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The influence of social media political marketing on trust, loyalty and voting intention of youth voters in South Africa

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

Johannesburg, 2016

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ABSTRACT

South Africa has witnessed a decline in youth voter turnout. Consequently, political parties are integrating social media in their political marketing strategies in order to appeal to the youth voters. Notwithstanding the cumulative research that has been conducted on social media political marketing globally, there is dearth of such research in South Africa. Furthermore, no studies have explored the influence of social media political marketing on voter trust, loyalty and voting intention of the youth in the South African political context. This research intends to contribute to the increasing knowledge on the efficacy of social media political marketing by political parties in South Africa to engage with the youth and improve their election turn out. The two main research objectives the study seeks to achieve are to establish the influence of social media political marketing on voting intention, with voter trust and voter loyalty as mediators and to determine which mediator (voter trust or voter loyalty) has the strongest influence on the outcome variable (voting intention).

Using a data set of 250 respondents, between the ages of 18 and 35 years, from Gauteng Province in South Africa, this study explores these relationships. The study outcome is that all five hypotheses are supported. The results denote that the relationship between social media political marketing and voter trust, social media political marketing and voter loyalty, voter trust and voter loyalty, voter trust and voting intention and voter loyalty and voting intention are all positive in a significant way.

The research paper deliberates on the implications of the results from an academic, political party, legal and marketers' perspective. In addition, directions for future research are suggested.

DECLARATION

I, Nandi Dabula, 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 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.

Nandi Dabula

Signed at……..

On the……day of……20……..

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have been profoundly blessed to be surrounded by people who love, inspire, challenge, support and see greatness in me, even when I don't see it myself. I wish to extend my appreciation, with a sincere sense of reverence to the following:

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CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

The emergence of social media has significantly transformed not only personal communications, but the business and political communications landscape across the globe. Social media facilitates the initiation, creation and dissemination of information between users. It also enables users to develop online relationships and interact, engage and share opinions with parties who have common interests (Kushin & Yamamoto, 2010; Steenkamp & Hyde-Clarke, 2014). The South African political landscape has become fiercely competitive as citizens have a wide array of political party choices and alternatives. Furthermore, there is increasing youth political apathy, decline in youth political participation (as evidenced by the low voter registration numbers during the 2014 elections and decline in youth voter turnout from the 2009 to 2014 elections (Mattes, 2012; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2014; Mattes & Richmond, 2014). Accordingly, political parties are incorporating social media in their election campaign strategies to promote their parties and position themselves and leaders positively in the electoral market, appeal to the voters, in particular the youth, in order to earn votes.

Social media has played an instrumental role in drumming up support for boycotts, demonstrations and election campaigns, among others. Due to its ability to deliver effectively coordinated political actions and expansive media visibility, social media has advanced the influence of social movements (Michalis, 2012). Prominent examples of such mobilisation are the Arab Spring in 2011 and the 2015 South African university student protests against fee increases, dubbed “feesmustfall”. The prominent examples of social media usage in election campaigns are the 2008 and 2012 United States (US) elections where President Barack Obama won both elections. Subsequent to Obama’s electoral victory, many countries followed the

trend of utilising social media in election campaigns. This trend has subsequently received extensive attention from researchers across the globe (Cogburn & Espinoza-Vasquez, 2011; Vergeer, 2012; Towner & Dulio, 2012; Flemming, Metag & Marcinowski, 2013; Marcinowski, Metag & Wattenberg, 2014; Bimber, 2014).

Social media also featured prominently in South African election campaigns during the 2009 and 2014 elections and scholars such as Steenkamp and Hyde-Clarke (2014); Ayankoya (2014) and Malherbe (2015) have explored its usage during these elections. The studies however, focused primarily on whether the political parties applied social media strategies effectively in their election campaigns. Consequently, there is still a lacuna in literature in this field in South Africa, which this study aims to complement by exploring whether social media political marketing influences trust, loyalty and voting intention of the youth in South Africa.

This chapter provides a synopsis of the research, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, research objectives and questions, significance and delimitations, definition of terms and assumptions. The chapter concludes with a graphical representation of the research flow which sequentially highlights the other chapters covered in the study.

1.2. Context of the study

South Africa has experienced a proliferation of social media usage over the years. According to the SA Social Media Landscape 2015 report, Facebook is still the most popular social network in South Africa, with 11, 8-million users (22% of the population) followed by YouTube with a user base of 7, 2-million, then Twitter with 6, 6-million users. Instagram and LinkedIn have also experienced growth, with 1, 1-million users and 3, 8-million users respectively in South Africa (SA Social Media Landscape, 2015 report).

Ahead of the 2009 general election, both the African National Congress (ANC) and the Democratic Alliance (DA) (amongst others) created Facebook pages as part of their online campaign strategies in an effort to communicate directly with citizens. By using social media, the parties sought to engage with the youth where they were (on social media platforms) and using their language to inspire robust political discourse. In addition, this platform aimed to serve as an insight gathering tool for political parties, so they could gauge the general attitudes of the youth electorate (Booysen, 2014). For users, these platforms offered more accessibility to political information, which was perceived as being personal, genuine and transparent. Through social media, politicians were able to publish their opinions on social networking sites, micro-blogs and personal websites, thus mobilising voters (Booysen, 2014).

During the 2014 elections, parties endeavoured to increase their social media presence. However, due to the demographic diversity of the supporters, parties were somehow compelled to strike a fair balance between traditional campaign methods such as rallies, speeches, door to door visits, posters, newsletters and pamphlets, electronic media such as sms and email, and social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp and Google broadcasts. This was to avoid alienating mature voters who may not have access to social media.

Although South African political parties concur that social media is a viable communication medium, myriad impediments impact its usage and potential expansion. The cost and lack of access to smart phones (which is where social media is mainly accessed from), cost of accessing data and deficient signal were some of the obstacles that the parties had to contend with (Booysen, 2014). Furthermore, social media requires expertise and financial resources for its benefits to be fully exploited (Towner & Dulio, 2012), of which many of the parties did not have much. Lilleker, Pack and Jackson (2010) posit that the Internet offers new and less established political parties more opportunities to disseminate their ideas, thereby enhancing political competitiveness. The performance of the Economic

Freedom Fighters (EFF) in the 2014 elections confirms this assertion. The EFF is a new party that was formed by former ANC Youth leader, Julius Malema. EFF's campaign strategy focused mainly on youth voters and used social media, particularly Twitter, to reach them. While the EFF's election results were lower than what its leaders anticipated, considering that the EFF managed to attain over one million votes in a very short time after its formation (August, 2013), it can be surmised that their impetus benefitted from online conversations (Findlay & Janse van Rensburg, 2015).

While the parties had social media presence in 2009, a study by Walton and Donner (2009) contends that social media did not facilitate electoral communication and thus did not allow for broader contestation or deliberation. The studies conducted by Steenkamp and Hyde-Clarke (2014), Ayankoya (2014) and Malherbe (2015) also suggest that the political parties did not leverage on the voluminous benefits social media presents to engage, interact, deal with youth apathy and create stronger bonds and connections between political parties and voters.

The current study postulates that social media centres on relationships and trust is an essential component in all forms of relationships (Zhang, Johnson, Seltzer & Bichard, 2010). For political parties to successfully leverage on the benefits offered by social media platforms, trust and loyalty must be fostered and when there is trust and loyalty, intention to vote is amplified. When voters have confidence, trust and are loyal to a party, they become inclined to have a strong intention to vote for that political party. Conversely, when trust does not exist, voters either vote for the opposition or simply do not vote (Ahmed, Lodhi & Shahzad, 2011; Hooghe, Marien & Pauwels, 2011; Rachmat, 2014).

It is therefore vital for political parties in South Africa to use social media to engage and interact with voters, answer questions, seek input and build profound connections. Social media tools must be seen as enablers that political parties can

fully utilise to develop an in-depth understanding of potential voters and to communicate with them in ways that would rebuild trust and loyalty, resulting in votes. The hallmark of President Obama's campaign was in its ability to harness the power of social media to engage, involve and empower voters. His social media campaign enlisted supporters, shared information , constantly updated citizens on what was going on and encouraged genuine conversations without the slant of political campaigns. Through this, Obama managed to instill trust and confidence which resulted in victory for his party in both the 2008 and 2012 elections
(Hong & Nadler, 2012; Copeland & Bimber, 2015; Pennington, Winfrey, Warner & Kearney, 2015).

1.3. Problem statement

1.3.1. *Main problem*

Social media is still a fairly new trend and the knowledge and experience of how to utilise these platforms effectively, particularly in a political environment, requires further development. According to Booysen (2014), South African political parties still lack expertise and skills to utilise social media platforms and thus understanding of how this medium could be fully exploited by political leaders, parties and politicians warrants further advancement. In view of the continuing apathy, and dwindling levels of interest and participation in election campaigns by the youth, as investigated by Schreiner and Mattes (2011), Mattes, (2012), and Mattes and Richmond (2014), the current study seeks to add to this existing body of literature of social media political marketing in South African election campaigns. The study not only focused on the usage of social media by political parties but also investigated how social media political marketing impacts on trust, loyalty and voting intention of the youth of South Africa.

1.3.1.1. *Sub- problems*

a. To establish the influence of social media political marketing on voting intention and the mediating role of voter trust and voter loyalty.
b. To determine which mediator (voter trust or voter loyalty) has the strongest influence on the outcome variable (voting intention).

1.4. Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of social media political marketing on voter trust, loyalty and voting intention by the youth of South Africa.

1.5. Research objectives

This study sought to address the theoretical and empirical objectives that are outlined below. A comprehensive review of literature addressed the theoretical objectives whilst the empirical objectives are addressed by the research investigation.

1.5.1. Theoretical objectives

a. To review literature on political marketing
b. To review literature on social media
c. To review literature on voter trust
d. To review literature on voter loyalty
e. To review literature on voting intention

1.5.2. Empirical objectives

a. To investigate whether there is a positive relationship between social media political marketing and voter trust.
b. To investigate whether there is a positive relationship between social media political marketing and voter loyalty.
c. To investigate whether there is a positive relationship between voter trust and voter loyalty.
d. To investigate whether there is a positive relationship between voter trust, and voting intention.
e. To investigate whether there is a positive relationship between voter loyalty and voting intention.

1.6. Research questions

The following research questions are answered by the study:

a. To what extent does social media political marketing influence voter trust?
b. To what extent does social media political marketing influence voter loyalty?
c. To what extent does voter trust influence voter loyalty?
d. To what extent does voter trust influence voting intention?
e. To what extent does voter loyalty influence voting intention?

1.7. Significance of the study

The study generated invaluable insights and created impetus to strengthen the knowledge base on the strategic framework that political parties could develop to align their social media activities and campaigns with their overall campaign strategy. This will ensure consistency and coherence across all media channels (online and offline) and will be valuable in aiding political parties reach their

campaign objectives, particularly in the upcoming local government elections in 2016.

Social media serves as a catalyst for forming civic communities, enhancing a sense of community and fostering trust and loyalty (Zhang *et al*., 2010). Based on this, the study contributes immensely in providing some strategic guidelines that political parties and leaders can employ to transmit messages on social media that are geared towards nurturing the trust and loyalty of followers, which will benefit the party in the polls.

The findings of the study will provide a structure of how advertising and digital agencies or political parties can design digital content that generates positive sentiments and maximises support for the political parties.

The study augments the limited knowledge surrounding social media political marketing in South Africa. The results will be beneficial for academics, civil society and political organisations to better understand how they can engage with young South Africans in a more profound manner to fortify the political discourse and narrative.

For marketing teams of political organisations endeavouring to increase their organisation's brand equity using social media, this study serves as a roadmap for the correct implementation of social media in politics. It is expected to increase leadership buy-in in political campaigning that combines social media.

The results have the potential to be used in uncovering a systematic pattern in the application of social media political marketing to enable campaigners and marketers to be more effective in their segmenting, targeting and positioning in order to influence citizen's voting behaviour and intention.

The study contributes to the understanding of the pivotal role played by social network sites in political change in developing democracies.

1.8. Delimitations of the study

The study focused on the youth between ages 18-35 years, who are the segment that mainly consumes social media. Because of this sampling, the study may exclude the views of the older generation. The study was conducted in Johannesburg at two universities, University of the Witwatersrand and University of Johannesburg, which excludes other cities and provinces in South Africa. Additionally, the study excluded the views of the youth between 18-35 (mostly in rural areas of the country) who do not have smartphones and do not engage on social media.

1.9. Definition of terms

The following phrases are used frequently in the report, thus it is prudent to familiarise the reader with these terms for ease of comprehension.

1.9.1. Youth

The National Youth Commission Act of 1996 and the National Youth Policy of 2000 defines the youth as the group of individuals who fall within the age group of 14 to 35 years (Booysen, 2014). The 35 years upper age limit was adopted to accommodate the reality of the imbalances and inequalities that still exist from the history of South Africa. This definition is consistent with the one stipulated in the African Youth Charter (African Union, 2006) which identifies youth as individuals between the ages of 15 and 35 years. The African Youth Charter description however excludes the 14 year olds. For the purpose of this research, the IEC classification of youth of 18-35 is used. Youth are also referred to as the Millennials, “Born frees”, Millennial Generation or Generation Y, terms generally used to refer to individuals born between the early 1980s and the early 2000s.

1.9.2. Political participation

Political participation is the means by which individuals use all their social resources to influence the government's decision-making process which is essential to a democratic society (Norris 2004; Resnick & Casale, 2011).

1.9.3. Political marketing

Political marketing entails the application of marketing principles and processes in political campaigns, with the aim of positioning the party and its leader positively in the political or electoral market, so that it appeals to the electorate/voters, thereby garnering votes for the party (Newman, 2012). In political marketing, voters are regarded as consumers whose needs have to be satisfied (Ediraras, Rahayu, Natalina & Widya, 2013).

1.9.4. Social media

Social media refers to a collection of applications that support the creation and sharing of User Generated Content (UGC), online communication, collaboration and information sharing between a wide audience (Davidson & Yoran, 2007; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Effing, van Hillegersberg & Huibers, 2011; Picazo-Vela, Gutierrez-Martinez & Luna-Reyes, 2012; Joseph, 2012; Towner & Dulio, 2012; Vergeer, Hermans & Sams, 2013). The software tools employed to facilitate this communication are known as social media channels. Social networking on the other hand, refers to the act of individuals or groups of people with likeminded interests coming together or engaging on social media (Swanepoel & Bothma, 2013).

1.9.5. Web 2.0

“Web 2.0 is a term that was first used in 2004 to describe a new way in which software developers and end-users started to utilise the World Wide Web; that is, as a platform whereby content and applications are no longer created and published by individuals, but instead are continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative fashion” (Effing *et al.,* 2011, p. 28).

1.9.6. Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)

IMC is the well co-ordinated use of different promotional methods, such as advertising, public relations, sales promotions, events, among others, with an intention to reinforce each other and provide clarity, consistency and increased impact when combined within a comprehensive communications plan (Thakur, 2014).

1.9.7. Electronic word of mouth (E-WOM)

“E-WOM” is short for “electronic word-of-mouth” and refers to word of mouth that is circulated online. E-WOM includes online customer reviews, posts on Twitter and Facebook and blogs and it can either be positive or negative.

1.9.8. Online Reputation Management (ORM)

Online Reputation Management is the task of monitoring, addressing, or rectifying undesirable or negative mentions on the web (Portmann, Meierc, Cudré-Mauroux & Pedrycz, 2015).

1.9.9. Voter trust

The confidence and expectations that voters hold about the reliability and positive intentions of the political party or leader to keep his words and promises (Sherman, Schiffman & Thelen, 2012; Rachmat, 2014).

1.9.10. Voter loyalty

The positive attitude that voters have towards a political party, which results in them repeatedly voting for that party during elections (Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003).

1.9.11. Voting intention

Voting intention is a person's desire and intention to vote for a particular political party or candidate (Rachmat, 2014).

1.10. Assumptions

The study assumed that the respondents had some basic understanding of the South African political landscape and that they used social media as a form of communication and interaction with others. The study also assumed that the respondents participated willingly, were free from bias and provided honest responses to questions.

1.11. The flow of the study

The process followed when the study was conducted is presented below. Figure 1, graphically depicts the chapters covered in the current study.

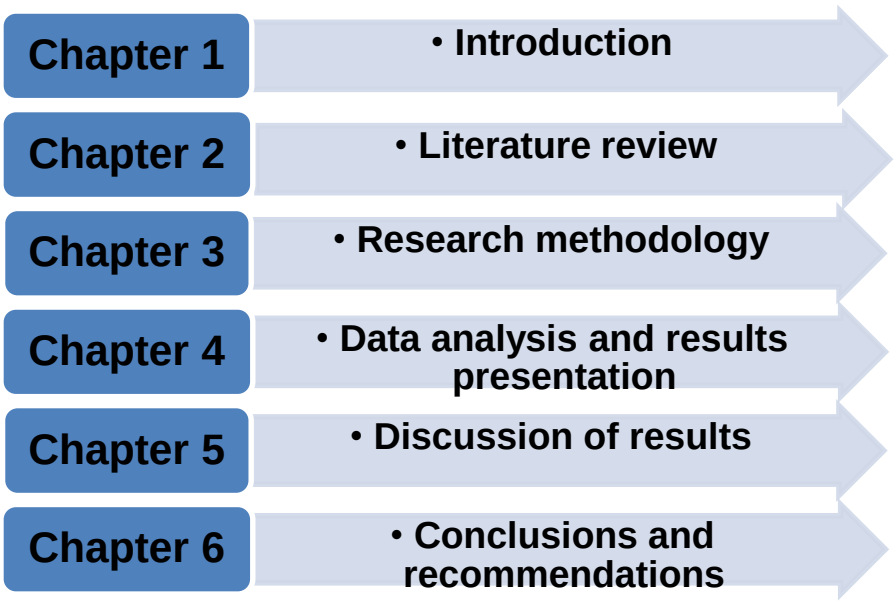


Figure 1: Flow of the study

1.12. Summary of Chapter 1

This chapter presented an outline of the entire study. The perspectives under which the study was conducted, the objectives that the study sought to address and the research purpose and questions, were articulated. In addition, the scope of the study, coupled with the ethical considerations to which the study adhered, were fully described. Lastly, a research flow diagram was presented to outline the framework of the entire study. The next chapter presents an extensive account of the theories on which the research is grounded and literature that was reviewed for the study constructs.

1.13. Synopsis of the study

Table 1 below provides the framework of the current study.

Table 1: Framework of the study

Chapter 1 **Overview of the study**	This chapter presented the study overview, which comprised the introduction, problem statement, purpose, research objectives and research questions, significance of the study, research flow and the synopsis of the entire study.
Chapter 2 **Literature review**	This chapter covered the theories on which the study is grounded, which are the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), Information, Motivation and Behavioural skills model (IMB) and Commitment-Trust Theory (CTT). It also focused on the literature reviewed for the study variables, which are social media political marketing, voter trust, voter loyalty and voting intention. The chapter concluded with the conceptual model and the development of the hypotheses.
Chapter 3 **Research methodology**	This chapter outlined the research methodology, design and data collection methods employed in the study. It further covered the validity and reliability of the research as well as the ethical considerations.
Chapter 4 Data analysis and results presentation	Chapter 4 dealt with the results of the study and particularly focused on descriptive statistics, scale item results, reliability and validity assessment results, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) results and Path Modelling results.
Chapter 5 **Discussion of results**	Chapter five dealt with the results discussion in relation to the research model.
Chapter 6 **Conclusions and recommendations**	The last chapter, chapter six presented some recommendations to political parties and marketing practitioners. It further articulated suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The literature review chapter commences with the discussion of the theoretical framework on which the study is grounded. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985; 1988; 1991), Information-Motivation-Behavioural skills (IMB) model by Fisher and Fisher (2002) and Commitment-Trust model have the most correlation with the study constructs and have thus been adopted as grounding for the current study. This chapter also discusses the research variables for this study which are social media political marketing (SMPM), voter trust (VT), voter loyalty (VL) and voting intention (VI).

Although in the conceptual model, social media political marketing is one variable, the researcher took the view of separating these concepts for the purpose of the literature review due to the abundance of literature on political marketing and social media. The researcher hoped that this approach resulted in a more structured and clearer review of social media political marketing. As the study focuses on the youth, a brief recapitulation of who makes up this segment, why this segment is significant and the pervasiveness of declining youth political participation across the globe is presented. The chapter concludes with the presentation of the conceptual model and the hypotheses development.

2.2. Theoretical framework

2.2.1. Theory of Planned Behaviour

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) expands on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) that was developed by Fishbein and Ajzen in 1975. TPB aims to

predict people's intentions and actions and suggests that attitudes, norms and ability predict behaviour. TPB corroborates the intention-behaviour paradigm which intimates that an individual's actions are influenced by the individual's intention to perform the action (Nchise, 2012).

The TPB has contributed significantly to researchers' understanding of predictors of intentions and behaviour. Consequently, it has been widely used in many studies as a framework to elucidate numerous kinds of behaviour, such as smoking, drinking and substance abuse. Within the voting context, TPB has been successfully applied by a number of authors such as Hansen and Jensen (2007); Glasford (2008); Curnalia and Mermer (2013) and Marcinkowski and Metag (2014). These researchers however, hold divergent views about the role of attitudes and norms in explaining voting behaviour. In his study, Glasford (2008) employed the TPB to predict the likelihood of the United States youth voting in the 2004 presidential elections. The study findings concluded that attitudes and subjective norms strongly predict voting behaviour. Hansen and Jensen (2007) used the TPB to rationalise voting intention during the Danish Parliament 2005 election. These authors established that intention is the main predictor of voting behaviour and that behavioural intention correlates to voting behaviour. The study findings confirmed that an individual's attitude about voting significantly predicts future voting intentions, which is consistent with the supposition of TPB. Paradoxically, in a study of politics in Singapore, attitudes towards the political party and the candidate were stronger indicators of behaviour than both mass media and interpersonal subjective norms (Singh, Leong, Tan & Wong, 1995).

This intimates that TPB predictors may vary, based on individual differences such as cultural background. In terms of applying the TPB to voting, Gill, Crosby and Taylor (1986) found that behavioural control, norms, and attitudes influenced adult voting behaviour. A conclusion that can be made from these contradictory findings is that attitudes and perceived behavioural control seem to be coherent

predictors of voting behaviour, although norms do not constantly predict political behaviour. It can thus be construed that behavioural intention is the crucial component of TPB. Researchers, such as Curnalia and Mermer (2013), contend that attitudes relate to both the evaluations of behaviour and beliefs about the outcomes of the behaviour. Intention has two major attributes, a person's attitude towards behaviour and a person's beliefs about social pressures to either perform or not perform the behaviour (Glasford, 2008). A person's attitude and subjective norm concerning his or her behaviour influences their intention (Curnalia & Mermer, 2013).

The Theory of Planned Behaviour consists of six constructs that all signify an individual's control over his/her actions. These are the deliberations about the result of performing the behaviour (i.e. attitudes), the reasons that encourage the performance of an action (i.e. behavioural intention), the perception about whether friends, family or close associates approve or disapprove of the action (i.e. subjective norms), the expected codes of behaviour in a group (i.e. social norms), the existence of clear reasons that may encourage or discourage the behaviour (i.e. perceived power) and lastly, a person's view of the ease or difficulty of performing the action (i.e. perceived behavioural control). Perceived behavioural control is the extension that was added from the Theory of Reasoned Action, to the Theory of Planned Behaviour. The constructs that are referred to in the TPB are illustrated in figure 2.

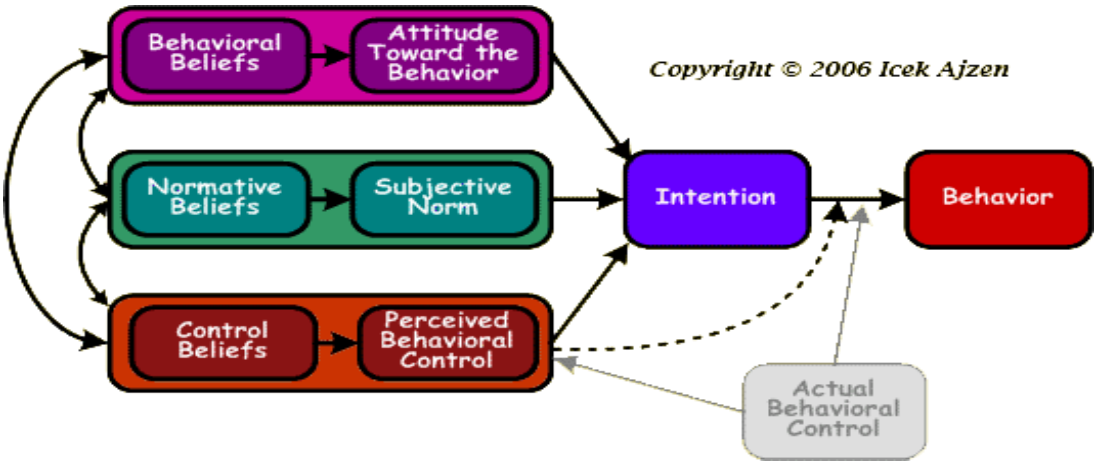


Figure 2: Theory of Planned Behaviour

Source: Ajzen (1991)

Drawbacks of TPB

Although TPB has been extensively used in numerous studies as a framework to explain conduct, it has some drawbacks. Firstly, it overlooks the possible influence of some factors (either environmental or economic), which may hinder a person's intention to do something. For example, from a voting perspective, a young person from a rural area may have the intention to engage with political parties or leaders on social media but may not be in a position to do so because of lack of connectivity, financial constraints and access.

Secondly, TPB presupposes that an individual has the resources and advantages required to be successful in performing the desired conduct, despite the intention. Once again, in a South African context, the realities of major disparities prevailing between the “haves” and “have-nots”, rural and urban areas, and other social issues pertaining to resources and opportunities, cannot be disregarded.

Thirdly, the TPB ignores other variables that impede behavioural intention and motivation, such as fear, threat or past experience, which may be a consequence

of real issues in the South African context, such as crime and political intolerance.

Lastly, the TPB fails to address the time lag between the intention and action, which is slightly problematic with elections or voting, as elections only occur every four years in South Africa.

Irrespective of these drawbacks, numerous studies have confirmed the relevance of TPB in explaining behaviour and its continued dominance in intention and behaviour literature (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen, 2011).

TPB: Relevance to the study

Voting intention is the outcome variable for the current study. It is therefore important to establish the factors that shape voter's intentions and the role that social media political marketing plays. The Theory of Planned Behaviour seems to provide an avenue from which to commence in facilitating the understanding of the voting intention construct. The relevance of TPB to this study is in its applicability to understand what motivates the youth to engage with political parties/leaders on social media, whether they believe that this behaviour will enhance their trust, loyalty and voting intention for a specific party. Moreover, TPB implies that motives, norms, and ability may be related to an individual's experience. It can be construed that experience and age are related, therefore the theory may be useful in attempting to explain the age dynamics in the context of the declining youth political engagement.

The argument forwarded by Glasford (2008) implies that a person feels positive towards the behaviour of voting and because of those positive sentiments, is willing to use social media to engage with a political party in order to understand its agenda and policies more intimately. Komiak and Benbasat (2006) further explain that according to TPB, intentions are determined by attitude. In a voting scenario, this denotes that if a person holds strong beliefs and attitudes about

participating in a democratic process, they will have the intention to vote. The theory is also relevant in that if a person perceives that individuals who are important to him, such as family and friends, believe that voting is not important, he is most likely not to vote.

TPB lends itself to the application in this study because it not only addresses people's motivations for using social media but goes further to examine its influence on the decision to participate in democratic processes and discourse using wireless technologies, through exercising their voting intention.

2.2.2. Information-Motivation and Behavioural Skills model (IMB)

The Information-Motivation and Behavioural skills (IMB) model, was developed by Fisher and Fisher (1992) to the augment TRA and TPB. The IMB model seeks to explicate behaviour using the concepts of information, motivation and behavioural skills (IMB). The IMB model suggests that, in order for an individual to perform an action, he must possess information, motivation, and behavioural skills associated with the behaviour (Glasford, 2008). Empirical research on voting behaviour underscores the pivotal role played by information, motivation, and behavioural skills to voting behaviour (Verba, Schlozman & Brady, 1995). Some researchers contend that individuals who are more informed about politics and who possess skills and resources are more likely to vote (Glasford, 2008; Cohen & Chaffee, 2012). This is further supported by the contention made by Gil de Zúñiga, Jung and Valenzuela (2012) that knowledge about politics is a predictor of one's civic participation as people require information in order to decide how to voice their concerns in the public realm.

The IMB model suggests three things, firstly, that information is the first requirement for an individual to do something, followed by personal motivation (which includes attitudes towards doing something) and social motivation (which

entails perceived social support for doing something) and behavioural skills are a third prerequisite for engaging in a behaviour. Secondly, an individual's motivation to vote is determined not only by their own personal feelings regarding whether voting is the right thing to do or not, but also by whether friends and other acquaintances support voting. Thirdly, an individual's ability and skills essential to perform the behaviour determine whether the individual performs the action or not.

In the election context, for a person to vote, he or she must possess adequate information about how to vote, as well as information about the candidates and must also be personally and socially motivated to do so. Furthermore, an individual must believe that they have the necessary skills to vote. In sum, the theory posits that people's voting behaviour is shaped by the information they possess about voting, the motivation they have to vote and whether they believe that they have the skills necessary to vote (Fisher & Fisher, 1992; Glasford, 2008). Figure 3 illustrates the IMB Model.

