The impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers in Soweto, South Africa

by

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DECLARATION

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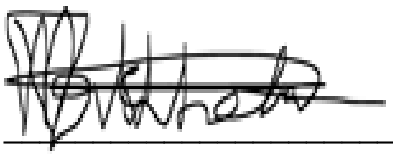
THE IMPACT OF MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SMALL INDEPENDENT RETAILERS IN SOWETO, SOUTH AFRICA

I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



_____ 11 March 2019_____

SIGNATURE DATE

DEDICATION

This master’s dissertation is dedicated to my family and loving wife. Thanks for all your support through it all.

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Writing a dissertation cannot be done by a single individual alone. With that being said, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all those who carried this load and travelled with me through this journey. My acknowledgement goes to:

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ABSTRACT

THE IMPACT OF MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SMALL INDEPENDENT RETAILERS IN SOWETO, SOUTH AFRICA

Small independent retailers in Soweto, a township of Johannesburg in South Africa, are losing business due to the emergence of large retailers in the township area. These large retailers are taking customers away from small independent retailers.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers in Soweto, South Africa. The study employed a descriptive research methodology that involved a quantitative research design. 300 small independent retailers in three townships in Soweto, namely, Meadowlands, Dobsonville and Protea North were targeted, and the self-administered printed questionnaires were distributed to these retailers. Data was analysed by means of descriptive statistical analysis, factor analysis, regression analysis and ANOVA.

The results depict that small independent retailers have a positive attitude towards marketing communication strategies. Small independent retailers were found to utilise word-of-mouth content and personal selling more in their businesses, while moderately using internet and social media. The results of the research study further revealed that marketing communication strategies (digital marketing, advertising, internet and social media) have a positive impact on the performance of small independent retailers.

The study also found that the major challenges experienced by small independent retailers are electricity outages (load-shedding), the high cost of marketing communication tools, crime, and selecting the right location for the business.

The key recommendation stemming from the study is that there is a need for more research on small independent retailers to identify the marketing communication strategies preferred by their customers. The study should be from the customer's perspective. Future studies should employ different research methodologies in order to delve deeper into determining why small independent retailers in Soweto do not

utilise digital marketing, advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion, and word-of-mouth message involvement.

Key Terms:

Advertising; digital marketing; direct marketing; internet; marketing communication strategy; small independent retailers; personal selling; sales promotion; social media; word-of-mouth

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ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used throughout the dissertation:	
AAAA	American Association of Advertising Agencies
ADSL	Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
CPPP	Community Public Private Partnership Programme
CSBP	Centre for Small Business Promotion
DSL	Digital Subscriber Line
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEP	Gauteng Enterprise Propeller
GPRS	General Packet Radio Service
GSM	Global System for Mobile Communications
IDC	Industrial Development Corporation
IMC	Integrated Marketing Communication
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
NAMAC	National Manufacturing Advisory Centre
NEP	National Education Policy Act
NSBC	National Small Business Council
SAMAF	South African Micro Apex Fund
SASTA	South African Spaza and Tuckshop Association
SEDA	Small Enterprise Development Agency
SEFA	Small Enterprise Finance Agency
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SMME	Small, Micro and Medium Enterprise
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

The following abbreviations are used throughout the dissertation:	
UNISA	University of South Africa

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined:	
General dealers	Are formal constructed stores, situated near residential locations; however, general dealers provide a limited product range when compared to the large chain stores found in shopping malls (Ligthelm, 2004).
Marketing	It is a method used by businesses to meet the company's goals, by focusing on meeting the consumers' needs and wants, by means of providing the consumers with the right product, at the right place and at the right time, in order to build and sustain relationships with consumers (Cant, Van Heerden & Ngambi, 2013).
Marketing communication strategy	Abiodun, Stephen, Stephen, Sulaiman & Olumide (2012) define marketing communication strategy as the process that presents a combined set of motivations to a specific targeted market with the objective of raising an anticipated response within the target market.
Medium independent retailers	Refers to a type of independent retailer that is independently owned and operated, and not dominant in its field of operation (Abor & Quartey, 2010).
Micro small independent retailers	This refers to a business that employs 15 employees or less (Mir & Feitelson, 2007). An example of a micro small independent retailer is a spaza shop (Mir & Feitelson, 2007).
Peri-urban	Refers to low-density housing and road developments on the periphery of urban areas and is a small rural area within networks of suburban buildings (MacGregor-Fors, 2010).
Small business	This is defined based on the industry it operates in, the size of the business, related to the average number of employees, and the total annual turnover that is averaged over a period of three years (Anon, 2015).
Small independent retailers	Businesses that are privately owned and do not belong to any large chain store (Makhitha, 2016).
SME (Small and Medium Enterprise)	A separate business that is managed by one person or more people (Cant & Wiid, 2013).
Spaza shop	Is defined as a business that operates out of a structure where people live permanently, or any other form of structure in a formal or informal township (Ligthelm, 2005).
Supermarkets	Stores that are larger than grocery stores and these stores are most likely to have in-store food preparation such as a butchery, bakery and delicatessen (Powell *et al*., 2006).
Survivalist small independent retailers	Are considered pre-entrepreneurial because they include hawkers and vendors. Survivalists are categorised as part of the micro-enterprise (Abor & Quartey, 2010).

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined:	
Very small independent retailers	Employ less than 10 employees because they function in a formal market that has access to technology (Abor & Quartey, 2010).
South African small independent retailers fall into the Department of Trade and Industry's (DTI) definition of Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise (SMMEs) (Makhitha, 2016). For the purpose of this study, small businesses, SMEs and SMMEs will be referred to as small independent retailers.	

CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Small independent retailers often rely on the application of marketing theory that has been developed for large companies, and which is then less successful when applied to smaller companies (Gabrielli & Balboni, 2010). Dockel and Ligthelm (2002) maintain that not much marketing is utilised by small independent retailers, and this could be a contributing factor to the high failure rate among small independent retailers in South Africa. Van Scheers (2011) mentions that managers in small independent retailers need the skills to recognise and expand the marketing plan for their goods and services, as proper marketing plays a deciding role in whether the small independent retailers will be successful in the long run or not.

The marketing communication strategy plays a vital role within small independent retailers and is used to create awareness and arouse the interest of customers so that they aspire to buy the merchandise (Tsikirayi, Muchenje & Katsidzira, 2013). Furthermore, it is a key element within any business, and as such, an excellent marketing communication strategy provides the customers with the sense that they are making informed decisions with regards to the products they are purchasing (Abiodun *et al.*, 2012). In effect, according to Kotler and Keller (2012), the role of a marketing communication strategy within the business is to notify, encourage and remind customers about the merchandise the business is selling.

The purpose of a marketing communication strategy is to create trust and assurance by laying the foundation for gaining a sustainable competitive advantage and making a profit in the medium-long term (Kotler & Keller, 2006; Oduor, 2017). Therefore, Davidavičienė, Sabaitytė, Davidavičius and Potapov (2014) further state that a marketing communication strategy can be utilised to exchange information between the business and consumers in order to acquire, develop, convey information, improve, understand and gather information about the consumers.

The various marketing communication strategies utilised by businesses differ in relation to their content about the product offering or the operations of the business

(Gabrielli & Balboni, 2010). Therefore, the marketing communication strategy utilised by large chain stores will differ from the marketing communication strategy utilised by small independent retailers.

The various categories of small businesses in South Africa play a vital role in the country's economy (Phanyane, 2013; Anon, 2016). South African small independent retailers fall into the various categories of Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) as defined by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) (Makhitha, 2016). Furthermore, Kongolo (2010); Schaupp and Bélanger (2014); Bello (2018); Ombongi and Long (2018) Anon (2016); and Ombongi and Long (2018) argue that small independent retailers create employment, and customers also rely on the goods and services provided by small independent retailers. As noted by Boone and Kurtz (2015), small independent retailers, such as spaza shops, supermarkets and general dealers, are known intermediaries for selling goods and services for consumption by the general public. A key factor that applies to independent retailers is that these are retail stores that are started and managed by an individual (Boone & Kurtz, 2015) and an independent retailer owns the store and runs the daily operations of the store (Waters, 2014).

According to Van Scheers (2011), 90% of the business environment in Africa comprises small businesses which contribute more than 50% to African employment. In South Africa alone, there are 2 251 821 small businesses, of which 667 433 are formal small businesses, and 1 497 860 are informal small businesses (Anon, 2016). Formal businesses operate in the legitimate developed economy and fiscal structure, where the business pays tax to the government (Badenhorst-Weiss & Cilliers, 2014). Conversely, informal businesses are broadly recognised as businesses that are not registered, and their economic activities contribute towards the gross domestic product (GDP) (Ligthelm, 2005). Small retailers contribute between 36% and 45% towards the South African GDP and constitute 60% of the labour force (Naidoo, 2016).

According to Mbonyane and Ladzani (2011), small independent retailers in the townships have between five and 50 full-time employees. This also applies to Soweto where small independent retailers typically employ between five and 50 full-time employees.

Soweto is a township that was established in 1904 to the Southwest of Johannesburg to house black communities living and working in the Witwatersrand area. It has evolved into the most highly populated, peri-urban residential location in South Africa (Anon, 2011; Dietrich, Coetzee, Otwombe, Mdanda, Nkala, Makongoza *et al.*, 2014). According to Strydom (2014), Soweto is recognised as the township that has benefited more than other townships in South Africa from the retail development programme which ensures that Sowetan residents are able to shop locally within Soweto.

To ensure their survival and growth, it is crucial that small independent retailers realise their competitive advantage, since 13.3% of new businesses in Soweto are forced to close down within less than a year (Badenhorst-Weiss & Cilliers, 2014). Small independent retailers that are successful realise their competitive advantage by ensuring that they service their customers professionally, and by building long-term relationships with their customers (Badenhorst-Weiss, Cilliers & Eicker, 2014). Box and Miller (2011) indicate that independent retailers should implement diverse means of differentiating their products, rather than merely lowering their prices to gain a competitive advantage.

According to Van Scheers and Radipere (2008), advertising has become an essential marketing communication strategy for the survival of small businesses in Soweto. An effective marketing communication strategy is a strength for a business that faces competition (Kotler & Keller, 2006). Therefore, small independent retailers need marketing communication strategies to ensure their growth and to allow them to remain competitive within the industry. Hence, this study aimed to determine the marketing communication strategies utilised by small independent retailers in Soweto.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to the Banking Association of South Africa (2013), small independent retailers in South Africa face numerous challenges, such as lack of access to markets and the inability to build relationships with customers. Chimucheka and Mandipaka (2015) expand on this notion by stating that small independent retailers are hindered by the environmental competition within which the business operates, government regulations, and the state of the economy. Furthermore, the establishment of malls and large retail stores in the townships has contributed to the threat of competition and the challenges faced by small independent retailers (Du Plooy, De Jager & Van Zyl,

2012). Consumers who used to support small independent retailers in the past, now prefer to shop in malls and large chain stores where a variety of merchandise is sold at affordable prices, and this increases competition for small independent retailers (Du Plooy *et al*., 2012). However, small independent retailers that are successful, manage to sustain their competitive advantage by servicing their customers efficiently and by building long-term relationships with their customers (Badenhorst-Weiss, Cilliers & Eicker, 2014).

Existing studies on independent retailers have focused on the challenges impacting on the performance of small independent retailers in Soweto (Makhitha, 2016), and have examined the unique market offering of formal independent retail and wholesale small businesses in Soweto (Badenhorst-Weiss & Cilliers, 2014). There is a need to research the impact of an efficient marketing communication strategy on the performance of small independent retailers in Soweto, as there is currently a lack of research on this topic in Soweto.

Mbonyane and Ladzani (2011) extend this argument in their contention that one of the reasons why South African small independent retailers fail can be attributed to the fact that such businesses are not in daily contact with their customers, neither do they offer their customers information about special promotions and price changes, and customers are unaware of new product features.

Mpofu and Chigwende (2013) emphasise that due to limited essential resources, small businesses within the retail industry do not have a marketing plan, which leads to these businesses running a trial-and-error strategy. Esposito (2013) expanded on this discussion by stating that this limitation in the marketing communication strategy utilised by small independent retailers is due to a lack of marketing skills. This statement is supported by Cant (2012) who highlighted that South African small business failure is caused by lack of marketing activities and skills.

The marketing communication strategy forms part of the marketing channel (Mohr & Nevin, 1990). Hence, the marketing communication strategy is part of the marketing activities and marketing plan. The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers in Soweto, South Africa.

The research objectives are discussed in the section below.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This section presents the primary research objective and the secondary research objectives that were formulated to address the problem statement. Thereafter, the research questions which have been derived from the objectives are presented. This is followed by the presentation of the research hypotheses.

1.3.1 Primary research objective

The primary research objective is to investigate the impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers in Soweto, South Africa.

1.3.2 Secondary research objectives

The following secondary research objectives have been formulated for the study:

- To determine the small independent retailers' attitude towards marketing communication strategies.
- To determine the marketing communications strategies utilised by small independent retailers in Soweto.
- To identify the challenges affecting the marketing communication strategy implementation of small independent retailers.
- To assess the impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers.
- To determine the influence of demographic factors (age and years of operation) on the performance of small independent retailers.

1.3.3 Research questions for attitude, challenges and performance

- What is the small independent retailer's attitude towards marketing communication strategies?
- What marketing communications strategies are utilised by small independent retailers in Soweto?
- Which challenges are affecting the marketing communication strategies of small independent retailers in Soweto?

- Do marketing communication strategies have an impact on the performance of small independent retailers?
- How do demographic factors (age and years of operation) influence the performance of small independent retailers?

1.3.4 Hypothesis and null hypothesis

The primary and secondary objectives led to the formulation of hypotheses to address additional relationships that became evident.

- **H_1:** Marketing communication strategies have an impact on the performance of small independent retailers.
- **H_0**: Marketing communication strategies do not have an impact on the performance of small independent retailers.

- **H_2:** The age of small independent retail owners/managers/sales assistants has a positive influence on marketing communication strategies.
- **H_0**: The age of small independent retail owners/managers/sales assistants does not have a positive influence on marketing communication strategies.

- **H_3:** The operational years of small independent retailers have a positive influence on marketing communication strategies.
- **H_0**: The operational years of small independent retailers do not have a positive influence on marketing communication strategies.

1.4 RATIONALE AND MOTIVATION FOR THIS STUDY

Small independent retailers play a vital role in developing the South African economy by contributing to the country's GDP, and by fighting poverty and unemployment (Akorsu & Agyapong, 2012; Ramasobana, 2017). Thus, the topic of this study is of emergent importance to the country at large, as the small independent retailers play a significant role in determining the future of South Africa's economic growth and development.

It is envisaged that a better understanding of the marketing communication strategies utilised by independent retailers in Soweto will contribute to the current body of

knowledge. In addition, this study aims to expose the owners/managers/sales assistants of small independent retailers to the topic of a marketing communication strategy if they have not yet been exposed to it, as this study aims to contribute to the knowledge regarding marketing communication strategy within the small independent retail industry.

The findings of this study will provide information to guide small independent retailers in Soweto to ensure their growth and survival, and the findings will also contribute to the sustainability of economic growth in South Africa. This study will also add to the body of knowledge regarding the small independent retail industry.

1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW

The preliminary literature review highlights the literature reviewed by the researcher on the various facets of marketing communication strategies. This section briefly discusses small independent retailers, followed by a discussion of marketing communication strategies.

1.5.1 Small independent retailers

Levy, Weitz and Grewal (2013) define retail as a place where final products and services are made available to the end user. Therefore, with regards to small business, a small business is defined as an independent and separate business that is managed by a single owner (Kruger, 2012). A small business is further defined based on the industry it operates in, the size of the business related to the average number of employees, and the total annual turnover that is averaged over a period of three years (Anon, 2015).

For the purpose of this study, micro and small businesses (spaza shops), SMEs (general dealers) and SMMEs (supermarkets) were referred to as small independent retailers. However, the small independent retailer is defined, based on the size of the business related to the average number of employees, and the total annual turnover (Anon, 2015).

According to Van Scheers (2011), more than 90% of all businesses that operate in Africa are small businesses. Moreover, there are 2 251 8521 small businesses that operate in South Africa.

Small independent retailers form part of small and medium enterprises as they are independently-owned and contribute towards building the South African economy. Small independent retailers, such as survivalist small independent retailers, spaza shops, hawkers, vendors, general dealers and local supermarkets, are known intermediaries for selling goods and services for consumption use. This study focused on these small independent retailers.

Mmbengwa, Groenewald and Van Schalkwyk (2013) state that the significance of small independent retailers has further been recognised within the industry, and in various countries such as the United States of America (USA). Moreover, small independent retailers contribute towards the economy of African countries (Akorsu & Agyapong, 2012).

Small independent retailers are vastly recognised for creating employment, wealth and food security; and these businesses are growing, irrespective of limited resources and insufficient support (Mmbengwa, Groenewald & Schalkwyk, 2013). South Africa has also seen the need to empower South African small independent retailers because these small independent retailers contribute towards employment, and they utilise local resources which save on foreign exchange (Wiid, Cant & le Roux, 2016). According to media reports (Anon, 2016), small independent retailers contribute towards the South African GDP and the fight against unemployment.

1.5.2 Small independent retailers' attitude towards marketing communication

Buil, De Chernatony and Martínez (2013) assessed the relationship between sales promotions, advertising and net sales, and found that individual attitudes towards sales promotions and advertising influence brand equity. Stojanovic, Andreu and Curras-Perez (2018) mentioned that social media influence the customer's attitude and behaviour and is a reliable way of influencing how customers perceive the product.

1.5.3 Marketing communication strategies in small independent retailers

Small independent retailers utilise advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, digital communication, publicity, sponsorship and direct marketing in their marketing communication strategy (Mapheto, Oni & Matiza, 2014). Mathenjwa (2007) added that small independent retailers in townships utilise product customisation, consumer focus, and product and market positioning (Mathenjwa, 2007). Van Scheers and Radipere (2008) maintain that the two main advertising methods utilised by small

independent retailers are broadcasting media and print media. However, in the study conducted by Tsikirayi *et al.* (2013) they mention that only a small number of small independent retailers utilise radio for promotional purposes. Cant and Wiid (2016) supported that marketing tools are expensive, and this discourages small independent retailers from investing in radio advertising.

1.5.4 The impact of marketing communication strategies on business performance

An appropriate marketing communication strategy will have a positive impact on business performance (Kotler & Keller, 2012; Buil *et al*., 2013). This implies that the marketing communication strategy enhances the performance of small independent retailers (Wang, Pauleen & Zhang, 2016). A study conducted by Ainin, Parveen, Moghavvemi, Jaafar and Shuib (2015) mentions that Facebook, as a marketing communication tool, has a positive impact on a small independent retailer's financials and non-financials, such as cost reduction, improvement in customer relations and information accessibility. The marketing communication strategy has a positive impact on the small independent retailer's performance.

1.5.5 Challenges facing small independent retailers

Ramukumba (2014) highlighted that South African small independent retailers are faced with various challenges, such as finance and obtaining credit, networking, lack of management skills, lack of support for the role they play in economic development, access to markets, and skills required to build relationships with customers. Fatok (2014) further states that additional challenges faced by small independent retailers are factors such as corruption, crime, the inadequate education system in South Africa, and load shedding (electricity blackouts). These challenges are discussed in Chapter 2.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This section of the study discusses the research design and methodology, starting with the research philosophy, followed by research design, research approach, research strategy, target population, sampling, data collection and ends with a discussion of the data analysis.

1.6.1 Research philosophy

The research philosophy is a system of assumptions and beliefs about the development of knowledge. Salvador (2016), and Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) explain the relevance for research based on philosophical positions such as positivism, post-positivism, critical realism, interpretivism, postmodernism, pragmatism and constructivism. These philosophies are discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

1.6.2 Research design

The research design is a framework that provides guidelines for the research study (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). Moreover, the research design is the plan that assists the researcher to conduct research as it stipulates the process so that it is possible to acquire the necessary information to answer the research questions (Malhotra, Birks & Wills, 2012). The research design consists of three methods, namely, qualitative, quantitative and mixed-method research (Wiid & Diggines, 2015), which will be briefly discussed below.

1.6.2.1 Qualitative research

Jobber and Ellis-Chadwick (2016) clarify qualitative research as the analysis of data, understanding the pattern within the data, and the social process of conducting the research. Thus, the purpose of qualitative research is to explore an existing situation, while qualitative research methods emphasise the social world and allow for data to emerge freely within the context in which they exist (Symonds & Gorard, 2008). Qualitative research is executed with the aim of generalising the results (Jobber & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016).

1.6.2.2 Quantitative research

Creswell (2014) defines quantitative research as a technique that tests the purpose of theories by assessing the relationship amongst the variables. In turn, these variables may be measured on instruments in order for numerical data to be analysed by applying statistical processes (Creswell, 2014). Neuman (2011) explains quantitative research as a deductive and objective method that emphasises the gathering of information in terms of numbers and measurements. Quantitative research applies statistical tests to analyse the data that has been gathered in order to draw inferences

to generalise the results from the sample of the population. In quantitative research, the researcher depends on numbers to establish the relationship between variables; and this technique normally employs an experiment or a survey technique (Maree, 2014). For the purposes of this study, the researcher used a descriptive design with the purpose of representing the correct role of the impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers.

1.6.2.3 Mixed-method research

This research method includes gathering, analysing and integrating both qualitative and quantitative research in a single study or a longitudinal programme of inquiry (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014). Mixed-methods is a term used when the researcher uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods (Symonds & Gorard, 2008). Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016) state that there are two philosophical positions that lead to mixed-method research, and that the first philosophical branch of this method is quantitative and the second branch is a qualitative data-collection method.

1.6.3 Research approach

The discussion of the research approach is an important part of any scientific study, irrespective of the research area. Saunders *et al.* (2019) mention that the research approach can be divided into three types, namely, the inductive research approach, the deductive research approach and the abductive research approach. The inductive and abductive research approaches are discussed in Chapter 3.

1.6.4 Research strategy

The research strategy is outlined as the way the research is conducted, representing a particular style and employing different methods in order to ensure that the data is obtained and the steps in the research programme are visible (Leung & Fong, 2018). The research strategies may comprise of archival research, case study, ethnography, action research, grounded theory, narrative inquiry and survey (Saunders *et al.,* 2019). A survey was adopted as the research strategy for this study. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

1.6.5 Target population

The term target population refers to the group of individuals from whom the data will be gathered to achieve the purpose of the study (McDaniel & Gates, 2013). The population is seen as the total group of participants and individuals from whom data is gathered (Wiid & Diggines, 2013). For the purpose of this research, the target population involved small independent retailers in Soweto.

1.6.6 Sampling

Sampling is the process of gathering data from a subset (sample) of a defined target population (McDaniel & Gates, 2013). A sample is selected with the premise that it represents the entire population (Cant & Van Heerden, 2013). The sampling design consists of a sampling process that includes defining the population, identifying the sampling frame, selecting the sampling methods, determining the sample size, selecting the sample elements, and gathering data from designated elements. Each of these aspects is discussed in the sections below.

1.6.6.1 Identifying the sampling frame

Sampling frame refers to a list that is used to choose the sample units (McDaniel & Gates, 2010). Struwig and Stead (2011) expanded on this notion by stating that a sampling frame is a record of people within the population who will be chosen to take part in the research.

The sampling frame for this study was small independent retailers in Soweto who were willing to participate in this study. The reason for using a non-probability sampling method was because there was no sampling frame available of small independent retailers in Soweto.

The absence of a sampling frame of small independent retailers operating in Soweto necessitated the researcher to create a list (sampling frame) of small independent retailers.

1.6.6.2 Selecting the sampling methods

According to Rasch, Kubinger and Yanagida (2011), the sampling method explains how the elements of a given population are chosen for the sample. A sampling method is made up of two elements, namely, probability and non-probability (Wiid & Diggines, 2015).

Probability sampling occurs when the researcher selects the unit randomly because it allows the researcher to generalise the findings to the selected target population, and is representative of the sample (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). According to Bhattacherjee (2012), there are various types of probability sampling, which are discussed in Chapter 3.

Non-probability sampling is when the components of the population are chosen on the basis of their convenience and availability (McDaniel & Gates, 2010). However, Kotzé (2007) points out that a disadvantage of non-probability is that the results of the study cannot be generalised to the whole population on statistical grounds.

According to Saunders *et al*. (2016), there are the four types of non-probability sampling, namely quota sampling, judgemental sampling, snowball sampling, and convenience sampling, which is when the researcher chooses the participants without evident principles in relation to research questions (Iacobucci & Churchill, 2010).

In this study, the non-probability sampling method of convenience sampling was conducted using a convenience sample of 300 small independent retail owners/ managers/sales assistants from whom to collect data. The convenience sampling method was employed to collect the data because the store owners, managers and sales assistants were conveniently available and accessible.

1.6.6.3 Determining the sampling size

Malhotra (2010) states that the sample size determines the probability of the findings from the selected sample size allowing the researcher to make inferences about a population from a sample. It is vital to choose the accurate sampling size because, should the researcher choose a smaller sample, it may result in insufficient data, whereas should the researcher choose a larger sampling size, this could lead to wasted resources and be time-consuming (Kapoor & Kulshrestha, 2010). Small independent retailers in Soweto are not formally registered, and as such, it was a challenge to acquire a list of small independent retailers.

1.6.7 Data collection

Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*. (2014) explain quantitative data collection as a method that acquires the richness and depth of data collected from the multifaceted phenomenon in a certain social environment. Wiid and Diggines (2015) state that there are two

determinant sources that identify data requirements, namely, secondary data and primary data.

The researcher drafted a questionnaire in order to ask questions that are suitable and applicable to the study (Zikmund & Babin, 2010). This study modified the questionnaires which were used by Makhitha (2016), Soke (2014); and Badenhorst-Weiss and Cilliers (2014) in their studies, as their studies investigated similar topics about the challenges that are faced by small independent retailers in the Soweto area. For the purpose of this study, Makhitha's (2016) questionnaire was mainly adapted.

1.6.7.1 Validity and reliability

According to Adams, Khan, Raeside and White (2007), reliability is the testing and evaluating tool which tests the degree to which an instrument measures the same way every time it is used. Zikmund and Babin (2013) further explain reliability as the degree to which the instrument is utilised to conduct the research and to produce constant and reliable results. Moreover, Mangal and Mangal (2013) explain reliability as the correctness of the outcome of the research, and the results can be confirmed when the researcher repeats the research on a similar population sample and acquires the same results. Validity is the degree to which the results of the study are accurate (Hair, Bush & Ortinau, 2009). Adams *et al*. (2007) further explain validity as the strength of inferences which includes the degree to which the researchers measure what they are supposed to measure. Validity and reliability are discussed in Chapter 3.

1.6.8 Data analysis

Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*. (2014) discuss data analysis as a method of organising and reducing data by providing a meaning to the data. Meaning, once the fieldwork has been completed, the next step is to analyse the collected information. Quantitative data analysis involves collecting primary data from many participants and the using statistical data analyses to enumerate the data (Zikmund & Babin, 2010).

Information from the questionnaires was inspected, cleaned and transformed into useful and relevant information by first capturing the data from the questionnaires into a Microsoft Excel file (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). The captured data was coded by allocating numerical figures to each answer, the data was cleaned and then imported into the statistical software package called SPSS version 25. In addition, ANOVA

analysis was used to determine the marketing communication strategy being utilised by small independent retailers in Soweto. Factor analysis was also used to evaluate the inconsistency that occurred due to causal elements in order to predict the important predictor of resultant behaviour, while regression analysis evaluated information about connected variables in order to make forecasts (Sorooshia, Meysam, Mehrdad, Neginsadat & Yasha, 2013).

1.7 ETHICAL CLEARANCE

Research ethics serves as a guideline to ensure that people, such as the respondents or participants who participated in this study, are not harmed or suffer any adverse consequences as a result of the research activities (Saunders *et al*., 2016). Ethical clearance for this study was obtained through the University of South Africa (UNISA) research and ethics committee for the marketing and retail department (see Appendix A).

Unethical activities comprise of actions such as violating a non-disclosure agreement, breaking a respondent's confidentiality, avoiding legal responsibility, and not interpreting the findings accurately (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). Therefore, the informed consent form given to each respondent contained a detailed description of the nature and aim of the research to be conducted to assure the respondents that participation was voluntary and that the acquired information would be treated confidentially.

1.8 STUDY LIMITATIONS

Due to the nature of employing a non-probability sampling method, the chosen sample that was selected in Soweto would not signify all small independent retailers operating in South Africa. Hence, the results are not be generalisable. The sample was limited to small independent retailers who were predominantly owners, managers and sales assistants, consequently the results could not be generalised to a broader population or a sample with different demographics.

Furthermore, this study focused on marketing communication strategies only. Although there are other areas that may contribute towards small independent retailers' growth, such as financial management, those areas were not researched in

depth. The existing literature, specifically related to small independent retailers, was limited, therefore some literature used in the study was based on small and medium-sized enterprises.

1.9 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study aims to raise awareness among the owners/managers/sales assistants of small independent retailers about the topic of a marketing communication strategy. The purpose of the study is to contribute to the knowledge regarding marketing communication strategies within the small independent retail industry. Furthermore, this study can be used by the small independent retail management, small independent retail industry, marketing academics and marketing students as a point of reference for future research on small independent retailers. This study has added to the field of knowledge of the small independent retail industry.

1.10 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

Chapter 1: The first chapter introduced the study, the research problem statement and the research objectives of the study. The theory of the study foundation, a brief overview of the research methodology, ethical clearance, study limitations, and the significance of the study are also outlined in Chapter 1.

Chapter 2: The second chapter of the study provides a review of the literature relevant to the key concepts related to marketing communication strategies, the impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers, and integrated marketing communication in small independent retailers. It further provides background information on small independent retailers. Thereafter, it presents the importance of independent retailers in South Africa, the challenges that small independent retailers in South Africa face, and the government support available to small independent retailers.

Chapter 3: This chapter discusses the research design and methodology which followed the “research onion” approach as the research philosophy, followed by research design, research approach, research strategy, target population, sampling, data collection and ends with a discussion of the data analysis.

Chapter 4: In this chapter, data is analysed, interpreted and discussed.

Chapter 5: Summaries, conclusions, and recommendations are made based on the results and findings of the research.

1.11 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the theoretical foundation of the study and provided an introduction to and an overview of the background to the marketing communication strategies of small independent retailers in Soweto. This chapter also provided the research problem statement, the objectives, questions and the hypothesis of the study. Thereafter followed a short literature review of small independent retailers, their attitude and the impact of marketing communication strategies, and the government support available to small independent retailers. With regards to the research design and methodology, the research philosophy, research design, research approach, research strategy, target population, sampling, data collection and the data analysis section were briefly discussed. The chapter also briefly discussed the ethical clearance of the study, the study limitations, significance of the study and the structure of the dissertation.

The next chapter provides a review of the available literature about the key concepts related to the marketing communication strategy, the impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers and challenges faced by small independent retailers.

CHAPTER 2:
MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES OF INDEPENDENT RETAILERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The current chapter (Chapter 2) provides a literature review of the key concepts related to the marketing communication strategy, and it also assesses the current relevant literature. The reviewed literature will assist in gaining an in-depth understanding of the impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers in Soweto, South Africa. This chapter commences with the introduction, which highlights the main aim of the literature review, this is followed by a section on understanding the marketing communication strategy, the elements of marketing communication strategies and integrated marketing communication in small independent retailers. This chapter further provides an overview of the impact of marketing communication on the performance of small independent retailers.

The aim of this chapter is to provide background information on small independent retailers by firstly providing a description of small independent retailers, and the categories of small independent retailers. Thereafter, this chapter further discusses the importance of independent retailers in South Africa, the challenges that small independent retailers in South Africa face, and the government support available to small independent retailers.

The next section provides an understanding of marketing communication, since this study focused mainly on the marketing communication strategies that are utilised by small independent retailers.

2.2 UNDERSTANDING MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

According to Fill (2009), no universal definition of the term ‘marketing communication strategy’ exists, and there are numerous interpretations of the term. Kayode (2014) defines the marketing communication strategy as the source (of the information), using it as a way of sharing information about the ideas and the significance of the goods and services with the receiver. However, Kotler and Keller (2012), and Muhcina and

Moraru (2016) mention that the marketing communication strategy is a specific mix of different mediums that is used by businesses to inform consumers about the products, and to persuade and remind the customers directly or indirectly about the goods and services that they offer. Fill (2009) supports the statement above by adding that the origin of the marketing communication strategy surmises the promotional viewpoint that its goal is to influence customers to buy the products and services. The marketing communication strategy can persuade customers' behaviour by communicating the products' features (Yang, 2019). Abiodun *et al.* (2012) define the marketing communication strategy as the process that presents a combined set of motivations to a specific targeted market with the objective of raising an anticipated response within the target market. Thus, the marketing communication strategy can be seen as the organisational process whereby businesses engage with their customers. This is done by businesses that develop and communicate the message to their stakeholders by ensuring that consumers understand how the products can meet their needs (Fill & Jamieson, 2011). The marketing communication strategy is necessary as it can assist the business to constantly inform, persuade and remind customers about the goods and services they offer (Shareef, Mukerji, Dwivedi, Rana & Islam, 2019).

The marketing communication strategy is important to the survival and growth of the business, because it builds the brand of the business to strengthen it against the competitors within the industry (Singh, 2018). Furthermore, the marketing communication strategy assists businesses to manage the perception of customers, and to influence the beliefs and behaviours of customers (Chubukova, Kostynets, Ponomarenko, Rallie & Zymbalevska, 2019). Therefore, it is clear that the marketing communication strategy is utilised to communicate important comprehensive information about the product, such as the quality of the product, product availability, product price level, and product promotions to the customers (Muhcina & Moraru, 2016). The marketing communication strategy enables the business to provide information about the price of the product and the means of delivering the product to the customer (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

Serrat (2017) maintains that the marketing strategy is known as the marketing activity which specifies the target market and it comprises of marketing elements such as product, price, place and promotion (marketing communication strategy). According to Mohr and Nevin (1990), the marketing communication strategy forms part of the

marketing strategy. The marketing strategy is well known as the four Ps, namely, the product, place, price and promotion that make up the marketing communication strategy used to inform the consumers about the product (Veríssimo, Sadowsky & Douglas, 2019).

Akbar, Balboni, Bortoluzzi and Tracogna (2017) highlight that the marketing communication strategy is a method utilised by business to reach its target markets. Walker, Mullins and Larréché (2008) further discuss the marketing strategy that specifies the target market for certain goods by ensuring that all the marketing strategies are integrated in order to attain a competitive advantage, and meet the consumer's needs. The marketing strategy begins with market research were consumers' needs and attitudes, and competitor's goods and services are assessed (Gbolagade, Adesola & Oyewale, 2013).

2.3 THE MARKETING COMMUNICATION PROCESS

The marketing communication process enables the business to communicate their products and services. In order for the business to communicate effectively, they need to understand the communication process.

According to Karlsson and Welander (2015), the marketing communication process is a way of conveying and sending the message to the audience. The marketing communication process begins with the sender communicating the message, and the recipient receiving the message. However, should the audience not receive the message that has been sent out, no communication has taken place (Karlsson & Welander, 2015).

Kotler and Armstrong (2015) mention that the communication model can be used in the marketing communication process to convey messages to consumers to ensure that the message is received and well understood. The marketing communication process model is illustrated in Figure 2.1.

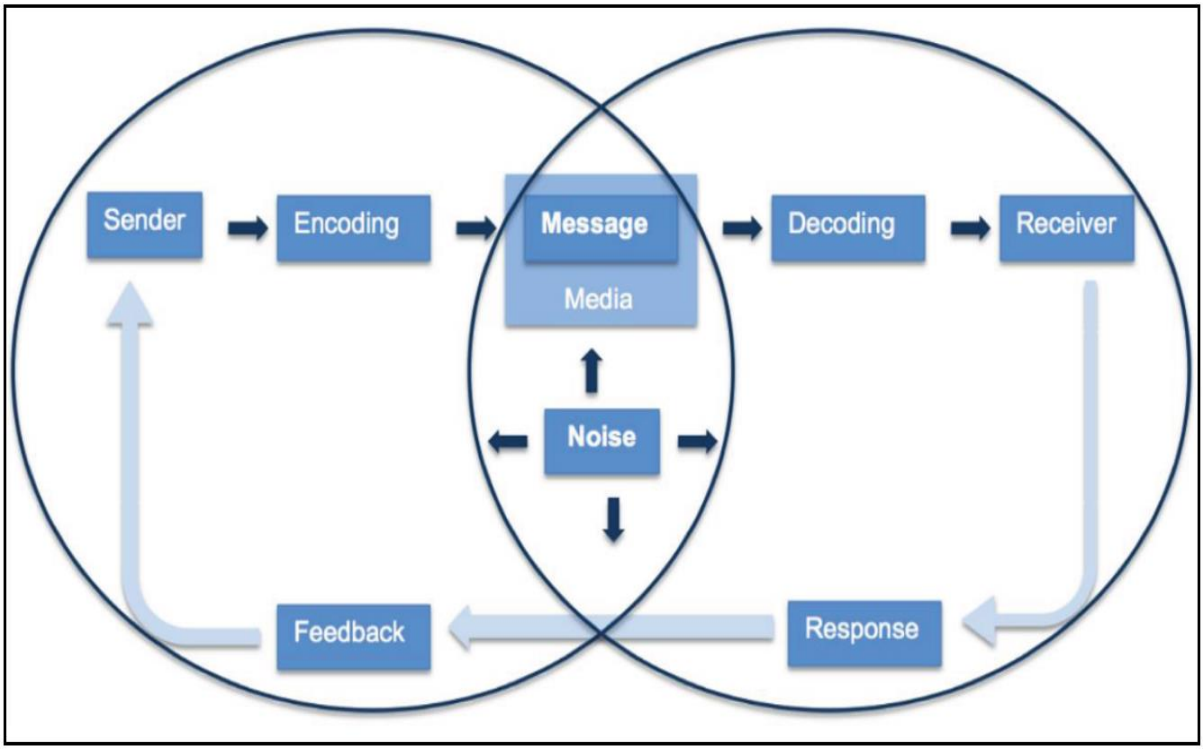

Figure 2.1: The marketing communication process model

Source: Kotler & Armstrong, 2015)

Figure 2.1 highlights the marketing communication model that essentially explains the marketing communication process where the sender formulates and conveys the message through a channel/medium to the receiver. The two key elements of the marketing communication process are the sender and the receiver.

Kotler and Keller (2012) highlight that the marketing communication process has nine key elements; which are:

- sender,
- message,
- media,
- encoding,
- decoding,
- response,
- receiver,
- noise, and
- feedback,

These elements of the communication process are briefly discussed below.

In Figure 2.1, the s*ender* represents the business that communicates the marketing message. *Encoding* refers to the knowledge of the subject matter of the communication and the recipient's language. *Message* refers to medium (plural media) that is used to transmit the message to the target audience. The message is normally encoded, then the message is either transmitted one-on-one, or via mass media and the receiver will decode the message and reply to it. Furthermore, *media/channel* refers to formal or less formal routes in which the message will be conveyed, and further it denotes a physical broadcast medium such as computer, television and radio. *Decoding* is the way that the recipient attaches meaning to the symbols, signs and the language received in the message. Further, the *receiver* represents the target audience at whom a message is directed. *Noise* refers to any external (advertisement from competitors) or internal (worrying) distracting issues that may obstruct the target audience, while *response* is when the recipient experiences the sensation that stimulates the receiver to react in a certain way. *Feedback* refers to the message that is sent back by the receiver and the basic response from the audience that informs the sender on how the message is being received in general (Koekemoer, 2014).

The marketing communication process is implemented to ensure that the correct message is communicated to the correct target consumers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2015). It is important for businesses to choose the correct message and correct marketing communication strategies because they need to ensure that they get the customers' attention, and then influence consumers to purchase certain products. Therefore, the type of marketing communication strategies being used can influence the effectiveness of the communication and the perceptions of consumers, as various customers attach a different interpretation to the message, and respond to the correct marketing communication channel (Kacaniova, 2013). Marketers can utilise one or more marketing communication strategies to notify, influence and remind the customers (Du Plessis *et al*., 2010).

In the next section, the elements of marketing communication are discussed, as small independent retailers need to engage in a marketing communication strategy to stimulate business sales (Centeno & Hart, 2012).

2.4 ELEMENTS OF MARKETING COMMUNICATION

Abiodun *et al.* (2012); and Ramasobana (2017) mention that the marketing communication strategy comprises of elements such as word-of-mouth, social media, advertising, public relations, personal selling, sales promotion, direct marketing and sponsorship as illustrated in Figure 2.2 and discussed in this section.

Figure 2.2: Elements of the marketing communication strategy

Source: Researcher's own compilation, 2018

According to Kotler and Keller (2009), each element of the marketing communication strategy has unique characteristics and ways of determining its effectiveness and efficiency. Therefore, the key elements of a marketing communication strategy comprise of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, direct marketing, public relations and sponsorship (Keller, 2009).

Furthermore, similar studies (not conducted in Soweto) have proven that small independent retailers invariably focus the most on these above-mentioned marketing communication strategies. Studies conducted by Gabrielli and Balboni (2010) highlighted that small businesses utilise advertising and sales promotions as a type of marketing communication strategy. Moreover, Mapheto *et al.* (2014) found that small independent retailers utilise advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, digital communication, publicity, sponsorship and direct marketing in their marketing

communication strategy. Lastly, the study conducted by Mathenjwa (2007) on the marketing communication strategy utilised by small businesses, highlighted that small businesses in townships utilise product customisation, consumer focus, and product and market positioning (Mathenjwa, 2007).

The existing literature on marketing communication strategy for small independent retailers, with specific reference to small independent retailers in Soweto, argues that they do not implement all the marketing communication elements. A study conducted by Van Scheers and Radipere (2008) highlighted that the most suitable advertising elements utilised by small independent retailers were wall painting, newspapers, directional boards, internet, door-to-door campaign and pamphlets. This is caused by the lack of funding/budget, a precise target market and illiteracy (Van Scheers & Radipere, 2008).

Hence, this study will exclude public relations, because the resources for public relations and other marketing support are often not available for small independent retailers due to financial constraints (Lekhanya, 2010). The study will further exclude/ not research sponsorship as a marketing communication strategy utilised by small independent retailers. Mapheto *et al.* (2014) highlighted that the use of marketing communication strategies, such as public relations, sponsorship and direct marketing, are less popular amongst the small independent retailers. A study conducted by Moss, Ashford and Shani (2004) argued that small independent retailers have a limited series of public relations skills and have a narrow understanding of what constitutes public relations. For the purpose of the study, the study will focus on digital marketing, word-of-mouth, advertising, personal selling, direct marketing, internet, sales promotion and social media as marketing communication strategies utilised by small independent retailers.

2.4.1 Advertising

As an element of marketing communication strategy (Ferrell & Hartline, 2011), the origins of advertising can be traced back to many years ago. Advertising refers to any means of mass communication about a good or service that is paid for by the business (Du Plessis *et al*., 2003). McDaniel, Lamb and Hair (2013) agree that advertising is when the business pays to communicate influential information about its goods or services to the targeted customers. Kaser (2013) add that advertising is a form of

communication where businesses pay to notify, convince and continually remind their customers to buy the goods and services they offer. Feiz, Fakharyan, Reza Jalilvand and Hashemi (2013) explain advertising as a public occasion that has an impact in people's lives in such a way that consumers change their buying power, standards, opinions and lifestyles.

Marketers have full control over who to target, because advertising allows marketers to target the precise customers through the correct marketing communication channels (Caemmerer, 2009). Van Scheers and Radipere (2008) highlight that advertising is becoming highly essential for small independent retailers in Soweto to ensure their continued business success.

Pergelova, Prior and Rialp (2010) opine that advertising has a positive effect on differentiating the products and can create long-term effects towards the brand of the product. McDaniel *et al*. (2013) argue that advertising can reach a large number of customers, if compared to other marketing communication elements, however, it has less impact on prompting instant customer behavioural change and is not able to change customers' deep-rooted attitudes.

As highlighted by Cant and Van Heerden (2013), there are various types of advertising channels/media. Danaher and Rossiter (2011) assert that businesses are faced with wide and varied types of media to choose from when they send marketing communication messages to customers and stakeholders. The utilisation of mobile advertising, such as texting (SMS/MMS) and mobile applications (WhatsApp) are increasing. This fast and growing common uptake of modern media channels is expected to cause a decline in the traditional marketing communication channels, such as television, radio and door-to-door sales promotion calls, to some extent (Rossiter, 2011).

Media can assist small independent retailers to build a relationship with its customers. Ferrell and Hartline (2011) emphasise that advertising is a paid cost-efficient and non-personal marketing communication programme that is utilised to communicate with customers through media such as the internet, magazines, newspapers, mail, mobile devices, radio, outdoor exhibitions and television.

In terms of small independent retailers in Soweto, Van Scheers and Radipere (2008) emphasise that they need to implement an effective advertising campaign in order to

ensure their survival. This means that small independent retail owners need to consider utilising cost-effective advertising, such as local radio stations. The various types of advertising that can be utilised by small independent retailers in Soweto, South Africa are: radio, television, print media and the internet. The sub-section below will briefly discuss each of these types of advertising media.

2.4.1.1 Radio

Radio is a broadcast and reception of electromagnetic waves frequency and it is utilised to carry out sound messages (Luis, Oliveira, Dinis & Bernardo, 2017). Zheng (2014) considers radio to be an important mass communication medium. Cant and Van Heerden (2013) mention that radio is a personal medium that is geographically selective in regional services or national coverage that can reach specific audiences at a certain time. Therefore, it can be said that radio is a personal medium capable of reaching and communicating to the targeted customers because of its wide geographic and demographic coverage (Zheng, 2014).

Additionally, radio is the most powerful tool that has the ability to build a long-term and emotional bond with its customers (Makgopa, 2016). According to Kotler and Keller (2012), radio advertising is relatively cost effective when compared to print media and television advertising. The above statement is supported by Zheng (2014) who states that radio advertising provides a strong effective response and brand reminiscence at an affordable cost which results in a high return on investment.

Small independent retailers can utilise local radio stations because of its cost effectiveness, which will allow them to inform, persuade and constantly remind local customers about the products or services they provide.

According to Van Scheers and Radipere (2008), the two main advertising methods are broadcasting media and print media. However, in the study conducted by Tsikirayi *et al.* (2013) they mention that only a small number of small independent retailers utilise radio for promotional purposes. This statement was supported by Cant and Wiid (2016) who highlighted that marketing tools are expensive, and this discourages small independent retailers from investing in radio advertising.

2.4.1.2 Television

According to Kaser (2013), television (TV) was invented in the 1920s and it became a massive advertising medium when the price of TVs became more affordable. With TV advertising, marketers are able to portray a creative message that attracts and convinces the customer's emotions, and they do this by ensuring that they demonstrate a detailed message to suitable customers. TV made a significant impact in the advertising industry, while other advertising media such as radio and print media took a back seat, because for the first time in the history of mankind, advertising was broadcast with sound, motion and visuals (Kaser, 2013). As discussed by Kotler and Keller (2012), marketers are able to cover a wide geographic area and be flexible regarding timing the presentation of the message when using TV as an advertising medium.

Chattopadhyay, Dutta and Sivani (2010) cited that TV is the most suitable platform where marketers are able to highlight the benefits of the products. Furthermore, Nielson (2013) mentions that customers believe that TV and magazine advertising are more effective than other means of advertising media. However, the downside of advertising through TV is the high costs that the businesses incur.

Tsikirayi *et al.* (2013) maintain that only a handful of small independent retailers utilise television advertisements. Centeno and Hart (2012) argue that although these small independent retailers do not have the budget for advertising, they usually receive invitations to morning TV programmes to talk about and promote their businesses.

2.4.1.3 Print media

Cant and Van Heerden (2013) maintain that print media is a form of spreading information to a general audience and is a platform for advertising. An example of print media could be posters and handing out printed flyers that contain information about the products or services of the business (Kaser, 2013). Small independent retailers in Soweto rent walls on busy roads to put up posters, and they also attach printed flyers and distribute printed flyers to general customers (Njiro & Thami, 2012).

Cant and Van Heerden (2013) highlight that magazines, newspapers, posters and flyers form part of print media as discussed below.

