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Branded Content Integration, Consumer Attitudes and Purchase Intent in South Africa

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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 Strategic Marketing**

Johannesburg, 2016

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to identify the effectiveness of branded content integration as a marketing and communication strategy.

The main objective was to find out whether the branded content integration in soap operas had an effect on consumer attitudes and purchase intent.

A quantitative experiment was designed for the study using customers that watch TV soap operas and those who do not watch soap operas. A total of 150 respondents were used for the experiment. The data was analysed using a Chi Squared test to accept or reject the hypothesis.

The findings of the study revealed that branded content integration has a positive influence when characters of a soap opera use a brand familiar to the viewers. The implications of the results of the study are that marketers are able to use branded content to create a positive change in consumer attitudes and to drive purchase intent.

Using branded content integration as a marketing communication tool in soap operas can have a positive impact on how messaging is displayed.

DECLARATION

I, Kopano Mwali declare that this research report is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management in the field of Strategic Marketing in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

Kopano Mwali

Signed at Ruimsig

On the 30th day of August 2016

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to the Almighty, my strength and my help. Thank you Lord. This is also for my mom, dad and husband. Thank you for always believing in me and pushing me to always do my best.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people who have contributed towards the completion of my study.

To my syndicate members Lesego and Lipalesa, thank you for the constant encouragement and being a helping hand on this journey. I couldn't have done any of this without you. A big thank you to Siphiwe Dhlamini for always being available to help, I truly appreciate it.

To my colleagues Penny, Elvis and Yasheen thank you for your encouragement, ideas and for listening.

To my family and friends, your support has been great. My cousin Phumla, your support was truly amazing. Thank you.

To my supervisor, Dr Yvonne Saini, thank you so much for your support, guidance, knowledge and encouragement on this journey.

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research was, first, to investigate the influence of branded content integration on consumer attitudes on the practice itself. Second was an investigation of consumer purchase intention in using branded content integration (product placement) as a marketing communication tool in targeting consumers while they watch their favourite South African TV soap opera.

Substantial academic research to date has focused on the effects of branded content (Bressoud, Lehu, and Russell 2010; Balasubramanian, Karrh, and Patwardhan 2006; van Reijmersdal, Neijens, and Smit 2009). The research conducted also explored consumer attitudes towards the placement itself in the context of movies, TV sitcoms and reality TV shows (Bressoud, Lehu, and Russell 2010). However, the gap identified in the literature reveals little research conducted in the context of country-specific soap operas.

The results of the research conducted in branded content integration in the context of South African TV soap operas could be used to guide marketers to effectively use this platform as part of an integrated marketing communication tool in order to influence or change attitudes or to effectively drive purchasing intent of a specific brand.

1.2 Context of the study

Product placement is fast becoming a popular marketing communication strategy tool to marketers in order to cut through clutter in the advertising space and to get messages through to the audiences that are being targeted. The study explored the factors that influence consumer attitudes and purchase intent within the context of a South African soap opera. Specific reference will be made to the Standard Bank brand that is currently placed within these soap operas.

Advertising on TV has been one of the biggest media that marketers and media owners utilise for the advertising of goods and services due to the large reach this medium has.

However, many advertisements currently take up this TV space and viewers are getting more irritated than they were before by the number of advertisements aired during their favourite TV shows. With the use of the PVR device TV viewers are now able to skip fast-forward advertisements. In a world of advertising, marketers and media owners find themselves having to look for alternative methods of advertising or media placement to cut through the clutter and ensure that brand messages get to the consumers.

To alleviate this issue, the use of branded content advertising was developed. This is also known as “embedded advertising strategy” or “product placement advertising”, in which brands are placed in or embedded in the TV programme. In product placement a product or a service is placed in a film or TV programme in exchange for payment of money or promotional activities (Gupta and Gould, 1997).

Branded content integration has now become one of the fastest growing trends in marketing strategies across the world and is becoming one of the growing trends in South Africa. Besides using product placement or branded content within a programme to avoid consumers skipping advertisements, it is also used to portray the real use of the product and service using the TV actor or celebrity, which then brings realism in the specific scene or TV programme (Morton and Friedman, 2002). One of the other advantages of using branded content integration in a film or movie setting is for high viewer engagement (Van der Walt, Nunes and Stroebel, 2008). Viewers also tend to make an association of the brand with the TV programme, characters and story line involved with the product or service.

The different types of branded content integration that can be seen in South African soap operas are active and passive brand integration by one of South Africa's banks Standard Bank. In addition, branded content integration is made of Apple, Jack Daniels, Jonny Walker and a life assurance company Assupol Life. Active brand placement refers to the integration of the product or service within the storyline of a soap opera with the character actively talking about a specific product or service or using the product or service. Passive brand placement refers to the placement of products such as ATMs, the Jack Daniels bottle in the background, and branding within the story normally in the background.

Genre of soap operas

TV soap operas in South Africa are very popular and this genre is right at the top of the popularity list as compared to other TV programmes like TV dramas, sports, movies, news and reality shows. A soap opera is a drama that runs for a long period of time with a long story arch that imitates real-life situations and families. Soap operas are known for the suspense created over the long story arch that keeps viewers 'glued' to their screens. They are often used to discuss real life issues or sensitive issues in society and educate viewers with their story lines (Hargrave and Gatfield, 2002). In 2012 South African consumers had a viewership of over 54% of this genre alone as identified by SAARF (2012). The media ratings for the soap opera genre are very high, with an estimated reach of almost 2 million viewers per day that watch the prime time of TV stations - SABC 1, 2, 3, ETV and DSTV (SAARF, 2012).

Most of the viewers of this genre associate with the characters in terms of how they live, the "realistic" situations the characters go through that are similar to those of their own personal lives.

Psyche of the soap opera viewer

Soap operas in South Africa are consumed mainly on weekdays during prime time (6pm -9pm) with a repeat of the soap opera in the weekend between 9am-11am. Viewership usually takes place during family time or dinner time. Viewers usually use this time as a form of relaxation and messages portrayed in soap operas are taken very seriously by the viewer as a result of the powerful nature of the genre (Hargrave and Gatfield, 2002).

According to Lu and Argyle (1993) popular reasons why soap operas are watched by consumers are for entertainment, realism, characters' extension of the real world, social issues, education, and lastly as part of their daily lives.

Soap opera stars (main characters) often have such a high level of credibility that viewers often cannot disassociate the actors from the fictional characters. Some viewers also see these fictional characters as real people that viewers need to console or give hope to.

1.3 Problem statement

Main problem

To identify whether the use of branded content integration as a form of product advertising in South African TV soap operas has an influence on consumer attitudes towards the product or brand and an influence on consumer purchasing intent. Research previously conducted by Russell (2002) reveals that future research should be conducted on the effectiveness of product placements using existing TV shows. Further to this, Russell (2002) suggests that future research should be devoted to variables such as purchase intent and actual purchasing influenced by branded content integration.

La Ferle and Edwards (2006) suggest that future research needs to be conducted to better understand the use and the effectiveness of product placement by the advertiser, as most of the research conducted to date has focused on brand placement in a movie setting. In this case research conducted in the soap opera type of programme will be relevant as a topic of investigation in this study.

Sub-problems

The first sub-problem is to determine the impact of branded content integration on consumer attitudes towards brand placement integration within a soap opera. The second sub-problem is to determine whether the popularity of the soap opera has an impact on consumer attitudes towards the product placed within the TV soap opera.

The third sub-problem is to determine the impact of branded content integration in consumer purchase intent.

1.4 Significance of the study

The study seeks to provide guidance to the impact of branded content integration within popular South African soap operas. The study also aims to gather consumer attitudes (positive or negative) on products and services advertised in this manner and to determine the impact of purchase intent. Research that has been conducted to date reveals branded content integration (product placement) is effective in the context of movies unless if it is associated with materials like tobacco, alcohol (Gupta and Gould, 1997). Studies by Barbin and Carter (1996) and Lehu and Bressoud (2008) have also documented factors that influence the effectiveness of branded content in terms of brand recall and recognition, consumer attitudes and perceptions as well as purchase intent resulting from branded content integration in movies and sitcoms. These studies have shown the effectiveness of branded content in these movies and sitcoms and how storyline plays an important factor in how the brand is portrayed.

This research will be significant in providing guidance to the effectiveness of branded content within South African soap operas as an integrated marketing communication tool.

1.5 Delimitations of the study

The following delimitations of the study have been applied:

- The study focused only on South African TV soap operas The study is limited to TV soap opera as a TV genre
- The study is limited to branded content integration (product placement advertising) strategy within the marketing discipline.

1.6 Definition of terms

Lehu and Bressoud (2008) define **Branded content integration** as a marketing tool where a product or service is placed into a movie scene or TV programme or its brand name is heard.

Active brand placement is when an actor touches, uses or says something about a product (Morris, 2011).

Passive brand placement is when a product is shown in the scene for a number of seconds (Morris, 2011).

Soap operas drama, typically performed as a serial on daytime TV or radio, characterised by stock characters and situations, sentimentality, and melodrama (American Heritage Dictionary. GIVE THE YEAR).

Consumer attitudes refer to the “reflection of a person’s feelings, approaches to situations, consumer views about different topics or situation and assessments regarding something” (Parumasur and Roberts-Lombard, 2014).

Purchase intent refers to “the consideration made by the consumer to purchase a brand or anticipating purchasing a brand” (Porter, 1974).

1.7 Assumptions

The following assumptions have been applied to the study:

- A respondent who associates brands with their favourite character in the TV soap opera might have more positive responses in brand placement and purchase intent than those who do not have favourite characters.
- Respondents might favour their preferred soap opera over the issue of product placement
- Some respondents might find active brand placement intrusive to their preferred soap opera
- Some respondents might find positivity in active and passive branded content in their preferred soap opera

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2. Introduction

This chapter will introduce key concepts related to the search through the literature related to product placement (branded content), consumer attitudes and purchase intentions and South African TV soap operas.

2.1 Definition of topic or background discussion

Branded content integration (product placement) is defined by Lehu and Bressoud (2008) as a promotional tool where a product or service is integrated within a movie scene or TV programme or its brand name is heard through the characters of the programme

Active product placement is when an actor touches, uses or says something about a product (Morris, 2011). **Passive product placement** is when a product is shown in the scene for a number of seconds (Morris, 2011). These are all forms of product placement but speak to how the product or service is placed.

Branded content integration is increasingly becoming very popular in terms of placing products on TV shows, soap operas, the Internet. Radio is now one of the elements that are considered as an entire marketing strategy. According to Van der Waldt (2005), branded content in films and TV programmes has become a communication vehicle within integrated marketing communication.

Furthermore, branded content integration is used as an integrated marketing communication tool used in building brand awareness in terms of brand recognition and brand recall. Recognition and recall can lead to purchase intent.

To provide a theoretical context of the study on product placement and branded content, a review of the Hieder's and Genre theories will be reviewed. The balance theory provides an understanding of relationship between attitudes and action or behaviour.

2.2 Theoretical background

2.2.1 *Heider's balance theory*

According to Heider's balance theory in social psychology (1946, 1958), "the balance theory is used to explain an individual's desire to maintain consistency among a chord of linked attitudes." The foundation of the balance theory lies in the belief that when an individual has perceptions about a set of elements that are linked together, the individual that perceives attempts to balance his or her attitude toward another person with an object that is associated with that of another person (Osgood and Tannenbaum, 1955). In this situation consistency is achieved through the alignment of attitudes towards an object between an individual and another person.

When adapting the theory to branded content integration the individual (being the person watching the programme) is associated with the consumer, the other person is associated with the fictional character of the soap opera and the object will be associated with the product.

The adaptation is triggered through consumers being more prone to achieve a balance by aligning their attitudes and feelings with the fictional character's attitudes towards a product. The alignment of the attitudes to those of the character in the soap opera is enabled by the relationship the consumer has with the character and the attitude is affected by the character-product relationship.

Research conducted by Davis and Rusbult (2001) suggests that the alignment attitude of the individual (consumer) with another person (fictitious character) is very strong if the attitude towards the object (product placed in the TV soap opera) is aligned to that of the fictitious character.

In branded content integration, the consumers' attitude towards the products placed within the soap opera will be formed by the attitude the character has toward the product and the relationship the consumer has with the character.

2.2.2 Genre theory

According to Chandler (1997), the genre theory relates to the classification of the different kinds of text. Mittel (2011) suggests that theorists that study contemporary genre have several ways in which to classify various texts such as TV programmes, literary works and film. Sherman (2001) states that although one could argue with this classification, it is useful in analysing the viewer's interpretations of the elements in a programme, the expectations from the audience and the contribution the programme makes to culture.

An analysis from Avery and Ferro (2002) and another from La Ferle and Edwards (2006) were conducted to determine the difference between genres. The analysis categorised branded content integration by the type of TV programmes in which brands were integrated (i.e. News, sitcoms, game shows) and defined the differences in brand integration by genre (Sherman, 2010). The results presented the differences of the nature of branded integrations across the different genres. Stern and Russell (2004) also used the genre theory and established that brands that had been placed prominently within a sitcom setting aided in formulating personas and provided meaning for the brand and context in usage of the brand.

Stern and Russell (2004) explain that the serialisation of sitcoms, similar to that of soap operas, directs the viewer to potentially have relationships with the characters in the soap operas. The relationship established by the viewer is long because soap operas run for long periods of time. When brands are placed within such sessions the viewer establishes further relationships with the character and the brand.

2.3 Effectiveness of branded content integration

2.3.1 *Branded content integration as an effective marketing strategy*

According to Van der Waladt (2008) brand placement should be used as one of the elements in integrated marketing communications (IMC). It cannot be used on its own; it needs to be used as a supporting technique with the rest of other elements such as radio, print, and TV advertisements. If used on its own it will have limited impact. This is evident because if consumers do not watch that specific programme in which the product or brand has been placed then there will be little to no exposure to the product that has been placed.

Branded content integration as a marketing strategy has one main difference compared to the other strategies in terms of the way the product or brand is displayed and the environment in which the product is used (Dudovskiy, 2002). In branded content integration, a product is placed in a movie or TV programme in exchange for payment or promotional activities (Gupta and Gould, 1997).

South African brands such as Standard Bank, White Star and Assupol Life currently make use of this marketing tool by placing their products and services on three South African soap operas, mainly Isibaya, Isidingo and Muvhango. This tool is used to drive brand recognition, brand recall and brand usage.

2.3.2 *Purposes of branded content integration*

Branded content integration can be a cost-effective marketing strategy tool for reaching targeted consumers at the time at which they watch their favourite TV programme. Product placement messages are more likely to be recalled than traditional advertising messages are (Russel and Stern, 2008).

According to Chang, Nelwell and Salmon (2009) the following are the purposes of product placement.

1. *Branded content integration to achieve prominent audience exposure, visibility, attention and interest.*

Brands are able to get more exposure due to the audience reach of the TV programme or film. The more successful the TV programme or film is, the more the brand that has been placement in the programme will get exposure and recall. (Panda, 2004) also notes that product placement strategy can have a significant effect in the message being received by target audiences.

2. *Branded content integration to increase or build brand awareness.*

(Williams, Petrosky, Hernandez and Page, 2012) found that when brand awareness is high, consumers tend to have a positive recall rate on the product or brand that has been integrated into the script. Branded content integration on its own can generate a positive recall rate and positive attitude formation. The authors also note that when brand awareness is low, consumers are not likely to remember product or brands that are being integrated. This is evident in (Van der Waltdt, 2005) theory that branded content integration cannot work on its own as a marketing strategy, it needs to be supported by other marketing activities.

3. *Branded content integration to increase or build brand recall of a product or brand*

(Williams, Petrosky, Hernandez and Page, 2012) noted that brands that are integrated into the TV programme or film prominently have a higher recall than those that are not. This is evident in Standard bank's integration into the popular TV soap operas. The brand currently enjoys high brand recall as a result of product placement (TNS, 2014).