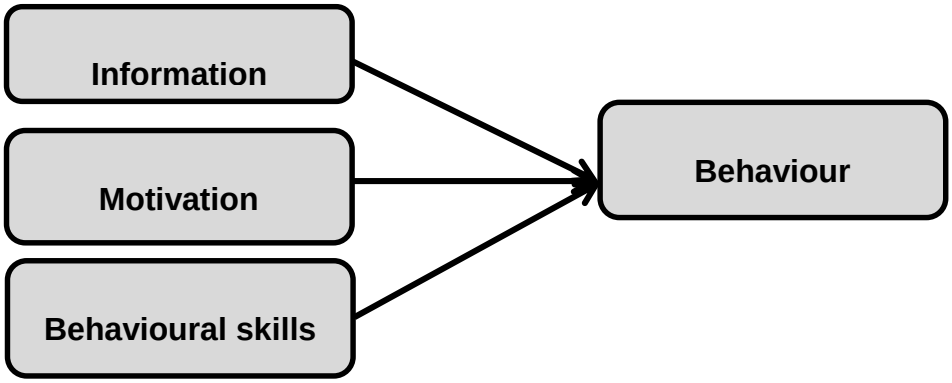


Figure 3: Information, Motivation and Behavioural skills model

Source: Fisher & Fisher (1992)

IMB: Relevance to the study

Social media has become a valuable resource to accelerate political discourse. Through intensive discussions on social media, abundant knowledge is acquired, which may enhance trust in the political system and impact on one's voting intentions. This supports the IMB model, which infers that the more one has knowledge, motivation and skills about voting, that has an influence on their voting behaviour and intention. If political parties want to galvanise and motivate the youth of South Africa to vote, social media is the appropriate platform that could reach a larger section of the youth, particularly in urban areas. However, utilising social media to engage the youth should not only be seen as a once-off tactic or only be applied during the voting period. It must be a continuous tool that is used to educate, interact, engage, motivate and develop the youth political knowledge to such an extent that their voting intention is strengthened and their political participation is invigorated.

This imparting of knowledge to the youth does not only end with political parties, but also extends to bodies such as the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), who need to utilise social media platforms to educate citizens about the electoral system, voter registration and provide all the intricacies involved in elections. This will go a long way in instilling a sense of voter trust, loyalty and also enhance voting intention. The youth will vote if they perceive that they have the ability to vote, the information needed to vote and are socially motivated to vote (Glasford, 2008).

2.2.3. Commitment-Trust Theory (CTT)

According to the Commitment-Trust Theory (CTT) of relationship marketing, trust and commitment are fundamental factors that must exist for a relationship to be successful (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Relationship marketing entails developing

bonds with customers, involves meeting their needs and fulfilling the commitments made. In a business context, businesses that adhere to the principles of relationship marketing build long-lasting bonds with their customers. As a result, customers trust these businesses and the mutual loyalty helps both parties fulfil their needs.

CTT: Relevance to the study

As aforementioned, voting enjoys analogies with business, where voters are regarded as customers, whose needs have to be understood, fulfilled and promises need to be honoured. Voter trust and loyalty are built by the continuous and consistent meeting of those needs. Failure to fulfil the commitments may result in trust deficit.

2.3. Voting behaviour

The trajectory that the field of political marketing has followed is that of consumer behaviour (Ben-ur & Newman, 2010). It is thus important to briefly demonstrate the connection between voting behaviour and consumer behaviour.

Voting is the way in which citizens contribute towards shaping the political trajectory in a democratic society. Consumer behaviour has found its place with voting because voting behaviour and decisions are driven by myriad environmental dynamics which include demographic factors, image of political party and leader, political party partisanship, government policies and performance, access to information both online and offline, sentiments and emotions, among others. Consumer behaviour, an arena of marketing, has resemblances with politics and campaigning. Voters can be perceived as consumers of service provided by a political party, therefore the manner in which they select political parties is analogous to how consumers make purchase decisions and has been researched extensively

(Ahmed *et al.,* 2011; Rachmat, 2014). Hence, the philosophies that pertain to marketing and selling of products and services can easily be transferred to the marketing of political parties and candidates.

In applying the principles of products and services marketing to elections, political parties or candidates make promises to the electorate through election campaigns in a form of advertising, PR, events, social media, among other methods. From the knowledge that is acquired and the interactions between the party and voters, trust develops, which results in the voter voting for the political party. An election process can thus be viewed as the purchase process, the voter as the buyer and the political party as the product. Figure 4 illustrates the consumer buying process, which is relevant to the study because it resembles exactly the same evaluation process that citizens go through before voting for a party.

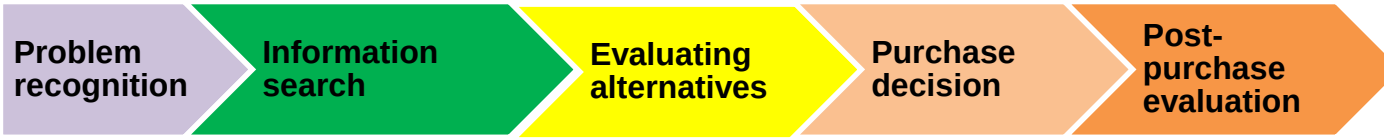


Figure 4: Consumer buying process

Source: (Belch & Belch, 2003)

2.4. The youth and political participation

2.4.1. Profiling the youth

The National Youth Policy 2009-2014 states that the youth are those individuals whose age groups are between 14 to 35 years. The 35 years upper age limit was adopted to take into consideration both the historical and current conditions of South Africa, where the country still faces myriad imbalances that stem from the past. The definition is coherent with the African Youth Charter (African Union, 2006)'s description of youth as those between 15 and 35 years (though it excludes the 14 year olds). For the purpose of this study, the IEC category of 18 to 35 years was employed to define the youth.

The youth globally are referred to as the Generation Y (Gen Y), or the Millennials, as they were born after the year 1992. Because they have grown up in an era of technology, they are very technologically savvy and display high levels of confidence with technological advancements and innovation. They are assertive, driven, ambitious, opinionated, and liberal and challenge convention. The internet and social media are very important forms of communication for them. Due to their free-spiritedness and adventurous attitude and outlook, Millennials have the ability to influence brands, politics, religion and technology in a phenomenal way.

South Africa has one of the lowest average ages of the population among numerous BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and the developed world, at 24.9 years, compared to the global average age of 29.1 years (Booysen, 2014). According to Booysen (2014), there are about 77.6% of people younger than 35 years, and 42% between the ages of 14 and 35 years in South Africa. Furthermore, according to Statistics South Africa (2011), the youth make up 41.2% of the country's population. These statistics illustrate that a substantial proportion of South Africa's voting population comprises the youth.

This corroborates the necessity of including the youth in the country's democratic processes to ensure the full entrenchment of democracy (Mattes, 2012).

2.4.2. Youth political participation

With expansions in social theory and research, diverse descriptions have been ascribed to the concept of youth political participation by numerous authors. Political participation can broadly be described as any activity that entails shaping opinions, taking action and striving to bring about positive change in society (Theocharis, 2011). Some authors conceptualise political participation to refer to actions by citizens that are directed at influencing government actions (Resnick & Casale, 2011). However, scholars such as Verba *et al*. (1995) are of the view that the definition adopted for political participation must be relevant and match the context of a particular study. The definitions by Theocharis (2011) and Resnick and Casale (2011) suggest that political participation manifests itself in numerous ways. These could encompass activities such as voting in elections, partaking in protest demonstrations, rallies, matches, voluntary work, belonging to a political party and involvement in political dialogues through the media.

It is startling though, to note that the definitions that have been provided for political participation do not include any forms of online political participation activities such as watching and commenting on political videos, sharing them across the social networks, tweeting and retweeting political content via social media, belonging to a social network community and contributing to online political discussions. This omission raises questions about the relevance of these definitions in the digital era where political participation cannot only be confined to traditional ways such as attending rallies, being a member of a political party or being involved in a demonstration, among others. On further exploring literature on political participation, it becomes apparent that researchers such as Lariscy, Tinkham and Sweetser (2011) and Himelboim, Lariscy, Tinkham and

Sweetser (2012) are advocating for the redefinition of political participation, so that it also incorporates online participation.

In a study conducted by Lariscy *et al*. (2011), the researchers even suggest that the exclusion of online political participation in the definition may also suggest that the definitions given above may be incongruent with what individuals perceive as political participation. Hence their recommendation for supplementary research to be undertaken to explore what individuals perceive as political participation. The current study focused on one aspect of political participation, which is voting in elections.

2.4.3. Global decline in youth political participation

Numerous studies have accentuated the pervasiveness of the decline in youth political participation across the globe. According to the UNDP (2013) report, young people of ages ranging from 15 to 25 years old, who represent a fifth of the population of the world, are not represented in political structures such as parliaments and also do not vote in elections. Several scholars have researched the youth's disenchantment and disinclination to vote or be involved in any other form of public action (Wattenberg, 2008; Flanagan & Levine, 2010; García-Peñalosa & Konte, 2013; Amoateng, 2015). Almond, Powell, Strom and Daltons (2004) conducted a study among college students in France and observed that their mistrust and lack of confidence and loyalty in the political structures and politicians has alienated them from participating in politics. The decline of youth voter turnout, absence of youth from political party membership and decline in social capital among the youth in Greece has also been evident and concerning (Theocharis, 2011). In Britain, the youth turnout in the 2010 elections was also significantly low as a large number of youth who registered to vote did not vote (Henn & Foard, 2012). Nor, Gapor, Bakar and Harun's (2011) study in Malaysia also amplified the university student's ambivalence and apathy about the country's politics. Based on the study by Resnick and Casale (2011) conducted

on 19 African countries to determine African students' political participation, the picture is no different, as the study's findings indicated that Africa's youth demonstrate a lower level of political participation and turnout at the polls.

Whilst the foregoing studies have empirically substantiated the decline or lack of youth political participation, the researcher's assessment of this trend worldwide differs. The researcher's discernment of youth political participation is that the youth still actively participate in the political discourse, however, the form of political engagement and participation has altered from the conventional means, such as voting, to more contemporary modes of engagement. The youth is predisposed to unconventional political participation. The researcher's assertion is also corroborated by studies conducted by scholars such as Hooghe and Dassonneville (2013) and Manning (2013). This apparent change in traditional political participation can be ascribed to factors such as globalisation, technological advances such as social media, which has provided the youth with more direct means to influence and challenge policy makers than in the past (Isaksson, 2010; Roberts, Struwing & Grossberg, 2012). The advent of the internet and social media has certainly unravelled many possibilities for robust engagement, debate and collaboration in the political process by the youth. It has also brought more transparency and inclusivity in the democratic processes as well as significantly transformed existing patterns of youth political participation, political mobilisation and collective actions (Nchise, 2012).

The reasons why youth political participation is of concern worldwide is twofold. Firstly, it has been empirically proven that political participation at a young age, predicts electoral involvement and participation in future (Glasford, 2008). Therefore, not voting at a young age means that voter turnout will continue to dwindle, thus adversely impacting on overall turnout in future. Secondly, when the majority of the population does not vote, that weakens the democratic system. Therefore, youth political participation is undoubtedly the catalyst to

democracy and the channel individuals use to influence the government's decision-making process, which is pivotal for democracy (Resnick & Casale, 2011; Amoateng, 2015). Youth political participation nurtures a feeling of citizenship and ensures that policy processes are transparent and accountable towards young people.

From all the studies that have been conducted on the subject of youth political disengagement and decline in political participation, the foremost issues seem to centre around the lack of participation in elections (voter turnout), on which the current study focuses.

2.4.4. South African decline in youth political participation

South Africa also experienced a decline in youth voter participation during the 2009 and 2014 general elections (Mattes, 2012; Booysen, 2014; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2014). Approximately 20 million of South Africa's 52 million citizens were in the 4 five-year age bands for South Africa's 15 to 34 year youth category (Statistics SA, 2011). This constitutes about 36% of the population. Close to 50% of the potential electorate, including both registered and unregistered citizens are of the ages of 18 to 35 years (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2014). A day before the 2014 South African elections, Statistics SA advised that South Africa's voting-age population (VAP) was 32.6 million. Youth registration for South Africa's 2014 general election was lower than figures for other age categories, as illustrated in voter registration breakdowns in the run-up to the 2014 election (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2014) in Table 2 below.

Table 2: South African voter registration figures for 2014

Age category years	Stats SA *VAP	Age category registered voters as of 11 November 2013	Age category
18-19	1,926,127	434,370	22.6
20-29	9,481,294	5,168,441	54.5
30-39	6,895,947	6,018,575	87.3
40-49	5,301,005	4,912,242	92.7
50-59	3,867,469	3,692,158	95.5
60-69	2,255,911	2,189,719	97.1
70-79	1,172,634	1,136,477	96.9
80+	533,647	560,432	105.0

*Note: *VAP=Voting Age Population*

Source: Electoral Commission (IEC), Hans Seidel Foundation: Background Report Elections 2014.

This sharp decline in youth voter turnout was impetus for South African political parties to employ social media in their electoral campaigns in order to reach, appeal to and drive the youth voters.

2.5. Variables discussion

The current study consists of four variables, namely, social media political marketing, voter trust, voter loyalty and voting intention. In order to provide clarity and depth to the literature review, political marketing and social media have been reviewed and discussed separately in this section.

2.5.1. *Political marketing*

2.5.1.1. *The origins of political marketing*

Political marketing has been approached from different disciplines, such as media and communication studies, political science and marketing but it is largely derived from sociology, political science, and psychology (Lees-Marshment, 2001; Savigny & Temple, 2010; Cwalina, Falkowski & Newman, 2012). The initial use of the concept of “political marketing” can be attributed to political scientist Stanley Kelley in 1956, who first posited that marketing principles can be applied to politics (Harris, Perrin & Simenti-Phiri, 2014).

Since political marketing originates from marketing, it is pertinent to offer a definition of what marketing is, in order to draw parallels between the two concepts. In defining marketing, Kotler and Keller (2006) cite the definition that was offered by the American Marketing Association, which defined marketing as “an organisational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organisations” (Kotler & Keller, 2006, p.6). In summation, marketing entails selecting target markets and attaining, retaining and increasing customers by generating, dispensing and conveying superior value to customers better than competitors. According to Kotler and Keller (2006), marketing is not only limited to marketing of products and services but also encompasses

marketing of political parties, people, events, companies, ideas, experiences, properties, information and destinations.

In a political environment, there is a political market, where candidates or political parties campaign for votes, with the aim of winning the election. For campaigning purposes, political parties apply political marketing principles with the sole aim of positioning the party and its leader positively in the political or electoral market so that it appeals to the electorate/voters and ultimately the electorate will vote for the party.

Norris (2004) contends that the process of election campaigning has been transformed in recent years to take three forms: pre-modern, modern and post-modern campaigns. The pre-modern campaign is based on direct forms of interpersonal communications between political parties and citizens. The pre-modern campaigns were characterised by localised, rigorous and more personal campaign tactics such as rallies, party branch meetings and door-to-door campaigns. The main aim in pre-modern campaigns was to invigorate and galvanise the political party's established base for votes, instead of acquiring new members. The modern campaign era moved to a countrywide strategic and synchronised campaign, where political parties engage services of external consultants such as advertising and public relations (PR) agencies. The advertising and PR agencies design all marketing material, schedule media activities and news conferences, develop campaign themes and execute campaigns. Since a lot of the campaigning is driven via mass media such as television, there is less focus on personalisation of campaigns, which somehow makes voters to disengage and become distant. Post-modern campaigns are characterised by the disintegration of media companies, a move from national broadcasting to more varied news channels such as satellite TV stations and talk radio stations. With the advent of the internet and social media, opportunities are now abound for political party and voter interaction (Norris, 2004).

South African campaigns seem to have successfully integrated all the three forms of campaigning suggested by Norris (2004). Political campaign tactics are still dominated by various pre-modern methods, to target the rural areas. The modern forms of campaigning are still very prevalent, with political parties incurring astronomical expenses in running their political campaigns, as evidenced by the 2009 election spend. According to the 28 October, 2013 Daily Maverick newspaper, the ANC spent about R200 million on its 2009 election campaign (Grootes, 2013). With the advent of social media, South African campaigns are moving rapidly towards the post-modern campaigning method suggested by Norris (2004).

2.5.1.2. *Definition of political marketing*

Several definitions of political marketing have been provided by numerous scholars. Shama (1976) defined political marketing as the process whereby political candidates or parties direct their ideas at voters in an attempt to gain their support for the candidate and ideas in question. Henneberg and O'Shaughnessy (2009) regard political marketing as a fusion between marketing and politics, whereby marketing practices, strategies and concepts are broadly applied to politics. Nielsen (2012) considers political marketing to relate to valuable, shared interactions between political parties and their environments. According to Ediraras *et al. (*2013), political marketing entails interactions between political parties and their environment with the aim of positioning the party, where voters are regarded as consumers who have needs that need to be fulfilled. The definition by Lock and Harris (1996) focuses on political marketing's role to communicate with the electorate, party members, media and funders while Wring (1997) delineates it as the manner in which a party scans and analyses the market and uses those insights to generate a competitive offering, which will aid the party to realise its objectives, satisfy the needs of the

electorate, in exchange for their votes. A more comprehensive definition was provided by Newman (2012), who regards political marketing as the process whereby marketing principles are employed in election campaigns by political parties. It encompasses analysing, developing, implementing and managing strategic campaigns by candidates or political parties with the aim of advancing their own political ideologies and win elections.

While these scholars provide different definitions of political marketing, what is common in their definitions is that political marketing entails the application of marketing principles to politics (Strömbäck, Mitrook & Kiousis, 2010; Gbadeyan, 2011). All these definitions reinforce the main similarities with regard to the application of product and political marketing. These similarities are found in what in marketing is regarded as the marketing mix, which is made up of product, price, place and promotion (the 4 P-s of marketing).

It is important to note that political marketing is not just about political advertising, rallies and electoral speeches but it deals with the entire process of image building and positioning the political party and its leaders positively in the minds of citizens, so that it can appeal to them and they can, in turn, vote for it. In addition, from a marketing perspective, the above definitions accentuate key issues that are of relevance. The understanding of the needs of the electorate and meeting of those needs, the importance of environmental and market analysis, development of appealing value propositions by the parties, which would position it positively in the minds of the electorate and lastly, the employment of various promotional tools to disseminate information to the electorate. The definition by Newman (2012) was adopted in the current study.

In order to furnish an even better perspective of the concept of political marketing and its resemblance to marketing of products, O'Cass (2001) uses an Exchange Theory model which was developed by Kotler in 1975. The theory states that

when citizens vote, that amounts to a transaction taking place, where in return for votes, the party makes commitments and promises about the policies that it will implement when it assumes power as the government. When the party fails to deliver on the promises it made during campaigning, distrust and dissatisfaction occurs, which ultimately makes people not to vote for that party again. The same applies to products. When a product fails to deliver on its promise, the buyer becomes dissatisfied and may never buy the product again. Negative word of mouth may also ensue, which will damage the brand.

The relationship between marketing and politics stems from the fact that both compete for the attention and loyalty of citizens. In political marketing, ideas are "sold" instead of products or services. To entice the buyer (voter), tactics such as advertising, public relations, social media, internet, direct mail, etc. are used to acquaint voters with the party's position on specific issues, thereby influencing voter behaviour (Anyangwe, 2012). Some scholars place emphasis on the process of transactions between voters and candidates (Ediraras *et al.*, 2013), others accentuate the use of the marketing mix (namely, product, price, place and promotion) to promote political parties and control the voter's behaviour efficiently (Arofah & Nugrahajati, 2014). In the political marketing context, the product is regarded as the commitments made by political candidates or parties in their campaigns, whilst the electoral support can be construed as the price, and the voter is the customer. The promotion plan entails advertising (radio, print, TV, outdoor), rallies, flyers, billboards, door-to-door canvassing and other campaign activities (Okan, Topcu & Akyuz, 2014). For political parties and candidates, political marketing is done through communicating messages and building image and credibility. It is about continuously influencing and encouraging the community to support a political party (Newman, 2012).

Although the use of the marketing mix is highly advocated by various researchers such as Ediraras *et al*. (2013), Arofah and Nugrahajati (2014), Okan, Topcu and

Akyuz (2014), researchers such as Pich and Dean (2015) are of the view that the evolution of political marketing entails an holistic approach to marketing by focusing more on building solid and valuable voter relationships through the application of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) practices and principles, in order to build and maintain brand relationships with voters and other important stakeholders. Copley (2014, p. 445) defines IMC as "the cohesive mix of marketing communications activities, tools and techniques that deliver a coordinated and consistent message to target customers and consumers synergistically in order to achieve organisational goals". The value of IMC in marketing campaigns is that it ensures that the messages across all media channels talk to each other in unison and seamlessly. Through effective use of IMC, campaigns are able to break through the clutter, stand out and have maximum impact, memorability and clarity. The benefit derived from that is the success in informing, reminding and persuading voters about the political party policies and promises. Gbadeyan (2011) asserts that the value of IMC in political marketing results in improvement in the quantity and quality of information flows from the electorate to parties and candidates, making them more sensitive and responsive to voters' needs.

South Africa, as in many countries, has also adopted political marketing as part of its electoral campaigns. A study conducted by Harris *et al.* (2014) confirmed the mounting use, impact and importance of political consultants, internet, social media, radio, print, billboard and television advertising among others, as evidence of this transformation in political marketing in South Africa. The study also recognised that the other forms of campaigning, such as canvassing, rallies and door-to-door campaigns, still play a vital role in South Africa so that political parties can still reach out to the communities at grassroots level. It is significant to mention though, that while the voters are the primary target market in election campaigns, there are other markets or stakeholders to which the political campaigns must talk and appeal. According to Kotler and Keller (2006), the

different key stakeholders or markets are the voters, media, contributors, party organisation and interest groups or organised constituencies.

From the arguments put forward by various scholars, it is evident that political marketing has a significant role to play in modern politics, particularly in view of the evolutions that are transpiring in the communications arena. Cognisance must be taken to the fact that consumer needs and behaviour are also rapidly changing, which makes it imperative for political marketing to evolve in order to continue being relevant in changing the political behaviour of the youth worldwide. This will be through building trust and loyalty in government, which will result in greater participation in democracy by the youth.

2.5.2. *Social media*

2.5.2.1. *What is social media*

Social media refers to a collection of applications that support the creation and sharing of information and content between a wide and different audience (Davidson & Yoran, 2007; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Effing *et al.,* 2011; Picazo-Vela *et al.*, 2012; Joseph, 2012; Towner & Dulio, 2012; Vergeer *et al.,* 2013). It is an interactive communication tool that provides content on demand, particularly with the use of mobile devices. It uses Web 2.0, which is a platform where content is continuously modified and shared by all users in a participatory and collaborative manner (Effing *et al.*, 2011).

The terms social media and social networks are always used interchangeably, which potentially poses some misunderstanding about them. In demystifying these concepts, Swanepoel and Bothma (2013, p.110) distinguishes them as “social media is a way in which information is transmitted and shared among an expansive audience using software tools which are referred to as social media channels. Social networking, on the other hand, is when individuals or groups of

people with similar interests come together and engage on social media". Zeng and Gerritsen (2014) offer a simpler distinction that social media are the communication "tools" which enable individuals to transmit while social networking is the act of "using social media tools" to interact, engage and communicate directly with people that one is already connected to or want to connect with. Social media is driven by community (i.e. a group of people with similar interests), participation, conversation, openness and interconnection (which entail connecting with other sites or people).

The following are some of the examples of social media:

- **Social news:** Local online media sites, such as News24, are examples of social news which provide articles and allow readers to comment.
- **Social sharing:** Instagram and YouTube are platforms where people can upload and share videos or photos with others.
- **Social networks:** Sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter enable individuals to connect with others and keep up to date with each other.
- **Social bookmarking platforms:** Blogmarks allow individuals to find and save sites and information of interest, which can be saved as bookmarks online, shared with others and accessed from location.

Table 3 presents an overview of the social media platforms that are prevalent in South Africa.

Table 3: Social media platforms in South Africa

Platform	Description
Twitter	• A free microblogging platform, which allows registered users to circulate only 140 character messages, which are referred to as tweets. Twitter users can disseminate tweets and also follow other users' tweets through manifold platforms and devices.
Facebook	• Free social networking site that allows registered users to generate profiles, upload images and videos, transmit messages and interact with colleagues, acquaintances, friends and family.
Google Plus +	• Google Search Engine programme that offers numerous features such as Facebook and supplementary Google related personalised services. It is designed to replicate the manner in which individuals interact offline than is the case in other social networking sites.
LinkedIn	• Social networking site devised specifically for professionals and business people. It provides registered users with the capacity to develop and document professional networks of individuals they know. In addition, it enables users to share business and professional information.
Instagram	• A platform which aims to help companies and individuals reach each other through sharing captivating and interesting pictures. Instagram has become a powerful platform used by marketers to reach their audiences by means of sharing pictures and short messages.
YouTube	• Online site which provides registered users with the capability to upload videos and make them available for viewing by the public.
Whatsapp	• Registered cross-platform instant messaging service that is available on smartphones. It utilises the Internet to deliver messages, pictures, videos and audio media messages to other users.
WeChat	• WeChat provides text, voice and broadcast messaging, video games, sharing of pictures and videos, video conferencing and location sharing. It has the ability to exchange contacts with individuals who are close by, using Bluetooth.

	It also provides numerous features for contacting people randomly where necessary.
Pinterest	• A social website used for sharing and labelling pictures found online. The main focus of the site is to grab the user's attention through visuals. By clicking on an image, the user is taken to the original source (for example, when one clicks on a picture of an item, they will be taken to a site where the item can be purchased from).
Mixit	• Free instant messaging application which was developed in South Africa. It operates on over 8,000 devices, which include Android, BlackBerry, iPhone, iPad, Windows Phone and tablets.
Snapchat	• Video messaging application which offers users the ability to take pictures, record videos, insert text and diagrams and transmit them to a list of controlled recipients.
Blogs	• Regularly updated web page which is operated by an individual or small group and is written in an informal and colloquial style.

2.5.2.2. *South African digital landscape*

The use of social media in South Africa has increased (SA Social Media Landscape report, 2015). According to the SA Social Media Landscape 2015 report, Facebook endured as the most popular social network in South Africa followed by YouTube and Twitter. With a total of 11,8-million South African users (22% of the population), Facebook is the first social media platform in South Africa that has witnessed precisely equivalent take-up by both females and males, with 5,6-million males and 5,6 million females using the platform. 8,8-million users access Facebook from mobile devices. The largest age group on Facebook is the 13-18 age group, with 2,5-million users (SA Social Media Landscape report, 2015). YouTube and Instagram users in South Africa have increased by 53% and 65% correspondingly, over the past year. By August 2014, YouTube had 7,2-million South African users, making it second only to

Facebook's 11,8-million. Instagram increased from 680 000 users in 2013 to 1,1-million active users in 2014. Twitter grew by 20% in the past year to 6,6-million users. LinkedIn has grown by 40%, to 3,8-million users in South Africa. According to the SA Social Media Landscape, 2015 report, 7,9 million South Africans access the internet using mobile devices.

Based on these statistics, it is clear that South Africa will continue to see growth in social media usage. This presents an opportunity for social media to also become a viable platform for companies to market their products and communicate with customers. It also presents abounding opportunities for political parties to foster closer relations with the country's citizens.

2.5.2.3. *Social media for political participation*

Communication between political parties and citizens has traditionally taken the form of one-way communication method with parties delivering a strategic and expounded message to potential voters (Chadwick, 2006; Xifra, 2010). Social media has steered major transformations in the political communication sphere and has continued to transform both the global and local political terrain since it was introduced by the Obama campaign team during the 2008 US presidential elections. It has since emerged as a potent political organising tool. Consequently, political parties and citizens can now establish and manage their own spheres of public political communication independent of the involvement of media journalists. Subsequently, this medium was adopted by many countries to augment their political marketing strategies with the objective of fostering more profound public political participation and engagement, in particular with the youth (Zhang *et al.*, 2010).

Because of its popularity, social media for political participation has been researched extensively. It has been researched as a form of organising protests by Valenzuela, Arriagada and Scherman (2012) and Joseph (2012), for its role in

information conflict (i.e. an application of information warfare concepts in both military and civilian contexts) by Van Niekerk and Maharaj (2013) and its use in elections by Skoric, Poor, Achananuparp, Lim and Jiang (2012), Towner and Dulio (2012), Steenkamp and Hyde-Clarke (2014) and Bimber (2014).

Social media has undoubtedly brought a renewed perspective in the political trajectory of the 21st century, not only for campaigning but for galvanising the public to engage in political discourse (Steenkamp & Hyde-Clarke, 2014). The benefits offered by this platform in the political arena are boundless. Its cost effectiveness in the dissemination and retrieval of information (Steenkamp & Hyde-Clarke, 2014), changing the "user's role and engagement", as users also create content (Bimber, 2014), the potential to decrease citizens' apathy, boost participation and stimulate the feeling of belonging and contribution to democracy (Vesnic-Alujevic, 2011; Joseph, 2012; Steenkamp and Hyde-Clarke, 2014) are some of the benefits. Social media has the ability to foster the involvement and public participation in the political discourse (Vesnic-Alujevic, 2011), and because of the existing large user base that many social media platforms have, it can be used to target large sections of the population efficiently.

Social media has also become very useful to read and gauge people's sentiments, hence Biswas, Ingle and Roy (2014) have coined this a change from "dipstick" research to "tweetstick", implying that platforms such as Twitter are now being utilised for gauging citizen sentiments. It is very clear from the above benefits that political engagement and participation could be fortified through the use of social network sites, for mobilising and galvanising the youth around deeper political participation. Social media can also act as the cornerstone to profound political discussions and opinions to attain and sustain a shared political discourse and trajectory across the globe. According to Biswas *et al.* (2014), the relationship between social media and politics is rooted in the desire for change as citizens are using the online information and social networks to find change.

Other than its recent extensive usage in election campaigns, social media has played an immense role in mobilising civic action such as boycotts, demonstrations and revolts. The well documented examples of effective and powerful usage of social media for political mobilisations are the 2011 Egyptian uprising, known as the "Arab spring" and the October 2015 South African student boycotts, known as the "feesmustfall" demonstrations. The efficient utilisation of social media during the Egyptian uprisings in 2011 undoubtedly transformed the dynamics of social and political mobilisation. The advantage of speed, interactivity and capacity of social media to rapidly disseminate information to millions of people, both locally and internationally, brought a sense of inclusivity among Egyptians. Citizens became part of social-networking groups and actively participated in dialogues. This made it possible for Egyptians to carefully follow the developing events in Tunisia, while they were at the same time planning their own revolution. Through social media, activists from both countries were sharing ideas, information and simply offering encouragement and support online.