– *Magazine advertising*

Magazine advertising takes the form of an outstanding high quality colour print, in a local, national or international publication that aims to advertise products and services (Makgopa, 2016). Chattopadhyay *et al.* (2010) highlight that magazine advertising is efficient in increasing sales and market share, and provides quality advertisements to a highly suitable audience. Kayode (2014) mentions that magazines have a high degree of credibility and provide better exposure of the message to the specific audience. Magazines further have regional flexibility, a long life span that provides multiple exposures to the original circulation (for example, magazines in a doctor's waiting rooms), and it is an excellent medium for direct marketing. The disadvantages of magazine advertising is that it is a costly process, and it has a long lead time before the publication date (60 to 90 days in advance) (Kayode, 2014).

– *Newspapers advertising*

As noted by Chattopad`yay *et al.* (2010), newspaper advertising is a printed advertisement which provides detailed information about the product/service to the targeted customers at a low cost. Kotler and Keller (2012) further this discussion by stating that newspaper advertising provides powerful coverage for local markets because most customers like to read them. Newspaper advertising is versatile and timely for consumers to read every morning. However, the disadvantage of newspaper advertising is that it has a short lifespan and low printed quality when compared to magazine advertising (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

The study conducted by Centeno and Hart (2012) revealed that more than half of the small independent retailers were found to be engaging in newspapers. Local newspapers in Soweto, such as the Orlando Sentinel and Soweto Urban News are local grassroots print media in South Africa. The most commonly used advertising means by small independent retailers in Soweto is the local newspapers (Van Scheers & Radipere, 2008).

– *Poster*

A poster is a multimedia communication approach that integrates words and images in a multimedia presentation (Sousa & Mouraz, 2014). A poster makes a more efficient communication than words alone, and posters are meant for visuals in order

to capture the attention of customers (Rhianna, Hardy & Rowland, 2017). A poster is an efficient medium to display a message as part of a social marketing drive, and it provides a novel way to improve the communication between the business and its customers (Jones, Babiker, Gardner, Royle, Curley, Hoo & Wildman, 2015). In a poster, the necessary information should be close to the visuals of interest and the necessary ideas must be explained in sequence, rather than in separate periods (Rhianna *et al.,* 2017). Posters have a low cost budget, is localised, easy changeable, and short runs are economical. However, the disadvantages of posters are that they have low-attention volume, limited segmentation is possible, they are exposed to vandalism, have to compete with lots of distraction, and have relatively poor images.

– *Flyer*

A flyer is a printed material that is often distributed to the targeted audience for free, and it is part of the mass communication marketing tool from the sender, with the purpose of attaining immediate readability (Gázquez-Abad & Martínez-López, 2016). Flyers include promotional activities for various products, with multifaceted cross-category relationships and it influence customers at home and in-store (Ziliani & Ieva, 2015). Flyers allow businesses to present information with the aim to promote products, and stores rely heavily on them to reach the customers directly (Swoboda, Elsner, Foscht & Schramm-Klein, 2010). Gázquez-Abad and Martínez-López (2016) mention that retailers utilise flyers with the intention of increasing in-store traffic and sales. Flyers are small and cheaper than posters to print because they can be printed in black and white, and they can easily be distributed in public areas such as markets and streets. However, the disadvantage of flyers is that they cannot control the feedback from the targeted audience (Advantages and Disadvantages of Different Types of Media, 2011).

2.4.1.4 Internet

Internet advertising has evolved over the past years, moving away from the earliest pop-up advertisements to website video advertising (Kaser, 2013). Web video advertising may include various types such as YouTube and Amazon videos. Kaser (2013) mentions that websites contain product/service hyperlinks to the

website's pages, that allow consumers to view videos and to buy the products/services.

Small independent retailers may also market and sell their products through their own websites (Jia, 2009). Stelzner (2014) states that those businesses that create a website on the internet to advertise their products or services, create a basis from where the business can send effective communication to their target market and it allows customers to receive marketing messages from the business. Small independent retailers need to understand that their adoption of a website will play a positive role in their business success (Ramayah, Ling, Taghizadeh & Rahman, 2016). Websites have become an essential means of accessing information by small independent retailers (Parker, Bellucci, Zutshi, Torlina & Fraunholz, 2015). However, Ramayah *et al.'s* (2016) study found that a small number of small independent retailers have their own websites. A study by Rahayu and Day (2017) highlighted that the adoption of websites within small independent retailers is still at a low level. Another study by Cant, Wiid and Meyer (2016) found that emails and websites were the most used internet-based function utilised by small independent retailers. Internet advertising is also known as online advertising (Grape-media, 2017).

Online advertising is an essential tool that can reach a larger number of customers through the internet and is considered important to customers (Chu, Kamal & Kim, 2013). It is of utmost importance for businesses to advertise their products online because online advertising provides the business with a platform where the business can provide interesting information to their customers in a timely manner (Kudeshia & Mittal, 2015).

In order for businesses to be successful with online advertising, the business has to communicate relevant information to their customers and they must allow their customers to provide feedback (Jain, Roy & Ranchhod, 2013). Businesses that provide feedback to customers on online advertising tend to appreciate the higher level of online advertising visibility (Yang, 2014). Good feedback from customers may improve the quality of the product, educate customers, increase the business's profit and maintain a healthy long-term relationship with customers (Jain *et al.,* 2013).

The internet emphasises the position of combined communication by integrating telecommunication and computers which permits the business and customers to access and communicate with each other (Mohlameane & Ruxwana, 2013).

The following are some benefits that small independent retailers gain from internet advertising: to improve their communication with customers, to increase participation through user engagement, and the dissemination of information and knowledge sharing between the business and customers (Wambaria, Kibas & Asienga, 2016). The internet can be used in such a way that a message can be conveyed in either one-way information directed at relevant stakeholders, or two-way information to interchange ideas and complaints, and lastly, the internet can be used to provide prospects for automated processes (Mason, 2015).

As the internet is the main advertising element of any business in today's world, the lack of internet usage will negatively influence the visibility and success of the business (Cant *et al*., 2016). The internet has become a necessity for business because more people have access to it and are making use of it (Mason, 2015). Furthermore, the internet has changed the world in such a way that it provides a platform where information can easily be shared and communicated electronically from one device to another (Castro & Misra, 2013).

Operating a business in today's complicated business environment is challenging and stressful for small independent retailers (Lambert, 2017). Small independent retailers are under-utilising the internet because they lack the ability and skills to adopt and implement the internet as an advertising medium (Cant *et al*., 2016). Figure 2.3 below shows that the majority of small independent retailers use the cell phone to connect to the internet, which does not allow them much freedom as an advertising vehicle.

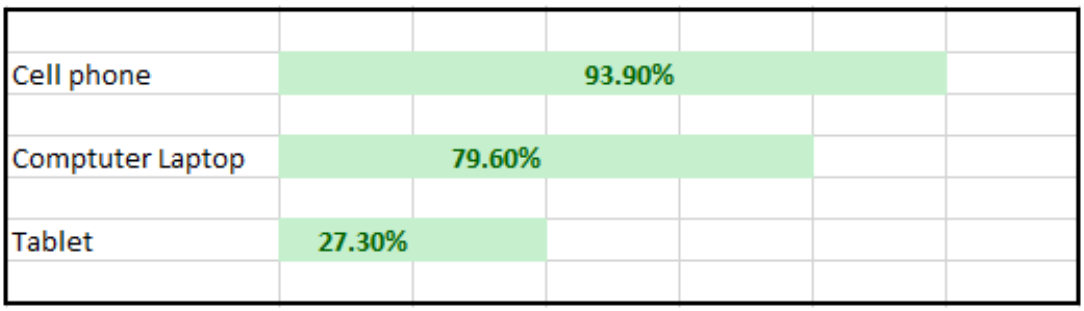

Figure 2.3: Small independent retailers' devices to connect to the internet

Source: Cant *et al.* (2016)

Figure 2.3 indicates that small independent retailers use the cellphone, computer or laptop and tablets to connect to the internet (Cant *et al*., 2016). It was found that 93.90% of the small independent retailers use their cellphone, 79.60% use computers or laptop, and 27.30% make use of tablets to access the internet (Cant *et al*., 2016). Consequently, small independent retailers that are using the internet to communicate with their customers are faced with challenges such as running out of data, without which they will not be able to connect to the internet (Mohlameane & Ruxwana, 2013). Therefore, government can support small independent retailers in promoting the use of the internet in their marketing communication efforts. If government encourages and promotes the use of the internet, the more likely the small independent retailers will be to adopt the internet as a means of communicating with their customers (Mason, 2015).

The lack of widespread information among small independent retailers' results from underdeveloped technological marketing communication infrastructure (internet) and insufficient business support (Kamunge *et al.,* 2014). For example, the internet can assist small independent retailers to obtain funds from financial service providers which will enable them to have the funds to implement marketing communication tools such as advertising, and promoting their businesses. Personal selling will be discussed next.

2.4.2 Personal selling

Koekemoer (2014) defines personal selling as the process where the sales personnel interact in a face-to-face manner with the customer during marketing communication. Personal selling may be an efficient marketing communication tool if it is utilised to gain a buying commitment from consumers (Strydom *et al.,* 2012). Ojala (2018) adds that personal selling is a means of face-to-face communication, where the seller provides assistance by persuading the buyer to buy the goods.

The purpose of personal selling is to build and maintain a long-lasting relationship with customers (Mapheto *et al.*, 2014). Personal selling is an essential tool that guarantees the customers' post-purchase satisfaction, and builds customers' trust and mutual understanding (Nimako, 2016).

In this perspective, Kotler and Keller (2012) highlight the following personal selling steps:

Step 1: Prospecting

It begins by seeking leads/prospects and turning them into potential customers. A lead is an individual who has the potential of becoming a consumer (Lamb, Hair & McDaniel, 2015). A prospect is a consumer who wants/needs the goods or services (Meghişan, 2008).

Step 2: Pre-approach

As soon as the lead has been identified as a potential customer, the salesperson needs to gather information about the potential customer to develop a customer's profile. This may further assist the salesperson to develop a suitable plan for the customer and will help in preparing the sales presentation (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

Step 3: Approach

This step is known as 'the sale opener' and is the first impression conveyed to the potential customer. In this step, the salesperson initiates the meeting with the potential customer with the intention of gaining the potential customer's attention. Thereafter, the salesperson needs to transmit the message accurately in order to maximise the chance of going to the next step. It is crucial to impress the prospective customer at the first meeting (Van Heerden & Drotsky, 2011).

Step 4: Sales presentation

The sales presentation is the heart of the personal selling steps, where the salesperson has to convince the potential customer to respond in a positive manner. The purpose of the sales presentation is to create the need for the goods or services (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

Step 5: Handling objectives

The salesperson needs to be prepared for questions in this step, and should be able to provide answers on the product's attributes. The salesperson should be able to answer these questions in a confident manner and be completely honest about the answers (Pride & Ferrell, 2016). Having the specialist be present in assisting the salesperson with explaining and validating the information may save time and enhance the chances of selling the product.

Step 6: Closing the sale

During this step, the salesperson has conducted the presentation and all parties are close to finalising the sale. This is the most essential and challenging step, as the salesperson needs to determine when the potential customer is ready, and then obtain the purchase from the potential customer (Meghişan, 2008). Nonetheless, questions about certain features of goods/services and the sale are likely to arise, however, the salesperson needs to take control and answer them in an appropriate manner.

Step 7: Follow-up and maintenance

Personal selling does not end after closing the sale. This step is also important because the salesperson assures the consumers that the promises made about goods or services will be fulfilled. Salespersons that follow-up with customers manage to acquire information on whether their customers were satisfied or not, and get to know the probability of future purchases. Furthermore, salespersons that follow up and maintain consumer relationships, safeguard customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, they build long-term relationships and tend to build goodwill between the salesperson and the customer.

The above-mentioned personal selling activities are based on well trained sales personnel being able to respond to any product-related questions, as personal selling plays an important role in the business's marketing effort. Kotler and Keller (2012) discuss that the objective of the personal selling strategy is assigned to a salesperson who should involve management in the expected sales results. The marketing communication strategy emphasises that the salesperson's function is to listen to the customers and understand their needs. Personal selling allows the salesperson to persuade customers by answering their product-related questions (Abiodun *et al.*, 2012).

Koekemoer (2014) noted that direct contact between the salesperson and the customer allows for flexibility and the opportunity to get immediate feedback from the customer. The direct contact between the small independent retailers and customers may enable better flexibility as the stores can communicate immediate promotional activities and obtain immediate feedback from customers, which they

can then further adapt to future promotional activities based on the customer's preferences.

Ultimately, personal selling is a face-to-face interaction with one or more prospective customers with the purpose of making a sale. Small independent retailers solely use face-to-face contact with their customers, and mostly use personal selling as a promotion method (Lekhanya, 2010). A study conducted by Mapheto *et al. (*2014) on small independent retailers, shows that personal selling is used more than other elements of the marketing communication strategy, such as sponsorship, publicity and direct marketing. Next, word-of-mouth is discussed.

2.4.3 Word-of-mouth

The elements of the marketing communication strategy include word-of-mouth (WOM) as a goal to enhance awareness, spread information and to increase the purchasing intentions (Kim, 2016). WOM refers to an oral person-to-person communication between the sender and the receiver of the message (Allan & Kitchen, 2015). Jalilvand, Salimipour, Elyasi and Mohammadi (2017), and Mbango and Makhubela (2018) further this argument by stating that WOM is initially an informal communication between people who have used the products or the service and who are giving their own apparent evaluation, and people who might be interested in experiencing these products or service.

The customer's attention is attracted by the novelty of who recommends the product and delivers the personal trust through WOM (Centeno & Hart, 2012). Datta, Chowdhury and Chakraborty (2005), and Mbango and Makhubela (2018) highlight that small independent retailers experience WOM as an interpersonal communication between customers regarding their personal experiences with the business or product. Franco, Santos, Ramalho and Nunes (2014) mention that small independent retailers have numerous means of communicating with consumers and promoting their goods and services. WOM is one of the communication elements that is used, because WOM is more responsive, flexible, innovative and allows the small independent retailers to have closer contact with the customers (Franco *et al.*, 2014).

Nguyen and Romaniuk (2014) state that WOM is vital because it allows a business to understand the type of information that customers are likely to communicate. The content of WOM are statements that are centred on word-of-mouth givers and

receivers (Nguyen & Romaniuk, 2014), and that get people talking about products or services (Sormunen, 2009).

According to Dzisi and Ofuso (2014) and Lekhanya (2010), small independent retailers use WOM. A study conducted by Supyuenyong, Islam and Kulkarni (2007) mentioned that small independent retailers use WOM as their primary tool for advertising.

2.4.4 Sales promotions

As identified by Keller (2009), sales promotions is an element of the marketing communication strategy. According to O'Guinn, Allen, Semenik and Scheinbaum (2015), sales promotion is defined as the process that uses short-term incentives to influence customers to buy the goods or services, and is an essential marketing communication tool for businesses (McDaniel *et al*., 2013). In support of the above statement, Cant *et al.* (2013) continued this discussion by highlighting that sale promotions are marketing activities which provides customers with extra incentives to buy a product or service. The purpose of sales promotion is to stimulate the sales in the short term and build brand equity for the long term (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

The sales promotions department establishes a budget that works towards attaining the business's marketing communication goals. Kotler and Keller (2012) opined that the marketing communication goals should come from the broader marketing communication strategy that are in line with the overall business goals. The business's sales promotion activities will have different effects, depending on the different types of sales promotion tools used by the retailer (Dib & Alnazer, 2013).

The types of sales promotions used by small independent retailers will be influenced by those used by large retailers, however, large retailers can afford to utilise various expensive types of sales promotions. For example, while small independent retailers may lower their prices, which may attracts a small number of customers, large retailers may use coupons and free gift sales promotions which attract a large number of customers. The elements of sales promotion comprises of free samples, coupons, gifts and discounts (Copley, 2014). Additionally, the main purpose of the sales promotion element is to increase a number of customers into a store and to achieve a direct response from the consumers (Copley, 2014).

Small independent retailers are most likely to implement a sales promotion strategy that includes offering lower priced products to consumers (Deakins & Freel, 2012).

Box and Miller (2011) indicate that independent retailers should also implement diverse means of differentiating their products, rather than relying on merely lowering their prices to gain a competitive advantage.

2.4.5 Direct marketing

Kotler and Armstrong (2014) define direct marketing as the element of the marketing communication strategy that targets audiences directly with marketing strategies that are personalised to their specific requests. Customers find direct marketing a convenient element because they do not have to visit the store (Strydom, 2012). Kotler and Keller (2012) mention that direct marketing comprises of mobile devices (SMS), electronic mail, and telemarketing. These are briefly discussed below.

2.4.5.1 Short message services (SMS)

The short message service (SMS) is known as the most popular mobile application (Chattopadhyay *et al*., 2010) and forms part of direct marketing (Shadkam, 2017). Businesses send mobile text (SMS) marketing messages as a means of communicating with the targeted customers. The SMSs can reach the targeted customers anytime and anywhere through their mobile devices. This can be done by generating a list of contact details from the customer's suggestion box or customers who voluntarily gave their contact details to the store. Once the business has the customer's user profile (contact details) and background, the business can offer the customer advertisements that suit them (Tripathy & Siddiqui, 2008).

2.4.5.2 Electronic mail

Electronic mail, also known as email, is a tool which is used by companies as part of the marketing communication strategy to inform, persuade and remind targeted customers about the business's products or services (Makgopa, 2016). Email is the utmost basic digital marketing tool that is utilised by companies to reach their customers.

According to McDaniel *et al.* (2013), the internet has changed the way advertising is done by companies, as permits companies to send emails that contain advertising messages to the targeted customers. Van Scheers and Radipere (2008) mention that email is an affordable advertising method where small independent retailers in Soweto can convey the message directly to the targeted customers around the globe.

Digital marketing is defined as a cluster of internet-based applications that are developed on the technological and ideological foundations of Web 2.0 (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Digital marketing is an interactive modern aspect of marketing and is often also known as internet marketing, online marketing, or web marketing (Kotler, Bowen, Makens & Balgolu, 2016).

Digital marketing refers to the marketing of products that use digital technology, primarily the internet, which comprises search engine marketing, social media marketing, email marketing, mobile advertising, display of advertising (web banner), and any other form of digital means (Thomas & Thomas, 2018).

A study conducted by Taiminen and Karjaluoto (2015) highlighted that the majority of small independent retailers utilise digital marketing. Eriksson, Hultman and Naldi (2008) mention that although some small independent retailers utilise digital marketing to market their products and services, most of them are only starting to utilise digital marketing and their usage of advance digital marketing remains low.

2.4.5.3 Telemarketing

According to Buck and Clickpoint Software Inc. (2014), telemarketing is defined as a telephone call with the aim of encouraging the targeted audience to buy or rent a product or a service. Telemarketing is the systematic means of communicating with current and prospect consumers via cellular phone or telephone. Moreover, telemarketing is when a telemarketer unsolicitedly contacts consumers via the phone. Consumers may volunteer to be contacted to partake in the promotions of the company (Vajiramedhin, 2014). The businesses normally buys a database (of contact details) from other companies or gets the consumers' contact details from the telephone directory, or consumers voluntarily provide the company with their contact details for promotional purposes (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

2.4.6 Social media

Social media is as an online application system, program or media that helps with communicating or with sharing information online (Seo & Park, 2018). Social media assists people online to gather and share opinions, knowledge and information through the means of various types of conversational media platform. Social media

such as Twitter, MySpace groups and Facebook are unique media platforms where users utilise it to communicate with each other (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

Social media is an online communication tool that permits people to share professional or personal information and to communicate their interest or views about their favourite brands and products, and anything else that interests them (Pride, Ferrell, Lukas, Schembri & Niininen, 2012). Taskiran and Yilmaz (2015) mention that social media makes use of low-cost devices that combine technology and social communication to form social media networks.

Kirtiş and Karahan (2011) noted that social networks are utilised because of its convenience of use and its capability to connect with users in a cost-effective manner. Marketers need to incorporate social networks, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google+ into their marketing communication strategy in order to conveniently reach their customers (Schultz & Patti, 2009). In addition, customers use social networks as a convenient tool to search for information and to purchase products (Seo & Park, 2018).

An example could be consumers that share a common interest raising/posting their concerns or thoughts on social media such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or Google+. Soares, Pinho and Nobre (2012) emphasise the fact that social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, have developed in such a way that people are able to also communicate with and build relationships with businesses. Companies use online social media to balance communication and advertising in order to accommodate the consumer's views and complaints.

According to Zailskaitė-jakštė and Kuvykaitė (2016), by communicating information on social media, the business raises awareness with the consumers about their product or service. Social media further offers consumers the positive opportunity to associate with the business and allows the consumers to be part of creating the product. Social media influences the customer's attitude and behaviour and has a better influence on how the customers perceive the product (Stojanovic *et al.,* 2018).

Social media assist managers to connect with customers, and to connect with their prospective customers as well (Ivanov, 2012). Marketers' target their customers according to their status or status updates on social media, as some customers want to be notified about the relevant advertising (Smith & Zook, 2011).

Less than 20% of small independent retailers utilise social media in their marketing communication strategy (Hassan, Nadzim & Shiratuddin, 2015). However, a study by Schaupp and Bélanger (2014) found that social media can create new opportunities for small independent retailers to communicate with their consumers. In addition, a survey conducted by Stelzer (2011) on small independent retailers showed that 38% of the employees of small independent retailers utilise social media for marketing purpose, and 23% of self-employed participants within the small independent retailers utilise social media for marketing purposes. Stelzer's (2016) study further discovered that the benefits of social media to small independent retailers are to generate more business coverage, increase traffic and to improve the search engine rankings for the business.

The marketing communication strategy becomes more successful when the business communicates the message using a communication channel, such as social media, that consumers prefer (Danaher & Rossiter, 2011). Small interdependent retailers make use of social media because social media is a tool that cannot be ignored as it can create massive benefits for the business (Chen, Ji & Men, 2017).

2.4.7 Public relations

Okwelle and Agwi (2018) explain public relations (PR) as the management function that assists to establish communication and maintain the relationship between the business and its stakeholders. PR comprises of a number of programmes to promote the business's image or products/services (Kotler & Keller, 2012). The main objective of PR is to develop good relationships with various stakeholders (Strydom, 2012). PR is the art of understanding the customers' expectations, and needs to be understood by its stakeholders (Eryılmaz & Bektaş, 2017). A good relationship needs to be developed with stakeholders such as employees, suppliers, competitors, government and shareholders. PR events are used to create awareness of product idea generation, and to build effective communication means with stakeholder (Kaser, 2013).

This discussion is supported by (Kotler & Keller, 2012), who state that the PR function is to send out favourable news updates about the organisation and to perform damage control of the unfavourable news updates. PR further acts as an internal consumer and public campaigner to better the organisation's practices. This means that PR is a

sustained and a well-planned effort to establish internal stakeholders to maintain the mutual understanding between the business and its public (Hanachor & Olumati, 2018).

Very often, the purpose of PR is mistaken with the marketing concept, and thus this confusion creates a misunderstanding about the functions of PR within the business (Venter, 2010). Cant and Van Heerden (2010) point out that PR has the objective to build and maintain solidarity between the business and the stakeholders on whom the business depends, in order to accomplish its objectives. Eryılmaz and Bektaş (2018) state that small independent retailers should perform PR campaigns to improve customer relationships and advance their validity in the eyes of their customers. However, performing huge PR campaigns requires an extensive budget, which small independent retailers do not have (Eryılmaz & Bektaş, 2018).

PR is a communication element within the business, and it further assists businesses to interact and monitor the relevant stakeholders (Van Ruler, 2015). Larger companies use PR, however, it is as important for small independent retailers, as it is important for larger companies. Huang-Horowitz (2015) mentions that small independent retailers focus more on building relationships rather than focusing on publicity (PR). In addition, Huang-Horowitz (2015) further states that PR can assist small independent retailers to improve their status and public image.

2.4.8 Sponsorship

Tsiotsou (2011) and Hatfield and Hatfield (2014) define sponsorship as a business relationship for entertainment or non-profit events, which allows the business in return to exploit the commercial potential associated with that business. Businesses perceive sponsorship as a marketing communication element that is utilised deliberately to increase the brand and service image of the business (Nayawo *et al.,* 2017). Sponsorship is a marketing communication element that serves to maintain the image of the business, and it has the ability to link brands to events, and the image of the event is transferred to the sponsor (Novais & Arcodia, 2013). According to Nayawo, Balami and Alhaji (2017), examples of sponsorships could be donations to charitable organisations, scholarship awards and traditional festivals. This means that businesses can build their brand image by sponsoring events.

Sponsorship is about the business investing in an event to raise awareness and to develop their reputation. Sponsorship is a win-win partnership that benefits both the charitable organisations (sponsee) and companies (sponsor) (Nayawo *et al*., 2017).

Now that the study has discussed the elements of the marketing communication strategy, a short discussion of the integrated marketing communication strategy follows.

2.5 THE INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION (IMC) STRATEGY

According to the American Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA), the integrated marketing communication (IMC) strategy is the marketing communication planning which recognises the added value of a complete plan and evaluates the strategic roles of different communication disciplines (Schultz & Patti, 2009). Lekhanya (2015) elaborates on this definition by highlighting that IMC is a marketing communication plan that integrates and evaluates the strategic functions of different communication principles to achieve consistency, clarity and greater influence results.

According to Gabrielli and Balboni (2010), the IMC concept appeared as an essential topic in the early 1990s and has been broadly accepted by marketing researchers and marketing experts. Early research publications have considered IMC as a logical process based on integrating the different communication options (Gabrielli & Balboni, 2010). Hence, the new generation of researchers into IMC began to plumb the depth of IMC by investigating the basis of IMC, assessing IMC development, uncovering IMC applicability, and transferring the IMC concept to new domains (Kitchen, 2017).

In light of this rationale, due to the increasingly vibrant technological environment which positively influences the marketing and corporate communication process, IMC has gained momentum from both academics (new generation researchers) and professional practitioners (Szromnik, 2016). However, there is limited research based on small independent retailers, especially in Soweto.

Cohen (2013) argued that only a few empirical studies have been conducted on IMC within the small business industry, and as a result, it becomes a challenge for small businesses to build strong brand awareness in their customers and to manage the communication process. Furthermore, only a small number of empirical research

studies on IMC within small independent retailers can be found in the literature. There are, however, a greater number of academic research studies that discuss IMC theory and focus on quantitative analysis or case-studies that are limited to larger retailers (Gabrielli & Balboni, 2010).

In keeping with the wider theory, IMC theory suggests that an operational and strategic communication technique is interpreted as the integrated activities that large retailers embark on when communicating with their customers. Gabrielli and Balboni (2010) also advise small independent retailers to adapt the formalised IMC techniques that are utilised by large retailers and to effectively implement them in their small independent retailers.

2.5.1 Purpose of IMC

Seen practically, IMC is utilised to target the specific audience, and then to persuade the desired behaviour to achieve the required end results (Tindall & Holtzhausen, 2012). In addition, Mapheto *et al.* (2014) perceive IMC as a vital concept for marketing small independent retailers, as IMC has financial and competitive benefits to be attained through the process of integration. It is essential for small independent retailers to implement IMC into their businesses, because it will improve their communication with their target market, and it will allow them to compete with large retailers such as Shoprite and Pick n Pay (PnP) (Mapheto *et al*., 2014).

Generally, IMC is a process that aligns the customer relationship, and integrates the strategic and tactical marketing communication decision-making in order to drive brand value (Hossain, Kabir & Rezvi, 2017). Tsikirayi *et al.* (2013) mention that IMC is a broad marketing communication plan which comprises of general strategic communication principles such as advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, direct marketing, public relations and sponsorships, that clarifies and maximises the communication influence.

In support of the statement above, Keller (2009) explains that IMC is a complete method that consists of advertising, branding, experiential marketing, promotions, PR and strategic communication. Polyorat (2014) similarly mentions that IMC integrates and synthesizes the marketing communication mix (elements) such as advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling and direct marketing. Furthermore, IMC highlights the benefits of harnessing synergy across various media platforms such

as social media to improve the brand equity and promote the goods and services of the business (Belch, Belch, Kerr & Powell, 2014). Moreover, according to Gabrielli and Balboni (2010), IMC coordinates the various functional areas of the marketing communication strategy and introduces the strategic importance of integrating the messages and communications media.

According to Danaher and Rossiter (2011), the purpose of IMC is to shift the focus away from assuming that the exposure the media receives results equally in advertising effectiveness. Thus, Tsikirayi *et al*. (2013) advise that it is crucial for marketers to communicate consistent messages about their products, and to communicate these messages on the media platform that customers are likely to use, because customers have a tendency to select only parts of the messages from marketers.

Danaher and Rossiter (2011) assert that companies are faced with a wide and varied range of media types to choose from when they send marketing communication to customers and stakeholders. For example, mobile advertising, such as texting (SMS/MMS) and mobile application (WhatsApp), is increasing. Therefore, with the fast and growing common uptake of media channels, traditional marketing communication channels such as TV, radio and door-to-door sales promotion calls are expected to decline to some extent (Rossiter, 2011). Media can assist small independent retailers to build a relationship with their customers.

2.5.2 Independent retailers and IMC

The new elements of IMC emphasise the important role played by IMC, such as to build close relationships with consumers to produce tangible outcomes for the business (Gabrielli & Balboni, 2010). Building strong relationships with customers will lead to long-term profits for the business, as this can be done when a business answers the consumers' questions, product issues and resolve consumers' issues. Thus, in this perspective, it is important for businesses to develop IMC strategies because IMC allows businesses to transmit an effective marketing message which develops long-term profits (Makgopa, 2016).

In support of the above-mentioned, this phenomenon is discussed in a study conducted by Mapheto *et al*. (2014), where participants highlighted that IMC has a positive influence on consumer purchasing decisions. The participants further

emphasised that IMC influences the consumer's purchasing decisions, and as a result, the small independent retailer's revenues and profits increase. Moreover, the participants agreed that IMC contributes towards increasing the small independent retailer's profits. Saeed, Naeem, Bilal and Naz (2013) posit that IMC is associated with positive outcomes, such as profitability enhancement, cost savings, brand awareness, brand loyalty, increased sales and satisfied consumers.

Further research by Lekhanya and Mason (2014) has shown that the elements of IMC are not utilised by all small independent retailers. Thus, Haung and Brown (1999) acknowledge that it is important for companies, including small independent retailers, to implement IMC for their survival and growth. Under-utilisation of IMC within the small independent retailers may be a contributing factor towards the failure of small independent retailers (Mapheto *et al.,* 2014).

Gabrielli and Balboni (2010) argue that small independent retailers are likely to implement IMC strategies that are informally structured, responsive and impulsive. Small independent retailers are likely to informally communicate with their customers without a structured plan. Personal communication by small independent retailers is normally done by the store owner, store manager or sales assistants. This is done because the store owners/managers/sales assistants have a limited budget and cannot afford to employ a salesperson or an in-store promoter. Furthermore, in the study conducted by Mapheto *et al*. (2014), the participants mentioned that the elements of IMC, such as advertising, sales promotions, and personal selling, are being utilised by most small independent retailers. However, other IMC elements, such as public relations, sponsorships and direct marketing, are not fully utilised by small independent retailers, mainly due to budget constraints (Moss *et al.,* 2004; Gabrielli & Balboni, 2010; Lekhanya, 2010; Mapheto *et al.,* 2014).

Danaher and Rossiter (2011) suggested that IMC should integrate the elements of the communication mix in order for the strength of one element being used to offset the weaknesses of others. The strength of advertising may be put forward in a single unified position to offset the weakness of other communication elements, such as PR and sponsorship.

IMC research and theory bring together the diverse parts of marketing mix under one conceptual framework. This IMC framework is designed to allow companies to attain

the best marketing communication strategies to successfully influence the targeted market. The IMC framework has also been developed to allow companies to communicate consistent messages across the various communication elements (John, Fatemeh, Habibi, Casidy, Barrie, Vanya & Maplestone, 2016).

2.6 SMALL INDEPENDENT RETAILERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

This section will focus on the small independent retailers and their attitude towards marketing communication strategies.

Schiffman and Wisenblit (2014) cited attitude as the learned tendency of a customer to act in a negative or positive way towards a situation or product offering. Attitude is the negative or positive feelings, behaviours and/or beliefs that an individual has towards particular products or situations or people (Mpinganjira, Dos Santos, Botha, Du Toit, Erasmus, Maree & Mugobo, 2013). The customer's attitudes towards marketing communication strategies are shaped by their previous experiences (Joubert, 2013). Kallier (2016) posits that a customer that has had a bad experience will possibly have a negative attitude towards the retailer and will probably not purchase from the retailer. As discussed by Hamway (2013), marketing communication strategies are important in managing the perceptions of customers to influence their attitudes.

The attitudes of small independent retail owners/managers/sales assistants should also be taken into consideration (Mokgoatlheng, 2013). Marketing communication strategies can have a positive influence on the customer's attitude and can impart a positive influence to how the customer perceives the product (Stojanovic *et al.*, 2018). Van Scheers and Radipere (2008) add that small independent retailers in Soweto should have a positive attitude towards marketing communication strategies in order to survive. Therefore, small independent retailers should apply marketing communication strategies with a positive attitude to ensure success (Gabrielli & Balboni, 2010; Tsikirayi *et al*., 2013; Wambaria *et al.,* 2016).

Marketing communication strategies related to product awareness can have a positive influence on changing the consumer's attitude regarding how they perceive specific products (Gaweseb, 2015; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016).

Buil *et al.* (2013) assessed the relationship between marketing communication strategies, and found that individual attitudes towards sales promotions and advertising (marketing communication strategies) can influence brand equity. To the contrary, Ngwenya (2012) and Tsikirayi *et al*. (2013) contend that small independent retailers do not have a positive attitude towards marketing communication strategies.

Furthermore, the marketing communication strategies in small independent retailers often depend on the application of marketing communication concepts that have been developed for large companies (Gabrielli & Balboni, 2010). Without marketing communication strategies, small independent retailers will not be able to compete with large companies and will not survive in the dynamic competitive environment (Jaganathan, Mahmood & Ahmad, 2014).

Small independent retailers need to utilise different advertising methods from those used by large chain stores (Van Scheers & Radipere, 2008). It is challenging and stressful for small independent retailers to operate, and survive, in today's complicated business environment (Lambert, 2017). It is important for the small independent retailers' survival and growth that they realise their competitive advantage (Badenhorst-Weiss & Cilliers, 2014). Pergelova *et al.* (2010) stated that the marketing communication strategy is vital for the survival and growth of businesses as it builds the brand of the business against the competitors within the industry.

The next section discusses the impact of marketing communication on the performance of small independent retailers.

2.7 THE IMPACT OF MARKETING COMMUNICATION ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SMALL INDEPENDENT RETAILERS

This section discusses the impact of marketing communication on the performance of small independent retailers.

The marketing communication strategy has a positive impact on organisational performance which is caused by the impact of brand knowledge or product/brand awareness (Kotler & Keller, 2012; Buil *et al. (*2013). A study by Van Aardt, Van Aardt, Bezuidenhout and Mumba (2008) found that marketing communication strategies have a positive impact on small independent retailers' success. Furthermore, the marketing communication strategy can enhance the small

independent retailer's performance (Wang *et al.*, 2016). A study by Anderson-Macdonald, Chandy and Zia (2014) realised that the marketing communication strategy has a positive impact on the business performance, including an increase in employment, sales and profits.

The positive effect of the marketing communication strategy on the financial and market performances is useful for small independent retailers because they can control the level of investment in the business (Öztamur & Karakadılar, 2014). If consumers are not responding towards the small independent retail advertisements and not buying the products, the owners/managers/sales assistants would then be able to spend more time on investing in other more effective marketing communication strategies. The impact of a marketing communication strategy such as WOM and social media on product awareness has a positive influence on changing the consumer's attitude towards the products, because these marketing communication strategies intend to influence the consumer's perceptions into the positive sphere and increase the product awareness (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016).

To enforce the behavioural effects of a marketing communication strategy such as social media, consumers are turning more regularly to social media to search for information to enable them to make buying decisions (Kim & Zeelim-Hovav, 2011). In addition, a marketing communication strategy, such as social media, further improves trust between employees, which normally leads to excellent work performance (Charoensukmongkol, 2014). Social media or advertising tools utilised by employees are positively associated with increased job performance and job satisfaction (Cao, Vogel, Guo, Liu & Gu, 2012; Charoensukmongkol, 2014).

A study conducted by Ainin *et al.* (2015) highlighted that Facebook has a positive impact on small independent retailers' financial and non-financial performance, in terms of information accessibility, cost reduction and improvements in customer relations. However, according to Lovejoy and Saxton (2012), regardless of the many benefits of a marketing communication strategy, utilising for example, Facebook, its impact on organisational performance has not reached its peak yet.

Even though performance has not yet reached its peak, small independent retailers can enhance their consumer relationship performance by utilising marketing communication strategies, such as advertising. A marketing communication strategy, such as advertising, exposes the consumers to the products, and increases the likelihood of the consumers purchasing the products, thereby having a positive impact on the business's performance (Choi, 2014).

The marketing communication strategy induces product switchers by creating product trials and raising enhanced product awareness among consumers (Choi, 2014). The more consumers switch to or purchase the small independent retailer's products, the better the performance of the business. This implies that the marketing communication strategy has a positive impact on the small independent retailer's performance.

2.8 CATEGORIES OF SMALL INDEPENDENT RETAILERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

There is no universally accepted definition of small independent retailers (Scheffler, 2018). The definition of small independent retailers depends on the country, business size, number of employees and the industry. In support of this argument, Ahmad (2016) mentioned that there is no universal definition for small independent retailers, but rather, small independent retailers are generally recognised as an establishment maintaining limited revenues or a certain number of employees. Countries around the globe differ in how they categorise small independent retailers based on the number of employees that they employ.

For instance, Australia recognises small independent retailers as businesses that employ less than 200 employees (Ahmad, 2016). Germany identifies small independent retailers as businesses that employ a maximum of 250 employees. Belgium understands small independent retailers as businesses that employ a maximum of 250 employees, and in the USA, small independent retailers are referred to as businesses that employ a maximum of 500 employees (Muriithi, 2017).

However, according to Abor and Quartey (2010), small independent retailers in Africa are classified into categories which are:

- A micro enterprise, which employs less than 6 employees;

- A very small enterprise, which employs between 6-9 employees;
- A small enterprise, which employs between 10-29 employees; and
- A medium enterprise, which employs between 30-99 employees.

Africa is primarily comprised of informal small independent retailers that are scattered across the continent. Moreover, small independent retailers play a significant role towards the African economy in various African countries such as Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Togo, Uganda, South Africa and others (Brinders, Memela & Mlosy, 2003). Small independent retailers further play a significant role in the South African economy as they contribute towards the employment and socio-political stability (Cant *et al*., 2016).

Mohlameane and Ruxwana (2013) maintain that the National Small Business Act (1996) in South Africa defines small independent retailers by using three parameters, namely, the number of employees, annual turnover and gross assets. Table 2.1 below depicts a thorough explanation of small independent retailers as categorised by the National Small Business Act 102, 1996.

Table 2.1: Categories of small independent retailers

Enterprise size	No of employees	Annual Turnover (SA Rand)	Gross assets, excl. fixed property
Medium	Fewer than 100 – 200, depending on industry	Less than R4 million – R50 million, depending on industry	Less than R2 million – R18 million, depending on industry
Small	Fewer than 50	Less than R2 million – R25 million, depending on industry	Less than R2 million – R4.5 million, depending on industry
Very small	Fewer than 10 – 20, depending on industry	Less than R200 000 – R500 000, depending on industry	Less than R150 000 – R500 000, depending on industry
Micro	Fewer than 5	Less than R150 000	Less than R100 000

Source: Falkena, Abedian, Blottnitz, Coovadia, Davel, Madungandaba *et al*. (2001).

Table 2.1 illustrates that small independent retailers are categorised according to the number of employees per enterprise size category combined with the annual turnover category and the gross assets without fixed property (National Small Business Act 102, 1996). A description of the various enterprise categories are provided as follows:

- **Micro small independent retailers:** Micro small independent retailers comprises of household industries and spaza shops (Mir & Feitelson, 2007). A spaza shop is a business that operates out of a structure where people live or any other form of structure in a formal or informal township (Ligthelm, 2005). From the observations of more than 352 spaza shops, Basardien, Parker, Mohamed, Friedrich and Sulaiman (2014) declare that spaza shops are businesses that actively specialise in selling a limited number of grocery products in return for making a profit. They sell products that consumers consume on a daily basis, such as bread, milk, maize meal, meat, and so forth. Most spaza shops operate in the front part of a residential area, and they are not registered. Consumers are normally served through a window by an employee stationed inside the spaza shop.

Figure 2.4: Example: Micro small independent retailer

Source: www.google.co.za/search?q=Spaza+shop

- **Survivalist small independent retailers:** Survivalists are considered pre-entrepreneurial as they are comprised of hawkers and vendors. Hawkers normally sell perishable goods (Strydom, 2014). Some hawkers also sell groceries, vegetables, fruits, processed food, garments, electronics, shoes, and so forth, in return for making a profit and for survival (Zondi, 2011). Survivalists are categorised as part of the micro-enterprise (Abor & Quartey, 2010). An example of a survivalist business would be a type of business that is not deemed to have the possibility of generating income to create employment (Ranyane, 2015).

Figure 2.5: Example: Survivalist small independent retailer

Source: http://www.socialagents.co.za/south-africas-survivalist-entrepreneur-resilience-personified

- **Very small independent retailers:** they employ less than 10 employees and these independent retailers function in a formal market that have access to technology (Abor & Quartey, 2010).

Figure 2.6: Example: Very small independent retailer

Source: www.google.co.za/search/south+african+stores&south+african+stores

- **Small independent retailers:** These independent retailers are more established when compared to very small independent retailers. They perform more complex business practices (Abor & Quartey, 2010). General dealers fall under this category. A general dealer is a formal constructed store that is situated near residential locations. General dealers provide a limited product range in comparison to the large chain stores found in shopping malls (Ligthelm, 2005).

General dealer refers to a dealer that sells a variety of goods to consumers, such as groceries, hardware and clothing (Zondi, 2011).

Figure 2.7: Example: Small independent retailer

Source: www.google.co.za/search?General+dealer=psy

- **Medium independent retailers:** This is a type of independent retailer that is independently owned and operated, and is not dominant in its field of operation (Abor & Quartey, 2010). A supermarket falls under this category. Supermarkets are retail stores that are larger than grocery stores and are most likely to have in-store food preparation such as a butchery, bakery and delicatessen (Powell, Slater, Chaloupka & Harper, 2006). These retail supermarkets normally operate in townships and rural areas. They differ from supermarkets such as Woolworths, Shoprite, Spar and PnP because they do not belong to any large chain stores (Ball, Crawford & Mishra, 2005).

Figure 2.8: Example: Medium independent retailer

Source: www.google.co.za/search?mamelodi+supermarket&oq=supermarket

The next section discusses the importance of small independent retailers in South Africa.

2.9 INDEPENDENT RETAILERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

South African small independent retailers fall into the Department of Trade and Industry's (DTI) definition of Small, Micro and Medium Enterprise (SMMEs) (Makhitha, 2016). For the purpose of the study, micro and small businesses (spaza shops), SMEs (general dealers) and SMMEs (supermarkets) will all be referred to as small independent retailers. While internationally, the importance of the small independent retail industry is realised, obtaining a universal definition of small independent retailers is a challenge, as every country has its own definition. In South Africa, small independent retailers are small businesses that operate in an arrangement where people live permanently, or any other form of structure in a formal or informal township (Ligthelm, 2005).

Independent retailers had their origins from the colonisation that separated shopping and residential zones for the black majority of South African citizens, which led to black entrepreneurs starting small businesses to serve the local society (Chikwekwe, 2015). Entrepreneurs that own small independent retailers depend on starting capital that was raised from personal savings, family members or financial institutions other than the government (Augustine & Asiedu, 2017).

A small independent retailer is defined based on the size of the business, related to the average number of employees, and the total annual turnover (Anon, 2015). The National Small Business Amendment Act 29 of 2004 (2004) and Waters (2014) highlighted that small independent retailers are a separate business entity where the daily operations are managed by a single owner or other employees. This indicates that small independent retailers are entities that are privately owned and do not belong to any larger chain store (W&R Seta, 2014).

The South African grocery retail industry consists of a formal and informal sector. The informal sector mostly comprises of spaza shops, general dealers, street vendors and hawkers that are mainly found in townships. Small independent retailers are further subdivided into organised and unorganised enterprises. The category of organised small independent retailers refers to small independent retailers that can afford to hire employees and that have a registered office (Augustine & Asiedu, 2017). The unorganised small independent retailers are mainly made up of temporary wooden/corrugated iron/zink structures or home-based enterprises that hire a few employees, or that in some instances, have no salaried employees (Augustine *et al.,* 2017). This means that the unorganised small independent retailers generally rely on apprentices or family members.

The small independent retailers discussed above, normally target consumers with a lower living standard (living standard measurement - LSM) in the townships, peri-urban, industrial and central areas of the city (Das Nair & Dube, 2015). This denotes that small independent retailers are means were consumers, particularly in low-income areas, can conveniently access groceries. Although these small independent retailers cater for low LSM, they create employment and also contribute towards the South African economic growth.

Small independent retailers are a significant solution that started and developed in the South African community due to high unemployment, unsatisfactory levels of poverty and low economic growth (Lekhanya, 2010). Small independent retailers dominate the South African economy to a very large extent, and they are associated with fighting unemployment within the disadvantaged communities, and economic empowerment (Sawers, Gutjahr & Paszkowski, 2008). Thus, a marketing communication strategy is needed in small independent retailers for them to grow their businesses. Hagedorn

(2014) posits that greater levels of marketing communication lead to positive business performance.

Small independent retail owners/managers/sales assistants prefer to use a marketing communication strategy, such as personal selling were they develop personal interactions with their consumers, suppliers and other stakeholders (Eiriz, Barbosa & Ferreira, 2018). As discussed in Chapter 2, marketing communication strategies such as pamphlets, local newspaper, posters and local radio stations are used by small independent retailers that cater for consumers with lower LSM. The trend for small independent retailers is often to advertise and launch marketing communication campaigns by advertising in the local newspaper or by distributing pamphlets as a means of informing customers of their offerings (Solomon, 2014).

The advantage of small independent retailers is that they are able to provide customers with lower prices, personalised customer service and specialist products (Makhitha, 2017). The small independent retailers normally buy and sell fast-moving goods and they operate at a low profit margin (Das Nair & Dube, 2015). Small independent retailers have a low-margin business model and have to manage expenses, such as merchandise shrinkage and merchandise wastage, for them to survive (Das Nair & Dube, 2016).

About 22.5% of small independent retailers in South Africa mainly serve 81% of South African households (Makhitha, 2018). In the Gauteng province alone, small independent retailers account for approximately 38% of all small independent retailers in South Africa. However, the number of small independent retailers in Gauteng province is not clear, as there are approximately 1.1 million small independent retailers (Small and Medium Enterprise South Africa, 2015).

Between the years 2010 and 2013, the independent retail marketplace grew by 45%, from R79.5 billion in 2010 to approximately R115.6 billion in 2013 (Sustainalytics, 2012). In addition, small independent retailers grew their sales by 13.4% from March 2016 to March 2017 (Business Day, 2017). The study focused on small independent retailers in Soweto because it is the largest township in South Africa, where the largest concentration of black business owners operate their businesses (Statistic South Africa, 2011).

Many individuals within township communities start small independent retailers for survival, since there are limited reliable sources of livelihood (Sarkar, Kundu & Chaudhuri, 2016). These small independent retailers are usually managed by their owners/managers/sales assistants that are self-motivated and that have an entrepreneurial approach in administrating the businesses (Eiriz *et al.*, 2018).

The entrepreneurial motivation factors have been classified into categories of pull and push factors (Pesonen, Komppula, Kronenberg & Peters, 2011). Briefly, small independent retailers' start-up factors are motivated by pull factors, namely, the availability and readiness of the entrepreneur, the influence of friends and family, family business, market potential, opportunity and profitability. An example of a pull factor is an entrepreneur that needs to be his/her own boss. Conversely, pull factors are related to the entrepreneur that has a positive internal aspiration to start a small independent retailer business, personal satisfaction, personal independence or a more flexible lifestyle; though push factors are associated to strong desires but centred on external negative reasons (Wang, Walker & Redmond, 2007).

