MEDIA MULTITASKING: THE CASE OF THE SOAP OPERA 7DE LAAN TELEVISION VIEWING AND SYNCHRONOUS TWEETING

by

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DECLARATION

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KEY TERMS:

Soap opera, 7de Laan, social media, Social television, Twitter(X), Live-tweeting, Media Multitasking, Second-Screen

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my husband, Mavhungu Oswald Mathelemusa, for provoking me to purpose. My beautiful bundles of joy, Vhuhone Ntshavheni and Luande Mathelemusa, and my amazing parents Peter and Suzan Lefowa who always support my dreams and vision. Most importantly this work is dedicated to me for never giving up on me throughout this journey. God, you love me too much.

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of media multitasking which has become trendy, was the focus of this study. These audiences watch television shows in real-time while interacting on Twitter (X) with other users, by live posting comments about the show, responding to live tweets posted by others and retweeting comments. Social media complement the way television is consumed, enabling audiences to discuss television shows over second screening devices such as smartphones. This study explored media multitasking to understand why audiences engage in media multitasking. The television soap opera *7de Laan* was the case study. To achieve the research objectives, a mixed-method approach was executed using the convergent research design. An online survey and interviews were the research methods. Data were analysed statistically and thematically respectively. Some study findings include that television audiences share their views on Twitter to gratify entertainment, information, socialisation and relaxation needs. The findings affirmed the position of television as a prime source of entertainment in the digital era. The study contributes to Communication Science by highlighting and forecasting media discourses regarding audience behaviour portrayed during television viewing in the age of social media.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

#- Hashtag
AD- Advert
AIM - Instant Messenger
BCCSA - Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa
CE - Commissioning Editor
COVID - Coronavirus Disease
DPU - Direct Pick Up
DSTV - Digital Satellite Television
DVR - Digital Video Recorder
ENCA - E- News Channel Africa
ETV- Electronic Television
HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICASA - Independent Communications Authority of South Africa
KFC - Kentucky Fried Chicken
PC - Personal Computer
SA - South Africa
SABC - South African Broadcasting Corporation
SN - Social Network
SNA - Social Network Analysis
SNS - Social Network Sites
SNT - Social Network Theory
STV- Smart Television
SWOT - Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats
TL - Timeline
TV - Television
TVSA - Television South Africa
TWAR - Twitter War
UGT - Uses and Gratifications Theory
U&G - Uses and Gratifications
UK - United Kingdom
VOD - Video on Demand

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Social networks are expanding exponentially quickly and posing a threat to the way that TV is watched around the world. Television has long been a common discussion starter and a significant social contact facilitator (Wohn & Na 2011:1). The platforms discussion boards, chats, newsgroups, and other forms of communication—vary depending on their nature or intended use (Boyd & Ellison 2007:213). With 368 million monthly users and 500 million tweets sent out globally every day, Twitter (X) is one of the social media platforms that is clearly expanding (Dean 2022). According to Deller (2011:2), Twitter "is more than just a macro-blogging Web as it is normally called but a social network in real-time." Using second-screen devices such laptops and mobile phones, Twitter has emerged as the preferred social networking site for viewers during live television (Schirra, Sun & Bentley 2014). To meet a specific demand, audiences are continuously searching for interesting content to satisfy their needs. For these audiences, linear programming is no longer the only option because there are multiple broadcasters nationally and a variety of content delivery platforms available.

Twitter hashtags allow audiences to interact with each other, as well as with the television programme (Zebid 2022:72). Television audiences have become more active than before, as they do not have to wait for the next day to discuss a television show they watched, they can do that in real-time with their friends or other people watching that television show. Producers of a particular television show can use these Twitter conversations to conduct a strength, weakness, opportunities, threats (SWOT) analysis. However, it is imperative for television producers not to forget about traditional audiences who are not on social networks and those who are, but do not tweet. Twitter has not only increased the amount of information flow such as users' opinions and facts, but it has inspired the users to share their feelings about anything like societal issues, products, services, events, and many more. This is evident when users visit their timelines, an activity often referred to as 'TL'. Television producers are utilising Twitter as a platform to engage their audiences during prime-time broadcasts by hashtagging them on programmes.

Twitter is different from traditional media where one has to sit and watch television or read a newspaper without actually interacting with other people who might be watching or reading elsewhere. Twitter allows the user to interact with other people and the user can decide how active or passive they want to be on that medium. In this research study, the researcher also focused on how audience needs were being fulfilled, while tweeting and watching national soap operas. Social networking site and new media services maybe ground-breaking, but they still rely heavily on television media to monetise their services (Walsh 2014:13). Television is turning to social media networks and new media services like online video streaming to amortise their content, while increasing their return on investment (ROI). However, it is still television that is the focal point and context driver on Twitter and other second screen platforms (Doughty, Rowland & Lawson 2012:79).

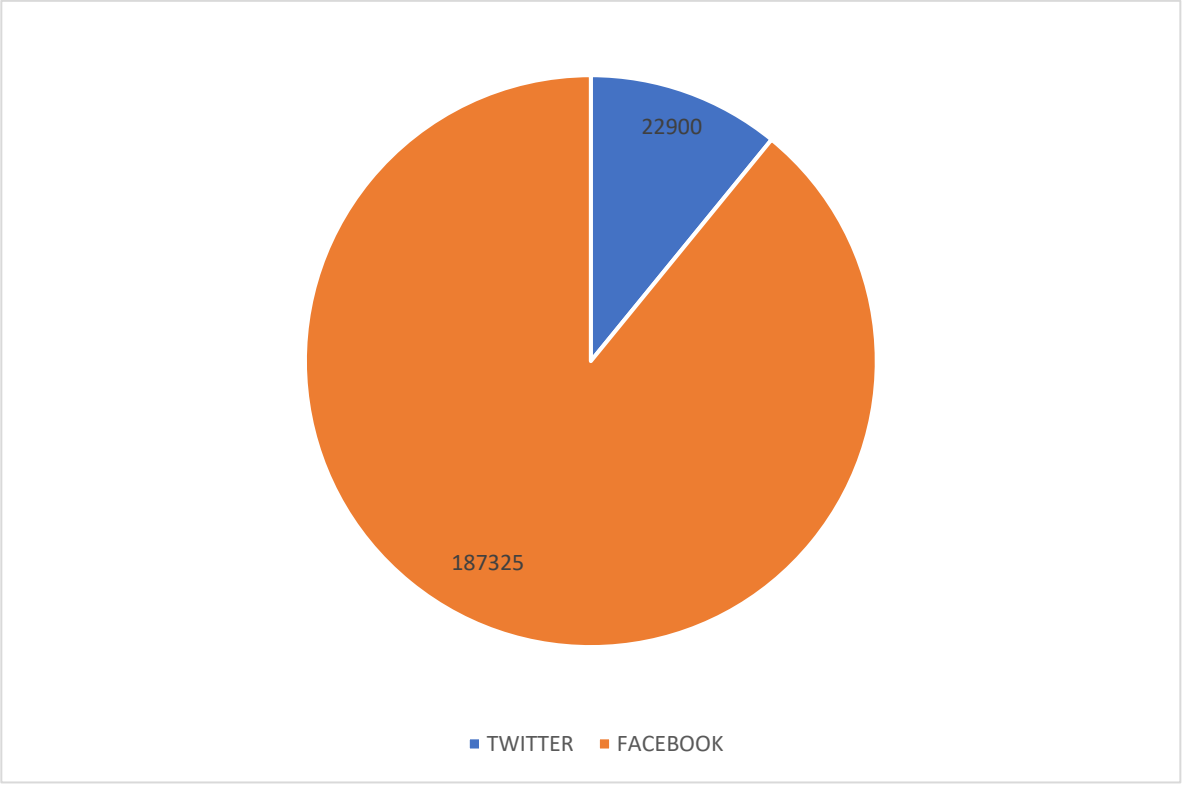
The television show 7de Laan, was chosen as a case study to explore what motivates the audiences of this television show to tweet while watching it. This show, broadcast on SABC 2, a South African public broadcasting service channel, airs during prime time from Monday to Friday at six o'clock in the evening (Ferreira 2023). The researcher selected 7de Laan due to its diverse viewership patterns, which transcend social class, gender, and race. According to Milton (2008:263)," 7de Laan is a soap opera that colourfully depicts a liberal-pluralist version of the country". However, 7de Laan has since gone through tremendous changes which seek to present South Africa in its current form and shape that embraces the spirit of Ubuntu and social cohesion. This television show 7de Laan has since stopped broadcasting after the SABC did not renew its contract after 23 years on air (Keteyi 2023). For this study, television consumers are referred to as audiences.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY

The rise of social media has complicated media culture and continues to pose problems for people daily. The dynamic rise of Twitter also continues to challenge how television producers engage this medium in their television production processes. As noted by Wohn and Na (2011), "television has always been a source of social

interaction and a noteworthy credible source of information". Because social media are so popular, a lot of television shows now have an online presence. This is clearer, especially pertaining to long-running television forms like telenovelas and soap operas as they are in people's living rooms, daily. Audiences who engage in media-multitasking, attest to experiencing a sense of belonging in a community and the ability to assert their views (Schirra et al. 2014). Reality television arguably is no longer the only genre that warrants audiences the interactive experience as soap operas can do so as well.

Figure 1.1: 7de Laan February user statistics



Source: Twitter and Facebook (2023)

Figure 1.1 suggests that the television show 7de Laan had an online presence both on Twitter and Facebook with 22 900 followers on 28 February 2023 recorded on its page @real7delaan and 187 325 likes on Facebook, recorded on the Facebook Web site during the same period. These numbers reveal that audiences either tweet or use

Facebook when watching the programme. To participate in the conversation, one has to watch the television programme, or alternatively, retweet meaning, republishing or forwarding a post that another Twitter user has written, with the intent to spread the word among one's own Twitter followers (Grauschopf 2017). According to Think with Google (2020) "television delivered over the internet offers audiences viewing flexibility across devices". Meaning, audiences can watch their programmes whenever, and wherever they want as appointment viewing is slowly becoming a mechanism of the past. This is something that the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) has since implemented in its content offering through the SABC+ streaming platform.

Watching television when tweeting has increasingly become the common practice among the audience and it is not very clear why, in terms of soap operas. According to, Beauvisage and Beuscart, (2012), "Twitter is a place where quantitative perceptions create a "buzz" that quickly concentrates responses to certain television shows". Nevertheless, this "buzz" does not always result in a larger audience share. For example, when *Isibaya,* a telenovela on Mzansi Magic broadcasting Monday to Friday at 20h30 started, Twitter audiences were tweeting that the show would mark the end of the old *Generations*, now *Generations: The Legacy*, as it was trending every night during its broadcast. The audience share for the show *Generations: The Legacy* to the contrary was soaring higher, demonstrating that Twitter usage does not always result in high audience performance ratings. The increase in audience share could have been due to several factors such as habitual viewing, a great footprint that the SABC continues to enjoy and the storyline or lack of competition during that 20h00 Monday to Friday time slot.

Undoubtedly, television audience practices characterised by meaningful social interactions taking place before, during and after the broadcast of a programme (Katz & Lazarsfeld 2017:20), have since evolved. People use technology devices now such as PCs, tablets, and smartphones (Kattukaran 2016:2). Family members hardly talk to each other when watching their favourite television programme like in the past. Now, some audiences are on their phone, interacting on the second screen with other people who are not watching in the same room as them. The reasons for their preference to

engage in media multitasking activity remain unanswered and a matter this study sought to explore.

According to the literature reviewed some authors such as Walsh (2014:11), make an assertion that live tweeting is a way for audiences to participate and interact in the television game via social networks to show their superior knowledge of the text, and in turn influence other audiences to engage through retweets or comments. Supporting this assertion, Larsson and Moe (2012: 731) claim that viewers engage on social media to express their opinions about the television programme viewed. Furthermore (Wilson 2016:172) shares a similar view, and contends that audiences use the second screen during prime-time television broadcasts to engage in social commentary on the issue. This study sought to explore the motives of 7de Laan audiences who engage on Twitter while watching the primetime broadcast of this TV show and to analyse these motives to gain insight and depth on such.

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

The study seeks to investigate the reasons and methods by which television viewers interact on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the soap opera 7de Laan. The study aimed to explore the phenomenon of "media multitasking" specifically focusing on soap operas (informally called 'soapies'). Watching TV and tweeting simultaneously has become a common practice among social media audiences, and the motive is unclear.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are to:

i. explore the *7de Laan* audience's motives for engaging on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show.
ii. explore what the *7de Laan* audiences use Twitter for when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show.

iii. determine what the *7de Laan* audiences' tweet about when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show.
iv. establish the nature of gratifications that *7de Laan* audiences seek from tweeting when watching the prime-time broadcast 7de Laan.

1.5 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The researcher's curiosity to explore the motives of audiences who while watching TV simultaneously tweet was triggered by trending statistics suggesting media multitasking activity is linked to increased audience share, which is not often the case. Nonetheless, Lochrie and Coulton (2012:731) maintain that there is an instantaneous and direct rise in viewer engagement, from two to ten times the level of activity during the show's airing. Undoubtedly, Twitter increasingly engages audiences in real-time interaction, through hashtags, and re-tweets that discuss TV shows or any other live event (Auverset & Billings 2016:2). This media multitasking phenomenon presents opportunities and challenges for the producers of shows. The opportunity for producers is that when online, they obtain immediate feedback from their audiences relating to the TV show's content without having to commission a focus group. However, since Twitter does not have a public membership list like a phone register, producers would have difficulty determining if the audience tweeting during the live broadcast of their show has one account or several accounts (Chen, 2011:758).