4. *Branded content integration to increase instant recognition of the product or brand in the media vehicle and at point of purchase.*

According to (Panda, 2004) branded content integration can have a positive impact on product or brand recognition. (Brennan and Babin, 2004) also state that brands that are very popular amongst consumers have higher levels of recognition than those that are not popular or familiar. What's more is that branded content integration from popular brands by audio-visual have higher recall rates than those that are placed visually only.

Research conducted by Cebzynski (2006) reveals that over 57.7% of viewers recalled brands that were integrated with a TV show compared to 46.6% that only recalled a brand based on a normal TV advertisement. Gupta and Lord (1998) argue that brand recognition derived from branded content integration depends on the complexity of the integration in the storyline. When story lines are weak and integration or brand placement is subtle, it may be difficult for the viewer to recognise the placement (Russel, 2002).

5. *Branded content integration to bring desired change in consumer's attitudes toward the brand.*

The research of Williams, Petrosky, Hernandez and Page (2012) suggests that no differences have been found in consumer attitudes towards branded content integration on TV shows and film. In addition, research conducted suggests that consumer attitudes to the product or brand are aligned to the attitudes of the actor or character that is associated with the brand or product.

According to Reijmersdal, Neijens and Smit (2007), the more consumers watch the TV shows with products integrated into the show, the more the image of the brand that has been integrated aligns with that of the programme. For example, when Standard Bank places a product or service within Isidingo (a South African TV soap opera) the more Standard Bank's brand image could align with that of Isidingo or the specific character of the soap opera. Brand integration is also more noticed in programmes with high levels of engagement like TV soap operas and films because consumers are likely to give their full attention when following their characters.

6. *Branded content integration to bring a change in or influence audience Purchase behaviour*

Brands that appear in TV programmes like sitcoms and dramas lead to higher purchase intent because of the product that has been integrated into the show (Russell, Stern and Panda, 2004). This higher purchase intent result from the high engagement associated with the shows and the association of the products or brands with that of the characters. For example, if a customer's favourite character is shown using a certain brand and customers associate themselves with that certain character, customers are more likely to purchase the brand.

7. *Branded content integration to create favourable marketing views of brand placement*

Marketers and media owners are able to have positive attitudes on brand integration within TV programmes and other mediums provided that brand placement still has a positive effect in terms of brand image and sales (Williams, Petrosky, Hernandez and Page, 2012).

8. *Branded content integration to promote consumer attitudes towards the practice of product placement.*

Branded content integration into storylines has positive attitudes on all media types and consumers enjoy the realism of product integration into the scenes (Snood, 2006). Pokrywczynski (2005) noted that consumers preferred to see real brands in TV shows and films than fake brands or no name brands. Williams, Petrosky, Hernandez and Page (2012) suggest that generally consumers don't find product placement unethical or misleading. Consumers enjoy the realism that comes with product integration.

2.3.3 Benefits of branded content integration

Branded content integration has several benefits for the brand. The first benefit is product or brand recall because of actor endorsements as well as popular TV programmes becoming associated with the product or service. The second benefit is that the brand is remembered by the viewer of the TV programme when the product or service is displayed for longer periods of time during the product integration (Vollmera and Mizerski, 1994). This benefit proves that even when the product is integrated, if the integration is for a short period of time, the likelihood of the brand being recognised is less.

The third benefit is continuity of advertisements of the product or service through continuous advertisement in traditional media. The fourth benefit is that the association made with the TV show character can be perceived as the character of the TV show endorsing the product, which can lead a positive impact on the consumer. According to Yan et al (2004), the fifth benefit results in branded content integration being positive strategy in terms of targeting a specific audience and tending to live longer than traditional advertising. Yang et al. (2004) reveal that brands that are integrated generally receive positive attitudes from consumers and receive less criticism than traditional advertising does.

2.3.4 Disadvantages of branded content integration

Disadvantages of product placements include the context in which the product has been placed in the TV programme or film. If the product is placed incorrectly then this might have an effect on how brand is perceived. For example, if a brand is used by characters that are involved in criminal activities those actors might be associated with the brand, which will have a negative effect. Williams, Petrosky, Hernandez and Page (2012) confirm that if a product is associated with such a character then the brand may also be tarnished. Another issue could be that customers view the particular programme in which the product has been placed as an infomercial. Lastly, if the characters do not mention the product or service properly or adlibs in the scene then that might create a negative conversation or it might create a wrong impression of the brand. The product is misrepresented in the scene or storyline.

2.4 Consumer attitudes

Consumer attitudes are formed in different ways and are formed through different situations. The discussion below will highlight how consumer attitudes are formed and how consumer attitudes have an impact on the media. According to Parumasur and Roberts-Lombard (2014), consumer attitudes are defined as a reflection of a person's feelings, approaches to situations, consumer views about different topics or situations and assessments regarding something.

According to Eagly and Chaiken (1993), "attitudes are pre-dispositions towards action made up of emotional reactions (affective), thoughts and beliefs (cognitive), and actions (behavioural) components about or towards people, objects and ideas. The strength of attitude increases with accessibility and knowledge about the topic in question. Attitudes are often learned from other people and are often a defining characteristic of groups."

Parumasur and Roberts-Lombard (2014) note that understanding of consumer attitudes by marketers will enable marketers to predict whether customers will accept a product or not and what customers would like to have in a product.

2.4.1 Nature of consumer attitudes

Parumasur and Roberts-Lombard (2014) explain that the most important aspects of attitudes according to the consumer attitudes mentioned in 2.4 are the following:

- Attitudes are learnt: customers form attitudes that coincide with buying behaviour as a result of an experience with the product or brand that they have experienced directly and information that the customer has acquired through advertising in all forms.
- Attitudes tend to be consistent: attitudes tend to be dependable with consumers behaviour.

2.4.2 How attitudes are formed

Parumasur and Roberts-Lombard (2014) explain that people learn attitudes and are not born with attitudes towards things. Below is a summary of how attitudes are formed:

Parumasur and Roberts-Lombard (2014) state that classical conditioning is when a positive attitude is formed by a person as a result of a previously known brand or a brand that has always been used in one's family. This is a form of attitude learning. Instrumental conditioning refers to the formation of an attitude towards a product or service after the buying to after the consumer has consumed the product. What do they feel? Do they think about the product after they have tried it for the first time? Cognitive learning theory refers to the formation of the attitudes by customers after they acquire more and more information about a product (Parumasur and Roberts-Lombard, 2014). This attitude can either be positive or negative. The other aspect of attitude is experience. This is consumers forming an attitude whether negative or positive after their direct experience with the product or service. An external authority refers to the formation of attitudes based on influences from peers such as family and friends who are trusted with their opinions on brands (Parumasur and Roberts-Lombard, 2014). Lastly, attitude formation is based on marketing communications. Attitudes are formed from a marketing communications perspective when a brand has something unique to offer than its competitors have and the message portrayed in the communication is stronger.

2.4.3 Attitudes towards branded content integration

Owing to the number of advertisements on TV programmes, it is very easy for consumers to avoid advertisements through skipping of advertisements with the PVR device. Marketers have now opted to use branded content integration within TV programmes in order to cut through the clutter and to create a positive association with the brand, which will, in turn, lead to positive attitudes towards the brand (Cowley and Barron, 2008).

To date research conducted on branded content integration has focused on general attitudes towards branded content integration, attitudes towards branded content in movies, video games and sitcoms. Insufficient research has been conducted within the soap opera environment.

Research conducted by Babin and Thompson (1996), Karrh, Firth and Callison (2001), Gupta and Lord 1998) on branded content integration reveals that brand placement has an influence on brand or product recognition, consumer attitude, as well as purchase intention.

In this study, attitudes towards branded content integration in general, as well as attitudes towards the brand placement, were investigated. According to Mackenzie et al (1986), "attitude towards an advertisement is a pre-disposition to respond in a favourable or unfavourable manner to an advertising stimulus during a particular situation". It is proposed that in this study consumers' general attitudes towards branded content integration is discovered.

There is extensive research conducted on consumer attitudes towards advertising in general but there is limited literature on branded content integration. Studies that have been conducted show a positive attitude toward branded content integration in general. However, limited research has been conducted on consumer attitude towards the brand placement and purchase intent within a soap opera. The first studies measured the consumer attitudes towards the practice of branded content integration in general and revealed that consumers generally have positive attitudes towards placement in movies (Nebenzahl and Secunda, 1993). Previous research conducted has revealed that consumers have the ability to connect to the "film world" by putting their aspirations onto products and services that are integrated in the film (Delorme and Reid, 1999) which can influence consumer attitudes and the manner in which consumers will consume the product or service. In other research it was found that branded content integrated in TV programmes such as sitcoms enhanced awareness of the product as well as consumer attitudes and purchase intent (Russell, 2002).

The findings in research conducted by (Gupta and Gould, 1997) found that consumers generally have positive attitudes towards the practice of branded content integration in movies except where the product is integrated in an unethical manner (e.g. usage in crime scenes or scenes with alcohol). In this case using an unfavourable character would do an injustice to the brand or could tarnish the brand's reputation.

The characters' attitude towards the brand that is integrated is also highly important, as this can have a direct impact on consumer attitudes. The findings by D'Astous and Chatier (2000) are that a brand integrated with a character present in the scene will be liked better and better remembered than when there is no character present in the scene.

Hypothesis 1:

H₁₀: Branded content integration has a positive effect on consumer attitudes in soap operas.

H_{1A}: Branded content integration has no effect on consumer attitudes in soap operas

2.5 Purchase intention

According to Keller (2001), the consumer's intention to purchase is related to the consumer's perception, behaviour as well as the consumer attitude. Purchase behaviour is one of the key elements that the consumer will go through when considering and evaluating a product. Porter (1974) explains the intent to purchase as a kind of decision that is studied to explain why consumers purchase brands in particular.

Gosh (1990) explains that purchase intention can be used as a tool in predicting the purchasing process by the consumer. Concepts like the consideration of purchasing a brand or anticipating to purchase a brand assist in making space for the intention to purchase the brand (Porter, 1974). Zeithaml (1998) and Porter (1994) reveal that a

Consumer's purchase intention can be influenced by price and perception of the quality and value of the product. Porter (1974) explains that the level of competition in the industry behind the brand can have an influence on consumer purchasing behaviour.

Bachler (2004) explains that the loyalty of a consumer towards a brand can contribute towards the purchasing decision. In this case price does not play a role but rather the loyalty the consumer has to the brand. Some consumers purchase a brand because it was a brand that they grew up using and not necessarily because it was seen on an advertisement. Interruptions by the internal and external environment of the consumer will occur during the purchasing process.

A study conducted by Lafferty, Goldsmith and Newell (2002) found that an endorser of a brand similar to that of the characters found in the soap operas has an influence on the consumer purchase intent. The endorser's or character's attitude towards the brand has an influence on the attitude and perception formulated by the consumer regarding the brand. Other findings are that using a principal character can have an impact on consumer purchase intent (D'Astous and Chatier, 2000). A principal character is the main character of the soap opera. The role of the principle character would be to use or actively mention a given brand within the context of the character's daily life.

Hypothesis 2:

H₂₀: Consumer attitudes has a positive effect on purchase intent in soap operas

H_{2A}: Consumer attitudes has no effect on purchase intent in soap operas

Conclusion of literature review

Branded content integration is fast becoming a very popular integrated marketing communication tool in South Africa. This brand placement has been widely used in other markets; however, it has been used in the context of films, in game advertising and in reality TV shows. Research conducted reveals that brand content integration within the context of TV soap operas has been used in soap operas in the Australian and Brazilian markets and has been received positively by consumers.

According to Van der Waldt (2007), products that were placed prominently in films were better recognised by consumers than those that were placed in the background. Van der Waldt (2007) states that branded content integration in films and TV shows provides realism to the consumers watching the shows. Passive and active brand placement also plays a role in how the message will reach the consumer, according to the way it has been placed in the film or the TV show.

According to Rose (2014), the main factor fuelling the rise of branded content integration advertising is that traditional TV commercial breaks are not as popular amongst consumers as they used to be. Consumers have a lot of choice. Because of the quality of TV with the rise of the DSTV PVR and Explora devices, consumers are able to watch uninterrupted TV by fast-forwarding or skipping commercial breaks.

Marketers now have an alternative method of placing brands or products in order to drive brand awareness, recognition and product usage in the setting of a soap opera (Williams, Petrosky, Hernandez and Page, 2012). This placement in the soap operas enables a company's brand or product to be showcased in an "interrupted space" by integrating the brand in the storyline of the soap opera (Russell, 2002). The brand will either appear in the background of the scene within of the soap opera or the brand will be used by the main character of the soap opera within the context of the usage of the brand. Russell (2002) has noted that the attitude of the character towards the brand placed within a TV programme will have an influence on consumer attitudes towards the brand placed in the programme. Positive attitudes that are created towards the brand can lead to a purchasing decision.

Conceptual model

In light of the literature discussed above the hypotheses are stated as follows:

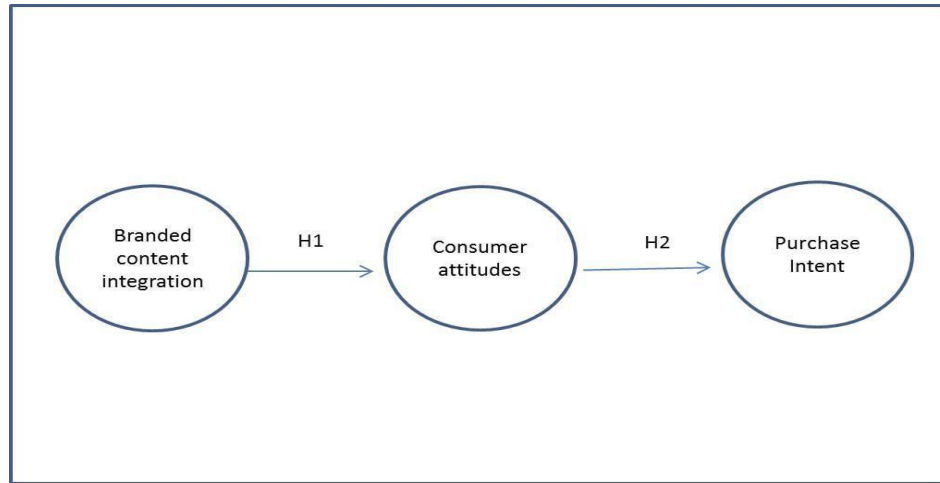


Figure 1: Hypothesised model

Hypothesis 1

H₁₀: Branded content integration has a positive effect on consumer attitudes in soap operas.

H_{1A}: Branded content integration has no effect on consumer attitudes in soap operas

Hypothesis 2

H₂₀: Consumer attitudes has a positive effect on purchase intent in soap operas

H_{2A}: Consumer attitudes has no effect on purchase intent in soap operas

CHAPTER 3. Research Methodology

This chapter identifies and describes the methodology, defined by Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis (2012) as "The theory of how research should be undertaken, including the theoretical and philosophical assumptions upon which research is based and the implications of these for the method or methods adopted" (p. 595) that we employ in this research. Broadly, it has three objectives: to identify and describe the research strategy (Section 3.1); to describe the research design (Section 3.2); as well as set out the procedure and methods (Section 3.3). The chapter also describes reliability and validity measures (Section 3.4) that this research applied to make it credible, as well as the technical and administrative limitations of the research procedure and methods (Section 3.5).

3.1 Research strategy

According to Saunders (2012), research strategy is the overall plan of how a researcher pursues answering the research questions. Bryman (2012) describes "research strategy" as a general direction for the conducting research and Robson (2011) states that research strategy is a general approach for carrying out research. There are three forms of research strategy - qualitative research, quantitative research, and mixed methods research

Research designs are differentiated as follows:

3.1.1 Qualitative Research

Creswell (2014) describes qualitative research as a method used for discovering and understanding problems internally. The data collected from this method is usually collected through participants that take part in the research. Thereafter, the researcher makes interpretations based on the data collected. Robson (2011) describes qualitative research as "a style of research of research using qualitative data collection and flexible designs." (p. 530)

3.1.2 Quantitative

This method is used to examine theories by testing the relationship between variables that can be measured through an instrument or using statistical methods (Creswell, 2014). Saunders (2012) describes quantitative research as predominantly used as a synonym for any data-collection technique such as questionnaires or data analysis procedure such as graphs that generate or use numerical data" (p. 151).