The "feemustfall" demonstrations refer to the protests by South African tertiary students, who took to the streets after the announcement that tertiary fees will increase by 10.3%. The protests started at Wits University in Johannesburg and within days, they had spread across the country, with almost all universities in South Africa joining in on the protest against the fee increases. The student campaign was driven by social media, in particular Twitter, via the hashtag "feesmustfall" and also Instagram. In both these examples, social media created opportunities for groups of people, notwithstanding the distance between them, to unite towards a common goal, build relationships, disseminate information and mobilise and expand their engagement in a cause that affected all of them.

For social media to be effective, an understanding of which platform is most effective for which type of messages is significant. Empirical research on social media platforms confirms that platforms such as Twitter are expedient for sharing

relatively one-dimensional and occasionally insubstantial information and have a relatively short lifespan (Jansen, Zhang, Sobel, & Chowdury, 2009). Based on personal observations and on the fact that Twitter only provides space for 140 characters, the researcher concurs that Twitter facilitates rapid, brief conversations and engagement. Twitter thus lends itself to be used by political parties for announcement of events or to deliver some important statistics, which will reinforce the message that is transmitted on other media. Twitter could also be useful to direct people to the party website or to other online content, such as a blog. Twitter will not have the desired impact as a stand-alone platform for building trust, loyalty and enhancing voting intention and must be employed to augment other media. Twitter is therefore relevant for building brand awareness and is a straightforward and quick way for political parties to keep the electorate informed on short topics. Twitter lends itself to activity and participation at all hours of the day and night as people share tweets and retweet, hence the message is likely to reach an enormously large group because of its viral benefits.

Platforms such as Facebook are more appropriate for conveying and imparting meaningful, profound and richer information (Jansen *et al*., 2009; Weinberg & Pehlivan, 2011). Moreover, Facebook possesses mechanisms that encourage and heighten interaction, two way communication, comments and responses, which in the long run strengthen trust and loyalty to a political party. Instagram, which is gaining popularity and growth among the South African youth, is a fitting platform to post and share photos of campaign activities, events and people.

The current study focuses on the role that social media plays in election campaigns (voting) and whether using social media enhances trust, loyalty and voting intention. Against this backdrop, the following section reviews and expounds on how social media has been used as a communication tool during elections.

2.5.2.4. *Social media in election campaigns*

This section briefly discusses examples of countries that employed social media in their elections. Each section concludes with a brief analysis of what made the election campaign a success.

The U.S. 2008 and 2012 elections

The 2008 U.S. elections demonstrated that strategic application of marketing tactics to electoral campaigns is what distinguishes an astute marketer from the rest. The Obama campaign had all the hallmarks of the strategic application of online platforms to the realm of political marketing. Although both presidential candidates (Obama and McCain) utilised the same platforms, the manner in which Obama's strategy was executed is unsurpassed and undoubtedly secured him victory. During the 2008 campaigns, all candidate campaigns were characterised by a wide web presence and utilised more of the varied tools such as email, blogs, candidate or party specific sites. Obama's campaign however applied those tools in different ways, and the following tactics can be noted:

Internet search advertising: Localised internet search advertising was used, where web adverts were placed on news sites, in important cities or states, such as Texas and Ohio.

Targeted campaigns: The web was used to focus on voters with similar characteristics, such as race or hobbies, for example, the youth were targeted through advertising in Xbox 360 online video games.

Mobile messaging: The campaign placed heavy reliance on text messaging, with about 1 million people signing up for this service.

Social networking sites: YouTube and other social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter were also used extensively in the Obama

presidential campaigns. This tactic paid off, with Obama's followers outstripping those of his opponent, McCain on Facebook and MySpace throughout the campaign (Towner & Dulio, 2012). YouTube also showed that Obama's campaign had posted more than 1,800 videos on their YouTube ''channel'' by the end of the campaign, while McCain's had only 330 posts (Towner & Dulio, 2012).

MyBO: The creation of Obama's own social networking site, MyBO, which allowed individuals to create their own profiles, interact with others and donate funds, was the most innovative campaign tool. This site went a long way in building the Obama ''brand'' which was also reinforced in all other media channels. What made the Obama brand building successful was the powerful design that incorporated consistent fonts, logos and web design. The Obama campaign logo was distinctive and featured a circle to represent the ''O'' in Obama using the colours of the American flag with a sun rising in the centre. More importantly, the logo was individualised to particular groups of voters, i.e. different distinctive images were created for different ethnic groups, which still incorporated the original Obama logo. This type of campaigning definitely had a lot of emotional appeal to it, which reverberated very well with many voters.

Other media: By employing an integrated marketing approach to their campaign, myriad outlets and every form of media available were used to deliver his message. Again, this was done with the idea of targeting specific voting regions.

Linking the campaign to fundraising: Fundraising was central to every activity on the websites in which Obama's campaigns engaged. In addition to using social media tools and engaging communities on social networking sites, candidates' web ads were designed to urge people to easily click through and donate or provide contact details. In addition, the use of social networking sites proved to be a great advancement in campaign organisation, allowing candidates to communicate, mobilise and fundraise with very little time and cost. More

importantly, social networking sites offered supporters the resources, such as training, tips and downloadable material to host events, canvass and fundraise.

From the Obama's 2008 campaign execution, a number of the key success factors from which South African political parties can derive major learning benefits can be identified.

Firstly, adequate resource allocation (financial and people), in a form of 100 staff members to deal with the online campaign strategy and hiring a top expert in social media (Chris Hughes, the co-founder of Facebook, as the director of online organising). Over $2.5 million was spent on internet advertising and a Chicago media firm was paid $1 million for placing web ads (Towner & Dulio, 2012). Secondly, they leveraged on the value and benefits of IMC, where all the campaign promotional tactics were used to reinforce each other (Thakur, 2014). Thirdly, the Obama team applied the segmentation, targeting and positioning (STP) principles effectively. Segmentation entails splitting a large market into diverse groups of customers who may require different products, price, distribution channels and promotion efforts based on their needs, characteristics or behaviours (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). Targeting is the process of selecting a group of customers with similar characteristics (market segment) at whom the seller intends to aim its marketing efforts (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). Positioning is a process of ensuring that a product has a unique, clear and desirable position in the mind of target consumers, compared to other competing products (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). The Obama team understood all the segments well and developed different value propositions and messages to appeal to their different needs and wants. Fourthly, the pivotal role that mobile played in transmitting information and driving marketing messages was enormous. Lastly, the Obama team realised that traditional media still has a place in marketing and that digital media will not replace traditional media. They used social media to target the millennials and traditional media to target the older generation.

The French 2007 and 2012 elections

The French elections possess a number of salient features that are worth mentioning. Firstly, elections are an important political event in France and are characterised by a visible and personalised style of campaigning that bears some similarities with the American election campaigns. Secondly, the financial resources available to candidates are limited because French law places a threshold on election expenditure. Thirdly, since elections are regarded as an important event, they generate extensive interest and attention among the electorate and result in a high voter turnout rate. This gives candidates an incentive to develop engaging and impactful election campaigns, whilst being mindful of cost. Lastly, until 2007, campaigning was done largely via TV coverage, town hall meetings and conventions. From 2007, the internet was added as part of campaign tactics of different candidates (Koc-Michalska, Gibson & Vedel, 2014).

During the 2007 French elections, online presence drove the electoral campaigns of all candidates. The campaigns comprised mainly of candidate web sites, with the two key contenders, Nicolas Sarkozy and Ségolène Royal going further to create supplementary channels for their campaigns. Nicolas Sarkozy developed Sarkozy TV, which portrayed a sequence of videos articulating his campaign strategy. Socialist candidate, Ségolène Royal, adopted a more collaborative approach, aimed to develop a community of supporters, using her Désirs d'avenir site.

The 2012 elections saw a substantial widening of communication strategies, with candidates venturing into social networking sites, blogs and other image- and video-sharing sites to enhance their visibility. By the time the month before the first round of voting commenced, all candidates had posted approximately 6,400 Tweets, 1,250 posts on Facebook and had garnered roughly 720,000 Twitter

followers, 910,000 Facebook “likes” and virtually 600,000 comments (Koc-Michalska *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, the prominence given to social media by candidates is evident from their respective campaign spending.

In 2002, the average expenditure of all candidates’ internet campaigns was only 2% of the overall campaign expenditure. By 2007, it had enlarged to 4%, and by 2012 to 5%. Also, there were startling differences in the performance of the respective candidates on different platforms. François Hollande’s performance on Twitter was remarkable, with Nicolas Sarkozy performing well on Facebook. It is also worth highlighting that François Hollande, who won the election, reduced his online expenses in contrast to Sarkozy during the 2012 elections (from 866,000 Euro in 2007 to 546,000 Euro in 2012). This may be partly due to his good utilisation of prevailing resources, such as his own web site and that of the Socialist Party (PS), as well as the volunteer hub “La Coopol http://www.lacoopol.fr”. Nicolas Sarkozy, on the other hand, executed the most expensive online campaign ever, spending over C1.3 million. Nicolas Sarkozy is subsequently being probed over allegations of fraud relating to his 2012 election campaign.

From the French case, it is worth highlighting that success in marketing is measured by strategic and efficient use of financial resources to achieve more. The success of Hollande, who spent less in his campaign, bears testimony to that. In addition, Hollande seems to have been more strategic in his deploying of technology than Sarkozy. Overall, if segmentation, targeting and positioning are done properly, a party can attract voters through its targeted messaging, relevant platforms and relevant channels.

African election campaigns

A number of countries in Africa, such as Nigeria, Egypt, Kenya and South Africa, to cite a few, held their country's elections between 2011 and 2014. It was through these elections that the role that technology plays in elections, in particular, social media and mobile infrastructure, was affirmed.

Kenyan 2013 elections

Research conducted by Portland Communications states that Kenya is Africa's second most active country on Twitter, after South Africa. Kenya has in excess of 14 million internet users, the majority of whom actively use social media. It is for this reason that President Uhuru Kenyatta used social media to connect with voters in the run up to Kenya's general election in March 2013. Social media and digital communication are said to have been instrumental in his election campaign and subsequent victory (Wafula, 2015). Kenyatta's Facebook page received approximately 500 000 'likes' or followers in the run-up to the elections, making it one of the most 'liked' pages in Kenya.

Nigerian 2011 elections

The general lack of information during elections in Nigeria in the past was curtailed by the emergence of social media and the public's usage of social media during the country's 2011 elections. Though Nigeria's social media uptake was still at a low level, social media played a significant role in these elections.

The decision by the Nigerian election management body, the Independent National Election Commission Nigeria (INEC Nigeria) to embrace social media facilitated an easy flow of information. It made Nigerians feel very comfortable about the election process as citizens were able to have their questions about the election process answered. Citizens became watch dogs of the overall election process and highlighted any issues that could affect the credibility of

elections. The benefits that were derived in that country through the employment of social media platforms in election campaigns were citizens perceiving elections as fair, transparent and credible. Consequently, there was development of citizenship, camaraderie and collaboration that was brought about by the adoption of social media during the election campaigns.

Egypt 2012 elections

Just as social media was pivotal in mobilisation during the Arab Spring, the June 2012 presidential election was no exception. Constant dialogue about the elections on different social media sites such as YouTube, Twitter and Facebook were common. The Muslim Brotherhood maintained good online presence and a positive dialogue before and during elections, which guaranteed transparency that was never experienced in Egypt in preceding elections. This was done through deploying Brotherhood members to all the polling stations, who provided persistent and timely updates on the results, which were then disseminated and conveyed to the public on social media sites such as Twitter. Even the official election results were analysed and discussed thoroughly on social media by independent analysts, academics, insurgents and even dissidents alike. This accessibility to information and public discourse of the results on social networks resulted in a transparent election, which would not have been achievable without the capability and benefits offered by social media.

South African 2009 and 2014 elections

The South African political landscape has evolved dramatically, from politicians campaigning door-to-door, holding rallies and public speeches to social media playing a pivotal role in persuading potential voters, particularly youth voters, about the party to vote for. During the 2009 elections, parties executed big campaigns, which incorporated social media to a lesser extent.

However during the 2014 elections, parties embarked on vigorous campaigning, using social media as one of the key battlefields for votes, particularly the youth vote. With new parties such as the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) contesting the elections, social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook were used to make substantial headway in the battle for South African voters. Although parties have fully embraced social media as part of their campaign strategy, they are conscious that they cannot abandon traditional media, so that they can still reach adult and rural voters, who are not on social media, cannot afford smart phones or are in remote areas where internet access is limited (Booysen, 2014).

Research indicates that Twitter and Facebook were the most prevalent platforms that were utilised by the parties during the 2014 elections (Booysen, 2014; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2014) and, according to these researchers, the selection of platforms was influenced by cost, ease of use, ability of the medium to drive the message across, having some control over the diffusion of communication and whether the youth audiences attach some fashion status to that platform.

The social media platforms were used by the parties for communicating the party's policies and posting key announcements, sharing successes in debates, magnifying their party profiles, galvanising citizens to register for and vote in elections, encouraging supporters to attend campaign events and launching their campaign adverts. From this, it appears that when it came to using online and social media, the trend was to use these media to disseminate existing electoral messages rather than interacting with existing and potential supporters, which could have provided political parties room to make their voices heard in an uncontrolled manner.

Twitter seemed to be the most popular mouth-piece amongst influential users, including politicians, analysts and experts and news agencies during the 2014 elections (Findlay & Janse van Rensburg, 2015). Hence it formed an extensive

portion of the DA and EFF leaders, Helen Zille and Julius Malema's social media strategy. This may be due to the fact that Twitter, notwithstanding its fewer users than Facebook, has greater engagement per user (Facebook average per post: 19 likes and 1.5 shares; Twitter average per post: 0.4 favourites and 23 retweets) (South African Social Media Landscape report, 2014). The DA was the early adopter of social media, in particular Twitter, with the ANC and EFF following suit. The data presented in a study conducted by Findlay and Janse van Rensburg (2015) posits that South Africa's political conversation is now a race between the DA, EFF and ANC. Table 4 below illustrates the political leader's Twitter activities during the 2014 general elections.

Table 4: South African political leader's Twitter activity during the 2014 elections

Candidate	Political Party	Twitter	Facebook
Jacob Zuma	ANC	372,000 followers	48,000 likes
Julius Malema	EFF	478,000 followers	129,833 likes
Helen Zille	DA	442,000 followers	289,000 likes

Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa South Africa Election Updates, Issue 8: //www.electionupdate.org.za/2014eu9editorial2.htm

It is still difficult however to see whether social media actually translates into votes. According to the study by Findlay and Janse van Rensburg (2015), the media coverage and Twitter share of mentions of parties does not correlate with the final number of seats won in parliament. During the 2014 elections, the ANC received a lower share of both media coverage and Twitter mentions but won the largest number of seats in parliament. Equally, the EFF received a lot of both media coverage and Twitter mentions; while the DA appears to have received

exactly its fair share. The incongruence between seats won, media coverage and Twitter mentions can be because Twitter and social media as a whole does not represent rural voters, which is where the ANC has the largest support. However, it does point to potential momentum in the future as more voters gain access to social media and join existing political conversations, a big change in these patterns may be observed (Findlay & Janse van Rensburg, 2015). It would be interesting to see if there will be any significant changes in these patterns during the 2016 local government elections.

2.5.3. *Voter trust*

In marketing, the role played by trust in developing and maintaining relationships during exchange processes, such as buyer-seller relationships is pivotal (Nguyen, Leclerc & LeBlanc, 2013; Rachmat, 2014). According to Chinomona and Dubihlela (2014), trust has become important in many business decisions where uncertainty is involved and in order for consumers to have trust in a product, they need to possess enough product information and must have experienced the product on a number of occasions.

Trust is an expansive concept that has been defined differently by scholars from diverse disciplines such as psychology, marketing and political marketing to name a few. In psychology literature, scholars have defined trust as an expectation that a person or a group hold that the promise made by another person or group can be relied upon (Sherman *et al*., 2008). Ahmed *et al.* (2011) and Himelboim *et al.* (2012) have defined trust as a situation when parties in a relationship believe that neither party would take advantage of the other. However, a definition that seems to have been used extensively in psychology literature is the one offered by Mayer, Davis and Schoorman (1995, p.712), who defined trust as “the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular

action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party".

From a marketing angle, trust is usually defined from a perspective of brand trust, consumer trust, customer trust, supplier trust among others. From a consumer perspective, the following definitions have been provided:
*"Trust is connected to consumer's expectations about the company's capacity to assume its obligations and keep its promises" (*Barber, 1983, p.190*).*
"Trust is the belief that the other party will behave as expected in a socially responsible manner, and in doing so, it will fulfill the trusting party's expectations" (Gefen, 2000, p.726).
*"Trust is a set of beliefs held by a consumer concerning certain characteristics of the supplier as well as the future behaviour of such a supplier" (*Eid, 2011, p.80*).*
*"Trust is the level of reliability ensured by one party to another within a given exchange relationship" (*Nguyen *et al*., 2013, p.99).

Despite the different definitions, there seems to be some degree of convergence in the definitions of trust. All the definitions above underscore three issues. Firstly, trust is fostered when a customer amply trusts a specific product or service. Secondly, trust relates to the confidence level that an individual has on another that they would behave as expected. Thirdly, trust is a consequence of expectations being met by parties in a relationship. Burke, Sims, Lazzara and Salas (2007) suggest that trust has different dimensions and contend that trust is a personal trait that all individuals possess, which is not impacted by any environmental factors. Also, that trust is an attitude with can develop due to interactions with others and can also dissipate if the engagement is not positive. Trust is progression and also an outcome of the interaction and it can either be reinforced or damaged by other attitudes and behaviour. This seems to agree with the idea that trust is an essential facet of many interactions, including the relations between a political party and voters. When a voter engages with a

political party on social media, trust could be an outcome of that interaction, if it is positive. From a marketing perspective, it is crucial for a product or service to deliver on its expectations or promises made. If a product fails to meet the expectations of the consumers, consumers become disappointed and consequently, trust diminishes. When trust diminishes, consumers will no longer buy the product and will also not recommend it to others. When a product meets the customer's expectations and promises that were made in marketing communications, the outcome of that is happy and satisfied customers. When customers are happy, trust is enhanced (Kotler, 2010; Ahmed, *et al.*, 2011).

The expectations that a customer has are usually based on the company's competence, integrity and benevolence (Nguyen *et al*., 2013). Competence refers to ability and expertise and, in a customer's view it signals the company's capacity to run the business effectively and live up to the customer's expectations. Integrity relates to honesty and the company delivering on its promises and benevolence represents the company's empathy in its dealings with customers. While competence, integrity and benevolence are connected to each other, they each have a separate influence on the level of trust in another within a relationship. Even with that, ability and integrity have the greatest influence early in a relationship, as one's benevolence requires more time to emerge. The effect of benevolence will increase as the relationship between the parties strengthens.

Other authors opine that reputation plays a pivotal role in building trust and can also be a strong predictor of behaviour (Bennett & Gabriel, 2001). Customers perceive a brand that holds a good reputation to be trustworthy as opposed to one with a negative reputation. Furthermore, the positive reputation that a brand possesses is regularly used as an alternative for product quality when the basic characteristics are difficult to employ. Lau and Lee (1999) state that if after usage, a brand meets the consumer's expectations and has a positive reputation,

the consumer's trust in that brand will be fortified. In leadership, reputation is usually associated with prudence and self-sufficiency, therefore a leader with a positive reputation is more trusted by followers and his intentions will be regarded in a more constructive light if the reputation is positive (Hall, Blass, Ferris, & Massengale, 2004). Furthermore, behaviour bolsters and sustains reputation, hence behaviour always has to be coherent with the reputation, failing which, reputation will be disputed and positive expectations will diminish.

Trust is an important catalyst in social interactions and long-term relationships. The principle of trust is fundamental in politics as political parties make promises and commitments to the electorate through their electoral campaign messages, in an attempt to garner votes (Kotler, 1975). The communication can either enhance or diminish voter trust, depending on whether the expectations are delivered on or not. Empirical evidence has established that trust is the glue that strengthens the connection between the political leaders and the voters. A high level of trust reflects voter confidence and belief that the political party will meet the voters' expectations, while the low level of trust reflects lack of confidence by the voters in the political party (Ahmed *et al.,* 2011; Hooghe *et al.*, 2011; Rachmat, 2014). When voters have trust and confidence in the political party and candidate, they will vote for them. Conversely, when trust does not exist, the voters either vote for the opposition or simply do not vote. Trust deficit leads to a general disconnect by citizens from the political system and also has direct electoral consequences, such as decline in voter turnout.

In the political marketing realm, the trust construct has focused on voter or political trust, trust in candidates, election trust and government trust among others. It has been referred to as either "political trust" or "voter trust". Although the words "voter trust" and "political trust" are used interchangeably, as the current study focuses on elections, for the purpose of the study, the term voter

trust will be employed. The following definitions have been put forward for voter trust:-

The positive evaluation of government and parties to serve the public interests well, coupled with optimism and confidence in their intentions to do 'good' (Dermody & Hanmer-Lloyd, 2005).

The confident expectations of the voters on the candidate's reliability and positive intentions (Rachmat, 2014).

"The ratio of people's evaluation of government performance relative to their normative expectations of how government ought to perform" (Hetherington & Husser, 2012, p. 313).

"*An expectation held by a voter or a group of voters that the words or promises of a political candidate (or officeholder) can be relied on"* (Sherman *et al*., 2008, p.131).

"The citizens' or voters' sense of trusting of political candidates, political officeholders or their trust of local, state or national level governmental institutions or bodies" (Hooghe *et al*., 2011, p.249).

It is notable that the above definitions also place a lot of emphasis on expectations of voters, based on the promises and commitments made during electioneering. Although there is commonality in the definitions put forward, different authors hold diverse views about what the real facets of voter trust are. Easton (1975) postulates that voter trust has two facets, the first relates to the view about the responsiveness of the administration in power, while the second component relates to the view about the responsiveness of the system itself. However, the researcher is not entirely convinced about the suggestion put forward by Easton (1975) and opines that the system is not so critical with voter trust. During an election campaign, political parties or leaders make promises and commitments to voters which raise their expectations. When the party or leader fails to meet those expectations, voters become disgruntled, not with the

political system but with the party or leader, hence they change their vote in the next election.

According to Delgado-Ballester (2004), trust reflects reliability and predictability. Reliability is usually based on the voter's belief that a party will deliver on its campaign promises. Predictability is the ability to constantly fulfill the needs of voters. Predictability reduces uncertainty and risk. This refers to key aspects that make people feel that the action of one party is motivated by positive intentions towards the wellbeing of others. This argument holds true and it is when the party does not act reliably and as predicted that distrust arises. Sherman *et al*., (2008) contend that the party incumbent is very important in developing trust in a political party. The party leader is always the "face" of a party and is the one who mainly has direct interaction with the public. Trust in a political leader is important in election campaigns because people generally trust someone whose vision they buy into. It is improbable that leaders who are not trusted can successfully mobilise and get citizens to commit to a vision. If people do not have confidence in the leader, they will not support his vision. Once the party is in government, the leader is actually the main driver of government policies and provision of services. This interaction results in the fluctuation of the voter trust as service provision is significant (Kotler & Keller, 2006). Incumbent trust is therefore based on the relationship between the citizens and the party leader and is purely dependent on whether the citizens perceive the leader and his government behaving against their pre-existing expectations from that leader. Hetherington and Ruddolph (2008) suggest that performance, process and probity are the three major components of trust in politics. These components provide credence to the ability, integrity and benevolence already aforementioned.

Studies have been conducted on the issue of decline in voter trust across the world (Pauwels, 2010; Hooghe *et al.*, 2011). Empirical research undertaken has also confirmed that the absence of voter trust has a profound impact on voting

behaviour (Hetherington, 2005; Pauwels, 2010; Hetherington & Husser, 2012). Distrust leads to discontent, which manifests itself in a number of ways. Firstly, discontented citizens will cease to vote, which results in decline in voter turnout. Secondly, discontented citizens will vote for other parties. Thirdly, because citizens may not have a viable option to vote for, they will, despite their distrust, vote for the majority political party (Pauwels, 2010).

With the advent of social media, citizens have access to knowledge and information and are able to make their own assessments and evaluations about political parties and leaders. This has not only altered the political landscape across the world but voter behaviour has altered significantly too. This knowledge abundance can either result in discontentment and cynicism of voters or lead to trust deficit, should a party be seen to fail to deliver on the promises made. Social media has opened up avenues for consumers to share their views about products and experiences. According to Kotler & Keller (2006), dissatisfied consumers spread information about products or services to more people than the satisfied consumers. Nowadays, with voters also being more socially linked with each other via social media, voters also tend to spread information more rapidly. This results in more voter cynicism, distrust and switching their affiliations from one party to another.

This demonstrates the potency of social media political marketing and its potential influence on voter trust.

2.5.4. *Voter loyalty*

The concept of voter loyalty derives from the conventional marketing concept of customer loyalty. Academics continue to pursue research on this subject. Currently, most of the research on customer loyalty centres predominantly on brand or product loyalty, such as studies conducted by Delgado-Ballester and

Munuera-Alemán (2001), Uncles, Dowling and Hammond (2003) and Aurier and Séré de Lanauze (2012), whilst scholars such as Harris and Ezeh (2008) and Moore, Ratneshwar and Moore (2012) have explored loyalty from a service sector perspective.

Pan, Sheng and Xie (2012), define customer loyalty as the potency of a customer's fondness to the brand coupled with his connection and intention to repurchase the brand continuously. This definition of loyalty outlines two key elements. The first encompasses behaviour, which denotes buying repeatedly over time. The second component is sentimentality or emotional bond, which refers to the affective and passionate attachment that the individual has towards something. Loyalty develops over time, in a sequential manner that consists of intellect, emotion and decision. It is commonly impelled by attitude, level of satisfaction, trust and commitment.

Customer loyalty is regarded as one of the company's most valuable assets, hence attaining and maintaining customer loyalty is what companies aspire for (Harris & Goode, 2004). By fostering and preserving customer loyalty, a company breeds a mutually beneficial, long-term and profitable relationship with its customers. Loyalty has a big impact on company performance. This is because loyal customers are less price-sensitive, they buy more and frequently from a company, talk positively about the product or company which results in positive word of mouth, they also become advocates for the organisation. They even encourage others to purchase and are also willing to forgive minor mistakes that a company may commit in the service delivery process. These outcomes are enviable and have impact as they also yield effective word-of-mouth advertising for the company. Loyal customers play a big role as referrals of new customers to the company, which is beneficial, as the company can potentially reduce its advertising expenditure spent on attempting to acquire new customers (Du Plessis, 2011; Van Vuuren, Roberts-Lombard & Van Tonder, 2012).

The same should apply to political parties, who, similar to businesses have to work hard and pay particular attention towards ensuring that voters continue voting for their party and also recommend it to other voters (Needham, 2006). With the intensity in competition in the political landscape, the number of political parties that exist, voters have a wide selection of parties to select from and will likely consider other options if they are not satisfied with the performance of the ruling party.

In a political context, voter loyalty refers to the voter's favourable attitude towards a party, resulting in repeat voting (Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003). Chiru and Gherghina (2012) state that voter loyalty denotes mainly electoral choice in two consecutive elections. This implies that voters are loyal when they vote for the same political party in different consecutive elections. Bauer (2010) refers to loyalty as when an individual maintains their partisan identity even when the party does not provide them with benefits. The author posits that individuals may attempt to express dissatisfaction with their party by not voting for it during elections or even by boycotting the polls.

Chiru and Gherghina (2012) hold a view that even though electoral competition may play a role in swaying voters to consider other parties, issues such as party identification and individual inclination towards short-term policy preferences and evaluations still do influence voter choice. Individuals who identify with a party tend to support it in elections. Some authors suggest that trust and loyalty is sustained by the party performance. The study conducted by Chiru and Gherghina (2012) confirms that voter loyalty is affected by the voters' evaluations of the performance of a party. Furthermore, Chiru and Gheghina (2012) also concluded that party identification has a significant relationship with loyalty.

Party identification is part of socialisation from childhood and is one of the ways by which people are acquainted to the political domain. By the time an individual

reaches voting age, party loyalties have been formed and at times are extremely difficult to change (Bauer, 2010). Party identification has a strong influence on voting behaviour, perceptions of and participation in politics. Party identification predicts individual's voting, their level of political participation and how they receive political information (Bauer, 2010). Currently the majority of South Africans base their votes on party loyalty instead of alternative party choices (Cilliers, 2014).

Other researchers hold a different view about the impact that party identification has on electoral behaviour and loyalty. According to Abramson, Aldrich and Rohde (2007), party identification has minor and insignificant influence on the vote in presidential elections. However, party identification indirectly impacts on the appraisal of candidates, evaluation of government performance and insights of political events. Party identification may be somewhat less important now than in the past, but it cannot be ignored as it has a fundamental role for explaining political alignment and behaviour (Abramson *et al*., 2007).

It was also an interesting insight to learn that researchers are finding that in many established democracies, party ties are eroding as voters are changing their party allegiances. According to Dalton (2013), evidence indicates considerable erosion in partisan loyalties and this de-alignment has become a continuing feature of contemporary politics. This may be attributed to the abundance of information that voters have access to and based on that can form their own opinion and also hold government to account. Notwithstanding that the majority of South Africans still base their votes on party loyalty instead of alternative party choices as noted by Cilliers (2014), Schulz-Herzenberg (2009) opines that the levels of party 'partisanship' are declining in South Africa, which implies a positive move towards an open political landscape.