There are limited studies conducted on Twitter concerning the South African TV soap opera genre. As such, this genre has since evolved to an extent that writers cannot write storylines without considering online social media audiences, particularly those who tweet during the prime-time broadcast of the TV. Rehman, Gulzar and Aslam's (2022:4), analysis of Twitter age demographics implies producers of TV shows should consider creating content that appeals to Twitter users within the ages of 25 and 34. The TV show 7de Laan, might be aligning to this idea as its cast has increased to include actors within an age bracket between 18-35 years. Active Twitter users in South Africa are perceived to be around the same age brackets mentioned. The study research problem was centred on a social issue that had not received enough research

attention in media consumption studies, the issue of whether media users gratify a need to connect with other users on Twitter to discuss television shows. In this study, the research problem focused on the 7de Laan TV show. With several people using Twitter world wide, understanding if the need to connect can be gratified using .With so many people using Twitter, understanding whether people can gratify a need to connect with other people through Twitter is a meaningful addition to the body of knowledge about how people interact online (Saeed 2023). Communication researchers have examined interactive media since the late 1990s (ibid.), but their review has focused on how the audience uses these media, not whether people gratify a need to connect with each other users through Twitter as this study interrogated.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study addressed the following research questions:

Research question 1: Why do 7de Laan audiences engage on Twitter while watching the prime-time broadcast of the show?

Research question 2: What do 7de Laan audiences use Twitter for when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show?

Research question 3: What do 7de Laan audiences tweet about when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show?

Research question 4: What gratifications do 7de Laan audiences seek by engaging on Twitter during the prime-time broadcast of the show?

1.7 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

This study sought to explore the motives of 7de Laan audiences who interact on Twitter while watching the prime-time broadcast of this TV show. Twitter was selected as it is one of the most popular social media platforms utilised now for media multitasking. This phenomenon has challenged several producers, companies, political parties,

organisations, and professions, as trending topics can create a measurable thrill that can make or break the brand.

For example, many topics that trend on Twitter emanate from TV shows. A Twitter study by Lochrie and Caulton (2012:729) suggests a direct, and immediate increase in viewer engagement on Twitter during 7de Laan prime-time broadcast. Illustrating this point is the example of a memorable incident that increased viewership ratings of the 7de Laan in January 2019 sparked by an interracial kiss shown on the show between two characters, one black and the other white (Zeeman 2019). This incident stirred an extensive debate and a barrage of social commentary on Twitter. The nature of the arguments revealed that race is still prevalent and a subject that South Africans need to address for people to live together in harmony.

Although there has been a significant change in how people consume content due to the availability of different technological screening and streaming devices, TV shows still create a quantifiable buzz of perceptions on social media that can result in a rapid concentration of responsiveness to some TV shows (Beauvisage & Beuscart 2012:4).

1.8 PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF THE STUDY

1.8.1 Philosophical perspectives

The study on the correlation between television audiences and their engagement on Twitter while watching the prime-time broadcast of the soap opera 7de Laan is based on a few philosophical perspectives and theoretical grounds. A philosophical perspective serves as a framework that shapes people's perception of the world and their position within it (Guraya, Harkin, Yusoff & Guraya 2023: 200). The philosophical perspective includes a researcher's convictions, principles and presuppositions on the nature of existence, understanding, morality and the essence of humanity (Ottuh & Erhabor 2023). These lenses offer a perspective to comprehend the intricate mechanics of audience involvement in the digital era.

The study on the correlation between television audiences and their engagement on Twitter while watching the prime-time broadcast of the soap opera 7de Laan is based on a wide range of philosophical perspectives and theoretical grounds. These lenses offer a perspective to comprehend the intricate mechanics of audience involvement in the digital era.

Mentioned hereunder, are the philosophical perspectives:

(a) **Social constructionism** is a viewpoint that suggests that reality is not inherently objective, but rather is actively formed through social interactions and shared interpretations (Zhao 2020:98). Within the study's framework, Twitter functions as a medium via which viewers collaboratively shape their comprehension of 7de Laan. The active participation of spectators in sharing their views, responses, and interpretations in real-time plays a crucial role in shaping the meaning and relevance of the soap opera. The process of co-creating meaning through social interaction emphasises the ability of viewers to shape their own perceptions and interpretations within the mediated realm of the soap opera.

(b) **Phenomenology** focuses on the first-hand experiences and personal interpretations of individuals (McLeod 2024: 1). It centres on the cognitive processes through which individuals see and comprehend their surroundings (Qutoshi 2018:217). Within the study's framework, Twitter involvement during 7de Laan can be regarded as a collective phenomenological encounter. Tweeting fosters camaraderie and inclusion as viewers connect emotionally and intellectually with the show as a group. This collective encounter promotes a feeling of interconnectedness and mutual understanding among viewers, surpassing the limitations of separate physical viewing locations.

(c) **Existentialism** is a philosophical perspective that places great importance on the freedom and choices of individuals, as well as their quest for purpose and significance in life (Chukwuokolo & Jeko 2020:44). The study investigates the extent to which Twitter involvement enables viewers to actively participate in the show's themes and narratives, thereby expressing their values and ideas. Viewers get meaning and

significance from the fictional world of 7de Laan by expressing their views and responses, establishing a connection between the show and their personal lives and experiences. The process of constructing meaning through active involvement with the show emphasises the influence of television in moulding personal identities and perspectives on the world.

1.8.2 Theoretical framework

The purpose of this section is to introduce the theoretical framework applied to understand audiences' motives for engaging on Twitter while watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan*. Theories are frequently used in research to formulate presumptions that direct the investigator. Such theory serves as motivation for the research questions which in this study are grounded in the uses and gratifications theory and the social network theory, which are applied relevant to the television show 7 de Laan, the case study examined in this study. Theoretical Foundation refers to the underlying principles, concepts, and frameworks that form the basis of a particular field of study or research (Salawu & Shamsuddin 2023:2104). Furthermore, (Baxter & Babbie 2003:82) states that theory is "a set of statements asserting relationships among classes of variables" and that "theories help to guide researchers through the maze of empirical findings so that they can explain or understand what is going on". Three main theories selected for this study, are uses and gratifications theory (UGT), social network theory (SNT).]

1.8.3 Uses and Gratifications Theory

The uses and gratifications theory (UGT) is typically concerned with gratifications pursued and gratifications attained by media users (Rubin, Palmgreen & 2020 Sypher:173). This theory attempts to explain people's motives for using media and the satisfaction they derive from using it (Ruggiero 2000:3). In the context of this study's research problem, the theory was employed to understand why *7de Laan* audiences engage on Twitter while watching the prime-time broadcast of this television show. The idea that audiences are motivated by a variety of motives to choose media and

information that best meets their own needs served as another driving force behind the theory's selection (Wimmer & Dominick 2003:403).

1.8.4 Social network theory

The social network theory (SNT), also referred to as social network analysis, is a “loosely organised configuration of presumptive claims about the nature of knowledge system” (Dunn 1983:453). According to Kadushin (2012:4 SNT is a social science concept that examines the connections and relationships within a social system. In an effort to discover the one item that would bring members of many cultures or groups together, the SNT was founded in the late 1800s (Jafaar, Abdul-Aziz & Sahari 2009:103). For example, *7de Laan* audiences connect on Twitter using the show’s hashtag (#7deLaan). According to Liu, Sidhu, Beacom and Valente (2017:1), SNT is shaped by a variety of research traditions, such as:

a) Sociometric analysis tradition is dependent on a mathematical graph.
b) Interpersonal relations tradition is more concerned about the creation of cliques within a group of individuals; and
c) The anthropology tradition seeks to explore the relationship structures within a community of a less developed society.

These research traditions fall within the social sciences fraternity and focus on relationships between and among people of the same network. This perspective of SNT emphasises the relationship of the ties rather than the individual’s characteristics within a network (Holt-Lunstad, Smith, Baker, Harris & Stephenson, 2015:365). The SNT is more concerned with the idea that common norms or values can bring people with common.

1.9 DIMENSION OF THE STUDY

1.9.1 Space dimension

This study has its space dimension in South Africa, no specific city, as the target population is people who are on *Twitter* and who engage on Twitter during the prime-time broadcast of *7de Laan*. These people can be anywhere in the country. Even though, *7de Laan* viewers' statistics show a high number of audiences situated in Cape Town, Kimberley and Johannesburg, owing to Afrikaans being the dominant language used, constituting 80% of the show; the research however was not limited to these cities.

1.9.2 Time dimension

The study's time dimension may be cross-sectional or longitudinal. Research data gathered at a single point in time is known as cross-sectional research (Du Plooy 2012:85). Observing the same occurrence over an extended period is known as a longitudinal study (Babbie 2010:106). To gather data for this research project, a cross-sectional methodology was used. Data were collected once within three months during episodes that aired in July 2021. This enabled the respondents to recall information. This concurs with Babbie's (2010:100) assertion that time affects the generalisability of the study as it plays a major role in the design and execution of the research.

1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To investigate the research problem, the study used a mixed-method approach, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. This allowed the researcher to address the research questions that were outlined in an earlier section. The mixed-method approach was selected because it was anticipated that it would provide a deeper level of understanding of the problem than either method could alone.

Quantitative research is largely experimental and founded on the measurement of quantity or amount; for example, ascertaining how many incidences a word, event or discussion about an issue occurs in each TV programme (Du Plooy 2009:22). On the

other hand, qualitative research differs significantly from quantitative research in that qualitative researchers believe in the existence of multiple objective “reality” that can be “observed and neutrally quantified (Silverman 2015:4) and believe that human beings are homogeneous and that they can be simply categorised” (Du Plooy 2002: 33). It is for this reason that qualitative methodology was also viewed as essential for this study.

The mixed method approach facilitated an understanding of the nuance and complexities of the research problem both from statistical and scientific perspectives as well as objective reality.

1.10.1 Population and Sampling

When doing research, researchers differentiate between probability and non-probability sampling approaches (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015:99). The researcher chose to utilise the non-probability sampling strategy for this investigation. The selection of this strategy was based on its convenience and efficiency in data collection (Bhardwaj, 2019: 161).

For qualitative sampling, the purposive sampling technique was employed. Purposive sampling enabled the researcher to purposefully select a sample comprising of 12, 7de Laan television show audience members to interview. Audiences who were sampled from the show’s Twitter page, were those who actively engaged on Twitter when watching the show. The decision on the sample size was based on minimising costs that would have been incurred with a larger sample and the fact that the research was not funded.

Quantitative sampling posed a hurdle due to the absence of a comprehensive user list on Twitter, making it difficult for researchers to select a sample. The lack of knowledge about the complete population also hindered the availability of a sample frame. Under these conditions, researchers may opt to use proxy populations that have a sampling frame available. This is done by identifying key characteristics in the target population

that need to be replicated (Venette 2003:10). From this proxy population, a sample of Twitter users can be selected. Hence the researcher opted for a sample size of 500 Twitter users,

The researcher posted the unique resource allocator (URL) to send the questionnaire to a large group of Twitter users. Snowball sampling was also used by requesting those Twitter users who received the questionnaire to also 'retweet' the URL. This was done to obtain a large sample, (Keyton 2017:508).

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2014:105), cost and time always control sample size and these authors (ibid.) advise researchers to consider using a small sample, suggesting a sample of 500 versus of 1000, to reduce the sampling error by a small percentage. The target population included all Twitter users who engaged on the 7delaan Hashtag during the live broadcast, irrespective of the country they are based at as the DSTV Stream allows every user to access all channels available in the streaming platform. A target population is the real population from whom the researcher hopes to generalize the findings, according to Du Plooy (2009:109). However, for this study the findings cannot be generalised to the target population. The hashtag (#7deLaan) for the television show was used to access these audiences. The number of Twitter accounts were limited to 500 to save time, costs and to reduce the sampling error.

The unit of analysis was limited to the 500 Twitter accounts comprising of audiences who engaged on Twitter during the live broadcast of the television show 7de Laan and those who had responded to the questionnaire. The population parameters for this study were race, gender, age, and province to determine if the respondent was tweeting in South Africa. The researcher was able to establish if a respondent had viewed the show in 'real time or not because of the activities during the broadcast time.

1.10.2 Data Collection and Data Analysis Methods

Semi-structured interviews were used to gather contextualised insights from qualitative data and online surveys to gather quantifiable generalisable, valid insights of quantitative data. Semi-structured interviews were an ideal technique to garner exploratory and to a certain extent descriptive (Du Plooy 2009:199) data. The semi-structured interviews provided insight and depth into what motivates audiences of the television show 7de Laan to engage in multitasking activities on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast. This method was also selected because it allows the interviewer to review some information during the interview without adding to the length of the questionnaire (Wimmer & Dominick 2014:214). Besides, interviews are a good method when the researcher wants to find out how people use media and which differences occur between the users (Du Plooy 2009:199).

