platform Use:**
   - Fulfilling client needs and considering client preferences as essential.
   - Client opinions and preferences drive the selection of platforms.

These themes provide an overview of the key aspects related to "what" and "how" participants are influenced by the opinions of friends, colleagues, collaborators, or followers in their choice to use online platforms.

APPENDIX E Summarised code book

Preposition	Theme	Descriptive codes
Proposition 1: Policy and governance act as facilitating conditions which influence the origination and adoption of MSMPs.	Compliance Requirements	Credit limits on Bark
		Compliance requirements on government platforms
		The vetting process for Snape and Bar
		Rigid terms and conditions on Instagram
	Conduct usage policies and guidelines.	Communication Policy on platforms, guidelines on content
		Posting rights,
		Reporting inappropriate content
		Group management policies
	Intellectual property ownership	Ownership and retention of copyright
		Fairness of contract clauses

		Disagreement with gallery social media clauses
Proposition 2: Platform features and functionality determine platform actors' performance expectancy, increase support and widespread adoption, and promote retention.	Platform functionality	Direct communication, messaging system, email or contact details for communication
		Diversity in payment methods, payment facilitation, checkout facility for purchases, banking verification
		Stock notifications, sales status, address for delivery, product rating by others
		Zooming function, ability to view different angles and close up of images, search
	Platform layout and design	Layout of platform
		Simplicity in design

		Product presentation on the platform
		Easy platform navigation
Proposition 3: Social networks drive social influence, which influences adoption and retention	Positive influence	Positive opinions of peers, positive opinions of followers, friends and peers influence usage, opinions of colleagues and collaborators
		Recommendations, beliefs and feedback from the community are personal currency strategies used to reach a wider audience.
	Neutral	Varying opinions from different sources, some positive and some negative, do not affect in any way.

	Promoted adoption	Shared by colleagues and peers, building trust with the community,
		Showcasing work, soliciting feedback, validates work.
Proposition 4: The origination of co-created MSMPs informs their adoption, continued use, and retention.	Support co-created MSMP	Great initiative. It would be wonderful and important, and it is something to be pursued.
	Sustainability and long-term success	It must be relevant, keep it bespoke, and stick to what is designed for
		Collaboration with broader stakeholders is important, improving the importance of advisory.
Proposition 5: The perceived value creation of adoption within the visual	Increased effectiveness & promotion on niche platforms	Better promotion on niche platforms, effective for engagement and promotion,

art ecosystem and its economic impact will be driven by all three factors: policy and governance, features and functionality and social influence, with policy and governance being the most substantial factor, followed by social influence	Limited effectiveness & promotion	Limited promotion, limited effectiveness for the broader community, limited personal benefit

Source: Authors own

APPENDIX F Coding process extracts

Q9: In what ways do the opinions of friends, colleagues, collaborators or followers influence your choice to use these platforms?

P1: influence to to use the platforms it's a 50/50 Not really, not really? Not really not. Oh, well, I mean, I mean, if I've got two friends who have been very successful on on this CSD platform one was even much younger than me, he was in his early 20s and bought his Toyota cabs Hilux and I was like How do you it so this CSD is working? So that did influence that's when I registered when I saw that I thought okay, it's working and then another friend, but I mean, it's only two friends out of the many so it's 50/50. I am more concerned about the results of using the platform so which is why the friends success advocates more than their opinion to use it.

P2: I think it's it's rather a positive many people or people of today rather you know, the encourage the online, the online platform so you'll hear that somebody actually met this great collector within this one platform and they certainly done collaborations with these great brands, only through this platform. And they just hit them up because they see they are active they are busy. So there's many great things and I feel like that's where everyone is at the moment finding people or collaborators or work opportunities or be anything to do with this ecosystem. Yeah It's mostly online. And then the traditional gallery is, is for the experiences to see and touch the art actually gives you a different experience. So that's the advantage of

Yoyisani Magwebu
Q9; P1; what; Friends success story; tangible results; how; witnessing specific achievements of friend; where; CSD platform; "I've got two friends who have been very successful on on this CSD platform one was even much younger than me, he was in his early 20s and bought his Toyota cabs Hilux and I was like How do you it so this CSD is working? So that did influence that's when I registered when I saw that I thought okay, it's working."; "I am more concerned about the results of using the platform so which is why the friends success advocates more than their opinion to use it."