Pull factors are characterised by personal influences, such as seeing an opportunity, whereas push factors are often characterised by personal or external negative connotation influences, such as being passed over for promotion (Pesonen *et al.,* 2011). Push factors comprise of key start-up factors, such as personal interest, personal attitude, and previous working experience in the business or retirement (Chan & Quah, 2012). However, compared to pull factors, push factors are mid-pointed on the elements of frustration people experience from being an employee that realises the lack of opportunity for career improvement, redundancy, and a possible escape from a low-paid position (Wang *et al.,* 2007). In summary, a pull factor is perceived to be more prevalent when compared to a push factor.

Small independent retailers in Soweto face collective competition from large retailers that are penetrating peri-urban, townships and rural areas (Badenhorst-Weiss *et al.*, 2014). This means that small independent retailers are gradually losing consumers to large retailers because consumers spend less money in small independent retailers than in large retailers (Durhum, 2011). Furthermore, this is affecting the small independent retailers' profitability and is leading to a decrease in the number of small independent retailers (Department of Economic development, 2015). In addition, the large retailers are increasing their marketing efforts, such as advertising and brand

promotion (Durham, 2011). In combination, these large retailers constitute 60% of the market share and are referred to as Shoprite, Massmart, Pick ‘n Pay, Woolworths and Spar (Makhitha, 2016).

The next section introduces the township of Soweto as the focus area of this study.

2.9.1 Soweto

Soweto is a peri-urban township in South Africa and it has approximately 1.3 million residents, which means that about 30% of the City of Johannesburg’s population live in Soweto (Statistics South Africa, 2011; Dietrich *et al.,* 2014). The 1.3 million people living in Soweto buy food from large retail stores such as Shoprite, Pick n Pay, Spar, and local supermarkets and spaza/tuckshops.

Soweto is divided into 29 townships (Soke, 2014). Due to South Africa’s history of apartheid, Soweto has a disadvantaged background, and in the year 2001 it was integrated into the great Johannesburg Metropolitan area (Zondi, 2011).

After the end of apartheid (1994), the South African government made a point of developing businesses that are owned by black people as part of developing the South African economy (Badenhorst-Weiss *et al.,* 2014). Soweto benefited more than other townships in South Africa from the retail development programme which ensured that Sowetan residents shop within Soweto (Strydom, 2014). Therefore, four big shopping malls that contain prominent reputable retail chain stores were built in Soweto between 2005 and 2007. As mentioned by Nair and Dube (2015), the four dominating reputable retail chain stores are Pick n Pay, Shoprite, Spar and Woolworths. The four large retail stores provide goods and service to the commuters at affordable prices and sell goods to both the upper-class demographics and the disadvantaged locations.

A study conducted by Strydom (2011) states that the South African government invested more than R500 million and private investors invested more than R3 billion in projects, such as developing shopping centres in Soweto. New and well-known malls such as the Dobsonville Shopping Centre, Protea Garden Mall, Bara Mall Shopping Centre, Jabulani Shopping Complex and Maponya Mall were built in Soweto to entice Sowetan residents to shop in Soweto.

According to Strydom (2011), one of the reasons why people from Soweto shop outside of Soweto is because of a shortage of alternative stores, the limited variety of

merchandise to choose from, high prices and lack of good customer service. The lack of excellent customer service in the township forced customers to shop outside the township in shops where they have a wide variety of merchandise to choose from and where they receive the good customer service they deserve (Strydom, 2011). For example, while the Pick n Pay in the suburb of Norwood/Brooklyn has a mini restaurant situated inside the store, the Pick n Pay in Soweto put wooden seats and tables outside the store and expected the customers to be satisfied with that.

Small independent retailers in Soweto are faced with stiff competition from large chain stores, and since 2005, small independent retailers are also faced with severe competition from stores owned by immigrants (Charman, Petersen & Piper, 2012).

As previously stated, small independent retailers play a significant economic role in the African continent and their survival is essential.

2.10 THE IMPORTANCE OF INDEPENDENT RETAILERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The marketing communication strategy assists the small independent retailers to come in contact with their customers, and to maintain the customer base by enforcing the purchasing behaviour of the customer (Abiodun *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, the essential marketing communication strategy for small independent retailers is to engage in communication with existing and potential consumers (Volkov, 2011). Kotler and Keller (2012) additionally state that the marketing communication strategy carries out the voice of the organisation and serves as a means of establishing a dialogue and building relationships with consumers.

Small independent retailers similarly need to transfer important information to their customers through the use of marketing communication tools. Whether in a small retailer or a large corporation, the marketing communication strategy transfers important information with the aim of assisting the business to communicate with consumers through media such as internet, magazines, newspapers, mail, mobile devices and radio.

One important aspect of building relationships with customers involves the ability of small independent retailers to develop an ongoing effective marketing communication strategy which ensures that the consumers pay attention to the message

communicated by the business (Luxton, Reid & Mavondo, 2015). The marketing communication strategy has unique characteristics, and a specific manner to determine its effectiveness and efficiency (Kotler & Keller, 2009). Kacaniova (2013) mentions that the marketing communication strategy can influence the effectiveness of communication and the perceptions of consumers.

Marketers can utilise one or more marketing communication strategies to notify, influence and remind customers (Du Plessis *et al*., 2010). This implies that small independent retailers need to engage in marketing communication strategies to increase business sales (Centeno & Hart, 2012). Additionally, Van Scheers and Radipere (2008) stressed that small independent retailers in Soweto need to have an effective advertising campaign in order to survive in today's competitive market environment.

A study by McKeever, Anderson and Jack (2014) stated that small independent retailers have successfully contributed towards the long-term and successful economic growth. In support of this statement, Muneer, Ahmad and Ali (2017) highlighted that small independent retailers play an important role in South African economic development and growth. According to Ribeiro-Soriano (2017) and Eijdenberg, Paas, Masurel and Masurel (2017), small independent retailers are recognised as drivers of economic growth. In a sense, the existence of small independent retailers in all sectors of the economy signifies the crucial role of steering the economic developments and growth (Kamunge, Njeru & Tirimba, 2014). Although a number of small independent retailers do close down every year, small independent retailers continue to grow and contribute to the economic growth of many countries (Decker, Haltiwanger, Jarmin & Miranda, 2016). This is because the main goal and push factor behind small independent retailers is to develop economic growth, to reduce poverty and to create employment (Battilana & Casciaro, 2012).

As stated previously, one role of independent retailers in South Africa is to create employment. This means that small independent retailers create employment opportunities (Bello, 2018; Ombongi & Long, 2018). Small independent retailers play a significant role towards creating employment (Battilana & Casciaro, 2012; Muneer *et al.,* 2017). In effect, they provide over 50% of total employment opportunities in various economies, and they provide a variety of employment opportunities (Ombongi

& Long, 2018). Without the contribution of small independent retailers towards employment creation, many economies in the world would not grow (Naidoo, 2016).

Davis (2010) highlighted that the creation and sustainability of small independent retailers is essential because it reduces unemployment. Small independent retailers add value to socio-economic factors, particularly in eradicating poverty and diminishing unemployment (Bruwer & Berg, 2017). Furthermore, small independent retailers play a critical role in increasing competition in emerging sectors, increasing job creation and reducing poverty (Ribeiro-Soriano, 2017). Moreover, as cited by Ayandibu and Houghton (2017), the advantages of small independent retailers in South Africa are: job creation, they adapt more rapidly, and use local recycled resources and are more labour-absorptive than other sectors.

In this perspective, the importance of small independent retailers is recognised in countries such as the USA and United Kingdom (UK) (Ramukumba, 2014). In Africa alone, small independent retailers account for more than 90% of African businesses, and they further contribute approximately 50% towards the African GDP (Kamunge *et al*., 2014).

In Tanzania, the small independent retailers contribute 20% to employment and 60% towards the Tanzanian GDP (Echengreen & Tong, 2005), while in South Africa, small independent retailers contribute 50% of the South African GDP (Bruwer & Berg, 2017). In support of the statement above, Mafini and Muposhi (2017) argue that in South Africa, small independent retailers are estimated to contribute up to 57% of the South African GDP and 60% of employment. Dubihlela (2013) furthers this phenomenon by stating that the small independent retailers' industry contributes towards the South African economy (GDP) and creating employment.

According to Peake and Eddleston (2017), small independent retailer owners are regarded as a pillar of social responsibility because their activities benefit the community in which the owner lives and works. Although small independent retailers play an essential role in growing the South African economy, they still operate in the informal sector (Kamunge *et al*., 2014). Although small independent retailers contribute towards the South African economy, not all small independent retailers become successful (Campbell & Park, 2017).

As far as creating extra employment is concerned, South African statistics highlight that the unemployment rate was 27.7% in the first quarter of 2017 (Statistic South Africa, 2017). Therefore, small independent retailers are an essential means for South Africa to achieve higher employment, since some of the people who are unemployed can be employed in the sector (Zuma, 2017). The marketing communication strategy assists small independent retailers to survive in the long term and during the sustainability period, they are able to sustain the stability of employment.

The next section discusses the challenges which are faced by small independent retailers in South Africa because these challenges affect the life span of the small independent retailers.

2.11 CHALLENGES FACING SMALL INDEPENDENT RETAILERS IN SOWETO

There are many challenges that affect small independent retailers (Eijdenberg *et al.*, 2017). Mafini and Muposhi (2017) mention that even though small independent retailers contribute towards the success of the economic growth, they face a host of challenges, such as training to retain their employees and customers, and access to finances that continue to plague the survival of small independent retailers in South Africa. The argument above is also supported by Ramukumba (2014), who noted that South African small independent retailers are faced with various challenges, such as finance and obtaining credit, networking, lack of management skills, support for the role that they play in economic development, access to markets, and skills required to build relationships with customers. These challenges are discussed below.

2.11.1 Marketing

Cant (2012) maintains that South African small independent retailers fail because of lack of marketing activities. This statement is supported by Razak, Abdullah and Ersoy (2018). They further lack the necessary resources to outsource the marketing functions to external experts (Ngwenya, 2012). Small independent retailers lack marketing skills, such as marketing knowledge and networking within the small independent retailers industry, finding a suitable location, identifying the correct market niche, and providing good products and services (Ngwenya, 2012). Fatok (2014) further asserted that marketing-related factors, such as lack of market research, bad

customer service, ineffective forecasting and analysis, and a lack of training of sales employees also lead to the failure of small independent retailers in South Africa.

According to Durham (2011), large retail chains in South Africa have increased their market penetration and increased their marketing communication strategy efforts by means of brand promotions and advertising. Small independent retailers identify this as a challenge because large chain stores utilise appropriate and expensive brand promotions, such as discounts and television advertising (Das Nair & Dube, 2015). Small independent retailers cannot afford to implement marketing communication strategies, such as advertising through brand promotions and television advertisements. According to Badenhorst-Weiss and Cilliers (2014), the small independent retailers regard the marketing aspects of the quality of products, best value pricing, enough product variety and best brands as the most important marketing strategies for the business.

Furthermore, Perks and Mazibuko (2009) mention that small independent retailers are unable to distinguish between public relations and applicable marketing tools. Lekhanya (2010) furthers this discussion by highlighting that the resources for public relations, sales training and other marketing support (sponsorship) initiatives are often not available for small independent retailers due to financial constraints.

2.11.2 Lack of access to markets

Small independent retailers that have adequate finances and are able to have access to the market, will grow their businesses (Tounsi, 2018). Birhanu, Ambelu, Berhanu, Tesfaye and Woldemichael (2017), and Chowdhury and Alam (2018) argue that lack of access to the market continues to be a constraint of new small independent retailers and it stunts the growth of existing small independent retailers, and is a major hurdle to the emergence small independent retailers. Birhanu et *al.* (2017) highlight that lack of access to the market hinders small independent retail entrepreneurs from selling goods and services at good prices. Small independent retailers experience high operating costs due to lack of formal distribution channels to transport goods to the market (Tang, 2018). In essence, the latter discussed above refers to the inability of small independent retailers to access market/consumers to sell to.

2.11.3 Supply chain management

Supply chain management from a small independent retailers' perspective is regarded as a set of business activities that include purchasing from the open market, and manufacturing subcomponents within the plant and delivering to larger businesses by hiring transportation to increase the value of the end product, and in return to ensure long-term purchase orders (Thakkar, Kanda & Deshmukh, 2008). About 95% small independent retailers are involved in supply chain management (Kull, Kotlar & Spring, 2018).

Supply chain management in small independent retailers is becoming an increasingly prominent factor in competitive advantage, because small independent retailers can conveniently buy goods directly from suppliers and sell to consumers (Sukwadi, Wee & Yang, 2013; Rezaei, Ortt & Trott, 2015).

Small independent retailers face challenges in implementing supply chain management because their merchandise, to a great degree, depends on the demand of their customers and they have to follow the standards required by the consumer (Arend & Wisner, 2005; Vaaland & Heide, 2007). This means in order for small independent retailers to manage inventory, they have to balance the supply of inventory at a sensible level and strive to forecast consumers' demands and expectations about the availability of products (Bai & Zhong, 2008). In addition, a challenge known to small independent retailers is having limited resources, a small number of products on stock, few customers and low volume (Makhitha, 2016).

Efficient supply chain management is a complex process with challenging tasks because of continuing trends of short product life cycles, globalisation of businesses, increasing product variety, increased subcontracting, and continuous advances in information technology (Singhal & Koul, 2018).

Supply chain management disorganisation is one of the most predominant issues that small independent retailers face (Makhitha, 2016). As a result of supply chain management challenges, small independent retailers also sometimes have to use public transport as a means of carrying their goods from suppliers to their stores because they do not have an effective supply chain management (Vaaland & Heide, 2007). Small independent retailers end up having a negative attitude instead of having

positive attitude towards their supply chain management, and as a result, they create supply chain management challenges for themselves (Voortman & Makhitha, 2014).

Some studies have highlighted that supply chain management in small independent retailers is vulnerable due to limited finances and human resources, in contrast with the supply chain management of large firms (Vlajic, 2015). Buying merchandise receives little attention from the small independent retailer's owners/managers/sales assistants, and it is ranked 14 out of 19 qualities valued by small independent retailers' owners/managers/sales assistants when they manage their businesses (Quayle, 2003).

Small independent retailers should engage in integrating their processes with that of their counterparts by planning jointly, using common information systems, sharing information and co-developing products (Kull, Kotlar & Spring, 2018). Supply chain management can offer quality just-in-time, transport cost reductions, customer service and risk reduction benefits (Arend & Winser, 2005). More efficient supply chain management may be a useful way for small independent retailers to enter new markets and to learn from the large firms in a given field (Su & Gargeya, 2016).

2.11.4 Competition

When small independent retailers fail, this has a harmful impact on the South African economy which results in millions of Rands being lost (Bruwer & Berg, 2017). Although the business conditions of the South African economy were affected by the late 2000s, about 75% of these small independent retailers closed down after operating for a period of approximately only three and half years (Bruwer & Berg, 2017), which implies that small independent retailers were failing on a monthly basis (Biyase, 2009).

In early 2010, the economic sustainability of South African small independent retailers did not show any developments, and a study conducted by Cant and Wiid (2013) confirmed that about 63% of South African small independent retailers closed down after a period of two years, while 75% of these small independent retailers closed down after three years (Moloi, 2013). Similarly, Cant, Wiid and Kallier (2014) noted that 40% of new small independent retailers failed within their first year of being operational, and 60% failed within the second year of being operational.

Lambert (2017) mentions that high risk, high household debt and well financed competitors may be hindering prospective entrepreneurs and may be the cause of the

small independent retailers' failure. Small independent retailers fail due to the changing economic climate, lack of demand for goods, and competitive services (Cant *et al*., 2014). Other reasons for the failure of South African small independent retailers is the high competition from immigrants operating small independent retailers.

African immigrants have established small independent retailers in South Africa. However, in order for them to survive, they have to compete with South African small independent retailers. Since 2005, South African small independent retailers have faced severe competition from small independent retailers owned by immigrants (Charman, Petersen & Piper, 2012). The immigrant retailers have a slightly different business model which involves that a group of immigrant owners of small independent retailers buy products collectively in bulk in order to receive bulk discounts; this approach of buying in bulk therefore has an impact on the pricing strategy competing directly with South African-owned businesses (Basardien *et al.,* 2014).

Small independent retailers owned by immigrants in South Africa seem to be threatening jobs for South Africans which can result in a high level of unemployment, poverty and income inequality (Khosa & Kalitanyi, 2014). In contrast, about 95% of immigrant small independent retailers employ South Africans to help fight the high unemployment rate and to contribute towards the South African economic growth (Khosa & Kalitanyi, 2014). Immigrants come to South Africa to operate their small independent retailers, and then employ South Africans (Basardien *et al.,* 2014).

Small independent retailers in South Africa are also faced with competition from large chain stores. Large chain stores are able to place small independent retailers at a competitive disadvantage (Kleindl, 2000). Furthermore, small independent retailers face challenges from high competition that result in higher transactional costs related to large chain stores, the concentration from large multinational chain stores caused by globalisation and economic integration, and a failure to compete against large chain stores with regards to research and innovation (Sikharulidze, 2014). Large chain stores receive discounts when they incur high transactional costs; they can afford to compete on a global scale; and they can afford to implement a just-in-time production system. Therefore, managers should have the ability to analyse the competitors' marketing communication strategies (Inan & Kop, 2018; Piëst, 1994).

2.11.5 Access to finance

Emerging small independent retailers have a limited budget for a marketing communication strategy because promotions that deliver positive results at a sound, yet effective manner, are costly (Lambert, 2017). This means that small independent retailers cannot afford to employ marketing communication due to financial constraints and insufficient capital.

Thus, it might be argued that another challenge that small independent retailers face is to not have sufficient capital and the inability to obtain financial credit. Therefore, in practice, starting a small independent retail business in a city requires the owner to have a large sum of capital. As a result, this discourages small independent retail owners from operating their businesses in a sizeable community or city (Ayandibu & Houghton, 2017). The inability to obtain financial credit is evident in the fact that 75% of credit applications are declined and only 2% of small independent retailers looking for private equity are successful (Ramukumba, 2014).

Moreover, it is difficult for small independent retail owners to be awarded external funds when the owner does not have personal assets to offer as security (Ramukumba, 2014). Previously, banks did not provide financial services to small independent retailers with no income, or little income, as banks experienced immense costs when managing a clients' account. However, interventions are being implemented to address finance accessibility issues for small independent retailers, but this still remains a big challenge (Wanjohi & Mugambi, 2017).

A study by Khosa and Kalitanyi (2014) discloses that 81% of small independent retailers that have been operational for more than five years do not like to borrow capital from banks to foster their businesses, however, they would prefer to use their own savings. The main sources of capital for small independent retailers are informal savings, retained earnings, not secure of risks sharing and unpredictable loans (Wanjohi & Mugambi, 2016). In this perspective, small independent retailers do not rely on the mainstream sources of capital because they are deemed to be a high risk to financial institutions, lack tangible collateral, and the regulatory and financial institution policies are less supportive to small independent retailers (Wanjohi & Mugambi, 2017).

Financing is often a key constraint of small independent retailers (Wanjohi & Mugambi, 2017). Should small independent retail owners have enough capital, they would be able to pay for training for themselves and their employees.

2.11.6 Lack of management skills

Lack of management skills was seen as a major reason for small independent retailers' failure in the past decades (Cover, 1933). Some small independent retailers may have adequate knowledge and ideas so that they are competent in their specific field on how to run a business, but these ideas fail because of a lack of management skills or knowledge (Kamunge *et al*., 2014). In light of this rationale, the failure of small independent retailers is caused by poor management and decisions made based on limited resources and decisions based on the opinions of owners (Cant *et al.,* 2014). The informal decisions made by small independent retail owners/managers/sales assistants normally focus on short-term goals, not long-term goals (Cant *et al.,* 2014).

Small independent retail owners, managers and sales assistants need to be trained in order to excel at managing the business and to obtain suitable management skills. Thus, the government should assist the small independent retailers by providing workshops that will deal with lack of management skills (Ramukumba, 2014).

According to Green and Martinez-Solano (2013), small independent retailers provide 50% less training for their employees than large retailers. In addition, small independent retailers are inclined to be active with consultants, suppliers and attending training conferences. However, such activities do not need the small independent retail owners to have qualifications or have educated employees (Green & Martinez-Solano, 2013). Kamunge *et al*. (2014) mention that small independent retail owners/managers/sales assistants lack suitable training and experience to operate their businesses because their management style and skills are normally on a trial-and-error basis, which is useful for a short-term period.

Van Scheers (2011) mentions that small independent retailers lack management skills such as bookkeeping, managing personal stress, time management, motivating employees, marketing and writing a business plan. The findings of the study conducted by Majama and Magang (2017) highlight that small independent retailers lack management skills, for example, they do not know where to start and how to go about managing the business. Small independent retailers also lack interpersonal

communication skills, such as managing personal stress, motivating their employees, problem solving and managing conflict (Cant, 2012).

2.11.7 Internet access challenges

South African small independent retailers are faced with various challenges, among others, also the inability to build relationships with customers (Banking Association of South Africa, 2013). By efficiently using the internet the business can reduce the costs of the marketing communication strategy and increase the means of communicating information with customers and thereby develop long-term relationships with them (Mason, 2015). The information of a business can be spread through internet tools such as social media (using Facebook and Twitter).

The internet has many benefits for small independent retailers, for example, it can help to improve their communication with customers, increase participation through user engagement, help to disseminate information, and to share knowledge between the business and customers (Wambaria, Kibas & Asienga, 2016). The successful implementation of the internet is perceived as an important factor that can ensure the long-term growth of small independent retailers (Mason, 2015).

Without access to the internet, small independent retailers will not be able to fully compete and survive in the dynamic competitive environment (Jaganathan *et al.*, 2014). To run and make a success of a business in today's complicated business environment is challenging and stressful for small independent retailers (Lambert, 2017). Subsequently, the internet creates value for small independent retailers by improving the business's communication and allowing it to be flexible and competitive (Mason, 2015). Therefore, the internet is essential for small independent retailers because it will help them to survive in a competitive environment and ensure the long-term growth of their business.

In order for small independent retailers operating in rural areas to become more economically viable and to ensure the growth of their businesses they need to be capable of using technology and need to have access to the internet (Wambaria *et al*., 2016). The statement above also applies to small independent retailers that operate in townships and in the cities, as the internet allows small independent retailers to fully compete and survive in the dynamic competitive business environment (Jaganathan *et al.*, 2014).

That being said, there are some small independent retailers that are not connected to the internet. As illustrated in Figure 2.9 below, 37% of the small independent retailers that utilise the internet are emerging businesses, while 17% of well-established small independent retailers do not have access to the internet. However, most growing and well-established small independent retailers in South Africa have access to the internet (Mason, 2015). This is depicted in detail in Figure 2.9 below.

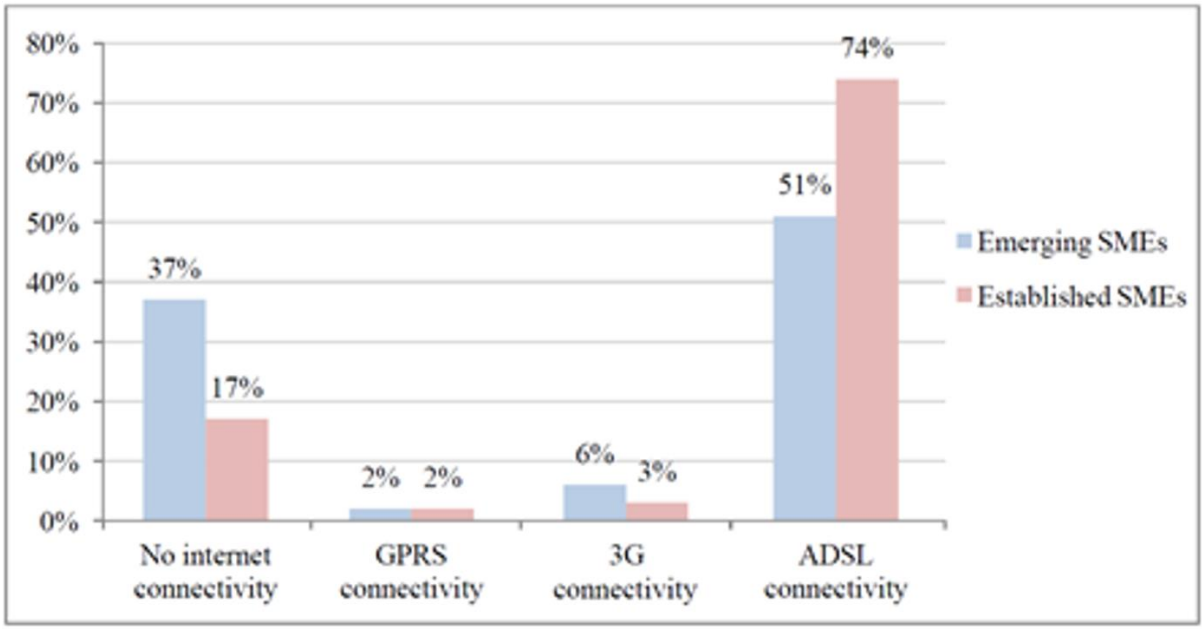

Figure 2.9: South African small independent retailers' internet connectivity

Source: National Youth Development Agency (2010).

The abbreviation GPRS (as in Figure 2.9) refers to the term 'General Packet Radio Service' which is a package for a mobile data service on the 2G and 3G communication global system for mobile communications (Raouf, Sagemcom Energy & Telecom SAS, 2014). The term '3G' refers to a kind of 'Wi-Fi' and this means that 3G provides internet access through the same radio towers which offer the voice service to your mobile phone (da Silva, Giustina, Bull & Housami, 2013).

The abbreviation 'ADSL' refers to the term Asymmetric digital subscriber line which is a digital subscriber line (DSL) technology that has a usage data communication technology that allows faster data transmission over copper telephone lines than a conventional voice band modem (Wyatt, McQuire & Butt, 2015).

Through either GPRS, 3G or ADSL connectivity with the internet, small independent retailers would be able to remain competitive and assist in making their businesses more successful (Mason, 2015).

Mohlameane and Ruxwana (2013) mention that small independent retailers operate in an industry characterised by competition related to business sustainability and growth. Though small independent retailers are reported to be reluctant to invest in internet technology due to the high costs involved, they should realise that the internet plays a vital role towards ensuring their competitiveness (Mohlameane & Ruxwana, 2013).

2.11.8 Location selection

Another challenge that is faced by South African small independent retailers is to identify a suitable location for their businesses (Khosa & Kalitanyi, 2014). Mariotti and Glackin (2012) posit that the selection of the appropriate location for the small independent retailer could make or break the business. Many small independent retail owners make the mistake of taking the first available location before considering whether it would be suitable for the customers and business's needs (Khosa & Kalitanyi, 2014).

The location of the small independent retailers can contain a market growth opportunity and it can have market potential because even though the small independent retailers can utilise the appropriate marketing communication strategies, it might be challenging for consumers to locate the store (Khosa & Kalitanyi, 2014). Hence, Mariotti and Glackin (2012) suggest that the factors to consider when deciding on the location for a small business are convenience, proximity to competitors, access to suppliers, economic conditions, demographics, cost of facilities, visibility, climate and governmental regulations (Khosa & Kalitanyi, 2014). The location of the business plays a large role in ensuring the success of the small independent retailer.

2.11.9 Business plan

An important element to the success of a small independent retailer is its business plan that comprises of background information of the business, goals of the business and the objective of the business (Solomon, 2014; Cant *et al.*, 2016). A business plan lays down the target market/consumers to be targeted directly with their products or service (Cant *et al.,* 2016).

About 95% of small independent retailers fail due to the lack of a suitable business plan (Gandy, 2015). A study conduct by Dhlomo (2017) highlights that only about 42.6% of small independent retailers have a formal written business plan, 21.3% of small independent retailers have an informal plan only, and 36.0% have no business plan at all. Small independent retailers that do not have a formal suitable business plan might struggle to access finances for the business (Moloi, 2014).

Van Scheers (2011), Cant (2012), Moloi (2014), and Wiid *et al.* (2016) are of the opinion that small independent retailers do not have skills to write a suitable business plan. The concerns that they raise regarding the small independent retailers' inability to obtain finance include: they have inadequate collateral, lack of credit history, poor market research, no viable business idea, and no suitable business plan (Cant, Erdis & Sephapo, 2014; Bureau for Economic Research, 2016).

Moloi (2014) advises that small independent retailers should create a formal business plan because although an informal business plan might work out, it needs to be assessed by external parties to determine its effectiveness and its feasibility. Mentors that assist small independent retailers to apply for financial schemes mention that these small independent retailers simply provide a 'cut and paste' business plan and do not have a business plan that has been developed specifically for their business's needs (Timm, 2011). This leads to banks being hesitant to grant loans to small independent retailers business due to lack of collateral and no suitable business plans (Lotto, 2014). The fact is that financial institutions consider financing a business based on the strength of the business plan (Moloi, 2014).

2.11.10 Additional challenges

There are additional challenges facing small independent retailers in South Africa. These will be discussed below.

2.11.10.1 Electricity

Lack of infrastructure is a major challenge that independent retailers face. In a study conducted by the World Bank (2010), electricity interference features as the biggest challenge that small independent retailers face. The World Bank study found that 25% of small independent retailers are faced with electricity challenges which cause them to fail. Hence, the lack of infrastructure, such as electricity and telephone lines

contribute towards the insufficient support for emerging technology utilised by small independent retailers. In this perspective, small independent retailers suffer from collapsing infrastructure that is supposed to be provided by government. Infrastructure, such as electricity, funds for renting premises and telephone access, are expensive items for small independent retailers (Ayandibu & Houghton, 2017).

2.11.10.2 Crime

Another challenge faced by small independent retailers is crime. The failure of small independent retailers is caused by factors such as corruption, crime, and the inadequate education system in South Africa (Fatok, 2014).

Small independent retail owners in South Africa are faced with increasing occurrences of armed robbery (Timm, 2011), which means that crime affects South African employment and economic growth. The failure rate of small independent retailers in South Africa is high and it negatively affects the employment rate and economic growth (Fatok, 2014).

In essence, a study conducted by Makhitha (2016) that focused on challenges faced by small independent retailers, highlighted that the most serious challenges they experience are competition from other businesses (87%), the high costs of buying products (83%), and high inventory costs (78%). In addition, high rental costs (77%), high taxation (70%), lack of business skills (70%), inability to market the products (63%), government regulations (63%), and difficulty in findings suitable location (60%) also played a role. However, a separate study conducted by Mbonyane and Ladzani (2011) found that the most severe challenges faced by small independent retailers are poor technological skills (86%) and poor access to credit (73%).

Since some small independent retailers struggle to become successful, it is important for government to intervene and assist these small independent retailers. This is discussed next.

2.12 GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR SMALL INDEPENDENT RETAILERS

The South African government has created initiatives which aim to support and grow the small independent retail industry in South Africa (Ramukumba, 2014). These

initiatives have been designed to improve social development by promoting small independent retailers and other social entrepreneurships (Ribeiro-Soriano, 2017). Timm (2011) added that the small independent retail policy was acknowledged by the 1995 ‘White paper’ on national strategy in developing and promoting small independent retailers in South Africa.

The 1995 White Paper emphasised the need for government to create a local framework which would enable the wide spread of information, and which would assist and advise small independent retailers with procurement, increased access to finance and building affordable physical infrastructure for small independent retailers (Ramukumba, 2014). Therefore, the 2017 White Paper aims to increase access to financial or non-financial support, and to create the demand for small independent retailer’s goods and services (White Paper, 2017). This led South Africa towards setting the national objectives for small independent retailers. The government policy and legislations’ objectives established government agencies that would assist small independent retailers.

South Africa has various support schemes (agencies) that assist small independent retail owners in the areas of marketing communication strategy support, export and business development (Timm, 2011). Government agencies such as the Centre for Small Business Promotion (CSBP), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the National Small Business Council (NSBC), and the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) were established to drive and achieve the national objectives for small independent retailers (Ayandibu & Houghton, 2017). Additional support schemes, such as the South African Spaza and Tuckshop Association (SASTA), the Gauteng Enterprise Propeller (GEP), and the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA) were also established to drive and achieve the national objectives for small independent retailers.

Bruwer and Berg (2017) highlight that small independent retailers receive support from the South Africa government. These major government support agencies are: the National Empowerment Fund (assisting black-owned SMMEs with funding); the National Small Business Advisory Council (promoting SMME support at government level); and the Industrial Development Corporation (providing funding to SMMEs). Additionally, the South African Micro Finance Apex Fund (providing funding to SMMEs) and SEDA (aiding SMMEs with financing opportunities, training

opportunities, marketing opportunities and franchising opportunities) have been established (Bruwer & Berg, 2017).

The South African government support agencies play an important role in supporting small independent retailers. However, Fatoki (2014) argues that despite all the support that is available, the small independent retailers' failure rate is still too high. Ayandibu and Houghton (2017) emphasise that government's involvement is not successfully resolving small independent retailers' challenges because as soon as the small independent retailers access the government funds, the funds are never enough for their business needs.

This means that financial assistance from government is needed to support the small independent retailers through the existing agencies such as CSBP, DTI and SEDA (Ayandibu & Houghton, 2017). According to Ramukumba (2014), these agencies present financial workshops and educate small independent retail owners, managers and sales assistants, particularly on how to apply and manage the finances in their businesses. It is becoming a necessity for government to implement 'learning from peers' or mentorship programmes to assist small independent retailers by using non-executives at an early stage of the business to bring external proficiency and advice on investment decision-making (Fatok, 2014).

Orford and Wood (2018) argued that in response to the observed failure of many government programmes to provide quality support both nationally and provincially, government has introduced new structures to deliver centrally administered support to small independent retailers via the SEDA. At municipal level, municipalities provide assistance to small independent retailers through their service delivery activities by maintaining the operating environment of businesses, and preventing service breakdowns and disruptions (NSBC, 2018).

The government support schemes (agencies) will be discussed next.

2.12.1 Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is the South African government department that is responsible for industrial policy and commercial policy (DTI, 2018). The DTI was formed to assist the technical and financial capacity of small independent retailers (Ayandibu & Houghton, 2017). In 1995, the DTI released the National

Strategy for the development and promotion of small business, together with the Small Business Act 102 of 1996 (Maboa, 2011).

The National Strategy was seen in the context of a post-apartheid small independent retailer's policy that identified the key developmental goals, such as the global improvement of competitiveness, redistribution of wealth and creating employment (Maboa, 2011). A decade later, in 2005, the DTI released the Integrated Small Enterprise Development Strategy which takes into consideration the accomplishments and failures of the implementation of the 1995 National Strategy for the development and promotion of small business (Maloka, 2013). The DTI is responsible for realising the South African's goal of global competitiveness, innovative industry and service sector, which contribute to the economic growth and creation of employment (DTI, 2018).

2.12.2 Centre for Small Business Promotion

The Centre for Small Business Promotion (CSBP) is a chief directorate which falls under the DTI. The CSBP was created by the DTI with the aim of establishing the central policy for small independent retailer's development (DTI, 2014). The purpose of the CSBP is to implement, monitor and assess the efficiency of the National Small Business Strategy, which intended to create employment, develop economic growth, generate income and support the redistribution of wealth, and to eradicate poverty (Development Co-operations Report, 2018).

The CSBP is responsible for programmes that are provided by government and to create policies that are associated with small independent retailers (DTI, 2018). The CSBP further manages and implements the framework within the national government, supervises the formation of new institutions proposed in the White Paper on small independent retailers, and mobilises funds to small independent retailers. It gave birth to the National Education Policy Act (NEPA), which was replaced by SEDA (DTI, 2003; Maloka, 2013).

2.12.3 Small Enterprise Development Agency

The Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) was created in December 2004 as a government agency. SEDA is an agency of the Department of Small Business Development in South Africa, through the National Small Business Amendment Act, Act 29 of 2004 (Maloka, 2013). SEDA was established by combining three

organisations, namely, the National Manufacturing Advisory Centre (NAMAC), Ntsika Enterprise Promotion Agency, and Community Public Private Partnership Programme (CPPP) (Maloka, 2013).

The main purpose of SEDA is to promote the competitiveness and capabilities of small businesses by means of projects and coordinated service programmes (Maloka, 2013). SEDA incorporates government-funded small business support agencies across all levels of government, and implements the governments' small independent retailer's strategy (Amra, Hlatshwayo & McMillan, 2013). SEDA provides services, such as compiling of business plans, enabling access to markets for local small businesses, providing small businesses with training, technology, finance, business registration and mentoring (Njiro & Compagnoni, 2010).

SEDA supports and promotes small businesses throughout the country, while assisting small businesses to network, and ensuring the growth and sustainability in coordination between partnerships with various stakeholders, including global partners (Maloka, 2013). SEDA further assists with the identification of business opportunities, provides information on how to start and build a sustainable business, and provides business linkages for small businesses (Maboa, 2011).

Fatok (2014) advised that there is a need for government agencies such as SEDA to intervene and organise training for small independent retail owners on how to utilise the marketing communication strategy to communicate with their customers and manage their businesses.

2.12.4 South African Spaza and Tuckshop Association (SASTA)

The South African Spaza and Tuckshop Association (SASTA) is a non-governmental organisation that was formed in 1997 as a club, and in 1999 it was established as an association. The organisation provides the benefits of collective bargaining to its memberships, which consist of small independent retailers, spaza shops and general dealers. SASTA members are situated across South Africa, in cities, townships, small towns, sidewalks and taxi ranks (saspazas, 2018).

SASTA facilitates training for small independent retail owners to professionally manage their businesses. This includes how small independent retail owners can market their businesses, manage their finances, encouraging bulk stock procurement,

provide customer service, device corporative imaging, formalise their businesses, and handle legal matters.

SASTA also keeps track of the daily actions of certified members of SASTA. SASTA addresses issues such as goods and services, location, and customer service of small independent retailers. SASTA facilitates business operations for smaller business owners that are vulnerable in the informal sector in search of education and training regarding general business formalities.

SASTA members are provided with support on a regular basis in order to ensure their continued survival and the sustainability of their businesses. SASTA focuses on what is allowed and what is not allowed for small independent retailers in order to ensure that small independent retailers function within various regulations that are designed to lead them to realise their goals (sastaa, 2018).

2.12.5 Gauteng Enterprise Propeller (GEP)

The Gauteng Enterprise Propeller (GEP) is the South African agency of the Provincial Department of Economic, Environment, Agriculture and Rural Development in Gauteng. The GEP assists small independent retailers and cooperatives with financial and non-financial support.

The GEP started its operations in 2005 and its development was informed by the province's growth and development strategy that identified small independent retailer's development as the major key levers in order to address the challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality (GEP, 2018).

The GEP fosters and develops small independent retailers within the Gauteng province by executing the policy of the Gauteng Provincial Government for small enterprise development. The GEP provides support to small independent retailers towards facilitating their development; increasing their sustainability and professionalism; increasing the participation of small independent retailers; creating and enabling environment for small independent retailers' sustainability and growth; and enhancing business facilitation and identifying business opportunities. A recent study conducted by the GEP highlights that 24% of the funding spent in local townships is distributed evenly within those communities. The GEP has assisted 24 000 small businesses to sustain their business, and has provided 850 training sessions for small businesses (GEP, 2018).

2.12.6 National Small Business Chamber (NSBC)

The National Small Business Chamber (NSBC) is a non-profit membership organisation that was established in 2007, and it drives small business growth. The National Small Business Chamber (NSBC) is the South African organisation for small businesses that helps small independent retail owners and entrepreneurs to become tomorrow's business legends. The organisation fosters and sustains growth for the small independent retail industry by alleviating unemployment, empowering job creation and developing the South African entrepreneurial spirit. The NSBC is the largest organisation of its kind in Africa and is a growing organisation of its kind in the world that has a base of approximately 125 000 small businesses (NSBC, 2018).

2.12.7 Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA)

The Small Enterprise Finance Agency is generally known as SEFA, which started in 2012 through a merger of the South African Micro Apex Fund (SAMAF), Khula Enterprise Finance and Small Business Activities of the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC). SEFA renders wholesale and retail finance to small independent retailers in South Africa. SEFA foster the establishment, survival and growth of small independent retailers which contributes towards fighting poverty, job creation and alleviating unemployment.

SEFA delivers services such as direct financial lending to small independent retailers in the form of loans from R500 to R5 million, in addition to leadership and management training to small independent retail owners. SEDA also monitors the impact and effectiveness of the finance and credit of small independent retailers (SEFA, 2018).

2.13 SUMMARY

This chapter presented an analysis of the marketing communication strategies utilised by small independent retailers around the globe and in South Africa. Marketing communication is a communication method used by businesses to inform, persuade and remind customers about the goods and services they offer. This chapter further discussed the marketing communication strategy process. This was followed by a discussion of the marketing communication elements where each element of the marketing communication strategy was analysed. Additionally, this chapter reviewed the integrated marketing communication strategy as a marketing communication plan

that integrates and evaluates the different communication principles to attain consistency and greater results.

This chapter further highlighted that the impact of the marketing communication strategy is most likely to enhance the small independent retailer's performance in terms of both financial and market performances (Wang *et al.,* 2016). This chapter expounded on small independent retailers and their important role in South African economic development and economic growth. Although government agencies do play an important role in supporting the small independent retailers, there is still a high incidence of failure among the small independent retailers.

The next chapter discusses the research design, research methodology, sampling method and the measurements used for the study.

CHAPTER 3:
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the research methodology, research philosophy, research design, research approach and research strategy. Additionally, the targeted population, sampling, data-collection method and instrument, pilot study, hypothesis development, data analysis, validity and reliability, limitation of the study and ethical considerations for the study are discussed.

Small independent retailers contribute about 45% towards the South African GDP, and constitute 60% of the labour force (Naidoo, 2016). A study by Makhitha (2016) focused on the challenges impacting on the small independent retailer's performance in Soweto, Johannesburg in South Africa. Another study by Badenhorst-Weiss and Cilliers (2014) focused on the unique market offering of formal independent retail and wholesale small businesses in Soweto. Therefore, there is a need to research the impact of a marketing communication strategy on the performance of small independent retailers in Soweto. The research paradigm is discussed next.

3.2 THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology is defined as an organised investigation and measurement of collecting and analysing information (LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 2010). Rodolo (2008) adds to this definition by highlighting that the research methodology is a research process of complexity and broadness. Furthermore, research methodology refers to the participation of author(s) in the research, while trying to find practical solutions (Roy, Roy & Bouchard, 2016). It entails questioning the suitability and competence of the methodology that the researcher would have used to conduct a study as opposed to other options (Ngulube, 2015). This further includes highlighting the shortcomings of the research methodology being used. The research methodology further entails the identification of the research objectives, data-collection methods and data analysis methods (Finley, 2017).

The research methodology contains the methods and techniques that are used to identify the shortcomings of each method and technique, and the impact of procedural

preferences on the data analysis that has been done (Myers, 2009). Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) supported this statement by highlighting that the research methodology is a process that comprises of the conceptualisation stage, research design, data collection, data analysis and the inference stage.

The research process comprises of identifying the research objectives, determining the research design, sampling, targeted population, data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations. The researcher employed the research design as a guideline in the choice of data-collection methods, sampling methods and data analysis.

In support of the above statement, the research design employed in this study was quantitative, descriptive, and it used non-probability and convenience sampling, because it allowed the researcher to gain a deep understanding of phenomena which were being investigated. At the same time, this study surveyed the population of 300 small independent retailers in three townships in Soweto, namely, Meadowlands, Dobsonville and Protea North, through the use of self-administered printed questionnaires. The study followed the "research onion" approach, which is illustrated in Figure 3.1 below.

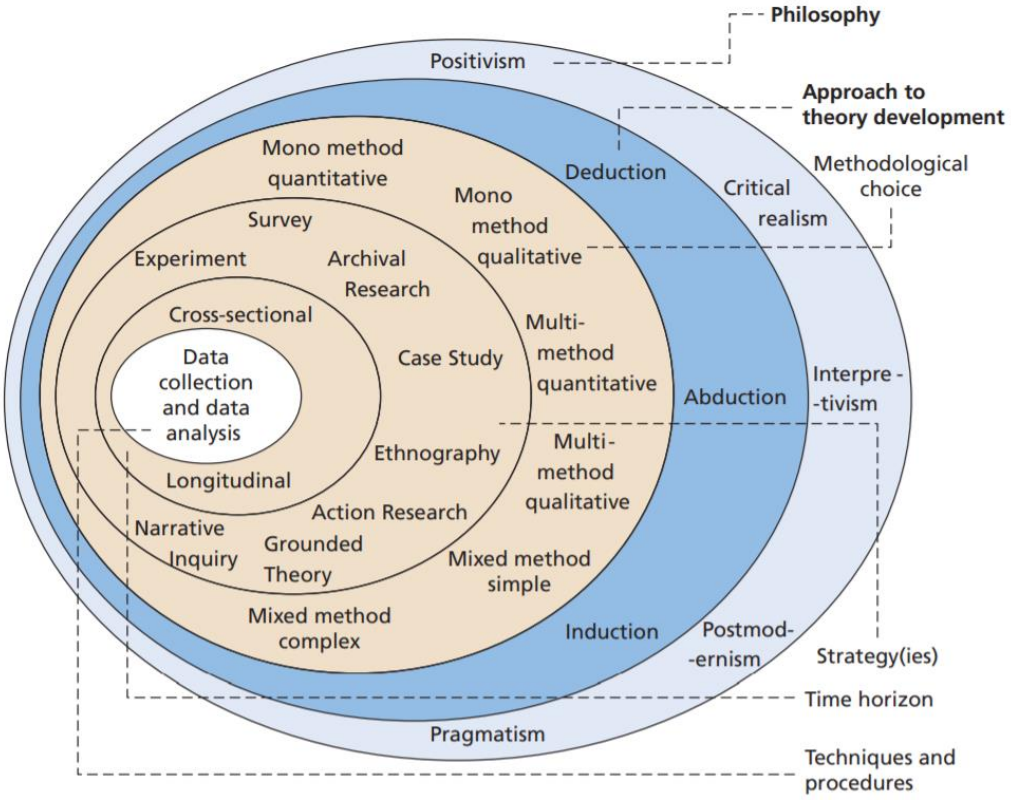

Figure 3.1: The "research onion"

Source: Saunders *et al.* (2019).

This chapter discusses these research philosophies in order for the research to be positioned in its theoretical setting and its guiding framework. The research philosophy section is discussed next.

3.3 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

The research philosophy is a set of assumptions, beliefs, or commands about the essential aspects of reality that guide action (Nieuwenhuis, 2007; Basit, 2010). Burton and Bartlett (2009) further state that the research philosophy is a model of research that uncovers how to investigate and uncover an agreement on the nature of the world. A research philosophy is a system that has comparable philosophies about the nature of the universe that highlights the purpose of the research that is conducted by researchers (Burton & Bartlett, 2009). Hence, the term research philosophy refers to a pattern and the framework of a scientific system of academic ideas and assumptions. It is a common agreement on the research methods that are acceptable to gather data. Therefore, the motivation, intent, beliefs and expectations of the research are set down by the decision of the research philosophy.

Based on this belief, Van Huyssteen (2014) differentiated between the positivist, post-positivist and postmodernism analysis, by categorising postmodernism and post-structuralism within critical theory. Klein (2013) mentions that there are three research philosophies, namely, positivism, interpretivism and constructivism. Saunders *et al.* (2019) add that the relevant research philosophical positions are positivism, critical realism, interpretivism, postmodernism and pragmatism.

3.3.1 Critical theory

Critical theory is the most dominant orientation framework that emphasises how subjugation and injustice form an individual's experiences and attempts to understand the universe (Patton, 2002). Yang (2014) explains the critical theory as an analysis of dominance, the use of reflection and critique as a means of encouragement and a promise to emancipate. Babbie and Mouton (2009) mention that the critical approach emphasises that the researcher needs to become part of the normal life of the individuals being studied. Critical theory states that bias exists in every action of people and wishes that the results of the study may support the bias (Glicken, 2003).

3.3.2 Interpretivism

Interpretivists believe that social research subjects are dependent on, and are created by human beings, and are therefore more subjective than objective (Willis, 2007). An interpretivist or a constructivist researcher relies on the views of research subjects about the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, it can be said that interpretivism research is defined as a social inquiry that comes from the interpretation of their experience from a group or individuals where societal reality is constructed (Walther, Sochacka & Kellam, 2013). Furthermore, interpretivism is a research process that focuses on understanding things based on social reality (Steiner & Marra, 2017). This means that interpretivism research seeks to understand why things happen.