The online survey was selected because it is not restricted by geography, making it possible to reach a wider audience. This study is targeted at all South Africans who engaged on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show 7de Laan (Keyton 2010: 162). The choice to use online surveys was based on the method being a cost-effective option (Keyton (2010:162) and the convenience for both the researcher and respondent in administering it with ease from mobile phones, tablets or computers enabled with internet connectivity (SurveyMonkey venue). The researcher conducted the surveys for four weeks, from the 1st to the 30th of April 2023.

Quantitative data were collected using an online questionnaire sent to respondents. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2006:167), questionnaires are useful in collecting data on opinions, feelings, and attitudes. Furthermore, Hughes, Blaxter and Tight (2006: 172) claim questionnaires are suitable for behaviour that is not observable. Since this study was conducted online, the survey made it less challenging and provided an opportunity to target a large group (Du Plooy 2009:189). The questions in the questionnaire were not only guided by the semi-structured interviews but also by the literature review. As the research was based on the uses and gratifications theory, it was imperative to distinguish the different motives influencing audiences to engage in multitasking activity on Twitter while watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show 7de Laan (Ruggiero 2000).

Data analysis in the qualitative study includes the capturing, recording, and coding of the collected raw data (Baptiste, 2001:3). To analyse the qualitative interview data, Braun and Clarke (2006:17) six-phased thematic analysis will be applied. According to Fox (2009:36), thematic analysis is “a systematic way of identifying all the main concepts which arise in the interviews, and then trying to categorise and develop these into common themes”. By grouping the data into broad themes, thematic analysis will enable the researcher to handle big data sets more readily and provide accessibility and flexibility in data interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2006:78).

The quantitative data analysis is either descriptive or inferential, according to Wium and Louw (2018:7). Every question's data will be analysed independently. The online survey data was exported from SurveyMonkey to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to prepare it for analysis. The data collection was analysed by a statistician. Respondents that did not fit the inclusion requirements and incomplete cases that gave identical responses to every question were eliminated once the online survey data were imported into SPSS. Two stages of analysis were conducted for this study: inferential statistical analysis and descriptive statistical analysis of frequencies.

1.11 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF KEY CONCEPTS

This section's goal is to guarantee that all readers comprehend the study's themes by providing clear definitions. The defined topics have been selected based on their significance in addressing the study question.

1.11.1 Soap opera

Soap operas, although being "series," have a distinct and unique narrative structure due to their various narratives and never-ending nature (Geraghty 2010:5). However, soap operas still apply the three-act structure of ‘beginning’, ‘middle’ and ‘end’, in each

episode which is linked to the story arc of the plot. Williams (1992:2) defines a soap opera as a popular form of art that has grown from the wellspring of culture and folk stories.

1.11.2 7de Laan

The TV show *7de Laan* is produced by Danie Odendaal Produksies and was first broadcast in 2000, in a 30-minute timeslot, four days a week, Monday to Thursday at 18:30 (Marx Knoetze 2016:45), and due to its popularity, viewing was extended to Fridays. *7de Laan* features a diversified ensemble of characters, whose lives, problems, and emotional relationships stand central to the narrative (Marx Knoetze 2016:55). The researcher's knowledge and experience in the field of broadcasting as the Commissioning Editor on *7de Laan* with the responsibility of managing scriptwriting and production from June 2014 to February 2020 assisted in navigating the research problem.

1.11.3 Social media

There are several definitions of social media, which are interlinked in one way or another. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010:60) define social media as, "primarily internet or cellular phone-based applications and tools to share information among people, or as a website that does not just provide one with information, but interacts with one while providing that information". According to Manning (2014:1158), "social media is the term often used to refer to new forms of media that involve interactive participation". Social media comprise, for example, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and many others.

1.11.4 Social television

Hill and Benton (2012:3715) define social television as the "online social interactions that occur between viewers while watching television". The phrase "social TV" refers, according to Harboe (2009:1), to a variety of experimental systems that make the claim

that they promote social interactions between TV viewers and the study of these interactions. Proulx and Shepatin (2012:9) characterise social TV as the meeting point of social media and television. Social media can enhance the TV viewing experience, but it is not intended to replace TV. Social TV allows audiences to watch TV while communicating with other audiences who are watching the same programme (Kim, Merrill Jr, Collins, & Yang 2021:1).

1.11.5 Twitter

Twitter is a social network application that developed because of the popularity of Facebook. Twitter is also a site that allows a person to post short status updates of up to 140 characters called ‘tweets’ using a smartphone, computer, tablet or any other hand-held device (Zhang & Ahmed, 2019:431). Twitter, which is more than just a micro-blogging web, as it is typically referred to, is a social network in real-time and a platform where conversations about a TV programme usually occur (Deller, 2011:217). These conversations hark back to what was referred to as ‘watercooler conversations’, which Nathan, Harrison and Yarosh (2008:85) describe as the place where groups congregate and discuss a TV show, automatically assuming everyone in the group has seen it. This phenomenon of people gathering to discuss a TV show still exists, but not in the same format as it did in the past due to the number of content choices that are now at the audience’s disposal. For example, audiences watch a variety of TV shows at the same time, and the discussion has audiences recommending shows to each other.

1.11.6 Live tweeting

The use of Twitter when watching television has become the norm among some audiences. Live tweeting is when one tweets while watching a TV show in real-time (Schirra, Sun & Bentley, 2014). Live tweeting allows the audience to interact with the programme and others watching the show, enhancing the viewing experience. Live tweeting during a live television show has become the norm among Twitter users (Schirra, Sun & Bentley, 2014). The concept of ‘live tweeting’ requires that one

watches the programme at the time of the broadcast with other Twitter users, which explains why *7de Laan* repeats seldom trend unless the repeat premieres in another country. Nevertheless, these audiences continue to create water cooler moments the following day when they meet their friends and colleagues.

1.11.7 Media multitasking

Media multitasking is the consumption of two media content simultaneously, switching between two different platforms or apps using smartphones or tablets (Duff & Yoon 2014: 11). For example, when a user engages on Twitter in discussions about a television show while simultaneously watching that show. Lin, Lin, Yeo & Lin (2012:1572), define media multitasking as the consumer's behaviour of using two or more media content simultaneously. Undoubtedly, the growing trend of live tweeting has influenced audiences' television viewing experience.

1.11.8 Second screen

The second screen refers to "mobile devices such as (smartphones, tablets, and laptop computers) that allow television viewers to interact with television content through the Internet and enhancement apps" (Guo 2019:140). While Neate, Evans & Jones (2017: 91) define the second screen as the act of engaging with one's mobile device while watching TV. Rather than detracting from TV content, the phenomena of second-screen use can improve the viewing experience for the viewer. Blake (2017:1) concurs stating that second-screen is an emerging phenomenon where users engage on two screens simultaneously, transforming television into a participatory, interactive social experience for users.

1.12 SUMMARY AND OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 Introduction and background of the study

Presented the research problem, the study's objectives, its motivation, its background, and its methodology. The study's theoretical underpinnings, its scope, and its definitions of its concepts.

Chapter 2 Literature review

The following Chapter 2 reviews the literature related to soap operas and further focuses on explaining several aspects of the soap opera 7de Laan.

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework

This chapter discusses the philosophical perspectives and the theoretical framework underpinning the study.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

This chapter covers the population, sampling procedure, data gathering technique, research methodology, and reasons for selecting a method.

Chapter 5: Qualitative data presentation

This chapter presents findings and analysis of the study.

Chapter 6: Quantitative data presentation

In Chapter 6, the quantitative data are reported and analysed.

Chapter 7: A synthesis and analysis of Qualitative and Quantitative data reflections and interpretation

In Chapter 7, the researcher merged qualitative and quantitative data and further analysed and interpreted these data against the theoretical foundation of the study.

Chapter 8: Conclusions, Recommendations and Limitations

This chapter present the key findings of the study, the recommendations for future research and draws conclusion in relation to the motives of the televisions show 7de Laan audiences who engage on Twitter when watching the live broadcast of the show.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the literature from different researchers who have contributed to the topic of media multitasking, including the history of the soap opera genre, 7de Laan as the chosen soap opera, characteristics of the soap opera, criticisms of the soap opera, Twitter as a social medium, Twitter as a backchannel to television, social television, audience participation on Twitter and the second screen. This allowed the researcher to address the gaps in the subject area by comparing and identifying contradictions within the literature.

2.2 THE HISTORY OF THE SOAP OPERA IN SOUTH AFRICA

Similar to others, the South African soap opera originated in radio during the 1950s, when they were referred to as “romantic serials” (Mattsson 2022:33). Soap operas were first introduced in 1953, when it was broadcast on *Springbok Radio,* and they were also popular among the female audiences (Tomaselli, Tomaselli & Muller 1990:197). According to Stern, Russell & Russell (2007:38), women are claimed to be able to find emotional release, personal fulfilment, camaraderie, and an escape from reality through soap operas. It was only in 1984, that soap operas were introduced to television, and they became an instant hit, with *Santa Barbara* and *Dallas* broadcasting on *Bop Television,* which was a television station in the former Bophuthatswana homeland in South Africa (Motsaathebe, 2009:431). These two shows became the revenue spinners for this television station (Motsaathebe 2009:431). In 1986, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) started broadcasting the two American soap operas (Motsaathebe, 2009:431).

In the democratic era, post-apartheid South Africa had to re-organise itself in terms of its identity, building a common future, reconciliation, and many other healing aspects, which required the trusted medium, television, to create content that will assist in forging a rainbow nation. Soap operas played a significant role in the creation of new

identities for the country. The first locally produced soap opera was *Egoli*, which was broadcast on the only independent broadcaster in the country, M-Net (Jonker 2015:92). *Generations* was the first SABC, locally produced soap opera that premiered in 1994, as a weekly one-hour show, produced by television producer, Morula Pictures, with its sole mandate to assist in the transformation and transition of the country into a democratic nation (Motsaathebe,2009:431). Due to its popularity, it was moved from weekly to daily broadcast (Motsaathebe, 2009:431). This soap opera 7de Laan is no longer on air, the last episode was on the 26th of December 2023 after 24 seasons (Ferreira, 2023) *Generations: The Legacy*, was introduced in 2014, after 16 cast members decided to resign in protest of contracting provisions, leaving both the producer and the broadcaster in a state of mess. This "new" *Generations* was developed and produced under three months, and it is still going strong, averaging over 8 million viewers daily (TVSA Team 2019). The soap opera, *7de Laan* which is currently under study, is discussed at length hereunder.

2.3 7DE LAAN AS THE SELECTED SOAP OPERA FOR THIS STUDY

In 2019, *7de Laan* was rated number 2 on *SABC2*: the most-watched programme, with over 2,581,668 million viewers (TVSA Team, 2019). This indicates that *7de Laan* is still a household favourite among South African viewers, an important revenue generator for the SABC and a mainstay on the channel's programming schedule. For these reasons, it was selected to answer the research question: What motivates audiences to tweet during television viewing? The television show, *7de Laan,* is broadcast predominantly in Afrikaans, with IsiZulu, Setswana and isiXhosa as other additional languages spoken on the show. Subtitles are provided in English only - this is done for the hearing impaired as well as those who do not understand the language/s spoken in the soap opera. The television show *7de Laan* is produced by Danie Odendaal Produksies (Productions) and was first broadcast in 2000, in a 30-minute timeslot, four days a week, Monday to Thursday at 18h30 (Marx Knoetze 2016:45). Due to its popularity, Fridays were added, and it was ultimately broadcast five days a week. When SABC 1 commissioned *Skeem Saam,* for the 18h30 timeslot, the same time as *7de Laan* on SABC 2, *7de Laan* started losing audiences and the

broadcaster changed the schedule, moving *7de Laan* to 19h00, but that did not result in audience rating increase, then it was eventually moved to 18h00, which is where it broadcasted until its last day on the 26th of December 2023 (Ferreira 2023). The reason the time slot changed from 19:00 to 18:00 was solely because of *Rhythm City* on ETV was averaging over four million viewers and had already built a loyal viewing (TVSA Team 2019).

This soap drama is set in a fictional suburb, called the Hillside, in the very real city of Johannesburg, Gauteng (Van der Merwe, 2012:36).

Figure 2.1. 7de Laan key visual poster



Source: eNCA (2015)

This series features a diversified ensemble of characters, whose lives, problems, and emotional relationships stand central to the narrative (Knoetze 2015:55). This is true of the television show 7de Laan which has an ensemble cast of 16 characters with whom the story revolves.

The researcher was the Commissioning Editor working on 7de Laan from scriptwriting to managing the entire production. The series comprises (on an ongoing basis) predominantly three types of storylines – high-impact/fast-paced drama, emotional

drama and comedy. Individually, within these different narratives, real-life issues are explored. The main aim of the series is to educate, inform and entertain as per the SABC mandate set in Chapter IV of the Broadcasting Act (1999: 20). The television show 7de Laan does not shy away from tackling relevant societal issues.

The characters living in the fictional world of Hillside aim to be representative of a real South Africa and are of mixed ethnicity. There are three major family groupings: The Welman family (white), the Meintjies family (coloured) and the Moloi family (black). Emotional drama often forces these families into conflict with one another and, at other times, new alliances and friendships are formed (Worden, 2013:35).