Loyalty cannot be developed overnight and different strategies have to be applied to build voter loyalty. Shachar (2003) somehow offers some guideline by segmenting voters into habitual voters and high-involvement voters. Because of their diverse characteristics, these two groups require different tactics to enhance their loyalty. Habitual voters' loyalty could be stimulated by creating brand (party) awareness and brand knowledge, through the use of different promotional tools, including social media. High-involvement voters are not enthused by brand awareness, but will respond positively to a strong party image and reputation. Parties can create a strong brand image by being distinct and unique, but mainly by acting consistently, delivering on the policies and fulfilling the promises made to the voters, which goes a long way in building trust (Shachar, 2003).

The political landscape has changed and is characterised by intense competition. In such a highly competitive and changing political environment, political parties need to put enormous effort in building sustainable and enduring relationships with supporters to ensure repeat votes. The proliferation of political parties is becoming an impediment to voter loyalty in politics, as voters have more variety of parties than in the past. With so much information available to help voters make informed voting choices, there is the benefit of making an informed assessment. In a political environment of diminishing party membership and voter disengagement and de-alignment, political parties cannot sit on their laurels and assume that the resonance and positive attachments that gave them victory previously will keep them in power.

It is incumbent on them to instill confidence, collaboration and fortify relationships with voters in order to secure votes in future elections. Relationship marketing possesses the underpinnings that are valuable for politics, because it shifts from a transactional focus of an election to a more relationship focus. It recognises that political parties like companies, must retain existing supporters as well as convert new ones. Fulfilling promises that have been made is equally important

as a means of achieving customer satisfaction, retention of the customer base, and long-term profitability. In the past, initial support for political parties was influenced by family, however there seems to be some intensifying detachment from such foundational social settings as individuals become more knowledgeable, connected and exposed to a wide network of relationships (Needham, 2006).

The marketing discipline is evolving, with an emphasis on the co-creation and co-existence of value, relationships, and connectivity (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). As a result, political parties are recognising the need to reflect and adapt to these changes, adopting new approaches and technologies into their marketing strategies, developing communication that resonates with the youth and also aggressively utilising communication that they prefer, not only to engage with them during election period, but to encourage sustainable participation that will build trust and loyalty and enhance voting intention.

2.5.5. *Voting intention*

The construct of intention has been explored extensively in marketing literature, with more prominence being given to purchase intention. This is surprising considering that studies have indicated that voting intention of the youth significantly determines voting behaviour in their adult life (Kahne, Lee & Feezell, 2013). Furthermore, other scholars have empirically established a relationship between voting intention and actual voting behaviour (Achen & Blais, 2010).

Consequently various definitions have been put forward. Dodds, Monroe and Grewal (1991) conceptualise that purchase intention denotes an interchange that develops after the consumer has had an opportunity to evaluate a product. That is, a consumers' purchase intention is molded by their appraisal of products based on outside stimulating factors such as advertising, the perceived image of

the product and reviews from other consumers. Shao, Baker and Wagner (2004), suggested that purchase intention signifies the prospect of consumers to purchase the product.

In analysing the proposed definitions, what seems to be coming to the fore is that purchase intention embraces numerous primary meanings. It insinuates a willingness to consider buying, it signifies what an individual wants to buy in the future and it also unearths the consumer's determination to purchase the product over again. Once more, since voting shares parallels with purchase of products, voting intention also contains all the three dimensions mentioned, i.e. the willingness to vote, the significance of voting and the determination to consider voting in future.

This is supported by the definition of voting intention that has been proposed by Rachmat (2014) that voting intention refers to a person's desire to vote for a particular candidate or party. Trust is vital in fueling such desire, since voters will inevitably fortify their intention to vote for the candidate and party they trust. Jones and Kim (2010) argue that trust leads to future intentions and that high trust would lead to brand or party loyalty. Therefore, when trust increases, the perceived risk of consumers decreases, and the impact would lead to behavioural intention. When the voters have a high degree of trust in a particular party or candidate, they would also tend to vote for that party instead of taking a risk of voting for a new political party where trust has not yet been formed. Therefore the risk that is associated with a general election propels the vigour of the intention to vote for the party that they trust, as trust seems to reduce the undesirable complexity.

Hansen and Jensen (2007) established that intention is the precursor of actual voting behaviour. This implies a significant connection between an individual's voting intention and their actual voting action. Hansen and Jensen's (2007)

study further illustrated that a person's attitude towards voting is a meaningful prediction of their voting intention. This finding is congruent with the Theory of Planned Behaviour, which affirms that attitude towards behaviour shapes the intention to carry out the action or behaviour.

Media exposure also has a fundamental influence on voting intention and some literature demonstrates this linkage between media usage and voting intention (Šerek & Umemura, 2015). Prior to or during an election, citizens have high exposure to marketing material, political party speeches in digital media or at rallies, online communication via social media and other stimuli that induces them to vote for specific parties. If a person has an intention to vote, they will intentionally alter their attitude, selectively expose themselves to the media they believe is relevant and use the information to steer them towards deciding which party to vote for (Aarts & Semetko, 2003; Hansen & Jensen, 2007). Pasek, Kenski, Romer and Jamieson's (2006) study concluded that exposure to television or radio news, print media and social media engagement has significant effects on voting intention and voter turnout. Research has further established that involvement in political dialogues and discussions with others enhances a person's intention to partake in politics (Ekstrom & Ostman, 2013).

Social media has become a valuable conduit for accelerating political discourse, both between political parties and voters and between voters themselves and consequently can be a catalyst in influencing people's voting intentions. Through interacting and engaging with political parties and others via social media, the probability of others persuading a person to vote is elevated. Through social media, an individual may gather indispensable insights relating to political attitudes that exist in the environment, which are likely to shape their voting intention. Furthermore, through robust discussions on social media, abundant knowledge is acquired, which may potentially enhance trust in the political system and impact on one's voting intentions.

Literature has also indicated that young people who are involved in political discussions are more likely to participate in civic organisations and are likely to be politically inclined and involved than those who do not discuss politics with peers, both online and offline (Klofstad, 2010; Lee, Shah & McLeod, 2013). In addition, a study conducted by Šerek & Umemura (2015) concluded that young people who habitually discuss politics with their friends demonstrate notably higher voting intentions, enhanced voter turnout and active overall civic political participation. The study recognised that the youth regard political interactions with peers to be more enthralling, which stimulates interest and can have an immediate positive impact on their voting intention, whilst political discussions with parents could have a more gradual impact on voting decision.

From these findings, it can be concluded that if political parties aspire to make great strides in employing social media to engage with youth voters, it is imperative that such engagement be driven by younger leaders in the party, whom the youth can relate to and who can engage with them in an intriguing manner which captivates and captures their attention. An older leader could be perceived in the same light as the “parent” figure and may compromise the authenticity and credibility of such interaction.

2.6. The conceptual model

To statistically test the relationships between the study constructs, a conceptual model or the theoretical framework on which the study is based is illustrated in figure 5, adapted from Chinomona and Dubihlela (2014). The current research investigates four variables, namely social media political marketing, voter trust, voter loyalty and voting intention by the youth of South Africa. In this conceptual model, social media political marketing is the predictor variable and influences voting intention (the outcome variable) indirectly through voter trust and voter

loyalty (which are mediating variables). Voter trust can affect voter loyalty and subsequently result in intention to vote.

The next section elucidates on the relationships between these constructs and the hypotheses are developed thereafter.

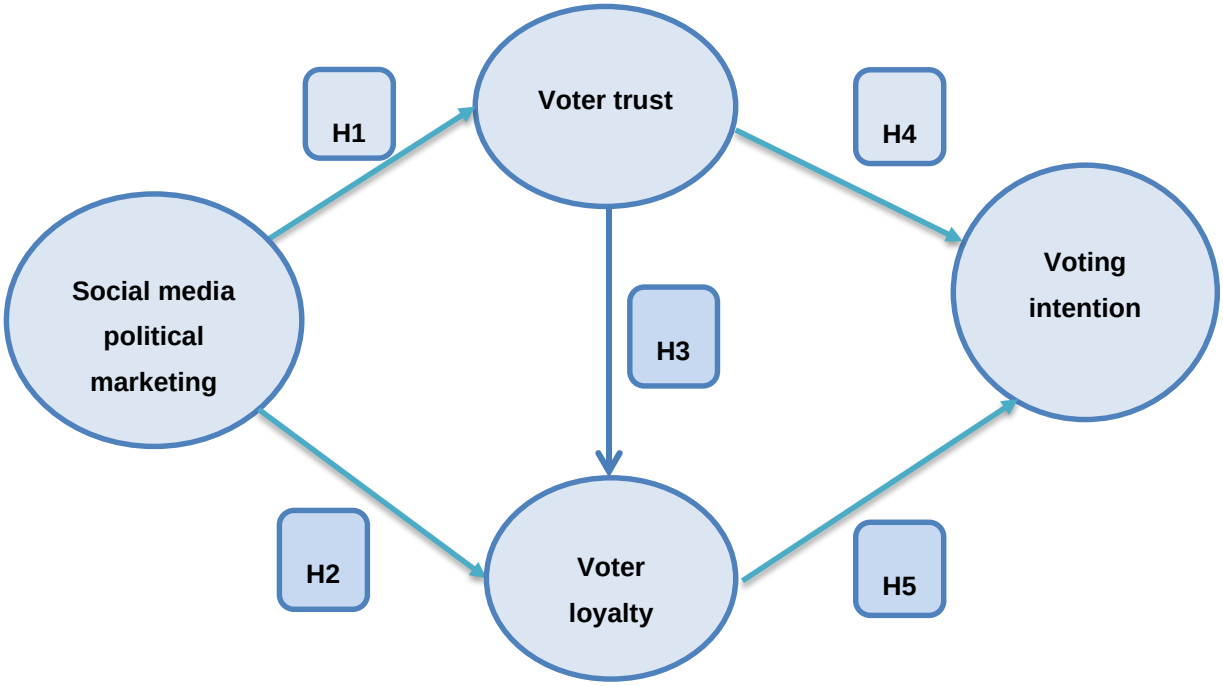


Figure 5: The conceptual model

2.6.1. *Hypotheses development*

As a manifestation of the cumulative significance of trust in social media use, the current study posits that social media political marketing is a predictor variable to the intention to vote. It is postulated therefore, that the more the users engage with a political party or leader on social media, trust and loyalty are enhanced and the more likely their intention to vote for that party increases. Based on the literature reviewed, the key variables of the theoretical framework were outlined and prevailing substantiation supporting the relationships proposed in the framework are discussed below.

a) Social media political marketing and voter trust

The current study suggests that a positive relationship between social media political marketing and voter trust exists. The importance of this relationship stems from the fact that with the waning youth political participation worldwide, mounting political apathy and distrust in governments, social media has turned out to be a safer space that people utilise for political consumption, interaction and participation. Unlike conventional media such as newspapers, social media is a multi-directional information flow medium, which offers benefits such as interaction, transparency, openness and information sharing. Marketing scholars such as Yadav and Varadarajan (2005) and Song and Zinkhan, (2008) have demonstrated that interaction is one of the main drivers and motivation for people's social media usage.

Through interaction, online communities are created and users can engage in informal discussions about various topics, including politics. Interaction generates a feeling of affiliation and being part of a "circle". Being connected to other parties is a precursor to openness and transparency. Interaction, openness and transparency are important elements in relationships and facilitate honest communication and development of trust in relationships (Labrecque, 2014). In communication, transparency and openness amplify feelings of intimacy and attachment. However, it must also be acknowledged that by sharing information, a person exposes himself to being vulnerable hence trust has to exist for people to share, otherwise truthful information could be withheld.

The concept of attachment has been explored from different angles such as social relationships (Galinha, Oishi, Pereira, Wirtz & Esteves, 2014), material possessions (Ferraro, Escalas & Bettman, 2011) and products/brands (Belaid & Temessek Behi, 2011; Mugge, Schifferstein & Schoormans, 2010; Malär, Krohmer, Hoyer & Nyffenegger, 2011). The studies have established that attachment evokes emotional feelings, passion, self-identity and sense of community. In the context of social

media interaction, when a voter engages with a political party online, attachment develops and the voter starts believing in the party's ability to deliver on their promises and meet the voters' expectations. This leads to trust, which is based on the reliability of the intentions of the individual (Nguyen *et al*., 2013).

Trust is regarded as an important mediator in customer relationship marketing. It is an essential ingredient in relationships, both online and offline. Himelboim, *et al*. (2012), contend that trust is contingent on the potency of those relationships. When the association is strong, people are inclined to have trust for the fellow online community members, thus the cumulative increase in social capital and the likelihood of robust online political participation. Social media political marketing encourages strong civic participation, removes apathy and enhances social capital and trust. According to Gil de Zúñiga *et al*. (2012), social capital or trust in government structures fosters a strong civil society, provides citizens with a platform to be vocal about civic affairs and makes political parties and leaders to be more accessible and receptive.

The existence of a relationship between social media usage and trust has been empirically confirmed in some studies (Hsiao, Chuan-Chuan Lin, Wang, Lu & Yu, 2010; Monforti & Marichal, 2014; Håkansson & Witmer, 2015). In the political environment, researchers also confirmed the existence of a positive relationship between social media usage and trust (Lupia & Philpott, 2005; Shah, Cho, Eveland & Kwak, 2005; Xenos & Moy, 2007; Valenzuela *et al.,* 2009, Gil de Zúñiga *et al*., 2012; DiGrazia, McKelvey, Bollen, & Rojas, 2013; Vaccari *et al*., 2015). A study by Gil de Zúñiga *et al*. (2012), found that social media provides sufficient and relevant information to bolster the democratic process and enhance social capital, while DiGrazia *et al*. (2013) found a substantial connection between social media usage in politics, voting behaviour and electoral performance. Scholars such as Warren, Sulaiman and Jaafar (2014) demonstrated that employing social media for citizen engagement has a significant positive impact on trust propensity and that this trust

has led to an increase in trust towards institutions. These findings suggest that interactions lead to improved relationships, which in turn positively impacts on the development of trust. Furthermore, relationship improvement occurs simultaneously with information sharing and dissemination between different parties, which potentially moderates doubt, enhances predictability and results in trust. Ferrin, Dirks and Shah's (2003) research has also illustrated that trust influences collaborative interaction and has an impact on communication, information sharing and cooperation. When individuals are inspired to express their opinions in a more open and transparent manner that is offered by social media, trust is enhanced and results in citizens contributing meaningfully and profoundly to the political discourse. By establishing trust on social media with voters, political parties can strengthen their relationships, increase willingness to share information and increase trust.

Based on the above, the following hypothesis has been put forth:

H_1 ⇒ there is a positive relationship between social media political marketing and voter trust.

b) Social media political marketing and voter loyalty

The overall purpose of engaging, interacting, listening and collaborating with voters as part of the political participation process is to build a more solid and enriched relationship with voters. By creating deeper relationships with voters, parties can increase loyalty, encourage advocacy and increase membership (Castronovo & Huang, 2012; Erragcha & Romdhane, 2014). The effect of social media activities on the customer's decision making process is also hugely influenced by closeness of the relationship and the bond between the information seeker and the source. The stronger the bond, the more effective the social media activity will be. Therefore good relationships and bonds with customers are indispensable in business (Nevin & Torres, 2012). The same view applies in politics.

Loyalty is driven by attitude, satisfaction, trust and commitment and commitment leads to loyalty. By engaging on social media with political parties, voters are able to question the leaders of the respective parties about their plans, progress and share any views. The political party also has a platform to clarify issues, update voters on the party performance and keep voters abreast. Through this medium, voters are in a position to receive information that they would otherwise not have been privy to from the media. This will result in changing attitudes and satisfaction, where voters believe that the party is fulfilling promises. Satisfaction leads to commitment, which Belaid and Temessek Behi (2011) assert it reinforces the dependence of the consumer/voter to the brand/party. It further minimises the prospect of the voter voting for another party, which is loyalty. Based on the above, the following hypothesis has been put forth:

H_2 ⇒ there is a positive relationship between social media political marketing and voter loyalty.

c) Voter trust and voter loyalty

In relationship marketing and any business or personal relationships, trust plays a pivotal role and remains an essential component in developing customer loyalty towards an organisation (Rachmat, 2010). The trust-loyalty relationship has been assessed in several studies, and there are contrasting views about this relationship. Some studies have confirmed that trust is one of the precursors to loyalty and that trust has a positive impact on customer loyalty (Hong & Cho, 2011). Other research has validated that brand trust is among the significant predictors of customer loyalty in the marketing literature (Jones & Kim, 2010; Nguyen *et al.*, 2013). Chinomona and Dubihlela (2014) also hypothesised that the relationship between customer trust, loyalty and intention is significant and positive. Conversely, Van Vuuren *et al.* (2013) concluded that no significant relationship exists between trust and loyalty. Van Vuuren *et al. (*2013) argue that improvement of voter trust is contingent on the citizen's assessment of whether or not the government is fulfilling its pre-election

promises and obligations. Furthermore, it is based on whether the delivery is according to the expectations of the citizens. This is also affirmed by Hetherrington and Ruddolph (2008), who maintain that the overriding factors that determine whether government is delivering or not are performance, process and integrity. Just as much as trust plays a pivotal role in the business arena, it also plays a huge role in the political arena and is a cornerstone of citizen support, it enhances citizen co-operation and fortifies political participation through elections (Hetherington & Husser, 2012).

The concept of customer loyalty is significant as loyalty is regarded as one of the organisation's lasting assets. Through maintaining customer loyalty, an organisation enlarges enduring and mutually beneficial relationships with customers. Some scholars such as Madjid (2013) have illustrated strong linkages between trust and loyalty in the banking environment. Madjid (2013) also asserted that customer trust moderates the customer satisfaction outcome on customer loyalty. This means that when customers are satisfied, trust is enhanced and customers become more loyal. This is equally supported by other studies in the mobile communication sector that customer satisfaction is a precursor to loyalty (Chadha & Kapoor, 2009; Kuusik & Varblane, 2009). Commitment also possesses connections with trust and loyalty. Based on Morgan and Hunt's (1994) assertion, cited by Van Vuuren *et al*. (2012), commitment arises from trust, common values and confidence. Commitment stimulates partner collaboration and preservation of what was invested in the relationship (Morgan & Hunt 1994).

Drawing from the above analysis, it can be hypothesised that:

H3 ⇒ there is a positive relationship between voter trust and voter loyalty.

d) Voter trust and intention

There are myriad studies that confirm a strong relationship between consumer trust, loyalty and repurchase intention (Kiyani, Niazi, Rizvi & Khan, 2012; Van Vuuren *et al*., 2012; Chinomona & Dubihlela, 2014). When a consumer trusts a product, his intention to repurchase the product will be high. Similarly, in relationships where trust is strong, an individual is willing to accept minor errors.

Various studies have proven the existence of a positive relationship between political trust and voter turnout and that trust has a robust influence on voting intention (Ahmed *et al.,* 2011; Hooghe *et al.*, 2011). When voters have trust and confidence in the political party and leader, they will vote for them. Conversely, when trust does not exist, voters either vote for the opposition or simply do not vote (Sherman *et al.,* 2008). Trust is the main mechanism affecting the decision, and thus leads to intention (Gefen, 2000). In illustrating the importance of trust on intention to vote, Komiak and Benbasat (2006) used the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which suggests that intentions are determined by attitudes.

It is argued that, due to high trust in the candidate or political party, perceived risks will decline and the voters will strengthen their commitment to vote. In essence, voters will vote for the candidate or party that meets their expectations. It is a reflection of the reliability and positive intentions held by the voters towards the party. This is supported by the empirical findings on trust and brand trust (Komiak & Benbasat, 2006; Jones & Kim, 2010). In the voting context, when trust increases, it leads to intention to vote, as Kim *et al.* (2008) posit. This result confirms the previous research findings by Komiak and Benbasat (2006).
Drawing from the above discussion and empirical evidence, it can be hypothesised that:

H4 ⇒ there is a positive relationship between voter trust and voting intention.

e) Voter loyalty and voting intention

Voter loyalty denotes electoral choice in two consecutive elections. Few studies that examine the relationship between loyalty and intention in the political arena exist. Chiru and Gherghina (2012) and Rachmat (2014) have found a relationship between the two and concluded that voters are loyal when they vote for the same political party in different consecutive elections. Chiru and Gherghina (2012) and Rachmat (2014) concur that voters will vote for the candidate who meets their expectations of performance. This confirms that voter loyalty is affected by the voters' evaluations of the performance of a party.

The relationship between loyalty and intention is important because loyalty is positively related to the financial success and continuing growth of a company, the possibility of attracting more customers, customers are prepared to forgive minor service mishaps, they are not sensitive to price increases, spread positive word of mouth and are a significant source of profits. Due to the risk in the general election, voters strengthen their intention to vote for the candidate whom they trust and are loyal to. According to Gefen (2000), trust is the main driver for the decision. Thus, when loyalty increases, intention also increases. When voters have loyalty in a particular party, they intend to vote for that particular party (Rachmat, 2014). It is an indication of the reliability and positive intentions that voters have towards the leader or the party. This assertion is backed by empirical research on trust, loyalty and intention (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Gefen, 2000; Komiak & Benbasat, 2006; Jones & Kim, 2010).

Drawing from the above discussion and empirical evidence, it can be hypothesised that:

H5⇒ there is a positive relationship between voter loyalty and voting intention.

2.7. Conclusion of literature review

The significant conclusions from the literature review demonstrated that the strategic application of social media as part of political marketing is what can give a political party and leader a competitive edge. It is important for South African political parties to understand that social media or digital strategy cannot be executed unsystematically. It should form part of a well synchronised electoral campaign where all platforms, both online and offline, augment one another seamlessly.

Social media has brought about a new paradigm shift, where communication has evolved from interactivity to interaction, from information exchange to information sharing, from monologue to dialogue. Political parties must use social media to engage, involve, collaborate, share and converse with voters, in particular the youth, in order to instill a sense of being part of shaping the South African political trajectory.

2.8. Chapter 2 summary

The first part of chapter 2 expounded on the theoretical grounding for the current study, which dealt with the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), the Information-Motivation and Behavioural skills model (IMB) and the Commitment-Trust Theory (CTT). The second section briefly dealt with the global decline in youth political participation. The subsequent section discussed and reviewed in detail the literature pertaining to the four study constructs, namely social media political marketing, voter trust, voter loyalty and voting intention.

The last part presented the conceptual model for the study and explicated the hypotheses put forward and the proposed relationships between the study constructs.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter details the research methodology that is employed in this research report to answer the research questions that have been articulated. Methodology refers to the theoretical principles and the framework that stipulates guidelines of how research is carried out in the context of a particular paradigm (Sarantakos, 1998). According to Sarantakos (1998), methodology aims to decode the rules of a paradigm into simpler research language and illustrate how the world can be easily explained. Utilising a relevant and appropriate methodology in a study is fundamental in order for the analysis to be clearly identified and to ensure that compatible methods are employed for the intended answers to research questions to be provided.

The methodology chapter outlines the agenda for the current study by defining and discussing the research paradigm, design, research procedures and limitations. It further deals with the validity and reliability procedures that the researcher applied to test the hypotheses or answer the research questions. The chapter seeks to achieve three objectives, namely, to identify and describe the research strategy (Section 3.1), the research design (Section 3.2), as well as the procedure and methods (Section 3.3). The chapter also describes the reliability and validity measures (Section 3.4) that were applied in this study to make it credible. To conclude the chapter, limitations of the research procedure and methods are highlighted and also deliberated on (Section 3.5).

3.2. Research paradigm

In order to generate a proper research design, it is imperative to first determine and select a research paradigm. Authors are not in agreement about the actual definition of what a paradigm is. However there is consensus in that it embraces a set of values, practices and beliefs that are common to members of a scientific group and dictates that scientists in a certain field have an influence on what should be researched, the manner in which the research should be conducted and how outcomes should be construed and interpreted (Sarantakos, 1998; Bryman, 2012). In summary, a research paradigm refers to the philosophical intent or motivation for conducting a study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013). Collis and Hussey (2009) define it as a set of essential assumptions or the philosophical framework that will guide how research is conducted and Guba and Lincoln (1994, p.105) define a paradigm as the "basic belief system or world view that guides the investigation". What was accentuated by these researchers in their respective definitions is that the research paradigm ultimately guides the choice of research strategy and how data will be collected and analysed (Collis & Hussey, 2009).

There are three different types of paradigms, namely, positivism, constructivism and realism. Bryman (2012, p.714) defines positivism as an "an epistemological position that advocates the application of the methods of natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond". Constructivism follows a position that affirms the manner and repetition in which social trends and their meanings are achieved by social actors (Bryman, 2012). Realism observes a reality that is free from the senses that are available to the means of the researcher and theoretical opinions and infers that the classifications that have been generated by scientists essentially signify real objects in a natural or social world (Bryman, 2012).

Table 5 below summarises the features of the different paradigms:

Table 5: Key features of research paradigms

Positivist	Constructivist	Realist
• The focus of the study is free from the researcher's bias.	• The researchers interact with the targets of the study to obtain data.	• It comprises various perceptions about an independent reality.
• Knowledge is discovered and confirmed using exact observations or measurements of phenomena.	• Knowledge is verified through the meanings ascribed to the phenomenon that is being studied.	• Realism is cognisant of the values of human systems and of researchers.
• Facts are established by deconstructing the phenomenon into different components for ease of assessments. This supports the philosophy that causes are likely to determine effects or outcomes.	• Inquiry changes both researcher and subject.	• Social conditioning plays a pivotal role in people's acquisition of knowledge and therefore cannot be understood autonomously and separate from the social actors involved.
• It advocates that researchers must be unbiased and emotionally detached from the research subjects. They must simply test and empirically justify their stated hypothesis.	• Knowledge is context and time dependent.	• It advocates the use of the approach that is appropriate for the particular research topic and level of existing knowledge pertaining to it.
• It has relevance to quantitative studies.	• It has more relevance to qualitative studies.	• The research topic must be the determining factor.

Source: (Krauss, 2005).

For the current research study, the positivist paradigm is the most appropriate approach to employ. There are three reasons that justify the selection of this approach. Firstly, the study seeks to investigate the use of social media in the political realm, which requires separation of facts from values. Secondly, the research process in this study will likely produce quantitative data which will be utilised to test assumptions about the relationship between social media political marketing and other variables, hence the positivist paradigm ties in well with the current study. Thirdly, this study evaluated the proposed framework using an empirical method and requires a number of operational concepts to be measured. This is achievable through the utilisation of a quantitative approach, which is the approach that is adopted for this study.

3.3. Research strategy

The definition given to research strategy by a number of scholars implies a general consensus that research strategy deals with the direction to conduct social research (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2013; Babbie, 2015). According to Wagner, Kawulich and Garner (2012), research strategy denotes the manner in which the researcher decides to carry out the research process depending on factors such as the researcher's theoretical framework and the research question. Research strategy involves various tactics and procedures that cover comprehensive methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation (Creswell, 2013). Three research strategies are noted, namely, qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods.

Qualitative research method is an unstructured method, which is exploratory in nature and involves a small sample that offers better understanding of the problem setting (Malhotra, 2010). It usually emphasises what people say than enumeration in the data collection and analysis (Bryman, 2012). Empirical observations are expressed as words, images or objects (Neuman, 2014). Quantitative research emphasises numbers in the collection and analysis of data, applies some form of

statistical analysis and tests theories by examining the relationship among variables (Malhotra, 2010; Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2013). Mixed method is the integration of quantitative and qualitative research approaches within the same research study or project (Bryman, 2012; Wagner *et al*., 2012).

3.3.1. *Data collection methods*

There are numerous forms of collecting data that are used in both qualitative and quantitative research and a brief summary of the different methods is provided below.

Structured observation is the “method of watching what is happening in a social setting that is highly organised and follows systematic rules for observation and documentation" (Neuman, 2014, p.374). For this method to be effective, an observation guide is used to ensure that data is collected in a more organised fashion. Using the guide, the researcher is better able to pay particular attention to those activities that are likely to help answer the research questions (Wagner *et al.*, 2012).

Focus groups are a form of a group interview where participants (usually between five and fifteen) are requested to take part in a discussion, facilitated by a moderator, on a predefined subject, with more emphasis on group interaction and joint construction of meaning (Bryman, 2012). In a focus group, the idea is for the moderator to elicit as much information as possible from participants (Cohen *et al*., 2013).

Interviews entail a compilation of questions that are asked by the person who conducts the interview. Interviews can either be structured, unstructured or semi-structured. Structured interviews follow an interview guide that covers the exact wording and sequence of all questions to be asked (Wagner *et al.*, 2012). In this instance, all respondents are asked similar questions, following the same order using a formal interview schedule (Bryman, 2012).

Semi-structured interviews are performed following an interview guide with the main questions to be asked, however, it also gives flexibility for matters to be addressed as they arise (Wagner *et al.*, 2012).

Unstructured interviews do not follow any predetermined structure or sequence, the participants are encouraged to engage and express themselves freely (Wagner *et al.*, 2012). The researcher sometimes uses an “aide-memoire” to remind himself of some issues to explore (Bryman, 2012).

Questionnaire is a group of questions that are administered to respondents in a survey. It gathers structured and numerical data that can be managed in the absence of the researcher and is relatively simple to analyse (Bryman, 2012).

When a questionnaire is administered, it is crucial to pay attention to the questionnaire design, wording of questions and the order in which the questions are asked as this is likely to affect validity and reliability of the results (Wagner *et al.*, 2012).

3.3.2. *Research strategy for the current study*

The strategy that has been utilised for this research study is the quantitative research strategy. According to Bryman (2012, p.35), “quantitative research can be construed as a research strategy that emphasises quantification in the collection and analysis of data", while Wagner *et al.*, (2012) describes the importance of quantitative research in describing social phenomena, using mathematical statistical processes and Neuman (2014, p.10) defines quantitative research as “data or empirical observations expressed as words, images or objects".

3.3.3. *Justification for using a quantitative method*

The quantitative method focuses on inferences, validation, theory and hypothesis testing, standardised data collection and statistical analysis, testing and

explanation, which are necessary to ensure that the study is reliable and valid. The quantitative method was selected because of its ability to reduce a complex problem to a number of constructs that could be tested in a more controlled setting. The current study seeks to test relationships between the constructs of social media political marketing, voter trust, voter loyalty and voting intention. By employing the quantitative method in the study, the researcher was able to measure and analyse data using statistical tools as suggested by researchers, such as Bryman (2012) and Creswell (2013) in order to confirm the existence of the relation between the study constructs and to establish cause and effect.