3.1.3 Mixed Methods

Creswell (2014) describes this method of research as the combination of both quantitative research and qualitative research methods in order to strengthen the research. Saunders (2012) defines "a mixed methods approach using quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques and an analysis procedure either at the same time or one after another but does not combine them"(p. 152).

Research is also influenced by philosophical worldviews that are used to give direction to the method of research to be used. This influence or worldview is also known as a paradigm (Creswell, 2014).

The positivist paradigm was applied to the study. A paradigm is defined as the basic belief system or worldview that guides an investigation (Lincoln, Lynham and Guba 2011, p.105). A positivist approach for this study explores the knowledge that is discovered through the study and the verification process that takes place through measurements or observations of the phenomenon. Krauss (2005) describes the positivist paradigm as a position that holds the aim of the knowledge and that describes the phenomena that we experience.

A quantitative research methodology approach was used for this study. This method is used to examine theories by testing the relationship between variables that can be measured through an instrument or using statistical methods (Creswell, 2014). The quantitative method was useful in terms of the data collection and flexible designs required for the study.

3.2 Research design

According to Bryman (2012), a research design is “a form of blueprint that is followed in the conducting of the research”, Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2012) describe research design as “the general plan of how you will go about answering the research questions” (p. 136) and Creswell (2014) describes research design as “types of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches that provide specific directions for procedures in a research”. Bryman (2012) describes five generic research designs: cross-sectional, longitudinal, case study, comparative, and experimental. Fundamental is that a research design is a way that a researcher collects data.

The research design that was used for this study was an experimental design. An experimental research design is a "research strategy that involves the definition of a theoretical hypothesis; the selection of samples of individuals from known populations; the allocation of samples to different experimental conditions; the introduction of planned change in one or more of the variables; and measurement on a small number of variables and control of other variables" (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012; p. 591). These quasi experimental designs are designed to test for causal relationships in situations where the classical design is difficult and inappropriate. We call these designs “quasi” because they are variations of the classical experiment design. Some use more than two groups, and others substitute many observations of one group over time for a control group. In general, the researcher has less control over the independent variable than in the classical design”. (Neuman 201, p. 287-288). According to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2012) an experiment is a form of research that is used to study causal links between an independent variable and a dependent variable.

For example, Lehu & Bressoud (2008) study explored new insights that concern the reactions of viewers in terms of brand placement during the viewing of a movie for the second time at home. The technique applied to the study was an experimental research design. In the study the data collection method involved getting respondents to first watch the DVD of their choice according to the DVDs made available by the researcher. A sample of 3 532 viewers was used.

The researchers made use of systematically submitted questionnaires as a research instrument that everyone watching the rented DVD would fill in. The use of the questionnaire to collect data was an advantage in collecting data due to the numerical data that can be obtained from a large sample and the testing to the hypothesis before data was collected. These positives can benefit the study because of the nature of product placement. Questions can be answered thoroughly if respondents have been exposed to a video or showcase before attempting to answer the questionnaire, which catches the respondent whilst in the right frame of mind because of the nature of product placement advertising and the research findings can be generalised based on a large sample.

In Van der Walt's (2008) study, the aim was to determine the effect of consumer brand recall if a product is placed prominently in a film. The study also aimed to explore the affective behaviour in terms of purchase intent when a principal actor uses the brand influenced. The technique applied to this study was an experimental research design. A questionnaire was utilised with a sample of 200 students. Stimulus material of an edited film clip was used for respondents to watch before attempting to answer the questionnaire. The questionnaire included a multiple-response scale of aided recall on products subtly placed in the film and an open-ended questionnaire (unaided) where respondents could fill in all brands noticed in the film. Aided and unaided questions were given separately so that one could not influence the other. The advantages to the technique used were the use of stimulus material via the edited clip from the film could enhance respondents' feedback. The use of both aided and unaided questions in the questionnaire enhanced the feedback received from respondents. Statistics can be used to generalise a finding. In this study the stimulus material was edited to ensure that the clip focused only on products the researcher would like respondents to see and be aware of.

Lastly, Russell (2002), explored whether product placement had an effect on consumer attitudes towards the brands being placed in a TV programme and if some product placements were more persuasive than others. The experiment design included a videotaped screenplay format like that used in sitcoms.

The rationale for using this format was to create a unique setting to establish and showcase the product placement using a student character in the “sitcom”. The experiment allowed for control to test a variety of messages. Upon viewing the theatre clips as part of the 20min experiment in the laboratory, the respondents also had two surveys to complete. The advantages of this technique are that the researcher was able to tailor the stimuli content to the audience of the experiment. The researcher was able to make observations throughout the experiment by tailoring the setting of the experience to stimulate the respondent’s state of mind (taking them outside of the normal surroundings). These positives benefitted the study because stimuli can enhance feedback required from respondents. An experiment allows for the observation of consumers’ reactions on product placement. Creating a theoretical setting could enhance the quality of feedback required for the study.

3.2.1 *The experimental approach*

An experimental approach was used for this study. An experimental approach is beneficial as it consists of a carefully worked out plan of data collection and analysis (Keppel & Wickens, 2004, p.2). One of the basic principles of an experimental research design is that the experiment will show that the “effects of the independent variables can be evaluated” (Saini, 2015). Experiments are normally used in designs where the researcher is able to manipulate the independent variable and then be able to measure the dependent variable and how to integrate the two in a situational context. In order to explore the influence of branded content integration (product placement) on consumer attitudes and purchase intent a stimulus was developed as part of three videos clips from three different soap operas. Each of the videos contained the same brand (Standard Bank) that has been integrated into the soap operas. The degree and type of integration differed among the three clips. Each of the video clips were manipulated to show mostly the integrated part of the video instead of showcasing an entire episode.

The experiment contained two groups of participants. One group of participants were regular viewers of South African soap operas in general and another group did not watch South African soap operas. Both groups watched a video clip and then continued to answer the questionnaire. Both of the groups answered the same questionnaire.

Both groups were similar in all aspects of the research, which allowed for planned intervention or manipulation (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). Once the participants had watched the video clips, they were required to answer a questionnaire. Control measures were set on the questionnaire against respondents who did not watch South African TV soap operas versus those who watched South African TV soap operas. This experimental design approach was appropriate for this study in order to be able to manipulate the independent variables and then be able to measure the dependent variables (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). The experiment approach also gave insight into how regular viewers and non-viewers view branded content integration in a soap opera and the extent of purchase intent once they have been exposed to it.

3.3 Research procedure and methods

3.3.1 Data collection instrument

Bryman (2012) defines a data collection instrument as “the device used to collect data, such as a paper questionnaire or computer-assisted interviewing system”. There are three types of structures unstructured, semi-structured, fully structured interviews. Unstructured interviews are referred to by Saunders (2012) as "loosely structured and informally conducted interviews that may commence with one or more themes to explore with participants but without a predetermined list of questions to work through" (p. 603).

A semi-structured interview is described by Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2012) as: “Wide-ranging category of interview in which the interviewer commences with a set of interview themes but is prepared to vary the order in which questions are asked and to ask new questions in the context of research situation.” (p. 601)

Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2012) describe fully structured interviews (questionnaires) "Data collection methods that are easily replicated to ensure high reliability" (p. 601). Robson (2011) defines fully structured interviews as "A questionnaire with fixed questions in a pre-decided order and standardised wording, where responses to most questions have to be selected from a small list of alternatives." (p. 278)

The research instrument that was used for this study was fully structured interview surveys in the form of questionnaires. Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2012) explain that surveys are one of the most popular types of research methodologies used to conduct social research.

Two methods were utilised to collect the data for the study. In the first method the respondents were sent an online questionnaire together with a video clip attached. The video clip contained a branded content integrated clip with Standard Bank integrated in the clip. The respondents were requested to first watch the video and then proceed to answer the online questionnaire. The questionnaire and video clip were distributed using the Qualtrics Software. The questionnaire was available for respondents to answer from the 6th June 2016 to 15th June 2016. In the second method, a room was hired at Mofolo recreational centre in Soweto. Two laptops and an iPad were set up. Each of the devices contained the video clips. The researcher first explained the purpose of the research and then proceeded to brief the respondents on how to answer the questionnaire once they had viewed the video clip. Once the respondents had filled in the questionnaire, an incentive of R5 airtime was sent to the respondents that had fully completed the questionnaire. The online questionnaire and the paper-based questionnaire contained the same questions. The questionnaire had four parts to it. On the first part of the questionnaire the respondents watched the stimulus material in the form of a video clip they then proceeded to answer the questionnaire based on the clip and select their general feelings about branded content integration, attitudes and purchase intent. The advantage of this data collection method ensured that the respondents proceeded to fill in the questionnaire while they still remembered the clips they had watched.

The disadvantages to this method were the lack of flexibility and questions could not be open ended (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012)). Owing to the big sample that was used in this study, questionnaires worked best in respondents answering simple questions in a short amount of time.

The following scales were used to measure the constructs for the study:

A. Branded content integration in TV soap operas.

A video clip that featured the Standard Bank brand was shown to the respondents. The video clip was a clip of integrated scenes of Standard Bank in the TV soap operas. The clips featuring the Muvhango TV soap opera and Isidingo were obtained by permission from The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and commissioned by the SABC 2 and SABC 3. The other clip was obtained from DSTV media responsible for broadcasting the Isibaya TV soap opera. All the soap operas in the clips were integrated with the Standard Bank brand. The clips were then combined into one clip.



Figure 2: Characters are seen using Standard Bank snap can on Isidingo

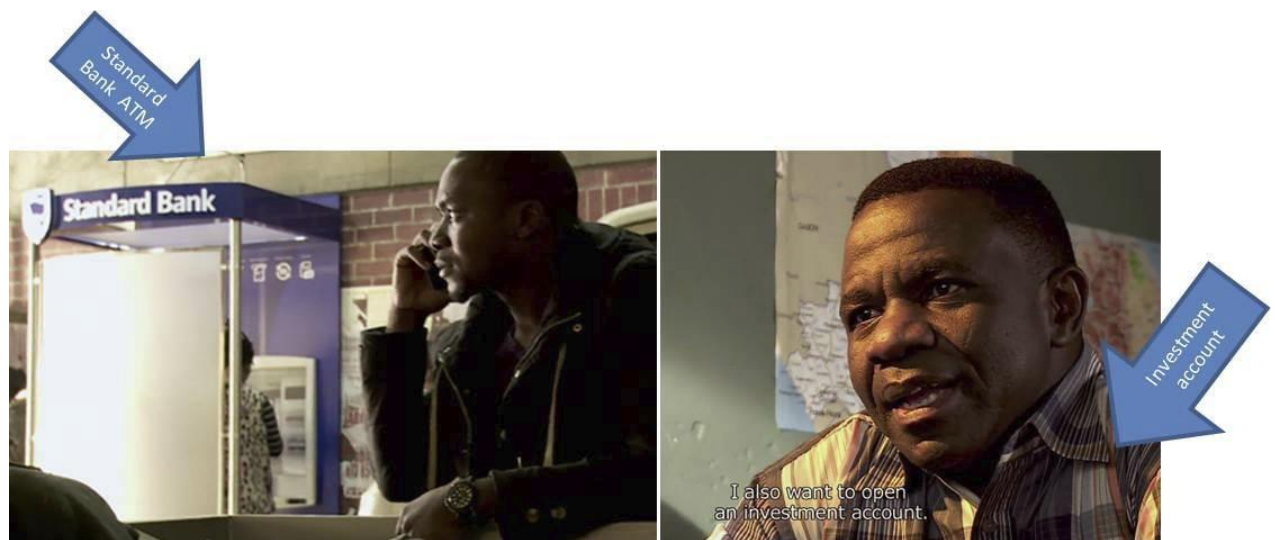


Figure 3: Standard Bank ATM is clearly visible and the character is actively mentioning a Standard Bank product on Isibaya



Figure 4: Character is actively mentioning Standard Bank and character is seen after using a Standard Bank ATM on Muvhango.

For this section of the questionnaire, a seven-item Likert scale was used to determine the respondents' views of the manner in which Standard Bank was integrated into the soap operas, the characters of the soap opera actively talking or using the brand or the brand appearing in the background. This part of the questionnaire focused specifically on what the respondents had viewed on the video clip.

Other questions pertaining to branded content integration was to gather the usage of branded content integration in soap operas in general. These views were not specific to the clip but to the respondents' personal view.

B. Consumer attitudes derived from branded content integration in a soap opera.

In this section of the questionnaire, specific focus was made on gathering consumer attitudes derived from branded content integration in general or from the video clip they had just watched. Specific questions were asked to gather respondents' attitudes on characters in the soap opera actively mentioning or using a brand or a brand appearing in the background of the scene.

C. Consumer purchase intent derived from consumer attitudes or directly from branded content integration

The last section of the questionnaire focused on gathering the respondents' purchase intent derived from the attitude formed according to the brand in branded content integration. This section would discover if the respondent would consider purchasing a brand if the character of the soap opera mentioned or used the brand. The second section would also discover if the respondent would purchase a brand that he or she saw in a soap opera.

3.3.2 Target population and sampling

Target population is described by Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2012) as "the full set of cases from which a sample is taken" (p. 212). Creswell (2012) defines target population as "the larger pool from which our sampling elements are drawn and to which we want to generalise our findings." (p. 133), Robson (2011) defines target population as "The universe of elements from which the sample elements are drawn." (p. 530). The population that was used in the study comprised South African citizens. These individuals were between the ages of 18 to 35 and older. For the purposes of this research only the Gauteng population was used.

According to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2012), sampling is a "sub-group or part of a larger population" (p. 600), Sampling is described by Creswell (2012) as "the process of selecting cases to observe is called 'sampling'." (p 133) and Bryman (2012) define sampling as "the selection of a sample for participation in the research" (p. 86). The study used the non-probability sampling approach. "Non-probability sample approach refers to a sample that is selected without using a random selection approach for your research" (William, 2006).

Convenience sampling

(Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012) states that convenience sampling is one of the most common types of sampling as it uses your everyday man on the street approach. Your everyday man or women on the street will be sampled for this study. This sample was collected using convenience sampling from people in the community of Mofolo in Soweto as well as students at the University of the Witwatersrand using Qualitrics. A total sample of 150 respondents was received for the study.

3.3.3 Ethical considerations when collecting data

Neuman (2012) defines ethical considerations as "principles and guidelines developed by professional organisations to guide research practice and clarify the line between ethical and unethical behaviour" (2011:155). Bryman (2012) refers to ethical considerations as being "an issue that must be considered at every step of the research design and implementation process. Ethics refers to ethical or discipline of moral principles in human behaviour". Only respondents over the ages of 18 were allowed to take part in the study.

3.3.4 Data collection and storage

Bryman (2012) defines "Data collection as gathering information to assist the researcher to answer research questions" (p172), Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2012) describes data collection as "the collection of data collected depending on the research questions and objectives" (p296).

There are four modes of data collection: participant observation or ethnography; interviews (face-to-face, telephone, or internet-based); focus group discussions; and using documents that aid in research data collection.