What makes *7de Laan* unique is the age range of the characters. The children in the Hillside community are delightful in their innocence, while the more mature citizens of Hillside provide a wide scope to explore deep, emotional, and heartfelt stories. The television show *7de Laan* assists the SABC to deliver on its language and local drama weekly output, as the broadcaster is mandated to deliver 35% drama programmes, consisting of South African dramas (Independent Communications Authority of South Africa/ICASA, 2016:85).

Table 2:1 SABC 2 local drama mandate (ICASA 2016:85).

GENRE	SABC 2
	2011 onwards
Drama	- 24 hrs per week - 8 hrs in prime time - 4 hrs SA in prime time

2.4 SOAP OPERA CHARACTERISTICS

Munshi (2020:67) lists eight generic characteristics of soap operas which are the following:

i. Soap opera's narrative resists closure

Soap opera narrative is infinitely deferred (Bignell 2013:102). This characteristic of soap opera resisting closure is not unique to this genre, as there are telenovelas that also share this characteristic in South Africa. In South Africa, soap operas are contracted at 260 episodes for each season and the longest-running soap opera is *Generations,* now *Generations: The Legacy,* with 30 years running, in 2022, followed by *Isidingo*, and then *7de Laan* at number three. Soap operas are written in four story arcs that allow for a clear beginning middle and end for the narrative. The arcs can run between two to three months, with adhocracy workshops to brainstorm the other arcs, should the writers run out of the story in arcs.

For the SABC, the producers of the soap opera go on a story conference retreat, where they brainstorm stories to present to the channel for a period of three, six or 12 months. The focus of the narrative is on characters' everyday personal lives and emotional journeys (Hobson 2003:1). This could be one of the many factors that get audiences watching and engaging, because they can identify with the characters' life journeys. Hobson (2003:3) claims that soap operas are always on the side of the right. The audience observes the villain or bad characters being punished for wrongdoing, either by being jailed or losing everything, but good always prevails, even though it might take time.

Soap operas used to be defined "as daily daytime serials, until *Dallas* and *Dynasty* started broadcasting during primetime, in 1978, which then raised the question if these two programmes were soap operas and, since then, there has been a wide range of seemingly endless sets of variation on the soap opera form" (Mumford 1995:15). Additionally, Bignell (2013:123) and Geraghty (2005:310) suggest that soap operas

cannot be purely defined by daytime scheduling or even by their appeal to a female audience, instead they should be defined by the stories, which engage the audience and create public conversations. This has been the strength of several soap operas in South Africa. Hobson (2003:34) concurs that “soap operas should be the story of the audience; it should be emotionally engaging and its characters’ stories recognisable”.

An illustration of this is the reaction of the South African public to the interracial kiss between the characters, Alexa and Fikani (real names Carina Nel and Nicholas Nkuna), on *7de Laan*, as previously mentioned. The character Fikani and Alexa started dating few weeks after Fikani arrived in Hillside Hospital. Audiences seemed excited for the relationship until they kissed as Fikani is a black male medical Doctor and Alexa a white female medical Doctor. Audiences went on Twitter to share their prejudice and their racial opinions; some even wrote to the Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa (BCCSA) for the SABC to be reprimanded for breaking the broadcasting code of conduct, which is not true of the code of conduct and the case was thrown out by the BCCSA. BCCSA is “an independent and self-regulatory body which mediates and adjudicates upon complaints against broadcasters who have accepted its Code of Conduct” (Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa, 2000). It even had audiences, in the United Kingdom (UK), who are generally of South African decent, abuzz as it initiated conversations about interracial relationships if they have a place in South African society and some audiences were shocked that there are people who still find inter-racial relationships offensive (Zeeman, 2019).

There were some audience members who found the scene offensive and threatened to stop watching the television show if this relationship continues (Zeeman 2019:23). This indicates that the audiences are watching and engaging, and they recognise the storyline.

Moreover, the reaction gave insight as to where South Africa as a country stands when it comes to issues of race.

The outcry in response to this storyline compelled the production company, Danie Odendaal Produksies, to issue a statement on their Twitter page username @Real7deLaan, which read as follows:

Figure 2.2: Online Twitter storyline discussions



Source: *@Real7deLaan* (Twitter 2019)

Steyn (2012:22) states that "the practice of creating ignorance, which was common during apartheid, is still going on in post-apartheid South Africa". South African. There are still several people who still think that it is wrong for a black and a white person to be in an intimate relationship. However, this study is not about the ignorance of a sector of South African society to the trajectories of apartheid, but rather about why the audiences participate on Twitter when watching the television show *7de Laan*. The conversation about the interracial kiss on *7de Laan* went on throughout the night and into the next day. This is a clear indication that audiences are using Twitter to express their opinions about the content they are consuming (Larsson & Moe 2012: 730).

ii. Multiple characters and plots

Soap operas usually have approximately 20 main characters, but these characters are not all featured in one episode but when the story dictates and guests that come in for certain arcs (Matthew 2012: 76). The television show, *7de Laan* is no exception to this convention as depicted in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3: 7de Laan cast members (Ramathesele 2000)



The plot consists of A, B and C stories, sometimes with a small D. The multiple storylines created around the characters, living in the same location, give an impression of rapidly recurring events (Bignell 2013:129). The soap opera has a specific location, with main characters, around whom the story revolves and, sometimes, guest characters would come and go in this fictional world (Hobson 2003:33). These characters are often brought in to disrupt the world, while offering more drama, conflict, and entertainment for the audiences.

iii. Use of time, which parallels real time, implying that action takes place whether viewers are watching or not

In this 7de Laan fictional world, after a weekend, the characters return on a Monday when the viewers are tuned in, and the characters talk about an event that happened over the weekend or reference a weekend away as if it happened. Bignell (2013:129) further states that one episode in a soap opera occurs in a short time that usually represents a day.

iv. Abrupt segmentation between parts

In a 30-minute slot episode, there are three segments, and two advertisement breaks within those segments (Marx Knoetze 2015: 52). Because of the three or four storylines in an episode, while the audience is still focusing on a story in one scene, there is an inter-cut to another scene, allowing for all three stories in one episode to be shown. One episode can consist of morning, day, and night, which is what *7de Laan* often does. For example, the researcher observed that after the title sequence on 7de Laan, it is the morning in the first segment, midday in the second segment night in the third, and last segment in a 24-minute episode. However, there seems to be an exception with some episodes where there is a direct pick-up (DPU) from the previous episode at the top of the scene which means that an episode that finished at night might continue at night the following day instead of the norm of starting each episode in the morning.

v. Emphasis on dialogue, problem-solving and intimate conversations

A soap opera's dialogue is often likened to gossip (Riegel 1996:202). There is more talking than action and, often, the soap opera lacks subtexts and puts emphasis on dialogue. Dialogue assists the soap opera in escalating the narrative, as well as driving the emotional arc of the characters, which finds resonance with the audience. According to Briggs (2009:71), “a soap opera has a positive impact on society because

viewers can relate to the characters and find themselves in them". A soap opera is really about discussion, which has a dialogic and decentred shape that is centrifugal rather than centripetal, according to Briggs (2009:71).

vi. Male characters who are sensitive

The soap opera also includes male characters, who often come in as a love interest, comic characters or "bad" characters, and they hardly have leading roles (Hobson, 2003:33). This is still the kept convention of the genre, which portray male characters as sensitive characters that are manipulated by female characters. Soap operas are still viewed by more women, than men. This could be because the genre is dialogue-driven, rather than action-driven (Hobson, 2003:33). However, in *7de Laan,* they are not sensitive they are the villains. For example, the character of De Wet has women fighting for him, while he continues running his business not caring about their conflicts which are a result of his behaviour.

vii. Professional and powerful female characters in the world outside the home

Fiske (2010:179) views the soap opera as a feminine narrative. This is interesting, as it is the case on 7de Laan audience performance statistics, which always show the genre as female-skewed, with a higher percentage of female viewers compared to males. Hobson (2003:33) concurs with this view stating in addition that the soap opera offers a range of strong female characters, of different ages, social levels, and personalities, whom the audience can sympathise with.

viii. The setting for the soap opera

(Gibson, Dyll & Teer-Tomaselli 2019:275) mention and define three sub-genres of soap opera which are the following:

a) community soaps – feature characters who are unmarried, not in a love relationship, live in the same neighbourhood, belong to the same community, and are based around class, families, and multigenerational characters.

b) dynastic soaps – this type of soap opera focuses on one powerful family, and

c) dyadic soaps – soaps centred almost exclusively on young people, uni-generational, interconnected with past, present, and future romantic ties.

In relation to this research case study, *7de Laan* falls under community soap operas, as it is about a community and class, strives to promote the public agenda of social cohesion.

Producers must be clear about what the sub-genre of soap operas are, to avoid telling the same narrative. For example, the treatment of a love story, in a community soap, or a dynastic and dyadic soap, will be different, because of the world the soap is premised on. Women are portrayed as being strong in community soaps (Liebes & Livingstone 1998:3). For example, in *7de Laan*, there is Marianne, Lesedi, Bonita, Vanessa and Charmaine. These female characters are emotionally, spiritually, physically and financially independent. They fight their own battles with each other and with other characters and they are all not married.

2.5 SUBJECT MATTER/THEMES

Themes common to soap operas include chaos and conflict, good and evil people, and most of the time, the depiction of an affluent, upper-middle-class lifestyle (Wittebols 2004:3). Perfect lives do not make for great television viewing and audiences like to watch characters in challenging situations and they find pleasure in watching them struggle through and overcoming those challenges. According to Fiske (2010:181), happy marriages in soap operas are boring and incapable of creating good plotlines. That is often why, in soap operas, relationships hardly have a happy ending; they are always in conflict and the happiness is short-lived. However, it is imperative to always

find the balance in the narrative so that not all your A, B and C stories are about the unhappy character; therefore, story A and B will be strong and subject matter heavy, then C be light, to create a “breather” for an audience, from intense A and B storylines. The soap operas on SABC often observe dates of national importance by mentioning them in the narrative or creating a whole storyline to bring awareness to the audiences. In *7de Laan,* for instance*,* a cancer story can be highlighted in October, which is observed as Cancer Awareness Month in South Africa. The researcher together with the writing team of 7de Laan developed a storyline in which one of the characters, Matrone, discovered that she had cancer and had to go for treatment. The narrative took the audiences through the emotional ups and downs of the journey to recovery. Similarly, as in American soap operas, South African soap operas have the themes of the family and romantic love relationships (Marx 2008:84).

2.6 FORMAT AND MEDIUM

The term "format" in television refers to the elements of a show that distinguish it from others, such as the premise, the kind of setting, the variety of characters or performers, and the genre (Bignell & Orlebar 2005:59). According to Hobson (2003:1), soap operas are transmitted more than three times a week for 52 weeks a year in a 30-minute slot. Trelease (2021:495) states that the main narrative focuses on the everyday personal and emotional lives of its characters. Soap operas present to audiences a version of real life that they can recognise as like own experiences (Mumford 1995:9). This could be one of the characteristics that has made soap operas survive as a genre, because they reflect the times in which the audiences live, creating an authentic world that resonates with audiences. According to Pitout (1998), the format of South African soap operas enables viewers’ involvement, and this fosters loyalty.

Soap operas use close-up and medium close-up camera shots to heighten the emotions of the characters (Geraghty 2010:94). Moreover, (Gledhill 2003:371) states that the characteristic camera set-up for a soap opera, as a “close-up two shot”, produce a drama of talking heads, in intimate exchanges or in an altercation. Establishing shots are also used to transition from one scene to the next and to give

the audience a sense of the location in which a scene is taking place. According to Brighter and Rader (2019: 1), an “establishing shot prefaces a scene in a movie with a wide shot of the scene’s location”. Its main purpose is to assist the viewer process a shift from one location to the other, especially for television shows recorded in the studio. These establishing shots are used because soap operas are shot in a studio; thus, from time to time, directors want audiences to suspend their belief that the action is not real, but fiction (Jane & Barker 2006: 90).

2.7 SOAP OPERA AS NET CASH FLOW AND REVENUE GENERATOR

The storytelling of soap operas has grown to be the most popular and lucrative genre on television, and it has impacted many other television genres (Wittebols 2004:9). In South African television, every broadcaster has more than one soap opera per channel. The cause of this is that soap operas make good advertising sense and generate great revenue. Ford, de Kosnik and Harrington (2011:3) state that serials are regarded as the perfect genre to deliver to audiences. The notion of the soap opera, as a commodity, has challenged several public broadcasting services, as it presents to the broadcaster the challenge of having to accommodate both their public mandate and ensure profit, since public broadcasters are expected to be financially self-funding. As previously mentioned, soap operas started on the radio before moving to television in the 1960s, where they remained a staple of daytime programming (Wittebols 2004:32). However, in South Africa, they are a staple of prime-time programming.