Interpretivism approach is qualitative in nature because it provides an understanding of the meanings that people attach to decisions, actions, values and beliefs within their world (Ritchie and Lewis, 2013).

According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2010), interpretivism researchers reinforce the views of social actors in order to understand the behaviours that exist within the outlined contexts. The emphasis of interpretivism research is to understand and interpret complex relations between social structures and the meanings people give to the phenomena (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

Therefore, interpretivism research is action-oriented and is viewed as 'behaviour-with-meaning' (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Walsham (2006) states that the logical base of interpretivism research is hermeneutics and phenomenology. Interpretivism research investigates the meanings of words, as various participants are classified based on the individuals' experiences and conveyed within definite social contexts. Interpretivism research assumes that individuals associate and create their own subjective and inter-subjective meanings as they relate to the world around them (Cavan, Delahaye & Sekaran, 2001).

The data of interpretivism research cannot be neutral or unbiased because the researcher brings their prior conceptions to the study (Walther *et al*., 2013). In interpretivism research, the researcher interacts with the respondents and thereby has an impact on the nature of the participants' responses. Additionally, the researchers realise that their background forms their interpretation, and they locate themselves in

the research to recognise how they understand movements from their own historical and personal experiences (Creswell, 2007). Next, postmodernist is discussed.

3.3.3 Postmodernism

Patton (2002) defines postmodernism as a belief in science that generates the truth as one of the cornerstones that was inherited from the Enlightenment Era. Ntini (2014) further defines postmodernism as an astonishment of meta-narratives. Postmodernism became popular for academic studies in the mid-1980s, and it is then it was used to label the era beyond modernity (Klages, 2003).

Dwivedi (2018) explains postmodernism as a philosophical description which contains arts, philosophy and a period of history. Thus, it is associated with beliefs, traditions, customs and emotional expressions. Garner (2012) furthers this discussion by highlighting that postmodernism is present and can be identified in the contemporary leadership issues and conflicts that many educational leaders face. Moreover, postmodernism is the ideology that is derived from modernism that includes developing ideas, formal communications, perceptions and beliefs that began to dominate this era (Grbich, 2007). Lastly, postmodernism means a number of radical changes are needed to understand the world and it is normally realised as the enlightenment that promises the universal truth, justice, and beauty.

3.3.4 Pragmatism

Pragmatism is based on how the object of knowledge is defined, therefore, pragmatism comprises of a realistic relation between two situations mediated by habitual action (Määttänen, 2015). Pragmatism is the doctrine that a notion can be recognised in terms of its practical consequences (Schiller, 2016). Pragmatism is the viewpoint that all objects and abstractions can be known based upon experiments and the results of that experimentation (Lee, 2015). According to Saunders *et al.* (2019), pragmatism is rich, complex, focuses on problems, practices problem solving and informs future practice as a contribution.

The ubiquitous presence of constructivism in this chapter is discussed next.

3.3.5 Constructivism

As much as post-positivism guides the assumptions, constructivism also provides a set of guiding assumptions that assist the line of thought that an investigator assumes.

As a result, constructivism is defined as the viewpoint of teaching that learners are not passive respondents in the environment, but rather as people that are engaged firmly as they seek to excerpt personal meaning (Henson, 2015). This means that personal stories comprise of inseparable truth and facts (Baillie & Douglas, 2014). The emphases of constructivism are on the psychological and philosophical viewpoints of this century.

Constructivism research is a concept that focuses on learning and knowledge theory, and it is all about explaining ‘knowing’ and finding out how an individual ‘comes to know’. It is based on the theory of knowledge, but not as the truth that is discovered or transmitted (Fosnot, 2013). Creswell (2013) states that the aim of research under constructivism is to rely on the respondents’ opinions of the situation being studied. Constructivism is a qualitative research process that interprets data not based only on historical data, but based on experiences, social perspectives and the researchers’ background (Pegues, 2007). Silverman (2011) further adds that in constructivism research people develop meanings through their interpretive relations with each other and experiences within their social environment.

3.3.6 Positivism

Creswell (2013) defines positivism as a philosophy that is associated with a positive scientific method and the evaluation of science. This means that the method of study needs to be more scientific and objective to devise a hypothesis to test the validity in the real world (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

The positivism research philosophy influences the existing reality beyond the human mind (Weber, 2004). According to Silverman (2011), positivism is a presentation of a design of a research process that discusses social facts that exist independently from the activities of both the researcher and the participant.

Positivism applies the natural science model of research that investigates the social phenomena and then explains it to the social world (Silverman, 2011). Positivism reinforces the philosophical approach taken by researchers in the social and physical sciences. In order for positivist researchers to create a hypothesis that stresses the importance of logical, objective and rational thinking, they have to use deductive reasoning. Rafi and Ismail (2013) mention that positivism is a method that measures

the patterns, behaviour, explanation of a reality predicated, and the prediction of future measurements.

Herewith, a positivism research was employed, where a theory was formulated and hypotheses were set and then tested (Rafi & Ismail, 2013). In this study, the positivist researcher created a hypothesis that stressed the importance of logical, objective and rational thinking which used deductive reasoning. The study employed a positivism research philosophy because it utilised the scientific measurable facts, numbers and prediction as contribution (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). The study further used a positivism research philosophy because it was typically deductive, highly structured, had a large sample and a typical quantitative method of range of data was analysed.

The control of the positivism research philosophy has spread to post-positivism in recent decades (Beck 2006). Positivism and post-positivism differ in terms of how severe the truth becomes once established and what may be regarded as the truth after it has been established.

3.3.7 Post-positivism

In contrast to positivism, the post-positivism realists have the existence and the capability of explaining the functioning of observable phenomena. Post-positivism is defined as a tradition that proposed a basis for mixed-method research, which straddles the research philosophy, and maintains respect for the creeds of philosophies in both quantitative and qualitative research methods (Gidding & Grant, 2007).

Post-positivism is a consistent technique that takes quantitative research methods, such as statistical facts and soft facts into consideration (Heurich & Vignali, 2015). Post-positivism research methods are modified from the positivism approach because perfect objectivity will never be fully achieved, however, it is possible to realise the knowledge of the world that separates our minds.

Post-positivism is a rational approach that has logical empiricism that bases all facts on logic and scientific inquiry (Higgs & Smith, 2006). Therefore, the post-positivism research philosophy attempts to test and verify various behavioural patterns and the outcomes thereof. Post-positivism states that any ‘truth’ depends on a guiding theoretical framework (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). In addition, post-positivism seeks to find the truth within predetermined contexts, and not to establish the absolute truth.

Post-positivism claims that although a true reality exists, post-positivists can never understand it because they have a crucial realist ontology and they practise a modified dualist epistemology. In essence as a research philosophy, post-positivism is a replacement of positivism. It contextualises factors, accepts limitations and uses multiple theories where research findings are interpreted (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Post-positivism is characterised by two sub-paradigm researches, namely interpretivism (constructivism) and critical theory (critical post-modernism) (Henson, 2015).

The research design applicable to this study will be discussed next.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is the action plan that researchers use to get from here to there. In this sense, ‘here’ refers to the original set of questions that need answers and ‘there’ refers to some set of conclusions/answers (Yin, 2003). Research design is perceived as a plan of conceptualising the research questions, data collection, data analysis, interpretation, report writing, and a structure to execute the research in order to maximise the validity of the research findings (Wilson, 2016). Henning, Van Rensburg and Smith (2000) state that the research design is a programme used to lead the researcher to collect, analyse and interpret the collected data.

Babbie (2007) states that a research design is an integrated plan that comprises of instructions and guidelines, and can be compared to the actions of an architect who is designing a building. Usually, the research design provides outlines to how the researcher must carry out the research project. This means that the research design is a logical plan for a research study which indicates how the study is to be conducted. It illustrates the main elements of the research study, such as determining the research design, sampling, targeted population, data-collection methods, data analysis techniques and ethical considerations, that all work together to attempt to meet the research objectives (Babbie, 2007).

The selection of research design methods depends on the nature of the research (Kumar, 2000). Thus, Burns and Bush (2010) highlight that although most research studies are different, they have similar categories that allow them to be classified according to their procedures and the methods employed to collect and analyse data.

Burns and Bush (2010) further mention that research design is classified into three categories, namely, exploratory research design, descriptive research design and causal (experimental) research design.

According to Creswell (2012), these are three broad means of collecting data, where the exploratory research design is part of qualitative research, descriptive research design is part of the quantitative research method, and a causal (experimental) research design. Exploratory research design is discussed first.

3.4.1 Exploratory research design

The advantage of exploratory research design is that it allows the researcher to identify similarities and differences related to the respondents (Saks & Allsop, 2013). Exploratory design enables the researcher to delve deep into understanding the issues associated with the respondent's attitudes, needs, beliefs, and the factors that influence those attitudes and beliefs. Exploratory research assists the researcher to respond to the research questions and provides the data needed to complete the objectives of the study (Polit & Beck, 2012). Exploratory research enables an in-depth understanding of the study.

There are different types of exploratory design, such as experience surveys, case studies, focus group interviews and pilot studies are types of exploratory design as explained below.

- *Experience surveys* are surveys that acquire information from well-informed individuals in the field about a specific research problem. However, the information provided by the individuals is not conclusive (Zikmund, Babin, Carr & Griffin, 2013).
- *Case studies* intensely investigate one or a few actual situations in depth that are similar to the researched problem and it requires cooperation. However, in a case study, the researcher needs to be availed of the existing database of case studies, since developing case studies is a time-consuming process (Zikmund *et al.,* 2013).
- Krueger (2014) explains that *focus group interviews* are an organised series of discussions with 5 to 10 people designed to gain insight into a distinct area of interest in a nonthreatening environment. Focus group interviews

are non-structured discussions that are directed by a skilled mediator within a small group of respondents with the purpose of understanding by listening to respondents from the targeted group talking about issues of interest (Krueger, 2014).

- *A pilot study* uses sampling of any small-scale exploratory study, but it does not apply difficult standards. The collected data may be analysed qualitatively or qualitatively, and the findings may be used to systematically formulate the research problem and finalise the research proposal. An example of a pilot study could be a survey that uses a questionnaire method on a small sample that has around 30 respondents (De Vaus, 2013).

3.4.2 Descriptive research design

Babbie and Mouton (2012) define descriptive research design as filling in the missing parts and understanding the research, as well as being an attempt to explain in detail what is happening. In addition, descriptive design provides appropriate characteristics to certain situations, individuals or groups (Grove, Gray & Burns, 2015). This means the phenomena of real life situations are described by descriptive design.

Cooper and Schindler (2014) explain that quantitative research provides detailed scenarios and emphasises the ‘what’, ‘when’, ‘where’, ‘how’ and ‘who’ of the research study. This phenomenon is supported by Mc Daniel and Gates (2010), who state that descriptive design is used to obtain answers to what, when, where, who and how questions.

Therefore, the focus of this study is on investigating the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of the marketing communication strategies that are utilised by (who and when) small independent retailers (where) in Soweto. Researchers use descriptive design to acquire new knowledge about information that is limited or on which no study has been conducted (Burns & Grove, 2009). The descriptive design part of the study was used to provide the respondents with an opportunity to provide an in-depth description about the types of marketing communication strategies they utilise. Thus, the researcher employed a descriptive design with the purpose of portraying the accurate role of the impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers.

3.4.3 Causal design

According to Burns and Bush (2010), causal research determines the distinction of cause and effect relationships between variables. The author further discusses that causal design focuses on answering the 'why' question. Causal design is interchangeably called experimental research, because causal design does physical tests (experiments) to determine the results.

3.5 RESEARCH APPROACHES

The appropriate research approach is important in a scientific study, irrespective of the research area. Saunders *et al*. (2019) indicate that the research approach is divided into three types, namely, the inductive research approach, the deductive research approach and the abductive research approach, as discussed below. In addition, the qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods research approaches are also discussed.

3.5.1 Inductive research approach

Farooq (2017) explains the inductive approach as the generation of hypotheses based on a theory and the testing of the hypothesis by using the collected data. An inductive approach is a process that observes a phenomenon and arrives at certain conclusions (Wan, Marco & Cheng, 2016). The inductive approach is qualitative in nature and generally uses interviews to collect the necessary data (Saunders *et al.,* 2019).

3.5.1.1 Qualitative research approach

Qualitative research is an exploratory study that allows the researcher to use interviews to understand the deeper opinions, reasons and motivations that drive peoples' behaviour (Whitfield, 2017). Malhotra (2010) defines qualitative research as a research that is exploratory in nature and it normally focuses on small samples such as in-depth interviews and focus groups.

Qualitative research is commonly utilised to generate hypotheses and classify variables that should be involved in quantitative research methods (Creswell, 2014). Saunders *et al*. (2012) mention that qualitative research incorporates a number of methods that may be applied in a flexible way to observe the participant's behaviour

or to permit participants to express their views. Qualitative research aims to capture the behaviour, views and thoughts of participants.

Creswell (2014) opines that qualitative research is a research method that allows the researcher to understand and explore the sense of individualism. Qualitative research denotes that the term ‘meaning’ is not discovered, but is made up of people’s experience and the manner in which they function (Ormston, Spencer, Barnard & Snape, 2014; Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Creswell (2014), and Rudestam and Newton (2015) assume qualitative research to be subjective, naturalistic and an interpretive philosophy. In Burns and Grove’s (2009) perspective, qualitative research is an approach that is used to explain how people understand the events and phenomena, and the meaning they attach to these experiences. Thus, qualitative research measures the quality of something, rather than analysing numbers and statistics. This means that qualitative research extracts information by means of themes, and it uses language and words as the means of analysing data. It further understands and develops insights from patterns of data acquired.

Researchers use qualitative research to conduct a study normally build a holistic and complex picture with the respondents, and thereafter they report the thorough insights concerning the problem of the study (Tappen, 2016). The researcher usually follows the participants in their natural environment to gain insight into the participants’ beliefs, attitudes, perceptions and views (Moule & Goodman, 2014).

The major distinctions between qualitative and quantitative research is that qualitative research involves exploring new areas of research and gathering information about the experiences of individuals (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg & McKibbon, 2015; Kruth, 2015). Etz and Arroyo (2015) add to this argument by stating that qualitative research studies things to understand their natural settings and then attempts to interpret or make sense of the phenomena. Therefore, it can be said that qualitative is employed to understand the underlying opinions, motivations and reasons of the research, which in turn provides insight into the problem (Neu, 2013). Moreover, qualitative research data is drawn from only a few participants, while quantitative research uses large groups of respondents (Levitt, Bamberg, Creswell, Frost, Josselson & Suárez-Orozco, 2018).

Conversely, quantitative research provides information which can be measured by means of testing the hypothesis and determining the causal relationships between variables (Hoe & Hoare, 2013). Quantitative research needs accurate large sampling proportions to acquire valuable statistical assessments (Gentles *et al.*, 2015). A quantitative research approach will be utilised in this study and is discussed next under descriptive design.

3.5.2 Deductive research approach

The deductive approach involves the development of a theory that is then subjected to a severe test through a series of propositions (Kumar, 2019). In the natural science of deductive approach, the laws present the basis of explanation, which allow the anticipation of phenomena and predict their occurrence, and therefore permit them to be controlled (Mackey & Gass, 2015). The deductive approach is the generation of new theory evolving from new data, such as grounded theory (Faroo, 2017). A deductive approach is a process where the researcher begins with a theoretical proposition and then progresses towards solid empirical evidence (Wan, Marco & Cheng, 2016). According to Svensson and Nordmark (2015), the deductive approach provides theories and generate hypotheses that should be tested against the collected data, and eventually generate a conclusion. The deductive approach adopts arguments based on rules, laws or other widely accepted principles (Svensson & Nordmark, 2015). The deductive approach is quantitative in nature and data collection is used to evaluate propositions or hypotheses related to an existing theory (Saunders *et al.,* 2019).

For the purposes of this study, a deductive approach was employed, wherein a theory was formulated and hypotheses were set and then tested (Kitchin, 2017). In order for positivist researchers to create a hypothesis that stresses the importance of logical, objective and rational thinking, deductive reasoning has to be used. Thus, as highlighted in Section 1.6.1, the study employed a deductive approach. Deductive approach is quantitative in nature (Saunders *et al.,* 2019).

3.5.2.1 Quantitative research approach

Quantitative research is a descriptive study that seeks to examine the current condition (Unlu, 2011). Quantitative research gathers information from a large number of people with the purpose of using the results to project the outcomes to a broader population

with the intention of generalising the specific population (Naidoo, 2016). Cooper and Schindler (2008) mention that quantitative research is suitable when the researcher needs to gather accurate measurements of people's opinions, attitudes and behaviours. Furthermore, quantitative research is numerical in nature and its methodology is cross-referenced, rigid and recorded by means of statistics.

In addition, quantitative research approaches a phenomenon from the participants' perspective in order to explain and predict the phenomena under study that operate in isolation (Marais, 2012). It comprises of characteristics, such as exploring possible correlations between two or more phenomena (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

The chosen research design for this study is quantitative in nature. Quantitative research was chosen because it enabled the researcher to statistically analyse the collected data in order to provide solutions to the research problem being investigated. Furthermore, the adopted research design (quantitative research) assisted the researcher to seek for the participant's opinions and ideas about the marketing communications strategies that are utilised by small independent retailers in Soweto. Quantitative research was selected as a suitable research method because of the type of information that was required to successfully achieve the primary research objectives.

3.5.3 Abductive research approach

Abductive approach is defined as a logical inference that starts with a range of observations and ends up finding a modest and most feasible explanation for the problem being researched (Kheder, 2018). However, with the abductive approach, the conclusions do not guarantee the premises, but it concludes the best possible explanations (Bryman, 2016). Abduction begins with a surprise and then afterwards requests an explanation (Bryman & Bell, 2015). An abductive approach does not follow the pattern of pure induction or deduction (Wan, Marco & Cheng, 2016). The abductive approach avoids the limitations related to the deductive and inductive positions (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The abductive approach incorporates all the evidence collected for the research in order to explain the phenomenon under study. The abductive approach is a combination of the induction and deduction approaches (Saunders *et al.,* 2019).

3.5.3.1 Mixed-method research

Maree (2007) explains the mixed-method approach as a process of collecting, analysing and mixing both qualitative and quantitative data. In support of this statement, Creswell (2014) states that mixed-method research is appropriate when the researcher needs to integrate both quantitative and qualitative methods in their study. The objective of mixed-method research is to combine both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to understand the researched problem better (Bulsara, 2015). Creswell (2014) mentions that mixing data from both qualitative and quantitative methods assists the researcher to understand the research problem that they are investigating.

McMillan and Schumacher (2014) state that both qualitative and quantitative methods can be conducted simultaneously. Hence, both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods are employed to combine the two data sets and interpret them together.

A quantitative research approach was selected for this study, as it enabled the researcher to decide on the subject matter, ask narrow and specific questions, collect numeric data from participants, and analyse the statistically reliable information from the sample data (Lipinge, 2013). Quantitative research was also used because it confirms or denies by providing a substantiation of measuring the variables (Maina, Namusonge & Kabare, 2016).

Studies conducted by Li (2018) Tandon and Singh (2018), and Mramba (2018) used quantitative research to examine the relationships and to gain further insight into the phenomena. Therefore, for this reason the researcher chose quantitative research methods to investigate the impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers.

3.6 RESEARCH STRATEGY

Leung and Fong (2018) explain the research strategy as a way of conducting research that represents a particular style and employs different methods in order to ensure that the data and research programme are visible. As highlighted by Saunders *et al.* (2019), the research strategies consist of archival research, case study, ethnography, action research, grounded theory, narrative inquiry and survey.

Archival research is explained as an empirical study which utilises archival information as the primary source of data, applying quantitative methods to analyse the data (Metso, 2018). Scott (2017) mentions that conducting archival research is like placing a jigsaw puzzle together, except that you do not have a picture on the box for reference.

Kučera (2017) discusses the *case study* as an empirical survey of the present phenomenon in its natural environment form, by using multiple sources of evidence. A case study investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real life context when the boundaries between context and phenomenon are not apparent. Researchers use the case study approach when they need as much information as possible to be collected through a thorough analysis of a few cases (Pereira, Munjal & Nandakumar, 2016).

For the purpose of this discussion, *ethnography* is a complicated and indefinable question (Hammersley (2018). Ethnography is a form of social and educational research which stresses the importance of studying at first-hand what people do and say in particular contexts (Parker-Jenkins, 2018). Normally, this includes a fairly lengthy contact through observing the participant in relevant settings or through open-ended interviews designed to understand people's perspectives (Parker-Jenkins, 2018).

Seid and Teklay (2018) define *action research* as a systematic research process that can be articulated by the researcher, and it comprises of data collection, data analysis, refection, as well as discussing with co-researchers or others with the aim of making a change in a situation over time. Action research is an intentional and systematic study usually conducted by teachers of their own classroom practice (Wolkenhauer, Hill, Dana & Stukey, 2017).

Grounded theory is the invention of theory from data systematically attained from social research (Aldiabat & Navenec, 2018). Grounded theory is a qualitative research methodology with a purpose of rationalising social phenomena and is grounded in many cases that deliver a 'quick-fix' and procedural approach, with poor hypothetical rigour (Woods, Gapp & King, 2016). Grounded theory is deeply entrenched in social and qualitative research, and its identity and characteristics distinguish it from other

methods that need qualified mentors to supervise the novice grounded theorists (Aldiabat & Navenec, 2018).

Hinojosa and Carney (2016) define *narrative inquiry* as the study of stories. Narrative inquiry comprises of both the 'personal conditions', that is the desires, fears, hopes, moral stands of the inquirer and research participants, and the 'social conditions', which are the environment, context and external conditions within which events/people are placed (De Zoysa, 2019).

Survey research is defined as a method of descriptive research that is used to collect primary data, based on written or verbal communication with a representative sample of individuals or respondents from the target population (Mathiyazhagan & Nandan, 2010). Jobber and Ellis-Chadwick (2016) further highlight that primary data collection includes survey methods, such as an internet survey, where an online questionnaire is emailed to the target audience so they can complete the survey on the internet. The researcher uses an email or web page to send a link to the questionnaire, which the respondent completes on line (Saunders *et al*., 2016). Another type of survey is a mail survey, where the researcher delivers the structured or unstructured questionnaires to the potential participants who will be requested to fill in the questionnaires and then return the questionnaire to the researcher upon completion (Agbenyegah, 2013). The researcher will contact the respondents and advise them to expect a questionnaire (pre-survey contact), while emphasising the importance of confidentiality and anonymity, and highlighting that the respondents are under no obligation to participate and may withdraw from the study at any time.

A printed questionnaire is another form of survey, a printed questionnaire is a set of questions that are developed to collect the necessary data to realise the purpose of the study (McDaniel & Gates, 2010). It is a survey that develops the items to make it context-specific (Dongre, 2018). A printed questionnaire is a useful data-collection methodology to collect data from a large-scale study because it reduces cost and ensures a great number of respondents (Morioka, Jike, Kanda, Osaki, Nakagome, Otsuka *et al.*, 2018). Usually, the researcher hands out the questionnaires to participants who will be requested to fill in the questionnaire and then return the questionnaire to the researcher upon completion (Agbenyegah, 2013).

In this study, a self-administered printed questionnaire survey was employed as it involved less time to collect the data from the participants and it was less costly (Polit & Beck, 2004). The questionnaire set questions that gathered the necessary information to achieve the objectives of the research study. The questions in the questionnaire were kept as short as possible because the participants (store owners/managers/sales assistants) are often busy attending to customers, and therefore, they would not like to spend much time on a long questionnaire. At the same time, this study surveyed the population of 300 small independent retailers in three townships in Soweto, namely, Meadowlands, Dobsonville and Protea North, through the use of self-administered printed questionnaires.

3.7 TARGET POPULATION

The targeted population of a study is defined as all the elements that comprise of objects, substances or individuals, or aggregation that meet a certain criterion which the researcher is interested in (Grove *et al.*, 2015). Maxfield and Babbie (2014) supported the statement above by highlighting that the targeted population are elements from which the sample is chosen.

Polit and Beck (2012), and Grove *et al.* (2015) state that sampling design is a method which takes a portion or a small number of units of population that will represent or have particular features of the entire population. In other words, the population is the total number of people or sampling units that the researcher is focusing on. This is the total number of participants that the researcher targets and needs to gather data from, analyse it, draw findings and make conclusions.

The population of interest was chosen from the three identified townships in Soweto. Figure 3.2 depicts the locations below.

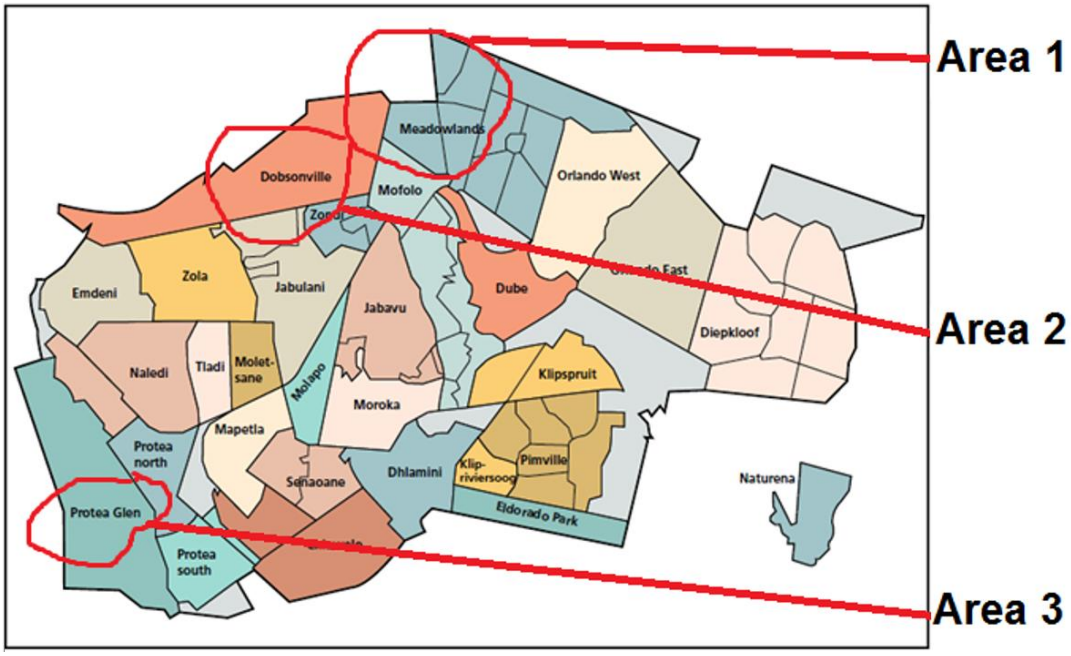

Figure 3.2: Soweto map

Source: Report (2011). The remaking of Soweto.

As shown in Figure 3.2, three townships, namely, Meadowlands, Dobsonville and Protea North, in Soweto, were chosen for this study. These three areas were chosen because there is an ultra-modern shopping centre in each of these areas (Ramchander, 2004). Thus, the small independent retailers situated around these ultra-modern shopping centres will definitely be affected by these ultra-modern shopping centres, as consumers who used to buy from the small independent retailers will be willing and eager to shop in malls and large chain stores (Du Plooy *et al.*, 2012). The sample was drawn from a population of small independent retailers in Soweto, namely 100 small independent retailers per identified township, making up a total of 300 small independent retailers.

The owners/managers/sales assistants of small independent retailers, such as spaza shops, general dealers and independent supermarkets that operate in the identified areas in Soweto were chosen to participate in this study. The focus of this study was on small independent retailers in Soweto, as Soweto is one of the largest townships in South Africa, housing many small independent retailers, and these small independent retailers are the backbone of many economies across the globe (Badenhorst-Weiss & Cilliers, 2014).

3.8 SAMPLING

Sampling design is a process where a sample is chosen to accept defensible inferences to be selected from the data and applied to populations, or when specific respondents are selected from the entire population (Saks & Allsop, 2013). The sample design lay out the process to be followed in order to draw the sample of the study. Sampling design is a part of the research plan that specifies how cases need to be chosen for observation (Cooper & Schindler, 2008). Research design maps out the basis of choosing a survey sample and offers the basic plan and methodology for choosing the sample (Cooper & Schindler, 2008).

- **Identifying the sampling frame**

According to Zikmund (2003), the sampling frame is defined as a list of all individuals or element units that comprise the population where a sample may be drawn from. The sampling frame consisted of small independent retailers in Soweto who were willing to participate in the research.

However, Adams, Khan and Raeside (2014) highlighted that under circumstances where the researcher does not have a sampling frame, the researcher can use a non-probability sampling method to serve the purposes of the study. For this reason, there was no sampling frame available of small independent retailers in Soweto. The absence of a sampling frame of small independent retailers operating in Soweto necessitated the researcher to create a list (sampling frame) of small independent retailers. The researcher walked from street to street in Meadowlands, Dobsonville and Protea Glen, and then approached the small independent retail owners/managers/sales assistants based on convenience, willingness and availability to participate in the study.

- **Determining the sampling size**

There is no easy equation in determining how large a sample is required, but quantitative researchers are usually advised to use as large a sample as possible (Polit & Beck, 2006). In research design, determining the sample size plays an important role because it enables the researcher to make judgements about the population within the study by making use of sample statistics where population parameters cannot be analysed (Waiyaki, 2013). Determining the sampling size

stresses that the greater the sample, the better it represents the population (Yount, 2006). However, Johnson and Christensen (2008) argued that when the sample is large, the worth of sampling is insignificant.

Naidoo (2016) mentions that when determining the sample size, a specified number of sampling elements should be considered in the final sample, namely:

- Participants who are willing to participate in the research study; and
- The number of final participants;

The factors that determine the appropriate sampling size are identified below (Johnson & Christensen, 2008);

- Cost: incorrect data is not useful in a study that cannot be finished due to insufficient funds (Yount, 2006). Therefore, a large sampling size normally increases the costs in terms of time and money.
- Accuracy: the more the population size increases, the more random errors cancel each other out.
- Homogeneity of the population: this means that the members of the population have similar characteristics within the study, therefore, the larger the variability in the population, the greater the sample will have to be (Johnson & Christensen, 2006).

In the light of the above, the sample size was determined based on the convenience and availability of the small independent retailers in Soweto. Small independent retailers in Soweto are not formally registered, and as such, this made it difficult to obtain a list of small independent retailers.

Similar studies were reviewed to determine the appropriate sampling size for this study. Makhitha (2016) distributed over 200 questionnaires, and Soke (2014) targeted a sampling size of 273 businesses in Soweto. Based on Makhitha and Soke's studies, a target sample size of 300 participants was determined for the study. Hence, for the purpose of this study, participants from three townships, namely, Meadowlands, Dobsonville and Protea North were selected.

- **Selecting the sampling methods**

Creswell (2009) mentions that there are two broad categories of sampling methods, namely, probability (random) sampling and non-probability sampling.

The probability sampling method gives every item of the population a known chance of being chosen for the sample (Hair, Celsi, Money, Samouel & Page, 2015), while the non-probability method does not give every item in the population a chance of being chosen (Stevens, Wrenn, Sherwood & Ruddick, 2006).

3.8.1 Probability sampling

Probability sampling is a procedure which is used to select individual units in a sample and these units have a known equal probability of being selected in the sample (Fowler, 2009). Overall, the probability sampling method can be employed when the researcher samples a population which is geographically well-defined. As mentioned by Salkind (2012), probability sampling is used when the selection of the respondents is determined by the likelihood of being selected in the sample.

Probability sampling is a method where every unit in the population has a possibility 'non-zero probability' of being chosen in the sample (Bhattacherjee, 2012). Ritchie and Lewis (2003) state that in probability sampling, the participants have a known probability of being selected because the elements in the population are selected randomly. Probability sampling comprises of simple random, systematic, stratified, cluster and multi-stage sampling (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2008). The simple random sampling method is discussed first.

- ***Simple random***

Simple random sampling provides all the possible subsets within a population with an equal probability of being chosen (Bhattacherjee, 2012). In other words, these procedures provide every item of the population an equal chance of being chosen. Krishnashwami (2002) mentions that simple random sampling is an appropriate technique to use when the population is homogenous.

- ***Systematic sampling***

Zikmund (2003) explains systematic sampling as a sampling process where a starting point is chosen by a random process, and then every number on the list may be selected. Systematic sampling is described as choosing elements at consistent intervals in an orderly list with the first element being chosen randomly. From the

sample frame list of participants that is being used, the equal chances of being selected is more effective in systematic sampling when compared with simple random sampling (Burns & Bush, 2010). It is a process that selects sample participants from a greater population, according to a random initial point, and according to a fixed and periodic interval, for example, choosing every fifth name on the list. Usually, every 'nth' participant is chosen from the whole population for inclusion in the sample population. Rubin and Babbie (2008) state that every fifth or tenth item on a sample frame may be chosen, depending on the percentage sample required.

- ***Stratified random sampling***

Kothari (2004) maintains that stratified random sampling is used when the population from which a sample is to be drawn is a heterogeneous group. Stratified sampling divides items into non-overlapping and homogeneous subgroups called strata, and then a simple random sample is drawn from each subgroup (Creswell, 2008; Bhattacherjee, 2012). In stratified sampling, every item of the population has a non-zero probability chance of being involved in the sample.

- ***Cluster sampling***

Kothari (2004) mentions that cluster sampling is when the researcher groups the population, and then select the groups or clusters instead of individual elements in the sample. Cluster sampling is used when the population is spread over a broad geographic region where it may not be possible to conduct a simple random sampling of the entire population. In such instances, the researcher sensibly divides the population into clusters, then randomly samples a few clusters, and measures all the units within that cluster (Bhattacherjee, 2012).

- ***Multi-stage sampling***

Kothari (2004) highlights that multi-stage sampling first selects large primary sampling units, then breaks it down to districts, towns and then into a few individuals within the towns. As noted by Kothari (2004), when random sampling is used in all stages, the sampling process is known as multi-stage random sampling.

3.8.2 Non-probability sampling

With a non-probability sampling method, the population is not represented by the selected sample, and therefore, it is not feasible to surmise valid conclusions about the population, based on the findings of the sample (Ghauri & Gronhaugh, 2010). Salkind (2012) and Van Zyl (2014) state that when the researcher employs non-probability sampling, the possibility of choosing any individual from the population is not known.

Non-probability sampling is a sampling method that contains an element of subjectivity, and offers a range of techniques that may be used to choose the sample (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). In this regard, certain groups of small independent retailers in Soweto were targeted.

If researchers do not know how many small independent retailers are operating in Soweto, they cannot calculate the likelihood of any retailers, such as small independent retailers, being selected for the sample. A non-probability sample was used to target a certain group that had specific characteristics that were of interest to the study (Cohen *et al.,* 2007). In this instance, the targeted group consisted of small independent retailers.

Non-probability was used as a mean of utilising non-random procedures to obtain the sample (Polit & Beck, 2012). Non-probability sampling is an economical and convenient design that use the judgment of the researcher in choosing the participants who know most about the phenomena (Brink, Van der Walt & Van Rensburg, 2012).

Non-probability sampling design was used in line with quantitative methods. The research study investigated the impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers. A non-probability convenience sampling was employed in this study because it allowed the researcher to gain a deep understanding of the phenomena under investigation (Babbie, 2010).

Saunders *et al.* (2012) identified different types of non-probability sampling, namely, quota, judgemental/purposive, snowball and convenience sampling, which is briefly discussed below.

- ***Quota sampling***

Quota sampling is a sample that represents a particular subgroup of the population and the subgroup is not randomly selected (Saunders *et al*., 2012). The purpose of quota sampling is to draw a sample that has the same features as the targeted population and the sampling process depends on a selection of convenience. Quota sampling is a classified type of purposive or convenience sampling that draws the sample from different strata (Saunders *et al*., 2016).

- ***Judgemental/purposive sampling***

In judgement sampling, the researcher selects a sample that will best represent the population (Quinlan, 2011). Judgemental sampling is a subjective selection process where the researcher decides which items should be researched. Saunders and Lewis (2012) explain judgemental sampling as a non-probability sampling based on the purpose of the research.

Purposive sampling is also known as judgemental sampling and is a sampling procedure where the researcher uses their own discretion to choose participants (Chiromo, 2006).

- ***Purposive sampling***

Botma, Greeff, Mulaudzi and Wright (2010) state that purposive sampling is established on the basis that the researchers' knowledge about the population is used to choose the sample members. Purposive sampling requires the researcher to choose certain elements of the population that will represent the focus area of interest (McMillan & Schumacher, 2007). De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2012) add that purposive sampling is a technique that collects data from the chosen respondents because they show some features which are of interest for a certain study.

- ***Snowball sampling***

Snowball sampling is a process that is used to choose additional participants on the base of referrals from the primary participants (McDaniel & Gates, 2013). This means that the participants identify one member of the population, and that participant is then asked to identify another prospect participant (Bachman & Schutt, 2014). According to Bhattacherjee (2012), in snowball sampling, the researcher identifies a small number of participants that meet the criteria for the study, and then requests the

participants to recommend similar or other participants that may meet the selection criteria.

Moreover, snowball sampling is a useful method to employ when the potential respondents are likely to be doubtful of the researcher's intentions (Adams *et al*., 2014). As noted by Wiid and Diggines (2015), snowball sampling is a judgment sampling technique that is used once a sample of a specific population is required.

Researchers use snowball sampling when the target population is difficult to identify, or the target population is unknown (Dongre, Deshmukh, Kalaiselvan & Upadhyaya, 2009). The researcher normally chooses a certain number of participants that are most likely to possess the characteristics that are initially required. Furthermore, Johnston and Sabin (2010) mention that the researcher usually relies on the snowball sampling method in a study of a hard-to-reach population.

Snowball samplings are randomly selected as they are chosen using a convenience technique (Baltar & Brunet, 2012). Lastly, snowball sampling depends on asking the participants to identify other possible respondents that have a similar set of characteristics (Krishnaswami, 2002). Given the above, the benefit of snowball sampling is reducing the costs associated with searching for participants (McDaniel & Gates, 2013).

- ***Convenience sampling***

Uludag (2014) defines convenience sampling as a method where the researchers use their judgement to select the units from the population. Convenience sampling is a sampling method that is easily available to the researcher to conveniently select the participants (Saunders *et al*., 2012). Convenience sampling is influenced by characteristics such as the easy availability of respondents, known contacts of respondents, geographical proximity, period and budget (Bryman, 2014).

Even though these sampling methods may barely lead the researcher to representative samples, they may possibly be the only means of reaching the population, especially in the absence of the sample frame (Bhattacherjee, 2012).

This study employed a convenience non-probability sampling method, as discussed by Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2015). Etikan *et al.* (2015) mention that the convenience sampling technique is used to choose a population that poses limitations

due to the specific nature of the population. The convenience sampling method was employed to ensure that the researcher acquired a large enough number of participants that were easily available to participate in the study (Kumar, 2014). Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique that depends on information that was collected from the population that was conveniently available to partake in the study (De Muth, 2014). The fact that there is no sampling frame of independent retailers could also be the reason for using convenience sampling.

Subsequently, it was convenient for the researcher to hand out the self-administered printed questionnaires to the respondents, as it is a cost-effective method of data collection. The convenience sampling method was used to collect the information because the storeowners, managers and sales assistants were conveniently available and accessible.

The questionnaires were distributed based on the small independent retailer's personal involvement with the phenomena that are being investigated and their ability and willingness to provide information to the researcher in an accurate and adequate manner (Bhattacherjee, 2012). In addition, the participants were chosen conveniently, based on their knowledge and experience in the application of marketing communication strategies.

Convenience sampling has an advantage when the researcher has enough time, workforce and resources, as the data can be collected in a short period (Sanders *et al.*, 2012). Conversely, one of the main disadvantages of convenience sampling is that convenience sampling does not represent the entire population, therefore, the findings cannot be generalised (Babbie, 2014).

3.9 DATA COLLECTION AND DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

Data collection is a logical process that collects information from the participants with the purpose of resolving the research questions (LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 2014). According to Grove *et al*. (2015), data is collected in numerous ways, depending on the kind of research, and by using different types of data-collection methods (Burns & Grove, 2001).

The researcher should firstly identify the type of information that would be needed to solve the problem (Burns & Bush, 2010). Malhotra (2010) said that there are two types

of methods which can be used to collect data, namely, the secondary data-collection method, which comprises of collecting information that has already been collected, such as articles, books, and databases, and the primary data-collection method which comprises of collecting information for the first time. The different data-collection sources and the data-collection instrument assisted the researcher to obtain appropriate information related to the study.

Burns and Bush (2010) mention that the researcher should first consider using secondary data because it is faster and cheaper to collect than primary data. Wiid and Diggines (2013) define secondary data as historical information that has been collected before. In this study, secondary data was used for the purposes of the literature review. The relevant literature was reviewed in Chapters 1 to 4 so that the researcher could explore the subject and familiarise himself with the research problem by means of a review of academic research articles and academic textbooks.

When the research problem has not been solved after collecting the secondary data, a formal research study must be conducted by means of a primary data-collection method (Wiid & Diggines, 2013). This study used both secondary and primary data-collection methods to collect the relevant data for the study.

Secondary data is information that was previously gathered by someone else; and the utilisation of the present data offers a feasible choice for researchers who have limited resources and time (Johnston, 2017). However, it was foreseen that the secondary data (literature review) for this study would not be viable enough to answer or resolve the problem statement being highlighted. Thus, this study further needed to obtain primary data in order to determine the factors affecting the marketing communication strategies of small independent retailers. .

Primary data is defined as a data-collection method that intends to resolve the problem by means of collecting data for the first time. According to Wiid and Diggines (2013), primary data is information that is collected from the participants for the first time, whilst secondary data is information that was gathered by other researchers. The study employed primary data by using a conceptualised self-administered printed questionnaire survey. A questionnaire is a set of questions that have been developed to gather the necessary information to achieve the objectives of the research project; it is therefore a formal schedule to collect data from the participants (McDaniel &

Gates, 2010). Primary data can be collected by employing either a qualitative or a quantitative method (Malhotra, 2010).

3.9.1 Questionnaire protocol

Watkins (2012) explains the questionnaire as a data-collection instrument that assists the researcher to assemble data that will be analysed and serve as proof of the relevant results of the study. A questionnaire can be administered by telephone, computer-assisted software, hand, post or by outsourcing it to data-collection companies (Collis & Hussey, 2009).

The researcher drafts the questionnaire in such a way that the questions are appropriate and applicable to the study (Zikmund & Babin, 2010). A questionnaire should include questions that are formulated so that they can obtain appropriate and accurate answers to gather the information that will answer the research questions. Furthermore, according to McDaniel and Gates (2010), a questionnaire is a set of questions that have been developed to gather the necessary information to achieve the objectives of the research project; it is therefore, a formal schedule to collect data from the participants.

A self-administered printed questionnaire survey was employed in the current study, because it involved less time to collect the data from the participants and it was less costly (Polit & Beck, 2004). The questions in the questionnaire were kept as short as possible because the participants (store owners/managers/sales assistants) are often busy attending to customers, and therefore, they would not like to spend much time on a long questionnaire.

Constructs were adapted from existing literature. A five-point Likert scale was used in the questionnaire, and most statements had reply categories varying from ‘strongly agree’ (1) to ‘strongly disagree’ (5); and a Likert scale ranging from ‘never’ (1) to ‘always’ (5). Nominal and dichotomous questions were also used. For this reason, the researcher adapted the questionnaires and questions that were used by Makhitha (2016); Soke (2014); Mokgoatlheng (2012); Gaweseb (2015); Osmanagic and Antighechian (2011); Van Scheers (2010); Mpofu (2014); Mbonyane and Ladzani (2011). Additionally, because their studies investigated similar topics, the researcher also adapted some questions from the studies by Kebede (2015); Hooper (2006); Peter (2014); Krush, Sohi and Saini (2015); Konyimbih, Mbura and Paul (2017); Ebitu

(2016); Gbolagade, Adesola and Oyewale (2013); Frimpong (2014); Badenhorst-Weiss and Cilliers (2014), and Acheampong (2014).

These questionnaires and questions were adapted from the previous studies because they have proven that the studies were academically successful in attaining the research objectives. These studies were also chosen because they have academically proved that the questions from the questionnaires have collected accurate responses that assisted in achieving the objectives of the studies or solved problems that were under investigation. The statistician also formulated some questions in order to achieve the objectives of the current study.

The questionnaire consisted of 15 questions, including an option for other comments (see Appendix B).

Section A_a, Research question 1: Small independent retailer's attitude towards marketing communication strategies

What is the small independent retailer's attitude towards marketing communication strategies? This question was adapted from Mokgoatlheng's (2012) and Gaweseb's (2015) studies. The current study further adapted questions from Gabrielli and Balboni (2010); Mokgoatlheng (2012) and Kallier (2016).

Section A had two subsections. The first subsection of Section A_a determined the attitude of small independent retailers towards marketing communication strategies.

Section A_a had eight statements that comprised of a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5), and a Likert scale ranging from 'never' (1) to 'always' (5).

Section A_b, Research question 1: Marketing communication strategies

What marketing communications strategies are utilised by small independent retailers in Soweto? This question was adapted from Mokgoatlheng's (2012) and Gaweseb's (2015) studies. Soke's (2014) questionnaire highlighted questions that gathered information about the elements of marketing communication and promotion, hence the current study adapted Soke's (2014) and Gaweseb's (2015) questionnaires. The current study also adapted questions from Gabrielli and Balboni (2010); Osmanagic and Antighechian (2011); Mokgoatlheng (2012); Luxton *et al.* (2015), and Kallier (2016).

The second subsection of Section A of the questionnaire broke down the elements of marketing communications, and then asked questions that gathered information about the marketing communication strategies that small independent retailers utilise in Soweto.

Section A_b had 59 statements that comprised of a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5), and a Likert scale ranging from 'never' (1) to 'always' (5).

Section B, Research question 2: Marketing communication challenges faced by small independent retailers

Which challenges are affecting the marketing communication strategies of small independent retailers in Soweto? This question was adapted from studies conducted by Van Scheers (2010) and Mpofu (2014). The questionnaire adapted questions from Makhitha's (2016); Mbonyane and Ladzani's (2011); Lekhanya's (2010); and Kebede's (2015) studies in order to achieve the objective of the current study.

Section B had one item which comprised of a dichotomous question with a 'yes or no' answer.

Section C, Research question 3: The impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers

Do marketing communication strategies have an impact on the performance of small independent retailers? This question was adapted from studies by Hooper (2006), Peter (2014), and Krush, Sohi and Saini (2015).

The study questionnaire adapted questions from studies conducted by Konyimbih, Mbura and Paul (2017), Ebitu (2016), Gbolagade, Adesola and Oyewale (2013), Frimpong (2014), and Acheampong (2014).

Section C had one item which comprised of a five-point Likert scale ranging from '1' to '5'.

Section D, question 6-15: Demographical information

How do demographic factors (age and years of operation) influence the performance of small independent retailers? This question was adapted from studies conducted by Gaweseb (2015) and Soke (2014). Further questions in Section D on demographics

were located at the end of the questionnaire, and it covered questions such as gender, age, level of education, types of business ownership, number of employees and the annual business turnover.

This section was adapted from studies by Gaweseb (2015) and Makhitha (2016). Section D had 12 items consisting of nominal questions and dichotomous questions.

The researcher met the respondents in person and personally distributed the questionnaires to the respondents (Malhotra, Birks & Wills, 2012). This means that the researcher personally handed out the questionnaires to small independent retailers as a technique for gathering primary data.

3.10 PILOT STUDY

A pilot test is a test which evaluates the questionnaire so that any potential problems are eliminated in advance and ensures that the participants do not experience difficulties in answering the questions, and there are no problems experienced when capturing information (Saunders *et al*., 2016). Piloting/ pre-testing the questionnaire ensures that errors are eliminated in the questionnaire (Babbie & Mouton, 2009). Pre-testing assists in determining whether there is a need to review the questions, the format of the questionnaire, and the need for further revisions (Araoye, 2003). This ensures that errors are corrected immediately before the questionnaire is finalised and sent out to the participants.