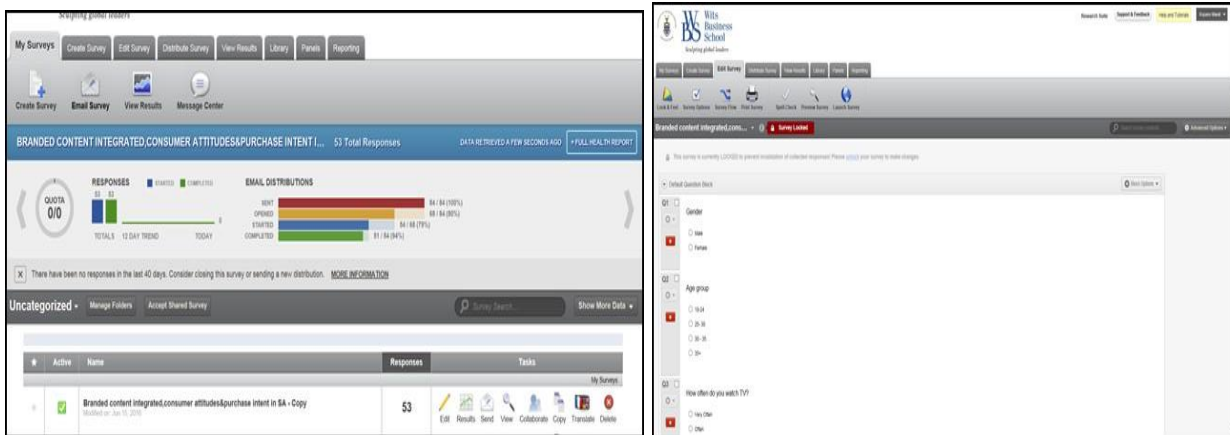


Figure 5 gives a snap shot of the Qualtrics survey.

In the second method, a room was hired at Mofolo recreational centre in Soweto. Two laptops and an iPad were set up. Each of the devices contained the video clips. The researcher first explained the purpose of the research and then proceeded to brief the respondents on how to answer the questionnaire once the respondents had viewed the video clip. Once the respondents had filled in the questionnaire, an incentive of R5. airtime was sent to the respondents that had fully completed the questionnaire. The online questionnaire and the paper-based questionnaire contained the same questions.



Figure 6 is a photograph of the Mofolo recreational centre in Soweto.

The questionnaire had four parts to it. In the first part of the questionnaire the respondents watched the stimulus material in the form of a video clip they then proceeded to answer the questionnaire based on the clip and select their general feelings about branded content integration, attitudes and purchase intent. The advantage of this data collection method ensured that the respondents proceeded to fill in the questionnaire while they still remembered the clips they had watched.

The disadvantages to this method is the lack of flexibility and questions were not open ended Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2012). Owing to the big sample that was used in this study, questionnaires worked best if respondents answered simple questions in a short amount of time.

3.4 Data processing and analysis

Bryman (2012) "refers to data analysis as the process of making sense of the data to answer a research question. It involves examining the data and how they fit together to make meaning" (p. 173)). Saunders (2012) describes data analysis as the "analysis of data broken down to clarify the nature of the component parts and the relationship between them" (p. 587) and (Robson 2011) refers to data analysis as "a breaking up of something complex into smaller parts and explaining the whole in terms of the properties of, and relations between, these parts." (p. 412).

3.5 Research reliability and validity measures

3.5.1 *Validity and reliability*

"Reliability means dependability or consistency. It suggests that the same thing is repeated or recurs under the identical or very similar conditions" Neuman (2011: p. 208). Winter (2000) describes validity and reliability as accuracy and replicability. Validity and reliability explore whether the study is usable according to the data to be collected. It also refers to the consistency of the results and how the research is conducted.

3.5.2 Discriminant validity

This study was sampled by a portion of the population, which can be generalised as the population of South Africa that has views on how product placement advertising is effective in the genre of soap operas. This external validity was ensured by using two groups of people: those who watch soap operas and those who do not watch soap operas.

3.5.3 Internal validity

Bryman (2012) describes internal validity as "a concern with the question of whether a finding that incorporates a causal relationship between two or more variables is sound" (p. 45). Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2012) refers to internal validity as the "extent to which findings can be attributed to interventions rather than any flaws in your research design" (p. 593) and Robson (2011) refers to internal validity as "the extent to which a study establishes that a factor or variables has actually caused the effect that is found (and in particular that this effect has not been caused by other factors)." (p. 527)

The researcher meets the internal validity criteria by compiling evidence of the observations made in the study by proper data collection and making sure that respondents answered the questions properly. The internal validity was achieved by assigning the two different groups of respondents to watch one of three soap opera clips. This ensured that data was received only from the correct groups of respondents.

3.5.4 Reliability

Creswell (2014) refers to reliability as "the dependability of a measurement instrument the extent to which the instrument yields the same results on repeated trials." (P. 152) and Robson (2011) refers to reliability as "The extent to which a measuring device, or a whole research project would produce the same results if used on different occasions with the same object of study." (p. 532). Reliability of the experiment is ensured by standardising the stimuli by using the same brand that has been integrated within three different soap operas. The same questionnaire was also used across the two groups.

In order to determine the reliability of the study, a pilot test was conducted to test whether the experiment would capture the desired results. A pilot test was conducted with a sample of 25 and 15 respondents. The pilot revealed that respondents that did not watch TV and those who did not watch soap operas found the questionnaire difficult to answer in the beginning. The questionnaire was then amended to exclude several questions for those who do not watch TV and those who do not consume South African TV soap operas. The way in which the questions about attitudes were written was also amended to make sure that respondents understood what was being asked. Once all the changes were made from the feedback received from the pilot, the study was then conducted with a different sample. Reliability of the measurements in the questionnaire was tested by using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient.

CHAPTER 4. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is a presentation of the results obtained from the research. This chapter also includes the statistical analysis of the research. The results in this chapter will prove whether the hypotheses of the study are true or not according to the conceptual model designed for the study. The hypotheses for this study were that there is a relationship between branded content integration and consumer attitudes, and in turn there is a relationship between consumer attitudes and purchase intent. The findings of the research are presented in a chart format and include a brief explanation of the findings obtained from the research.

4.2 Demographic profile of all respondents

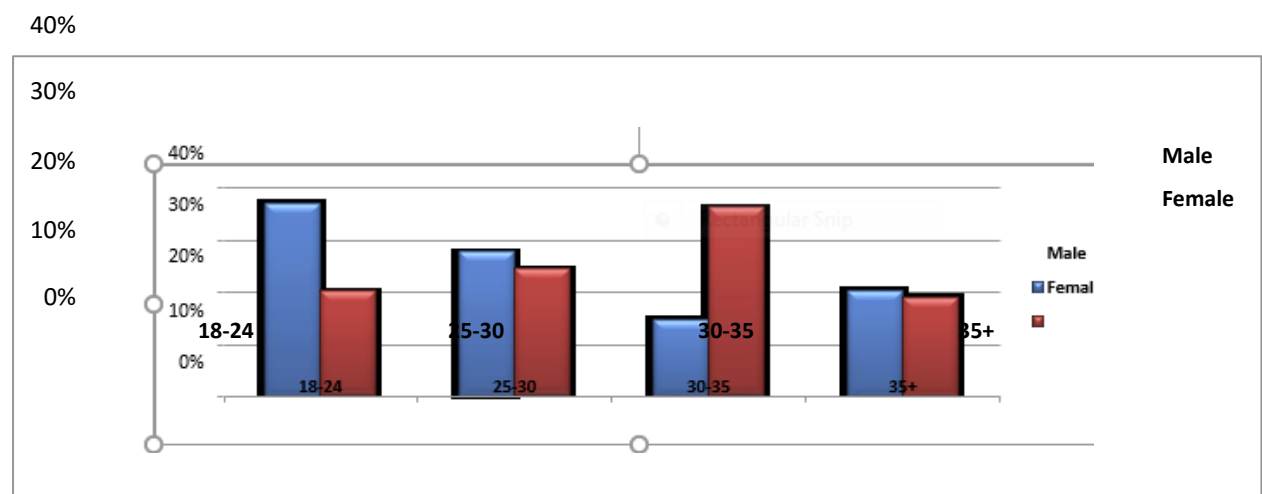


Figure 7: Gender and age group split

The sample was dominated by males in the 18-24 age group and then dominated by females in the 30-35 age group. There was a slight difference in gender split in the 25-30 and 35+ age groups. The total valid sample of respondents was 148.

Table 1: Frequency of watching of TV

How often do you watch tv?	% of respondents

Less than 1% of the respondents do not watch TV. The rest of the sample watches TV in general variably.

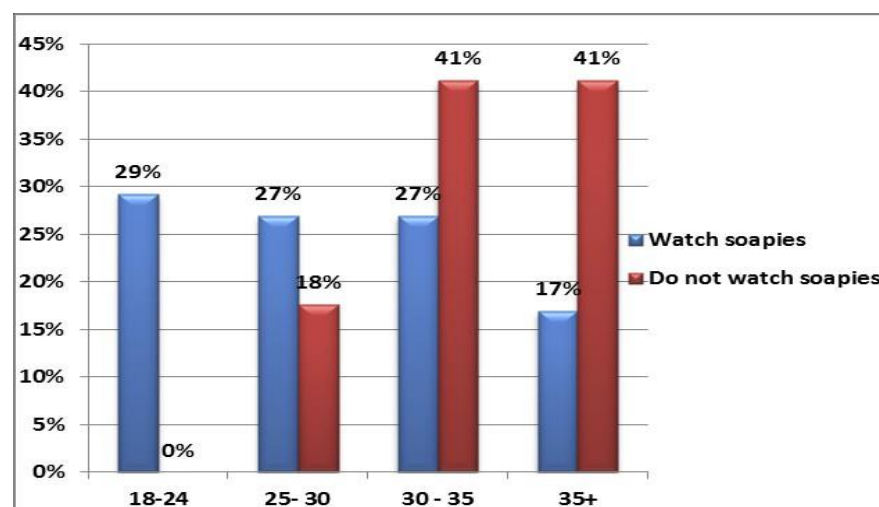


Figure 8: Soap opera viewership in general

The sample is divided into those who view soap operas and those who do not. There was a high percentage of viewers who watch TV soap operas in the 18-35 age groups as compared to the high percentage of those who do not view soap operas in the 30-35+ age groups.

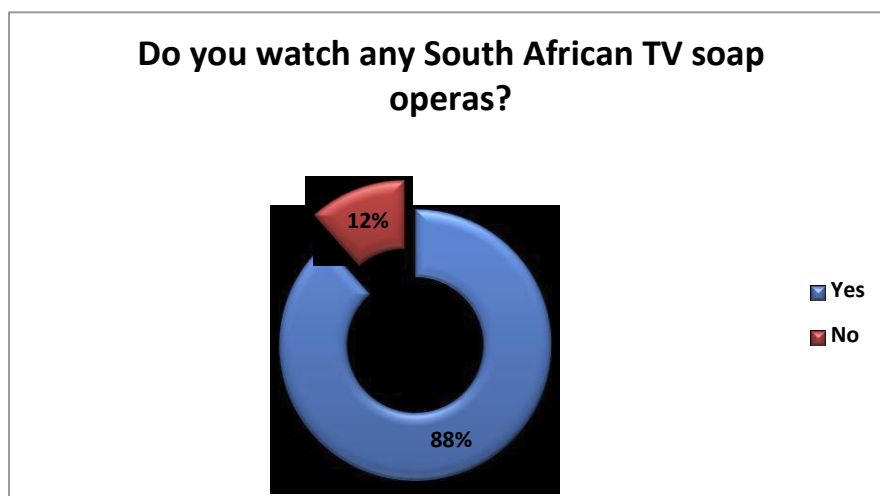


Figure 9: Respondents that Watch South African TV soap operas versus those who do not.

From those respondents that actually watch TV in soap operas in general, only 12% of the samples do not watch South African soap operas. A total of 130 respondents watch South African soap operas. This is an indication of the high viewership of South Africa TV soap operas.

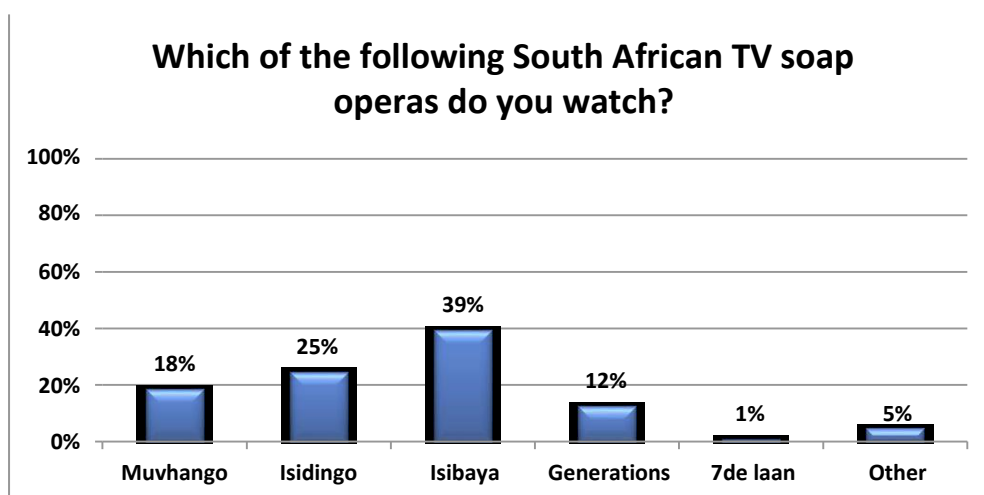


Figure 10: South African soap operas watched by respondents

The Isibaya soap opera has the highest viewership amongst respondents compared to the other soap operas.

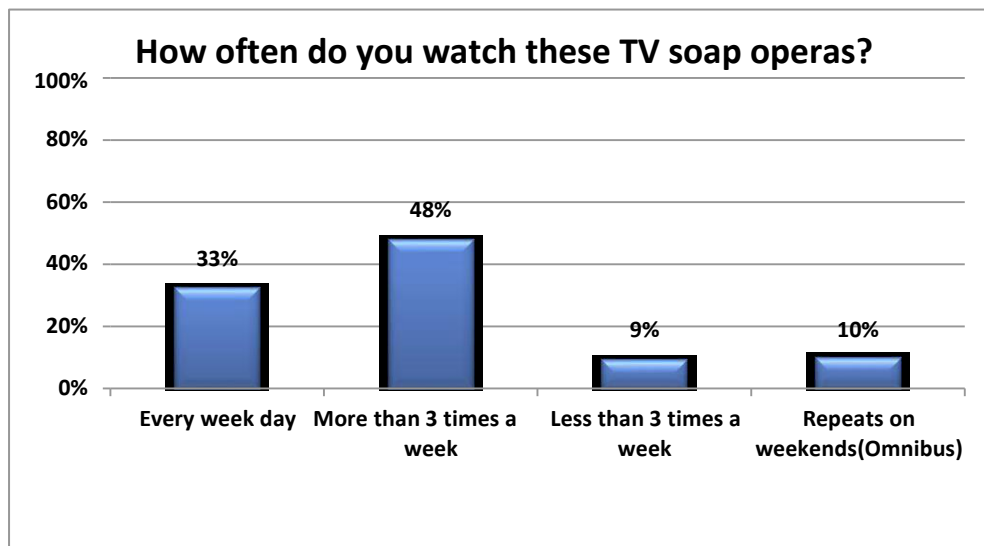


Figure 11: Soap opera viewership

The majority of the sample preferred watching South African TV soap operas during the week with a high percentage of viewers who watch more than 3 times a week. Soap operas are watched less on weekends by respondents.