Because statistics were also used to generalise the research conclusions and outcomes, the reliability and objectivity of the study can be ascertained. By using the quantitative method, the study provided precise numerical data, which enhanced the credibility of the study. This gives the researcher confidence that the study will be welcomed and embraced by political parties, and other parties who may need to use the study as a blueprint and roadmap for developing effective marketing strategies that encapsulate social media platforms in their political marketing strategies and campaigns. This is even more relevant and fundamental in mobilising and galvanising the youth around active political participation.

Lastly, this method provided the advantage of speed, less cost and better control over the respondent type.

3.4. Research design

A research design provides a structure for both data collection and analysis. A selection of research design indicates decisions about the priority being devoted to elements of the research process (Bryman, 2012). Malhotra (2010, p.102) defines a research design as a “framework or blueprint for conducting the marketing research

project. It details the procedures necessary for obtaining the information needed to structure or solve marketing research problems" and Creswell (2013, p.12) defines it as "types of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach that provide specific direction for procedures in a research design".

A research design mainly deals with the techniques used to acquire data, the data collection instrument that will be used, how the instrument will be used and how the researcher intends to analyse data (Yang, Wang & Su, 2006). There are five generic research designs, namely cross sectional, longitudinal, case study, comparative and experimental research designs (Bryman, 2012).

A cross- sectional design study examines information on many cases at one point in time (Neuman, 2014) and depends on observations that represent a single point in time (Babbie, 2015). It is useful for collecting quantifiable data on a number of variables which are then scrutinised to identify trends of association (Bryman, 2012).

Longitudinal design study is defined differently by authors. After reviewing definitions from several researchers, such as Bryman (2012), Neuman (2014) and Babbie (2015), the most comprehensive definition is the one coined by Malhotra (2010) who postulates that a longitudinal design comprises pre-determined elements of the sample of population that is measured repetitively. This sample does not change over time, and therefore provides a sequence of depictions which, when observed jointly, reveal a clear demonstration of the situation and the variation that occurs over time. A longitudinal study can either be a panel or the cohort study (Bryman, 2012).

Case study is the detailed investigation of a vast amount of information that relates to very few units or cases for a single period or across multiple periods of time (Neuman, 2014). As Bryman (2012) discerns, case study research deals with the intricacy and precise nature of the case in question.

Comparative study entails studying two contrasting cases using more or less identical methods. The researcher examines data on events and conditions in the historical past and/or in different societies (Neuman, 2014). Comparative studies are essentially about comparisons (Bryman, 2012).

Quasi-experimental designs relate to a process where individuals are not randomly assigned (Creswell, 2013). Quasi-experiments somehow apply some part of the procedures of experimentation although they lack full experimental control (Malhotra, 2010). The benefit of quasi-experimental designs is that they almost ascertain the identification of a causal relationship, even better than the pre-experimental designs and are appropriate with testing for causal relationships in circumstances where the classical design is inappropriate (Neuman, 2014).

This study was a quantitative study, which employed a questionnaire to gather data. The justification for selecting a questionnaire is discussed under the data collection instrument section below.

3.4.1. *Data collection instrument*

According to Babbie (2015, p.248), a data collection instrument is "a document containing questions and other types of items designed to solicit information appropriate for analysis" while Bryman (2012, p.12) refers to it as “some of the methods of data collection entail a rather structured approach to data collection - that is, the researcher establishes in advance the broad contours of what he or she needs to find out about and designs research instruments to implement what needs to be known".

A questionnaire as the most popular research instrument in quantitative studies was used for this study. All the measurement items were assessed on a 7-point Likert scale (using 1= strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree). A 7-point Likert scale was applied because previous similar studies utilised a 7-point Likert scale.

A 7-point Likert scale also provided respondents with more options to choose from and resulted in a higher response rate. The questions addressed by the measurement instrument included:

- Demographic information
- Internet usage by the respondents
- Social media as part of political marketing (media) tools
- Level of political engagement
- Views on using social media for political participation
- Level of political activity on social media
- Level of trust and loyalty
- Intention to vote for a political party
- Access to political information
- Voting behaviour, reasons for voting and attitudes towards parties

The multiple choice questions in the descriptive statistics section were divided into two groups, those with a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers and those with question-specific multiple choices. The measurement instrument that was used in the current study was adapted from previous researchers and proper modifications were made and it is attached as Appendix B. Table 6 presents the details of the measurements.

Table 6: Measurement instruments

Variables	Source	Number of instruments
Social Media Political Marketing	Ayankoya (2014)	9
Voter Trust	Chinomona (2013)	5
Voter Loyalty	Chinomona, Mahlangu & Pooe (2013)	3
Voting Intention	Liñán & Chen (2009)	5

Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted before the commencement of the data collection process. The pilot study was carried out among 50 respondents, who are within the specified age, some of whom are students and some of whom are employed. The pilot study provided the researcher an opportunity to test all the components of the research instrument such as question flow, comprehension, ambiguity, relevance and understandability of variables, the reliability of scales and whether the instrument would answer the questions that the researcher sought to answer with the study. The questionnaire was then changed to take into account the feedback that was received, before it was administered.

3.4.2. *Target population*

Target population is regarded as a group of units from where a sample is selected (Bryman, 2012). It can also be regarded as a group of elements that the researcher will utilise to elicit some information from and make inferences based on the data at hand (Malhotra, 2010). This implies that this group must be large, concretely specified and used by the researcher to draw a sample and then generalise the research findings based on the selected sample (Wagner *et al.*, 2012). The population that was targeted by the study are students, employed and few self-employed individuals who represent the youth. For the purposes of this research, the classification of youth by the IEC of 18 to 35 years was utilised. The students sample was selected from Wits University and University of Johannesburg in Gauteng and the employed individuals sample was from different private companies in Johannesburg. Other respondents were selected randomly using personal contacts and events where the youth were likely to be present.

3.4.3. *Sampling*

Sampling entails selecting a segment for research from the population or universe (Bryman, 2012). According to Wagner *et al.* (2012, p. 274) it is “the selection of a sample for participation in research" while Creswell (2013, p. 246) defines it as "a small set of cases a researcher selects from a large pool and generalises to the population”. The purpose of any sampling method is to extract a sample from the population in order to generalise the results back to the sample frame. There are two categories of sampling methods, probability sampling and non-probability sampling methods. Non-probability sampling methods rely on the personal judgement of the researcher and not on coincidental selection (Malhotra, 2010). The size of the sample is not established in advance and the researcher’s knowledge about the population from which the sample is taken is limited. Wagner *et al.* (2012) asserts that because there is no specific selection with non-probability sampling, individuals may be included in the sample because they were available and willing to participate in the study. A probability sampling method denotes a process where a sample is randomly selected, so that each unit in the population has an equal chance of being selected. Probability sampling aims to ensure that the research findings are not subjected to error derived from the differences in the sample and the population from which it was selected. Table 7 below encapsulates the different types of probability sampling methods and Table 8 summarises the non-probability sampling methods.

Table 7: Probability sampling methods

Probability sampling methods		
Method	**Features**	**Source**
Simple random sampling	• It lists all the individuals who make up the population and participants are randomly selected from that list.	(Bryman, 2012)
Systematic sampling	• It involves choosing members from a population systematically instead of randomly.	(Neuman, 2014)
Stratified sampling	• Random selection is leveraged with the careful manipulation of the population list to ensure that some participants are not accidentally left out of the sample.	(Wagner *et al*., 2012)
Cluster sampling	• It is usually utilised in small studies and entails the limitation of the boundaries of the wider population.	(Neuman, 2014)
Stage sampling	• It is an enhancement of cluster sampling which encompasses selecting the sample in phases, by finding samples from samples.	(Babbie, 2015)
Multi-phase sampling	• It pulls samples that are to be altered during the various stages of the research.	(Bryman, 2012)

Table 8: Non-probability sampling methods

Non-probability sampling methods		
Method	**Features**	**Source**
Convenience sampling	• A sample is chosen because it was easily available to the researcher.	(Bryman, 2012)
Purposive sampling	• "The researcher aims to sample participants strategically to ensure that the sampled participants are relevant to the research questions that are being used" (p. 714). • "A non-random sample in which the researcher uses a wide range of methods to locate all possible cases of a highly specific and difficult to reach population" (p. 273).	(Bryman, 2012) (Neuman, 2014)
Snowball sampling	• Entails a random selection of the first cluster of respondents, who then refer others. • Sampling in which participants lead the researcher to others who might also be willing to participate in the study.	(Wagner *et al.,* 2012)
Quota sampling	• "It signifies numerous levels of a population in the percentages they are found in that population" (p. 273). • It has a pre-set quantity of cases in each of the pre-set classes which will mirror diversity of the population using random methods.	(Creswell, 2013) (Babbie, 2015)

3.4.4. *Sampling method for the current study*

The sampling strategy that the study committed to is the convenience sampling method, which is defined as a non-probability sampling technique that is based on the judgment of the researcher and the easily accessible units are usually the ones selected for inclusion in the sample (Bryman, 2012). What this definition suggests is that convenience sampling is when the researcher uses those who are easy to obtain rather than because of the appropriateness.

The selection of respondents for the current study was based on a convenience sample, which always raises questions about the external validity of the findings. The sampled population were mainly students in the two campuses and the youth who are employed in different companies. Convenience sampling ensured that the researcher surveys people who invariably use social media for interacting with different users on different subjects. This made the data collection process more efficient and rapid.

3.5. Data analysis and interpretation

The data analysis phase is essentially about data reduction and is concerned with condensing the magnitude of information that has been gathered to ensure it makes better sense (Bryman, 2012). This phase encompasses the organisation, analysis and explanation of the data, which all ultimately are intended at methodologically arranging, assimilating and exploring data to examine patterns and associations among the specific details. Analysis entails the linking of data to theories, developing generalisations and identifying trends and themes and to test the hypothesis (Babbie, 2015). It is important to accentuate the fact that different techniques are applied to analyse qualitative and quantitative data, therefore the data analysis approach that is followed is always guided by whether a quantitative approach or qualitative approach was followed in the study.

The section below explicates the step by step process that the researcher followed to analyse the data after it was gathered.

3.5.1. *Data coding and processing*

Before data is coded, it is important for it to be cleaned. The data cleaning process entails sifting through the data to check for inconsistencies, incorrect information and to ensure that all redundant data which could potentially have an adverse impact on data coding is removed (Bryman, 2012).

Once the data were cleaned, the coding process commenced. Coding is important for quantitative studies. Data coding entails inserting data codes which act as identifiers on data about all units of analysis. The aim was to allocate the data that relates to each variable into groups, which is regarded as a category of that variable. For the current study, before the data were entered into a computer for processing and analysis, it was essential for the researcher to develop a coding system. This was done by assigning a number to each category of a variable e.g. male was coded as one (1), and female as two (2). The codes were entered on the questionnaires to make coding easier and less tedious. When the questionnaire was finalised, a box for the code in the right margin of the page for each question was inserted. These boxes were not used by the respondents but were only completed during data processing.

A codebook, which is a record used in data processing and analysis to identify where the different data items are located in the data file, was created. It categorises the data items and the meaning of the codes applied to signify diverse aspects of variables (Babbie, 2015). It was imperative to ensure a proper and consistent coding system was developed and that coding schemes were easy to use. Before the coding and data entry, all procedures were tested on a

few questionnaires in order to estimate the time required to complete the coding task. Once that was complete, the data were ready for coding.

3.5.2. *Data analysis using Structural Equation Model (SEM)*

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was utilised in this study to analyse data. Suhr (2010) delineates SEM as a method for representing, estimating and testing a connection between variables (measured variables and latent variables). MacCallum and Austin (2000) and Grace (2006) also confirm one of the salient features of SEM as being its ability to test the hypothesised patterns of directional and non-directional relationships among a set of observed (measured) and unobserved (latent) variables. In analysing the various definitions put forward, what seems to stand out about SEM is that the researcher can create theoretical concepts and validate the proposed causal relationships through two or more structural equations. SEM combines elements such as regression analysis, factor analysis and simultaneous equation modeling.

SEM's ability to deal with numerous modelling difficulties, the endogeneity among constructs and composite underlying data structures found in various phenomena can be assumed to be the main reason for its popularity (Washington, Karlaftis, & Mannering, 2003).

3.5.3. *Rationale for selecting SEM*

SEM was selected for this study because it is a general approach that analyses multivariate data for theory testing (Bagozzi, 1981). SEM is appropriate for testing the causal relationship between many variables. Since the study sought to test the relationship between the four constructs (social media political marketing, voter trust, voter loyalty and voting intention), SEM was the most

appropriate method. SEM is also relevant for the analysis of data for deduction purposes. While the conventional multivariate techniques are not capable of measuring or correcting for measurement error, SEM offers exact approximations of these parameters. Lastly, SEM techniques are able to incorporate both unobserved (latent) and observed variables. SEM allowed for integration and inclusion of multi-item scales. It also presented accurate estimates of measurement errors that are associated with these scales (Grace, 2006). The following are some of the advantages of using SEM:

Structural Equation Models go outside normal regressions models to integrate manifold dependent and independent variables together with hypothetical latent constructs that groups of observed variables might represent.

They deliver a method in which the stipulated set of relationships among observed and latent variables can be tested and also permit theory testing even when experiments are not possible. As a result, SEM methods have become pervasive in social and behavioural sciences (MacCallum & Austin, 2000).

SEM process

Structural Equation Modelling is performed using two stages. The first stage entails the evaluation of the appropriateness of the measurement model. In this stage, the construct reliability and item reliability are examined (Nusair & Hua, 2010). Data analysis procedure followed the following steps:

- Data coding
- Generating descriptive statistics using SPSS software
- Performing Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) using AMOS for SEM
- Path Modelling using Amos for SEM

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) measures reliability, validity and model fit, while Path Modelling measures the signage (positive or negative) and

significance of the relationship using probability value. Lastly, the model fit was checked.

3.5.4. *Validity*

Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what the study actually intends to measure (Punch, 2013). In quantitative research, content validity focuses on whether the conceptual definition is represented in the measure, criterion validity and construct validity focuses on how well a measure conforms to theoretical expectations (Punch, 2013).

Validity is particularly important because using the wrong measurement instrument or an instrument that does not effectively measure the underlying concept would effectively jeopardise the integrity of the research (Creswell, 2013).

Convergent and discriminant validity were used to measure validity. Convergent validity was investigated using item loadings and item-to-total correlation values and discriminant validity was tested by checking the inter-correlation between the constructs and by comparing the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) to Shared Variance (SV).

3.5.5. *Reliability*

Reliability deals with the degree to which a scale yields coherent outcomes if repeated measurements can be made on that attribute (Malhotra, 2010; Bryman, 2012). A much clearer definition of reliability is provided by Wagner *et al.,* (2012) who posit that reliability is the extent to which an instrument measures a variable identically every time it is employed on the same participants and under the same circumstances. Simply put, it is whether a study will produce the same result if it is done more than once. It also denotes that the conclusion about a

fundamental concept will stay the same if the similar measurement is repeated over time (Collis & Hussey, 2009).

For the current study, to measure reliability, the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability Index were used. Cronbach Alpha is generated using SPSS and Composite Reliability Index is generated using AMOS.

3.5.6. *Sampling frame*

A sampling frame is a list from which the sample was drawn (Bryman, 2012). For this study, the sampling frame was students in the two campuses and the youth who are employed in different companies.

3.5.7. *Sampling size*

The sample for this study was made up of 350 respondents. The target was to obtain 250 responses. The 350 sample size was to accommodate spoilt questionnaires or non-responses. 280 responses were received, with 30 of those being spoilt. The 250 was sufficient for the AMOS software which was utilised for data analysis and requires at least 250 as the sample size.

3.5.8. *Description of the respondents*

The study targeted the youth as defined by the IEC, 18 to 35 years old, all racial groups and who are in Johannesburg, Gauteng. Initially, the researcher attempted to cover a diverse category of respondents (i.e. university students, high school students in townships and employed individuals of all races) in order to observe whether there would be any differences in the views of the youth based on their life stage and socio-economic circumstances. Unfortunately, the

few questionnaires obtained from high school students were spoilt and could not be used in the analysis.

Table 9: Profile of study respondents

Description of respondent type	Number to be sampled
• Students from Wits University and University of Johannesburg • Employed and self- employed individuals • Age group - 18 to 35 years • All racial groups • All genders	350 in total and 250 usable questionnaires

3.6. Data collection

The constructs that the study seeks to test are the major determining factor of the data collection tool that a researcher uses. Based on the objectives of the study, a self-administered questionnaire was the most apt data collection tool to employ. A questionnaire is a document that comprises questions and other details that are compiled in order to obtain information from study respondents for analysis by the researcher (Babbie, 2015). A questionnaire provides some inherent benefits as an information gathering tool such as the speed with which data can be collected, their ability to gather a large amount of information and low cost if it is self-administered (Bryman, 2012). A questionnaire does also have its own shortcomings such as misinterpretation of questions, which the researcher cannot clarify and response rates may be very low with questionnaires. The fact that the questionnaire was self-administered helped to alleviate the issue of low response rate as the researcher was on many occasions physically present during the completion of questionnaires and could wait and collect them.

3.7. Ethical considerations

In the process of carrying out research, researchers are sometimes faced with having to find a balance between the potential benefits of improving the understanding of social life by pursuing scientific knowledge and the rights of the participants in the study (Neuman, 2014). Therefore it is important that researchers comply with proper ethical considerations in conducting research.

Ethical behaviour in research deals with the responsibility that researchers must apply in conducting social research and ethical behaviour mainly centres around four main themes, namely, harm or injury to study participants, no informed consent, invasion of privacy and deceiving participants (Bryman, 2012). Notwithstanding that there are no explicit rules that are prescribed for ethical considerations in research, the overriding factor should be about ensuring that the participant's dignity, self-esteem, privacy and all other personal rights are respected and protected.

One of the most important areas where the researchers are faced with ethical issues is in their relationship with study participants. It is essential for the researcher to inform the research participants about the objective and benefits of the study. In addition, participants must be protected from any form of loss, harm, discomfort or embarrassment arising from the study, even when this could result in low response rate. Collis and Hussey (2009) suggest that to comply with ethical behaviour, the researcher should ensure voluntary participation in the research. Secondly, the participant's right to anonymity and confidentiality must not be violated in any way. According to Collis and Hussey (2009), conducting social research with proper adherence and considerations to ethics has a benefit of increasing the response rate, as the participants will be more comfortable and feel free to provide information.

The current study has been carried out with consideration to ethical issues described above. The participants were not coerced, were informed about the purpose of the

study and no form of participant identification was gathered in order to ensure confidentiality. This information was communicated in a letter which was presented as a covering letter to the questionnaire. The letter is attached as Appendix A, followed by the questionnaire as Appendix B. In addition, the research has been carried out according to the ethical policy of Wits Business School research committee. The non-requirement of special ethical clearance is attached as Appendix C.

3.8. Limitations of the study

The current study was site-based and Johannesburg respondents were chosen because of their convenience to the researcher. Because of that, the study excluded the views of the youth outside Johannesburg.

Since the study focused on engagement via social media, it invariably excluded any young person who does not engage on social media either due to access or preference.

The study also targeted the youth between the ages of 18 and 35, and therefore excluded anyone below or above this age group.

3.9. Summary of Chapter 3

In this chapter, the research paradigm and research design were outlined followed by the demographic characteristics of the targeted respondents, the research instrument and data analysis. In the latter part of chapter, the limitations of the study were put forward and the ethical conduct applied in the study was discussed.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS PRESENTATION

4.1. Introduction

Data analysis entails the systematic application of statistical techniques aimed to compress, describe and evaluate data (Neuman, 2014). This process enables the researcher to apply reasoning so as to fully comprehend and interpret the gathered data. The central point of this chapter is to present and expound on the results of the empirical study conducted. This comprises describing the data collected, the response rate and crucial research items on the questionnaire and their reliability. Furthermore, the descriptive statistical analysis of the gathered data and the interpretation thereof are discussed.

What this study intends to comprehend and contribute to political parties, marketers, academia and business was amplified by empirical evidence, with the utilisation of SPSS 22 and AMOS 22 statistical programmes. This is to ensure that the empirical conclusions of the hypothesis are confirmed and validated so that they meet the objectives as delineated in Chapter 1.

Four main topics are dealt with in this chapter. Descriptive statistics are presented first. Descriptive statistics illuminate the population that was sampled and this is achieved by representing this detail using corresponding statistics and additional tables. Subsequent to that, a discussion on the reliability and validity assessment tools, which was achieved using Confirmatory Factor Analysis is presented and concluded by the Path Modelling results. The subsequent figure below, figure 6 graphically elucidates the approach that was implemented in analysing the gathered data.

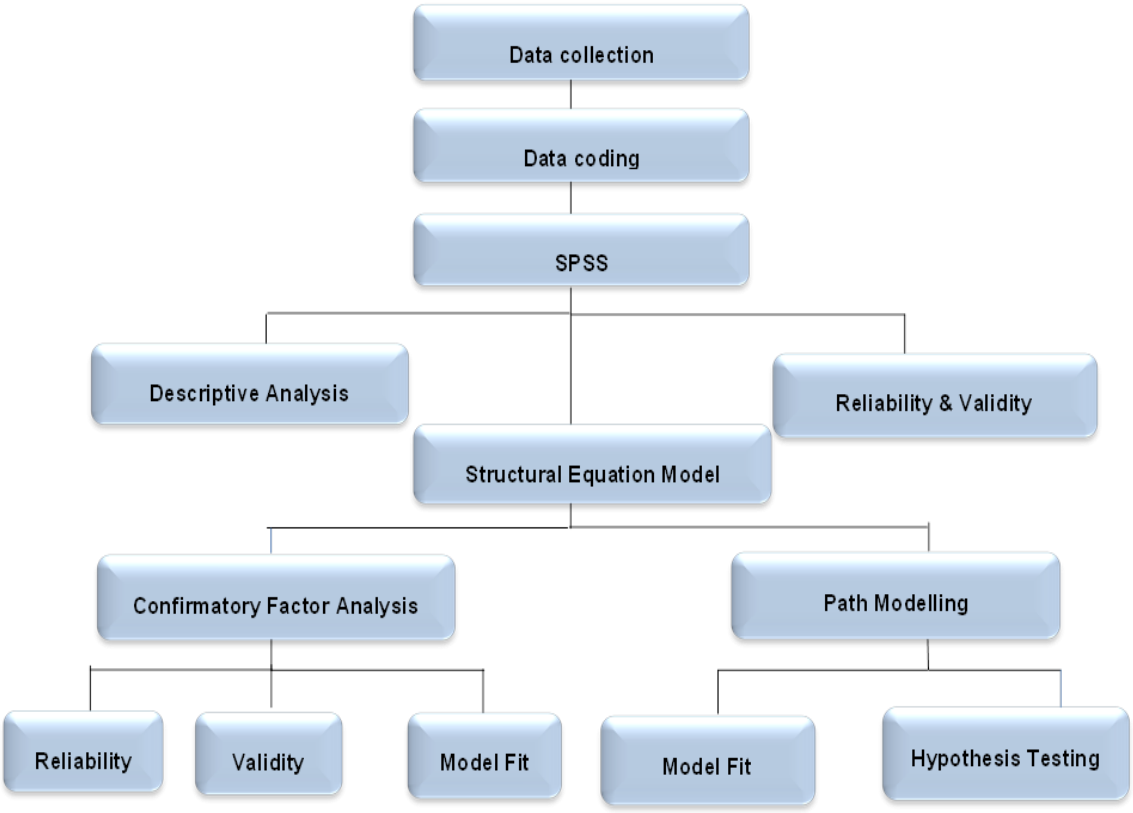


Figure 6: Data analysis approach

4.2. Descriptive statistics

Lomax and Hahs-Vaughn (2013) define descriptive statistics as techniques that allow the researcher to tabulate and summarise the profile of research objects in the study. This study utilised SPSS 22.0 to analyse the sample.

The data collection process took place from 5 October to 30 October 2015, using a self-administered survey questionnaire to gather data for the current study (Appendix B). A questionnaire, which was self-administered, was selected as the researcher would have better control of the completion thereof and could easily follow up with individuals who had not returned the completed questionnaire. The

approach used by the researcher was to target groups of students on campus in tutorial classes. The employed youth group was targeted using individuals from three different companies, who requested colleagues to complete the questionnaire, which made the process easy and the response rate high. Out of 350 questionnaires that were issued, 280 were returned, which equated to an 80% response rate. 30 of the questionnaires were not used in data analysis as they were spoilt.

The first page of the questionnaire required the respondents to furnish demographic information such as gender, age category, race, marital status, highest education qualification and occupation. The second page required them to answer questions relating to their internet and social media usage.

The following section provides condensed information detailing the characteristics of the respondents who were part of the current study. Collis and Hussey (2009) assert that descriptive statistics must be presented in a summarised format, for ease of presentation, identification and understanding of the data. Table 10 presents a tabulated format of the demographic profiles of the 250 study respondents, followed by pie diagrams, which demonstrate significant trends and relevant frequencies of occurrence from which deductions can be extrapolated.

In the current study, descriptive statistics detail the demographic features of the research information. The overall number of respondents was stated, and the spread of gender, age, marital status, racial group and educational level of participants was explored.

Table 10: Descriptive statistics

Gender	Freq.	%	Age Category	Freq.	%	Marital Status	Freq.	%
Females	137	55%	18-24	149	60%	Single	200	80%
Males	113	45%	25-30	65	26%	Married	33	13%
			31-35	36	14%	Divorced	6	2%
						Other	11	4%
Total	**250**	**100%**	**Total**	**250**	**100.00%**		**250**	**100%**
Qualification	**Freq.**	**%**	**Occupation**	**Freq.**	**%**	**Racial Group**	**Freq**	**%**
High school	115	46%	Student	146	58%	Black	157	63%
Diploma	46	18%	Employed	79	32%	Coloured	17	7%
Degree	54	22%	Self Employed	23	9%	Asian	29	12%
Post Grad	35	14%	Unemployed	2	1%	White	37	15%
						Other	10	4%
Total	**250**	**100%**	**Total**	**250**	**100%**	**Total**	**250**	**100%**
Internet Access	**Freq.**	**%**	**Place of Access**	**Freq.**	**%**	**Duration on internet a week**	**Freq.**	**%**
Yes	246	98%	Home	54	22%	Less than1 hour	12	5%
No	4	2%	Work	40	16%	2-5 Hours	51	20%
			School	53	21%	5-10 Hours	60	24%
			Mobile/Tablet	100	40%	10-15 Hours	53	21%
			Internet Café	3	1%	More than 15 hours	74	30%
Total	**250**	**100%**	**Total**	**250**	**100%**	**Total**	**250**	**100%**
Social Media Usage	**Freq.**	**%**	**Social Media Type**	**Freq.**	**%**			
Yes	250	100%	Facebook	89	36%			
No	0	0	Twitter	21	8%			
			LinkedIn	10	4%			
			YouTube	16	6%			
			Instagram	34	14%			
			All of the above	80	32%			
Total	**250**	**100%**	**Total**	**250**	**100%**			

**Freq=Frequency; %=Percentage*

4.2.1. *Demographics*

a) Gender

The majority of the respondents were females at 55% with males 45%. Females constitute more and this being in line with the national population figures as per census 2011 (Statistics South Africa, 2011).

Figure 7 illustrates the gender of the respondents in the current study.

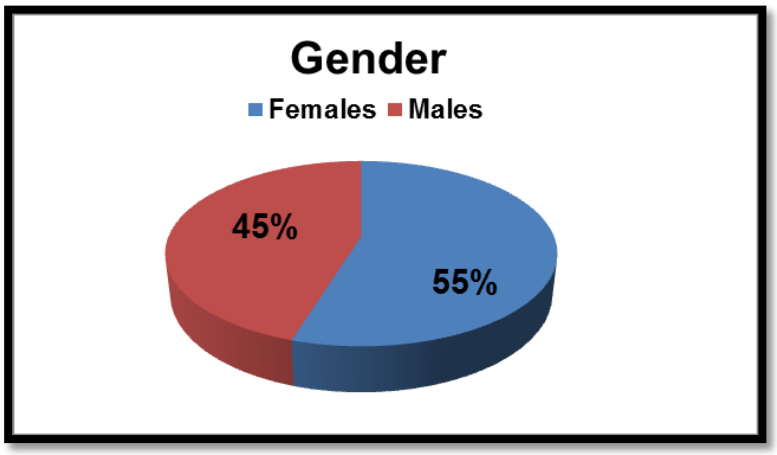


Figure 7: Gender

b) Age Category

As demonstrated in Figure 8, a large percentage of the research population is between the ages of 18-24 years, making it 60% of the research population. This is because the highest respondents were from the students at the two institutions, namely Wits and UJ, who are in that age group. This was followed by the 25-30 age group, which constitutes 26% of the research population. The smallest group is in the higher age groups, 31-35, which constitute 14% of the research population.

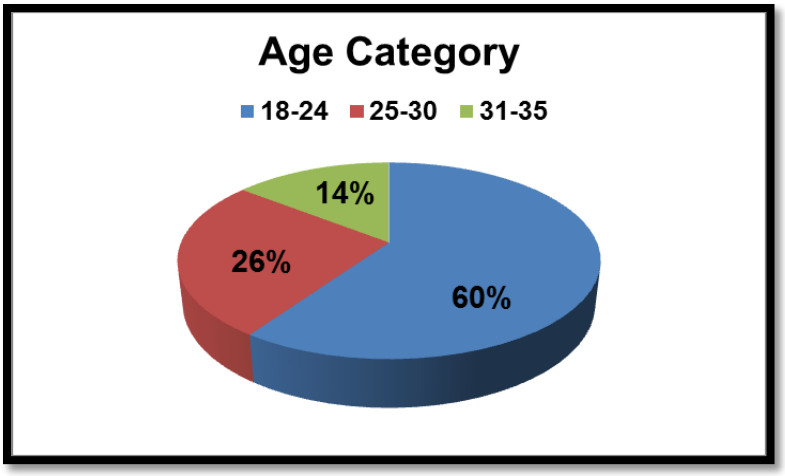


Figure 8: Age Category

c) Marital Status

The majority of the respondents were single at 80% and this is not surprising since the study was conducted in two institutions of higher learning, namely Wits University and University of Johannesburg, therefore the respondents are still students. This was followed by the married respondents at 13%. The smaller percentage of married and divorced respondents was prevalent from the employed group.