Soap operas have increasingly influenced prime time television scheduling, a move that has revolutionised the concept of “quality television” (Ford et al. 2011:7). The soap opera is a popular culture that appeals across time, cultures and even classes, making it commercially very viable (Williams 1992:2). This is evident in South Africa, where new channels, when they are launched, would include a soap opera as part of the schedule and it has been shown, repeatedly, that the soap opera soon becomes the pillar of that channel. A case in point is the latest channel offering on MultiChoice, called *1Magic,* which was launched in 2018 and included in its line-up the soap opera,

The River, which, in turn, has become one of the most popular shows on the channel (News24 2017).

2.8 SOUTH AFRICAN SOAP OPERAS

Television viewers in South Africa enjoy both local and imported soap operas, according to quantitative audience data (Van der Merwe 2012:37). According to Andersson (2004:10), "soapies mirror South Africa's soul," and viewers in that country have every right to extrapolate the thin plot lines of soap operas to their own experiences. While local audiences make connections between what they see in soap operas and their own experiences, even though they are aware that the texts are fictional, Tager (2010:115) concurs with Andersson (2004:10) that South African soap operas are used as a moral and social blueprint for viewers in post-apartheid South Africa.

Thelwell (2014:2) states that South African soap operas usually carry a message. This has been one of the conventions of the genre in South Africa (SA). For example, Generations*,* now known as *Generations: The Legacy* which is the longest running soap opera in SA, carry messages on identity, that is, “you can be black and successful”; it has inspired “black excellence” which according to urban dictionary means someone that is black and portrays great qualities and abilities that makes the black community proud. The themes of nation-building and social cohesion also form part of the conventions followed by producers of 7de Laan. This can be ascribed to the national endeavour to find healing to overcome its apartheid history and the knowledge that messaging in television programmes, like soap operas, could assist in forging social cohesion and unity in a multicultural and multiracial country. This is also encompassed in *7de Laan*, wherein the characters, from diverse cultural and racial groupings, are coexisting and thriving, irrespective of skin colour and culture. This will be further explored in this research when the content of the tweets of *7de Laan* audience members are analysed to explore whether the show, in fact, attracts viewers from different cultural and racial groups.

High ratings indicated for soap operas, can be attributed to viewers' craving for a cathartic release that they experience from watching characters living out situations like their own lives (Chronis 2013:1), and further states that people's lives are tough, which is the motive of soap opera to be just pure emotions as audience can escape into glamorous lives of characters in exotic locations.

Marx (2008:80) asserts that soap operas play a role in the development of a new South African identity. Additionally, she asserts that because soap operas are usually broadcast in the late afternoon or early evening, housewives and professional women can watch the broadcasts, and that the soap opera storyline is purportedly largely oriented towards women (Marx 2008:83). The best time to watch the South African soap opera is usually between 18:00 and 21:00, which is prime time. Soap operas have attracted a significant female viewership despite a little increase in the number of male viewers due to the genre's growth.

The soap opera genre has had an influence on prime-time scheduling, and this is evident in South Africa, as each broadcaster wants a piece of the prime-time advertising revenue by scheduling a soap opera during this timeslot. Soap operas are the flagship programmes of their respective channels, their viewing figures not only show their popularity, but also the health of the channel (Briggs 2010:71).The conventions of the soap opera, such as the ensemble cast and ongoing storyline, which carries over from one episode to the other, have been adopted by other genres like the crime thriller, procedural drama, science fiction and comedy (Ford et al. 2011:7). Moreover, in South African television, this has been done with telenovelas, which are long running series that are broadcasted three to five days a week. However, they have a different narrative style - some follow the three months arc storyline, while others follow one arc through 260 episodes. In a crime series, for example, there will be a murder in episode 1 and, for a number of months, the narrative is about trying to find out who committed the murder, and, if the guilty party is eventually identified, they can either be brought to justice or escape it, depending on whether the series is a once-off offering or not. The soap opera genre has grown from strength to strength,

becoming the most watched genre on television, occupying the first six spots in the top 20 list of programmes broadcast across terrestrial channels in South Africa (TVSA 2022).

2.9 SOAP OPERA CRITICISM

There has been criticism levelled at soap operas, especially for the never-ending text and the fact that they are repeated in the daytime since they already dominate the prime-time slot (Geraghty 2005:312). In South Africa, soap operas generally, premiere during prime time and repeats are broadcast during daytime. According to Geraghty (2005:326), soap opera premieres typically take place in a prime-time slot around the world. Viewers now focus on the intricate, intertwined themes of the show rather than its lack of a resolution, such as the creation of a distinct community, the importance of melodrama, paying attention to domestic and familial relationships, and good versus evil within a family or community. It is, however, interesting that the format of all the South African soap operas is different to other international formats in the way the story interweaves and in the portrayal of the male characters versus female characters.

The notion that soaps operas are targeted at housewives and female viewers has shifted in so many ways, as the male audiences have also found their way to these soap operas. This is evident when gauging the audiences that are watching the premiere episodes and engaging with others about the programme through the second screen*,* Twitter. There is a fair number of male viewers tweeting about the programme. The criterion will be tested in the questionnaire, as one of the research questions explored in this study. In the local soap operas, the stories are no longer centred on women. Therefore, the men also admit to liking the soap operas (Geraghty 2005:325). Additionally, Gauntlett and Hill (1999) suggest that academics should refrain from referring to soap opera as “women’s genre”. Soap operas also tend to represent groups or figures that are under-represented in other dramas - characters that do not fit the conventional standard of a hero - and these representations are termed, “tokenistic representation” (Geraghty 2005:317). In *7de Laan,* there are two main black female characters, Aggie and Maria, who, never had meaningful stories and, if ever

they did, it was always comic stories that are badly and stereotypically written. The reason for this was attributed to the lack of representation of people of colour in the scriptwriting team. Only when the SABC insisted on the diversity of the scriptwriting team then these two characters begin to have meaningful storylines and more black characters came into the world of the story.

2.10 SOCIAL TELEVISION

It is important; to note that online TV continue to challenge television as a social means only linear television will be challenged to extinction. This means that people will have so much choice that television programme schedulers will find it hard to keep audiences watching within a certain timeslot. Media practitioners assert that broadcasters might profit from social TV since people may go back to linear TV due to the ability to communicate simultaneously on social media (Buschow, Schneider & Ueberheide 2014:129). Audiences will still stream their favourite programmes on smart TV (STV) which according to Shin and Kin (2013:673) is a “TV that incorporates an operating system/platform that allows you to access, manage, and view online and network-based media content without the need to connect to an additional box”. These audiences will be able to create their schedules, which might be a challenge to advertisers, as it will be difficult to measure the audience viewing rates, as the premier slot will be non-existent.

The emergence of streaming TV networks has also provided audiences with greater control regarding how they consume television content and choice about the platform they want to use when consuming streaming services. “Social television” created an essential shift in how audiences interact and socialise around television (Harboe 2008:1). Television was created to be a social medium and this will not change with the emergence of social media networks. Social media networks enhances television viewing and does not replace television.

According to Cesar, Chorianopoulos, and Jensen (2007:116), “there are a few social reasons why people watch television, such as fostering a sense of community,

facilitating interaction, and offering subjects for future discussions". Conversation could be the essential factor that drives people to watch a particular television show. This phenomenon has now moved online, where people are driven to watch a certain television show, because it is trending on Twitter, or they have seen the show mentioned on their social network timeline.

Friedrichsen, Wolfgang, Mühl-Benninghaus, and Verlag (2016:604) define social television as the ways in which online users or audiences, along with programme creators, presenters, producers, performers, and crew, use social media to make television more engaging. It is, therefore, advisable for marketers of televised programmes or events to maximise the audience reach that is created by social television. Social television has empowered audiences, as they can control what and how they want to consume television content. Social television has enabled audiences to be their own programming schedulers, as the media streaming platform continues to rise across the globe. It would be interesting for the SABC to start selling their shows to streaming platform owners like Viu, Netflix, Hulu and other streaming platforms that are interested in entering the South African television market. This has the potential to extend the brand reach and set trends in the industry.

According to Froufe and Neira (2014:84), social media forcibly arrived in the media ecosystem due to the evolution brought about by the convergence of social networks, second screen technology and television. In this regard, Giglietto and Selva (2014:260) define social television as "the interactions among other viewers and between viewers, the characters, and the producers of the show enabled by the (second screen) practice".

Social television continues to be a challenge and an opportunity for television producers, as they strive to get close to or control these social network audiences, as they can make or break the show. However, these audiences provide television executives with research tools, free of charge, as their comments can be seen online, and they are not shy to voice their opinions (Froufe & Neria 2014:84), and numerous

comments inform the producers of what is working and what needs to be tweaked. It is the executive's prerogative as to whether they take those comments - good or bad - on board or not, understanding that the audiences are in control of their views about a show.

2.11 TWITTER

Twitter was founded in early 2006, to enable users to share brief, text messages, called "tweets", with other Twitter users (Boyd, Golder & Lotan 2010). It is only between 2008 and 2009 that Twitter became more popular, after *Facebook,* due to its adoption by high profile public figures (Deller 2011:217). Twitter allows its users to follow other users, whom they might be interested in, and, once one follows them, one can read all their tweets and is able to comment. Although Twitter has become firmly ingrained in the daily lives of its users, broadcasting and online media remain important mainstream media outlets that Twitter does not necessarily replace (Harrington et al. 2013:405). According to Business Tech (2021), Twitter had 9.3 million active users in South Africa, becoming the fourth used social media network after Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. Twitter has become an essential companion for television audiences, who are not shy to express or share their opinions and ideas, while watching their favourite television shows.

Twitter is "a social networking and micro-blogging platform that allows users to send brief messages and read others' messages, called "tweets" (Chen 2011:1). Twitter allows for a backchannel that enriches interaction with the television content or any other content like festivals, concerts, disasters, and others. Twitter presents opportunities for broadcasters to use this platform as a tool to decide on which pilot project to commission, as they can easily access and analyse audience engagement on Twitter (Giglietto, Artieri, Gemini & Orefice 2015:2460). Mainstream broadcasters like the SABC, ETV and MultiChoice continue to utilise Twitter to test audiences' appetite for a television show. These broadcasters have gone as far as creating a hashtag and a Twitter account with the television show name and the channel, for example, #umkhokha_Mzansi, @umkhokha_Mzansi. A trending show on Twitter does

not necessarily translate to audience share, as there are still large numbers of audiences in South Africa who are not online or not on Twitter. In a South African population of over 60 million people, 38.2 million are regular internet users and 27 million of these are active social media users (Business Tech 2021). However, using Twitter, as a tool, can assist broadcasters in gaining some competitive advantage, as they can get insight into audiences' views on their programme offerings and enlighten them on audience behaviour.

Twitter has become an important backchannel for television, where the programme can be reviewed and discussed directly by the viewers, and producers should not ignore this trend (Deller 2011:225). In addition, in other television formats, such as in the breakfast shows, which are broadcasted live, Twitter has become more than a backchannel, it is part of the programme, as the audience tweets get incorporated into the show (Harrington et al. 2013:407). For example, *The Morning Live Breakfast Show,* on SABC 2, which airs Monday to Friday, has a segment where they have the audience sends in their tweets about a particular issue and those tweets are displayed on screen and read out by the anchors. There are advantages and disadvantages of Twitter.

Table 2.2. Advantages and disadvantages of Twitter

Advantages	**Disadvantages**
Networking without borders	Addiction
Instant news and information	Mental illness
Great marketing channel for business	Fraud and scams
Awareness and activism	Fake news
Exchange of ideas and collaboration	Cyberbullying
	Hacking
	Privacy issues
	In active accounts/fake accounts

2.11.1 Twitter as a backchannel to television programs

A backchannel is not only created for television shows, but it can be started for any live event, as it allows for people, who are not at the event, to be informed about what is happening at the event. According to Moore (2014:2), attendees at live events are often seen tweeting what is taking place at the event with people at the event or not attending, keeping them updated on the event happenings, this phenomenon is called backchannel.

This phenomenon has challenged media journalists to become more innovative in their reporting, as by the time they break with the story in their newspapers, people are already informed about the story. A backchannel allows for real-time feedback and comment, using a hashtag and organisers can quickly fix issues that arise, if there are any, that are brought to their attention through this medium, both at a live event and a broadcast show. A live event, such as a concert or conference, requires an immediate response, whereas with a broadcasted show, it might take time, as the stories are written and recorded in advance, with a lag time of three months. McNely (2009:297) "maintains that the main use for a backchannel is to complement an existing channel". This statement further emphasises that Twitter is available to enhance the primary medium, which is television, in this instance.

The backchannel, created by Twitter, allows television producers to be able to conduct content research, using feedback and comments from the audience. Backchannel is defined by Proulx and Shepatin (2012:11) as the real-time discussion taking place on social media sites while the episode is airing. Several television programmes display the backchannel, using the hashtag to direct audiences. At other events, it is often the programme director or facilitator who keeps mentioning the hashtag and, on radio, it could be the host. All these activities are done to enhance interaction and engagement.

2.11.2 Why audience engage on Twitter

Audiences have always participated with various media in one way or another. However, the emergence of the internet has increased this participation. According to

García-Avilés (2012), “audience engagement is the input that broadcasters obtain through a combination of new technology and existing measuring systems”. In South Africa, this feedback is not yet significant, as broadcasters hardly engage with audiences on online platforms, giving preference, instead, to mainstream traditional systems, with the exception being information shared regarding competition or a complaint through the Broadcasting Complaint Commission of South Africa (BCCSA), or direct complaints or comments sent to the broadcaster. However, there have been changes in regard to live entertainment shows, where audiences are encouraged to send through tweets.