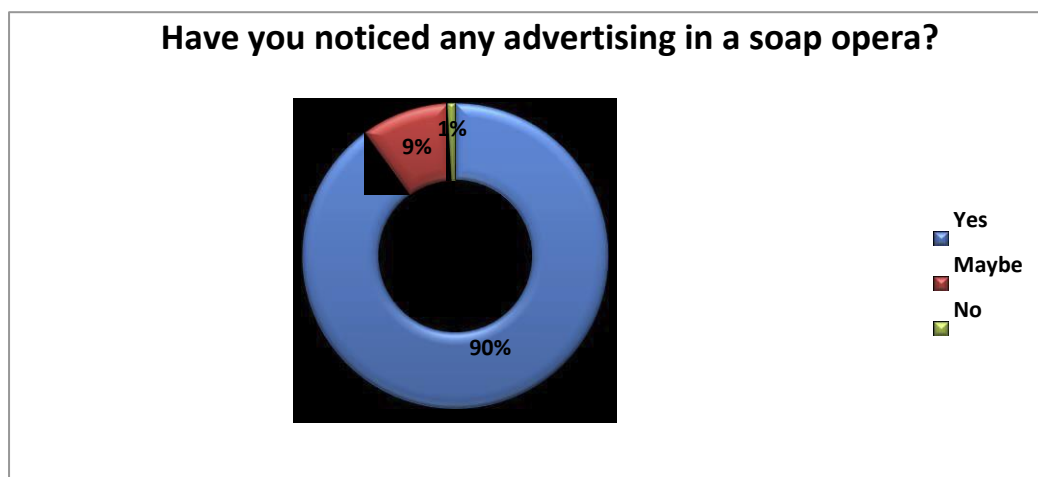


Figure 12: Notice of previous advertising in soap operas

Ninety-three percent of the sample that watches TV soap operas had previously noticed branded content integration in their respective soapies. Only 1% of the sample had not noticed branded content in TV soap operas.

4.3 Results pertaining effectiveness of branded content integration, consumer attitudes and purchase intent

4.3.1 *Branded content integration*

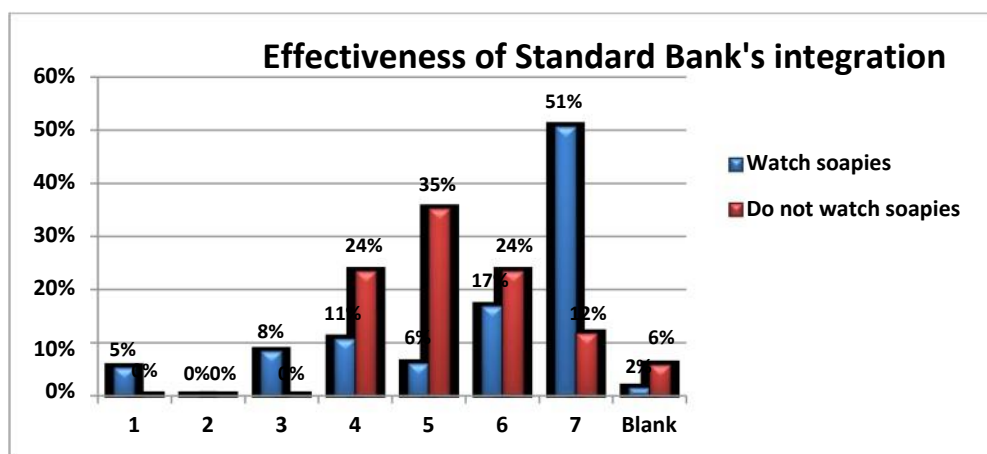


Figure13: Effectiveness of Standard Bank’s integration in the soap opera.

The results illustrate that 51% of the sample that watch South African TV soap operas strongly agreed with the Standard Bank’s integration in the supplied video clip being an effective way of advertising.

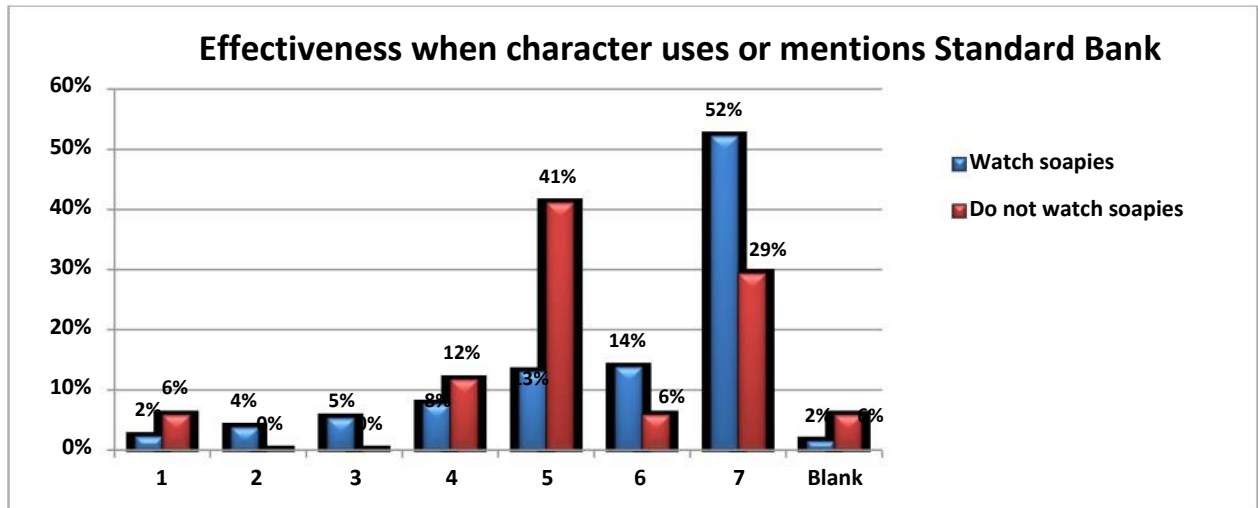


Figure 14: Effectiveness of Standard Bank’s integration in the soap opera when a character uses or mentions things about Standard Bank.

The results indicate that 52% of the sample that watches South African TV soap operas strongly agreed that Standard Bank advertising in the clip is effective when a character mentions or uses the brand as compared to 41% of those who do not watch the South African soap operas, who slightly agreed that the integration was effective. A very small percentage of the sample believed that the integration is not effective when a character mentions or uses the brand.

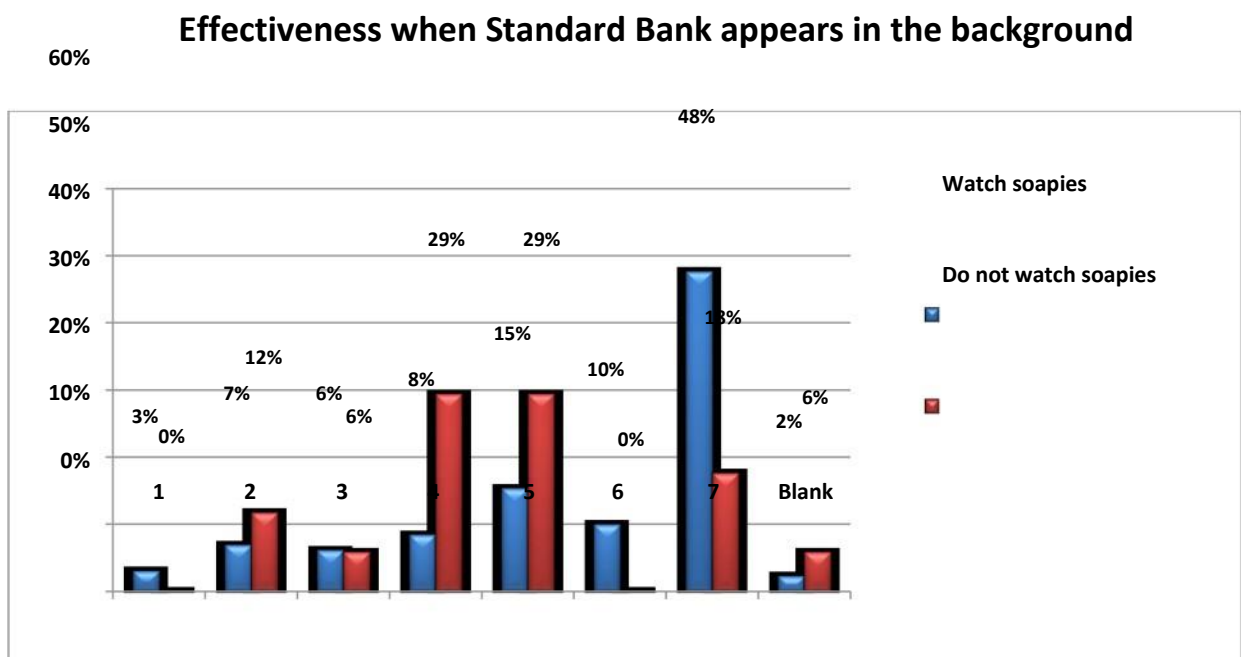


Figure 15: Effectiveness of Standard Bank's integration when Standard Bank appears in the background of the scene.

A larger portion of the sample that watches South African TV soap operas (48%) strongly agreed that Standard Bank's integration is effective when the brand appears in the background of the scene as compared to only 18% of those who do not watch South African TV soap operas. Only a combined sample of 16% of those who watch South African TV soap operas disagreed that the Standard Bank's integration is effective when it only appears in the background of the scene.

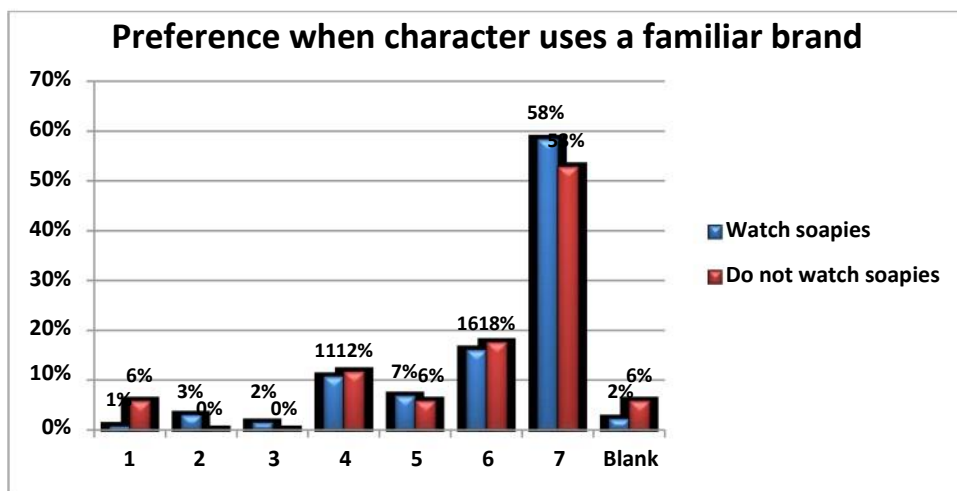


Figure 16: Preference when character of a soap opera uses brand you know instead of a no-name brand.

Fifty-eight per cent strongly agreed and 16% agreed that those that watch soap operas preferred a character in the soap opera to use a brand they are familiar with instead a nameless brand. This is a total of 74% of those who watch South African Soap operas. Fifty-three per cent of those who do not watch soap operas also agreed that they preferred characters to use brands that they are familiar with. A small percentage of the sample disagreed. The results indicate that there was an agreement of brands being familiar amongst those who watch TV soap operas and those who do not.

Preference when character mentions a brand you are familiar with

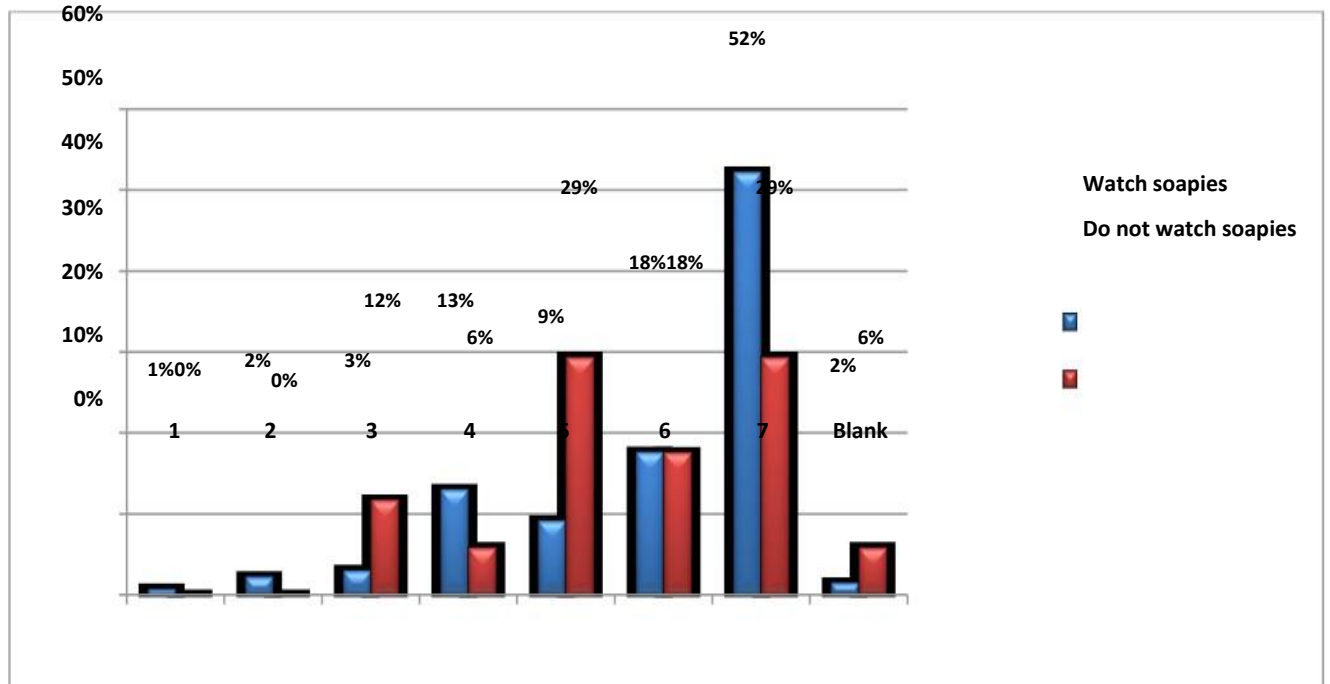


Figure 17: Preference when a character of the soap opera says something about a brand you know when watching soap opera.

A large portion of the sample that watches soap operas agreed that that they would prefer a character in the soap opera to say something about a brand they know. Fifty-two percent strongly agreed and 18% agreed of those who watched soap operas making it a total of 70% as compared to a total of 47% (29% that strongly agreed and 18% that agreed) of those who do not watch soap operas.

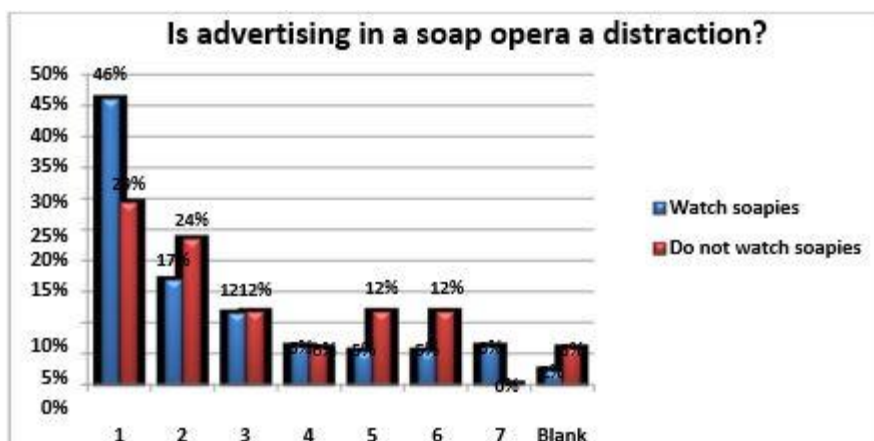


Figure 18: Advertising in a soap opera - a distraction

A large portion of 46% of those who are viewers of South African TV soap operas strongly disagreed that branded content integration in a soap opera is a distraction to the viewer and 29% of those who don't watch soap operas strongly disagreed. A total of 29% of those who do not watch TV soap operas also disagreed that branded content integration is a distraction. A total of 24% of those who did not watch South African TV soap opera believed that branded content integration is a distraction.