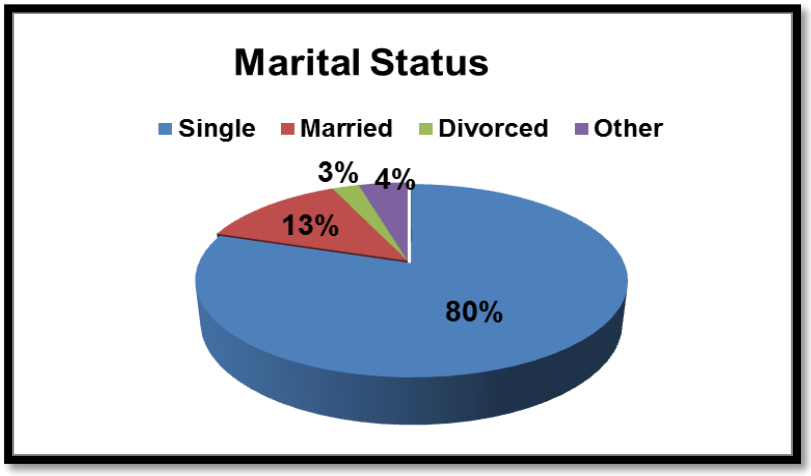


Figure 9: Marital Status

d) Academic Qualification

46% of the respondents, which is the majority, have high school as the highest academic level. This is consistent with the fact that the majority of the study respondents are University students between the ages of 18 and 24 who do not hold a degree yet. This was followed by 22% of the respondents who had a degree. The minority of the study respondents possesses a post graduate qualification and this minority was made up of the employed individuals. Figure 10 illustrates the results of this statistic.

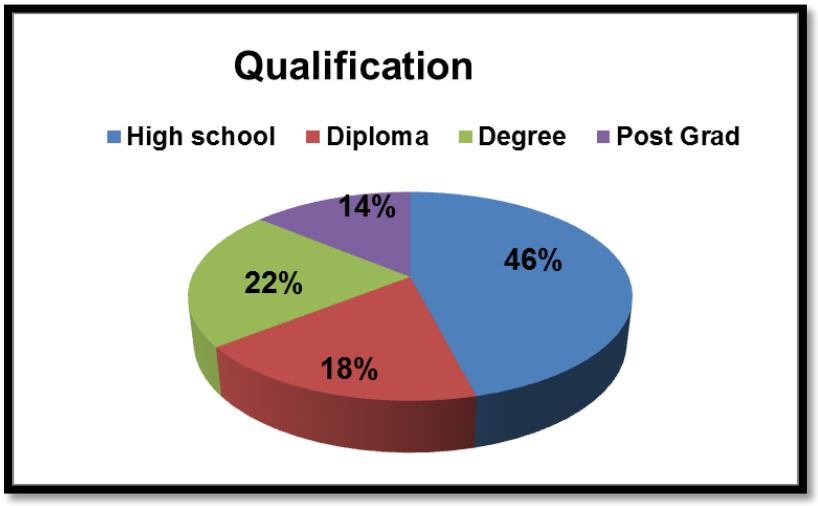


Figure 10: Highest Academic Qualification

e) Occupation

As represented in Figure 11, a high proportion of the respondents are students at 58%, followed by those who are employed at 32%. Some of the students who were surveyed are self-employed, at 9%. The lowest at 1% was made up of the unemployed. This is explicable as the study focused mainly on students and employed respondents.

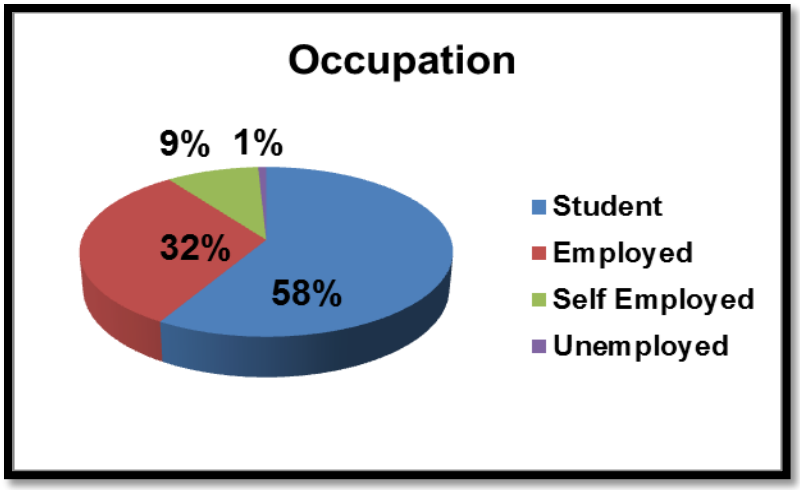


Figure 11: Occupation

f) Racial Group

Blacks made up the majority of the respondents at 63%, followed by whites at 15%. Asians constituted 11% and coloureds at 7% and others constituted the remaining 4%. Race was asked in order to assess whether there would be any interesting differences based on race. However, from the results of the study, there were no differences in attitudes or behaviour of the respondents based on race. The “other” option was included to accommodate other racial groups that are not identified as either of those indicated (Black, White, Coloured and Asian). It was interesting, though, to realise that some respondents were not comfortable with indicating their actual racial group and opted for “other”. What was mostly prevalent from that group was that they identified themselves as South Africans as opposed to identification based on racial lines. Figure 12 indicates the racial composition of the respondents in the study.

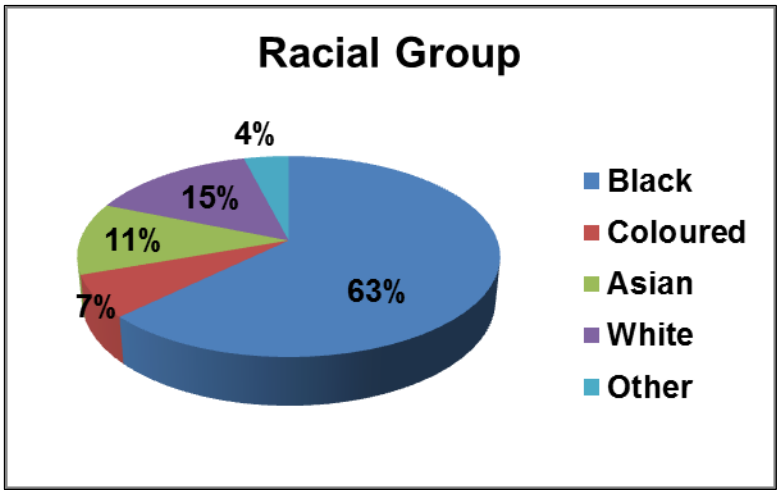


Figure 12: Racial Group

4.2.2. *Respondents' internet access*

This section details the respondent's internet access, social media usage and aims to determine the social media platforms they use. The results are presented in the following graphs:

a) Internet Access

As presented in Figure 13, the majority of the respondents have internet access at 98.4% and the remainder does not have. On further scrutinising the 2% that indicated that they do not have internet access, it became apparent that they do have social media profiles and also use social media platforms. What could be inferred from this is that they do access the internet at school or at an internet café.

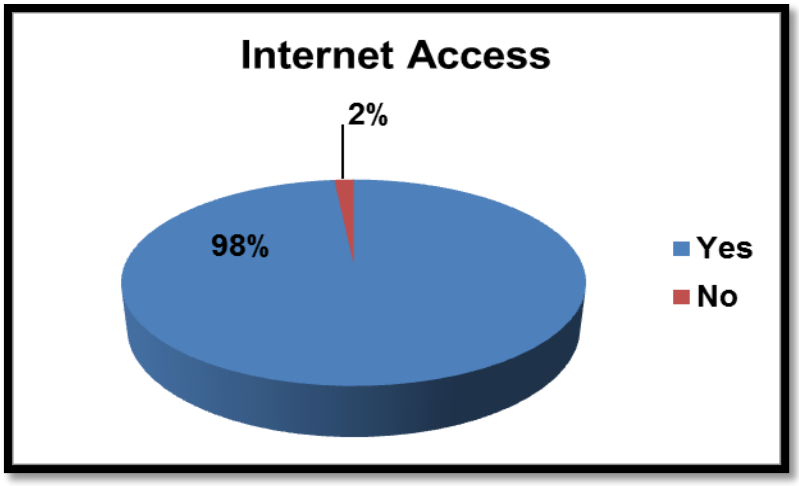


Figure 13: Internet Access

b) Place of internet access

The aim of this question was to understand where or how they access the internet. Figure 14 depicts that the majority of the participants at 40% access the internet using their mobile devices (either cellphone or tablet). An equal proportion of respondents access the internet either at home (22%) or at school (21%). The remaining respondents at a small 1% access it from an internet café. The high incidence of internet access via mobile can be attributed to the high prevalence of smart phones coupled with the ubiquitous nature of a mobile device, which has become part and parcel of the life of the majority of South Africans. Research indicates that there are 79.1 million mobile subscriptions in South Africa, which is a 146% penetration as % of the South African population (SA Social Media Landscape, 2015 report). This number demonstrates that people may hold more than one mobile devices and subscriptions.

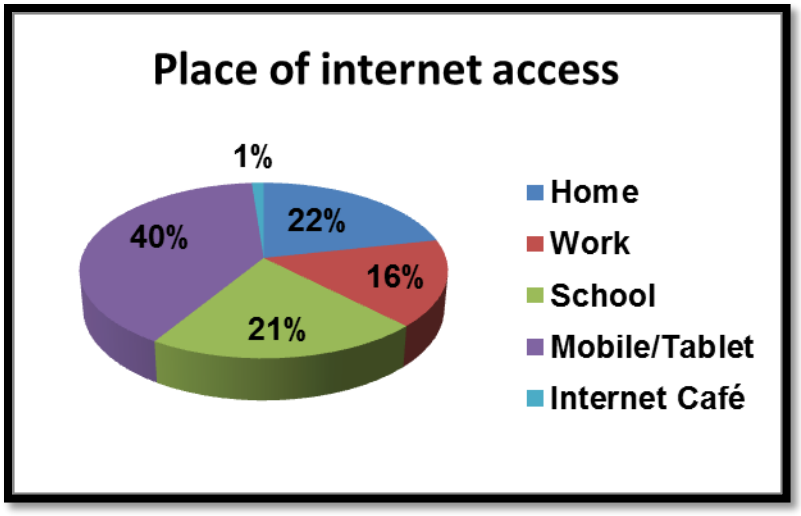


Figure 14: Place of Internet Access

c) Duration spent on the internet

The majority of the respondents spend more than 15 hours a week on the internet at 30%, followed by 24% who spend between 5 to 10 hours a week, with 21% spending 10 to 15 hours and the remainder spending less than 5 hours per week. This data suggests that the majority of the study participants are very active Internet users because of the amount of time they spend on the Internet. Therefore they are more disposed to searching for and disseminating information on the Internet.

Figure 15 illustrates the time spent on the internet by the respondents.

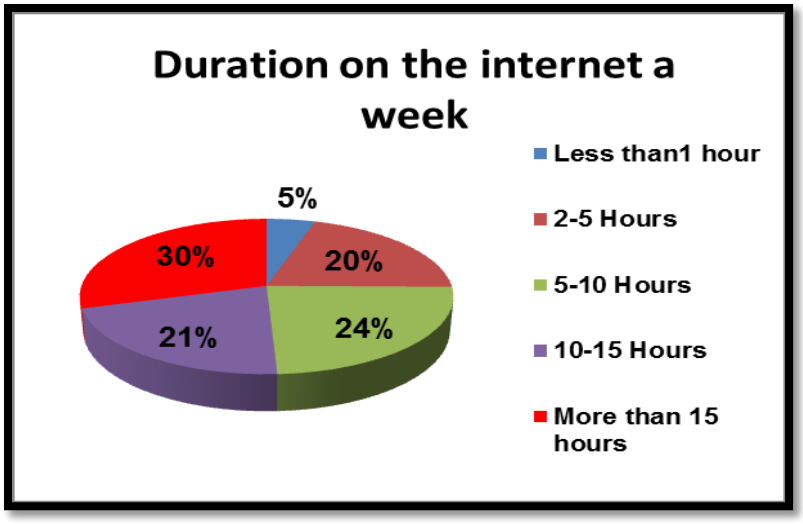


Figure 15: Duration on the internet

4.2.3. *Social media usage*

The current study aims to explore whether the youth political participation and engagement on social media influences their trust, loyalty and voting intention. It was crucial therefore that the respondents are on social media and use it as a communication platform. It was thus anticipated that the respondents must be social media users.

As confirmed by figure 16, all the respondents in the study (100%) use social media. This indicates that all respondents in the study have a good discernment of the social media landscape. This renders them fully appreciative of what the study seeks to achieve.

Figure16 illustrates the respondent's social media usage.

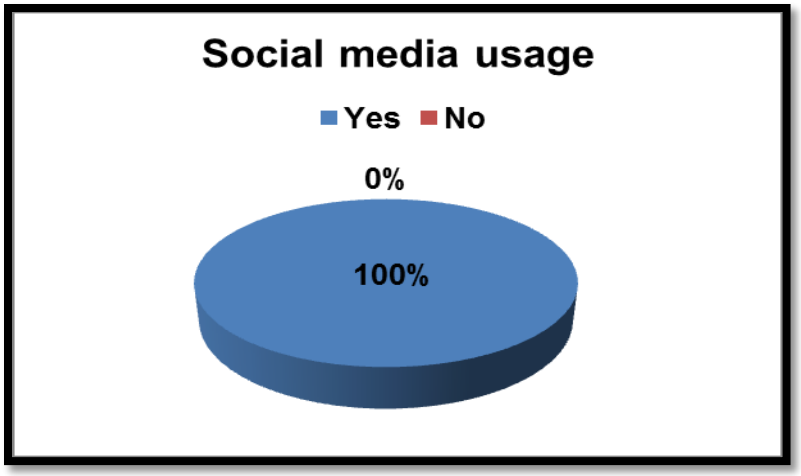


Figure 16: Social Media Usage

d) Social media platforms

The majority of the respondents, which is 36%, use Facebook. It is also interesting to note that this is followed closely at 32% of the respondents who use all the social media platforms that were listed (namely Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Instagram). This implies that the percentage of Facebook users is even higher than the 36% that is recorded. 14% of the respondents use Instagram and the lowest that is used by the respondents is LinkedIn. This is understandable, as LinkedIn is mainly a site that is used by professional people and businesses and thus has a lower appeal to the youth.

Figure 17 portrays the social media platforms that are utilised by the respondents.

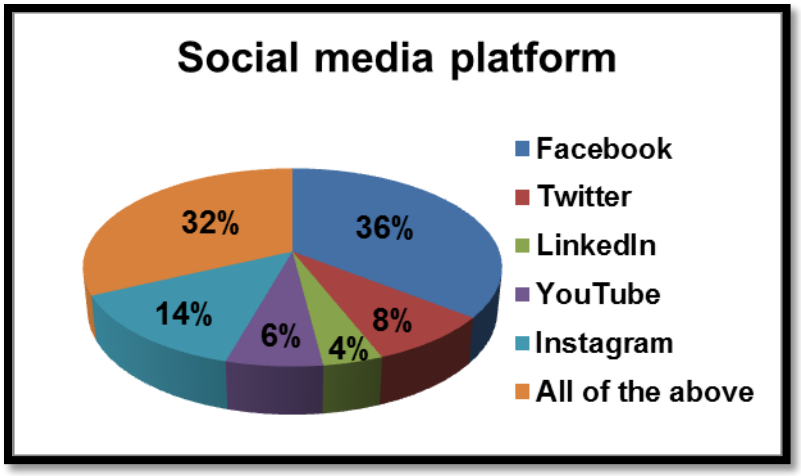


Figure 17: Social media platforms

4.2.4. *Summary of scale item results*

All research variables were measured using a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=slightly disagree, 4=neutral, 5=slightly agree, 6=agree and 7=strongly agree). The first variable, social media political marketing (SMPM) was measured using sixteen items which were adapted from Ayankoya (2014), ranging from SMPM 1 to SMPM 16. The second variable of voter trust (VT) was measured using five items, adapted from Chinomona (2013) and ranging from VT1 to VT5. The third variable, voter loyalty (VL) used three measurement scales adapted from Chinomona, Mahlangu & Pooe (2013), which ranged from VL 1 to VL 3. The last variable, voting intention (VI) used five questions, adapted from Linan and Chen (2009) ranging from VI 1 to VI 5.

Table 11: Scale to item summary

`		Scale: Frequency & Percentage (%)														
Constructs		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Slightly disagree		Neutral		Slightly Agree		Agree		Strongly agree		
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Mean
Social media political marketing	SMPM1	37	14.8%	21	8.4%	21	8.4%	43	17.2%	42	16.8%	42	16.8%	44	17.6%	4.34
	SMPM2	117	46.8%	45	18.0%	5	2.0%	24	9.6%	3	1.2%	18	7.2%	38	15.2%	2.83
	SMPM3	63	25.2%	19	7.6%	3	1.2%	7	2.8%	1	0.4%	36	14.4%	121	48.4%	4.82
	SMPM4	93	37.2%	48	19.2%	28	11.2%	45	18.0%	13	5.2%	7	2.8%	16	6.4%	2.69
	SMPM5	81	32.4%	33	13.2%	18	7.2%	28	11.2%	27	10.8%	32	12.8%	31	12.4%	3.43
	SMPM6	37	14.8%	14	5.6%	8	3.2%	31	12.4%	46	18.4%	65	26.0%	49	19.6%	4.70
	SMPM7	51	20.4%	23	9.2%	19	7.6%	29	11.6%	36	14.4%	48	19.2%	44	17.6%	4.18
	SMPM8	79	31.6%	37	14.8%	28	11.2%	31	12.4%	15	6.0%	29	11.6%	31	12.4%	3.31
	SMPM9	91	36.4%	46	18.4%	20	8.0%	20	8.0%	20	8.0%	21	8.4%	32	12.8%	3.09
	SMPM10	119	47.6%	48	19.2%	20	8.0%	18	7.2%	15	6.0%	10	4.0%	20	8.0%	2.49
	SMPM11	94	37.6%	41	16.4%	19	7.6%	29	11.6%	11	4.4%	24	9.6%	32	12.8%	3.09
	SMPM12	12	4.8%	11	4.4%	20	8.0%	50	20.0%	50	20.0%	54	21.6%	53	21.2%	4.96
	SMPM13	14	5.6%	13	5.2%	29	11.6%	69	27.6%	59	23.6%	36	14.4%	30	12.0%	4.50
	SMPM14	11	4.4%	10	4.0%	14	5.6%	47	18.8%	32	12.8%	74	29.6%	62	24.8%	5.20
	SMPM15	7	2.8%	6	2.4%	8	3.2%	54	21.6%	35	14.0%	71	28.4%	69	27.6%	5.37
	SMPM16	12	4.8%	12	4.8%	22	8.8%	75	30.0%	48	19.2%	43	17.2%	38	15.2%	4.66
Voter Trust	VT1	49	19.6%	49	19.6%	60	24.0%	66	26.4%	13	5.2%	6	2.4%	7	2.8%	2.96
	VT2	62	24.8%	58	23.2%	41	16.4%	55	22.0%	20	8.0%	7	2.8%	7	2.8%	2.85
	VT3	66	26.4%	65	26.0%	50	20.0%	45	18.0%	14	5.6%	6	2.4%	4	1.6%	2.64
	VT4	54	21.6%	60	24.0%	36	14.4%	56	22.4%	24	9.6%	11	4.4%	9	3.6%	3.02
	VT5	55	22.0%	44	17.6%	40	16.0%	53	21.2%	29	11.6%	17	6.8%	12	4.8%	3.22
Voter Loyalty	VL1	46	18.4%	46	18.4%	21	8.4%	58	23.2%	30	12.0%	25	10.0%	24	9.6%	3.60
	VL2	41	16.4%	41	16.4%	25	10.0%	59	23.6%	34	13.6%	24	9.6%	26	10.4%	3.72
	VL3	34	13.6%	30	12.0%	26	10.4%	67	26.8%	25	10.0%	37	14.8%	31	12.4%	4.02
Voting Intention	VI1	24	9.6%	21	8.4%	12	4.8%	42	16.8%	53	21.2%	46	18.4%	52	20.8%	4.70
	VI2	15	6.0%	11	4.4%	6	2.4%	50	20.0%	36	14.4%	64	25.6%	68	27.2%	5.18
	VI3	28	11.2%	12	4.8%	18	7.2%	41	16.4%	55	22.0%	49	19.6%	47	18.8%	4.67
	VI4	24	9.6%	8	3.2%	10	4.0%	45	18.0%	32	12.8%	51	20.4%	80	32.0%	5.10
	VI5	25	10.0%	13	5.2%	7	2.8%	62	24.8%	27	10.8%	43	17.2%	73	29.2%	4.90

**SMPM =Social media political marketing; VT=voter trust; VL=voter loyalty; VI=voting intention*

The results of the above scales denote the following:

Social media political marketing

The construct of social media political marketing was measured using 16 measurement items. The measurement scale of social media political marketing sought to elicit insights about the respondent's level of political interest and participation, whether the respondents use social media to search, read, comment and share political information. In addition, they were asked whether they perceive social media to be a reliable, objective information source than other media platforms.

The majority of respondents, at 56%, agreed with all sixteen of the measurement items, whilst 25% were neutral and 19% disagreed. These results posit that the majority of the respondents have a general interest in politics and use social media to read, disseminate or even engage in political discussions on social media. Furthermore, they agree that social media is a more useful source of information than the traditional media.

Voter trust

Five measurement items were used to measure the voter trust construct. The measurement scale for voter trust focuses on questions that relate to the respondent's views about their level of trust, and confidence in the messages that political parties and leaders communicate via social media. The questions aimed at exploring whether respondents consider those messages sincere and believable and whether political parties and leaders actually do consider the views of followers on social media.

80%, which is an overwhelming majority of the respondents, disagreed with all five measurement items, with 20% being neutral. This means that although the respondents are active on social media and actually get involved in the

discussions or even share some political information, they still do not necessarily trust or have confidence in the messages that political parties and leaders share via social media. The respondents do not consider these messages sincere.

This implies that voter trust develops based on the citizen's assessment of whether the government is fulfilling its pre-election promises and obligations and whether the delivery is according to the expectations of the citizens. If the government is delivering on its promises, trust is enhanced and if it does not, trust diminishes. The fact that an individual interacts with a party on social media seems to be immaterial, what matters is the fulfilment of promises made in pre-electoral campaigns.

Furthermore, political parties must appreciate that trust is not built overnight and to build voter trust on social media, the message must be authentic, must focus on communicating what the party has achieved and not use social media to "sell" their parties only during elections only.

Voter loyalty

The voter loyalty construct was measured with three measurement items. The measurement scale of voter loyalty comprised questions that relate to loyalty of social media users to the political party based on their social media engagement with it. All the respondents were neutral. Voter loyalty develops from trust, when voters trust a party, they become loyal to it. This result is very linked to the voter trust result. 80% of the respondents disagreed with all measurement items for voter trust. It is therefore plausible that all the respondents were neutral on voter loyalty. Loyalty without trust does not exist.

Voting intention

The final construct of voting intention was measured with five measurement items. The measurement scale focused on questions that relate to the respondent's feelings about voting behaviour and whether engaging with a political party on social media would enhance their voting intention.

The majority, at 100% of the respondents, slightly agreed with the statements mainly because the majority regard voting is an opportunity to be involved in the country's democratic process and they definitely want to be part of shaping the country's democratic trajectory, hence the voting intention seemed to have some resonance with the majority of the respondents.

4.3. Reliability measurements

In order to ensure the credibility and integrity of the study, the Cronbach's Alpha value (Cronbach α), Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were performed to appraise the reliability of the measures. Cronbach's Alpha assists with confirming the existence of reliability, while CR and AVE confirm and validate the presence of discriminant reliability. This ultimately ensures that there were no significant inter-research variables cross-loadings. The results of the reliability and validity assessments that were performed are depicted in Table 12 and are discussed henceforth.

4.3.1. *Cronbach Alpha*

Cronbach Alpha is used to test internal reliability. According to Bryman (2012), Cronbach Alpha calculates the average of all possible split half reliability coefficients. A calculated Cronbach's coefficient will vary between 1 and 0. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 1 indicates perfect internal reliability and the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0 indicates no internal reliability. The figure of 0.80

is usually used as a rule of thumb to indicate an acceptable level of internal reliability (Bryman, 2012). As illustrated in Table 12, the Cronbach Alpha values for this current study exceed the threshold of 0.80 (i.e. SMPM=0.892, VT=0.868, VL=0.838 and VI=0.882).

Furthermore, in accordance with Dunn, Seaker and Waller (1994), the cut-off point for item-to-total values is 0.3 (often ≦0.3). For the current study, the item-to-total values range between 0.56 and 0.796, which exceeds the threshold of 0.3. This therefore confirms the reliability of the measures used in this study. The measurement items with item-to-total values which were below the threshold of 0.3 were deleted. These are SMPM 3,4,12,13,14,15 and 16.

Table 12: Reliability Measures

Constructs		Mean	Standard Deviation	Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach Alpha	CR	AVE	Item loading
Social Media Political Marketing	SMPM1	4.34	2.02	0.688	0.892	0.898	0.576	0.713
	SMPM2	2.83	2.295	0.591				0.640
	SMPM5	3.43	2.224	0.727				0.779
	SMPM6	4.7	2.024	0.624				0.620
	SMPM7	4.18	2.182	0.714				0.745
	SMPM8	3.31	2.174	0.789				0.887
	SMPM9	3.09	2.203	0.747				0.838
	SMPM10	2.49	1.95	0.712				0.777
	SMPM11	3.09	2.21	0.723				0.794
Voter Trust	VT1	2.96	1.46	0.596	0.868	0.830	0.573	0.659
	VT2	2.85	1.568	0.759				0.875
	VT3	2.64	1.441	0.758				0.833
	VT4	3.01	1.64	0.772				0.782
	VT5	3.23	1.755	0.598				0.602
Voter Loyalty	VL1	3.6	1.928	0.76	0.838	0.743	0.670	0.879
	VL2	3.72	1.904	0.796				0.938
	VL3	4.02	1.905	0.56				0.599
Voting Intention	VI1	4.7	1.895	0.61	0.882	0.832	0.571	0.696
	VI2	5.18	1.725	0.723				0.732
	VI3	4.67	1.879	0.771				0.874
	VI4	5.1	1.911	0.766				0.72
	VI5	4.9	1.942	0.722				0.746

4.3.2. *Composite Reliability (CR)*

To assess internal reliability, the Composite Reliability test was performed. The following formula should be applied when examining Composite Reliability:

$$CR_{\eta} = {(\sum \lambda y_i)^2}\Big/{[(\sum \lambda y_i)^2 + (\sum \varepsilon_i)]}$$

Composite Reliability = (square of the summation of the factor loadings)/{(square of the summation of the factor loadings)+(summation of error variances)}.

The above formula was employed when evaluating the Composite Reliability of all the constructs in the current study. Reliability of measurement models are evaluated by the Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of each construct. Values of CR must be above 0.70 and AVE must be above 0.50 (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012). An indicator is regarded as being reliable if its loading score is at least 0.50 or above.

As illustrated in Table 12, the Composite Reliability of the constructs for the current study are SMPM=0.898, VT=0.830, VL=0.743 and VI=0.832, these surpass the stipulated limit of 0.70. The AVE for this study is SMPM=0.576, VT=0.573, VL=0.670 and VI=0.571. The threshold for acceptable AVE is 0.50. As indicated, the AVE for the current study exceeds the set limit. This therefore implies that the measurement model is reliable.

4.4. Validity measurements

Validity assessments were performed and Convergent and Discriminant validity were evaluated. Convergent and Discriminant validity assessments are discussed in the following section.

4.4.1. *Convergent validity*

Convergent validity measures and establishes the extent to which a construct converges in its indicators by giving explanation of the items' variance. Convergent validity in the current study was examined by evaluating item correlation estimates and factor loadings. Nusair and Hua (2010) suggests that items indicate satisfactory convergent validity when they load strongly on their shared construct. In addition, to confirm convergent validity, a loading that exceeds 0.5 is essential.

For the current study, the final items loaded well on their corresponding constructs, with the values ranging from 0,599 to 0.938, as illustrated in Table 12. This denotes that measurement instruments are converging well on the construct they intended to measure and that there is convergent validity.

4.4.2. *Discriminant validity*

Determining the existence of discriminant validity entails assessing whether the correlation between the research constructs is less than 1.0. This is done by identifying whether the observed variable displays a higher loading on its own construct than on any other construct included in the structural model. As indicated in Table 13, the inter-correlation values for all paired latent variables are less than 0.5, which validates the existence of discriminant validity. There was also no problem of multi-collinearity because variables did not correlate highly on each other (i.e. greater than 0.8).

Researchers suggest that correlation denotes the strength of a relationship between two variables (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012). When a correlation is high or very strong between two or more variables, it always implies that a strong relationship exists whilst a low correlation implies a weak relationship (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012).

Researchers have also proven that when a relationship is measured numerically, one derives a correlation coefficient that quantifies the direction and the intensity of the relationship between variables (Grace, 2006; Bagozzi & Yi, 2012). This coefficient ranges between -1 and +1. It is also important to note that a -1 coefficient represents a perfect negative relationship whilst +1` represents a perfect positive relationship (Grace, 2006). The inter-construct correlation coefficients for this study were all below 1 which confirms the existence of discriminant validity.