Before the researcher began to conduct the main data-collection process, a pilot study was conducted. A pilot study is conducted in order for the researcher to improve and test the competence of the research instruments, to test whether the research procedure is accurate and to evaluate the viability of the research study (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002). De Vaus (2013) further posits that a pilot study is essential because it identifies the logistical challenges that might happen, and a preliminary data collection helps to estimate the variability of results to assist in determining the sample size.

For this reason, a pilot study that included 30 participants was undertaken in the Soweto district, and reliabilities were measured using the Cronbach alpha coefficients. This method was employed because Phayane's (2013) study pre-tested the questionnaire using five small independent retailers in the area. The data that was

gathered during the pre-test was not included in the research study, but it assisted to improve the data-collection instruments.

3.11 HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

A research hypothesis is a provisional assertion of a relationship between two variables and is a sophisticated guess about how the social world works (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2013). This study focuses on the relationship between marketing communication strategies (independent) and the performance (dependent) of small independent retailers in Soweto, South Africa. The hypotheses are accepted when they are statistically proven, and are rejected when the hypothesis statements cannot be answered through scientific observation (Tredoux & Durheim, 2013).

Numerous authors discussed whether marketing communication strategies have an impact on the performance of small independent retailers. The literature review (Chapter 2) further revealed that according to Tarutė and Gatautis (2014) and Scuotto, Del Giudice and Carayannis (2017), marketing communication strategies do have an impact on the performance of small independent retailers.

Smith and Chaffey (2012), and Bhandari (2012) mention that marketing communications assist businesses to grow their sales, get closer to customers as a means of customer satisfaction, increase turnover, and increase profits. The aforementioned are supported by results from Kwok and Yu (2013) who discussed that sales can be increased by utilising marketing communication strategies.

Consoli (2012) expanded the discussion by stating that marketing communication strategies have a positive impact on performance, growth, expansion and new products of small independent retailers. A study by Dzisi and Ofosu (2014) found that the marketing communication strategies utilised by small independent retailers have a significant impact on the performance in terms of profitability (50%), brand awareness (30.6%) and market share (19.4%). From the above discussion, the impact of marketing communication on the performance of small independent retailers will be tested towards the overall expectations, and thus the following hypotheses were formulated.

Hypothesis 1:

The marketing communication strategy improves trust between employees, which normally leads to excellent work performance, which in its turn, leads to a positive impact on the business's performance (Charoensukmongkol, 2014). Wang *et al.* (2016) state that a marketing communication strategy can enhance the small independent retailer's performance. Buil *et al*. (2013) maintained that a marketing communication strategy has a positive impact on the business performance. In Anderson-Macdonald, Chandy and Zia's (2014) study, they found that a marketing communication strategy has a positive impact on the business's performance. However, Tsikirayi *et al.* (2013) argue that small independent retailers do not have a positive attitude towards marketing communication strategies.

The first hypothesis of the study is:

H_1: Marketing communication strategies have an impact on the performance of small independent retailers.

H_0: Marketing communication strategies do not have an impact on the performance of small independent retailers.

Hypothesis 2:

Sin *et al.* (2010) stated that there were no significant differences between small independent retailers demographic characteristics (age of small independent retail owners/managers/sales assistants) and marketing communication strategies. Fuertes *et al.* (2013) further found that the age of small independent retail managers is connected to negative practices regarding marketing communication strategies and negative attitudes towards older employees.

In the contrary, Sin *et al.* (2010) suggested that the small independent retail demographic characteristics (age of small independent retail owners/managers/sales assistants) influence the marketing communication strategies through their experiences. Afande (2015) discussed that the age of small independent retail owners/managers/sales assistants has a significant effect on the growth and performance of small independent retailers. Older small independent retail owners/managers/sales assistants have a significant effect because they have more experience and they are in a better position to execute marketing communication

strategies than their younger counterparts (Indarti & Langenberg, 2004; Afande, 2015).

This leads to the next hypothesis of the study:

H_2: Age of small independent retail owners/managers/sales assistants has a positive influence on marketing communication strategies.

H_0: Age of small independent retail owners/managers/sales assistants does not have a positive influence on marketing communication strategies.

Hypothesis 3:

Afande (2015) mentioned that older small independent retailers grow faster than younger ones because of the experience they have gained on how to implement marketing communication strategies over the years. Hence, older small independent retailers point to a positive relationship between the small independent retailer's growth, utilisation of marketing communications strategies and its years of operations (Afande, 2015). Soke (2014) mentions that there was a statistical difference across the operational years of small independent retailers and their marketing communication strategies. The third proposed hypothesis is:

H_3: Operational years of small independent retailers have a positive influence on marketing communication strategies.

H_0: Operational years of small independent retailers do not have a positive influence on marketing communication strategies.

The data analyses conducted during the study are discussed next.

3.12 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is a process that summarises the data that has been gathered and organises it in order for the researcher to synthesise and categorise the data obtained from the data-collection instrument. Zikmund and Babin (2010) further state that quantitative data analysis refers to collecting primary data from the respondents, and using the statistical data analysis to compute the data.

As soon as the fieldwork was finished, the next step was to analyse the collected data. The questionnaires were cleaned, and transformed into useful and relevant

information by firstly capturing the data from the 300 questionnaires into a file on the Microsoft Excel computer program (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). The captured data was coded by allocating numerical figures to each answer, and then imported to the statistical software called SPSS version 25.

In this manner, the data that was gathered in this study was quantitatively analysed with the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science) software. Magolego (2011) explains that SPSS can analyse and interpret data quickly. SPSS comprises a set of processes that organise, transform and analyse the quantitative data that was obtained from the questionnaires.

An important assumption for a technique like 'Analysis of Variance' (ANOVA) is the assumption of homogeneous variances. In statistics, ANOVA is a collection of associated procedures and statistical models in which the variance that is being examined is partitioned into components due to various explanatory variables (Hahn & Salmaso, 2017). ANOVA is used to test for differences between two or more independent variables (Dean & Bergeron, 2015). The ANOVA analysis was used to determine the differences among respondents to show if they were different in terms of the marketing communication strategies they use. Factor analysis was used to evaluate the inconsistencies that occur due to causal elements in order to predict the most important predictors of resultant behaviour.

According to Schroeder, Sjoquist and Stephan (2016), regression analysis is a more advanced analysis technique and it seeks to find the sum of the squared value of the vertical distances. It summarises the relationship between the variables of interest and other variables that are expected to influence that variable. Regression analysis is the 'bread and butter' of social science research, and it estimates the effects of numerous factors concurrently (Schroeder *et al.*, 2016). Regression analysis also evaluates information about connected variables in order to make forecasts (Sorooshia, Meysam, Mehrdad, Neginsadat & Yasha, 2013). Based on this study, regression analysis was used to understand how the impact of marketing communication strategies relates to the performance of small independent retailers. Furthermore, to explore the relationship between the impact of marketing communication strategies and the performance of small independent retailers.

According to Lamb, Wolfinbarger, Money, Samouel and Page (2015) exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is a multivariate analysis method that is employed to distinguish variables in a group of observed variables. Hair *et al*. (2015) expound this argument by highlighting that factor analysis is employed to evaluate the inconsistencies that transpire due to causal elements with the aim of predicting the essential analysts of resultant behaviour.

Two models can be used for EFA, which are principle component analysis and common factor analysis. Sarstedt and Mooi (2011) mention that principle component analysis reduces the initial set of variables to a smaller set of variables to identify the primary factors. Lamb *et al.* (2015) mention that common factor analysis makes use of only the common factors found in a scale to identify the underlying constructs. These are the eigenvalues, scree plot and factor loadings (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). An eigenvalue refers to the ratio between the variance of the specific factor compared to that of the average factor (Feinberg, Kinner & Taylor, 2013). A factor with an eigenvalue that is above 1 is generally retained (Feinberg *et al*., 2013). A scree plot is used to select the optimal number of factors, and the scree plot stipulates a simple visual representation of how quickly the eigenvalue or the quality of the factors degrade (Feinberg *et al*., 2013).

Additionally, the descriptive statistical analysis was achieved by means of computing standard deviations, mean scores, t-test, correlations, pie charts and frequency tables for the data presentation analysis. Tables, graphs and chart percentages were used to visually present quantitative descriptions to describe single variables and associations that join one variable with another.

3.13 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

As noted by Leedy and Ormrod (2010), the relationship between validity and reliability highlights that a test can be reliable but not valid, although a test cannot be valid without first being reliable. Therefore, this study used the validity and reliability test to confirm that the results were trustworthy and to prevent errors of measurement Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*. (2014). This was achieved by ensuring that a statistician reviewed and carried out a pilot test of the questionnaire before and after the data was collected. Validity is discussed first, and then followed by a discussion of reliability and trustworthiness.

3.13.1 Validity

According to Pietersen and Maree (2007), validity is an instrument that measures what it is supposed to measure, and it involves the effectiveness and soundness of the instrument. According to Kumar (2005), validity is a measurement process that includes assessing the ability of an instrument to measure what it is intended to measure. This means that validity establishes whether or how accurate the research findings are, or whether the research study truthfully measures what was intended to measure (Coleman & Briggs, 2002). Validity in quantitative research denotes that a researcher can come up with valuable and important suggestions from the scores obtained on certain instruments (Creswell, 2012).

Validity is the measurement in which the findings acquired from analysing the data actually present the phenomena under study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). In order to increase the likelihood of validity, the researcher needs to pre-test the survey (Maphoto, 2016). This can be done by using a pilot study to identify the elements that could be misinterpreted, and such elements could be improved accordingly. In this study, a pilot study included 30 small independent retail participants for the purpose of validity. This study utilised suitable quantitative research methods to maximise validity.

The major types of validity highlighted by Heale and Twycross (2015) are internal validity, predictive validity, content validity, convergent validity, discriminant validity, construct validity and face validity. For the purpose of the study, content validity, convergent validity, discriminant validity, construct validity and face validity are adopted in the study.

Internal validity

Internal validity refers to the quality of an experimental design, such as obtaining results that are attributed to manipulating the independent variable (Salkind, 2012). This type of validity further refers to the degree that claims that changes to the independent variable may cause changes in the dependent variable (McMillan & Schumacher, 2007).

Predictive validity

Predictive validity denotes that the instrument should have high correlations with future criteria. This implies that a score of high self-efficiency associated to performing a task must predict the likelihood of a participant completing the task (Heale & Twycross, 2015).

Content validity

Content validity refers to the degree that a measure reports on the topic of interest. This denotes that the sections in the questionnaire must capture the whole scope of the theory that is being measured (Zikmund *et al.,* 2013). The researcher needs to ensure that the questionnaire is presented to experts, and in order for experts to assist in validating the questionnaire, the researcher needs to cover the whole content (Babbie, 2007). Content validity is applicable to this study because the sections in the questionnaire explain the whole idea that is being measured, hence the questionnaire was validated by a statistician.

Convergent validity

Validity refers to an instrument that measures what it is supposed to measure, and it involves the effectiveness and soundness of the instrument (Pietersen & Maree, 2007). Brundle, Heaven, Brown, Teale, Young, West and Clegg (2018) state that convergent validity is a subtype of construct validity and is considered to be a core component of the validity of a test. Nienaber and McNeill (2018) explain that convergent validity exists when each estimated indicator's path coefficient is mapped to a potential construct that is statistically significant. In order to achieve convergent validity, the statistician ran the total coefficient value for the marketing communication strategy scale. As a result (see Table 4.10, Section 4.6.3), the item loadings ranged between 0.573 and 0.934, which means that the instruments loaded well on their respective constructs. The results indicate that all items converged well on the construct they were supposed to measure, hence, it confirmed the existence of convergent validity.

Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity refers to the correlations which are compared for each variable in the model to measure the degree of differences between the overlapping constructs

(Franke & Sarstedt, 2019). The measurement of discriminant validity is essential in research with the use of indicators for demonstrating the construct (Ab Hamid, Sami & Sidek, 2017). When the discriminant validity is not established in a study the researcher cannot be firm about the results confirming whether they are a result of statistical discrepancies (Henseler, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2015). In the current study, the motivation for employing discriminant validity was to identify the content and substance of constructs (Voorhees, Brady, Calantone & Ramirez, 2016. Discriminant validity was achieved by means of correlation coefficient/Simple Correlation Matrix.

Stockburger (2016) mentions that a positive correlation coefficient refers to the value of one variable that increases, while in contrast, a negative correlation coefficient signifies that as one variable increases, the other decreases, and vice-versa. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r), or correlation coefficient, is a measure of the degree of linear relationship between two variables, mostly labelled X and Y. The study used a Simple Correlation Matrix to indicate if the research constructs are distinct and unique from one another (see Table 4.10, Section 4.6.3).

Construct validity

Validity represents the point that the measure conforms for measuring the construct that is being scrutinised (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2008). Construct validity needs to be internally consistent and should measure what it is supposed to measure. This means that the construct validity of a measure either approves or rejects the hypothesis envisaged from the theory (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

Thus, the researcher employed the experts in the field to confirm whether the questionnaire assessed the constructs in question. The researcher further reinforced the construct validity of the questionnaire by ensuring that different sections of the questionnaire dealt with facets crucial to the research topic, based on the literature review. In practice, the statistician verified whether the relationships between variables confirm or deny the hypothesis predicted from the theory for this study. Meaning that the statistician confirmed/ denied that small independent retailers utilise marketing communication strategies.

Face validity

Face validity refers to the extent that an instrument seems valid. Meaning, the instrument needs to measure what it is supposed to measure (Gravetter & Forzano,

2003). Face validity involves the superficial appearance of the face value of a measurement process. In order to ensure face validity, the researcher presented the questionnaire to the statistician for professional judgement.

The different types of validity used in this study are content, convergent, discriminant, construct and face validity. Moreover, the questionnaire allowed the researcher to gather good quality data by ensuring that the questionnaire met the purpose of the research study, and that it was practically feasible and carefully phrased.

3.13.2 Reliability

Reliability is defined as the degree to which the findings of the study may be replicated under a comparable methodology, and that the findings are constantly consistent over a certain period (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005). Therefore, reliability is seen as a research tool that ensures that the research instrument consistently provides the same results over a certain period. Furthermore, reliability is a tool that measures what it is supposed to measure (Pietersen & Maree, 2007). This means that reliability refers to the consistency, stability and accuracy of the data-collection instrument and the measuring technique.

If the findings of a study are reliable, other researchers that use the same technique will also obtain the same findings. The findings of reliability depend on the way in which the data is understood and on the possible recurrence of the original data (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003). According to Burns (2000), reliability can be increased by lengthening a questionnaire, therefore the researcher ensured reliability in the study by increasing the length of the questionnaire by including more questions.

Reliability can further be increased by taking the average score of multiple measurements from the questionnaire; a common strategy could be to measure an individual three times and then take the average value (De Vet, Mokkink, Mosmuller & Terwee, 2017). To ensure reliability in this study, the researcher distributed a few questionnaires to small independent retailers in Soweto to pre-test whether the questionnaire would be able to measure what it was supposed to measure.

Lastly, Kraska and Neuman (2012) mention that the principle of reliability is associated with the trustworthiness and consistency of the information being collected. Pietersen and Maree (2007) state that pre-testing methods, Cronbach's alpha coefficient and other methods can be employed to measure the reliability of an instrument. The

Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated in the study to establish the dimension of consistency. Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha are used to assess the consistency between the responses against each item from the questionnaire (Pietersen & Maree, 2007). Hair *et al.* (2015) interpret Cronbach's Alpha as listed in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Interpreting Cronbach's alpha coefficient

Range	Strength
< 0.6	Poor
0.6 to < 0.7	Moderate
0.7 to < 0.8	Good
0.8 to <0.9	Very good
0.9 to < 0.95	Excellent
= 0.95	Too high (Items considered to be redundant)

Source: Adapted from Hair *et al.* (2015).

For the purpose of the study, the reliability and validity of all the scales and sub-scales were verified with exploratory factor analysis and Cronbach's alphas. Chapter 4 deliberates on the factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha that were done for the current study.

3.14 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

In evaluating the results of the study, it is noted that the study has its own limitations. These limitations are as follows:

The existing literature, specifically on small independent retailers, was limited, therefore some literature used in the study was based on small and medium-sized enterprises.

The study focused only on the impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers in Soweto only, and therefore, the fact that a convenient sampling method was used limit the results of the research, and as such cannot be generalised to the entire population.

The sample was limited to small independent retailers who were predominantly owners, managers and sales assistants, consequently the results could not be generalised to a broader population or a sample with different demographics.

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned limitations that do not negate the contributions of this study, it can be concluded that the study shows promise for investigating the impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers, and all the research objectives were achieved.

3.15 ETHICAL CLEARANCE

Ethical matters and procedures should receive serious attention in both a qualitative and quantitative research study (Streubert & Carpenter, 2011). The researcher first needs to obtain approval for the research study from the relevant academic institution before starting with the research study (Saunders *et al*., 2016). For the purpose of the current study, the researcher first sought permission from UNISA and secondly sought permission from the small independent retailers in Soweto before collecting data. The ethical clearance certificate for the study is attached as Appendix A.

UNISA's Policy on Research Ethics states that researchers should protect and respect the confidentiality, dignity and privacy of the respondents (University of South Africa, 2007). This means that the researcher must obey UNISA's code of conduct for researchers. De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2007) state that ethical guidelines assist the researcher as a basis and standard from where the researcher ought to assess their own conduct.

The researcher included an informed consent form in the questionnaire that contained a detailed description of the nature and aim of the research to be conducted to assure the respondents that participation is voluntary and that the acquired information will be treated confidentially. The ethical clearance form was submitted together with a draft questionnaire before the data was collected, as mentioned in the guideline for research at UNISA. Next is a discussion of the ethical guidelines that the researcher followed.

3.15.1 Formal informed consent

Sedenberg and Hoffmann (2016) define informed consent as the agreement attained from the participant, or from his/her authorised representative, to the participation in pursuit. Before the researcher collects data, the respondents should be provided with sufficient information regarding the study (Schulze, 2002). In this regard, the respondents were provided with enough information, as the process to be followed

and the way in which the findings will be used and made available to the respondents was discussed with them. The researcher did misconstrue facts to convince the respondents to participate in the study (De Vos *et al*., 2007). This helped the respondents to make their decisions concerning fairness and transparency. The informed consent form was given to each respondent and contained a detailed description of the nature and aim of the research to be conducted to assure the respondents that participation was voluntary and that the acquired information would be treated confidentially (see Appendix B).

3.15.2 Protection from psychological or physical harm

Respondents can be injured in an emotional or physical way (De Vos *et al*., 2012). In order for the researcher to avoid harming the respondents, the researcher informed the respondents beforehand about the influence of investigating the marketing communication strategies utilised by small independent retailers in Soweto and offered them an opportunity to withdraw at any time should they see the need to do so.

3.15.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality and anonymity ensures that should someone inform the researcher about something, the information will be regarded as private, and the researcher will hold it in confidence and not tell anyone else (Swain, 2016). The information provided by respondents should be considered as confidential, unless the respondents agreed otherwise upon the informed consent letter (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). This means that researchers have to be cautious, sensitive and sensible towards their respondents.

During the data-collection process, the respondents' confidential information was not compromised. The respondent's right to confidentiality was adhered to during the study because no confidential information was divulged, as the research results were presented anonymously (Huysamen, 1994).

The researcher respected the respondent's confidentiality by not disclosing the specifics of what other respondents wrote in their questionnaires. The researcher did not discuss the respondents' information about the types of marketing communication strategies they utilise with other respondents in their area. The respondent's confidence has to be protected, their privacy has to be respected and their anonymity

has to be preserved when they participate in the research (Glesne, 2006; Webster, Lewis & Brown, 2014; Leedy & Ormrod, 2015).

3.15.4 Acknowledgement of sources

All sources that were cited in the study were properly acknowledged to avoid committing plagiarism. The research document was submitted through TurnItin to ensure that no plagiarism was committed. Moreover, every author that has been quoted in-text was appropriately referenced using the Harvard referencing style, and furthermore, the researcher acknowledged the literature reviewed by attaching a comprehensive reference list at the end of the study.

The study obtained data from the owners/managers/sales assistants of small independent retailers in Soweto, as they are well informed about the environment in which their business operates. The participants were acknowledged in advance before they participated in the study, and were guaranteed that their responses would be preserved with the greatest confidentiality. The participants were informed that they were allowed to withdraw at any time during the data-collection process should they need to do so. The respondents were further notified that the questionnaires will be kept for five years, and the study can be found under the UNISA database. The data-collection instruments essentially provided the respondents the assurance that this study was ethical and trustworthy.

3.16 SUMMARY

The research process is followed to collect, organise, and then present the suitable and relevant information for decision-making purposes (Wiid & Diggines, 2013). The research process is a systematic and orderly technique that provides reliable data (Wiid & Diggines, 2013). This section of the study discussed the research process employed in order to collect the primary data for the study. Each step in the research process was discussed in detail by providing a theoretical base and a practical application. This chapter discussed the research design and methodology employed in the study. The research methodology was first outlined, followed by a discussion of the research philosophy, research design, research approach and research strategy. The chapter further discussed the targeted population, sampling, data-collection method and instrument, pilot study, hypothesis development, data analysis, validity

and reliability. The limitations of the study were highlighted. Setting aside the underlying limitations, the study is in the interest of the Sowetan and South African small independent retail industry, and also small, medium and micro-sized enterprises that can all gain knowledge about the impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers. The ethical considerations related to the study were discussed last.

The next chapter, Chapter 4, discusses the analysis, results and the interpretation of the data that was collected from the completed questionnaires.

CHAPTER 4:
DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Chapter 4 is to critically analyse and interpret data, and then present the research findings in order to realise the research objectives. This chapter starts with a summary of the research objectives, research questions and the research design employed in the study. Thereafter, the demographic profile of the respondents, relevant tables, graphs and chart percentages present quantitative descriptions of the demographics. The descriptive statistical analyses are presented next by computing standard deviations, mean scores, correlations, pie charts, frequency and tables. An overview of factor analysis is presented, with validity and reliability analysis, and analyses of the hypotheses are presented.

4.2 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This chapter addresses the research objectives and research questions of the study. Direct data pertinent to the research objectives are:

- The first research objective of the study was to determine the small independent retailers' attitude towards marketing communication strategies.
- The second research objective of the study was to determine the marketing communication strategies utilised by small independent retailers in Soweto.
- The third research objective was to identify challenges affecting marketing communication strategy implementation of small independent retailers.
- The fourth research objective was to assess the impact of marketing communication strategies on the marketing communication performance of small independent retailers.
- The last research objective was to determine the influence of demographic factors (age and years of operation) on the performance of small independent retailers.

The researcher distributed 300 self-administered printed questionnaires to the targeted respondents with the assistance of two fieldworkers. The researcher and the field workers personally delivered and collected some of the questionnaires from the

respondents after completion. The questionnaire return rate is summarised in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Respondents response rate

Respondent category	Number in the sample	Number of responses	Responses by percentage
Meadowlands	100	100	33.3%
Dobsonville	100	100	33.3%
Protea North	100	100	33.3%
Total	**300**	**300**	**100%**

Table 4.1 depicts that the response rate was 100%. Data was collected in Dobsonville, Meadowlands and Protea North from 300 questionnaires.

The demographic profile of the respondents is discussed next.

4.3 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Section D of the questionnaire contained questions related to the demographic information of respondents. It included questions related to gender, age group, level of education, business ownership, how long the business has been operating, how many people the business employs and the annual turnover of the business.

These demographic factors are used to understand the characteristics of the respondents and their business. In this study, it was crucial to understand the demographic profile of the small independent retailers because it assisted in establishing the gender, age group, level of education, business ownership, how long the business has been operating, how many people the business employs, and the annual turnover of small independent retailers.

The demographic profile of the respondents who answered the questionnaires is discussed below.

Demographic profile of respondents (*n*=300)

4.3.1 Gender of the respondents

The gender of respondents is important as it provides this study with a good understanding of the participants.

The results of the current study are shown in Figure 4.1.

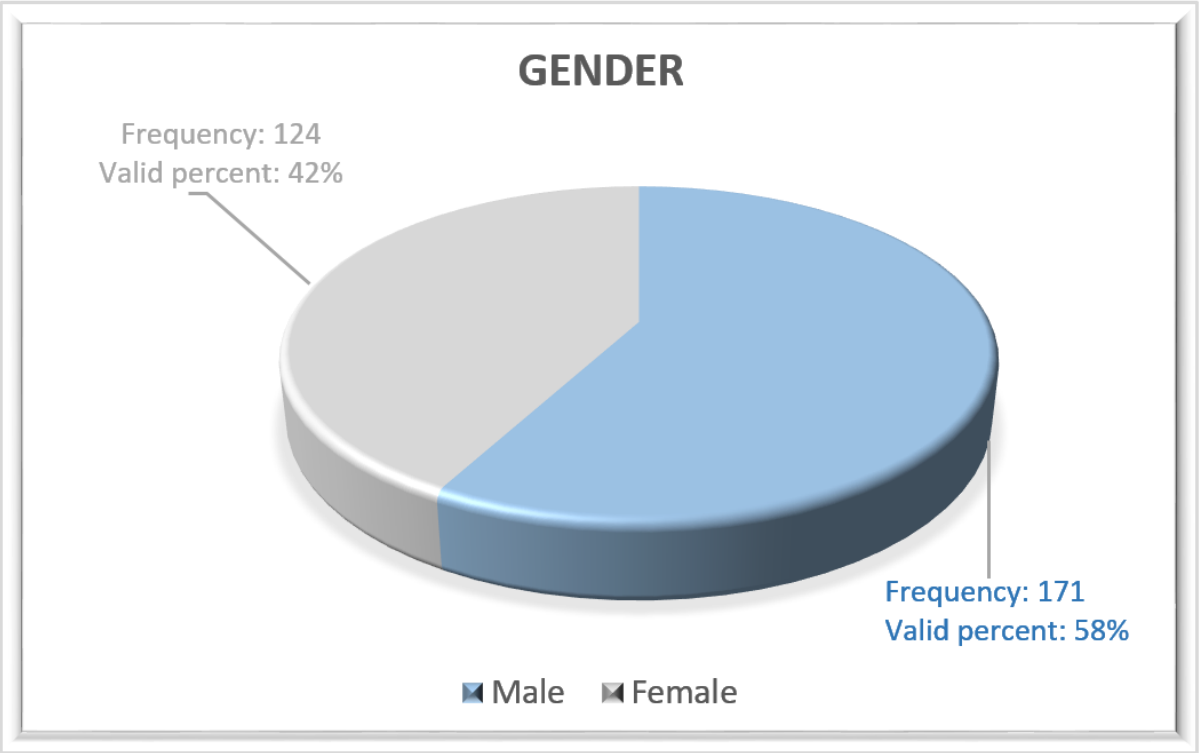

Figure 4.1: Gender

Figure 4.1 indicates that 58% (n=171) of the respondents were males, which means that males were in the majority, with female respondents at 42% (n=124).

4.3.2 Age of the respondents

This question about the age of the respondents was asked in order to determine the age groups of owners/managers/sales assistants of the small independent retailers in Soweto.

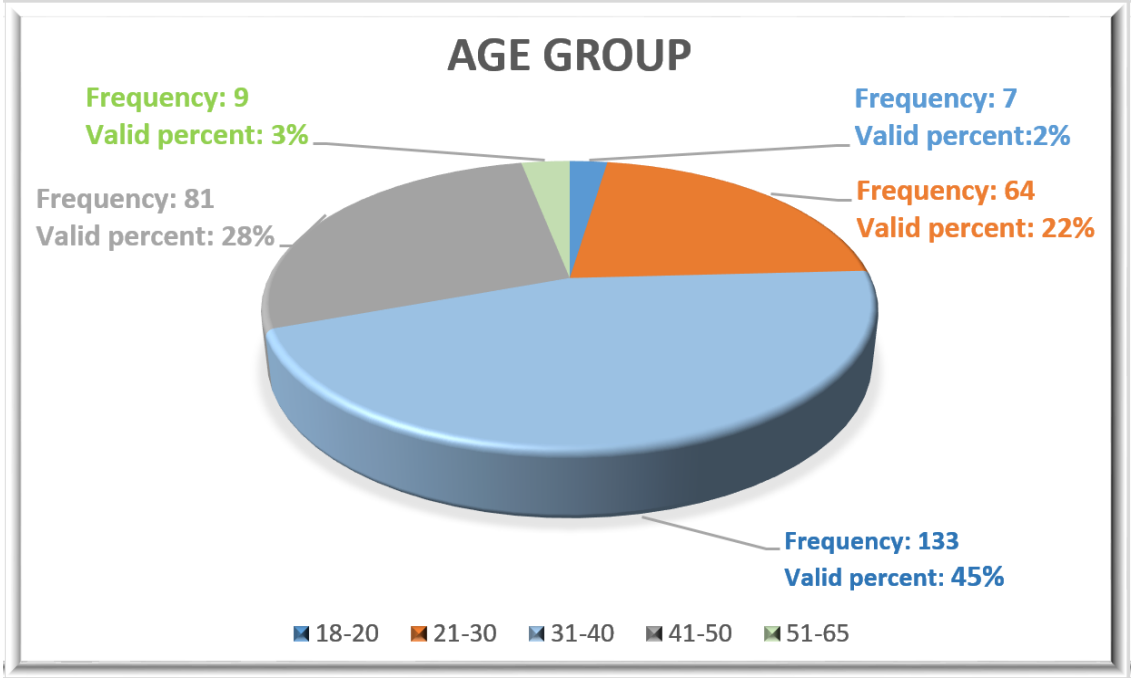

Figure 4.2: Age group

The largest proportion of the respondents was between the ages of 31 and 40 years (45%), followed by respondents between 41 and 50 years of age (28%); and between 21 and 30 years of age (22%). While the rest of the respondents were relatively equally distributed among the other age groups.

4.3.3 Level of education

Education plays an important role in the success of a SME as shown in Figure 4.3.

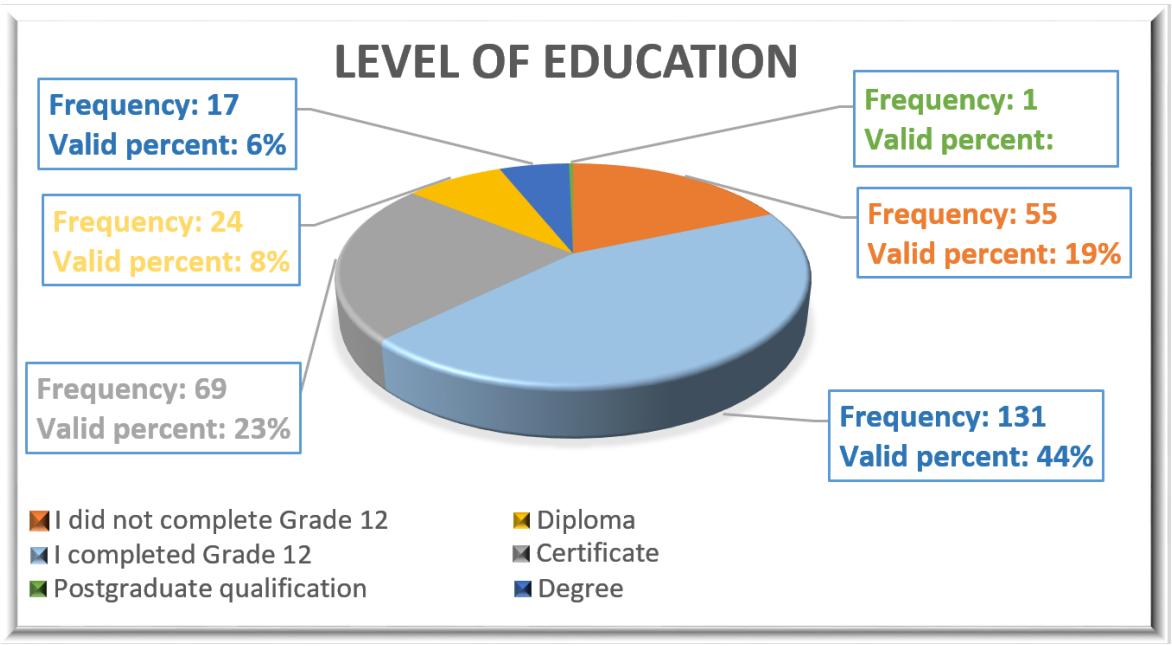

Figure 4.3: Level of education

As shown in Figure 4.3, which represents the level of education, the majority of respondents completed grade 12 (44%, n=131), followed by respondents who had a certificate (23%, n=69), and 19% (n=55) of the respondents who did not complete their grade 12. Further, 8% (n=24) of the respondents had a diploma, 6% (n=17) had a degree, and 0.3% (n=1) of the respondents had a postgraduate qualification.

4.3.4 Person responsible for the marketing communication

This question was asked to determine who is responsible for marketing communication strategies within the business.

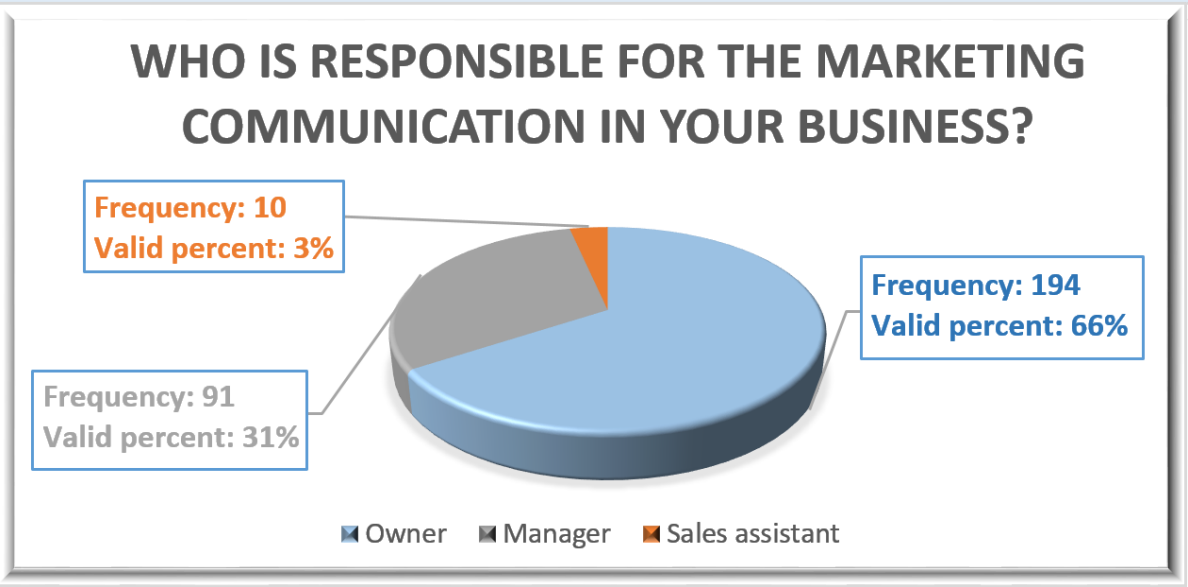

Figure 4.4: Who is responsible for the marketing communication in your business?

As shown in Figure 4.4, people who are responsible for marketing communication in small independent retailers are owners which represents a significant 66% (n=194), followed by managers (31%, n=91), and then sales assistants which represents 3% (n=10).

4.3.5 Training

Figure 4.5 below shows the marketing communication training received by the respondents.

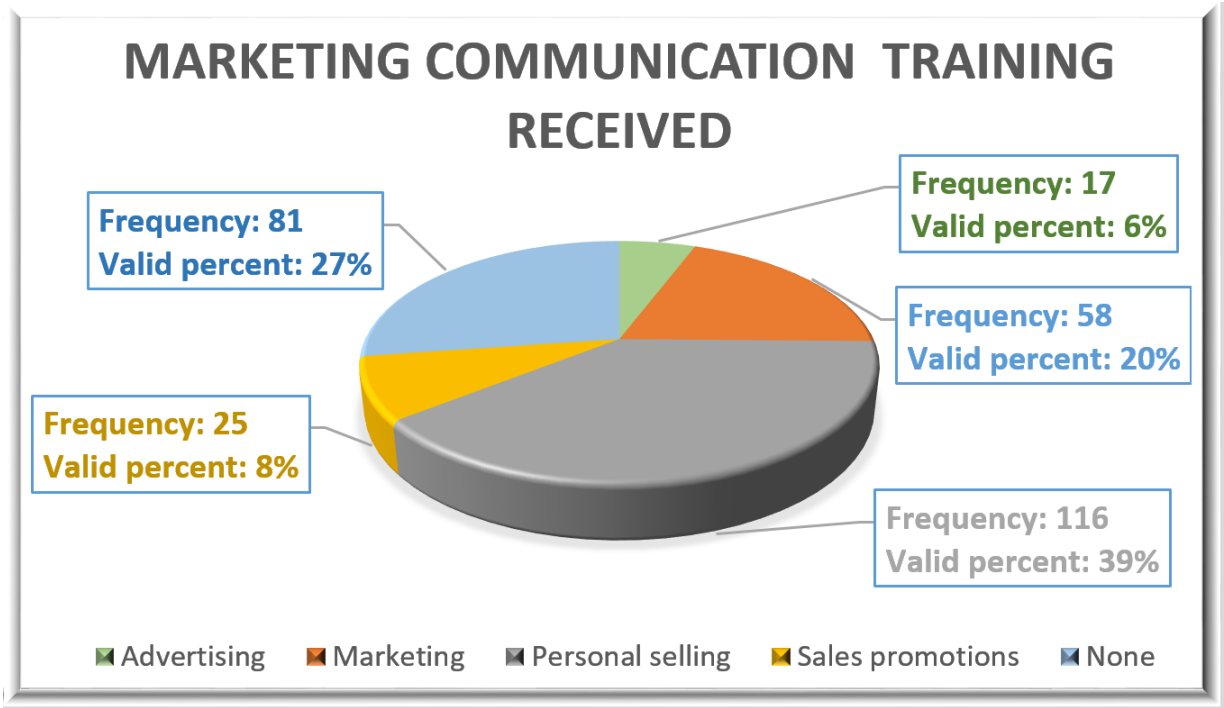

Figure 4.5: Marketing communication training

The study found that the most attended training by small independent retailers received was personal selling, which represented a significant 39% of the population.

4.3.6 Years of operation

The results from Figure 4.6 indicate that the years of business operation varied from less than a year to over 10 years.

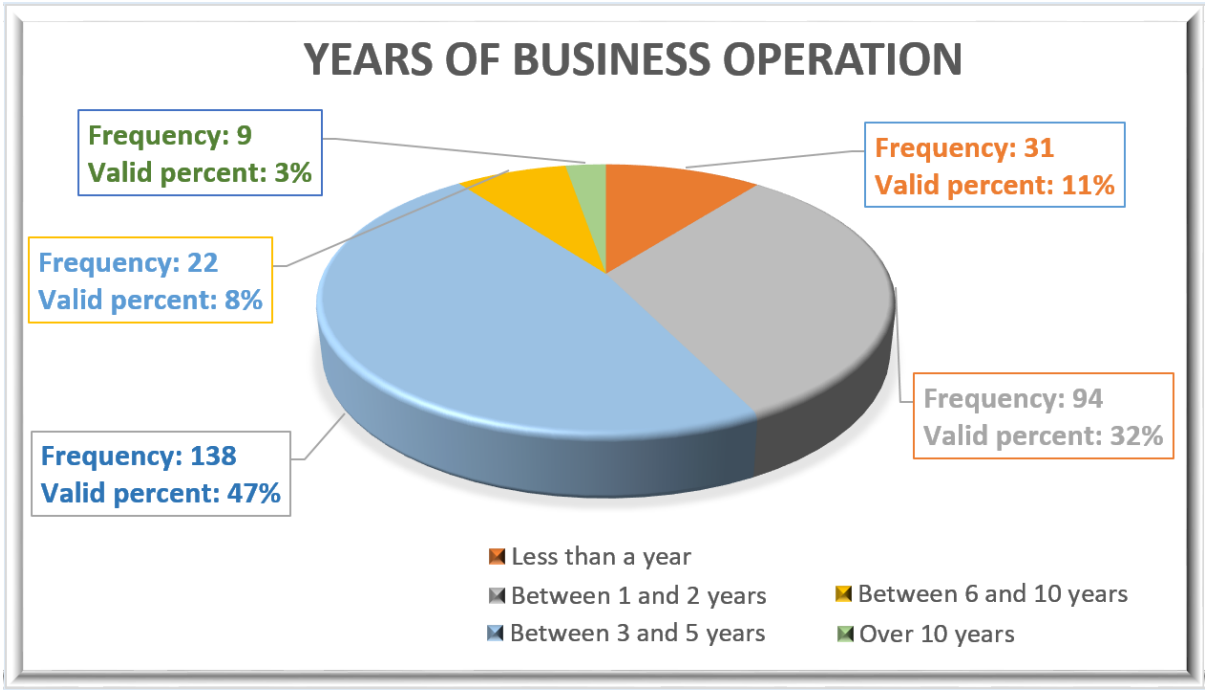

Figure 4.6: Years of business operation

Of the respondents, 293 of the total population answered this question. Most of the respondents have been in operation for between 3 and 5 years, represented by 47% of the population (n=138). This was followed by small independent retailers that have been in operation for 1 to 2 years, represented by 32% (n=94) of the respondents, while small independent retailers that have operated for less than a year were represented by 11% (n=31) of the respondents. Followed by the respondents have been in operation for between 6 and 10 years, represented by 8% (n=22) of the respondents, and respondents have been in operation over 10 years, which represented by 3% (n=9).

4.3.7 Number of employees

The results of the number of employees employed by Sowetan small independent retailers are disclosed below in Figure 4.7.

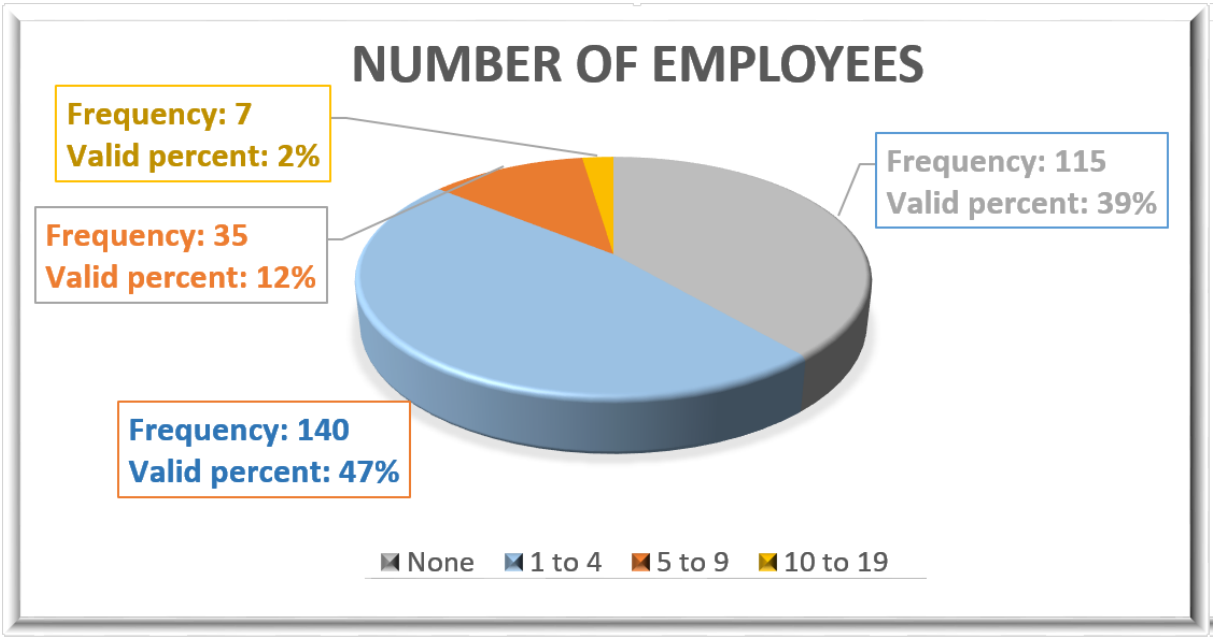

Figure 4.7: Number of employees

As shown in Figure 4.7, the number of employees ranges from those small independent retailers that do not employ anyone (39%, n=115), to those that employ between 1 and 4 employees (47%, n=140). Small independent retailers that employ between 5 and 9 employees represent 12% (n=35) of the population, and those employing between 10 and 19 employees represent 2% (n=7) of the population.

4.3.8 Annual turnover

This question was asked to determine how much small independent retailers make per annum.

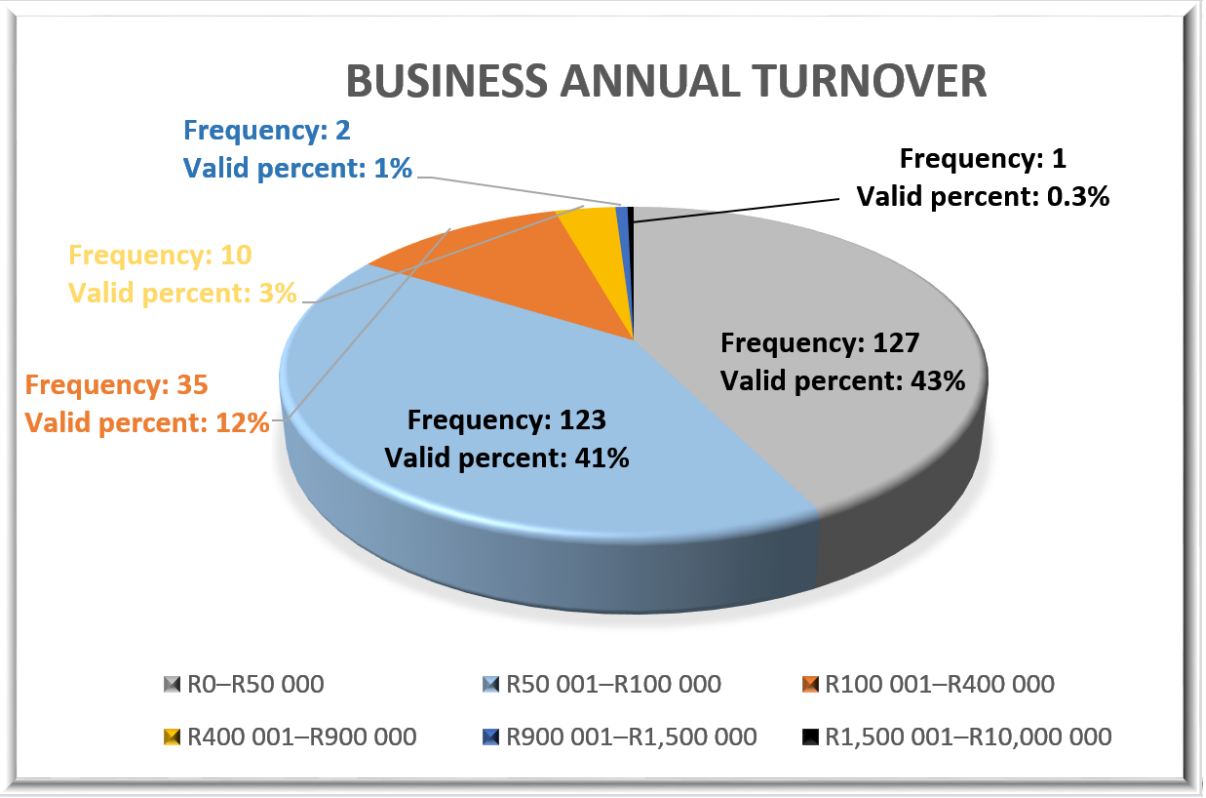

Figure 4.8: Business annual turnover

As seen in Figure 4.8, 43% (n=127) of the small independent retailers in Soweto generate sales revenue per year ranging from R0 to R50 000. Those with revenue between R50 001 and R100 000 comprised 41% (n=123) of the respondents, and those with revenue between R100 001 and R400 000 comprised 12% (n=35) of the respondents. This was followed by 3% (n=10) of the small independent retailers with revenue between R400 001 and R900 000, and 1% (n=2) of the respondents with revenue between R900 001 and R1 500 000, while 0.3% (n=1) of the respondents indicated that they had revenue between R1 500 001 and R10 000 000.

There is not 1% of small independent retailers that generate revenue above R10 000 000 per annum. This is expected on the basis that Soweto is a developing township that falls under a third world country.