4.3.2 Consumer attitudes

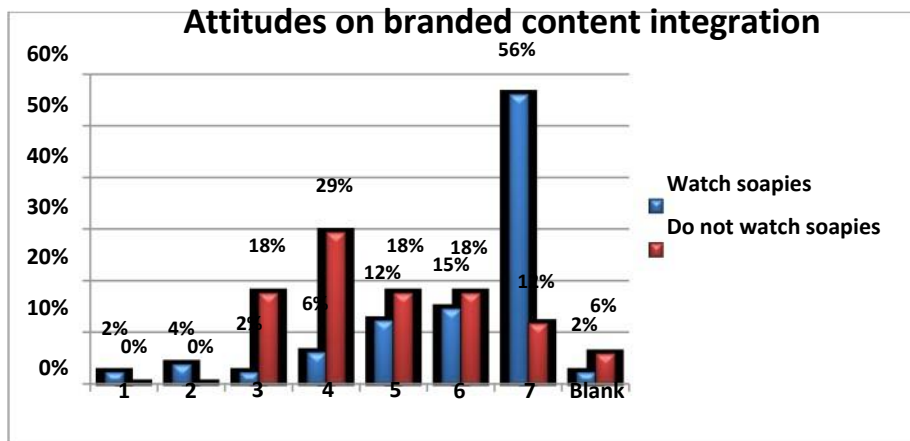


Figure 19: Attitudes about advertising in soap operas in general.

The results illustrate that a large portion of the sample 56% of those who watched soap operas felt extremely positive about branded content integration in soap operas in general. 29% of those who did not watch TV soap operas were undecided.

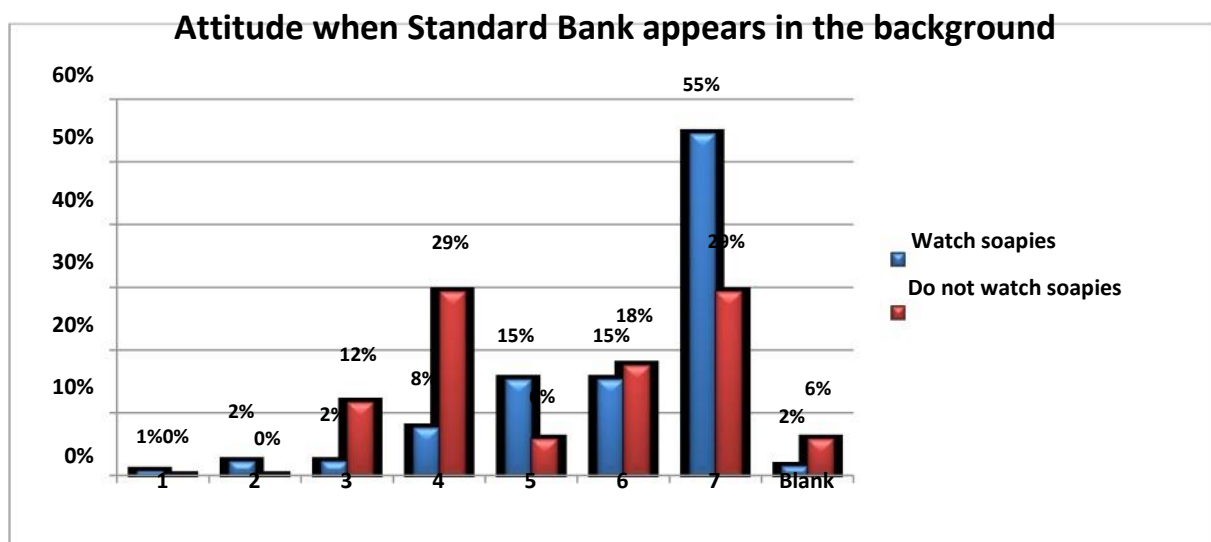


Figure 20: Attitude when the viewer sees Standard Bank's integration in the background of the scene.

In terms of attitudes formed when respondents see the integration of Standard Bank in the background of the scene, 55% of the respondents that watch TV soap operas felt extremely positive about Standard Banks integration in the soap opera. 29% of those

who do not watch soap operas felt neither positive nor negative. On average 53% of those who do not watch soap operas had positive attitudes when Standard Bank is shown in the background of the scene.

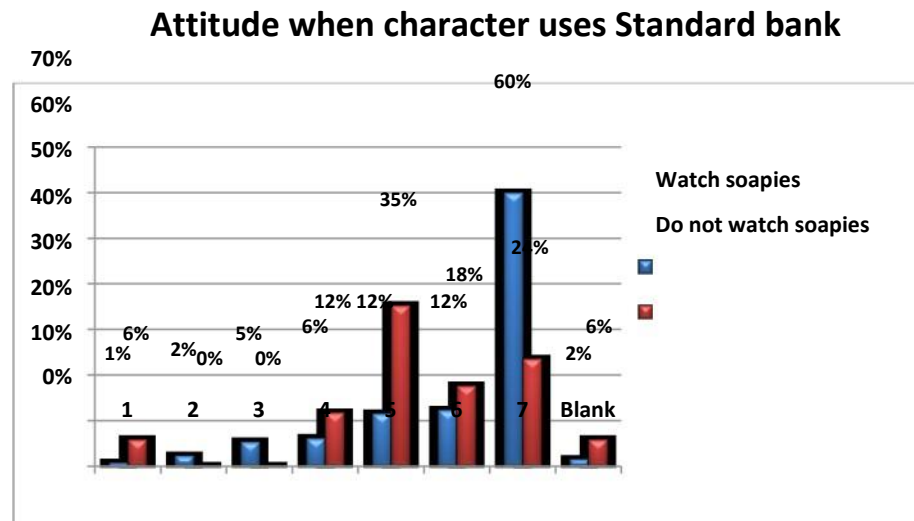


Figure 21: Attitude when character mentions or uses Standard Bank products in the soap opera.

According to the results 60% of the sample that watches soap operas felt extremely positive when a character of a soap opera used or mentioned Standard Bank products compared to a portion of 35% of those who do not watch soap operas who felt slightly positive about the characters of the soap opera using Standard Banks products. The results show that in general the attitude was positive amongst the two groups.

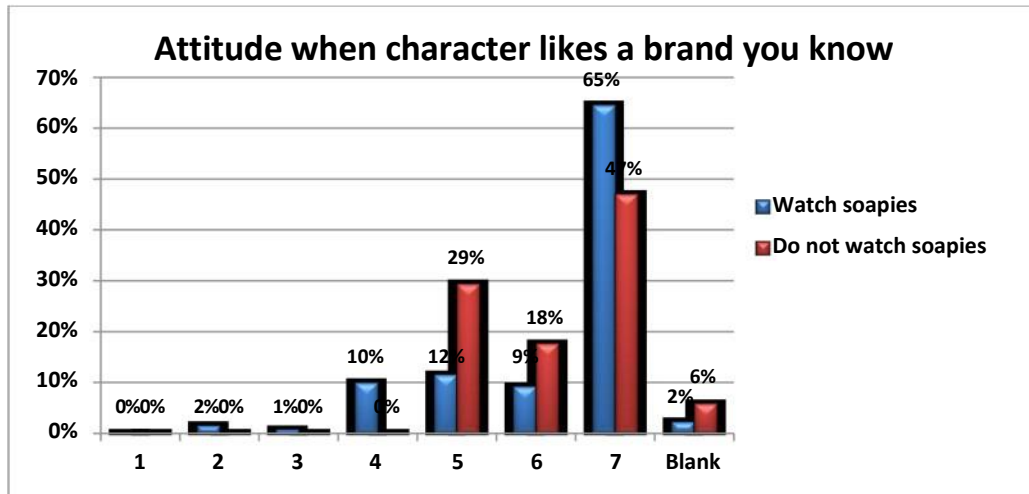


Figure 22: Attitudes when character of a soap opera has a positive attitude towards a brand you know

Sixty-five percent of the respondents that watched South African TV soap operas felt extremely positive when a character of a soap opera has positive feelings about a brand they know. Forty-seven per cent of the sample who do not watch soap operas also felt extremely positive. So in general there are slight differences in the attitude between those who watch TV soap operas and those who do not.

4.3.3 Consumer purchase intent

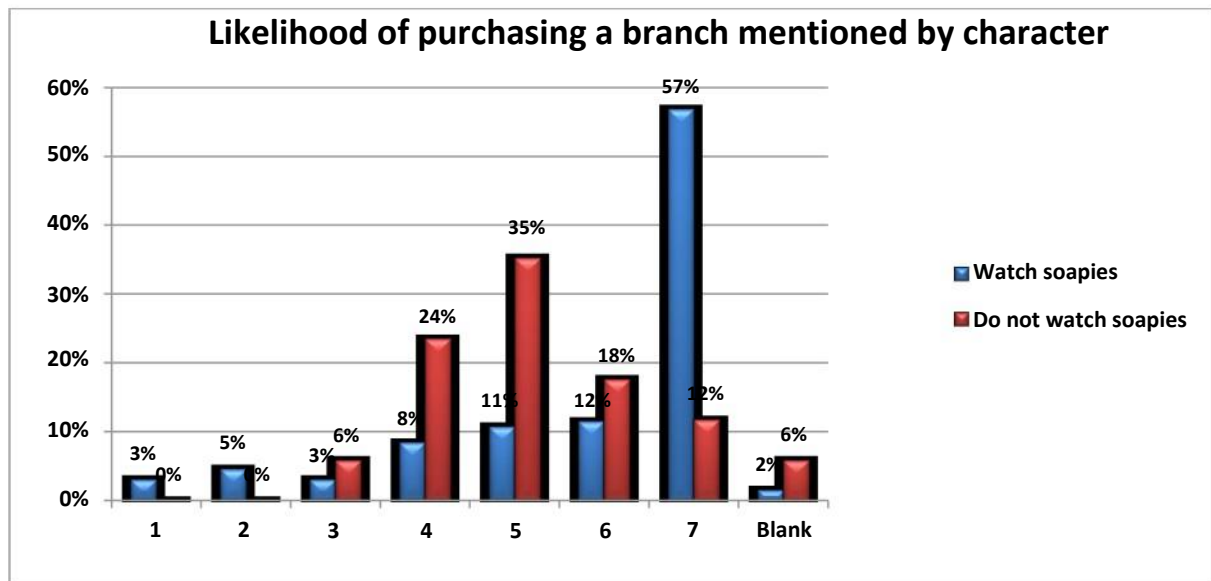


Figure 23: Purchase intent of brand if character mentions a brand

The results above relate to how likely a respondent would purchase a brand that is mentioned by their favourite character in a soap opera. 57% of the sample of those who watched soap operas was extremely likely to purchase a brand mentioned by their favourite actor. Only 35% of those who did not watch soap operas slightly agreed to consider purchasing a brand mentioned by a character in the soap opera. Overall both groups are likely to purchase a brand that is mentioned by a character of a soap opera irrespective of whether they watch a soap opera or not.

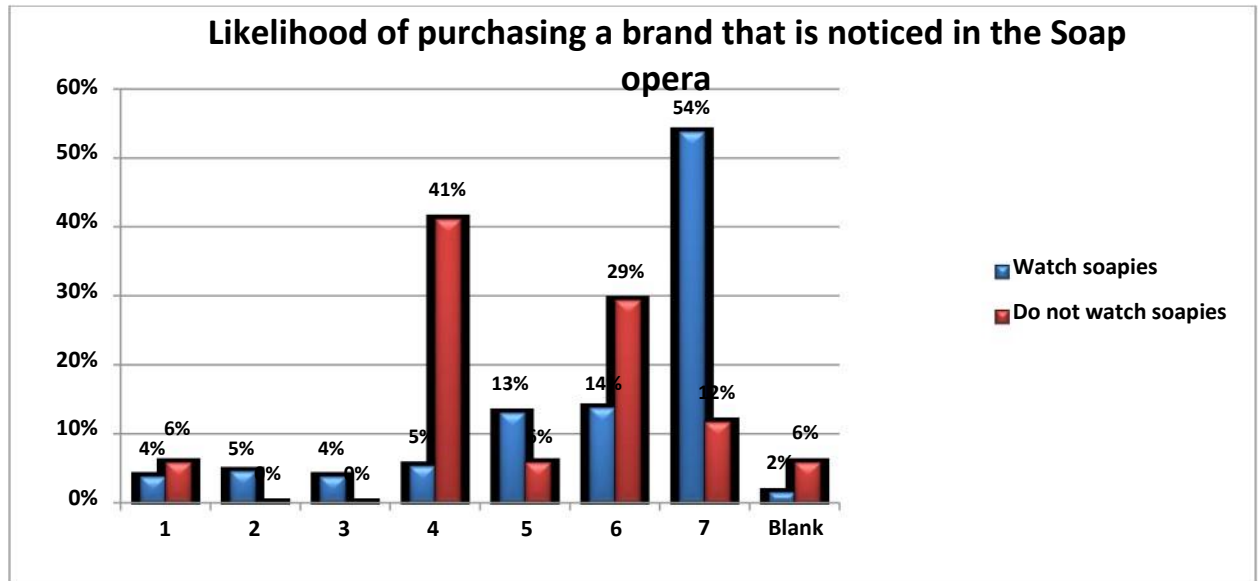


Figure 24: Purchase intent after seeing a brand in a soap opera

Fifty-four of the respondents that watched South African soap operas were extremely likely to consider purchasing a brand that is integrated in a soap opera without a character mentioning the brand. A large percentage (41 %) of the respondents that do not watch soap operas were neutral.

4.4 Relationship between branded content integration and consumer attitudes

4.4.1 Results pertaining to those who watch TV soap operas

Table 2: Branded content integration and consumer attitudes

		Consumer attitudes H1				
			Q_11 Attitude on branded content	Q_12 Attitude when brand is in the background of scene	Q_13 Attitude when character mentions brand	Q_14 Attitude when character likes the brand
Branded content integration H1	Q_8 Effectiveness of branded content	Chi-Square	118.02	102.62	102.33	88.01
		df	30.00	30.00	30.00	25.00
		P value	0.00 1	0.00 1	0.00 1	0.00 1
	Q_9 Effectiveness when character uses a brand	Chi-Square	143.92	119.64	167.18	85.44
		df	36.00	36.00	36.00	30.00
		P value	0.00 1	0.00 1	0.00 1	0.00 1
	Q_10 Effectiveness when brand appears in background.	Chi-Square	85.93	85.81	60.19	78.72
		df	36.00	36.00	36.00	30.00
		Significance	0.00 1	0.00 1	0.00 1	0.00 1
	Q_15 Effectiveness when character uses a familiar brand.	Chi-Square	158.74	99.36	140.21	210.29
		df	36.00	36.00	36.00	30.00
		P value	0.00 1	0.00 1	0.00 1	0.00 1
	Q_16 Preference when character mentions a brand	Chi-Square	109.88	95.02	160.20	144.92
		df	36.00	36.00	36.00	30.00
		P value	0.00 1	0.00 1	0.00 1	0.00 1
	Q_17 Distraction of branded content	Chi-Square	118.92	90.72	87.52	94.71
		df	36.00	36.00	36.00	30.00
		P value	0.00 1	0.00 1	0.00 1	0.00 1

** P < 0.001 rejection of null hypothesis between branded content integration and consumer attitudes.

Table 2 illustrates the relationship branded content integration and consumer attitudes. The table illustrates that if the p < 0.001. The null hypothesis is accepted. All the p-values in the table are 0.001, which proves that there is a positive relationship between branded content integration and consumer attitudes.

To conclude Hypothesis 1 is accepted and demonstrates branded content integration in TV soap operas lead to positive consumer attitudes of the brand.