The emergence of internet technologies and online social networks have expanded the social possibility of television, where social activities and conversation about television content can now be discussed via social networks (Mukherjee & Jansen 2018:317). Twitter is currently used prominently to comment on televised content, not only live broadcast content, but premier content too, which is content that is recorded, but broadcast “live”. For example, *7de Laan* is recorded two months before the broadcast, but when it broadcasts at 18:00 every evening, Monday to Friday, that is regarded as “live”. According to McBride (2015:1), television audiences are the most active users of Twitter in the broadcast industry. The audiences’ comments on a show can be seen in real time and is freely available to executive producers, who can analyse these them to inform themselves of what works and what does not about the show (Froufe & Neira 2014:84). Broadcasters can take advantage of Twitter and conduct audience research through focus groups instead of commissioning paid research. Especially if broadcasters want to get an in-depth understanding of audiences as the feedback is readily available through the television show hashtag if audiences are engaging on the show via Twitter.

What is also interesting regarding the connection between the audiences of a television programme and Twitter, is that the conversation goes beyond the broadcasting time and does not end when the credits roll, but sometimes starts before the broadcast (Froufe & Neira 2014:84). It is interesting to note, however, that in South Africa social media audiences will not replace traditional media audiences, as the

former consist of those that are on social media networks. However, social media audiences could complement the television programme, providing the executive producers with data to enhance the narrative. Feedback can be provided through social media interactions with actors, who have created a Twitter account of the character they play, and they are able to comment on the narrative, together with audience members, while watching the show (Wood & Baughman 2012:328). The phenomenon of characters of a television show having Twitter accounts has not yet been fully utilised in South Africa, as the actors tweet themselves on their personal accounts and not the character.

Audiences can consume television content via a range of platforms, and the rise of digital video recorder (DVR) has allowed audiences to shift their viewing habits. However, there are still programmes that are viewed live, as they premiere (Lochrie & Coulton 2012:729). The reason for this could be that interacting with other audience members, on Twitter, when a programme is broadcasting and everyone is watching, is more fun than when watching alone later (virtually). Wohn and Na (2011) established that several online comments on the content of a television programme are personal opinions – this is expected, because of the diversity of the audiences who are watching on television, while engaging online. It is audiences, not content, that have become the key driver of the longevity of a show, as these audiences can decide what they want to watch and when they want to watch it. Content creators should remember this every time they produce content, that is, the number of distribution modes in the industry require them to think differently than they used to with traditional broadcasting (García-Avilés 2012:430).

Audiences do not just consume content these days but interact and engage with the content through the medium in which the information is conveyed, which is often through smartphones, tablets or other portable internet-enabled devices. Twitter transformed people to become active users by encouraging user-generated content through Web 2.0 (Chen 2011:1).

Twitter allows four main ways for users to interact, which are the following:

a) Retweet – when a user shares a tweet of another user and this is visible to other users.

b) Reply or mention – is a tweet that starts with the @username, directed at that specific user, and can be seen by other users, as it appears on their timeline.

c) Direct message – is a direct message between the sender and receiver that is not visible to other users.

d) Hashtag – users, with mutual interests, can group together to draw attention to a social issue (Elrhoul 2015).

The Twitter hashtag is a powerful tool to draw attention to social causes, not only to organise, but also to gain public support. An example in South Africa is the *#FeesMustFall* movement in 2015, when students protested the high increases in the university fees across the country. The hashtag, *#FeesMustFall,* was created and any user, who wanted to know and see what was happening, needed only the hashtag to participate in the conversation, as users were tweeting and posting images using it (Chen 2011:2). It should be noted that the interactions are not restricted by geographical locations. The hashtag allows for tweets to be categorised and it is an integral part of Twitter's offering, as it links comments and allows strangers to participate in the conversation (Murthy 2013:3).

Twitter allows for everyone to be an information author, which has resulted in the concept of "fake news" (Aïmeur, Amri & Brassard 2023:13). As a result, people are not able to distinguish which information is fact or fiction. According to Allcott and Gentzkow (2017:213), "fake news is described as a piece of news information that is purposefully fabricated to deceive readers". News also moves fast, as it can be shared on users' timelines in real-time, irrespective of location. Twitter can help broadcasters enhance their relationship with audiences and drive viewership. Audiences often share their opinions about topics and products, or about services they are not happy with.

An example was the 7de Laan audiences' reaction to Bonita and De Wet's wedding which they shared opinions about how beautiful it was and how the character Bonita is the wife material.

The emergence of social networking apps, like Twitter, and advances in technologies, have allowed audiences to interact outside the living room and beyond the borders; thus, enhancing audiences' viewing experience (Lochrie & Coulton 2012:729). Furthermore, (Buschow et al. 2014:130) concur, stating that new technologies and social media have extended interpersonal communication beyond family, friends and communities, allowing for active participation among audiences, including among other strangers, different provinces, countries and regions. This is evident when one evaluates @*Real7deLaan* timeline, the people tweeting are from various provinces, even the world, as there are audiences that view the programme on YouTube, from outside the country. It is, therefore, important to include a question in this research on the region or country from where the viewer tweets during *7de Laan*. Twitter also has the advantage that, unlike Facebook, Twitter allows for open conversation about the programme beyond the friend group, which is a private group (Schirra et al. 2014:2442).

The connection created between audience members on Twitter, through retweets, is incredible to observe, as it allows for a quick flow of information (Doughty, Rowland & Lawson 2012:81). This clearly shows how TV and Twitter need each other to survive, as the retweets and mention of a certain television program can send eyeballs on screen. Eyeballs, refers to audiences who are watching a particular programme (Ciacu & Tănase 2012:258). However, it is not clear for how long this relationship will last, as Twitter continues to lose popularity among social network applications, currently ranking at number 15, behind some popular social network such as Facebook, Instagram, Tick Tock, Snapchat, Pinterest (Shepherd 2022). The researcher believes this relationship is a lifetime relationship, until there is a new technology that offers more than what Twitter offers, which is the immediate second-screen experience.

Twitter has opportunities for advertisers within the hashtag of a programme, where they send advertisements in the timelines of the users (Walsh 2014:12). The audience on Twitter should be included in the terrestrial audience rating of programmes. For example, there needs to be a mechanism to measure the audience activity on Twitter, during the programme. How it is measured, does not necessarily have to be the same as for television, because there may be people tweeting about a programme, who are not necessarily watching, but who are commenting on the promo or a previous episode they watched.

2.11.3 Live tweeting television programs

In this sub-section, “live tweeting” is used with the first broadcast of an episode, as episodes are recorded before broadcast. It is imperative to understand user motivation, as live tweeting and television interconnect, and this can lead to an improved social television experience (Schirra, Sun & Bentley 2014). In a study, Schirra, Sun and Bentley (2014:2441) found that audiences would live tweet, based on several different personal considerations and social conventions. The activity related to tweeting, in real-time, allows audiences to interact and connect with other audience members, who are watching the same television programme or event as them, which allows for a shared viewing experience.

Twitter can get the audiences to engage with the television content, in real time and beyond. Television broadcasters cannot continue to take their audiences for granted, as they have become more active than ever before. There are so many programmes to choose from, the programme producer’s days of dictating to the audience, regarding what content they should watch, are coming to an end. Audiences continue to dictate to the producer and broadcasters the type of content they want to consume. South Africa has witnessed this with the emergence of new broadcasting channels, such as *Moja Love,* (Channel 156 on DSTV), producing content that other producers and broadcasters call “trash TV”, but Moja Love rakes in profits, an indication that the audience can determine content.

Audiences live tweet about television shows to engage with the content and to indicate superior knowledge of the text (Walsh 2014:11). For example, when one visits the soap opera *7de Laan* hashtag on Twitter, audiences attempt to predict the storyline, and sometimes they get it right and sometimes not. This forces writers to do extra work, as they would not want the audiences to always catch them out, or be predictable, as audiences may become bored. However, it is gratifying for audiences when they are able to correctly predict the storyline.

According to Schirra et al. (2014:2443), for some audience members, knowing the plot twists seems to enhance their viewing experience. Live tweeting about a television programme is still big among audiences that are consuming terrestrial television programmes, but for a niche channel, this phenomenon does not exist, as these audiences usually binge-view or use the catch-up option to watch their favourite programmes. The phenomenon of live tweeting applies to channels that still enjoy large audiences and which are still in control of the TV schedule.

2.11.4 Second-screen to enhance audience engagement

The emergence of broadcast technology allowed broadcasters the likelihood to engage with audiences in real-time and audiences can interact with each other, to enhance the shared viewing experience. The second-screen phenomenon has affected audiences' TV engagement behaviour in real-time, as there are multiple content pop-ups when watching television. As Morley (1992:173) argues, watching television is a complex activity, enmeshed with “a range of other domestic practices”. The introduction of a second-screen has further complicated it, particularly for the older generation, as they are not that techno-savvy. Television broadcast content continues to be the driver for second screen co-viewing (Doughty, Rawland & Lawson 2012:80). Broadcasters cannot ignore this trend, as technologies continue to improve and likely to add more offerings in the future. Broadcasters need to start making the second screen part of their television strategy and procure content in a way that make

allowances for this synergy between television and the second screen. The more “eyeballs on the screen”, the more revenue for broadcasters.

There has been an increase in second screen use among television audiences and this has seen broadcasters embracing Twitter, to enhance their relationship with audiences, while also increasing viewership (Lochrie & Coulton 2012:729). This is making the second-screen application one of the key marketing tools, at marketers’ fingertips. According to (Ciacu 2012:258) television programme success is about eyeballs on the screen, unless it is a social change narrative, which will be about the increase or decrease in whatever objective would be. For example, if the programme is about empowering people to test and know their human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) status, the success of that show will be measured by the tests conducted, not necessarily the audience ratings. This is the case with several SABC television shows which are mandate driven than revenue driven which is obtained by the high number of viewers on a particular show.

During prime time viewing, in South Africa, television programmes still make the list of trending topics on Twitter. It is also interesting to note that there are audiences, who use the second-screen to observe, like or retweet other audience members’ comments. The second-screen assists in retaining audience attention on a particular television programme or event (De Meulenaere, Bleumers & Van de Broeck 2015:16). It is interesting to observe second-screen, where audiences have become active participants, as they watch the television programme and tweet about it, at the same time. The second-screen has allowed audiences to be both active and interactive, when watching television or any other live event (Auverset & Billings 2016:2).

The need for a sense of community, social bonding through established social media networks, reinforcement of an online persona, entertainment, information sharing, advancing a social movement, expression of attachment to television shows, self-documentation, and incentives are among the reasons why audiences engage on the second screen, according to Cha (2016). Traditional television audiences are

motivated to watch television out of habit, for relaxation, companionship, escapism, to pass time, for information, learning arousal, social interaction, and entertainment (Guo 2019:141). It is worth noting that the emergence of digital media has not changed the motives of audiences to watch television, but has added more motives, which have been brought about by the internet. Audiences engage on the second screen to chat and learn more about a television programme they are watching, but also to pursue other purposes within their timelines, such as seeking general information or reading commentaries (Auverset & Billings 2016:3). It is also interesting to note that audiences engage on second screen to see what other audiences write about the show (Giglietto & Selva 2014:260). The researcher has noted, when visiting a certain hashtag, that some viewers will mention, under that hashtag, that they are on the hashtag – announcing their presence, just to access the comments on the topic being discussed and, if it there is a Twitter war (twar), then followers would comment that they are bringing "popcorns to watch". *Twar* is when users are fighting on Twitter, usually, it will be between two Twitter users, with other users reading the comments and getting involved through commentary or by taking sides (Arcy 2018:489). An example is the disagreement on Twitter ("twar") between two local celebrities, Pearl Thusi and Bonnie Mbuli, about "colourism" (Zeeman 2019) - Bonnie was claiming that Pearl Thusi gets all the media gigs, because of her light skin, while Pearl disputed this, saying that she gets engagements because she works hard.

2.12 CRITICISMS OF TWITTER

The arrival of social networks, particularly Twitter, has had a significant impact on television viewing. Twitter allows for instant, open conversations about a programme. This then makes it imperative to understand if there is a direct link between Twitter activity, a programme, and audience ratings. Rating analysis is the analysis of the data about audience size and composition, produced by audience measurement firms, and the data are used in both the commercial and non-commercial media sectors (Napoli 2011:286). Social media networks increase audience share because it allows viewers to connect with television shows and other audiences outside of their viewing spaces while they watch them air, (Cheng, Wu, & Chen 2016:283). However, Deller (2011:219) disagrees, stating that a trending show does not always imply a high

audience rating share. The researcher concurs with Deller (2011:219), who holds that there are shows that trend every night, but this does not result in a high audience share, as there are several factors at play, including free-to-air versus pay TV, the demographics in terms of age and also access to the internet. In addition, some broadcasters have paid for social media campaigns. Similarly, Tulloch (2000:58) observes that trends do not always imply high ratings, further adding that soap operas, particularly, often gain high ratings and are viewed traditionally, as it is a "generator of watercooler moments" and would, therefore, also be regularly discussed on Twitter.