Yoyisani Magwebu
Q9; P2; what; positive opinions of peers; recommendations by people; opportunities for collaborations; how; positive online experiences shared by colleagues and peers; positive influence; where; Instagram; ". So it's been positive opinions mostly. So people's opinions of being online and they recommendations of like saying I found this collector online and collaborated with this person online have positively influenced me. Yeah,"

Row Labels	Count of Descriptive Code
⊟ how	19
⊞ Considered adoption	3
⊞ No not adopt	1
⊞ Promoted adoption	15
⊟ what	21
⊞ Indifferent	3
⊟ Positive influence	18
Opportunities	7
Strategic use	11
⊟ where	11
⊞ CSD platform	1
⊞ General platforms	3
⊞ Instagram	4
⊞ Online shops	1
⊞ Social media platforms	1
⊞ X	1
Grand Total	51

Questic	Particip	Structu	Descriptive Code	Theme	Sub-Theme	Phrase Extract 1
Q9	P1	what	Friends success story	Positive influence	Opportunities	"I've got two friends who have been very successful on on this CSD platform one was even much younger than me, he was in his early 20s and bought his Toyota cabs Hilux and I was like How do you it so this CSD is working? So that did influence that's when I registered when I saw that I thought okay, it's working."
Q9	P1	what	tangible results	Positive influence	Opportunities	"I am more concerned about the results of using the platform so which is why the friends success advocates more than their opinion to use it."
Q9	P1	how	witnessing specific achievements of friend	Promoted adoption		
Q9	P1	where	CSD platform	CSD platform		
Q9	P2	what	positive opinions of peers	Positive influence	Opportunities	"So it's been positive opinions mostly. So people's opinions of being online and they recommendations of like saying I found this collector online and collaborated with this person online have positively influenced me. Yeah,"
Q9	P2	what	recommendations by people	Positive influence	Opportunities	
Q9	P2	what	opportunities for collaborations	Positive influence	Opportunities	
Q9	P2	how	positive online experiences shared by colleagues and peers	Promoted adoption		
Q9	P2	how	positive influence	Promoted adoption		
Q9	P2	where	Instagram	Instagram		
			feedback from online			

APPENDIX G Ethical clearance and title approval notification

Graduate School of Business Administration
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Wits Business School Ethics Committee
Constituted under the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical)

Ethics Clearance Certificate

Ethics protocol number: WBS/DB0311598P/502

This certificate is only valid with a legitimate ethics protocol number and signed by the Researcher (below).

Project title	The adoption of multi-sided market platforms within the South African creative economy
Investigator / Researcher	Mrs Yoyisani Magwebu
Nature of Project	MM (Digital Business)
Decision of the Committee	Approved, provided stakeholders and participants are guaranteed confidentialty.
Issue Date of Certificate	2023/10/04
Expiry date	Date of submission of the project / research report
Chairperson	Dr Pius Oba ☎ +27 11 717 3976 +27 82 733 6587 pius.oba@wits.ac.za

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Declaration by Researcher

One copy must be signed by the Researcher and returned to the Chairperson of the Wits Business School Eth Committee.

I fully understand the conditions under which I am authorized to carry out the abovementioned research an guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.

UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG

Private Bag 3 Wits, 2050
Fax:
Tel:

Reference: Ms Jennifer Mgolodela
E-mail: jennifer.mgolodela@wits.ac.za

28 September 2023
Person No: 0311598P
PAG

Mrs YG Magwebu
1 Kiepersol Street
Ferndale Ext 6
2194
South Africa

Dear Mrs Yoyisani Magwebu

Master of Management: Approval of Title

We have pleasure in advising that your proposal entitled *The adoption of multi-sided market platforms within the South African creative economy* has been approved. Please note that any amendments to this title have to be endorsed by the Faculty's higher degrees committee and formally approved.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Marike Bosman
Faculty Registrar
Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management