4.4.2 Results pertaining to those who do not watch TV soap operas

Table 3: Branded content integration and consumer attitudes

		Consumer attitudes H1				
			Q_11 Attitude on branded content	Q_12 Attitude when brand is in the background of scene	Q_13 Attitude when character mentions brand	Q_14 Attitude when character likes the brand
Branded content integration H1	Q_8 Effectiveness of branded content	Chi-Square	23.11	15.82	13.67	7.72
		df	12.00	12.00	12.00	6.00
		P value**	0.03	0.20	0.32	0.26
	Q_9 Effectiveness when character uses a brand	Chi-Square	20.30	14.36	26.15	10.62
		df	16.00	16.00	16.00	8.00
		P value**	0.21	0.57	0.05	0.22
	Q_10 Effectiveness when brand appears in background.	Chi-Square	12.44	18.35	16.09	15.57
		df	16.00	16.00	16.00	8.00
		P value**	0.71	0.30	0.45	0.05
	Q_15 Effectiveness when character uses a familiar brand.	Chi-Square	15.41	28.77	13.56	13.01
		df	16.00	16.00	16.00	8.00
		P value**	0.50	0.03	0.63	0.11
	Q_16 Preference when character mentions a brand	Chi-Square	12.09	14.51	13.78	10.54
		df	16.00	16.00	16.00	8.00
		P value**	0.74	0.56	0.62	0.23
	Q_17 Distraction of branded content	Chi-Square	22.56	20.59	14.93	10.26
		df	20.00	20.00	20.00	10.00
		P value**	0.31	0.42	0.78	0.42

** P value < 0.001 rejection of null hypothesis between branded content integration and consumer attitudes

Table 3 illustrates the relationship of branded content integration and purchase intent for those who do not watch TV soap operas. The overall results indicate that there

is a significant relationship between branded integration and purchase intent, thus accepting the null hypothesis? The P values in between these variables range from 0.03 to a maximum of 0.78 illustrating the strong relationships between the individual variables in the construct. There is particularly a strong relationship when the character of a soap opera mentions a brand and attitude of branded content integration for those who do not watch soap operas. There is also a very strong relationship between branded content integration being a distraction in the soap opera and attitudes when a character mentions a brand in a soap opera. However, to conclude there is a positive relationship between branded content integration and consumer attitudes for those that do not watch soap operas.

4.5 Relationship between consumer attitudes and purchase intent

4.5.1 Results pertaining to those who watch TV soap operas

Table 4: Consumer attitudes and purchase intent

		Purchase Intent H2		
			Q_18 Purchase intent if character mentions brand	Q_19 Purchase intent when brand is scene in the background
Consumer attitudes H2	Q_11 Attitude on branded content	Chi-Square	126.54	131.30
		df	36.00	36.00
		P value**	0.00 1	0.00 1
	Q_12 Attitude when brand is in the background of scene	Chi-Square	98.75	89.21
		df	36.00	36.00
		P value**	0.00 1	0.00 1
	Q_13 Attitude when character mentions brand	Chi-Square	147.06	110.91
		df	36.00	36.00
		P value**	0.00 1	0.00 1
	Q_14 Attitude when character likes the brand	Chi-Square	128.04	110.77
		df	30.00	30.00
		P value**	0.00 1	0.00 1

** P value < 0.001 rejection of null hypothesis.

Table 4 illustrates the consumer attitudes and purchase intent as per hypothesis 2 that stated there is a relationship between consumer attitudes and purchase intent. The table illustrates that if the p-value is less than the significance level of 0.001 then we will reject the null hypothesis that the two variables (consumer attitudes and purchase intent). All the p-values in the table resulted in 0.001, which proves that there is a positive relationship between consumer attitudes and purchase intent.

Therefore, hypothesis 2 is accepted and demonstrates that positive consumer attitudes derived from branded content integration in TV soap operas lead to consumer purchase intent.

4.5.2 Results pertaining to those who do not watch TV soap operas

Table 5: Consumer attitudes and purchase intent

Consumer attitudes H2	Purchase Intent H2			
			Q_18 Purchase intent if character mentions brand	Q_19 Purchase intent when brand is scene in the background
	Q_11 Attitude on branded content	Chi-Square	30.22	27.25
		df	16.00	16.00
		P value**	0.02	0.04
	Q_12 Attitude when brand is in the background of scene	Chi-Square	18.13	23.31
		df	16.00	16.00
		P value**	0.32	0.11
	Q_13 Attitude when character mentions brand	Chi-Square	15.78	13.20
		df	16.00	16.00
		P value**	0.47	0.66
	Q_14 Attitude when character likes the brand	Chi-Square	9.72	8.07
		df	8.00	8.00
		P value**	0.29	0.43

** P value <0.001 rejection of null hypothesis between consumer attitudes and purchase intent.

Table 5 illustrates the consumer attitudes and purchase intent in those customers that do not watch TV soap operas. Overall the P values illustrate that there is a significant relationship between consumer attitudes and purchase intent when looking at the items holistically. The p values also indicate strong relationships (p value 0.32) between attitudes when a brand is shown in the background of a scene in a soap opera and purchase intent when a character mentions the brand. The P values (p value

0.43) indicate that the relationships are also strong when a character of soap has a positive attitude towards a brand and purchase intent when the brand is seen in the background of the scene.

4.6 Relationship between branded content and purchase intent

4.6.1 Results pertaining to those who watch TV soap operas

Table 6: Branded content and purchase intent

Branded Content integration H3	Purchase Intent H3			
			Q_18 Purchase intent if character mentions brand	Q_19 Purchase intent when brand is scene in the background
	Q_8 Effectiveness of branded content	Chi-Square	95.66	91.70
		df	30.00	30.00
		P value**	0.00 1	0.00 1
	Q_9 Effectiveness when character uses a brand	Chi-Square	133.83	116.70
		df	36.00	36.00
		P value**	0.00 1	0.00 1
	Q_10 Effectiveness when brand appears in background.	Chi-Square	95.79	114.45
		df	36.00	36.00
		P value**	0.00 1	0.00 1
	Q_15 Effectiveness when character uses a familiar brand.	Chi-Square	123.99	109.36
		df	36.00	36.00
		P value**	0.00 1	0.00 1
	Q_16 Preference when character mentions a brand	Chi-Square	134.19	120.90
		df	36.00	36.00
		P value**	0.00 1	0.00 1
	Q_17 Distraction of branded content	Chi-Square	63.69	65.99
		df	36.00	36.00
		P value**	0.00 1	0.00 1

** P value <0.001 rejection of null hypothesis between branded content integration and purchase intent.

Table 6 illustrates the branded content integration and purchase intent and shows a confidence P value of 0.001 which is an acceptance of the null hypothesis.

Therefore, an additional hypothesis is accepted and demonstrates that branded content integration in TV soap operas can lead to consumer purchase intent of the brand.

4.6.2 Results pertaining to those who do not watch TV soap operas

Table 7: Branded content integration and purchase intent

	Purchase Intent H3			
			Q_18 Purchase intent if character mentions brand	Q_19 Purchase intent when brand is scene in the background
Branded Content integration H3	Q_8 Effectiveness of branded content	Chi-Square	28.44	20.27
		df	12.00	12.00
		P value**	0.01	0.06
	Q_9 Effectiveness when character uses a brand	Chi-Square	22.99	16.84
		df	16.00	16.00
		P value**	0.11	0.40
	Q_10 Effectiveness when brand appears in background.	Chi-Square	25.38	12.04
		df	16.00	16.00
		P value**	0.06	0.74
	Q_15 Effectiveness when character uses a familiar brand.	Chi-Square	17.56	27.28
		df	16.00	16.00
		P value**	0.35	0.04
	Q_16 Preference when character mentions a brand	Chi-Square	22.36	16.46
		df	16.00	16.00
		P value**	0.13	0.42
	Q_17 Distraction of branded content	Chi-Square	20.40	19.09
		df	20.00	20.00
		P value**	0.43	0.52

****P value <0.001 rejection of null hypothesis**

Table 7 illustrates the branded content integration and consumer purchase intent. The results indicate that overall, there is a significant relationship between the two variables thus accepting the hypothesis. The results (p value 0.42) indicate strong relationships between preference when a character mentions a brand and consumer purchase intent when the brand is seen in the background of a scene.

4.7 Reliability of the main constructs of the study

Table 8: reliability of depended and independent variables

	Branded content in soapies	Attitudes formed from branded content	Purchase intent
Number of Cases	148	148	148
Number of Items	6	4	2
Reliability Coefficient	0.62	0.89	0.86

Table 8 illustrates the reliability of the various constructs according to the hypothesis. The reliability coefficient of branded content integration variable is measured at 0.62. In terms of the reliability of the consumer attitudes formed from branded content integration construct the reliability coefficient is measured at 0.89. Table 8 also illustrates the reliability of the consumer purchase intent formed from consumer attitudes and branded content integration. The reliability coefficient of this part of the construct is measured at 0.86. According to Malhotra (2007) Cronbach's alpha scores of 0.6 or above indicate that the measurement scale is reliable. Thus all the constructs were reliable.

4.8 Summary of the results

According to the results presented in the chapter, statistical analysis proves that the entire hypotheses have been accepted. According to the results, there is a positive relationship between branded content integration and consumer attitudes (H1). This means that branded content integration leads to positive consumer attitudes. The second hypothesis was also accepted according to statistical methods used to test the relationship between variables. This proved that there is a positive relationship between consumer attitudes and purchase intent (H2). This shows that consumer attitudes formed from branded content integration can lead to purchase intent of the brand by the consumer. A third hypothesis was also discovered and accepted in the research according to statistical analysis. This proved that there is a positive relationship between branded content integration and purchase intent. This means that branded content integration can lead directly to purchase intent. The reliability of the constructs of the questionnaire was also found reliable using the Cronbach Alpha score. The Cronbach Alpha score is used to test reliability of constructs in the questionnaire in social sciences studies (Malhotra, 2007).

The results also revealed the differences between the two groups; those who watch TV soap operas and those who do not. Specific aspects of branded content integration, consumer attitudes and purchase intent are identified as those that are accepted for those who do not watch TV soap operas. Hypothesis 1 is accepted only when a character of a soap opera uses a familiar brand and when a brand is seen in the background of the scene. Hypothesis 2 is accepted when a character mentions the brand and when brand is seen in the background of the scene. The third hypothesis is accepted when a character is using or mentioning the brand and when a character uses a familiar brand. Overall there was a slight difference between the two groups of respondents.

The revised model according to the findings of the study:

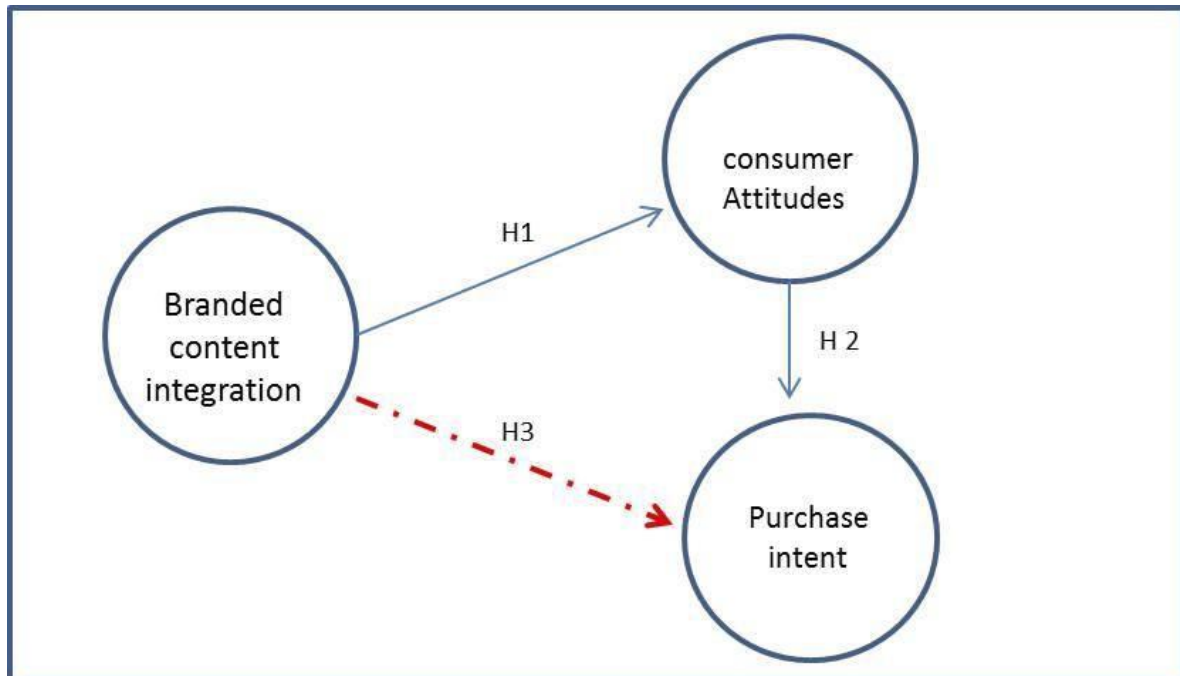


Figure 25: Revised hypothesis model

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the results pertaining to the hypothesis and use the data that has been collected. The results will be discussed with reference to the literature review. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of branded content integration towards consumer attitudes and purchase intent in South African TV soap operas. The research employed an experimental research design, which compared the views of people who watch South African TV soap operas to those who do not consume South African TV soap operas. The study also evaluated demographics such as gender, age groups and the extent at which people consumed South African TV soap operas.

The research experiment was conducted using an online questionnaire system as well as a hard-copy questionnaire to gather the data. In both instances the respondents were required to watch a video clip of a South African TV soap opera that was manipulated to show the branded content integration of a brand within the Soap opera. In this case, Standard Bank was used as the brand integrated in the soap opera.

In the study respondents were required to provide their view on how effective Standard Bank's integration in the video clip was and how effective branded content integration would be effective if it were a brand they are aware of other than Standard Bank. The respondents also were required to share their attitudes towards branded content integration in general and how their attitudes in the different ways in which Standard Bank had been integrated in the video clip.

The aim was to assess if there would be a difference in their choice between the two groups of respondents.

5.2 Demographic profile of respondents

5.2.1 Gender

The research was dominated by 64% of women followed by 36% males... According to the research, more women in the study watched South African TV soap operas. It is important to note the number of women or men watching the South African TV soap operas.

5.2.2 Age group

The research reveals that 81% of those who consume TV soap operas are between the ages of 18-30 years. Eighty-one per cent of those who do not watch South African TV soap operas fell in the 30-35+ age group. These results revealed that the younger age group consumed more South African soap operas than the older group.

5.2.3 Watching of TV, soap operas; consumers watch and frequency

The research revealed that only 1% of the respondents did not watch TV at all compared to a total of 99% of people who watched TV. The research found that out of the 99%, 63 % often watched TV.

The respondents that watched TV were separated into two groups, those who watched South African TV soap operas and those who did not watch South African TV soap operas. Only a small percentage of 12% of the respondents did not watch South African TV soap operas. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents watched South African TV soap operas,

In terms of the soap operas watched by the respondents most of the respondents watched Isibaya followed by Isidingo and Muvhango and Generations. A small percentage watched other South African TV soap operas.

In terms of the frequency with which the respondents watched soap operas, 48% watched TV soap operas more than three times a week. TV soap operas often play every weekday, which means that these respondents watched four out of five days a week. Thirty-Three percent of the respondents watched South African TV soap operas every day of the week with a small percentage watching soap operas fewer than three times a week or on weekends only.

In terms of respondents noticing any form of advertising (branded content) in the TV soap operas they consumed, a large percentage (90%) of the respondents had previously seen or noticed integrated products within a soap opera.

The results set out above give us a view of the frequency at which people watch TV and South African TV soap operas, and those who don't. The results also give us an idea of the soap operas being watched by South African viewers and the extent to which they notice the advertising in the soap operas.

5.3 Discussion pertaining to the effectiveness of branded content integration

5.3.1 Branded content integration_

The research revealed viewers of South African TV soap operas who agreed that the way in which Standard Bank was integrated in the soap opera was effective when the character uses or mentions things about Standard Bank. A large number of those who did not watch South African TV also agreed with the statement.