Table 13: Correlation matrix

Constructs	SMPM	VT	VL	VI
SMPM	1			
VT	-0.272**	1		
VL	-0.367**	0.512**	1	
VI	- 0.113**	0.555**	0.628**	1

Significance at 0.05. Note: SMPM=Social Media Political Marketing; VT=Voter Trust; VL=Voter Loyalty; VI=Voting Intention

VT-VL=0.512**

VT-VI=0.555**

VL-VI= 0.628**

This shows that there is convergent validity because the values are greater than 0.5.

SMPM-VT= -0.272** SMPM-VL= -0.367** SMPM-VI= -0.113**

This illustrates that there is discriminant validity because the values are less than 0.5. There was no problem of multi-collinearity because the variables did not correlate highly on each other (i.e. greater than 0.8).

4.4.3. *Model Fit assessment*

Model fit assessment is conducted for the purpose of determining how well the conceptual model is signified by the sampled data. Model Fit indices are observed for this assessment.

Table 14 indicates the results pertaining to the assessment. They are discussed hereafter.

Table 14: Model fit (CFA)

Indices	Threshold	Study results	Accepted/not accepted
Chi-square (χ^2 /DF)	<0.3	1.827	Accepted
GOF	>0.9	0.925	Accepted
NFI	>0.9	0.911	Accepted
RFI	>0.9	0.900	Accepted
TLI	>0.9	0.949	Accepted
IFI	>0.9	0.958	Accepted
CFI	>0.9	0.957	Accepted
RMSEA	<0.08	0.58	Accepted

Note: (χ^2 /DF)= Chi-square/degrees of freedom; NFI= Normed Fit Index; TLI= Tucker-Lewis Index IFI= Incremental Fit Index; CFI= Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA= Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

a. Chi-square (χ2 /DF)

According to literature, a chi-square value that is below 3 is an acceptable indication of model fit. The current study has a chi-square value of 1.827, which is below the suggested threshold and therefore a conclusion can be drawn that there is there is acceptable fit.

b. Normed Fit Index (NFI)

A recommended threshold for NFI of greater than 0.9 is deemed to be acceptable fit. The Normed Fit index value of the current study at 0.911 is above the recommended threshold, 0.9, hence there is acceptable fit.

c. Relative Fit Index (RFI)

RFI value that surpasses 0.9 is a sign of acceptable fit. The RFI value of the current study is 0.900, therefore this implies that there is acceptable fit.

d. Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)

A Tucker-Lewis Index value that meets or exceeds 0.9 implies that the fit is acceptable. As the study has a TLI value of 0.949, this confirms that an acceptable fit exists.

e. Incremental Fit Index (IFI)

An IFI value that meets or exceeds 0.9 suggests that the fit is acceptable. The 0.958 value of the study means that there is acceptable fit as it exceeds the threshold.

f. Comparative Fit Index (CFI)

A CFI value that meets or exceeds 0.9 indicates a good fit. The study's CFI value is 0.957 and this means that there is good fit.

g. Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)

A RMSEA value that falls below 0.05-0.08 is an indication of good model fit. The RMSEA value for the current study is 0.58. This confirms that there is acceptable fit. As demonstrated above, all but one model fit indices confirm that there is a general acceptable fit of the model by the data, with the exception of the RFI.

4.5. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Figure 18 is the graphic illustration of the CFA model. Latent variables are signified by the circular or oval shape while observed variables are represented by the rectangular shapes. Adjacent to the observed variables are measurement errors which are represented by circular shapes as well. The bidirectional arrows connote the relationship between latent variables.

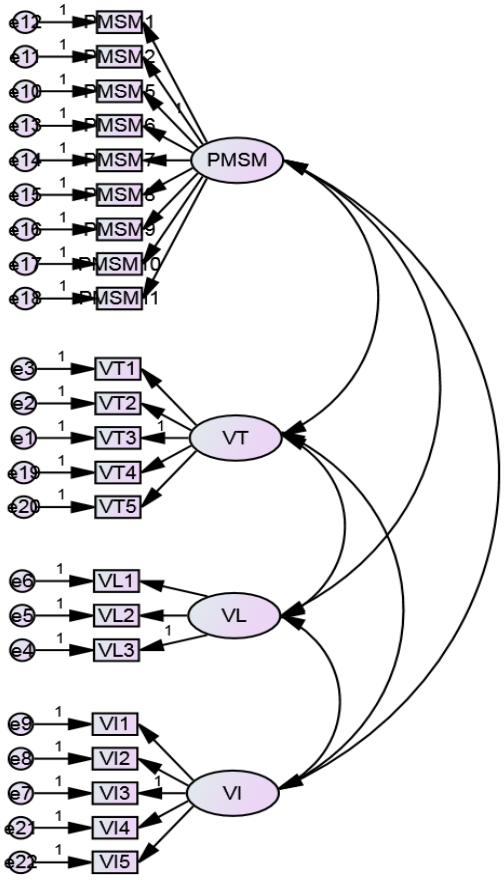
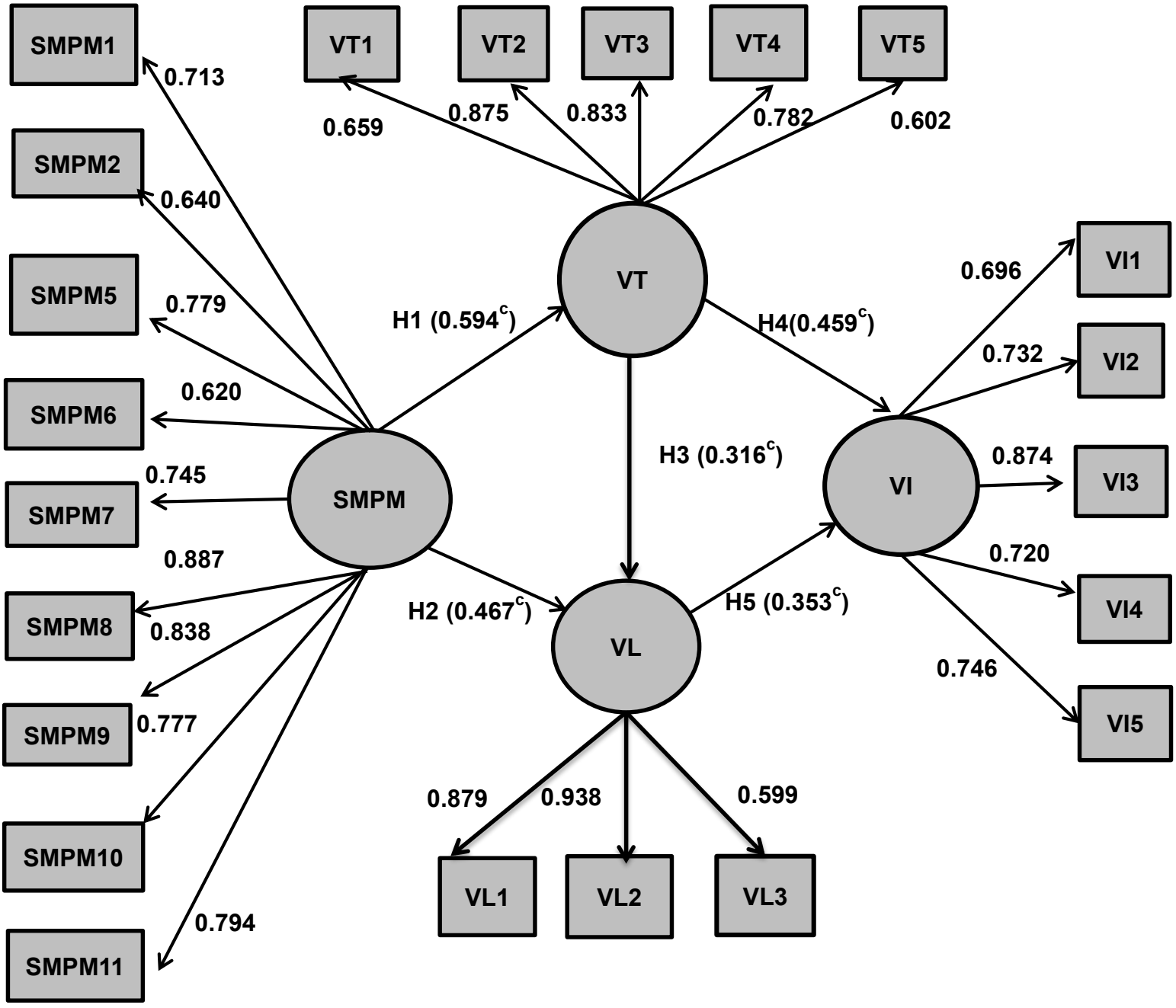


Figure 18: CFA Model

4.6. Path Modelling

Path modeling is the second process that was conducted. According to Sanchez (2013), the term Path Modeling and Structural Equation Model are often used interchangeably. The process entails establishing the connection between the blocks by considering previous knowledge (e.g. theory) of the phenomenon that is being analysed. In addition, the assumption is that each block of variables plays the role of a theoretical concept represented in the form of a latent (unobserved) variable (Sanchez, 2013). The objective of this Path Modelling is to evaluate causal relationships among latent variables (Sanchez, 2013). This procedure includes multiple regression analysis and path analysis and models the relationship among latent variables (Sanchez, 2013).

Figure 19 depicts the Path model. The rectangles stand for the measurement items. The unidirectional arrow signifies the influence of one variable on another and is used to show the causal relations.



Level of significance: a= 0.1 ; b**= 0,5 ; c***= 0,01*

Figure 19: Path Model

4.7. Hypothesis Testing Results (Path modelling)

According to Nusair and Hua (2010) SEM asserts that certain latent variables have a direct or indirect influence on other latent variables with the model, which leads to estimation of results that portray the relation between these latent variables.

For the current study, estimation results elicited through hypothesis testing are indicated in Table 15. The table indicates the proposed hypotheses, factor loadings, p values and whether a hypothesis is rejected or supported. Literature asserts that $p<0.05$, $p<0.01$ and $p<0.001$ are indicators of relationship significance and that positive factor loadings indicate strong relationships among latent variables (Chinomona, Lin, Wang & Cheng, 2010). The hypothesis testing results are discussed below.

Table 15: H1- Social Media Political Marketing (SMPM) and Voter Trust (VT)

Proposed hypothesis relationship	Hypothesis	Factor loadings	P value	Rejected/Supported
SMPM → VT	H1	0.594[c]	***	Supported and significant

*Note: c***= p<0.01*

The coefficient of H1 was 0.594. This implies that there is a strong relationship between SMPM and VT. The P value denotes a 0,01 confidence level, which signifies that the hypothesis is supported and significant.

Table 16: H2- Social Media Political Marketing (SMPM) and Voter Loyalty (VL)

Proposed hypothesis relationship	Hypothesis	Factor loadings	P value	Rejected/Supported
SMPM → VL	H2	0.467[c]	***	Supported and significant

*Note: c***= p<0.01*

The coefficient of H2 is 0.467. This implies that there is a strong relationship between SMPM and VL. The P value denotes a 0,01 confidence level, which signifies that the hypothesis is supported and significant.

Table 17: H3- Voter Trust (VT) and Voter Loyalty (VL)

Proposed hypothesis relationship	Hypothesis	Factor loadings	P value	Rejected/Supported
VT → VL	H3	0.316[c]	***	Supported and significant

*Note: ***= p<0.01*

The coefficient of H3 is 0.316. This implies that there is a strong relationship between VT and VL. The P value denotes a 0,01 confidence level, which signifies that the hypothesis is supported and significant.

Table 18: H4- Voter Trust (VT) and Voting Intention (VI)

Proposed hypothesis relationship	Hypothesis	Factor loadings	P value	Rejected/Supported
VT → VI	H4	0.459[c]	***	Supported and significant

*Note: ***= p<0.01*

The coefficient of H4 is 0.459. This implies that there is a strong relationship between VT and VI. The P value denotes a 0,01 confidence level, which signifies that the hypothesis is supported and significant.

Table 19: H5-Voter Loyalty (VL) and Voting Intention (VI)

Proposed hypothesis relationship	Hypothesis	Factor loadings	P value	Rejected/ Supported
VL → VI	H5	0.353[c]	***	Supported and significant

*Note: c***= p<0.01*

The coefficient of H5 is 0.353[c]. This implies that there is a strong relationship between VL and VI. The P value denotes a 0,01 confidence level, which signifies that the hypothesis is supported and significant.

4.8. Summary of Chapter 4

This chapter presented the statistical analysis of data that was gathered utilising a questionnaire as the data collection tool. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and AMOS were utilised to analyse data. Descriptive statistics were presented and discussed. In addition, the reliability and validity of all the constructs in the model were tested. Structural Equation Modelling was also performed, where Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Path Modelling were conducted.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed to assess Model Fit, Reliability and Validity of the scales that were utilised in the study questionnaire. To assess the validity of the scales, shared variance was compared to Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Path Modelling (PM) was conducted to confirm for model fit, and to test the hypothesis of the study.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to deliberate on the empirical results of the current study. The objective of this research was to explore whether using social media in political marketing influences the trust and loyalty of the South African youth voter and impacts on their voting intention. As already discussed in Chapter 4, data analysis for the study was conducted using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 22 and AMOS 22. Chapter 5 is discussed under three main sections, namely the profiles of the respondents, the results discussion relating to the hypothesis and conclusions.

5.2. Respondent's profiles

It is important to understand the demographic profiles and behavioural aspects of the respondents in the study, particularly with respect to their internet and social media usage and how they impact on the results of the research.

5.2.1. Demographic profiles

As this study is concentrated on the youth and their social media usage for political participation and engagement, university students were targeted as they are identified to be among the most internet-connected subgroups of the population and frequent users of social media. Other young people who are employed were also surveyed.

Table 20 sets out the demographic profiles of the respondents in the study.

Table 20: Respondent's demographic profiles

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	137	54.80%
Female	113	45.20%
Total	**250**	**100%**
Age Category	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
18-24	149	59.60%
25-30	65	26%
31-35	36	14.40%
Total	**250**	**100%**
Marital Status	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Single	200	80%
Married	33	13.20%
Divorced	6	2.40%
Other	11	4.40%
	250	**100%**
Qualification	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
High school	115	46%
Diploma	46	18.40%
Degree	54	21.60%
Post Grad	35	14%
Total	**250**	**100%**
Occupation	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Student	146	58.40%
Employed	79	31.60%
Self Employed	23	9.20%
Unemployed	2	0.8%
Total	**250**	**100%**
Racial Group	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Black	157	62.80%
Coloured	17	6.80%
Asian	29	11.60%
White	37	14.80%
Other	10	4%
Total	**250**	**100%**

With regards to gender, female respondents had a slightly higher representation in the study (54.90%) than male respondents (45.20%). This is in line with the national population figures as per census 2011, where females constitute more than males (Statistics South Africa, 2011).

The study focused on the youth and the IEC classification of youth of 18 to 35 years was used in the study. The population of the study was mainly university students (University of Witwatersrand and University of Johannesburg), hence a large percentage (59.60%) of the research population is between the ages of 18-24 years. The other respondents were made up of individuals who are employed.

It was essential to check the highest level of education in this study. While the respondents' qualifications were diverse, they somehow correlated to the age profiles in that the majority (46%), those in the lower age groups (18-25 years) had high school as their highest level of education. This is plausible considering that those would be the young university students. The other higher age groups had degrees and post graduate degrees, as they are either employed, self-employed or even students undertaking post graduate studies. Qualifications were important to measure as some researchers have indicated that educated citizens are likely to demonstrate more interest and involvement in politics (Rosenberg, 1988).

On the subject of race, in South Africa, research has shown that different racial groups' political affiliation and engagement is still mainly on a racial basis and political identity, with the majority of black people identifying and voting for the ANC (Southall, 2014). Leighley (1995) further states that evidence that relates to race-related disparities in participation rates differs, controlling for socio-economic status, minorities are sometimes more and sometimes less likely than the majority race to engage in political participation. In this research, there was a fair representation of the races that make up the South African population. The

majority of the respondents were Black, followed by White and Asians and Coloureds being the minority groups. A classification of 'other' was also added in an attempt to accommodate other racial groups, such as Chinese, etc. It is interesting to note that some respondents indicated 'other' because they viewed themselves as South Africans and did not wish to be classified by race.

Though occupation and marital status were added, they were not of much significance to the study as there were no specific trends that could be deduced from this data. The majority of the respondents were students and also unmarried, which is probable based on the sample.

5.2.2. Internet Access

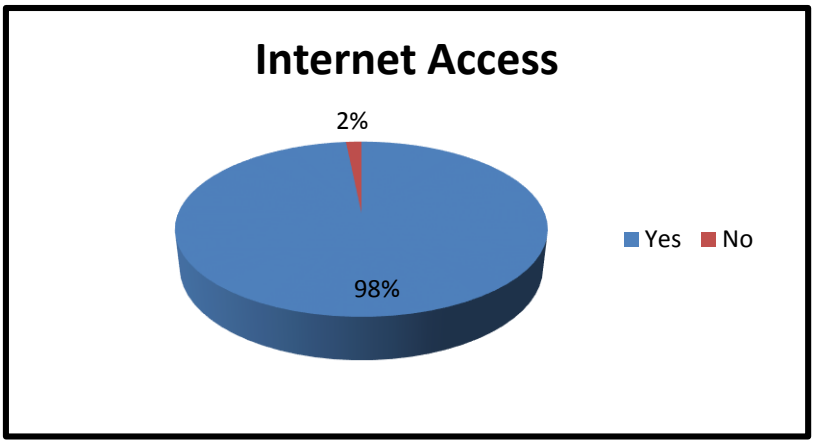


Figure 20: Respondent's internet access

The study focused on social media, which can only be accessed via the internet. Therefore social media usage is based on the individual's access to the Internet. Consequently, the efficacy of social media as a communication platform depends on the internet's penetration by the target population. The study found that the majority of the respondents have internet access. On scrutinising the data closely, it was clear that the 2% who indicated that they do not have internet access, do however access the internet from campus or internet cafes and also

are active on social media. The results of this study therefore demonstrate how internet access has changed the communication trajectory and political discourse.

5.2.3. Place of internet access

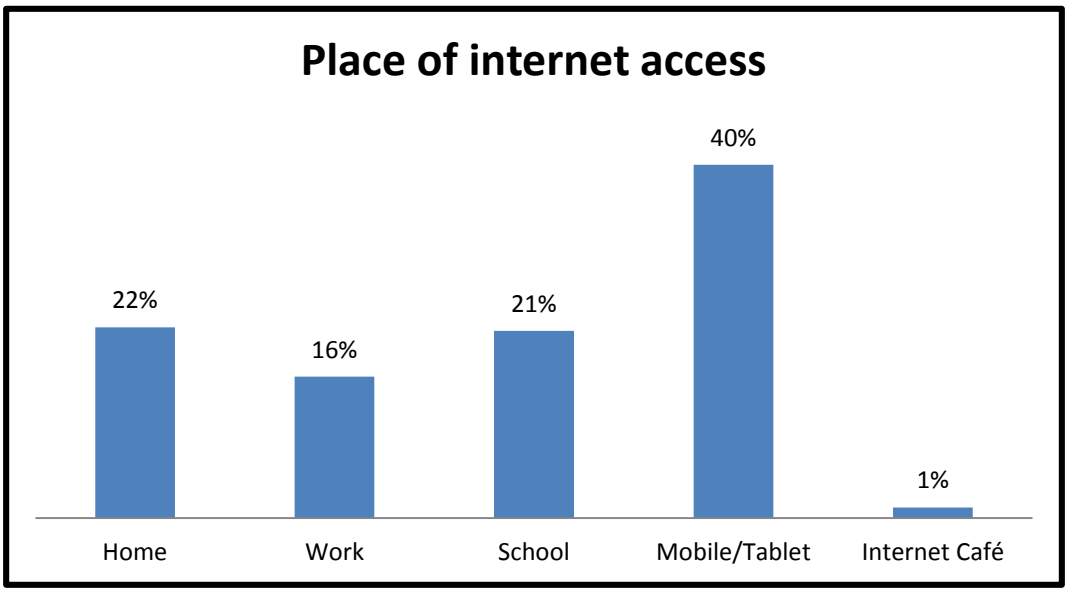


Figure 21: Respondent's internet place of access

As depicted in figure 21, the majority (40%) of the respondents access the internet from their mobile phones. According to the 2015 SA Social Media landscape report, there is a 123% penetration of mobile phones in South Africa. Accessing the Internet using smartphones is increasing and the cost of accessing the Internet via the mobile phone is decreasing. Based on this, it can be concluded that South Africa will continue to experience a surge in social media usage over the coming years. This means that brands or organisations will not have a choice but to utilise this platform extensively to communicate with customers and other stakeholders.

The ubiquitous nature of a mobile device makes it a good communication platform and further presents boundless opportunities for marketers and, in this case, political parties to utilise and harness the strength of mobile to reach the target markets wherever they are. School and home were also selected as areas from where the respondents access the internet. This is mainly driven by the availability of free wi-fi on campus and also at home.

5.2.4. Duration on the Internet

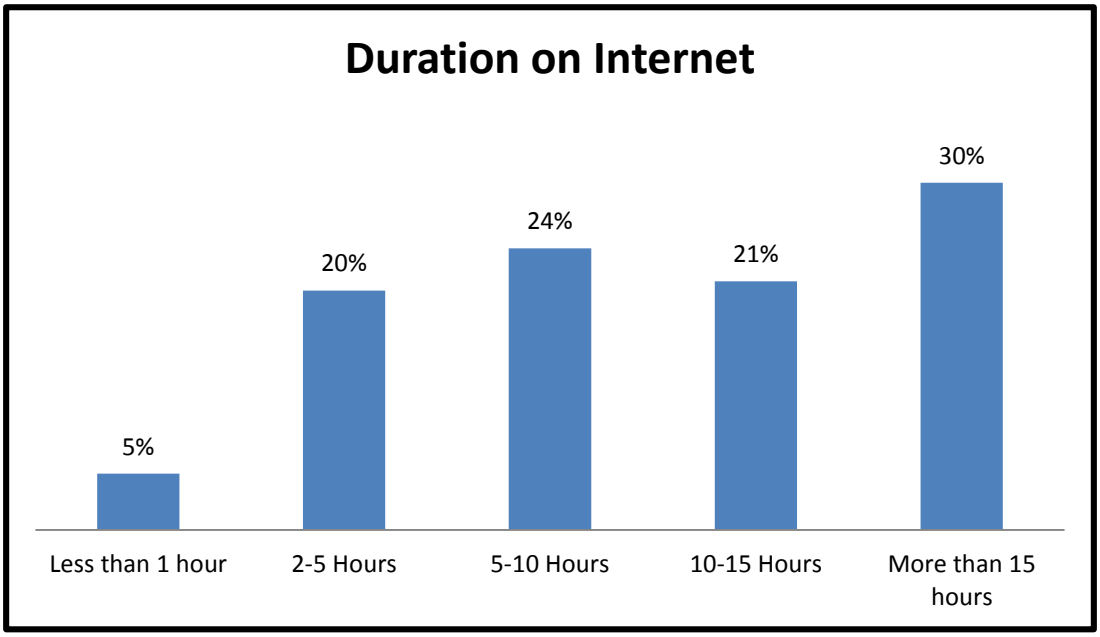


Figure 22: Respondent's duration on the internet

Figure 22 illustrates that the majority (30%) of respondents spend more than 15 hours a week on the internet. This is to be expected considering the fact that the internet has a number of uses and the social aspect that it has. This implies that with internet, the audience is captive and are willing to engage if the content is interesting and captivating. This means that for marketers who want to use the internet as a communication platform, interactivity and very fresh content is vital. Marketers need to ensure that content strategy plays a pivotal role to keeping

audience hooked and coming back to the site for more. User experience plays a pivotal role in online communication.

5.2.5. Social media usage

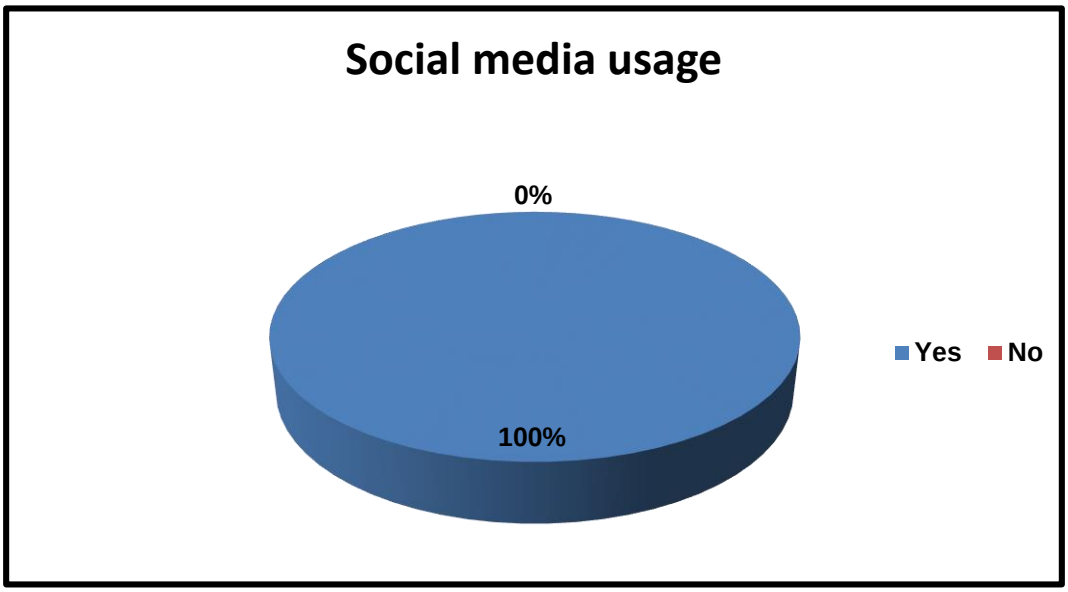


Figure 23: Social media usage

The study centres on the influence of social media political marketing. It was therefore imperative to ensure that the respondents use social media. All the respondents in the study use social media as depicted in Figure 23. This implies that online communication is becoming an important element of a successful election campaign and also as a platform to continuously involve citizens to participate in political debates and for politicians to communicate interactively with voters. Furthermore, the interactivity should focus on communicating the positives that the party has achieved, which will ultimately enhance the political trust that is in so much deficit across the globe.

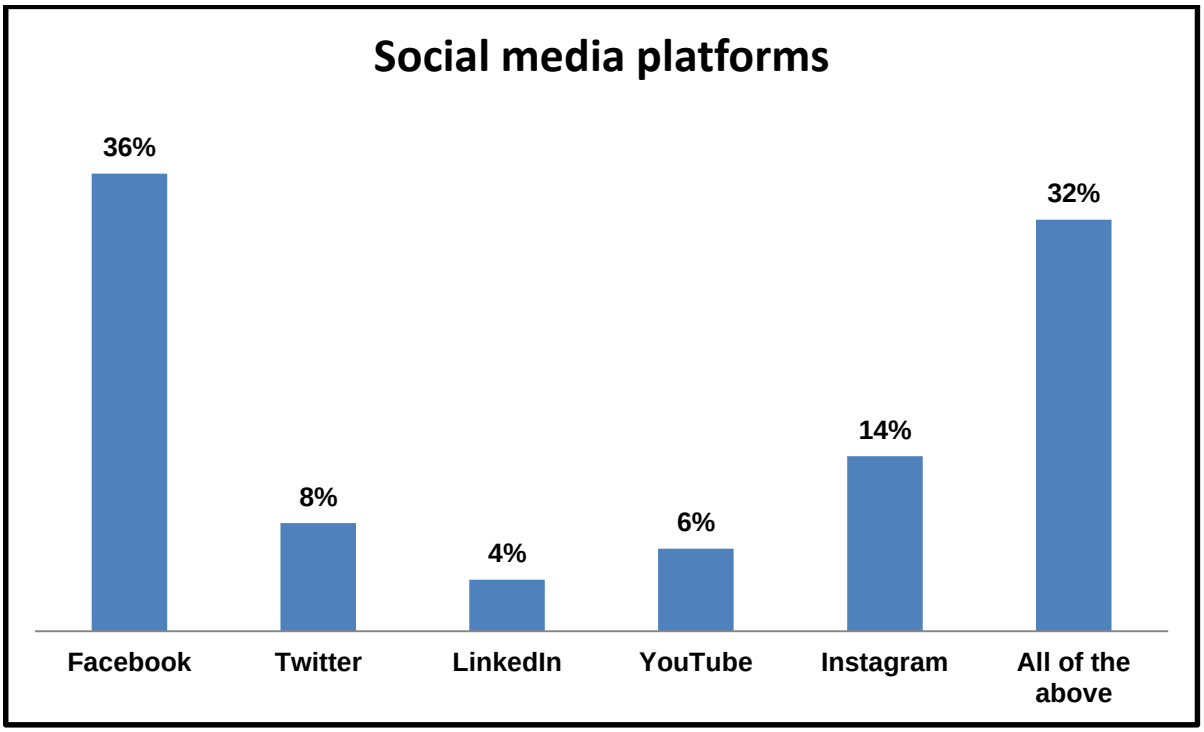


Figure 24: Respondent's social media platforms

The majority (36%) of respondents use Facebook, as Figure 24 demonstrates. This percentage is higher considering that from the group that indicated that they use all the platforms, are also using Facebook. This is not surprising in view of the fact that Facebook still has the biggest penetration in South Africa, with 13 million users (SA Social Media Landscape, 2015 report). 32% of respondents use all platforms.

LinkedIn has scored the lowest, mainly because it is a platform that targeted at professionals and business people. The majority of the respondents are students and do not find resonance with LinkedIn as a communication platform. The 4% respondents who use LinkedIn are likely to be from the employed group. The figures presented in Figure 24 attest to the power of social media and that this is a platform that cannot be ignored by both business and political parties if they want to reach the millennials.