Twitter allows a user to have multiple accounts, which makes it difficult when one conducts a survey, as one respondent may have five accounts (Deller 2011:218). Twitter also allows fake accounts, which are accounts created to specifically increase the number of followers of a target account, to increase its popularity and influence (Crecsi, Petrocchi, Spognardi, Tesconi & Di Pietro 2014:194). The influence can be good or bad. South Africa has experienced the impact that fake accounts can have during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, when fake accounts were created to cyberbully prominent media personalities and celebrities, under the hashtag #mustfall. This hashtag is regularly created when the so-called, "Black Twitter", does not agree with someone's opinion on an issue. For example, a hashtag was created when Ntando Duma (#NtandoDumamustfall) parked in the disabled parking bay at a mall and when she was called out by the disabled lady who needed to use the parking she ran to Twitter and cried foul. For this reason, the researcher has opted to have interviews with the sample of research participants, to be able to confirm the identity of the Twitter account user, as several users are not verified, and this will also eliminate fake accounts in the sample. Accounts that are verified have the blue tick ( ) next to their name on their profile. Well-known people are often the ones who verify their accounts, as they use them for several purposes, some as influencers, so they need their followers to know that their account is authentic. There are criteria to get one's account verified, but this is not the focus of this study and will not be discussed.

2.13 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 2 AND OUTLINE OF CHAPTER 3

Previous studies on television soap opera audiences, as well as Twitter, were outlined and analysed in this chapter. This chapter also interrogated issues on whether Twitter can increase audience ratings, the history of the soap opera and its audiences as well as its conventions. Twitter, as a backchannel and a role player in social television and the second screen phenomenon, was discussed at length. Furthermore, the motives of audiences to tweet during television viewing were also discussed founded on the results of previous studies. It is interesting to note that though audiences have a variety of choices in terms of media and content with which they can engage, television is still a leading medium that gets audiences interacting with each other, while the motivations of engaging with TV have remained the same over decades.

Chapter 3 engages on the theoretical background of the study, which has contributed to the theoretical establishment of this study. The theories analysed in Chapter 3 explain why audiences participate on Twitter while watching a television show. The theories include the uses and gratifications (UGT) and social networking theory (SNT).

CHAPTER 3: PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Scholars have spent decades researching and classifying the demands and motivations behind media use. These theories provide the impetus for the execution of the research study. The theories underpinning this study are uses and gratifications theory (UGT), and social network theory (SNT). “Uses and gratification theory advances the claim that various needs, or motives, influence audiences to select a variety of media and media content that will fulfil their personal needs” (Wimmer & Dominick 2003:403). Social network theory mentions that nodes in a network share common attributes and communicates with each other within a network (Kadushin 2012). While the social influence network theory is of the notion that nodes within a network can influence each other. The two theories mentioned are discussed further in this chapter. These theories are examined in relation to several subtopics, such as presumptions, objections, and applicability to the current investigation.

3.2 PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES OF THE STUDY

3.2.1 Social constructionism

Social constructivism is a viewpoint that suggests that reality is not inherently objective, but rather is actively formed through social interactions and shared interpretations. Within the study's framework, Twitter functions as a medium via which viewers collaboratively shape their comprehension of 7de Laan. The active participation of spectators in sharing their views, responses, and interpretations in real-time performs a critical function in shaping the meaning and relevance of the soap opera. The process of co-creating meaning through social interaction emphasises the ability of viewers to shape their own perceptions and interpretations within the mediated realm of the soap opera. Social constructivism “is the epistemological view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human

practices, being constructed in and out of the interaction between human beings and their world, and transmitted within an essentially social context" (Crotty, 1998: 42).

Social constructivism is a philosophical view which explains that knowledge is acquired through experience and it was proposed by Lev Vygotsky in 1968 (Sleem et al. 2021; Khaksarighin 2023; Koch 2023). Vygotsky believed that social interaction is necessary for lifelong personality development and that social learning adds to cognitive growth (ibid.). The leading theorists of the social constructivism perspective include Peter L. Berger, Thomas Luckman, Lev Vygotsky and Jerome Bruner (Barnett 2019). These theorists have significantly shaped the understanding of how individuals construct knowledge and understanding through social interactions and cultural influences within the social construction. Against this history and discussion thereof, it is argued, therefore, by this researcher, that social interaction on Twitter by 7de Laan television viewers has a potential to also develop these individuals' personalities and can also lead to cognitive growth because the discussants share ideas and views which can improve their worldviews in the final analysis.

Creswell (2013) "regards social constructivism as an explanatory structure whereby individuals seek to understand the world around them and create their meanings that alignes to their experience". This means that meanings are formed through interactions, and these interactions and shared meanings happen on Twitter. According to Cho (2018), social constructivism is a social approach whose key tenets include the importance of ideas and social interaction as fundamental to understanding how issues come to be taken for granted and how change becomes possible. Alase (2017) is of the view that social constructivism is participant-oriented and allows research participants to express their lived experiences. In this study, this perspective promotes the review and analysis of Twitter discussions by the 7de Laan viewers and discussants to understand their understanding and lived experiences of the show.

3.2.2 Phenomenology

Phenomenology focuses on the first-hand experiences and personal interpretations of individuals (McLeod 2024:1). It centres on the cognitive processes through which individuals see and comprehend their surroundings (Vincini & Gallagher 2020:185). Within the study's framework, Twitter involvement during 7de Laan can be regarded as a collective phenomenological encounter. Tweeting fosters a feeling of camaraderie and inclusion as viewers connect emotionally and intellectually with the show as a group. This collective encounter promotes a feeling of interconnectedness and mutual understanding among viewers, surpassing the limitations of separate physical viewing locations.

Phenomenology is an approach in qualitative research that is uniquely positioned to support this study because this philosophical perspective promotes the analysis of a phenomena from the viewpoint of those people who are experiencing and discussing the phenomena.

Phenomenology is further defined “as an approach to research that seeks to describe the essence of a phenomenon by exploring it from the perspective of those who have experienced it” (Neubauer et al. 2019). In this case the 7de Laan television show viewers who discuss the show on Twitter. The primary objective of phenomenology is to describe the meaning of this communication method between the communicators, both in terms of what was experienced and how it was experienced (ibid.). Phenomenology highlights the transcendental and hermeneutic approach to human communication (ibid.). Neubauer et al. (2019) further explain the transcendental phenomenon as a situation in which the researcher brings no definitions, expectations and assumptions to the study, while the hermeneutic phenomenon describes the position of t*abula rasa* (a blank slate), which means that the researcher suspends one’s previous knowledge about the topic/s under discussion, in this instance the Twitter discussions about 7de Laan, and approaches the study with an objective view which focuses only on what the Twitter discussants converse about on Twitter.

Hermeneutics refers to the interpretation of texts, therefore, in this study, in assisted in the processes of analysing texts found on Twitter between the 7de Laan television viewers. The texts interpreted by hermeneutics reflect the experiences of the individuals as they share these experiences in their Twitter discussions.

3.2.3 Existentialism

Existentialism is “a philosophical perspective that places great importance on the freedom and choices of individuals, as well as their quest for purpose and significance in life” (Chukwuokolo 2020: 43). The study investigates the extent to which Twitter involvement enables viewers to actively participate in the show's themes and narratives, thereby expressing their own values and ideas. Viewers get meaning and significance from the fictional world of 7de Laan by expressing their views and responses, so establishing a connection between the show and their personal lives and experiences. The process of constructing meaning through active involvement with the show emphasises the influence of television in moulding personal identities and perspectives on the world. According to Tan and Lim (2021), and Akinbode (2023), existentialism is a philosophical idea that existence precedes essence, which means that existence remains more important than the labels, roles and stereotypes. The primary benefit of existentialism is genuineness, whereby choices are made unconventionally with full accountability and avoiding bad faith, a phenomenon in which an agent adopts false values due to external or social pressures, and in doing so, denies their own freedom (Tan & Lim 2021). In his book, *Being and Nothingness*, Jean-Paul Sartre argued that man is condemned to be free, and that the purpose of man’s existence is man’s relationship with others. On Twitter, the 7de Laan TV viewers exist with others and explore the show in words and texts through communication and conversations. Therefore, in this study, the researcher conducted research to analyse this communication and conversations.

3.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.3.1 Uses and Gratifications Theory

The uses and gratifications theory (UGT) is defined as “a technique to studying mass communication that looks at the reasons why audience members choose to spend time with the media to their wants and needs of the audience members that are being fulfilled” (Hanson 2014: 39). Uses and gratifications researches conducted are more concerned with the gratifications pursued and gratifications gained (Rubin, Sypher & Palmgreen 1994: 173). Auverset and Billings (2016:2) contend researchers have always employed the UGT to examine why people find social network sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and YouTube appealing. Auverset and Billings (2016:2) further claim that the UGT is the suitable theory to apply when studying the second screen as choice of media use is at its core of this theory.

Uses and gratifications theory allows for researching of specific motivations and social activities of the audiences (Ruggiero 2000). This theory believes that the audience are active in the media choices they make and they are not passive (Fourie 2009:391). Hence the researcher employed the two theories for this study.

3.3.1.1 An overview of uses and gratifications theory (UGT)

The uses and gratifications theory was initially conducted in the 1940s to determine the motives behind housewives listening to radio soap opera (Fourie 2009:391). Additionally, (Heath and Bryant 2000: 360) assert that the UGT was originated to understand why radio listeners are attracted to the programme quiz and the daytime serials, and the social factors. According to Dominick and Wimmer (2003:403) the U&G was conceived by researchers to understand why audiences were listening to radio and reading newspapers. Weiyan (2015:71) concurs, stating that the U&G was established to understand the gratifications that make the audiences attracted to and satisfied by a certain medium. “Uses and gratification theory claims that various needs, or motives, influence audiences to select certain media and media content that will best fulfil their personal needs” (Wimmer & Dominick 2003:403).

The theory of uses and gratifications was developed in the 1940s with the main objective being to understand why audiences chose a certain media above the other (Ruggiero 2000). Li, Chen and Nakazawa (2013:63) maintain that the UGT has been used to examine why audiences watch certain television programmes. Moreover, Jamal and Melkote (2008) agree, mentioning that UGT seeks to understand the psychological and social needs of the audience as well as the motives that drive their media choice to derive certain gratifications. Fiske (11:143) also concurs, stating that this theory believes that audiences have a set of needs which they seek to satisfy in the mass media. The audience motives for tweeting during the television program 7de Laan viewing was studied. Fourie (2017: 391) further claims that the UGT focuses on the active selection of media by audiences to gratify a particular need. Additionally, Du Plooy (2009:282) concurs that the UGT research focuses on audience motives for the selection of a certain media or media content and the perceived satisfaction received from such mass communication. As mentioned before focuses on media users selecting a certain media and media content. Before the birth of the UGT in the early 1940s scholars of media studies focused more on the effects media have on audience (Ruggiero, 2000). It is imperative to note that this theory believes that there are diverse reasons to audience motivation for media selection that best fit their personal needs. McQuail (2010:321) contends that irrespective of the reasons and motives that guide audience to choose a particular medium; there are four categories of needs: information, personal identity, entertainment, social integration, and interaction. These needs are elaborated further in the study. Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1973) mention three objectives of the uses and gratifications theory which are:

i. The theory ought to clarify how individuals use the media to satisfy their own desires.
ii. The idea ought to aid researchers in comprehending the media habits of a viewer.
iii. The theory ought to pinpoint the purposes or outcomes that stem from wants, intentions, and actions.

The theory's focus is on the origin of needs and expectations of a media outlet to gratify those needs (Maxwell 2012:18). Moreover, McQuail (1997:18), concurs by stating that the emphasis of the UGT is on audiences' active participation and the social origins of

media gratifications. Hanson (2014:39) believes that the idea of the UGT is based on the understanding that audiences are always looking for gratifications and the media outlet compete to offer them. This is evident with the number of television content and broadcasters around the world, all competing for attention of the same available audience, it is all about eyeballs on screen. Fiske (2011:143) concurs stating that the basic tenant of the UGT is that the audiences have a complex set of needs and wants that they seek the mass media to gratify. Maybe that is the reason that the central question at issue of several media content is, 'what is the intention'; this question is asked to understand the message and the target audiences. However, Fiske (2011:143) understands that there are several other ways of satisfying the needs and wants. In this regard, Hanson's (2014:39) assertions that "the media competes with other sources of gratification is convincing". For example, one might read a newspaper in the evening to relax, but the attention of the person would be competing with newspaper and television viewing, while walking the dog, or going to the gym could be an alternative way of relaxing. The theory thus is audience based and as such, it can be used to explain how television audiences – in the case 7de Laan soap opera, respond to storylines, characters, the visuals on Twitter to satisfy their needs (Rosenberry & Vicker 2009: 283).