In terms of the character of the brand integration being effective only when the brand appears in the background of the scene, a large portion of respondents that watch South African TV soap operas also agreed that the integration is effective when the brand appears in the background. Less than 40% of those who did not watch soap operas believed the same after watching the clip.

In terms of the preference when a character of a soap opera uses a brand that the viewer knows instead of a no name brand, a large percentage of those who watch South African TV Soap operas, as well as of those who did not watch South African TV soap operas, agreed that they preferred the character to use a brand they know instead of a no-name brand. This is in agreement with (Pokrywczynski's, 2005) statement that consumers preferred to see real brands in TV shows and films than fake brands or no name brands. Williams, Petrosky, Hernandez and Page (2012) also agreed that consumers enjoy the realism that comes with branded integration.

In terms of branded content integration being accepted by consumers or being a distraction to consumers in the South African soap opera environment, consumers who watched South African TV soap operas disagreed that branded content integration was a distraction when watching a TV soap opera as compared to 29% of those who do not watch TV soap operas. This finding is also in agreement with Williams, Petroksy, Hernandez and Page (2012) that consumers generally do not find product placement unethical or misleading.

5.4 The relationship between branded content integration and consumer attitudes

In terms of the model constructed, the model indicated a relationship between branded content integration and consumer attitudes formed from watching a TV soap opera. The branded content integration in this context is the placement of Standard Bank in a soap opera and other brands in general. Table 2 and 3 illustrates the relationship between branded content integration and consumer attitudes. The P value <0.001 validates that there is a positive relationship between branded content integration and consumer attitudes on those that watch TV soap operas.

The research revealed that attitudes towards the practice of branded content in TV soap operas were generally positive for those who watched South African TV soap operas. Those who did not watch soap operas were slightly positive about the practice. The research also revealed that consumers who watched TV soap operas felt very positive

when they saw a product or brand that they were aware of in the background of the scene and consumers felt very positive when the character of the soap opera mentioned or used Standard Bank in the soap opera. These findings are consistent with research previously conducted that branded content integration into storylines provokes positive attitudes in all media types and that consumers enjoy the realism that comes with branded content integration (Snooddy, 2006). This is also consistent with (Pokrywczynski, 2005) that consumers prefer to see real brands in TV shows instead of no-name brands.

Both consumers who generally watch South African TV soap operas and even those who do not watch South African TV soap operas felt very positive when a character of a soap opera had positive attitudes towards a brand that they were aware of. In conclusion, the hypothesis tested revealed that there is a positive relationship between branded content integration and consumer attitudes, which is consistent with the results of the research. The research also revealed there is a difference between consumers who watch TV soap operas and those who do not watch TV soap operas.

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between branded content integration and consumer attitudes.

5.5 The relationship between consumer attitudes and consumer purchase intent.

Table 4 and 5 indicate p values of 0.001 and above indicating that there is a positive relationship between consumer attitudes and consumer purchase intent for those who watch soap operas and those who do not. The hypothesised model indicated that a relationship exists between the dependent variable (consumer attitudes) and independent variable (purchase intent). The respondents were tasked to watch a video clip and then answer questions pertaining to their attitudes in general about branded content integration and then to determine the likelihood of purchasing a product or service that they had seen been used by a character of the soap opera or having seen the product in the scene not specifically being mentioned by a character.

A Chi square test was conducted to measure the attitude to branded content variables against the variables of purchase intent. The P-values were all less than 0.05, which enabled us to conclude that there is a significant relationship between consumer attitudes formed from branded content integration and purchase intent.

The main findings indicated that consumers are generally positive about branded content integration. The viewers who watched South African soap operas are generally more positive about branded content integration in a soap opera compared to those who do not. The viewers that watched soap operas were also more positive in terms of seeing the Standard Bank brand in the background of the scenes and seeing a character using the brand than those who did not watch TV soap operas. There was little negativity amongst those who did not watch TV soap operas. The results of the findings align with those from research conducted by Babin and Thompson (1996), Karrh, Firth and Callison (2001), Gupta and Lord (1998) on branded content integration reveals that attitude has an influence in brand or product recognition, attitude, as well as purchase intention.

The results conclude that the respondents who watched TV soap operas and those who did not were likely to purchase a brand mentioned by a character of a soap opera or a brand that is seen in a scene of a soap opera. These results were consistent with the study conducted by Lafferty, Goldsmith and Newell (2002) that found that an endorser of a brand similar to that of the characters found in the soap operas has an influence on the consumer purchase intent.

5.6 The relationship between branded content integration and purchase intent.

The initial model did not indicate a relationship between branded content integration and consumer purchase intent. Once the analysis had been conducted to test the relationship between the two variables, the findings revealed that branded content integration (after watching a soap opera integrated with a brand or product) was likely to lead to consumers' purchase intent. Table 6 and 7 indicate P values of 0.001 and above

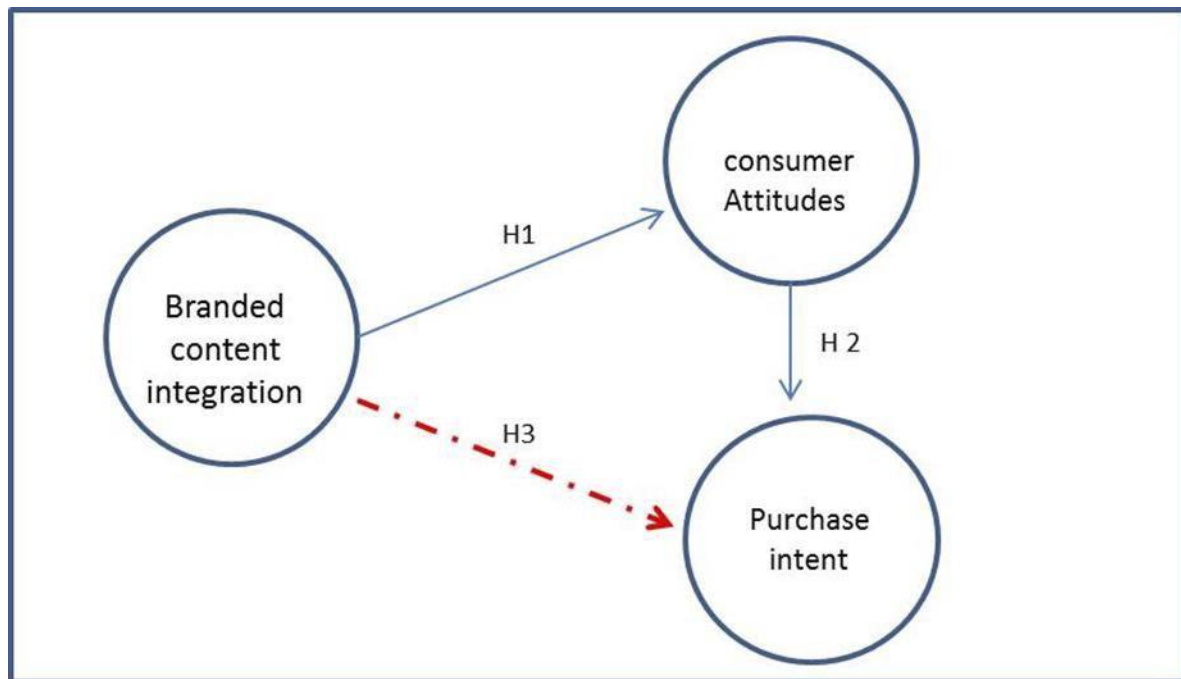
confirming that there is indeed a positive relationship between branded content integration and consumer purchase intent.

The factor of purchase intent was driven by integration of the character of the soap opera mentioning the brand in the context of the scene; this integration would be considered as the character endorsing the brand. The purchase intent was also driven by the consumers seeing the brand within the soap opera either being used by a character or integrated in the scene. These findings are consistent with the research conducted by Russell, Stern and Panda (2004) that states that products or brands that appear in TV programmes like sitcoms and dramas have higher purchase intent by the consumers because of the product that has been integrated into the show.

5.7 Conclusion

The results discussed in chapters 4 and 5 utilised responses 148 responses in order to determine the effectiveness of branded content integration on both consumer attitudes (with people who watch soap operas being the consumers) and purchase intent in South African TV soap operas. The findings of the research indicated branded content integration leads to consumer attitudes and consumer attitudes have an effect on consumer purchase intent. The results also indicated that branded content integration can lead to consumer purchase intent. The findings indicated a very strong relationship between the variables to those who did not watch soap operas as compared to those who watch TV soap operas.

Figure 26: Final model



CHAPTER 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

The study was aimed at determining the effectiveness of branded content integration on consumer attitudes and purchase intent in the context of South African TV soap operas. The findings of the study revealed that integration of branded content in South African TV soap operas has an effect on consumer attitudes. Consumers' attitudes formed from integration of content can lead to consumer purchase intent. The findings of the study also confirmed that branded content integration leads to consumer purchase intent.

6.2 Implications

The findings of this study gives marketers insights into how to effectively use branded content integration in South African TV soap operas as part of an integrated marketing communication strategy. The results of this study revealed strategies that marketers could use in order to form positive consumer attitudes of an integrated brand and increase the level of consumer purchase intent. The most common measure of branded content integration is measuring consumer attitudes to this integration of content. Purchase intent is formed upon positive attitudes formed from the integration.

The study revealed that branded content integration in general could be used as an effective way of advertising within a soap opera, depending on how the placement is done. Marketing managers need to make sure to use characters of a soap opera to mention or use the brand in the scene. The brand appearing in the background in context also creates an effective way of integration into the soap opera.

In the study it was revealed that viewers actually preferred characters of a soap opera to use a brand familiar to them rather than a no-name brand. These findings give marketers an opportunity to effectively integrate brands that can be associated with the main characters of a soap opera. At the same time marketers need to be careful in choosing the correct character to associate with their brand, as an unethical character could have a negative association.

When developing branded content strategies for integration in a soap opera, marketers must identify the correct soap opera in which the brand will be integrated that will fit the brand as well as resonate with the target market of the brand and the soap opera. Viewers of soap operas follow the storyline through mainly because of the nature of the soap opera (running for long periods of time and long storylines). When a brand is integrated seamlessly in a soap opera, customers do not view this as a distraction in the soap opera and customers appreciate the characters of the soap opera using real brands in order to create realism. This realism provides marketers with an opportunity to showcase the brand for longer periods in the right context, thus creating a relationship with the viewers. Viewers form relationships with their favourite character of a soap opera. The findings of the study revealed that consumers formed positive attitudes towards branded content integration when their character of a soap opera uses the branded integrated in the soap opera or when the character actively mentions the brand.

Positive attitudes were also formed by viewers when the character of a soap opera had a positive attitude towards the brand. Marketers can use this opportunity to select a character of a soap opera as an “endorser” of a brand. Using a brand also creates an opportunity for a character to build the credibility of a brand and showcase usage of a brand in a way that entices the viewer to consider purchasing the brand. The study revealed that customers were more likely to consider purchasing a brand once they had seen a character of a soap opera mentioning or using the brand. The study proved that viewers who regularly watched TV soap operas and those who did not believed that branded content integration was effective in soap operas and had positive attitudes to the practice of branded content itself. These findings indicate that branded content integration as marketing communication strategy can be used to target groups that do not watch soap operas in the TV programmes that they prefer watching instead of soap operas.

6.3 Limitations and future research

This study has limitations that should be taken into consideration. Firstly, the data sample for the research was small and was dominated by viewers who consumed South African TV soap operas, whereas those who did not watch were fewer. The study focused on branded content integration in South African TV soap operas specifically and not on the practice itself on other platforms.

Secondly, the stimuli used for the study could have influenced the positive results received because viewers might be skewed to answer positively about their favourite TV soap opera. The stimuli also showed the integration of one brand across three different soap operas. Thirdly, the stimuli used were manipulated to mainly showcase the parts of the soap operas that were heavily integrated with the Standard Bank brand to show maximum exposure.

Finally, when the data of the study was collected, respondents had just viewed the stimuli, which meant that we were not able to analyse the effects after the customers had been exposed over a longer period. Future research in this study area should focus on how the storyline of the soap opera can play a role in the manner in which a brand is integrated into the soap opera.

Secondly, future research could be considered in product type; for example, what products are best suited to be used for branded content integration? Could these products be fast moving consumer goods or service-related products in the telecommunications- or banking industry?

Finally, it would also be interesting to duplicate the study and include the level of education of the respondents; for example, those with tertiary education and those who have no tertiary education. This aspect can give us a view of the levels of integration that each group prefers. The findings could be used to target placements appropriately, based on the target market of the soap opera.

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APPENDIX A

Product placement effectiveness in soap operas Questionnaire

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for your attention to this academic questionnaire.

My name is Kopano Mwali and I am studying towards a Master of Management in Strategic Marketing at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. I am required to conduct research as part of fulfilling the requirements of my degree.

The study is exploring the influence of consumer attitudes and purchase intent within the context of a South African soap opera. Specific reference will be made to the Standard Bank brand that is currently placed within soap operas.

This is considered as placement of a brand within a TV program. For this thesis specific focus is made on advertising within South African TV soap operas

I would like to invite you to take part in this study by watching the video clip attached and then clicking on the following survey link to complete a short online survey:

Should you have any queries relating to the research, please feel free to e-mail me (1296462@students.wits.ac.za). Alternatively, you may contact my dissertation supervisor, Dr Yvonne Saini (yvonne.saini@wits.ac.za).

Name of participant: _____

Q1 Gender

- Male
- Female

Q2 Age group

- 18-24
- 25- 30
- 30 - 35
- 35+

Q3 How often do you watch TV?

- Very Often
- Often
- Sometimes

Never

If Never Is Selected, Then Skip to End of Survey

Q4 Do you watch any South African TV soapies?

- Yes
- No

If No Is Selected, Then Skip to On a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is strong...

Q5 Which of the following South African TV soapies below do you watch?

- Muvhango • Isidingo, • Isibaya • Generations • 7de Laan
- Other

Q6 How often do you watch these TV soapies?

- Every week day
- More than 3 times a week
- Less than 3 times a week
- Repeats on weekends(Omnibus)

Q7 Have you noticed any advertising in a soapy?

- Yes • Maybe • No

Part 2

Q8 On a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is strongly disagree and 7 is strongly agree, would you say that Standard bank's advertising in the soapy is effective?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q9 On a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is Strongly disagree and 7 is Strongly agree, would you say Standard Bank's advertising in the soapy is effective when the character uses or mentions things about Standard Bank

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q10 On a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is Strongly disagree and 7 is Strongly agree, would you

say Standard Bank's advertising in the soapy is effective only when Standard Bank appears in the background of the scene

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q11 On a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is Extremely negative and 7 is Extremely positive, how do you feel about advertising in soapies?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q12 On a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is Extremely negative and 7 is Extremely positive, how do you feel when you see Standard Bank's advertising in the background of a scene in a soapy

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q13 On a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is Extremely negative and 7 is Extremely positive, how

do you feel when a character mentions/uses Standard Bank products in the soapie

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q14 On a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is Extremely negative and 7 is Extremely positive, how do you feel when a character in a soapy likes a brand you know?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q15 On a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is Strongly disagree and 7 is Strongly agree, would say you prefer a character in a soapy to use a brand you know instead of a no-name brand

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q16 On a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is Strongly disagree and 7 is Strongly agree, would you say that you prefer a character in the soapy to say something about a brand you know when you are watching the soapy

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q17 On a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is Strongly disagree and 7 is Strongly agree, would you say that advertising in soaps is a distraction

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q18 On a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is extremely unlikely and 7 is extremely likely, how likely would you consider using a brand that is mentioned by your favourite character in a soapy

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q19 On a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is Extremely unlikely and 7 is Extremely likely, how likely would you consider using or buying a brand that you see in a soapy

1	2	3	4	5	6	7