4.3.9 Access to internet

The internet is an essential tool that can reach a larger number of customers and is considered important to customers (Chu *et al.*, 2013). It is of utmost importance for businesses to advertise their products on the internet because it gives the business a platform from where the business can provide interesting information to their customers in a timely manner (Kudeshia & Mittal, 2015). A study conducted by Cant *et al.* (2016) indicates the small independent retailers use devices to connect to the internet. The study further mentioned that small independent retailers in developed countries cannot be generalised to small independent retailers in developing countries because each country faces different barriers specific to them (Cant *et al.,* 2016).

The results of the current study are shown in Figure 4.9 below.

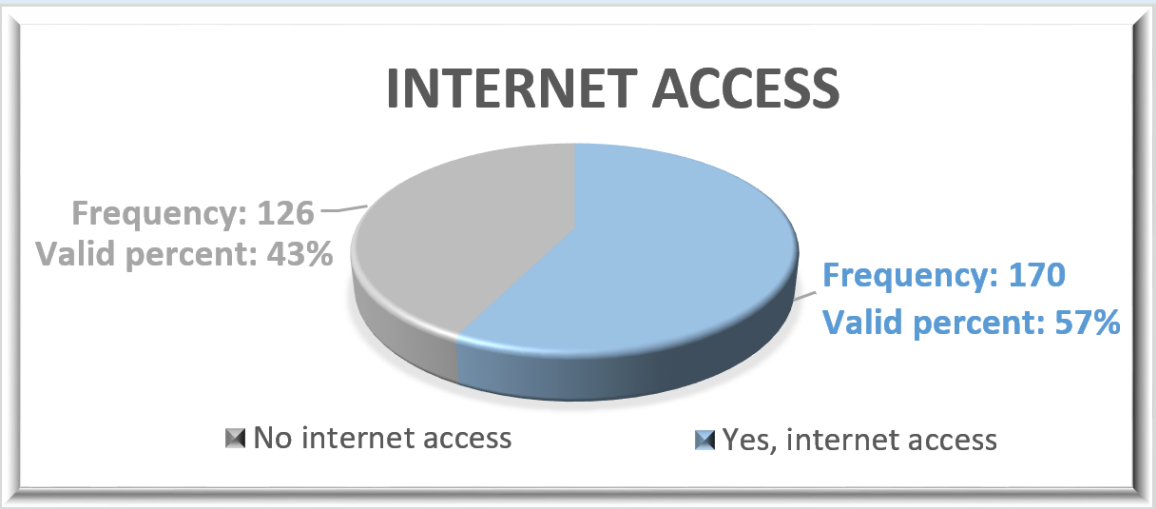

Figure 4.9: Internet access

According to Figure 4.9, the majority of small independent retailers had internet access represented by 57% (n=170) of the population, and 43% (n=126) did not have access to the internet.

Cant *et al.*'s *(*2016) study highlighted that a few small independent retailers had no access to the internet.

4.3.10 How small independent retailers in Soweto access the internet

Cant *et al.* (2016) indicated that small independent retailers use devices to connect to the internet, and the devices are, namely, cell phones, computers or laptops and tablets.

The results of the study related to how small independent retailers access the internet are shown in Figure 4.10.

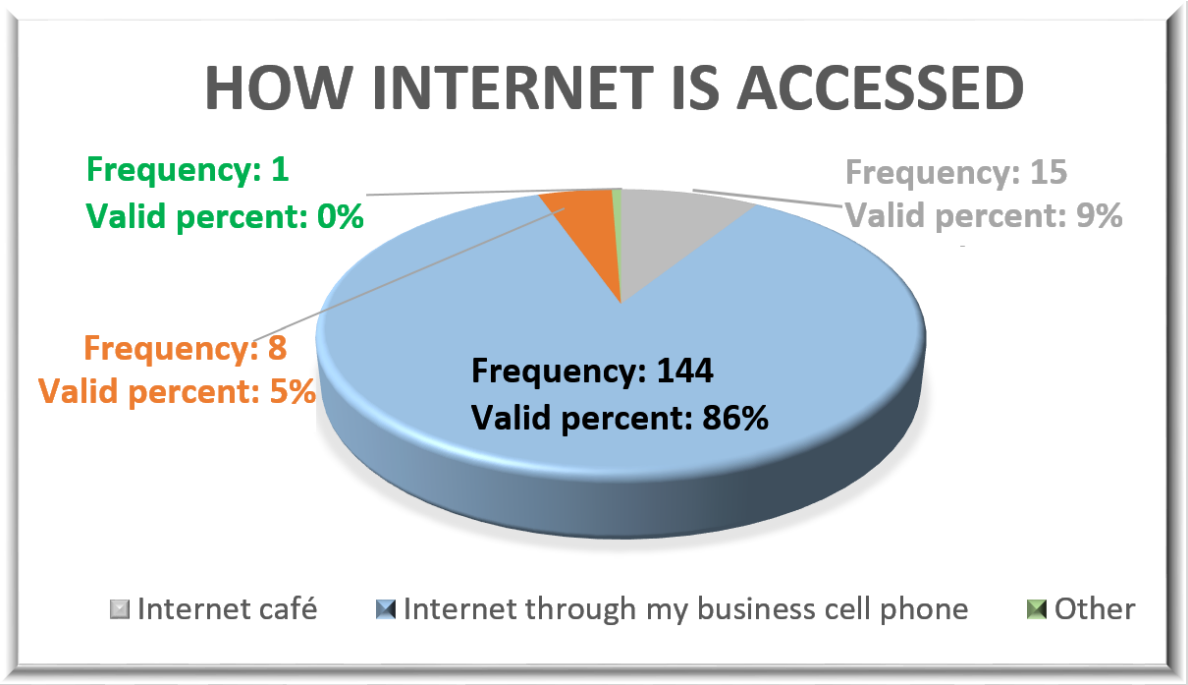

Figure 4.10: How internet is accessed

Figure 4.10 highlights that respondents access the internet through internet café (9%, n=15), business cell phone (86%, n=144), public hotspot (5%, n=8), and those who access internet by other means presented 1% (n=1) of the respondents.

4.3.11 Website

Small independent retailers market and sell their products through their own websites (Jia, 2009). The results regarding website are shown in Figure 4.11.

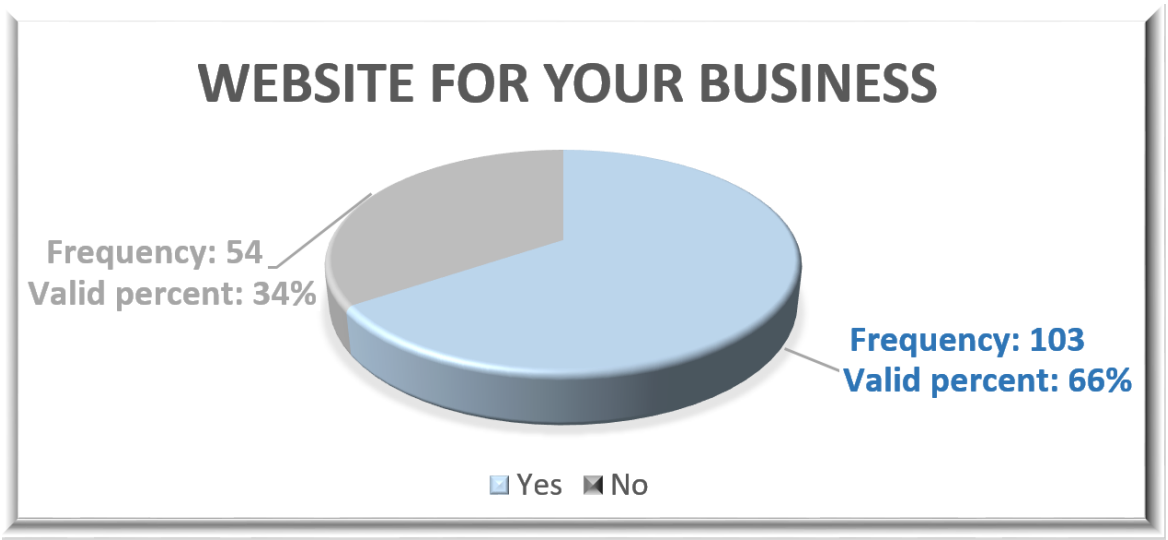

Figure 4.11: Website for business

As shown in Figure 4.11, 66% (n=103) of the small independent retailers have websites, while 34% (n=54) small independent retailers do not have websites for their businesses.

The next section presents the descriptive analysis of the study.

4.4 DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

This section will discuss the descriptive analysis of the attitude towards marketing communication, marketing communication strategies, marketing communication challenges faced by small independent retailers, and the impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers.

The descriptive analysis of the attitude towards marketing communication is discussed first.

4.4.1 Attitude towards marketing communication strategies

To test the attitude towards marketing communication strategies, the descriptive analysis (mean and standard deviation) was used.

The first objective was to determine the independent retailer's attitude towards marketing communication. This section of the chapter attempted to achieve the aforementioned research objective. In order to realise this research objective, the next question was asked: What is your attitude towards marketing communication strategies?

Table 4.2 below shows the descriptive analysis related to the attitude that small independent retailers have towards marketing communication strategies.

Table 4.2: Attitude towards marketing communication

Marketing communication statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Standard deviation (SD)	Number of respondents (N)	Mean (M)
'We apply marketing communication principles in our business'	0.3%	6.4%	24.4%	***62.5%***	6.4%	.695	299	3.69
'Our business will not survive without marketing communication'	0%	19.3%	34.1%	**40.5%**	6.1%	.854	296	3.35
'We have enough knowledge about marketing communication'	0%	9.1%	24.6%	**60.3%**	6.1%	.733	297	3.63
'Marketing communication is good for our business'	0%	5.8%	19.7%	**63.3%**	11.2%	.711	294	3.80
'We analyse our competitors' marketing communication strategies'	0.3%	11.7%	**50.7%**	29.2%	8.1%	.794	298	3.33
'We respond to our competitors' marketing communication strategies accordingly'	1.7%	16.1%	**44.3%**	32.2%	5.7%	.824	294	3.41

Table 4.2 shows the percentages, standard deviation, number of respondents and the mean score per attitude criterion. Table 4.2 shows that:

The majority of respondents strongly agree and agree that they apply marketing communication principles in their businesses. This is represented by 68.9% (M=3.7, n=299, SD=.695) of the population, while 6.7% strongly disagree/disagree, and 24.4% were neutral.

Over 40% (M=3.4, n=296, SD=.854) of the respondents strongly agree/agree that their businesses will not survive without marketing communication, followed by 34.1% that are neutral, and 19.3% who strongly disagree/disagree

Most respondents, represented by 66.4% (M=3.6, n=297, SD=.733), strongly agree/agree that they have enough knowledge about marketing communication, while 9.1% strongly disagree/disagree, and 24.6% are neutral.

The majority of the respondents strongly agree/agree that marketing communication is good for their business, which is represented by 74.5% (M=3.8, n=294, SD=.711), while 5.8% strongly disagree/ disagree, and 19.7% are neutral.

Out of 298 respondents that analysed their competitors' marketing communication strategies, 50.7% (M=3.3, n=298, SD=.794) are neutral, 37.3% strongly agree/agree, and 12% strongly disagree/disagree. Inan and Kop (2018); and Piëst (1994) highlighted that managers should have the ability to analyse their competitors' marketing communication strategies in order to have a competitive advantage.

The majority of the respondents, 44.3% (M=3.4, n=294, SD=.824) are neutral that they respond to their competitors' marketing communication strategies accordingly, while 37.9% strongly agree/agree, and 17.8% strongly disagree/disagree with a mean score of 3.41 and a standard deviation of .824.

In terms of their attitude towards marketing communication, it appears that a high percentage of respondents 'agree' that they apply marketing communication principles in their businesses, have enough knowledge about marketing communication, and marketing communication is good for their business. The study concludes that small independent retailers have a positive attitude towards marketing communication strategies, thus the research objective was achieved.

4.4.2 Marketing communication strategies used by small independent retailers

Determining the marketing communications strategies utilised by small independent retailers in Soweto is the second research objective of the study.

The mean scores showed in Table 4.3 signify the average of the responses from 300 respondents about statements related to each factor of marketing communication tools.

The respondents were asked to rate on a scale between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree).

Table 4.3: Descriptive statistics

Marketing communication statements	Mean (M)	Standard deviation (SD)
'Word-of-mouth is powerful because it can influence customers to buy our products'	1.32	0.466
'Word-of-mouth is good for our business'	1.34	0.481
'Word-of-mouth enhances awareness about our business'	1.41	0.519
'Some referred customers trust word-of-mouth'	1.43	0.509
'Word-of-mouth assists us in getting more referrals'	1.44	0.524
'We communicate our products directly to the customer'	1.59	0.627
'Direct marketing is good for our business'	1.59	0.663
'We promote our products by means of direct marketing'	1.64	0.617
'We utilise local TV channel to showcase the benefits of our products'	1.82	0.963
'We use LinkedIn for business purposes'	1.87	1.087
'We use YouTube for business purposes'	1.94	1.086
'We use magazine advertisements to increase our sales and market share'	1.99	0.930
'Sales promotions influence our customers to buy our product'	2.03	0.904
'We advertise our products on local radio stations'	2.17	1.091
'We give coupons to our customers to promote our business'	2.21	0.957
'We continuously conduct informal research on sales promotions'	2.24	0.947

Marketing communication statements	Mean (M)	Standard deviation (SD)
'We use local newspapers to obtain broader coverage of the market'	2.28	1.100
'We give our customers gifts as a means of promoting our business'	2.32	1.061
'We use Twitter for business purposes'	2.33	1.234
'The internet is useful for our business'	2.37	0.934
'We hand out flyers/posters to general customers'	2.42	1.165
'We have enough knowledge about the use of the internet to market our business'	2.44	0.861
'We use email to communicate with suppliers'	2.44	1.294
'We WhatsApp our customers as a means of direct marketing'	2.45	1.143
'We have enough knowledge about social media and its role in marketing our business'	2.47	0.871
'We provide our customers with free samples to promote our business'	2.56	1.064
'Our business uses loyalty programmes as a form of sales promotion'	2.56	1.289
'Using SMSs as part of direct marketing is good for our business'	2.59	1.471
'We use the internet to research our competitors'	2.70	0.953
'We unsolicitedly contact our customers over the telephone'	2.75	1.308
Social media enables customers to share opinions about the products	2.92	1.143
'We use the internet to sell products'	2.95	1.065
'Our business uses the internet to advertise products'	2.95	1.049
'We provide feedback about the products to our customers on social media'	3.00	1.025
'We use the internet to research our customers'	3.01	1.044
'We offer information about our business on our social media'	3.02	1.027
'We email our customers as a way of direct marketing'	3.03	1.437
'We monitor our social media home page'	3.15	1.123
'Some customers are less willing to offer their opinions on how they have experienced the product'	4.51	0.616
'Personal selling is effective in increasing awareness about the business'	4.52	0.560

Marketing communication statements	Mean (M)	Standard deviation (SD)
'Personal selling is utilised as a source of information about the business'	4.53	0.584
'Word-of-mouth allows us to exchange product information with our customers'	4.58	0.515
'Our customers communicate positive word-of-mouth messages about our business'	4.59	0.545
'Personal selling is effective in increasing profits for the business'	4.59	0.566
'We gain buying commitments from customers when we use personal selling'	4.59	0.572
'Personal selling assists us in achieving customer loyalty'	4.59	0.534
'Personal selling is good for our business'	4.60	0.552
'Word-of-mouth enables us to exchange opinions about how customers experience the product'	4.61	0.510
'Personal selling is flexible because it allows us to get immediate feedback from customers'	4.62	0.535
'Personal selling assists us to identify potential customers'	4.63	0.526
'We network with other businesses using word-of-mouth'	4.66	0.503
'Personal selling enables the business to build relationships with customers'	4.66	0.550

Source: Researcher's own compilation

Table 4.3 shows the descriptive analysis of the marketing communication strategy statements extracted from the questionnaire (see Section A, V^{9}-V^{67}).

The marketing communication strategy statements with the **lowest mean** are discussed first.

The marketing communication strategy statement concerning '*word-of-mouth is powerful because it can influence customers to buy our products*' had a mean score of 1.32 and standard deviation of 0.466. This denotes that small independent retailers strongly disagree that word-of-mouth can influence customers to buy their products.

The following marketing communication strategy statement was '*word-of-mouth is good for our business*', which had a mean score of 1.34 and standard deviation of 0.481.

The marketing communication strategy statement about '*word-of-mouth enhances awareness about our business*' had a mean score of 1.41 and standard deviation of 0.519.

'*Some referred customers trust word-of-mouth*' marketing communication strategy statement had a mean score of 1.43 and standard deviation of 0.509.

The marketing communication strategy statement with regards to '*word-of-mouth assists us in getting more referrals*' had a mean score of 1.44 and standard deviation of 0.524.

The aforementioned marketing communication strategy statements had a mean score below 1.50, which means that small independent retailers strongly disagree with the statements.

The marketing communication strategy statements with the **highest mean** are discussed next.

Marketing communication strategy statements about '*some customers are less willing to offer their opinions on how they have experienced the product'* had a mean score of 4.51 and standard deviation of 0.616, and '*personal selling is effective in increasing awareness about the business*' had a mean score of 4.52 and standard deviation of 0.560.

Furthermore, marketing communication strategy statements with reference to *'personal selling is utilised as a source of information about the business'* had a mean score of 4.53 and standard deviation of 0.584, and '*word-of-mouth allows us to exchange product information with our customers'* had a mean score of 4.58 and standard deviation of 0.515.

The marketing communication strategy statement *'Our customers communicate positive word-of-mouth messages about our business'* had a mean score of 4.59 and standard deviation of 0.545.

The marketing communication strategy statement regarding *'personal selling is effective in increasing profits for the business'* was represented by a mean score of

4.59 and standard deviation of 0.566, and '*we gain buying commitments from customers when we use personal selling'* represented a mean score of 4.59 and standard deviation of 0.572.

The strategy statement in relation to '*personal selling assists us in achieving customer loyalty'* had a mean score of 4.59 and standard deviation of 0.534, and '*personal selling is good for our business'* was represented by a mean score of 4.60 and standard deviation of 0.552.

The marketing communication strategy statement '*Word-of-mouth enables us to exchange opinions about how customers experience the product'* had a mean score of 4.61 and standard deviation of 0.510, and '*personal selling is flexible because it allows us to get immediate feedback from customers*' had a mean score of 4.62 and standard deviation of 0.535.

The marketing communication strategy statement on the subject of '*personal selling assists us to identify potential customers'* was represented by a mean score of 4.63 and standard deviation of 0.526, and '*we network with other businesses using word-of-mouth*' had a mean score of 4.66 and standard deviation of 0.503, while the strategy statement about '*personal selling enables the business to build relationships with customers'* had a mean score of 4.66 and standard deviation of 0.550.

The above-mentioned marketing communication strategy statements with the highest mean (above 4.50) indicate that small independent retailers strongly agree with the statements.

4.4.3 Marketing communication challenges faced by small independent retailers

To determine the marketing communication challenges faced by small independent retailers is the third research objective of the study.

Questions about the marketing communication challenges faced by small independent retailers were asked in order for small independent retailers to indicate which major challenges they face.

The marketing communication challenges facing small independent retailers were categorised in an orderly manner according to the impact they have, ranging from the highest important challenges they face to the lowest challenges they face.

The marketing communication challenges were categorised in order to identify which marketing communication challenges small independent retailers face the most.

Table 4.4 below shows a descriptive summary of marketing communication challenges that are faced by small independent retailers.

Table 4.4: Marketing communication challenges faced by small independent retailers

Dimension	N	1(yes) 2(no)	Valid Percent
Very high challenges (80.0% to 70.9%)			
Electricity outage (load-shedding) affects our business	233	1	**80.0 %**
	57	2	20.0%
	290		
High cost of marketing communication tools	211	1	**71.8%**
	83	2	28.2%
	294		
Crime is a challenge for the business	209	1	**71.1%**
	85	2	28.9%
	294		
Selecting the right location for the business	207	1	**70.9%**
	85	2	29.1%
	292		
High challenges (67.6% to 60.5%)			
Lack of access to the internet	198	1	**67.6%**
	95	2	32.4%
	293		
Lack of access to finance	198	1	**67.6%**
	95	2	32.4%
	293		
Obtaining credit	195	1	**66.6%**
	98	2	33.4%
	293		

Dimension	N	1(yes) 2(no)	Valid Percent
Competition from other businesses	190	1	**64.8%**
	103	2	35.2%
	293		
High business rental costs	187	1	**64.0%**
	105	2	36.0%
	292		
Inability to advertise our products efficiently	178	1	**60.5%**
	116	2	39.5%
	294		
Poor knowledge of marketing communication	178	1	**60.5%**
	116	2	39.5%
	294		
Moderate challenges (58.4% to 52.6%)			
Inability to network with other businesses	170	1	58.4%
	121	2	41.6%
	291		
Lack of market access	166	1	56.5%
	128	2	43.5%
	294		
Lack of marketing communication research	154	1	52.6%
	139	2	47.4%
	293		
Low challenges (46.1% to 41.7%)			
Lack of sales promotion skills	135	1	46.1%
	158	2	53.9%
	293		
Poor sales performance	121	1	41.7%
	169	2	58.3%

Dimension	N	1(yes) 2(no)	Valid Percent
	290		
Lack of management skills	115	1	39.0%
	180	2	61.0%
	295		
Lack of advertising skills	106	1	36.3%
	186	2	63.7%
	292		
Lack of skills required to build relationships with customers	99	1	33.8%
	194	2	66.2%
	293		
Lack of personal selling skills	94	1	32.1%
	199	2	67.9%
	293		
Lack of direct marketing skills	87	1	29.7%
	206	2	70.3%
	293		

As shown in Table 4.4, the four major challenges that retailers, according to the order of impact, face are:

Electricity outage as shown by 80% (n=233) of the respondents who stated that they face electricity outage as a challenge. As stated in the literature, electricity interference is the highest challenge faced by small independent retailers (Ayandibu & Houghton, 2017).

The high cost of marketing communication strategy is the second major challenge faced by small independent retailers. Out of 294 respondents, 72% (n=211) of the respondents mentioned that marketing communication tool costs are high for their businesses, whereas 28% (n=83) respondents do not experience high costs on marketing communication tools. Cant (2012) discussed that South African small independent retailer's fail because of lack of marketing communication activities. This

is because small independent retailers cannot afford to implement marketing communication strategies (Badenhorst-Weiss & Cilliers, 2014).

The majority of the respondents (71%, n=209) stated that crime is a challenge they are faced with. The literature discussed in Chapter 2 highlighted crime as another challenge faced by small independent retailers. Small independent retail owners in South Africa are faced with an increasing armed robbery, which means that crime contributes towards the failure of small independent retailers (Timm, 2011; Olwawale & Gware, 2010)

The fourth marketing communication strategy challenge that is experienced as a very high challenge is selecting the right location. As highlighted in Table 4.4, 71% (n=207) of the respondents encounter challenges in choosing the right location for their businesses, while 29% (n=85) do not encounter challenges. The literature in Chapter 2 stated that South African small independent retailers fail to identify a suitable location for their businesses (Khosa & Kalitanyi, 2014). Cant and Wiid (2013) also found that small independent retailers face challenges related to identifying suitable locations for their businesses.

The high challenges faced by small independent retailers are listed below.

Based on Table 4.4, 68% (n=198) of the respondents do have access to the internet. Cant *et al.* (2016) highlighted that 64% small independent retailers encounter challenges with accessing the internet. Small independent retailers are reported to be reluctant to invest in the internet because of the high costs involved (Mohlameane & Ruxwana, 2013).

68% (n=198) of the respondents lack access to finance. Vlajic (2015); and Razak *et al.* (2018) stated that small independent retailers are vulnerable due to lack of access to finance and from having limited finances. Olwawale and Gware (2010) and Makhitha (2016) highlighted that a lack of access to finance poses as a major challenge for small independent retailers.

Respondents that were not able to obtain credit consisted of 67% (n=195) of the population. The findings of Ramukumba (2014) stated that small independent retailers were not able to obtain financial credit. Adaane (2016) and Sulistya and Darwanto (2016) agree that small independent retailers face challenges in obtaining financial credit.

Small independent retailers that face competition from other businesses are represented by 65% (n=190) of the 293 respondents. Makhitha (2016) and Cant and Wiid (2013) agreed that small independent retailers are faced with competition from other businesses. Lambert (2017) mentioned that well-financed competitors might be hindering prospective entrepreneurs and might be the cause of small independent retailers' failures. The failure of small independent retailers is caused by competitive competition services (Cant *et al.,* 2014).

Out of 292 respondents, 64% (n=187) of the respondents face high rental costs as another challenge. Small independent retailers experience high operating costs, such as high business rental costs (Tang, 2018). Makhitha (2016) also supports this statement that the small independent retailers in Soweto face high rental costs as a challenge.

61% (n=178) do not have the ability to advertise their products efficiently. It appears that the current study agrees with studies conducted by Tsikirayi *et al.* (2013) and Mapheto *et al.* (2014) that the small independent retailers do not have the ability to advertise their products. However, the current study contradict studies conducted by Van Scheers and Radipere (2008), Tsikirayi *et al.* (2013) and Mapheto *et al.* (2014) which argue that small independent retailers have the ability to advertise their products.

294 respondents were asked about the knowledge they have about marketing communication, and 61% (n=178) indicated that they have poor knowledge of marketing communication. Some small independent retailers might have knowledge and ideas on how to run a business, but these ideas fail because of lack of marketing communication knowledge (Kamunge *et al.,* 2014).

The moderate challenges faced by small independent retailers are listed below.

Small independent retailers that were able to network with other businesses were represented by 42% (n=121), while 58% (n=170) of the small independent retailers are not able to network with other businesses. This could be that small independent retailers lack marketing skills such as networking with other small independent retailers (Ngwenya, 2012). Barchue (2011); and Ramukumba (2014) support this phenomenon by stating that small independent retailers face challenges such as

networking, and that small independent retailers do not network outside their industry (Gijsberts, 2016).

Out of 294 respondents, 57% (n=166) of the respondents lack access to the market, while 44% (n=128) can access the market. Birhanu, Ambelu, Berhanu, Tesfaye and Woldemichael (2017) and Chowdhury and Alam (2018) argued that lack of access to market continues to be a constraint of new small independent retailers and limits the growth of existing small independent retailers, and is a major hurdle to the emergence of small independent retailers.

Table 4.4 shows that 53% (n=154) of the respondents indicate that they are not able to conduct marketing communication research, whereas 47% (n=139) of the respondents know how to conduct marketing communication research. Cant *et al.* (2014) and the Bureau for Economic Research (2016) stated that small independent retailers face challenges in conducting marketing communication research.

Discussed above are the moderate challenges that are faced by small independent retailers. The list below contains low challenges towards small independent retailers.

Table 4.4 highlights that 54% of the respondents have the skills to apply sales promotions. It appears that the respondents have the skills to apply sales promotions which means this is not a challenge faced by small independent retailers. However, Esposito (2013) and Razak *et al.* (2018) argue that this limitation in the marketing communication strategy utilised by small independent retailers is due to a lack of marketing skills such as lacking skills to apply sales promotions.

58% (n=169) of the respondents do not experience poor sales performance as a challenge. It seems that small independent retailers do not experience poor sales performance as a challenge. A study conducted by Makhitha (2016) highlighted that small independent retailers do not experience poor sales performance as a challenge.

Out of 295 small independent retailer respondents, 61% (n=180) had management skills, this means that small independent retailers do not experience a lack of management skills as a challenge. Van Scheers and Radiperee (2011) reported contradicting findings that small independent retailers lack management skills. The lack of management skills was seen as a major reason for small independent retailers' failures in the past decades (Cover, 1933). Some small independent retailers have knowledge and ideas that they are competent in their specific field on how to run a

business, but these ideas fail because of lack of management skills (Kamunge *et al*., 2014).

Out of 292 respondents, 64% have the skills to advertise. Cant *et al.* (2014) argued that small independent retailers lack marketing skills such as advertising skills. Esposito (2013) further maintained that small independent retailers lack advertising skills. However, the current study uncovered that small independent retailers in Soweto have the skills to advertise, thus this is not perceived as a challenge faced by small independent retailers in Soweto.

The majority of the respondents (66%) have the skills to build relationships with their customers. In the current study, it seems that small independent retailers have the skills to build relationships with their customers. Research has shown that South African small independent retailers are faced with challenges such as the inability to build relationships with customers (Banking Association of South Africa, 2013). Ramukumba (2014) adds that South African small independent retailers face various challenges, such as the skills required to build relationships with customers. Ligthelm (2002) supports the statement by highlighting that the inability to build relationships with customers could be a contributing factor to the failure rate among small independent retailers in South Africa.

68% (n=199) of the respondents do not face a challenge related to a lack of personal selling skills. This denotes that only 32% (n=94) of the respondents face this challenge, which means that small independent retailers do not face a challenge related to a lack of personal selling skills. Cant *et al.* (2014) argue that small independent retailers lack marketing skills, such as personal selling.

Out of 293 respondents, 70% of the respondents have the skills to implement direct marketing. It seems that small independent retailers do not lack the skills to implement direct marketing. Research has shown that small independent retailers lack marketing skills, such as implementing direct marketing (Cant *et al.,* 2014).

As discussed in the literature chapter (Chapter 2) Makhitha (2016) highlighted that the most serious challenges small independent retailers experience are competition from other businesses, high costs of buying products, and high inventory costs. Further, there are high rental costs, high taxation, lack of business skills, the inability to market the products, government regulations, and difficulty in finding a suitable location.

Another study conducted by Mbonyane and Ladzani (2011) highlighted that the most severe challenges faced by small independent retailers are poor technological skills and poor access to credit.

However, this study found that the most serious challenges experienced by small independent retailers are electricity outage (load-shedding) affecting the business (80%), followed by high cost of marketing communication tools (72%), crime is a challenge for the business (71%), and selecting the right location for the business (71%).

Furthermore, high challenges experienced by small independent retailers are shortage of accessing the internet (68%), lack access to finance (68%), not able to obtain credit (67%), competition (65%), high rental costs (64%), inability to advertise products efficiently (61%), and poor knowledge of marketing communication (61%).

The current study further found that the challenges moderately impacting on the small independent retailers are inability to network (58%), lack of market access (57%), and lack of marketing communication research (53%).

Lastly, the challenges with the least impact on small independent retailers are lack of sales promotion skills (46%), poor sales performance (42%), lack of management skills (39%), lack of advertising skills (36%), lack of skills required to build relationships with customers (34%), lack of personal selling skills (32%), and lack of direct marketing skills (30%). These ‘low challenges’ experienced by small independent retailers do not seem to be challenges for small independent retailers, as the majority of the respondents do not encounter these challenges.

4.4.4 Marketing communication strategies and the performance of small independent retailers

The respondents were asked to indicate how their marketing communication strategies influence the performance of their businesses. These questions were necessary in order to assess and determine whether marketing communication strategies have an impact on the performance of small independent retailers and to address the fourth objective.

The results are shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Marketing communication strategies and the performance of small independent retailers

Statements	1% to 20%		21% to 40%		41% to 60%		61% to 80%		> 81%		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Increased sales	30	10.3%	119	40.8%	88	30.1%	47	16.1%	8	2.7%	292
Influenced the customers purchasing behaviour positively	14	4.8%	130	44.2%	102	34.7%	41	13.9%	7	2.4%	294
Increased awareness	12	4.1%	126	43.2%	112	38.4%	39	13.4%	3	1.0%	292
Increased customer satisfaction	12	4.0%	89	30.0%	127	42.8%	62	20.9%	7	2.4%	297
Increased turnover	6	2.0%	88	29.8%	111	37.6%	81	27.5%	9	3.1%	295
Increased profit	6	2.0%	63	21.3%	104	35.1%	85	28.7%	38	12.8%	296

Table 4.5 indicates that the majority of the respondents (41%, n=119) reported increased sales of between 21%-40%, followed by a sales increase of between 41%-60% as indicated by 30% of the respondents (n=88). This was followed by increased sales of between 61%-80% as reported by 16 (n=47) of the respondents. A few independent retailers had an increase of above 80% as shown by 3% (n=8).

Most respondents, representing 44% (n=130) of the respondents, reported that marketing communication strategies influenced the customers' purchasing behaviour positively between 21%-40%, followed by 35% (n=102) of the respondents who stated that marketing communication strategies influenced the customers' purchasing behaviour positively by between 41%-60%. While 14% (n=41) of the respondents reported that marketing communication influenced the customers' purchasing behaviour positively between 61%-80%. A small number of respondents (5%, n=14) stated that marketing communication influenced the customers' purchasing behaviour positively from 1%-20%, this was followed by a few respondents (2%, n=7) who reported that marketing communication influenced the customers' purchasing behaviour positively by over 81%.

As shown in Table 4.5, the majority of the respondents (43%, n=126) stated that marketing communication increased awareness between 21%-40%, followed by an increase awareness of between 41%-60% as represented by 38% (n=112) of the respondents. A small number of respondents (1%, n=3) indicated that marketing communication strategies increased awareness by over 81%.

The results in Table 4.5 highlight that the majority of the respondents (43%, n=127) encountered increased customer satisfaction of between 41%-60%, followed by 30% (n=89) of the respondents who indicated that marketing communication strategies increased customer satisfaction between 21%-40%. While 21% (n=62) of the respondents reported that they increased customer satisfaction between 61%-80%, and 4% (n=12) of the respondents also increased customer satisfaction between 1%-20%. Only a few respondents (2%, n=7) indicated that marketing communication strategies increased customer satisfaction above 81%.

Most of the respondents, represented by 38% (n=111), indicated that marketing communication strategies increased turnover between 41%-60%. This was followed by 30% (n=88) of the respondents who reported that they increased turnover between

21%-40%, while 28% (n=81) of the respondents also reported that they increased turnover between 61%-80%. A small number of respondents (3%, n=9) indicated that marketing communication strategies increased turnover by over 81%, followed by 2% (n=6) of the respondents who indicated that they increased turnover between 1%-20%.

As shown in Table 4.5, the majority of the respondents (35%, n=104) reported an increase in profits of between 41%-60%, while 29% of the respondents (n=85) indicated an increase in profit between 61%-80%. Furthermore, the respondents (21%, n=63) reported an increase in profit of between 21%-40%. Only a few, 2% (n=6) of the independent retailers had an increase in profit between 1%-20%.

Studies by Kotler and Keller (2012) and Buil *et al.* (2013) highlighted that marketing communication strategy has a positive impact on organisational performance which is caused by the impact on brand knowledge or product/brand awareness. Van Aardt *et al.* (2008) and Wang, Pauleen and Zhang (2016) further agreed that marketing communication strategies have a positive impact on small independent retailers' success and can enhance the small independent retailer's performance. The marketing communication strategy is a feasible marketing tool to enhance small independent retailers' performance (Lekhanya, 2010). Ainin *et al*. (2015) mention that marketing communication strategies have a positive impact on small independent retailers' financials and non-financials such as cost reduction, improvement in customer relations and information accessibility.

The next section discuss the factor analysis.

4.5 FACTOR ANALYSIS

In the study, factor analysis was used as a set of procedures that reduce and summarise data (Bradley (2010). Exploratory factor analysis is discussed next.

4.5.1 Sample adequacy

Exploratory factor analysis is (EFA) is a method that is designed to assess the covariance structure of a group of variables in order to describe the relationships among these variables with reference to less hidden unclear variables, named factors (Bilgin & Öznacar, 2017). Yayar and Karaca (2017) expanded on this notion by stating that EFA achieves a few significant and new variables by reflecting the relationships

between the variables. EFA is based on a correlation matrix of the variables that are included in the analysis.

The appropriate data included in the EFA analysis was also evaluated. A Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value towards 1 also implies a strong enough correlation structure (a value of 0.8). According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2001), the value of the KMO measure of sampling adequacy should range between 0 and 1, and at the same time values closer to 1 are ideal, while the minimum acceptable value for a KMO measure for further analysis is .60.

The value of the KMO measure of sampling adequacy was .888 in the final EFA analysis, which is above the minimum recommended value of .06 (Pallant, 2009). For the purpose of the study, in order to determine construct validity and reliability and to access the underlying structure of the scales, EFA was conducted. The KMO and Bartlett's Test is shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.888
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	11720.381
	df	1711
	Sig.	0.000

Table 4.6 shows the results of Bartlett’s test for Sphericity, and it further depicts the results of KMO measures of sampling adequacy. These tests were conducted to establish the sample adequacy of the correlation matrix for factoring. The KMO index for the study is 0.888 that signifies that the items in the dimensions are suitable for factor analysis. The p-value of Bartlett’s test that is below 0.05 is significant, indicating that the correlation structure is significantly strong enough to perform a factor analysis on the items. The KMO measures how much the items in a scale have in common, hence a value closer to 1 shows that the variables have a lot in common. Table 4.6 shows that Bartlett’s test of sphericity reached the statistical significance ($p<0.05$). Meaning that both the KMO measure and Bartlett’s test support the factorability of the correlation matrix employed in the EFA analysis (Pallant, 2009).

Table 4.7 shows the communalities. The communalities indicate the extent to which an individual item correlates with rest of the items (Lee, Rosenthal, Veld & Veld-Merkoulova, 2015). A value near 1 indicates an item that correlates highly with the other the items. For the 59 items investigated in this study, the communalities are reasonable, because the communalities had a minimum of 0.430 and a maximum of 0.914.

Table 4.7: Communalities

Communalities		
	Initial	**Extract.**
'We continuously conduct informal research on the effectiveness of advertising'	0.672	0.494
'We advertise our products on local radio stations'	0.818	0.702
'We use local newspapers to obtain broader coverage of the market'	0.828	0.748
'We hand out flyers/posters to general customers'	0.800	0.665
'We use magazine advertisements to increase our sales and market share'	0.877	0.781
'We utilise local TV channel to showcase the benefits of our products'	0.895	0.838
'The internet is useful for our business'	0.827	0.725
'We use the internet to research our competitors'	0.863	0.823
'We use the internet to research our customers'	0.848	0.832
'We have enough knowledge about the use of the internet to market our business'	0.831	0.754
'We use the internet to sell products'	0.859	0.799
'Our business uses the internet to advertise products'	0.881	0.790
'We use email to communicate with suppliers'	0.894	0.813
'We have enough knowledge about social media and its role in marketing our business'	0.799	0.736
'There is limited use of social media in our business'	0.582	0.430
'We monitor our social media home page'	0.844	0.776
'We offer information about our business on our social media'	0.906	0.914
'We provide feedback about the products to our customers on social media'	0.881	0.847
Social media enables customers to share opinions about the products	0.816	0.749

Communalities		
	Initial	**Extract.**
'We use Facebook for business purposes'	0.811	0.642
'We use Twitter for business purposes'	0.885	0.813
'We use YouTube for business purposes'	0.885	0.688
'We use LinkedIn for business purposes'	0.885	0.721
'Direct marketing is good for our business'	0.599	0.514
'We promote our products by means of direct marketing'	0.750	0.719
'We communicate our products directly to the customer'	0.632	0.512
'We email our customers as a way of direct marketing	0.720	0.555
'We use direct marketing activities, such as catalogues'	0.738	0.598
'Using SMSs as part of direct marketing is good for our business'	0.833	0.765
'We WhatsApp our customers as a means of direct marketing'	0.712	0.542
'Direct marketing enables us to deliver advertisements directly to the targeted audience'	0.599	0.481
'We unsolicitedly contact our customers over the telephone'	0.787	0.653
'Sales promotions influence our customers to buy our product'	0.731	0.639
'We continuously conduct informal research on sales promotions'	0.694	0.572
'We provide our customers with free samples to promote our business'	0.801	0.704
'We give coupons to our customers to promote our business'	0.897	0.881
'We give our customers gifts as a means of promoting our business'	0.883	0.818
'We provide our customers with discounts'	0.674	0.569
'Our business uses loyalty programmes as a form of sales promotion'	0.832	0.739
'Word-of-mouth is good for our business'	0.711	0.550
'Word-of-mouth is powerful because it can influence customers to buy our products'	0.768	0.756
'Word-of-mouth enhances awareness about our business'	0.715	0.615
'Word-of-mouth assists us in getting more referrals'	0.657	0.561
'Some referred customers trust word-of-mouth'	0.625	0.508
'We have closer contact with our customers because of word-of-mouth'	0.676	0.614

Communalities		
	Initial	**Extract.**
'Word-of-mouth enables us to exchange opinions about how customers experience the product'	0.715	0.615
Some customers are less willing to offer their opinions on how they have experienced the product	0.628	0.533
'Word-of-mouth allows us to exchange product information with our customers'	0.690	0.676
'Our customers communicate positive word-of-mouth messages about our business'	0.741	0.620
'We network with other businesses using word-of-mouth'	0.737	0.681
'Personal selling is good for our business'	0.786	0.631
'Personal selling is effective in increasing profits for the business'	0.832	0.745
'Personal selling is effective in increasing awareness about the business'	0.753	0.676
'We gain buying commitments from customers when we use personal selling'	0.709	0.613
'Personal selling assists us in achieving customer loyalty'	0.751	0.599
'Personal selling assists us to identify potential customers'	0.717	0.558
Personal selling is utilised as a source of information about the business	0.698	0.562
'Personal selling is flexible because it allows us to get immediate feedback from customers'	0.713	0.617
Personal selling enables the business to build relationships with customers	0.690	0.621
Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.		

Table 4.7 above depicts communalities. EFA was conducted using SPSS 25 in which the Likert scale statements in question 9 to 67 of the questionnaire were concurrently subjected to principal components analysis (PCA). Costello and Osborne (2005) stated that factors with fewer than three items have no best fit to the data. In order for a factor loading to be significant, given the sample size, the loading should be >= 0.30 (Hair, 2010). In order to ensure a significance, factor loadings 0.50 indicate a good validity (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1998; Feinberg, Kinner & Taylor, 2013). Factors with items loading of 0.5 and higher were used for extraction.

Factor extraction using Principal Component Analysis is shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Factor extraction using Principal Component Analysis (CPA)

Total Variance Explained							
Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	16.555	**28.059**	28.059	16.271	27.579	27.579	8.876
2	8.979	**15.219**	43.278	8.629	14.625	42.203	5.550
3	5.130	**8.694**	51.972	4.863	8.243	50.446	9.465
4	3.387	**5.741**	57.713	3.038	5.148	55.594	7.121
5	2.505	**4.245**	61.959	2.128	3.606	59.200	4.711
6	1.972	**3.343**	65.302	1.649	2.795	61.996	8.927
7	1.632	**2.766**	68.068	1.290	2.186	64.182	3.509
8	1.311	**2.222**	70.289	0.964	1.633	65.815	5.413
9	1.134	**1.922**	**72.211**	0.861	1.459	67.274	10.365
10	0.928	1.573	73.784				
11	0.870	1.474	75.258				
12	0.815	1.382	76.640				
13	0.786	1.332	77.972				
14	0.756	1.281	79.253				
15	0.742	1.258	80.511				
16	0.669	1.134	81.646				
17	0.636	1.079	82.724				
18	0.590	0.999	83.724				
19	0.557	0.944	84.668				
20	0.548	0.928	85.596				
21	0.511	0.865	86.461				
22	0.504	0.854	87.315				

Total Variance Explained							
Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
23	0.450	0.763	88.078				
24	0.429	0.728	88.806				
25	0.411	0.697	89.503				
26	0.379	0.642	90.145				
27	0.374	0.634	90.779				
28	0.365	0.618	91.398				
29	0.327	0.555	91.952				
30	0.317	0.536	92.489				
31	0.294	0.498	92.986				
32	0.289	0.489	93.475				
33	0.283	0.480	93.956				
34	0.264	0.448	94.403				
35	0.247	0.419	94.822				
36	0.236	0.399	95.222				
37	0.220	0.374	95.595				
38	0.210	0.356	95.951				
39	0.202	0.343	96.294				
40	0.185	0.314	96.608				
41	0.178	0.302	96.910				
42	0.168	0.284	97.194				
43	0.162	0.274	97.468				
44	0.149	0.252	97.721				
45	0.145	0.246	97.966				
46	0.132	0.223	98.190				

Total Variance Explained							
Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
47	0.124	0.210	98.400				
48	0.113	0.191	98.591				
49	0.105	0.178	98.769				
50	0.103	0.174	98.943				
51	0.100	0.169	99.112				
52	0.088	0.150	99.262				
53	0.082	0.139	99.401				
54	0.074	0.126	99.527				
55	0.070	0.119	99.646				
56	0.065	0.111	99.756				
57	0.055	0.094	99.850				
58	0.049	0.083	99.933				
59	0.040	0.067	100.000				
Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.							
a. When factors are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.							

The results of the final EFA analysis, including 59 marketing communication items, are reported in Table 4.8. Table 4.8 also shows nine factors, namely, digital media, word-of-mouth content, advertising, personal selling, direct marketing, internet, sales promotion, word-of-mouth message involvement, and social media with eigenvalues greater than 1.

Figure 4.12 below shows the scree plot which is a graphical representation of eigenvalues contrary to the corresponding spaced factor numbers (Brown & Naiker, 2018). Where the scree plot highlights a distinct ‘elbow’ beyond which the difference

in descending eigenvalues becomes small, and the number of points preceding this elbow alludes to the number of latent factors in the data (Pallant, 2011).

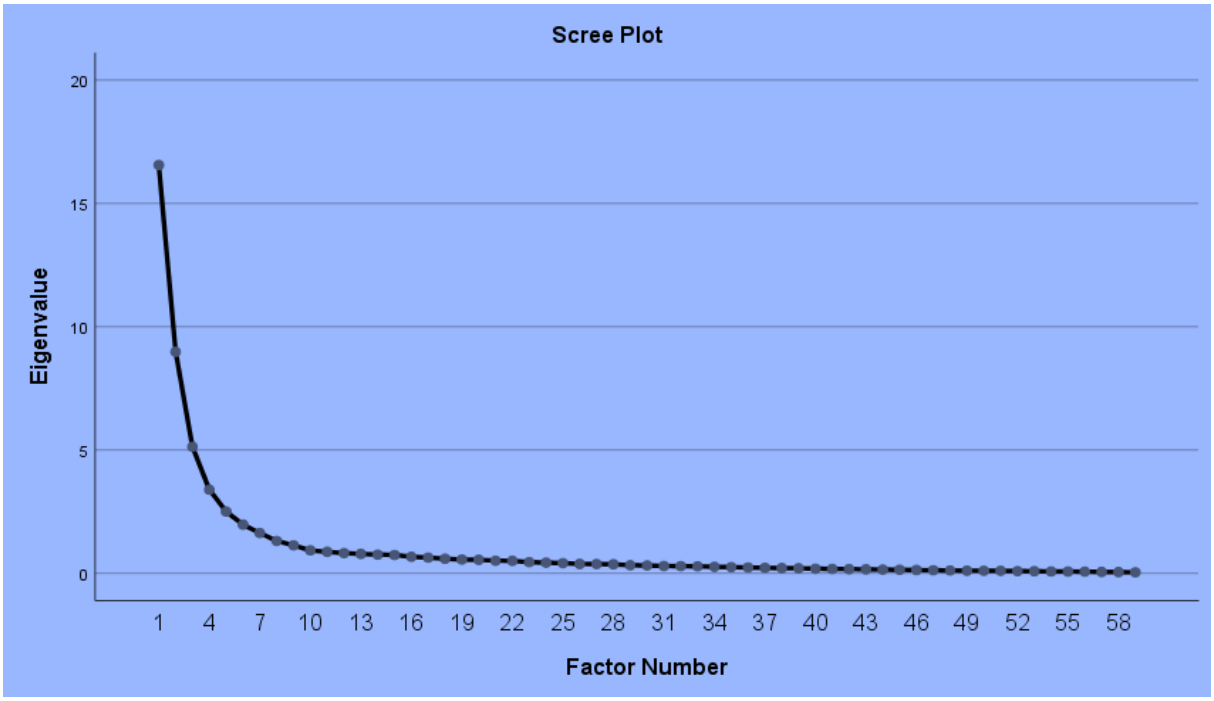

Figure 4.12: Scree plot for factor retention

Figure 4.12 depicts an inspection of the scree plot and supports the interpretation and considerations for different criteria in the decision made to extract 9 factors. The scree plot was included in the study as an alternative test for factor retention. Hence, the components 1 to 9 in were retained.