5.3. Hypothesis discussion

5.3.1. *Hypothesis 1*

The study proposed that there is a positive relationship between social media political marketing and voter trust. The results of the study have confirmed the existence of this relationship and that it is significant. The coefficient of H1 was 0.594, and this suggests a strong relationship between SMPM and VT. The p value indicates a 0,01 level of confidence which therefore means that the hypothesis is supported and significant. The arguments as put forward under hypothesis development hold true.

The literature that has been reviewed has established that interacting with a political party or leader using social media has a direct effect on voter trust, and voter trust directly impacts voting intention. This assertion is supported by other scholars who affirm that social media interactions can result in elevated trust echelons (Lupia & Philpott, 2005; Shah, Cho, Eveland & Kwak, 2005; Xenos & Moy, 2007; Valenzuela *et al.,* 2009, Gil de Zúñiga *et al*., 2012; DiGrazia, McKelvey, Bollen, & Rojas, 2013; Vaccari *et al*., 2015). Furthermore, trust elicited through social media communications plays a significant role in explicating behavioural consequences, such as intention (Sashi, 2012).

The conclusion in H1 supports one of the theories on which the current study is grounded, the Information, Motivation and Behavioural skills model (IMB). As already demonstrated in the literature review, behavioural models such as the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and Information, Motivation and Behavioural Skills model (IMB) present a logical exploration of the intangible aspects that guide certain behaviour. Furthermore, they stipulate interventions that can be explored and even applied in different circumstances. The IMB model explicitly postulates that information and motivation influence behaviour through

behavioural skills. Literature on voting behaviour underscores the significance of information, motivation, and behavioural skills to voting behaviour. This implies that when individuals are well-versed about politics through social media interactions and engagement, are empowered and have skills and resources, there is a prospect of developing trust in the political party or leader and ultimately a likelihood of voting for that party. A study by Moeller, de Vreese, Esser and Kunz (2014), which analysed whether online and offline news media utilisation among adolescents influences internal efficacy established that online news media have a positive effect because of their interactivity and new opportunities to disseminate and discuss information. Other researchers such as Warren, Sulaiman and Jaafar (2014) have also illustrated the flourishing usage of Facebook to connect, teach, enlighten and steer public engagement that tackles social issues.

The IMB model illustrates the significance of information, motivation, and behavioural skills to voting which are all as a result of political interaction, participation and discussions via social media. When individuals are inspired to express their opinions in a more open and transparent manner that is offered by social media, trust is enhanced, which results in citizens contributing meaningfully and profoundly to the political discourse. By establishing trust on social media with voters, political parties and leaders can strengthen their relationships, fuel the willingness to share information and increase trust.

5.3.2. *Hypothesis 2*

The study proposed that there is a positive relationship between social media political marketing and voter loyalty. The results of the study have confirmed the existence of this relationship and that it is significant. The coefficient of H2 was 0.467, and this suggests a strong relationship between SMPM and VL. The p value indicates a 0,01 level of confidence which means that the hypothesis is

supported and significant. The arguments as put forward in the hypothesis development hold true.

This conclusion is supported by scholars such as Laroche, Habibi, Richard and Sankaranarayanan (2012) whose study determined that brand communities created on social media have a positive impact on customer-brand relationships, which impact positively on brand trust, and trust has positive effects on brand loyalty. In a tourism management study, Hudson, Roth, Madden & Hudson (2015) found that interactions on social media lead to desired outcomes such as positive word of mouth and loyalty.

In the political arena, Bakker and de Vreese (2011) affirmed that when the youth are part of message creation, either through participating in an online discussion or simply by forwarding a political message to their friends, their internal political efficacy is significantly enriched. Bode (2012) affirmed this assertion in her study which concluded that intense engagement with one's Facebook community accelerates vigorous political participation and the extent of closeness with that online community bolsters social capital. Additionally, more political participatory norms are encouraged, thus contributing to increased political outcomes, including voter trust, loyalty, voting and online and offline political behaviour. Other empirical evidence has corroborated that by creating deeper relationships with voters, parties can increase loyalty, encourage advocacy and increase membership (Castronovo & Huang, 2012; Erragcha & Romdhane, 2014).

5.3.3. *Hypothesis 3*

The study proposed that there is a positive relationship between voter trust and voter loyalty. The results of the study have confirmed the existence of this relationship and that it is significant. The coefficient of H3 was 0.316, and this suggests a strong relationship between VT and VL. The p value indicates a 0,01

level of confidence which therefore means that the hypothesis is supported and significant. The arguments as put forward under hypothesis development hold true.

Copious research which supports the existence of a positive relationship between trust and loyalty exists. Hong and Cho (2011) concluded that trust is one of the antecedents of loyalty and that trust has a positive impact on customer loyalty, whilst some studies have further confirmed that brand trust is among the significant predictors of customer loyalty in the marketing literature (Jones & Kim, 2010; Nguyen *et al.*, 2013). Chinomona and Dubihlela (2014) also hypothesised that the relationship between customer trust, loyalty and intention is significant and positive.

Scholars such as Madjid (2013) have illustrated strong linkages between trust and loyalty in the banking environment and further emphasized that customer trust regulates the customer satisfaction outcome on customer loyalty. This infers that when customers/voters are satisfied, trust is heightened and customers develop more loyalty.

5.3.4. *Hypothesis 4*

The study proposed that there is a positive relationship between voter trust and voting intention. The results of the study have confirmed the existence of this relationship and that it is significant. The coefficient of H4 was 0.459, and this suggests a strong relationship between VT and VI. The p value indicates a 0,01 level of confidence which therefore means that the hypothesis is supported and significant. The arguments as put forward under hypothesis development hold true.

Gefen (2000) states that trust is the main means affecting the decision to vote and leads to voting intention. Numerous findings have substantiated the manifestation of a strong relationship between trust, loyalty and repurchase

intention in the product marketing sphere (Kiyani, Niazi, Rizvi & Khan, 2012; Van Vuuren *et al.*, 2012; Chinomona & Dubihlela, 2014). According to these studies, when a consumer trusts a product, his intention to repurchase the product will be high. In a political arena, the existence of a positive relationship between political trust and voter turnout and that trust has a robust influence on voting intention has also been attested (Ahmed *et al.,* 2011; Hooghe *et al.*, 2011). When voters trust and have confidence in the political party and leader, they will vote for them. When trust increases, it leads to intention to vote, as Kim *et al.* (2008) posit. The significance of trust on intention to vote was demonstrated through the employment of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which insinuates that intentions are shaped by attitudes (Komiak and Benbasat (2006).

In essence, voters will vote for the candidate or party that meets their expectations. It is a reflection of the reliability and positive intentions held by the voters towards the party. This is supported by the empirical findings on trust and brand trust (Komiak & Benbasat, 2006; Jones & Kim, 2010).

5.3.5. *Hypothesis 5*

The study proposed that there is a positive relationship between voter loyalty and voting intention. The results of the study have confirmed the existence of this relationship and that it is significant. The coefficient of H5 was 0.353, and this suggests a strong relationship between VL and VI. The p value indicates a 0,01 level of confidence which therefore means that the hypothesis is supported and significant. The arguments as put forward under hypothesis development hold true.

The relationship between loyalty and intention in politics has been examined and confirmed in the studies by Chiru and Gherghina (2012) and Rachmat (2014). Both these studies have found a positive relationship between loyalty and voting intention of the electorate. The researchers, Chiru and Gherghina (2012) and

Rachmat (2014) concur that voters will vote for the candidate who meets their expectations of performance. This confirms that voter loyalty is affected by the voters' evaluations of the performance of a party.

The basis of the significance of the loyalty-intention relationship is that loyalty is positively related to the success and perpetual growth of the party, loyalty begets more members, who are even able to forgive transgressions of the party or its leader and speak favourably and be advocates of the party. Consequently, when loyalty amplifies, intention also intensifies. When voters are loyal to a particular party, they intend to vote for that particular party (Rachmat, 2014). This assertion is backed by empirical research on trust, loyalty and intention (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Gefen, 2000; Komiak & Benbasat, 2006; Jones & Kim, 2010).

5.4. Summary of Chapter 5

This chapter presented the results, the demographic profile of respondents, and a discussion on each hypothesis. It should be noted that the hypotheses put forward were proven correct at supported at 0.01 level of significance. Overall, based on the results of the empirical study it can be concluded that political marketing using social media highly and significantly influences voting intention.

This chapter presented the discussions of the hypothesis drawn from the results. The following chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations followed by limitations identified from the study and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Introduction

The current study was undertaken to investigate and provide answers to the research question of whether social media political marketing influences trust, loyalty and voting intention of the South African youth. The objectives of Chapter 6 are to present the conclusions and deductions from the study. The chapter commences with the synopsis of the study outcomes, followed by the implications that the findings would conceivably have in academia, political organisations, political leaders, marketers, policy makers and the society. Subsequently, recommendations and some key success factors for the successful and efficient utilisation of social media in the political arena will be explicated. The last section of this chapter deliberates on the limitations of the study and presents suggestions for future research.

6.2. Synopsis of the findings

The study aimed to explore and understand the relationship between social media political marketing and voter trust, loyalty and voting intention. From the assessment of the five suppositions that were put forward, the research outcomes have validated that there is a strong and persuasive connection between social media political marketing and voter trust, social media political marketing and voter loyalty, voter trust and voter loyalty, voter trust and voting intention and voter loyalty and voting intention. The individual coefficients of H1, H2, H3, H4 and H5 were 0.594, 0.467, 0.316 and 0.459 and 0.353 as depicted in Table 21.

Table 21: Study outcomes

Proposed hypothesis relationship	Hypothesis	Factor loadings	P value	Rejected/Supported
SMPM → VT	H1	0.594[c]	***	Supported and significant
SMPM → VL	H2	0.467[c]	***	Supported and significant
VT → VL	H3	0.316[c]	***	Supported and significant
VT → VI	H4	0.459[c]	***	Supported and significant
VL → VI	H5	0.353[c]	***	Supported and significant

a= 0.1 level of significance ; b**= 0,5 level of significance ; c***= 0,01 level of significance*

The research outcomes illustrate a significantly positive relationship between social media political marketing and voter trust at 0.594 standardised coefficients. This conclusion is coherent with the supposition made in H1 that a positive relationship exists between social media political marketing and voter trust.

H2 revealed a positive connection between social media political marketing and voter loyalty at 0.467 standardised coefficients and this confirms the assumption formulated in H2. This therefore supports that supposition.

The significance and standardised coefficient echelons of voter trust and voter loyalty is positive at 0.316, which is congruent with the hypothesis made in H3. This implies that advanced levels of voter trust are related to greater levels of voter loyalty. This further supports the theory that was put forward in H4 that the more the level of voter trust, the greater the degree of voting intention at 0.459, therefore, H4 is substantiated.

The results depicted in Table 21 are also in line with the hypothesis that was developed for H5 and backs the proposition that the higher the degree of loyalty voters have to a political party, the higher the prospect to vote for that party at 0.353.

The outcome of the study confirmed all that all the five research hypotheses are positive and significant. It is vital to note that the study findings have affirmed that social media political marketing influences voter trust and voter loyalty in attaining voting intention. This implies that SMPM is the main influence on voting intention.

6.3. Implications of the study

The current study has numerous practical implications.

6.3.1. *Political implications*

Previous studies have concluded that South African political parties are still not well versed on how to leverage the benefits provided by social media. This study aimed to investigate the causal relationships between the constructs of social media political marketing, voter trust, loyalty and voting intention in the political perspective, particularly in the South African setting, where there is still a shortage of studies that investigates these constructs in a political context. The study contends that social media political marketing causes voting intention through voter trust and loyalty. Additionally, social media political marketing can affect voter trust, followed by voter loyalty and resulting to voting intention. The study outcomes ratify the intimation that social media political marketing, through voter trust and voter loyalty is a precursor that accelerates an intention to vote. Therefore, this study infers that political parties that seek to appeal and draw youth voters should use social media not just as an extension of the offline message but to deepen relationships with the youth through honest, two-way,

continuous interaction and communication, which will enhance trust and then loyalty, ultimately leading to voting intention. This study provides political parties with a roadmap to follow to exploit this platform effectively and successfully.

6.3.2. *Business implications*

Companies are increasingly affected by communication on social media. Customers now have the power to share information and customer experiences. The importance of public sentiments on a product, brand or organisation is significant and has great impact on consumers' purchase decision processes. Because of the influence that sentiment has and the fact that social media content rapidly becomes viral, companies should proactively analyse consumer sentiments related to their brands on social media. A lot of what is usually shared on social media is negative and can result in negative electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) if not vigilantly and timeously managed. Electronic word of mouth (both positive and negative) in social media is viewed as cheaper and more effective than traditional media. Companies could capitalise on this by being proactive in social media and not only react to negative comments. They can use this platform to position their brands positively in consumer's minds through content that triggers positive sentiments and has a potential of being shared.

Furthermore, for companies that seek to increase the customer's purchase intention, they must use social media to develop trust in the company, which will lead to loyalty and purchase intention.

6.3.3. *Academic implications*

In the academic arena, this study significantly contributes to the literature of political marketing by exploring the impact of social media political marketing on voter trust and voter loyalty with the outcome of achieving voting intention of the youth in South Africa.

In particular, the current study findings support the proposition that political marketing using social media, through voter trust and voter loyalty, are precursors that hasten an intention to vote in the election.

6.3.4. *Legal implications*

There is no legislation that explicitly deals with social media in South Africa, other than the Constitution, Employment law, Consumer protection laws and Intellectual property law. This lacuna needs to be addressed as the legal framework will indisputably offer another mechanism to manage the ethical risks of social media. The unprecedented proliferation of social media usage in the world and within Africa, necessitates that stringent laws be put in place and users of social media be educated in order to circumvent the potential and corollary damage of irresponsible usage of this medium.

6.4. Recommendations

As discussed in Chapter 2 under the literature review section, social media presents enormous opportunities for political parties and their leaders and the strength of this medium needs to be harnessed to ensure it delivers positive outcomes for political parties.

The following recommendations are put forward:

Adequate resource allocation

For parties to make huge strides in this arena and successfully compete in today's online political ecosystem, it is essential to commit apposite and adequate resources towards their digital strategy. These resources must consist of both financial and human resources.

A clear digital marketing strategy

Political parties must consider engaging services of very senior individuals with extensive experience in Marketing and digital media, who will develop and implement a comprehensive, cohesive, highly focused and continuous digital strategy. The Obama election team in 2008 and 2012 are testament to how a fully funded and well-resourced campaign can achieve phenomenal results for political parties and help it secure electoral victory.

Value of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)

Political parties and marketing managers must include social media as part of their IMC strategies. This is congruent with the views of scholars such as Thakur (2014), that Integrated Marketing Communications co-ordinates all promotional activities, such as advertising, public relations, sales promotions and direct marketing, among others, to produce a unified, clear, consistent and focused promotional message with enormous impact when integrated as part of a comprehensive communications plan. Through application of IMC, the political party would be in a position to drive consistent messages using traditional and non-traditional marketing channels.

Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning (STP) is crucial

For political parties who desire to appeal and attract votes of the millennials and thus deriving enormous value from employing social media successfully in their campaign strategy, it is pivotal to possess a comprehensive understanding of this segment or group. This understanding entails knowing what their needs, hopes and aspirations are, how they receive, process and interpret political information and how they evaluate political parties and then decide to vote. It is recommended that parties divide the electorate into segments or groups, based on their similarities with those in the same group and divergence with those in

other groups. In the marketing arena, the segmentation approaches that are employed are geographic, demographic, behavioural, and psychographic segmentation approach. However, Falkowski and Cwalina (2012) also suggest that in political marketing, market segmentation goes beyond these approaches and more complex models are used. Regardless of the approaches that are employed to define voter segments, the superseding and paramount goal is for political parties to know the voter intimately and in the best possible manner. This will steer the tactics, messaging, tone and relevance of the message to persuade and sway the voter to make a choice of the political party for which to vote. Through this, the political party will be in a position to leverage on the social media platforms that are aligned to the different segments.

This study found that the majority of the participants use Facebook. Based on this, it can therefore be concluded that political parties need to utilise Facebook extensively to reach the millennials.

Certain forms of social media serve specific marketing objectives

One of the most prevalent social media oversights within the South African political landscape is transmitting the same message in the same way across all the social media platforms. The political parties who used social media during the 2014 elections simply added it as part of their communications tactics, without necessarily understanding the real intricacies of the different platforms. There are stark disparities between the different platforms, from the motivations for using them and the manner in which they are utilised. Appreciation of each platform's mechanisms will aid political parties to create and generate messages that will reverberate with the specific audiences.

Engagement through mobile communications

Smart phones are ubiquitous and could enable political parties to extend their reach and thus including a large number of people in the political discourse. Because people can access information wherever they are, mobile technology has a significant advantage of speed and transmission of real-time information. According to SA Social Media Landscape 2015 report, South Africa has a total number of 79.1 million mobile subscriptions. This presents a huge opportunity for parties to reach an extremely wide audience.

Online Reputation Management strategies

One of the major risks of social media is reputation management. Reputation is a very important asset, notwithstanding its intangibility. The political party must always be aware of its online reputation. Building personal, business or even political reputation requires time, tremendous effort and a detailed strategy. In social media, which is an environment that is open 24/7, this reputation can be damaged instantaneously. Online Reputation Management (ORM) entails tracking, assessing and monitoring online media to identify what is being said about an entity, such as a business or a political party in order to rectify undesirable or negative mentions online (McDonald, Deveaud, McCreadie & Ounis, 2015). A good reputation of a political leader would encourage voters to trust the candidate, while a bad reputation would decrease the voters' trust in the candidate (Rachmat, 2014). The incident of the DA leader, Dianne Kohler Barnard, who forwarded a racist tweet bears testimony to how easily reputation can be tarnished by a social media post.

Images and videos drive impact on social media

Social media platforms are becoming increasingly visual and to gain attention, political parties must also follow this trend with their posts. With social media,

political parties are fighting for the audience's attention, therefore informative graphics draw attention and have a potential of being shared and are also memorable. Even on Twitter, tweets with visuals receive more clicks, comments and retweets. The recommendation therefore is that political parties must invest in graphic designers who would be in a position to create graphics that draw conversation, sharing and continuous engagement. The idea is for a political party to make the audience come back, engage and interact, which builds a relationship, trust, loyalty and increases the intention to vote for that party.

Developing a social listening strategy

Social media in politics is a platform for political parties to connect more with the electorate. Connecting is about listening more than talking. The recommendation is that political parties must develop a social listening strategy to help the leaders keep abreast of what is trending or being said, participate in the conversations that matter, and measure the pulse and temperature of the audience, to better respond, refine and direct the party's social media and content strategy. This will provide the party and its leaders with better insights of what the audience, in particular the youth, regards as important to them. By involving voters, eliciting information through asking their views, the citizens will feel that their feedback and input matters, which will go a long way towards enhancing trust in government and encouraging the youth to be part of shaping the country's political trajectory.

Data analytics

Utilisation and implementation of social media analytics to diagnostically and systematically scrutinise and monitor user-generated content on social media platforms.

Clear social media policies

In order to ensure that social media is used to build the party brand rather than destroy it, certain fundamentals have to be in place about the manner in which members conduct themselves on social media. Political parties should consider developing a clear social media policy which will guide the entire organisation's key figures' behaviour on social media. The policy must articulate clear and well defined guidelines on the "do's and don'ts" for the use of social media. Likewise, it must determine who can and cannot act as a spokesperson for the political party. Because of the reputational risk involved with social media posts and content, it is recommended that this policy also extends to the appropriate and ethical use of personal social media accounts.

It must be borne in mind that political parties can have their social media profiles and political leaders (as individuals) also have their own personal profiles. In politics, audiences or users usually do not extricate an individual from an organisation, and thus individual comments by political leaders can be construed to reflect the views of the political party. This juxtaposition of the individual and the party induces numerous ethical and reputational issues pertinent to social media, hence the recommendation of the social media policy extending to the individual's personal social media profiles or accounts.

Alleviating risks of social media

One of the risks of social media is that of hacking. This can have negative ramifications on the party or its leader's reputations. Focus must be given to mitigate hacking by employing the services of individuals or organisations that are well versed with social media channels. This individual or service provider can ensure that the party's social media site is kept safe from hackers or false social media identities.

Evaluation and monitoring

It is a well-known fact that what cannot be measured, cannot be managed. Clearly defined success measurement metrics must be put in place and linked to the objectives for the implementation of social media. The benefits of social media can be tangible or intangible. Quantifiable measurements such as the number of followers, likes, virality of content are some of the measurements that can be put in place. These measurements must be examined and deciphered based on the party's social media objectives. Measuring the success will not only provide an indication of the return on investment, it will also help the parties to learn and improve.

Leverage the power of YouTube and Instagram

It is evident from the study that although the youth still use Facebook as their main social media platform, there is a mounting trend of utilising Instagram. This is also supported by the fact that Instagram grew from 680 000 active users in 2013 to 1, 1-million in 2014 (South African Social Media Landscape, 2015). Also, political parties did not fully leverage the power of YouTube during the 2014 general elections. It is recommended that political parties include YouTube as a key social media platform to engage with the youth. Its value for sharing campaign policy and other information which may be more difficult to put in writing is immense and the researcher highly recommends leveraging this platform during the 2016 local government elections.

6.5. Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of social media political marketing on voter trust, voter loyalty and voting intention by the youth of South Africa. Five hypotheses were proposed and to examine the hypotheses, data were

collected from Johannesburg, Gauteng Province in South Africa. The empirical result supported all the five posited research hypotheses in a significant way.
What is noteworthy about the study findings is that social media political marketing has influence on voter trust and voter loyalty in achieving voting intention. This denotes that social media political marketing is the main factor in voting intention.

For many political parties and leaders, the capability to reach the youth is a significant factor of their attempts on social networks. Millennials make up the majority of social media users and thus being on these platforms provides political parties and leaders with access to this segment. They also are able to engage with them where they are, in their own time, using the right language that resonates with them.

Sharing of photos and videos is what appeals to the Millennials, therefore political parties can benefit from using these methods and thus the messages will resound more with them, will be memorable and will likely be shared.

It is important though to stress that digital media will not replace traditional media. It may be a platform that is used to engage with a certain segment such as the millennials/ youth but because of access, other media platforms still need to be used extensively.

Undoubtedly, social media has resulted in a metamorphosis in electoral campaigns, revolutionising the manner in which candidates campaign, and transforming the method in which citizens learn and participate in politics.
Social media has become a ubiquitous communication media and social networking sites will be a permanent feature in our marketing and communications realm. Therefore it would always be prudent for marketers and campaign managers to efficiently incorporate them into their campaign strategies. Social media presents new opportunities in political marketing. However, adapting and implementing these instruments successfully in communications plans is crucial. The campaigns that

effectively integrate their communications strategies, including TV, print, direct mail, radio, internet, e-mail and social media will be the ones that become more triumphant and will enjoy supplementary benefits from social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

Balance is therefore still significant in the political party's communications efforts and the campaign strategy must still include conventional and established campaigning methods, such as rallies, door-to-door campaigns, posters, etc. It all still boils down to the power of IMC.

Social media as part of politics is here to stay - either for mobilisation, citizen engagement, holding government to account or protest organising and elections, despite the fact that some countries are attempting to introduce laws to curb its use. Egypt's recent controls on the compulsory licensing of group-text-messaging services may be regarded as Egypt's endeavour to introduce new restrictions on press freedom. Likewise, the requirement in South Korea for citizens to register with their real names for certain internet services can also be viewed as an effort to curb citizen's ability to mobilise action similar to the 2008 protest in Seoul and the 2011 Arab spring.

6.6. Limitations

The limitations of this study can also be regarded as opportunities for future research. The geographic scope of the study which only concentrated on a single city and province is an important limitation. Moreover, the study was limited to students at two universities in South Africa. Future studies could therefore, consider expanding data collection to include other virtual community members who utilise social media platforms.

The study was wide in its approach of social media. With different platforms available, addressing diverse objectives, this study could be repeated focusing on one specific social media platform.

All the study variables were measured at a single point in time. The variables of trust and loyalty are not static, they develop over time also in a sequential manner and the study has not taken that into account. It may therefore be valuable to explore trust and loyalty over a period, so that the dynamism of these constructs can be portrayed.

6.7. Suggestions for further research

Through highlighting the limitations of this study in the section above, it is prudent to provide some suggestions for future research, which were primarily extricated from the limitations and the delimitations of this study. While this study makes substantial contributions to research knowledge and practice, it had some limitations, therefore suggesting some future research avenues. First, the data was gathered from Gauteng Province and the sample of 250 is relatively small. Conceivably, with the availability of resources, the results would be more informative if the sample size is large and data gathered from all the nine provinces in South Africa. This would also be relevant in view of the number of youth who use social media. Secondly, possibly future studies should consider extending this research to other African countries for results comparison or consider reproducing this study in other South African provinces or other African countries. Future studies could also explore which exact social media platform (either Facebook or Twitter) has the strongest influence on youth voting intentions. Finally, further research could also investigate the effects of other constructs such as “perceived enjoyment” of social media platform use as a possible predictor of the intention to use social media platforms and information sharing for education and recreational purposes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Covering Letter

The University of Witwatersrand
Graduate School of Business Administration
Date: 5 October 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: COMPLETION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a post graduate student at the University of Witwatersrand – Graduate School of Business Administration, undertaking a Master of Management in the field of Strategic Marketing. In order to fulfil the requirements for my degree, I have to undertake research. The topic for my research is "**The influence social media political marketing on trust, loyalty and voting intention of youth voters in South Africa."**

In order to accomplish my research objectives, a questionnaire has been prepared to gather information regarding the following:

- Your level of political interest and online political participation
- Whether your online political participation enhances your trust and loyalty to a political party
- Whether your online political participation strengthens your intention to vote in elections in future.

This is to kindly request you to complete the attached questionnaire. Your response will be of great value to the research. Please be advised that your identity will remain anonymous and your feedback will be kept in utmost confidence.

Yours sincerely

Nandi Dabula
nandidabula@gmail.com

Study Supervisor
Prof. Richard Chinomona
richard.chinomona@wits.ac.za

Appendix B: Questionnaire

THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS STRICTLY FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES ONLY. PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS BY MARKING THE APPROPRIATE ANSWER WITH X.

SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION

A1. Please indicate your gender		
1	Male	
2	Female	

A2. Please indicate your age category		
1	18 – 24 years	
2	25 – 30 years	
3	31-35 years	

A3. Please indicate your marital status		
1	Single	
2	Married	
3	Divorced	
4	Other	

A4. Please indicate your highest academic qualification		
1	High school	
2	Diploma	
3	Degree	
4	Post graduate degree	
A5. Please indicate your occupation		
1	Student	
2	Employed	
3	Self-Employed	
4	Unemployed	
A6. Please indicate your racial group		
1	Black	
2	Coloured	
3	Asian	
4	White	
5	Other	

SECTION B: INTERNET ACCESS AND USAGE

B1. Do you have access to the internet?

1	Yes	
2	No	

B2. Where do you access the Internet from mostly? Please choose 1 option.

1	Home	
2	Work	
3	School	
4	Mobile phone/ Tablet	
5	Internet Cafe	

B3. How many hours do you spend on the Internet a week?

1	Less than 1 hour	
2	2-5 hours	
3	5-10 hours	

4	10-15 hours	
5	More than 15 hours	

SECTION C: SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

C1. Do you use social media?

1	Yes	
2	No	

C2. Which of the following social media platforms do you use mostly? Please select one option.

1	Facebook	
2	Twitter	
3	Linked In	
4	YouTube	
5	Instagram	
6	All of the above	

SECTION D: POLITICAL INTEREST AND PARTICIPATION:								
To what extent do you disagree or agree with each of the statements below:		**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Slightly disagree**	**Neutral**	**Slightly agree**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
D1	In general, I am interested in politics							
D2	I am a member of a political party							
D3	I have voted in the previous general elections							
D4	I think the government has my best interests at heart.							
D5	I use social media to search for political information							
D6	I read humorous content related to politics on social media							
D7	I watch political videos on social media							
D8	I forward political information to others							
D9	I participate in political discussions on social media							
D10	I post political information on political parties profile page							
D11	I post a 'like', message or a comment on someone else's message on the political party profile page.							
D12	I believe social media is a better source of information than other media platforms (e.g. TV, Radio, Newspapers etc.)							
D13	I think social media provides useful and objective political information.							

D14	I believe social media is a good place for political engagement of citizens							
D15	I believe politicians should pay more attention to their followers ' attitudes on social media							
D16	I believe politicians should act according to their followers ' attitudes communicated through social media							

SECTION E: VOTER TRUST

Please indicate to what extent you disagree or agree with each statement below.		**Strongly disagree**	**Disagree**	**Slightly disagree**	**Neutral**	**Slightly agree**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
E1	I think that the information offered by political parties and leaders on social media is sincere and honest							
E2	I think I can have confidence in the promises that a political party and leader makes on social media							
E3	I think that political parties and leaders fulfill the commitments they make on social media							
E4	I think that political parties and leaders are concerned with the present and future interests of their followers on social media							
E5	I think that political parties and leaders take into account the repercussions that their actions on social media could have on their followers							

SECTION F: VOTER LOYALTY

Please indicate to what extent you disagree or agree	**Strongly disagree**	**Disagree**	**Slightly disagree**	**Neutral**	**Slightly agree**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**

with each statement below.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F1	The more I engage with a political party on social media, the more I become committed to it							
F2	My interaction with a political party leader on social media increases my faithfulness to that party							
F3	I will never be swayed to change my vote after learning about a political party and its leader on social media							

SECTION G: VOTING INTENTION

Please indicate to what extent you disagree or agree with each statement below.		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
G1	I would vote for the party and leader whose social media messages make sense to me.							
G2	I think the party I want to vote for is concerned with the issues of the country.							
G3	Engaging with a political party, leader and politicians on social media would encourage me to vote							
G4	Voting gives me a choice to have a say about the country's policies and plans							
G5	Voting gives me a good feeling							

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

Appendix C: Ethics Clearance