4.5.2 Item loading per factor

Costello and Osborne (2005) stated that factors with fewer than three items have no best fit to the data. In order for a factor loading to be significant given the sample size, the loading should be >= 0.30 (Hair, 2010). Field (2005) advised that all loading less than 0.40 should be suppressed in the output and so there could be blank spaces for various loadings. In order to ensure a significance, factor loadings lower than 0.50 were suppressed (Hair *et al.*, 1998). Nine factors, namely, digital media, word-of-mouth content, advertising, personal selling, direct marketing, internet, sales promotion, word-of-mouth message involvement, and social media were extracted from the analysis. In order to extract these nine factors, the statistician suppressed the small coefficients absolute value below 0.50, which is a different approach that took a bit of time because it encompassed more iterations.

Cross-loading is defined as items loading on two factors (Afifi, May & Clark, 2003). Feinberg, Kinner and Taylor (2013) explain that a factor loading of -1 or 1 is considered to be high, and the variable can be used to understand the factor. In the current study, few items were cross-loading and were removed from further analysis. Furthermore, seven items did not load on any of the nine factors and were removed from further analysis and a revised factor solution was generated.

The item loading per factor is shown in Table 4.9, on the next page.

Table 4.9: Item loading per factor

Pattern Matrix[a]									
Source of information (variables)	**Factor**								
	Digital marketing	**Word-of-mouth content**	**Advertising**	**Personal selling**	**Direct marketing**	**Internet**	**Sales promotion**	**Word-of-mouth message involvement**	**Social media**
'Using SMSs as part of direct marketing is good for our business'	0.630								
'We use email to communicate with suppliers'	0.583								
'We use Twitter for business purposes'	0.581								
'We use YouTube for business purposes'	0.578								
'We use LinkedIn for business purposes'	0.560								
'We email our customers as a way of direct marketing'	0.558								
'We unsolicitedly contact our customers over the telephone'	0.549								
'Word-of-mouth allows us to exchange product information with our customers'		0.683							

Pattern Matrix[a]									
Source of information (variables)	Factor								
	Digital marketing	Word-of-mouth content	Advertising	Personal selling	Direct marketing	Internet	Sales promotion	Word-of-mouth message involvement	Social media
'Some customers are less willing to offer their opinions on how they have experienced the product'		0.637							
'Word-of-mouth enables us to exchange opinions about how customers experience the product'		0.560							
'We network with other businesses using word-of-mouth'		0.527							
'Our customers communicate positive word-of-mouth messages about our business'		0.501							
'We give coupons to our customers to promote our business'			0.938						
'We give our customers gifts as a means of promoting our business'			0.817						
'Our business uses loyalty programmes as a form of sales promotion'			0.816						
'We use magazine advertisements to increase our sales and market share'			0.793						

Pattern Matrix[a]									
Source of information (variables)	Factor								
	Digital marketing	Word-of-mouth content	Advertising	Personal selling	Direct marketing	Internet	Sales promotion	Word-of-mouth message involvement	Social media
'We utilise local TV channel to showcase the benefits of our products'			0.750						
'We provide our customers with free samples to promote our business'			0.747						
'We advertise our products on local radio station'			0.669						
'We hand out flyers/posters to general customers'			0.620						
'Personal selling is effective in increasing profits for the business'				0.777					
'We gain buying commitments from customers when we use personal selling'				0.777					
'Personal selling enables the business to build relationships with customers'				0.772					
'Personal selling is effective in increasing awareness about the business'				0.757					
'Personal selling assists us in achieving customer loyalty'				0.755					

Pattern Matrix[a]									
Source of information (variables)	Factor								
	Digital marketing	Word-of-mouth content	Advertising	Personal selling	Direct marketing	Internet	Sales promotion	Word-of-mouth message involvement	Social media
'Personal selling is flexible because it allows us to get immediate feedback from customers'				0.730					
'Personal selling assists us to identify potential customers'				0.726					
'Personal selling is good for our business'				0.721					
Personal selling is utilised as a source of information about the business				0.601					
'We promote our products by means of direct marketing'					0.834				
'Direct marketing is good for our business'					0.687				
'We communicate our products directly to the customer'					0.681				
'We use the internet to research our competitors'						0.812			
'We have enough knowledge about the use of the internet to market our business'						0.764			
'The internet is useful for our business'						0.716			
'We use the internet to sell products'						0.655			

Pattern Matrix[a]									
Source of information (variables)	Factor								
	Digital marketing	Word-of-mouth content	Advertising	Personal selling	Direct marketing	Internet	Sales promotion	Word-of-mouth message involvement	Social media
'We use the internet to research our customers'						0.653			
'Our business uses the internet to advertise products'						0.591			
'We have enough knowledge about social media and its role in marketing our business'						0.515			
'Sales promotions influence our customers to buy our product'							0.620		
'We continuously conduct informal research on sales promotions'							0.565		
'We use local newspapers to obtain broader coverage of the market'							0.548		
'Word-of-mouth is powerful because it can influence customers to buy our products'								0.844	
'Word-of-mouth enhances awareness about our business'								0.705	
'Word-of-mouth assists us in getting more referrals'								0.662	
'Some referred customers trust word-of-mouth'								0.525	

Pattern Matrix[a]									
Source of information (variables)	Factor								
	Digital marketing	Word-of-mouth content	Advertising	Personal selling	Direct marketing	Internet	Sales promotion	Word-of-mouth message involvement	Social media
'Word-of-mouth is good for our business'								0.500	
'We offer information about our business on our social media'									0.850
'We provide feedback about the products to our customers on social media'									0.810
'Social media enables customers to share opinions about the products'									0.766
'We WhatsApp our customers as a means of direct marketing'									0.532
'We monitor our social media home page'									0.505
Cronbach's alpha	.925	.867	.929	.908	.781	.927	.542	.861	.921
Eigen value	28.05	15.22	8.69	5.74	4.25	3.34	2.77	2.22	1.92
Mean	2.42	4.59	2.26	4.59	1.61	2.70	2.18	1.39	2.91
SD	1.274	0.538	1.065	0.553	0.64	0.968	0.984	0.500	1.092

Pattern Matrix[a]									
Source of information (variables)	Factor								
	Digital marketing	Word-of-mouth content	Advertising	Personal selling	Direct marketing	Internet	Sales promotion	Word-of-mouth message involvement	Social media
Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring. Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalisation.									
a. Rotation converged in 24 iterations.									

Table 4.9 shows the factor loadings for nine extracted factors, namely, digital media, word-of-mouth content, advertising, personal selling, direct marketing, internet, sales promotion, word-of-mouth message involvement, and social media. The loading of an item indicates the extent to which an individual item 'loads' onto a factor. A value near 1 indicates an item that loads highly on a specific factor. A loading of >=0.50 can be considered as significant.

Factor 1 was named 'digital marketing' and loaded '*we use email to communicate with suppliers'*, '*we use Twitter for business purposes'*, '*we use YouTube for business purposes'*. In addition, '*we use LinkedIn for business purposes'*, '*we email our customers as a way of direct marketing'*, '*SMSs as part of direct marketing is good for our business'*, and '*we unsolicitedly contact our customers over the telephone*'. This factor reflected how small independent retail owners/managers/sales assistants use digital marketing to communicate with their clients. A reliability analysis conducted on this factor achieved a strong Cronbach's alpha of .925, which is above the generally expected minimum of 0.7, with a mean score of 2.42, standard deviation of 1.274 and 28.05 eigenvalue. This factor involves the interactive modern aspect of marketing and is often also known as internet marketing, online marketing, or web marketing, that is digital marketing (Kotler *et al.,* 2016). The study conducted by Taiminen and Karjaluoto (2015) highlighted that the majority of small independent retailers utilise digital marketing. Eriksson *et al.* (2008) mention that small independent retailers utilise digital marketing to market their products and services, however, most of the small independent retailers are at an early stage of the utilisation of digital marketing, as their usage of advance digital marketing has remained low. Kallier (2017) supports the statement by stating that digital marketing is being used the least.

There were five items loading in Factor 2, namely '*word-of-mouth enables us to exchange opinions about how customers experience the product'*, '*some customers are less willing to offer their opinions on how they have experienced the product'*. Additionally, '*word-of-mouth allows us to exchange product information with our customers', 'our customers communicate positive word-of-mouth messages about our business',* and '*we network with other businesses using word-of-mouth'*. This Factor 2 was named 'word-of-mouth content'. These items loaded strongly together on Factor 2 in the final EFA analysis. A reliability analysis obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .867 that is above the generally expected minimum of 0.7, with a mean score of 4.59,

standard deviation of 0.538 and 15.22 eigenvalue. Chowdhury and Chakraborty (2005) highlighted that small independent retailers utilise word-of-mouth as an interpersonal communication between customers regarding their personal experiences with the business or product. Lekhanya (2010) and Franco *et al.* (2014) add that many small independent retailers depend solely on word-of-mouth because word-of-mouth is flexible, spreads information in a responsive manner and allows the small independent retailers to have closer contact with their customers. Additionally, a study conducted by Ramasobana (2017) revealed that small independent retailers utilise word-of-mouth to obtain feedback from consumers about their products or services.

The third factor, Factor 3 was named 'advertising'. Items were *'we advertise our products on local radio station', 'we hand out flyers/posters to general customers', 'we use magazine advertisements to increase our sales and market share', 'we utilise local TV channel to showcase the benefits of our products'*. Additional items were *'we provide our customers with free samples to promote our business', 'we give coupons to our customers to promote our business', 'we give our customers gifts as a means of promoting our business'*, and '*our business uses loyalty programmes as a form of sales promotion'* loaded together on Factor 3 in the final EFA analysis. A reliability analysis conducted on this factor achieved a strong Cronbach's alpha of .929, which is above the generally expected minimum of 0.7, with a mean score of 2.26, standard deviation of 1.065 and 8.69 eigenvalue. When a business pays to communicate influential information about its goods/services to the targeted customers that is known as advertising (McDaniel *et al.*, 2013). Rossiter (2011) mentioned that there are various types of advertising, such as TV, radio and door-to-door promotions. Van Scheers and Radipere (2008) suggest that small independent retailers in Soweto need to utilise different advertising methods, such as advertising in taxis, print advertising and other means of outdoor advertising. A study conducted by Gabrielli and Balboni (2010) and Aggarwal (2018) state that small independent retailers utilise advertising. Moreover, a study conducted by Mapheto *et al*. (2014) on the marketing communication strategy utilised by small independent retailers, agrees that small independent retailers utilise advertising. Van Scheers and Radipere's (2008) study reported that small independent retailers in Soweto need to utilise different advertising methods from those used by a large chain in a well-established area which would

typically employ outdoor advertising, such as advertising in taxis, print advertising and other means of outdoor advertising.

Factor 4 is the construct ‘personal selling’ and items of ‘*personal selling is good for our business’, ‘personal selling is effective in increasing profits for the business’, ‘personal selling is effective in increasing awareness about the business’*. Additionally, ‘*we gain buying commitments from customers when we use personal selling’, ‘personal selling assists us in achieving customer loyalty’, ‘personal selling assists us to identify potential customers’. ‘Personal selling is utilised as a source of information about the business’,* and ‘*personal selling is flexible because it allows us to get immediate feedback from customers’* loaded together on Factor 4 in the final EFA analysis. A reliability analysis achieved a Cronbach's alpha of .908, which is above the generally expected minimum of 0.7, with a mean score of 4.59, standard deviation of 0.553, and 5.74 eigenvalue. On this factor, personal selling refers to the process where the sales personnel interact face-to-face with the customer, and it is known as a marketing communication element that involves direct and face-to-face interaction with the customer (Koekemoer, 2014). A study conducted by Mapheto *et al*. (2014) on small independent retailers, highlights that the marketing communication strategy shows that personal selling is used more than other marketing communication elements such as sponsorship, publicity and direct marketing. Aggarwal (2018) agrees that small independent retailers utilise personal selling.

Factor 5 is the construct ‘direct marketing’. Items ‘*direct marketing is good for our business’, ‘we promote our products by means of direct marketing’*, and ‘*we communicate our products directly to the customer*’ loaded strongly together on Factor 5 in the final EFA analysis. All three items reflected direct marketing. A reliability analysis conducted for Factor 5 achieved a Cronbach's alpha of .781, which is above the generally expected minimum of .7, with a mean score of 1.61, standard deviation of 0.64, and 4.25 eigenvalue. Factor 5 reflected direct marketing, which is an element of the marketing communication strategy where audiences are targeted directly with marketing strategies that are personalised to their specific requests (Kotler & Armstrong, 2014). Customers find direct marketing as a convenient element because they do not have to visit the store (Strydom, 2012). Aggarwal (2018) discussed that small independent retailers utilise direct marketing, while Mapheto *et al*., 2014) argued that the use of a marketing communication strategy such as direct marketing is less

popular amongst the small independent retailers, which support the findings of this study. Thus, small independent retailers cannot afford to implement direct marketing due to budget constraints (Moss *et al.,* 2004; Gabrielli & Balboni, 2010; Lekhanya, 2010; Mapheto *et al.,* 2014).

The construct 'internet' is Factor 6. Items such as '*the internet is useful for our business', 'we use the internet to research our competitors', 'we use the internet to research our customers', 'we have enough knowledge about the use of the internet to market our business'*. Additionally, '*we use the internet to sell products', 'our business uses the internet to advertise products',* and '*we have enough knowledge about social media and its role in marketing our business*' loaded strongly together on Factor 6 in the final EFA analysis. However, a reliability analysis conducted for Factor 6 achieved a strong Cronbach's alpha of .927, which is above the generally expected minimum of .7, with a mean score of 2.70, standard deviation of 0.968, and 3.34 eigenvalue. Cant *et al*. (2016) and Aggarwal (2018) mentioned that small independent retailers utilise the internet. Consequently, small independent retailers that are using the internet to communicate with their customers are faced with challenges such as running out of data, and without data they will not be able to connect to the internet (Mohlameane & Ruxwana, 2013).

Factor 7 is the construct 'sales promotion'. Items '*we use local newspapers to obtain broader coverage of the market', 'sales promotions influence our customers to buy our product',* and '*we continuously conduct informal research on sales promotions'* loaded together on Factor 7 in the final EFA analysis. A reliability analysis conducted on this factor achieved a Cronbach's alpha of .542, with a mean score of 2.18, standard deviation of 0.984, and 2.77 eigenvalue. Small independent retailers utilise sales promotions (Aggarwal, 2018). In addition, a study conducted by Gabrielli and Balboni (2010) and Mapheto *et al.*, 2014) found that small independent retailers utilise sales promotions to promote their products and services.

Factor 8 was named 'word-of-mouth message involvement' because the items intrigued the quality of a word-of-mouth message that gets people talking about products or services (Sormunen, 2009). Items '*word-of-mouth is good for our business', 'word-of-mouth is powerful because it can influence customers to buy our products', 'word-of-mouth enhances awareness about our business'*. Additionally, '*word-of-mouth assists us in getting more referrals',* and '*some referred customers*

trust word-of-mouth' loaded together on Factor 8 in the EFA analysis. A reliability analysis conducted for Factor 8 obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .861 that is above the generally expected minimum of .7, with a mean score of 1.39, standard deviation of 0.500, and 2.22 eigenvalue. The customer's attention is attracted by the novelty of who recommended the product and delivered the personal trust through word-of-mouth (Centeno & Hart, 2012). Dzisi and Ofuso (2014) highlighted that small independent retailer's use word-of-mouth. Lekhanya (2010) added that many small independent retailers utilise word-of-mouth. A study conducted by Supyuenyong *et al.* (2007) mentioned that small independent retailers use word-of-mouth as their primary tool for advertising.

The last Factor 9 was named 'social media' because more items reflected the general utilisation of social media by small independent retail owners/managers/sales assistants. Items '*we monitor our social media home page', 'we offer information about our business on our social media',* and *'we provide feedback about the products to our customers on social media'*. Additional items were '*social media enables customers to share opinions about the products'*, and '*we WhatsApp our customers as a means of direct marketing'* loaded together on Factor 1 in the final EFA analysis. A reliability analysis achieved a strong Cronbach's alpha of .921, which is above the generally expected minimum of .7. A reliability analysis achieved a mean score of 2.91, standard deviation of 1.092, and 1.92 eigenvalue. On this factor, social media is an online communication tool that permits people to share professional or personal information and communicate their interest or views about their favourite brands and products, and anything that interests them (Pride *et al.,* 2012). The use of social media within small independent retailers was reported as low (Hassan *et al*., 2015).

4.6 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

The relationship between validity and reliability highlights that a test can be reliable but not valid, but a test cannot be valid without first being reliable (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The study used the validity and reliability test to confirm that the results are trustworthy and to prevent errors of measurement (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*., 2014).

4.6.1 Validity analysis

As discussed in Chapter 3 (refer to Section 3.13.1), validity refers to an instrument that measures what it is supposed to measure, and it involves the effectiveness and soundness of measuring the instrument (Pietersen & Maree, 2007). Validity is a measurement process that includes the ability of an instrument to measure what it is intended to measure (Kumar, 2005). To achieve validity, the corresponding measurements of rules of thumb or principles were used in this section. Namely, content validity, convergent and discriminant validity as outlined in Chapter 3.

4.6.2 Content validity

A panel of academics and a statistician assessed the scales during the pretesting and piloting phase. The scale items in the final questionnaire sufficiently comprised the domain of the constructs and the content validity of the questionnaire was addressed. The questionnaire adapted the content of questions from other existing studies and used existing literature to design the questionnaire items. This was performed in order to improve the questionnaire so that the participants do not experience difficulties in answering the questions, and to ensure that there are no problems experienced when capturing data. The questionnaire was kept short, questions unrelated to the objectives were removed, and questions were straight and to the point to avoid boredom, which may result in unanswered questions, as mentioned in Section 3.13.1, Chapter 3.

4.6.3 Convergent validity

According to Aldlaigan and Buttle (2002), the recommended value of item loadings for each corresponding research construct is 0.5. As shown in Table 4.11, the item loadings ranged between 0.573 and 0.934, which means that the instruments loaded well on their respective constructs. The results indicate that all items converged well on the construct they were supposed to measure, hence, it confirmed the existence of convergent validity.

As a result, the recommended guidelines for content and convergent validity were met in the current study.

4.6.4 Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity is the correlations that compare each variable in the model to measure the degree of difference between the overlapping constructs (Franke & Sarstedt, 2019). In order to indicate if the research constructs are distinct and unique from one another, a Simple Correlation Matrix was employed within the discriminant validity. Stockburger (2016) mentions that the absolute values of the Pearson Product moment Correlations Coefficient (r) provide an indication of the effect size which are highlighted as follow; small effect: $r \leq .20$, medium effect: $r \geq .30 \leq .49$, and large effect: $r \geq .50$ (Cohen, 2008).

Table 4.10 below shows a distinct correlation between the constructs.

Table 4.10: Simple Correlation Matrix

	Digital marketing	Word-of-mouth content	Advertising	Personal selling	Direct marketing	Internet	Sales promotion	Word-of-mouth message involvement	Social media
Digital marketing	1								
Word-of-mouth content	.115*	1							
Advertising	.623**	.166**	1						
Personal selling	0.055	.433**	-0.070	1					
Direct marketing	-.157**	-.259**	-0.051	-.284**	1				
Internet	-.555**	-.211**	-.255**	-.177**	.154**	1			
sales promotion	-0.088	-.373**	-0.070	-.236**	.379**	0.065	1		
word-of-mouth message involvement	-.171**	-.647**	-.221**	-.260**	.325**	0.091	.396**	1	
social media	-.718**	-.129*	-.394**	-0.098	.146*	.765**	-0.010	0.091	1
Notes: ***. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).**									
Notes: ****. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**									

The results from Table 4.10 indicates that there was a significant positive relationship between digital marketing and word-of-mouth content (r = .115; small effect; p ≤ .05), advertising (r = .623; large effect; p ≤ .05), and a negative significant relationship with direct marketing (r = -.157; small effect; p ≤ .05), internet (r = -.555; large effect; p ≤ .05), word-of-mouth message involvement (r = -.171; small effect; p ≤ .05) and social media (r = -.718; small effect; p ≤ .05).

The results indicate that there was a significant positive relationship between word-of-mouth content and advertising (r = .166; small effect; p ≤ .05) and personal selling (r = .433; medium effect; p ≤ .05), and a negative significant relationship with direct marketing (r = -.259; small effect; p ≤ .05), internet (r = -.211; small effect; p ≤ .05), sales promotions (r = .373; medium effect; p ≤ .05), word-of-mouth message involvement (r = -.647; large effect; p ≤ .05) and social media (r = -.129; small effect; p ≤ .05).

Table 4.10 shows that the results indicate that there was a negative significant relationship between advertising and internet (r = -.255; small effect; p ≤ .05), word-of-mouth message involvement (r = -.221; small effect; p ≤ .05) and social media (r = -.394; medium effect; p ≤ .05).

There was a negative significant relationship between personal selling and direct marketing (r = -.284; small effect; p ≤ .05), internet (r = -.177; large effect; p ≤ .05), Sales promotions (r = -.236; small effect; p ≤ .05), and word-of-mouth message involvement (r = -.260; small effect; p ≤ .05).

The results indicate that there was a significant positive relationship between direct marketing and internet (r = .154; small effect; p ≤ .05), sales promotions (r = .379; medium effect; p ≤ .05), word-of-mouth message involvement (r = .325; medium effect; p ≤ .05) and social media (r = .146; small effect; p ≤ .05).

As shown in Table 4.10, the results indicate that there was a significant positive relationship between internet and social media (r = .765; large effect; p ≤ .05). Lastly, there was a significant positive relationship between sale promotion and word-of-mouth message involvement (r = .396; medium effect; p ≤ .05).

In conclusion, discriminant validity achieved the simple correlation matrix because there was a distinct correlation between the constructs.

4.6.5 Reliability analysis

Wilson (2014) mentioned that a reliability analysis of the research is important because it offers an indication of the quality of the research that was conducted. Reliability further refers to the internal consistency of a research instrument, which means that the research instrument should produce reliable outcomes when the tests are repeated under the same conditions (Zikmund & Babin, 2013). Hair *et al.* (2015) highlight the following:

- reliability is considered poor if the value is less than 0.6;
- reliability is considered moderate if the value is between 0.6 and 0.7;
- reliability is considered good if the value is between 0.7 and 0.9; and
- reliability is considered to be redundant if the value is greater than 0.95.

Cronbach's alpha is a statistical measurement that is employed to measure the internal consistency reliability of multi-item scales at an intermission level of measurement (Cooper & Schindler, 2013). Hence, the Cronbach's alpha was employed as an indicator of internal consistency reliability to assess the degree that the set of items of the nine dimensional marketing communication strategy scale are internally consistent in their measurements, whether or not they measure the same fundamental dimension. A scale's internal consistency is an essential feature of reliability (Pallant, 2011).

The Cronbach's alpha and internal consistency reliability analysis coefficients of the nine dimensions measured was 0.851, as shown in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Total coefficient value for marketing communication strategy scale

Dimension	Cronbach's alpha test		Number of items
	Alpha value	Item-total	
Digital marketing	0.925	0.929	7
Word-of-mouth content	0.867	0.870	5
Advertising	0.929	0.934	8
Personal selling	0.908	0.908	9
Direct marketing	0.781	0.783	3
Internet	0.927	0.929	7
Sales promotion	0.542	0.573	3
Word-of-mouth message involvement	0.861	0.861	5
Social media	0.921	0.923	5
Overall alpha for all factors	**0.851**	-	

As shown in Table 4.11, a reliability analysis on each of the 9 items obtained a Cronbach's alpha item-total loadings ranged between 0.573 and 0.934, meaning that the instruments loaded well on their respective constructs.

4.7 THE IMPACT OF MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

The section deals with the impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers.

Regression analysis is a method to investigate the functional relationships between variables (Chatterjee & Hadi, 2015). The regression analysis is an equation that analyses outcomes of independent variables across dependent variables (Ahn, Yoon & Kim, 2018). A regression analysis determines the variation between the dependent variables and independent variable, and authenticates the beta value that shows how much the independent variable can influence the dependent variable (Neuman, 2003). In order for the hypothesis to be supported, the researcher should test the significance of the regression analysis. Nardi (2003) mentions that in research, it is proposed to use a significance level of at least 95% that is represented by a value of .05.

Malhotra and Birks (2006) and Bryman and Bell (2011) explain that a dependent variable is the variable that the researcher aspires to understand by means of the conducted research.

The symbol 'r' is a uniform tool for measuring the strength and direction of linear relationships between two variables, varying from -1 for a perfect negative relationship and 1 for a perfect positive relationship. The researcher may choose to provide a non-statistical audience a sense of some rules of thumb as set out by Cohen (2008), which are highlighted in Table 4.12 below.

Table 4.12: r

r	r	r
0.1 to 0.29	0.3 to 0.49	>= 0.5
small	medium	large

Source: Cohen (2008)

Table 4.12 shows that r between 0.1 and 0.29 has a small relationship, r between 0.3 and 0.49 has a moderate relationship, and r above 0.5 has a strong relationship. However, some authors may mathematically argue that 0.49 is close to 0.5 thus rounding it off to the nearest ten that is 0.5, which represents a strong relationship. In any event, r is interpreted as equivalent to a standardised regression coefficient (Jeromy & Adhesh, 2011).

Beta (β) is an appropriate method used to analyse percentage responses (Schmid, Wickler, Maloney, Mitchell, Fenske & Mayr, 2013). Beta value is a tool used to assess how strong each predictor variable affects the criterion (dependent) variable (Bryman & Bell, 2011). This means that the closer the value to ±1, the stronger the relationship.

A probability value known as p-value is derived from the chi-square test that shows a statistical significance (Wilson, 2014). The smaller the p-value, the smaller the 99 probability, the more the observed result occurred by chance (McDaniel & Gates, 2009). Computer software highlights a so-called 'p-value' with each statistical test of a null hypothesis (McDaniel & Gates, 2009). Briefly, the p-value provides the probability of the results under the null hypothesis. When the calculated p-value is

smaller than 0.05 at a 95% level of confidence, the level of confidence refers to the percentage that the parameter represents the true population (Wilson, 2014). For the purpose of the study, Sig. from the table, will be represented by the p-value.

In Question 3 from the questionnaire (see Appendix B), respondents were asked to indicate the percentage that the marketing communication strategies had in the performance of their businesses. This was essential because one of the secondary research objectives of the study was to assess the impact of marketing communication on the performance of small independent retailers in Soweto. It further helped in identifying the link between the impact and the performance that marketing communication have in the small independent retailers.

4.7.1 Testing hypothesis 1

H_1: Marketing communication strategies have an impact on the performance of small independent retailers.

H_0: Marketing communication strategies do not have an impact on the performance of small independent retailers.

To test H_1, regression analysis was used. Multiple regression was performed by modelling performance that is the composite of increased sales, positive influence on the customers' purchasing behaviour, increased awareness, increased customer satisfaction, increased turnover and increased profit as dependent variables. Marketing communication strategies was an independent variable.

Table 4.13 summarises the regression analysis results performed to assess whether marketing communication strategies acted as a significant predictor of performance. The results showed that the regression model is significant ($p = 0.000$; $F = 17.078$; $r^2 = 0.354$; $\Delta r^2 = 0.333$; and $r = 0.595$). This is found on the model summary on Table 4.13 (0.354) *100 = 35.4 (medium) implying that the independent variable explains 35% of the variance of the dependent variable (performance).

Table 4.13: Regression coefficients

Regression												
Model variables	**Unstandardised Coefficients**		**Standardised Coefficients**	**t**	**Sig.**	**Collinearity Statistics**		**Sig.**	**F**	**R^2**	**Adj. R^2**	**R**
	B	**Std. Error**	**Beta (β).**			**Tolerance**	**VIF**					
(Constant)	2.496	0.816		3.059	0.002			0.000	17.078	0.354	0.333	0.595
Digital marketing	-0.414	0.059	-0.585	-7.034	**0.000**	0.333	3.003					
Word-of-mouth content	0.192	0.119	0.112	1.611	0.108	0.473	2.113					
Advertising	0.511	0.054	0.612	9.470	**0.000**	0.551	1.814					
Personal selling	0.087	0.099	0.049	0.881	0.379	0.753	1.328					
Direct marketing	0.093	0.076	0.067	1.235	0.218	0.782	1.278					
Internet	-0.162	0.071	-0.175	-2.276	**0.024**	0.389	2.572					
Sales promotion	-0.011	0.059	-0.011	-0.195	0.846	0.746	1.340					
Word-of-mouth message involvement	-0.106	0.125	-0.057	-0.855	0.393	0.510	1.960					
Social media	-0.218	0.070	-0.280	-3.129	**0.002**	0.286	3.491					
a. Dependent Variable: Performance												
Notes: N = 290; *** p ≤ .001; ** p ≤ .01; * p ≤ .05, r ≤ .30 (small), r ≥ .30 ≤ .49 (medium), r ≥ .50 (large).												
Note: The statistically significant p-values are highlighted in bold in the table												

Table 4.13 shows the analysis of regression coefficients. Since the p-value (<0.05) of this coefficients is significant, the researcher interprets it as that digital marketing is the significant predictor of performance with a strong negative relationship (r = -0.585). This means that a unit change in the digital marketing will cause a decrease in the performance score by -0.414. The advertising p-value is <0.05, denoting that the coefficient is significant. This means that advertising is the significant predictor of performance with a strong positive relationship of r = 0.612.

Table 4.13 highlights that a unit change on the advertising will cause an increase in the performance score by 0.511. The p-value (<0.05) of this coefficient is significant, hence it is explained that internet is the significant predictor of performance, with a small negative relationship (r = -0.175). A unit change on the internet will cause a decrease in the performance score of -0.162.

As the p-value (<0.05) of social media coefficients is significant, this is interpreted that social media is the significant predictor of performance with a small negative relationship (r = -0.280). It is shown in Table 4.13 that a unit change on the social media will cause a decrease in the performance score of -0.218.

The above findings support that marketing communication strategies influence performance within the small independent retailers in Soweto, South Africa. Various scholars, such as Wong (2012), Rodriguez, Ajjan and Peterson (2014), Ainin *et al.* (2015), Wang *et al.* (2016) and Musa, Ab Rahim, Azmi, Shibghatullah and Othman (2016) concur with the findings that state that the marketing communication strategy has a strong positive impact on the performance of small independent retailers. As early as 2007, a study by Keh, Nguyen and Ng already found that there is a positive relationship between the marketing communication strategies and performance of small independent retailers. The statement above was also confirmed by Gilmore (2011), and Bocconcelli, Cioppi, Fortezza, Francioni, Pagano, Savelli and Splendiani (2018).

In conclusion, the results of the current study revealed that marketing communication strategies (namely, digital marketing, advertising, internet and social media) have an impact on the performance of small independent retailers. However, word-of-mouth content, personal selling, direct marketing, sales promotion, and word-of-mouth message involvement do not predict performance.

With that being said, H_1 was supported.

4.8 DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS & MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

This section discusses the effect of marketing communication strategies and demographic factors (age and years of operation) on the performance of small independent retailers.

This section aims to determine if marketing communication strategies differ across demographic factors, such as age and years of operation. An ANOVA analysis was conducted to determine this result. The ANOVA analysis is a statistical method that is used to establish whether samples from two or more groups are derived from populations with equal means (Zikmund & Babin, 2013). ANOVA is used to test for differences between two or more independent variables (Dean & Bergeron, 2015). The ANOVA analysis was used to determine the differences among respondents to show if they differed in terms of the marketing communication strategies they use.

In order to establish whether there was a statistically significance between the utilisation of marketing communication strategies and the **age of the participants**, and a statistically significance between the utilisation of marketing communication strategies and **years of small independent retailers' operations**, ANOVA was utilised. In this study, the mean scores that were derived from the ANOVA were used to show the rank of the different age groups on the utilisation of marketing communication strategies, and the rank of years of operations on the utilisation of marketing communication strategies.

The p-value is the level of probability to achieve a computed statistical test that is due to chance. The smaller p-value, the smaller the 99 probability, the more the observed result occurred by chance (McDaniel & Gates, 2009). Briefly, the p-value provides the probability of the results under the null hypothesis. When the calculated p-value is smaller than 0.05 at a 95% level of confidence, the level of confidence refers to the percentage that the parameter represents for the true population (Wilson, 2014). For the purpose of the study, p-value will represent 'Sig.' from the table.

Hair, Bush and Ortinau (2006) mention that the level of significance is the measurement of risk in the accurateness of the test that the researcher is willing to

accept. Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) state that the significance level for hypothesis testing in the current study was set at 95% (α = 0.05). The significance level of α = 0.05 is accepted by many researchers and signifies the level of risk that the researcher needs to take into consideration when rejecting the hypothesis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Understanding the demographics of small independent retail owners/managers/sales assistants would provide the small independent retail owners/managers/sales with information that could be useful in customising their marketing communication strategies to their consumers (Breytenbach, 2014). This section determines at which years of operations the marketing communication strategies have the most impact on the performance of small independent retailers. In addition, it determines whether there are links between the marketing communication strategies and age group of the small independent retailers. Furthermore, it establishes how much of an impact the marketing communication strategies have on which age group.

The demographic profile is the relationship between the impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of the small independent retailers and the age group of small independent retail owners/managers/sales assistants. Further, the demographic profile, which is the relationship between the impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of the small independent retailers and years of small independent retailers operations, is essential as it provides small independent retailers with a good understanding of which marketing communication strategies have an impact on the performance of the small independent retailers.

Two hypotheses were formulated regarding the demographic factors (age and years of operation) which influence the performance of small independent retailers, namely, the age of small independent retail owners/managers/sales assistants has a positive influence on marketing communication strategies, and the operational years of small independent retailers has a positive influence on their marketing communication strategies.

These two formulated hypotheses were tested and are presented below.

4.8.1 Testing hypothesis 2

H_2: Age of small independent retail owners/managers/sales assistants has a positive influence on marketing communication strategies.

H_0: Age of small independent retail owners/managers/sales assistants does not have a positive influence on marketing communication strategies.

To test H_2, ANOVA was used. The purpose was to determine whether there was a significant relationship between age group (question 5) and the utilisation of marketing communication strategies (question 9-67). ANOVA was used to determine the difference for years of operations (question 10) and the utilisation of marketing communication strategies (question 9-67).

Table 4.14 presents the results of the differences between age groups and the marketing communication strategies they use the most. Furthermore, Table 4.14 also presents the results of the differences between the utilised marketing communication strategies and the age of small independent retail owners/managers/sales assistants.

Table 4.14 shows the results for marketing communication strategies and age of the participants.

Table 4.14: ANOVA results for marketing communication strategies and age of the participants

ANOVA										
Dimension	**Age group**	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error**	**95% Confidence Interval for Mean**		**Post Hoc Tests, Sig.**	**DF**	**P value**
						Lower Bound	**Upper Bound**			
Digital marketing	18-30	71	2.1955	1.02154	0.12123	1.9537	2.4373		2	0.072
	31-40	133	2.3605	1.07132	0.09290	2.1768	2.5443			
	40+	90	2.5738	1.03208	0.10879	2.3576	2.7900			
	Total	294	2.3860	1.05350	0.06144	2.2651	2.5069			
Word-of-mouth content	18-30	71	4.6176	0.41577	0.04934	4.5192	4.7160		2	0.283
	31-40	132	4.6038	0.43412	0.03779	4.5290	4.6785			
	40+	89	4.5213	0.45188	0.04790	4.4262	4.6165			
	Total	292	4.5820	0.43569	0.02550	4.5318	4.6322			
Advertising	18-30	71	2.3726	1.03334	0.12263	2.1280	2.6172		2	**0.026**
	31-40	133	2.1093	0.83082	0.07204	1.9668	2.2518	0.040		
	40+	90	2.4036	0.82367	0.08682	2.2311	2.5761	0.040		
	Total	294	2.2630	0.88986	0.05190	2.1608	2.3651			
Personal selling	18-30	70	4.5169	0.34384	0.04110	4.4349	4.5989		2	0.320
	31-40	133	4.5946	0.44591	0.03867	4.5181	4.6711			

ANOVA										
Dimension	Age group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Post Hoc Tests, Sig.	DF	P value
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound			
	40+	89	4.6122	0.42695	0.04526	4.5223	4.7021			
	Total	292	4.5813	0.41800	0.02446	4.5332	4.6295			
	18-30	71	1.7254	0.73899	0.08770	1.5504	1.9003			
Direct marketing	31-40	133	1.6003	0.47138	0.04087	1.5194	1.6811		2	0.210
	40+	89	1.5805	0.50384	0.05341	1.4744	1.6867			
	Total	293	1.6246	0.55785	0.03259	1.5604	1.6887			
Internet	18-30	70	2.7864	0.70565	0.08434	2.6181	2.9547		2	0.488
	31-40	132	2.6470	0.78227	0.06809	2.5123	2.7817			
	40+	90	2.7220	0.90641	0.09554	2.5321	2.9118			
	Total	292	2.7035	0.80500	0.04711	2.6108	2.7962			
Sales promotion	18-30	71	2.3521	0.77026	0.09141	2.1698	2.5344	0.018	2	**0.025**
	31-40	133	2.1880	0.69915	0.06062	2.0680	2.3079			
	40+	90	2.0481	0.64682	0.06818	1.9127	2.1836	0.018		
	Total	294	2.1848	0.70821	0.04130	2.1035	2.2661			
	18-30	71	1.3465	0.36872	0.04376	1.2592	1.4338		2	0.530

ANOVA										
Dimension	**Age group**	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error**	**95% Confidence Interval for Mean**		**Post Hoc Tests, Sig.**	**DF**	**P value**
						Lower Bound	**Upper Bound**			
Word-of-mouth message involvement	31-40	132	1.3867	0.39999	0.03481	1.3179	1.4556			
	40+	89	1.4180	0.41848	0.04436	1.3298	1.5061			
	Total	292	1.3865	0.39797	0.02329	1.3406	1.4323			
Social media	18-30	71	3.0134	0.87904	0.10432	2.8053	3.2214		2	0.619
	31-40	133	2.8970	0.96074	0.08331	2.7322	3.0618			
	40+	90	2.8733	1.01736	0.10724	2.6603	3.0864			
	Total	294	2.9179	0.95804	0.05587	2.8079	3.0278			
Note: **The statistically significant p-values are highlighted in bold in the table**										

Table 4.14 shows the different relationships between marketing communication strategies and age group of the participants, however, the analysis combined the 41-50 years and 51-65 years age group together. The decision was purely made on numbers such that the test can be valid, hence it was grouped as 40+ years.

As shown in Table 4.14, it seems that age has no statistical significant difference between age group and digital marketing as this is shown by a p-value of 0.072, which is larger than the specified significance of 5%.

The analysis from Table 4.14 shows that there is no significant difference between age group and the usage of word-of-mouth content; this is shown by a p-value of 0.283, which is larger than the specified significance of 5%.

The results shown in Table 4.14 reported the p-value of <0.05, which indicates that age group has a statistical significant difference in the usage of advertising and is smaller than the specified significance of 5%.

There is no significant difference in all the respondents aged between 18 and 65 years and the usage of personal selling. This is indicated with a p-value of 0.320, which is larger than the specified significance of 5%.

It can be concluded that there is no significant difference between the respondents between the ages of 18 years and 65 years and the utilisation of direct marketing, represented with a p-value of 0.210, which is larger than the specified significance of 5%.

Based on the p-value of 0.488 that is larger than the specified significance of 5%, it can be concluded that there is no statistically significant difference between the age group and the internet.

Table 4.14 shows that the p-value of <0.05 is smaller than the specified significance of 5%, thus, the statistical significant difference between the age group and the utilisation of sales promotions.

The analysis from Table 4.14 concludes that age has no significant difference towards word-of-mouth message involvement. This is presented with a p-value of 0.530, which is larger than the specified significance of 5%.

It can be seen in Table 4.14, the p-value of 0.619 is larger than the specified significance of 5%, thus there is no statistically significant difference between age group and social media.

A post-hoc test was employed to determine where significant differences lie in groups where significant differences exist (P <0.05) that is considered as significant (López-García, Mariscal-Tovar, Martínez-Gómez, Jiménez-Estrada & Castelán, 2014). The post-hoc test was done on groups with more than two categories. Tukey HSD post-hoc tests were done to determine significant differences between marketing communication strategies and age group (*P < 0.05). Additionally, post-hoc tests between advertising and sales promotion, and age groups were done to determine where the significant differences lie.

From Table 4.14 above it is clear that the age groups 31-40 and 41+ are statistically different with a p-value of <0.05 (0.040). The other group's means score do not differ statistically at the 5% level. Further, Table 4.14 shows that the age groups18-30 years and 41+ years are statistically different with a p-value of <0.05 (0.010), while the other group's means score do not differ statistically at the 5% level. This denotes that small independent retail respondents aged between 31 years and 40+ years are statistically different when compared to the age group between 18-30 years concerning the utilisation of advertising. In addition, small independent retail respondents aged between 18-30 years and 40+ years are statistically different when compared to the age group between 31-40 years about the utilisation of sales promotion.

In summary, the results in Table 4.14 revealed that between age groups, there was a statistical significant difference regarding advertising and sales promotion. Nevertheless, digital marketing, word-of-mouth content, personal selling, direct marketing, internet, word-of-mouth message involvement, and social media have no statistical significant difference towards the age group.

Having said the above, H_2 was supported.

Next, the ANOVA results for marketing communication strategies and years of operation of small independent retailers are discussed.

4.8.2 Testing hypothesis 3

H_3: Operational years of small independent retailers have a positive influence on marketing communication strategies.

H_0: Operational years of small independent retailers do not have a positive influence on marketing communication strategies.

To test H_3, ANOVA was used. A study conducted by Soke and Wiid (2016) indicated that small retailers utilised marketing communication tools within less than a year of operations, and they utilised marketing communication tools between 2 and over 5 years of operations.

Based on the above-mentioned, Table 4.15 shows marketing communication strategies by years of small independent retailers' operations.

Table 4.15: ANOVA results for marketing communication strategies and years of small independent retailers' operations

ANOVA										
Dimension	**Years of operation**	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error**	**95% Confidence Interval for Mean**		**Post Hoc Tests**	**DF**	**P value**
						Lower Bound	**Upper Bound**			
Digital marketing	Less than a year	31	2.0307	0.98275	0.17651	1.6702	2.3912		3	**0.001**
	Between 1 and 2 years	94	2.1877	0.89420	0.09223	2.0045	2.3708	*0.004*		
	Between 3 and 5 years	138	2.5097	1.07947	0.09189	2.3280	2.6914			
	Over 5 years	30	2.9230	1.20811	0.22057	2.4719	3.3741	0.004		
	Total	293	2.3980	1.05277	0.06150	2.2770	2.5191			
Word-of-mouth content	Less than a year	31	4.6774	0.48902	0.08783	4.4980	4.8568		3	0.259
	Between 1 and 2 years	93	4.6258	0.39950	0.04143	4.5435	4.7081			
	Between 3 and 5 years	137	4.5358	0.44651	0.03815	4.4603	4.6112			
	Over 5 years	30	4.6067	0.42502	0.07760	4.4480	4.7654			
	Total	291	4.5869	0.43540	0.02552	4.5367	4.6372			
Advertising	Less than a year	31	2.3715	0.83566	0.15009	2.0650	2.6781	0.006	3	**0.000**
	Between 1 and 2 years	94	2.1708	0.89907	0.09273	1.9866	2.3549	0.000		
	Between 3 and 5 years	138	2.1463	0.76544	0.06516	2.0174	2.2751	0.000		
	Over 5 years	30	3.0851	1.00636	0.18374	2.7093	3.4609	0.006		

ANOVA										
Dimension	**Years of operation**	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error**	**95% Confidence Interval for Mean**		**Post Hoc Tests**	**DF**	**P value**
						Lower Bound	**Upper Bound**			
	Total	293	2.2741	0.88567	0.05174	2.1723	2.3759			
Personal selling	Less than a year	31	4.4516	0.66910	0.12017	4.2062	4.6970		3	**0.024**
	Between 1 and 2 years	94	4.6203	0.32981	0.03402	4.5527	4.6878			
	Between 3 and 5 years	136	4.6242	0.36262	0.03109	4.5627	4.6857			
	Over 5 years	30	4.4259	0.51134	0.09336	4.2350	4.6169			
	Total	291	4.5841	0.41737	0.02447	4.5359	4.6323			
Direct marketing	Less than a year	31	1.5161	0.47795	0.08584	1.3408	1.6914		3	0.256
	Between 1 and 2 years	94	1.5621	0.44129	0.04552	1.4717	1.6524			
	Between 3 and 5 years	137	1.6655	0.53874	0.04603	1.5744	1.7565			
	Over 5 years	30	1.7222	0.90161	0.16461	1.3856	2.0589			
	Total	292	1.6221	0.55382	0.03241	1.5584	1.6859			
Internet	Less than a year	31	2.8011	0.67154	0.12061	2.5548	3.0474		3	0.062
	Between 1 and 2 years	94	2.8609	0.69995	0.07219	2.7176	3.0043			
	Between 3 and 5 years	136	2.5795	0.84043	0.07207	2.4370	2.7220			
	Over 5 years	30	2.6675	1.00894	0.18421	2.2907	3.0442			

ANOVA										
Dimension	**Years of operation**	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error**	**95% Confidence Interval for Mean**		**Post Hoc Tests**	**DF**	**P value**
						Lower Bound	**Upper Bound**			
	Total	291	2.7031	0.80670	0.04729	2.6100	2.7962			
Sales promotion	Less than a year	31	1.6989	0.63453	0.11396	1.4662	1.9317	0.003	3	**0.000**
	Between 1 and 2 years	94	2.2589	0.74960	0.07732	2.1053	2.4124	0.001		
	Between 3 and 5 years	138	2.1763	0.62548	0.05324	2.0710	2.2816	0.003		
	Over 5 years	30	2.3778	0.79140	0.14449	2.0823	2.6733	0.001		
	Total	293	2.1729	0.70472	0.04117	2.0919	2.2540			
Word-of-mouth message involvement	Less than a year	31	1.2645	0.28466	0.05113	1.1601	1.3689		3	0.205
	Between 1 and 2 years	93	1.3640	0.39648	0.04111	1.2823	1.4456			
	Between 3 and 5 years	137	1.4277	0.42853	0.03661	1.3553	1.5001			
	Over 5 years	30	1.3800	0.38363	0.07004	1.2367	1.5233			
	Total	291	1.3851	0.40205	0.02357	1.3387	1.4314			
Social media	Less than a year	31	3.2435	0.94063	0.16894	2.8985	3.5886	0.027	3	**0.000**
	Between 1 and 2 years	94	3.1926	0.82726	0.08532	3.0231	3.3620	0.009		

ANOVA										
Dimension	**Years of operation**	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error**	**95% Confidence Interval for Mean**		**Post Hoc Tests**	**DF**	**P value**
						Lower Bound	**Upper Bound**			
	Between 3 and 5 years	138	2.7232	0.95972	0.08170	2.5616	2.8847	0.026		
	Over 5 years	30	2.5733	1.06833	0.19505	2.1744	2.9723	0.027		
	Total	293	2.9135	0.95916	0.05604	2.8032	3.0238			
Note: The statistically significant p-values are highlighted in bold in the table										

Table 4.15 shows statistically different relationships between marketing communication strategies and the years that small independent retailers have been operating, however, the analysis combined between 6 and 10 years, and over 10 years. The decision was purely made on numbers such that the test can be valid, hence it was grouped as over 5 years.

In Table 4.15, it appears that years of operation have a statistically significant different role on the utilisation of digital marketing. This is shown with a p-value of <0.05, which is smaller than the specified significance of 5%.

The analysis from Table 4.15 concludes that there is no statistically significant difference between years of operation and word-of-mouth content as this is shown by a p-value 0.259, which is larger than the specified significance of 5%.

It seems that there is a statistically significant difference in the years of operation and advertising. These results shown in Table 4.15 highlight the p-value of <0.05, which is smaller than the specified significance of 5%.

There is a significant difference between years of operation and personal selling, which is presented by a p-value of <0.05 that is smaller than the specified significance of 5%.

In Table 4.15, it appears that years of operation have no statistically significant difference between years of operation and direct marketing. This is shown with a p-value of 0.256, which is larger than the specified significance of 5%.

It can be concluded that there is no significant difference between years of operations and the internet, and this is presented by a p-value of 0.062, which is larger than the specified significance of 5%.

The p-value of <0.05 is smaller than the specified significance of 5%, thus a statistically significant difference between years of operation and sales promotions.

As can be seen in Table 4.15, there is no significant difference between years of operations and word-of-mouth message involvement, as this is shown with a p-value of 0.205, which is larger than the specified significance of 5%.

There is a statistically significant difference between years of operation and social media. This is shown with a p-value of <0.05, which is smaller than the specified significance of 5%.

In the current study, a Tukey HSD post-hoc test of significant ANOVA was considered, that is the significant differences between digital marketing, advertising, sales promotion, social media, and years of operations. From Table 4.15 above it seems that the post-hoc test of digital marketing on years of operation Between 1 and 2 years and over 5 years are statistically different with a p-value of <0.05 (0.004). The other group's means score do not differ statistically at 5% level. From Table 4.15 above it is clear that the post-hoc test of advertising on less than a year and above 5 years of operations are statistically different with a p-value <0.05 (0.006), and between 1 and 2 years of operation has a statistical difference with a p-value of <0.05 (0.000).

The post-hoc test of sales promotion of less than a year and between 3 and 5 years of operations are statistically different with a p-value of <0.05 (0.003). Moreover, the post-hoc test of sales promotion of the group between 1 and 2 years, and over 5 years of operations are statistically different with a p-value of <0.05 (0.001). From Table 4.15 above the post-hoc test of social media on less than a year and over 5 years of operations are statistically different with a p-value of <0.05 (0.027). Additionally, the post-hoc test of social media on the group between 1 and 2 years has a statistical difference with a p-value of <0.05 (0.009), and the post-hoc test of social media between on the 3 and 5 years group has a statistical difference with a p-value of <0.05 (0.026).

In essence, this means that small independent retail respondents that have been in operation ‘between 1 and 2 years’ and ‘over 5 years’ are statistically different when compared to small independent retailers that have been in operation for ‘less than a year’, and ‘between 3 and 5 years’ with regards to the utilisation of digital marketing.

Briefly, the results shown in Table 4.15 show that there is significant difference on digital marketing, advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and social media towards the years of operations. However, word-of-mouth content, direct marketing, internet, and word-of-mouth message involvement had no statistically significant difference towards years of operations.

That having been said, H_3 was supported.

Table 4.16 shows a summary of the research objectives and links them to the hypotheses, and the statistical analysis for each hypothesis.

Table 4.16: Objectives, hypotheses and statistical analysis

Objectives	Hypothesis	Statistical analysis	Supported /rejected
To assess the impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers	H_1: Marketing communication strategies have an impact on the performance of small independent retailers	Regression coefficients	**Supported**
	H_0: Marketing communication strategies do not have an impact on the performance of small independent retailers	Regression coefficients	Rejected
To determine the influence of demographic factors (age and years of operation) on the performance of small independent retailers	H_2: The age of small independent retail owners/managers/sales assistants has a positive influence on marketing communication strategies	ANOVA	**Supported**
	H_0: The age of small independent retail owners/managers/sales assistants does not have a positive influence on marketing communication strategies	ANOVA	Rejected
	H_3: The operational years of small independent retailers have a positive influence on marketing communication strategies	ANOVA	**Supported**
	H_0: The operational years of small independent retailers do not have a positive influence on marketing communication strategies	ANOVA	Rejected

4.9 SUMMARY

In this chapter, data was analysed, presented and interpreted. The study had a 100% (n=300) response rate from respondents in three townships, namely Meadowlands, Dobsonville and Protea North. A demographic profile for small independent retailers that operate in Soweto was developed.

The descriptive statistical analysis with regards to the attitude towards the marketing communication was discussed, and it appears that a high percentage of respondents have a positive attitude towards the marketing communication and ‘agree’ that they

apply marketing communication principles in their businesses, have enough knowledge about marketing communication, and they agree that marketing communication is good for their business. A further descriptive statistical analysis of the marketing communication strategies affirmed that small independent retailers strongly agree that they only utilise word-of-mouth content and personal selling in their businesses. In contrast, small independent retailers are neutral about the use of the internet. Furthermore, small independent retailers disagree that they utilise digital marketing, advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion and word-of-mouth message involvement.

A descriptive statistical analysis of the marketing communication challenges faced by small independent retailers in the current study highlighted that four questions had a very high impact; and seven questions highlighted high challenges. Additionally, three questions seemed to be moderate, two questions appeared to be low, and the last five questions seemed to be very low marketing communication challenges faced by small independent retailers. A descriptive statistical analysis of the impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers was also discussed, and it appears that marketing communication strategies had a significant impact on increasing sales, positively influencing customers' purchasing behaviour, increasing awareness, and increasing customer satisfaction in small independent retailers.

The current study summarised that nine factors were extracted from the analysis. A regression analysis was performed to assess whether marketing communication strategies enacted as a significant predictor of performance. The variance in the performance as a dependent variable resulted that marketing communication strategies (digital marketing, advertising, internet and social media) were a significant predictor of performance as independent variables. However, word-of-mouth content, personal selling, direct marketing, sales promotion, and word-of-mouth message involvement do not predict performance.

This chapter summarised that the regression analysis results showed that marketing communication strategies acted as a significant predictor of performance. Hence, the results showed that the regression model is significant. The chapter ended with the ANOVA. Concerning the ANOVA results for marketing communication strategies and age of the participants, the current study revealed that between age groups, there was

only a statistical significant difference on advertising and sales promotion. Regarding the ANOVA results for marketing communication strategies and years of small independent retailers' operations, the current study surmised that there was only a statistically significant difference on digital marketing, advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and social media towards years of operations.

The next chapter will discuss the summary, research conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5:
SUMMARIES, CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This study investigated the impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers in Soweto, South Africa. The results and findings of the study were presented in Chapter 4. This chapter provides an overview of the summaries of the literature from the study, and presents conclusions and recommendations. This chapter reaches conclusions based on the interpretations and discussions in Chapter 4.

5.2 SUMMARIES FROM LITERATURE STUDY

The literature is summarised as per the secondary research objectives. The literature from the study is summarised first as per the secondary research objectives, and then followed by summaries from the primary study as per the secondary objectives.

5.2.1 Summaries from literature study

The summary for secondary research objective 1 is discussed next.

5.2.1.1 Summary for secondary research objective 1

A study by Gabrielli and Balboni (2010); Tsikirayi *et al*. (2013), and Wambaria *et al.* (2016) state that small independent retailers have a positive attitude towards applying marketing communication strategies. Van Scheers and Radipere (2008) stressed that small independent retailers in Soweto need to have a positive attitude towards marketing communication strategies in order to survive. However, Ngwenya (2012) argued that small independent retailers do not have a positive attitude towards marketing communication strategies. The current study agrees with the aforementioned studies that highlighted that small independent retailers have a positive attitude towards marketing communication strategies.

5.2.1.2 Summary for secondary research objective 2

A study conducted by Mapheto *et al*. (2014) on small independent retailers highlights that the marketing communication strategy shows that personal selling is used more

than other marketing communication strategies such as sponsorship, publicity and direct marketing.

With reference to the literature review, the object of word-of-mouth as utilised by small independent retailers is to obtain feedback from consumers about their products or services (Ramasobana, 2017). Many small independent retailers depend solely on word-of-mouth because word-of-mouth is flexible, spreads information in a responsive manner and allows the small independent retailers to come into closer contact with their customers (Franco *et al.*, 2014). Franco *et al.* (2014), Mapheto *et al*. (2014) and Ramasobana, 2017), mentions that word-of-mouth content and personal selling are the marketing communication strategies that are utilised the most by small independent retailers in Soweto. The study agrees with a study conducted by Aggarwal (2018), which stated that small independent retailers utilise personal selling.

Wamba and Carter (2016) found that small independent retailers utilise social media. Hassan *et al.* (2015) argued that a low usage of social media within small independent retailers has been reported. This study concluded that small independent retailers utilise social media in a moderate manner. The reason for this finding that small independent retailers reported neutral on the utilisation of social media and internet could be that the younger generation are accustomed to social networks such as social media (Saemundsson, 2012).

On the utilisation of the internet, Cant *et al*. (2016) and Aggarwal (2018) maintained that small independent retailers use the internet to communicate with their customers. Consequently, small independent retailers that are using the internet to communicate with their customers are faced with challenges such as running out of data, without which they will be unable to connect to the internet (Mohlameane & Ruxwana, 2013). This study concluded that small independent retailers utilise the internet in a moderate manner.

Kallier (2017) stated that digital marketing is being used the least by small independent retailers. The statement was supported by Taiminen and Karjaluoto (2015), who maintained that small independent retailers have not widely adopted digital marketing for marketing purposes.

However, a study conducted by Mapheto *et al*. (2014) on the marketing communication strategy utilised by small independent retailers, found that small

independent retailers utilise advertising. Aggarwal (2018) also mentioned that small independent retailers utilise advertising. Meanwhile, Centeno and Hart (2012) argued that these small independent retailers do not have the budget for advertising.

Regarding the existing literature reviewed, Mapheto *et al.* (2014) discussed that small independent retailers utilise sales promotions to promote their products and services. However, small independent retailers have a limited budget for marketing communication strategies, and sales promotions that deliver positive results at a sound yet effective manner, are costly (Lambert, 2017).

Small independent retailers utilise word-of-mouth because by involving customers in the word-of-mouth, it allows the small independent retailers to come into closer contact with their customers (Franco *et al.*, 2014). The study by Supyuenyong *et al*. (2007) found that small independent retailers use word-of-mouth as their primary tool for advertising.

Although Aggarwal (2018) mentioned that small independent retailers utilise direct marketing, Mapheto *et al*. (2014) argued that the utilisation of direct marketing as a marketing communication strategy is less popular amongst the small independent retailers, which supports the findings of this study. Small independent retailers cannot afford to implement direct marketing due to budget constraints (Moss *et al.*, 2004).

5.2.1.3 Summary for secondary research objective 3

The literature reviewed found that serious challenges are posed by marketing communication challenges that are crucial for the survival and growth of small independent retailers. Should these marketing communication challenges be ignored, small independent retailers may have to close down (Badenhorst-Weiss & Cilliers, 2014). This means that small independent retailers in Soweto may be forced to close down if these marketing communication challenges are not addressed. In a study conducted by Ayandibu and Houghton (2017), electricity interference was also seen as the most serious challenge faced by small independent retailers. Badenhorst-Weiss and Cilliers (2014) highlighted that small independent retailers cannot afford to implement marketing communication strategies due to the high costs. Timm (2011) mentioned that crime contributes towards the failure of small independent retailers. In addition, South African small independent retailers fail to identify a suitable location for their businesses (Khosa & Kalitanyi, 2014).

Small independent retailers face challenges such as networking and not networking outside their industry (Gijsberts, 2016). Chowdhury and Alam (2018) maintained that a lack of access to the market continues to be a constraint of new small independent retailers which also affects the growth of existing small independent retailers, and is a major hurdle to the emerging small independent retailers. Cant *et al.* (2014) stated that small independent retailers face challenges in conducting marketing communication research.

Cant and Wiid (2013) confirmed that about 63% of South African small independent retailers have to close down their businesses after a period of two years, while 75% of these small independent retailers have to close down after three years (Moloi, 2013). This is caused by these marketing communication challenges. That being said, it is crucial for the survival of small independent retailers to comprehend and address these moderate marketing communication challenges as well.

5.2.1.4 Summary for secondary research objective 4

Van Aardt *et al.* (2008) and Wang *et al.* (2016) confirmed that marketing communication strategies have a positive impact on the small independent retailer's success and can enhance the small independent retailer's performance. In addition, the marketing communication strategy is a feasible marketing tool for small independent retailers' performance (Lekhanya, 2010). Ainin *et al*. (2015) mentioned that marketing communication strategies have a positive impact on both the small independent retailers' financials and non-financials, such as cost reductions, improvement in customer relations, and information accessibility.

5.2.1.5 Summary for secondary research objective 5

Soke (2014) mentioned that there was a statistical difference across small independent retailers and marketing communication strategies.

5.2.2 Summaries from primary study

The summaries of the research objectives that were identified for this study are addressed below.

The primary objective of the study was to investigate the impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers in

Soweto, South Africa. In order for the primary research objective to be realised, various secondary research objectives were formulated.

5.2.2.1 Summary for secondary research objective 1

In achieving the primary objective, secondary research objectives were formulated and each secondary objective is highlighted below.
As outlined in Chapter 1 (see Section 1.3.2), the first secondary objective of the study was to determine the small independent retailers' attitude towards marketing communication strategies.

The research study concluded that with regards to their attitude towards marketing communication, a high percentage of respondents 'agree' that they apply marketing communication principles in their businesses, they have enough knowledge about marketing communication, and marketing communication is good for their business. The objective was achieved because this study concludes that small independent retailers have a positive attitude towards marketing communication strategies.

5.2.2.2 Summary for secondary research objective 2

The second secondary objective was to determine the marketing communication strategies utilised by small independent retailers in Soweto, as highlighted in Chapter 1 (see Section 1.3.2).

The study extracted nine factors (marketing communication strategies), namely, digital media, word-of-mouth content, advertising, personal selling, direct marketing, internet, sales promotion, word-of-mouth message involvement, and social media.

In the study, it is affirmed that small independent retailers 'strongly agree' (M=4.59) that they utilise word-of-mouth content more in their businesses. Word-of-mouth content (not to be confused with word-of-mouth message involvement) is an important marketing communication strategy utilised by small independent retailers.

This study confirmed that small independent retailers 'strongly agree' (M=4.59) that they utilise personal selling more in their businesses. Personal selling is an essential marketing communication strategy that has a statistically significant difference towards the operational years of small independent retailers.

This was followed by the study's findings regarding the neutral usage of social media. Small independent retailers moderately utilise social media (M=2.91). The study concluded that social media has a positive impact on the performance of small independent retailers as it can predict performance, and social media has a statistically significant difference towards the operational years of small independent retailers.

Small independent retailers moderately utilise the internet (M=2.70), it has a positive impact on the performance of small independent retailers, and the internet can predict the performance of small independent retailers.

Next, the study indicated that small independent retailers utilise digital marketing the least, and this was presented with a mean score of 2.42. However, digital marketing has a positive impact on the performance of small independent retailers, as it can predict the performance of small independent retailers, and has a statistically significant difference towards the operational years of small independent retailers.

The research study revealed that small independent retailers utilise (M=2.26) advertising the least, but it has a positive impact on the performance of small independent retailers. Advertising has a statistically significant difference towards the age groups, and operational years of small independent retailers.

The study revealed that sales promotion is the least used (M=2.18) marketing communication strategy by small independent retailers. In addition, sales promotion has a statistically significant difference towards the age groups, and operational years of small independent retailers.

Small independent retailers utilise word-of-mouth message involvement (M=1.39) (not to be confused with word-of-mouth content) the least. The study showed that direct marketing is the least (M=1.61) utilised marketing communication strategy by small independent retailers.

With the above discussion on marketing communication strategies utilised by small independent retailers in Soweto, the study concludes that the second secondary objective of the study was met.

5.2.2.3 Summary for secondary research objective 3

The third secondary objective was to identify challenges affecting the marketing communication strategy implementation of small independent retailers (refer to Section 1.3.2 in Chapter 1).

The research study found that the most serious marketing communication strategy challenges experienced by small independent retailers are that electricity outage (load-shedding) affects our business (80%), followed by the high cost of marketing communication tools (72%), crime is a challenge for the business (71%), and selecting the right location for the business (71%). Additional challenges experienced by small independent retailers are a shortage of accessing the internet (68%), lack of access to finance (68%), not able to obtain credit (67%), competition (65%), high rental costs (64%), inability to efficiently advertise products (61%), and poor knowledge of marketing communication (61%).

The research study found that marketing communication strategy challenges that moderately impact on the small independent retailers are: the inability to network (58%), lack of market access (57%), and lack of marketing communication research (53%). To operate in today's complicated business environment is challenging and stressful for small independent retailers in order to ensure their survival (Lambert, 2017). Hence, these moderate marketing communication challenges also need to be addressed in order for small independent retailers to survive.

The research study concluded that the marketing communication strategy challenges with the least impact on small independent retailers are: the lack of sales promotion skills (46%), poor sales performance (42%), lack of management skills (39%), lack of advertising skills (36%), lack of skills required to build relationships with customers (34%), lack of personal selling skills (32%), and lack of direct marketing skills (30%).

These 'low challenges' experienced by small independent retailers do not seem to be challenges for small independent retailers, as the majority of the respondents do not encounter these challenges. However, it is essential for small independent retailers to address these least impacting marketing communication strategies for their continued survival and growth.

The study concluded that the third secondary objective, which was identifying challenges affecting the marketing communication strategy implementation of small independent retailers, was achieved.

5.2.2.4 Summary for secondary research objective 4

As highlighted in Chapter 1 (see Section 1.3.2), the fourth secondary objective of the study was to assess the impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers.

The study determined whether marketing communication strategies have an impact on the performance of small independent retailers, namely, that marketing communication strategies increased sales, positively influenced the customers' purchasing behaviour, increased awareness, increased customer satisfaction, increased turnover, and increased profit. It was established that marketing communication strategies have a significant impact on increasing sales, positively influencing customers' purchasing behaviour, increasing awareness, and increasing customer satisfaction.

The study further ran a regression analysis to assess the impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers. In conclusion, the results of the study revealed that marketing communication strategies (digital marketing, advertising, internet and social media) influence the performance of small independent retailers. In addition, word-of-mouth content, personal selling, direct marketing, sales promotion, and word-of-mouth message involvement do not predict performance.

The impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers was achieved by using performance (namely, increased sales, positively influencing the customers' purchasing behaviour, increased awareness, increased customer satisfaction, increased turnover, and increased profit) as dependent variables, and marketing communication strategies as an independent variable. In essence, the fourth secondary objective was achieved, thus, the results of the research study revealed that marketing communication strategies (digital marketing, advertising, internet and social media) have a positive impact on the performance of small independent retailers. Conversely, however, word-of-mouth,

personal selling, direct marketing, sales promotion, and word-of-mouth message involvement do not predict performance.

5.2.2.5 Summary for secondary research objective 5

The last secondary objective was to determine the influence of demographical factors (age and years of operation) on the performance of small independent retailers (see Section 1.3.2 in Chapter 1).

Concerning the demographical factor for marketing communication and age group of the small independent retail owners/managers/sales assistants, the study discovered that between age groups, there was a statistically significant difference on advertising and sales promotion. Age groups have differences across the usage of advertising and sales promotion. The study indicated that small independent retail respondents aged between 31 years and 40+ years utilise advertising more than the age group between 18-30 years. Small independent retail respondents aged between 18-30 years and 40+ years utilise sales promotions more, whereas the age group between 31-40 years utilise sales promotion less.

Digital marketing, word-of-mouth content, personal selling, direct marketing, internet, word-of-mouth message involvement, and social media have no statistically significant difference towards the age group. The study concluded that there are no differences across the usage of digital marketing, word-of-mouth content, personal selling, direct marketing, internet, word-of-mouth message involvement, and social media towards the age group.

Regarding the demographical factor for marketing communication and years of operation of the small independent retailers, the study established that there is a significant difference in digital marketing, advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and social media as related towards the years of operation. The operational years of small independent retailers show differences across the utilisation of digital marketing, advertising, personal selling and sales promotion. Conversely, word-of-mouth content, direct marketing, internet, and word-of-mouth message involvement had no statistically significant difference towards the years of operations. There are no differences across the usage of word-of-mouth content, direct marketing, internet, and word-of-mouth message involvement towards the years of operations.

The study concluded that small independent retailers that have been operating ‘between 1 and 2 years’, and ‘over 5 years’ use digital marketing more than small independent retailers that have been operating ‘between 3 and 5 years’. Furthermore, small independent retailers advertise their products more across all years of operations. Small independent retailers use sales promotions more across all years of operations.

That being said, the last secondary research objective, which was to determine the influence of demographical factors (age and years of operation) on the performance of small independent retailers, was achieved.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

Since small independent retailers have a positive attitude towards marketing communication strategies, this means that small independent retailers utilise marketing communication principles in their businesses, have enough knowledge about marketing communication, and marketing communication is good for their business. The study further extracted nine factors (marketing communication strategies), namely, digital media, word-of-mouth content, advertising, personal selling, direct marketing, internet, sales promotion, word-of-mouth message involvement, and social media.

Regarding the challenges faced by small independent retailers, the research study established that there are serious marketing communication strategy challenges being experienced by small independent retailers, followed by moderate challenges. Also, there are challenges that have a low impact on small independent retailers, as the majority of the respondents do not encounter these challenges. However, it is essential for small independent retailers to address these least impacting marketing communication strategies for their continued survival and growth.

In conclusion, the fourth secondary objective was achieved as the results of the research study revealed that marketing communication strategies (digital marketing, advertising, internet and social media) have a positive impact on the performance of small independent retailers. Conversely, however, word-of-mouth, personal selling, direct marketing, sales promotion, and word-of-mouth message involvement do not predict performance.

With regards to the last secondary objective, the study concluded that there are no differences across the usage of digital marketing, word-of-mouth content, personal selling, direct marketing, internet, word-of-mouth message involvement, and social media towards the age group. That being said, age and years of operation do have an influence on the performance of small independent retailers.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

From the conclusions drawn above, and the analysis of the literature and outcomes presented in Chapter 4, numerous recommendations can be made for small independent retailers in Soweto, South Africa, that aspire to utilise marketing communication strategies.

5.4.1 Recommendations regarding attitudes towards marketing

The study showed that in relation to their attitude towards the marketing communication small independent retailers 'agree' that marketing communication strategies have an impact on the performance of small independent retailers in Soweto, South Africa. As a result, it is recommended that small independent retailers maintain the *status quo* and have a positive attitude towards marketing communication.

In view of the fact that small independent retailers agree that they have enough knowledge about marketing communication and they apply marketing communication principles in their businesses, small independent retailers should continue gathering more knowledge about the subject of marketing communication. The research study recommends that small independent retailers should further apply more marketing communication principles in their businesses, as marketing communication has been proved to be good for their businesses.

5.4.2 Recommendations regarding marketing communications

The study extracted nine factors (marketing communication strategies), namely, digital marketing, word-of-mouth content, advertising, personal selling, direct marketing, internet, sales promotion, word-of-mouth message involvement, and social media. The research study makes the following recommendations for each marketing communication strategy:

Based on the outcomes of the study, which revealed that small independent retailers strongly agree that they utilise word-of-mouth content more in their businesses, and since small independent retailers strongly agree that they utilise personal selling more in their businesses, it is highly recommended that small independent retailers continue to pay more attention to word-of-mouth content by getting their customers talking about their products and/or services. Furthermore, they should pay attention to personal selling, such as face-to-face interactions with customers, because it is evident from the study that these two elements (word-of-mouth content and personal selling) appear to be of benefit to the survival of the small independent retailers.

While the current study confirmed that the utilisation of the internet is neutral, the internet has a positive impact and can predict performance within small independent retailers. It is recommended, based on the results of the study, that small independent retailers utilise the internet by using free Wi-Fi and mobile hotspots, as it is confirmed that the internet predicts the performance of small independent retailers.

From the results obtained in the study, the utilisation of social media is neutral, while social media does have a positive impact on the performance of small independent retailers, and a statistical significance towards the operational years of small independent retailers. It is important for small independent retailers to promote their businesses via social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, because Facebook and Twitter are low-cost platforms for gathering and sharing opinions/information online with customers.

Emerging small independent retailers have a limited budget for marketing communication strategies, such as digital marketing, which, although it delivers positive results in a sound yet effective manner, is costly (Lambert, 2017). As for the current study, digital marketing was not statistically significant towards the age groups of the small independent retailer's owners/managers/sales assistants. Regarding the aforementioned, it is recommended that small independent retailers should not utilise digital marketing, as they cannot afford to use digital marketing tools, such as direct email.

Since small independent retailers utilise advertising the least, it is recommended that organisations, such as CSBP, NSBC, SEDA, SASTA and GEP, encourage small independent retailers to engage in discussions amongst themselves about the types

of advertising tools they should use. Small independent retailers should use effective advertising tools, such as wall painting, local newspapers and pamphlets.

One of the research findings shows that small independent retailers utilise direct marketing the least and it does not predict performance. As stipulated by Mapheto *et al.* (2014), small independent retailers cannot afford direct marketing, thus it is recommended that they cease from utilising direct marketing, as they cannot afford to use direct marketing tools such as direct mail, postcard letters and SMSs.

Small independent retailers utilise sales promotion the least and this does not predict performance. The study recommends that small independent retailers turn away from utilising sales promotions because they cannot afford sales promotions, such as incentivising customers, and providing coupons, free gifts and discounts to customers. This recommendation is supported by Lambert (2017), who mentioned that small independent retailers cannot afford to employ sales promotions due to financial constraints.

Word-of-mouth message involvement does not predict performance, and small independent retailers utilise it the least. The study recommends that small independent retailers should not rely entirely on word-of-mouth message involvement, but should enhance the quality of a word-of-mouth message to get their customers talking about their products or services. As such, word-of-mouth message involvement may just suffice.

5.4.3 Recommendations regarding challenges

The study found that the most serious challenge being experienced by small independent retailers is ‘electricity outage (load-shedding) affects our business’ (80%). It is recommended that small independent retailers install solar power systems to overcome this challenge. The next most serious challenge experienced by small independent retailers is ‘high cost of marketing communication tools’ (72%). In this regard, it is recommended that small independent retailers utilise affordable marketing communication strategies, such as wall painting, local newspapers, local radio, internet and social media using free Wi-Fi, door to door campaigns (word-of-mouth), and pamphlets. ‘Crime is a challenge for the business’ (71%), is another serious challenge experienced by small independent retailers. Thus, in order to reduce the criminal activities faced by small independent retailers, the study recommends that

small independent retailers get to know their neighbours, form a modern-day neighbourhood watch, invite law enforcement into their communities, consider security cameras, and keep up on crime trends and spread the word in the community.

The study found that ‘selecting the right location for the business’ (71%), and ‘high rental costs’ (64%) are serious challenges being experienced by small independent retailers. A recommendation in this regard would be that small independent retailers research different locations, research their competitors, gather information about the demographic and economic characteristics of the areas they are interested in, and try to be as close to the market (customers) as possible. Furthermore, they might request government support, such as from municipalities, to allocate suitable locations for them, or they might contact organisations, such as CSBP, NSBC, SEDA, SASTA and GEP, to assist them with finding suitable locations.

In addition, another high challenge being experienced by small independent retailers is a ‘shortage of accessing the internet’ (68%). To address this challenge, small independent retailers should connect to the internet with their laptops, computers or tablets using a mobile hotspot, or use a free Wi-Fi connection, and subscribe to an affordable network provider.

The study revealed that ‘lack of access to finance’ (68%) and ‘not able to obtain credit’ (67%) are serious challenges being experienced by small independent retailers. Small independent retailers should register for the government support programmes available to small independent retailers (CSBP, DTI, NSBC, SEDA), and other South African support schemes, such SASTA, GEP and SEFA.

A serious challenge being experienced by small independent retailers is competition (65%). It is then recommended that small independent retailers conduct marketing research about their competitors, ask customers about their competitors, implement bulk purchases, perform networking actions, and differentiate themselves in some way.

Another serious challenge being experienced by small independent retailers are the ‘inability to advertise products efficiently’ (61%), and ‘poor knowledge of marketing communication’ (61%). It is recommended that small independent retailers should attend marketing communication training programmes, workshops, conferences, and allow themselves to be mentored.

The study further found that the moderate marketing communication challenges that impact on the small independent retailers are the ‘inability to network’ (58%), ‘lack of market access’ (57%), and ‘lack of marketing communication research’ (53%). It is recommended that organisations such as CSBP, NSBC, SEDA, SASTA and GEP encourage small independent retailers to meet other small independent retail owners/managers/sales assistants that have access to the market, and they should be available for network sessions.

Although small independent retailers face a number of marketing communication challenges, the marketing communication challenges with the least impact on small independent retailers are: ‘lack of sales promotion skills’ (46%), ‘poor sales performance’ (42%), ‘lack of management skills’ (39%), and ‘lack of advertising skills ‘(36%). Additionally the ‘lack of skills required to build relationships with customers’ (34%),’ lack of personal selling skills’ (32%), and ‘lack of direct marketing skills’ (30%) also show the least impact on small independent retailers. These low marketing communication challenges faced by small independent retailers do not seem to be challenges for small independent retailers, as the majority of the respondents do not encounter the above-mentioned marketing communication challenges. That having been said, it is recommended that small independent retailers monitor and address the aforementioned marketing communication challenges in order to avoid them from escalating into high marketing communication challenges.

5.4.4 Recommendations regarding the impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers

As discussed by Wang *et al.* (2016) marketing communication strategies have a positive impact on small independent retailers’ success, and similarly the present study also confirmed that marketing communication strategies have a positive impact on small independent retailers. Hence, it is recommended for small independent retailers to continue to managing relationships with their customers.

The internet, digital marketing, advertising and social media enact as significant predictors of performance that small independent retailers utilise as a form of marketing communication strategy. The study would strongly recommend that small independent retailers continue utilising digital marketing, as digital marketing is used as a type of electronic media to promote products and communicate with customers.

A further recommendation would be that small independent retailers should continue utilising advertising, such as handing out flyers/posters to general customers, as it predicts performance within small independent retailers. It is encouraged that small independent retailers utilise social media (Facebook and Twitter) as it predicts performance within small independent retailers. Having said this, it is further recommended that small independent retailers share and communicate information with their customers that will, in turn, increase their performance.

5.4.5 Recommendations regarding the influence of demographical factors

The study discovered that there was statistically significant difference on advertising and sales promotion towards age group. However, digital marketing, word-of-mouth content, personal selling, direct marketing, internet, word-of-mouth message involvement, and social media have no statistically significant difference towards the age group.

The findings of the study indicated that there is a relationship between the age group of 31-40 years and 40-65 years towards advertising. It is encouraged that organisations, such as CSBP, DTI, NSBC, SEDA, SASTA, GEP and SEFA, establish network sessions and request the older generation of small independent retailers to network and educate the younger generation (18-30 years) on how to advertise their products.

The findings of the study further revealed that the age groups between 18-30 years and 40-65 years have a positive relationship towards sales promotions. Therefore, it is recommended that small independent retailers in age group of 31-40 years attend formal training. This can be done by attending marketing communication training, such as sales promotion workshops, sales promotion mentorships and by attending government support schemes (GEP, SEFA, SASTA).

There is a significant difference on digital marketing, advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and social media towards the years of operations. Then again, word-of-mouth content, direct marketing, internet, and word-of-mouth message involvement had no statistically significant difference towards years of operations.

As highlighted in Section 6.4.2, it is recommended that small independent retailers should cease from utilising digital marketing and sales promotions. As for advertising, personal selling, and social media, towards years of operations, it is encouraged that

organisations, such as CSBP, DTI, NSBC, SEDA, SASTA, GEP and SEFA, establish network sessions and request small independent retailers that have been in operation between 1 and 5 years to educate the small independent retailers that have been in operation for less than a year, and over 5 years, on how to advertise their products. Furthermore, organisations, such as CSBP, DTI, NSBC, SEDA, SASTA, GEP and SEFA, are encouraged to establish network sessions and request small independent retailers that have been in operation for 1 and 2 years, and over 5 years, to educate the small independent retailers that have been in operation for less than a year, and between 3 to 5 years on how they utilise social media.

Demographics comprises of factors that influence customer behaviour, and as such, they must be reflected in the marketing communication strategies activities (Breytenbach, 2014). It is thus recommended that small independent retailers consider the owners/managers/sales assistants' demographic profile when utilising marketing communication strategies. This will assist them in understanding which age groups understand and utilise which marketing communication strategies the most.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The key recommendation stemming from the study is that there is a need for more research on small independent retailers that should identify the marketing communication strategies that their customers prefer. The study should be from the customer's perspective.

A study that employs different research methodologies, namely, a mixed-methods method, is recommended in order to delve deeper into determining why small independent retailers in Soweto do not utilise digital marketing, advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion and word-of-mouth message involvement.

Future qualitative studies are recommended to gain a deeper understanding into why word-of-mouth content, personal selling, direct marketing, sales promotion, and word-of-mouth message involvement do not predict performance, in order to filter out marketing communication strategies that are not working/failing for small independent retailers.

It is imperative for future studies to conduct in-depth research about the origin of the challenges faced by small independent retailers and to determine why they face these

challenges. An understanding of these challenges might assist small independent retailers to become successful and operate sustainable businesses in the long run.

There is a need to provide relevant evidence based on the government support available to small independent retailers in order for these small independent retailers to face their challenges. Small independent retailers should be educated about the government support available to them.

Although there is growing evidence that suggests that marketing communication strategies can contribute on the performance of small independent retailers, the findings of the current study suggest that not all marketing communication strategies can be considered beneficial in this regard (Wang *et al.*, 2016). Thus, word-of-mouth content, personal selling, direct marketing, sales promotion and word-of-mouth message involvement needs to be investigated in depth as to why they are not predictors of performance or influence performance within the small independent retailers.

5.6 OVERALL CONCLUSION

Overall, this study established that small independent retailers have a positive attitude towards marketing communication strategies, and nine factors (marketing communication strategies), namely, digital media, word-of-mouth content, advertising, personal selling, direct marketing, internet, sales promotion, word-of-mouth message involvement, and social media, were extracted. Small independent retailer also face most serious, moderate and least (low) marketing communication strategy challenges. Marketing communication strategies (digital marketing, advertising, internet and social media) have a positive impact on the performance of small independent retailers. On the contrary, word-of-mouth, personal selling, direct marketing, sales promotion, and word-of-mouth message involvement do not predict performance, and age and years of operation have an influence on the performance of small independent retailers.

5.7 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The topic of the study is of emergent importance to the country, South Africa, at large, as small independent retailers play a significant role in determining the future of South Africa’s economic growth and development. The study aims to expose the

owners/managers/sales assistants of small independent retailers to the topic of a marketing communication strategy if they have not yet been exposed to it. The purpose of the study is to contribute to the knowledge regarding marketing communication strategies within the small independent retail industry.

The findings of the study will provide information to guide small independent retailers in Soweto to ensure their growth and survival, and the findings will also contribute to the sustainability of economic growth in South Africa. The study concluded that the study shows promise for investigating the impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers, as all the objectives were achieved. Furthermore, this study can be used by the small independent retail industry, retail management, consumer science, marketing academics and marketing students as a point of reference for future research on small independent retailers. This study has added to the field of knowledge of the small independent retail industry.

5.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 5 discussed the summaries of both the literature study and a summary of the primary study. This chapter further presented the conclusions, recommendations and recommendations for further study. In addition, the overall conclusion were discussed.

The research aimed to investigate the impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers in Soweto, South Africa. The conclusions that were drawn from the research, indicated that the research objectives had been achieved. Recommendations for each research objective were made to the small independent retail industry, small and medium-sized enterprises, small, medium and micro-sized enterprises, and the retail industry in general.

The recommendations made a clear distinction that small independent retailers should maintain the *status quo* by maintaining a positive attitude towards the marketing communication strategies, and to negate the effect of the marketing communication challenges. The findings of the study will further expose the owners/managers/sales assistants of small independent retailers to the topic of the impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers in Soweto, if they have not yet been exposed to it. The research study will provide information to guide small independent retailers in Soweto to ensure their growth, long-

term survival, sustainability, and finally, their ability to sustain the stability of employment.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

UNISA university of south africa

UNISA DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING AND RETAIL MANAGEMENT ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date 11-06-2018

Dear Mr Vincent Makhubela

Decision: Ethics Approval from 2018 - 2021

NHREC Registration # : (if applicable)
ERC Reference # : 2018_MRM_005
Name : Mr Vincent Makhubela
Student #: 47539011
Staff #: N/A

Researcher(s): Mr V Makhubela, vincentv014@gmail.com, 0828754355

Supervisor (s): Prof M Makhitha, makhilkm@unisa.ac.za, 0824979641
Prof L van Scheers, vscheml@unisa.ac.za, 0823231365

Working title of research:

The impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers in Soweto, South Africa

Qualification: Postgraduate degree

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa Department of Marketing and Retail Management Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for 3 years.

*The **low risk application** was **reviewed** by the Department of Marketing and Retail Management Ethics Review Committee on 6 June 2018 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
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Open Rubric

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the Department of Marketing and Retail Management Research Ethics Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.
7. Minor changes suggested by the committee be amended on the Form 1.

Note:

The reference number ***2018_MRM_005*** *should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Yours sincerely,

Signature

Chair of Department of

Marketing and Retail Management ERC

E-mail: jwild@unisa.ac.za

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pp Signature

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APPENDIX B: FINAL DATA-COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

Respondent number			

The impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers in Soweto, South Africa

Informed consent for participation in an academic research study

Department of Marketing and Retail Management

Dear Respondent

My name is Vincent Funani Makhubela, a master's student in the Department of Marketing and Retail Management at the University of South Africa. I am inviting you to participate in a study entitled "The impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers in Soweto, South Africa". The aim of this study is to investigate the marketing communication strategies utilised by small independent retailers in Soweto.

Please note the following:

- This study involves an anonymous survey. Your name will not appear on the questionnaire and the answers you give will be treated as strictly confidential. You cannot be identified in person based on the answers you give.
- Your participation in this study is voluntarily and very important to us. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.
- The researcher will intercept with your business, thus there will be minimal risk (meaning the researcher will contact you at your business, which will inconvenience your business hours).

- Please answer the questions in the attached questionnaire as completely and honestly as possible. This should not take more than 15 minutes of your time.
- The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only, and may be published in an academic journal. We will provide you with a summary of our findings on request.
- The questionnaires will be kept for five years, and the study can be found in the UNISA database.
- Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Prof Makhitha at: makhikm@unisa.ac.za or Prof Van Scheers at: Vscheml@unisa.ac.za or telephone numbers: 012 429 2381.

Please mark the form to indicate that:

- You have read and understand the information provided above.
- You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis.

Please mark **X** if you ☐ agree

Date: **……**

Section A: Marketing communication strategies (advertising, internet, social media, direct marketing, sales promotion, word-of-mouth and personal selling)

Q1 Please read each statement carefully and then cross **(X)** one appropriate response to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement. Select 1 if you 'strongly agree' with the statement, 2 if you 'agree' with the statement, 3 if you are 'neutral' about the statement, 4 if you 'disagree' with the statement, or 5 if you 'strongly disagree' with the statement.

The statements below determine your attitude towards **MARKETING COMMUNICATION**.

Variable no	Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
	MARKETING COMMUNICATION	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
V^{1}	Marketing communication is implemented in large organisations only.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{2}	We apply marketing communication principles in our business.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{3}	Our business is doing well without marketing communication.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{4}	Our business will not survive without marketing communication.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{5}	We have enough knowledge about marketing communication.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{6}	Marketing communication is good for our business.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{7}	We analyse our competitors' marketing communication strategies.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{8}	We respond to our competitors' marketing communication strategies accordingly.	1	2	3	4	5
	ADVERTISING	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
V^{9}	We continuously conduct informal research on the effectiveness of advertising.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{10}	We advertise our products on local radio station.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{11}	We use local newspapers to obtain broader coverage of the market.	1	2	3	4	5

Variable no	Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
V^{12}	We hand out flyers/posters to general customers.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{13}	We use magazine advertisements to increase our sales and market share.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{14}	We utilise local TV channel to showcase the benefits of our products.	1	2	3	4	5
	INTERNET	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
V^{15}	The internet is useful for our business.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{16}	We use the internet to research our competitors.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{17}	We use the internet to research our customers.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{18}	We have enough knowledge about the use of the internet to market our business.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{19}	We use the internet to sell products.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{20}	Our business uses the internet to advertise products.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{21}	We use email to communicate with suppliers.	1	2	3	4	5
	SOCIAL MEDIA	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
V^{22}	We have enough knowledge about social media and its role in marketing our business.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{23}	There is limited use of social media in our business.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{24}	We monitor our social media home page.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{25}	We offer information about our business on our social media.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{26}	We provide feedback about the products to our customers on social media.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{27}	Social media enables customers to share opinions about the products.	1	2	3	4	5

Variable no	Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
V^{28}	We use Facebook for business purposes (such as communicating with our customers, searching for information and posting products that we sell).	1	2	3	4	5
V^{29}	We use Twitter for business purposes (such as communicating with our customers, searching for information and posting products that we sell).	1	2	3	4	5
V^{30}	We use YouTube for business purposes (such as posting videos of products that we sell).	1	2	3	4	5
V^{31}	We use LinkedIn for business purposes (such as selling our products to professional people and businesses).	1	2	3	4	5
	DIRECT MARKETING	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
V^{32}	Direct marketing is good for our business.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{33}	We promote our products by means of direct marketing.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{34}	We communicate our products directly to the customer.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{35}	We email our customers as a way of direct marketing.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{36}	We use direct marketing activities, such as catalogues.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{37}	Using SMSs as part of direct marketing is good for our business.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{38}	We WhatsApp our customers as a means of direct marketing.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{39}	Direct marketing enables us to deliver advertisements directly to the targeted audience.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{40}	We unsolicitedly contact our customers over the telephone.	1	2	3	4	5
	SALES PROMOTION	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
V^{41}	Sales promotions influence our customers to buy our product.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{42}	We continuously conduct informal research on sales promotions.	1	2	3	4	5

Variable no	Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
V^{43}	We provide our customers with free samples to promote our business.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{44}	We give coupons to our customers to promote our business.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{45}	We give our customers gifts as a means of promoting our business.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{46}	We provide our customers with discounts.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{47}	Our business uses loyalty programmes as a form of sales promotion (points, rewards, cards programme, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
	WORD-OF-MOUTH	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
V^{48}	Word-of-mouth is good for our business.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{49}	Word-of-mouth is powerful because it can influence customers to buy our products.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{50}	Word-of-mouth enhances awareness about our business.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{51}	Word-of-mouth assists us in getting more referrals.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{52}	Some referred customers trust word-of-mouth (i.e. trust products recommended by other customers).	1	2	3	4	5
V^{53}	We have closer contact with our customers because of word-of-mouth.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{54}	Word-of-mouth enables us to exchange opinions about how customers experience the product.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{55}	Some customers are less willing to offer their opinions on how they have experienced the product.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{56}	Word-of-mouth allows us to exchange product information with our customers.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{57}	Our customers communicate positive word-of-mouth messages about our business.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{58}	We network with other businesses using word-of-mouth.	1	2	3	4	5

Variable no	Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
	PERSONAL SELLING	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
V^{59}	Personal selling is good for our business.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{60}	Personal selling is effective in increasing profits for the business.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{61}	Personal selling is effective in increasing awareness about the business.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{62}	We gain buying commitments from customers when we use personal selling.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{63}	Personal selling assists us in achieving customer loyalty.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{64}	Personal selling assists us to identify potential customers.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{65}	Personal selling is utilised as a source of information about the business.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{66}	Personal selling is flexible because it allows us to get immediate feedback from customers.	1	2	3	4	5
V^{67}	Personal selling enables the business to build relationships with customers.	1	2	3	4	5

Section B: Marketing communication challenges faced by small independent retailers

Q2 Please read each statement carefully and then cross **(X)** one appropriate response by indicating the extent to which the statement is true or false.

Does your business face the **CHALLENGES** listed below?

Variable no	Statements	Mark (**X**)	
		Yes[1]	**No**[2]
V68	Lack of marketing communication research	1	2
V69	Lack of market access	1	2
V70	Inability to network with other businesses	1	2
V71	Obtaining credit	1	2
V72	Lack of access to finance	1	2
V73	High cost of marketing communication tools	1	2
V74	High business rental costs	1	2
V75	Selecting the right location for the business	1	2
V76	Electricity outage (load-shedding) affect our business	1	2
V77	Competition from other businesses	1	2
V78	Poor knowledge of marketing communication	1	2
V79	Inability to advertise our products efficiently	1	2
V80	Lack of management skills	1	2
V81	Lack of skills required to build relationships with customers	1	2
V82	Poor sales performance	1	2
V83	Lack of personal selling skills	1	2
V84	Lack of advertising skills	1	2
V85	Lack of direct marketing skills	1	2
V86	Lack of sales promotion skills	1	2
V87	Lack of access to the internet	1	2
V88	Crime is a challenge for the business	1	2

Section C: The impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers

Q3 Please indicate the **percentage (%) impact that previous use of marketing communication tools has had on your business performance.** Mark the appropriate block with a **X**.

Variable no	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
V^{89}	Increased sales	1% to 20%	21% to 40%	41% to 60%	61% to 80%	> 81%
V^{90}	Influenced the customers purchasing behaviour positively	1% to 20%	21% to 40%	41% to 60%	61% to 80%	> 81%
V^{91}	Increased awareness	1% to 20%	21% to 40%	41% to 60%	61% to 80%	> 81%
V^{92}	Increased customer satisfaction	1% to 20%	21% to 40%	41% to 60%	61% to 80%	> 81%
V^{93}	Increased turnover	1% to 20%	21% to 40%	41% to 60%	61% to 80%	> 81%
V^{94}	Increased profit	1% to 20%	21% to 40%	41% to 60%	61% to 80%	> 81%

Section D: Demographical information

Q4 Please indicate your gender.

		Mark (**X**)
V^{95}	Male	1
V^{96}	Female	2

Q5 Pease indicate your age group.

	Age group	Mark (**X**)
V^{97}	18-20	1
V^{98}	21-30	2
V^{99}	31-40	3
V^{100}	41-50	4
V^{101}	51-65	5

Q6 Please indicate your level of education, by selecting the most appropriate option.

		Mark (**X**)
V^{102}	I did not complete Grade 12	1
V^{103}	I completed Grade 12	2
V^{104}	Certificate	3
V^{105}	Diploma	4
V^{106}	Degree	5
V^{107}	Postgraduate qualification	6

Q7 What is the type of business ownership?

		Mark (**X**)
V^{108}	Sole business	1
V^{109}	Jointly owned	2
V^{110}	Manager of the business	3
V^{111}	Assistant manager of the business	4

Q8 Who is responsible for the marketing communication in your business?

		Mark (**X**)
V112	Owner	1
V113	Manager	2
V114	Sales assistant	3

Q9 In which of the following marketing communication areas have you received training?

		Mark (**X**)
V115	Advertising	1
V116	Marketing	2
V117	Personal selling	3
V118	Sales promotions	4
V119	None	5

Q10 How long has the business been operating?

		Mark (**X**)
V120	Less than a year	1
V121	Between 1 and 2 years	2
V122	Between 3 and 5 years	3
V123	Between 6 and 10 years	4
V124	Over 10 years	5

Q11 How many people do you employ?

		Mark (**X**)
V125	None	1
V126	1-4	2
V127	5-9	3
V128	10-19	4
V129	20-49	5
V130	50-99	6
V131	100+	7

Q12 Please indicate the annual turnover of your business.

		Mark (**X**)
V132	R0–R50 000	1
V133	R50 001–R100 000	2
V134	R100 001–R400 000	3
V135	R400 001–R900 000	4
V136	R900 001–R1,500 000	5
V137	R1,500 001–R10,000 000	6
V138	Over R10, 000 000	7

Q13 Do you have Internet access for your business?
If your answer is **YES** for question 13, please proceed with questions **14** and **15**. If your answer is **NO** for question 13 then you are finished with the questionnaire.

	Option	Mark (**X**)
V139	Yes	1
V140	No	2

Q14 How do you access the Internet?

	Option	Mark (**X**)
V141	Internet café	1
V142	Internet through my business cell phone	2
V143	Public hotspot (mall, restaurant and university Wi-Fi)	3
V144	Other	4

Q15 Do you have a website for your business?

	Option	Mark (**X**)
V145	Yes	1
V146	No	2

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

APPENDIX C: DECLARATION OF PROFESSIONAL EDIT

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Independent Skills Development Facilitator

Dear Mr Makhubela

This letter is to record that I have completed a language edit of your thesis entitled "The impact of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small independent retailers in Soweto, South Africa".

The edit that I carried out included the following:

-Spelling
-Vocabulary
-Pronoun matches
-Sentence structure
-Formatting
-Grammar
-Punctuation
-Word usage
-Correct acronyms (matching your supplied list)
-Captions and labels for figures and tables
-Spot checking of ten in-text references

The edit that I carried out excluded the following:

-Content
-Correctness or truth of information (unless obvious)
-Correctness/spelling of specific technical terms and words (unless obvious)
-Correctness/spelling of unfamiliar names and proper nouns (unless obvious)
-Correctness of specific formulae or symbols, or illustrations.

Yours sincerely

Retha Burger

27 February 2019