3.3.1.2 Motivations for choosing a certain media content

Wimmer and Dominick (2003: 404) discovered three types of gratifications obtained by radio soap opera listeners which are emotional release, wishful thinking and obtaining advice. Abrahams and Gile (2007) concluded that the most gratification experienced by these audiences is when watching their own selection of television programmes for entertained, to escape boredom, loneliness, and to learn. Papacharissi and Mendelson (2007:361) concur with the six motives for the audience watching television namely: "relaxation, entertainment, pass time, companionship, social interaction, and voyeurism". The results of this study will be interesting as the focus of the study centres on analysing television audiences and their mediated interaction on the Twitter platform, including exploring the audiences' motives. The researcher anticipates the list of motives might increase from the six identified above.

Katz, Gurevitch and Haas (1973:166) identify five types of needs which audiences seek from media use namely:

i. Cognitive needs – obtaining information, knowledge, and understanding another facet that is satisfied in obtaining news information is inquisitiveness and exploratory drives (Bryant & Heath 2000:362). The various avenues of knowledge acquisition offered by Twitter can satisfy cognitive needs of different audiences such as: information seeking and entertainment.

ii. Affective needs – user's emotion, pleasure, feelings. The pursuit for entertainment and pleasure is the primary basic influence for media usage (Hunter 2005). SABC needs to continue offering the soap opera 7de Laan on catch-up and on-demand., notwithstanding the hashtag.

iii. Personal integrative needs – concerning credibility, stability, and status and relating to the humanbeing's need for self-esteem (Severin & Tankard 1992:273). By allowing users to engage with one another on the site, Twitter may provide users with the chance to test and validate their thoughts about the soap opera 7de Laan and fortify their social connections with other users. It is also about audiences watching the television programme or interacting with other users on Twitter about a television program to model their behaviour as well as identify with the characters within the programme, especially in soap opera and drama genre.

iv. Social integrative needs – socialising with family and friends. Individuals continuously search to reinforce a certain level of connection with family, friends, and the world (Bryant & Heath 2000:362). According to Gallion (2010:3) social integrative needs are the most essential elements that allow the UGT to be applied when studying social media, in this case Twitter. Gallion (2010:4) further argues that users who engage on social media to gratify the social integrative needs, desire to meet other people.

v. Tension release needs i.e., relaxation need – relate to escape and diversion. Severin & Tankard (1992:273) describe the need to escape to release tension

and find distraction. Twitter the potential to offer the audience this escapism by allowing these audiences to connect with each other inside and outside of the living rooms, as well as across borders.

Krause (2020:5) identifies several generalised motives of listening to the radio: companionship, bracketing the day, changing mood, ridding loneliness or boredom, providing useful news and information, allowing mediated participation in events, and assisting in social interaction. Rubin (1981:147) concurs suggesting in addition, eight different motives for watching television content and any other media, which are similar to the ones stated by Mendelsohn for listening to radio. The motives are:

i. To pass time (sitting in a waiting room watching television)
ii. Companionship (meeting with friends to watch an event on television like Soccer, State of the Nation address, and other events)
iii. Escape (watching TV to escape from the pressure of meeting a deadline)
iv. Enjoyment (other people watch television just for fun)
v. Social interaction (watching to be able to engage on the water-cooler conversations which have now also extended to Twitter and not confined to face to face discussions about programs)
vi. Relaxation (watching TV to relax after work)
vii. Information (watching television to keep abreast on available information)
viii. Excitement – watching an action movie or thriller (Rubin 1981:147).

The same way that radio and television have gratifications, the internet too has three main categories which are, content gratifications, process gratification and social gratifications (Stafford, Stafford & Schkade 2004:267).

All these types of needs can either be gratified by the internet if one has access to it due to its unlimited content offering at anytime and anywhere or satisfy other unrelated needs.

Ruggiero (2000:28), predicted that the increased internet usage will bring with it changes in the personal social interaction, roles, and social habits of media users. This prediction was right as we see with media users' social habits and personal interaction which have moved to online, family and friends interact online and might be sitting

together in one room but not interacting with each but with other people outside the living room or with each other in a ‘family group’ setting, online. Park, Kee and Valenzuela (2009: 731) discovered that the majors uses and gratifications of social networking site (SNS) users such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and others to be for entertainment, socializing, and information. While Pai and Arnott (2013) believe that users adopt SNS to attain four values (self-esteem, belonging, reciprocity and hedonism). It is interesting to note that even though there are new gratifications sought from SNS, there is an overlap with the traditional media.

3.3.1.3 Audience motivations for using Twitter

There are several categories created by researchers to study motivations. Deci and Ryan (2008:14) state that when people are moved by autonomous motivations, they act with the understanding of choice and personal freedom. This sounds true of the Twitter audience as they project a sense of freedom in their tweets, which could be the result of the number of media choices available to them. It is imperative to understand user motivation as live-tweeting and television interconnect and this can lead to an improved social television experience. The UGT is an interesting theory when trying to understand media usage, exposure, and effects as it empowers the audience (Ballard 2011). This statement has never been so true like it is currently in the social media era where the audience has so much more power than ever before; where they can make or break a brand. This is evident as some brands pay ‘celebrities’ to advance their brand which is called “paid media”, where the celebrity will say good things about the brand which in turn will make their followers want association with the brand because of that celebrity. These celebrities are called “media influencers”. As stated by West (2024), a "media influencer is an individual who can quickly promote brands' products and who frequently achieves a notable engagement level on their posts and has a loyal following of fans, typically over 10,000, on at least one social network”.

Ruggiero (2000:3) has argued that any future audience research in mass communication must really consider including uses and gratifications while other scholars believed that the future of mass communication in computer mediated era will mean the end of the UGT.

3.3.1.4 The assumptions of the uses and gratifications theory

The UGT has an affirmed history in communication and mass media research and at its core is the desire to understand why, how, and with what purpose people use media daily (Weiyan 2015:71). Moreover, Asemah (2011) maintains that the basic assumption of the U&G is about the choices people make on certain media and the gratifications they attain from the use of that medium. Baran and Davis (2006) concurs, stating that the principal assumption of the U&G is that audiences are active, and goal orientated in their choices of certain mediums. Hanson (2014: 39) concurs, stating that audiences are active receivers who have needs and wants, which compel them to make choices about media use. Audiences have always been active in their media choices and the current social media era has increased the choice creating challenges for the media creators. Active audiences are not just receiver of the messages, they are conscious and decisive in their choice of a certain medium, be it choice to fulfill personal need and, or to escape from boredom (Meyrowitz 2002: 101). In this regard, Amiri, Noori & Basatian (2012:128) concurs, stating that the audiences are aware of their own reasons of using media content and they can define them.

Baran and Davis's (2006: 302) assumptions about the UGT are that internet users are more active than any other mass medium users. This assumption could be true as the internet users are not limited to a specific content but have access to a variety; while radio and traditional television users are limited to what the program schedulers have scheduled at a specific time. The fundamental tenet of the UGT is that viewers choose their media consumption actively and with goals in mind (Baran & Davis, 2006). Additionally, Grissa (2017:19) in concurrence, contends the theory assumes that individuals are active, rational, and objective in their choices. It is worth noting that with several social media networks available, there are certain audiences who choose to actively participate on the television program 7de Laan hashtag, and not on Facebook. These audiences also have a choice of different programs to view from across different broadcasting channels, but they actively choose to watch the television program 7de Laan. Musa, Azmi and Ismail (2015:86) assert that social media gives audiences the advantage and flexibility to actively seek out content that is beneficial to them, which

transforms how people utilise mass media. Unlike mainstream media users who rely on media content to be provided to them.

Katz et al. (1974:510) have identified five basic assumptions of the UGT which are the following:

i. The audiences are regarded as engaged contributors to the discourse.
ii. However, the internet users are seen as more active than any other media users (Baran & Davis 2006).
iii. The audiences initiate the process of choosing a medium that will gratify their specific need. Audience members are aware of which media gratifies their needs and want and make those choices consciously (Hanson 2014:39). Even Netflix categorises their programmes in different genres to make it easy for audiences to find the programme they want to watch. For example, if an audience member is feeling like watching 'Romance' they can easily go to that category. The researcher believes that Netflix understands that audiences are active users of the media or at least their medium.
iv. Various sources of need gratification are available, creating challenges and competition for the media creator. For example, watching television competing with reading a newspaper or magazine.
v. Audiences can identify their own needs.
vi. It is imperative to understand first, the interpersonal reasons for media use.

Hanson (2014:39) concurs arguing that the judgement about the value of different media use should be guided by the audience's perspective. Fiske (2011:144) concurs with the assumptions above, adding that the message is what the audience make of it not what the sender intends, meaning, the content producer might not be aware of the uses and gratifications of their television programme. The UGT assumes that media consumption is not the same for everyone hence the gratifications obtained and sought cannot be the same for everyone (Fiske 2011:144). This is evident when one looks at Twitter users' engagement on the social network app during 7de Laan broadcast, for example, some tweeting, others commenting, and liking while others retweet. Fiske (2011:148) further states that the media are not the only source of gratification for people. This is correct as there are things that people can do like, playing sports, going

on holiday, purchasing a new vehicle or even shopping to gratify their certain needs, but for mass communication, the media is.

3.3.1.5 The criticism of the uses and gratifications theory

Ruggiero (2000:5) makes the following criticisms on early UGT research:

i. Heavily relies on self-reports;
ii. Lacks sophistication regarding the social context of the needs that viewers bring to the media;
iii. Is too naive about the potential dysfunction of certain forms of audience satisfaction for both the self and society; and,
iv. Is overly enthralled with the creative diversity of viewers who pay attention to the text's limitations.

Baran and Davis (2012:302) state that the UGT, focuses on functional analysis, which can create a bias in favour of the status quo. It also has difficulty addressing the presence or lack of impacts, and several of its core ideas have been attacked for being immeasurable. Finally, it is overly focused on the microlevel. Grissa (2017:20) indicates two criticisms of the UGT which are:

i. the UGT has a very positive and optimistic view of media, believing that social media exists to satisfy, the needs, desires, and interest of its users, and that
ii. it forgets that the media choice sometimes could be from a habitual behaviour or influence from a socio-cultural environment.

These criticisms are very interesting to look at as the researcher has noted that some soap operas especially Generations: The Legacy, audiences complain so much about the storyline and some even call for it to be removed on the schedule, but the audience ratings are soaring high reaching over 8 million viewers every day.

The uses and gratifications theory was critiqued by Ang (1992) for being overly individualistic and focusing solely on the psychological satisfaction that each individual gets from using media on their own. Furthermore, detractors contend that the UGT

overstates the degree of vigorous and determined choice, leaving out the idea that media might be imposed upon individuals rather than being a freedom of choice, Baran and Davis (2012:297). For example, several broadcasters' still schedule programmes based on appointment viewing phenomenon where audiences must view a certain programme at a certain time, but the advent of online content streaming has given the audience the choice to view whatever they want, and whenever.

Another critique is that studies of uses and gratifications rely mostly on self-reports because it is challenging to document exposure patterns through observation (Katz 1987). However, self-reports can be problematic because they rely on personal recollections (Nagel, Hudson, & Abowd 2004). Because they will be answering the questionnaire while not viewing the show, the respondents may therefore misremember how they behave when using media, which could lead to a distortion in the answers. Put differently, it is typically grounded more in memory than in the here and now. Studies on the uses and gratifications of new technology has proven beneficial for analysing a variety of new media, particularly email (Baran & Davis 2012: 296). However, women find e-mails more helpful than men for preserving relationships and staying in touch with loved ones (Boneva, Kraut, & Frohlick, 2001:533). However, this has changed with the dawn of social media networks; where now both men and women probably use *WhatsApp* messenger to remain in contact with family and friends. WhatsApp Messenger is a cross-platform, proprietary instant messaging programme that runs on the internet and is available for smartphones, tablets, laptops, and computers as well as some feature phones. Users can send messages, photos, videos, audio files, and their location in addition to text messages (Alsanie 2015:69).

The UGT explores the how and what motivates the audiences to choose a certain medium as well as what gratifications are obtained, unlike other mass media concepts that put emphasis on the influence of media (Tanta, Mihovilovic & Sablic 2014:86). Gryphon (2012:368) notes that whilst UGT placed an emphasis on optimistic motivation and active use of media information that can satisfy audience's needs, some theories in the earlier years — such as the magic bullet and hypodermic needle theories—suggested that the audiences are passive and easily manipulated (Griffin 2012: 368). Bajracharya (2018) mentions six criticisms of UGT, which are:

i. The UGT does not show media as important.
ii. This theory does believe that media has the power to influence human needs and gratifications unconsciously.
iii. The UGT is audience centred and portrays audience as active participant.
iv. Critics do not believe that UGT can be called a theory because it does not meet the standard and can only be considered as an approach to analyse, as research relies heavily on memory recollection.
v. The UGT ignores the use of media as a social structure.
vi. Audience might not always active- there are different levels of active when it comes to Twitter, some users post tweet, some retweet, like, comment while some are just there to read the comments, hence the researcher believe there should be different levels of activeness in these audiences.

Table 3.1 Strengths and weaknesses of the UGT

Strengths of the UGT	**Weaknesses of the UGT**
Pays much attention on individuals in the mass communication research.	Relies on functional analysis, which can create a bias towards the status quo.
Respects intellect and ability of media consumers.	Cannot easily address the presence or absence of effects.
Provides insightful analysis of how people experience media content.	Many of its key concepts are criticised as unmeasurable.
Differentiates between active and passive media users.	Is too orientated toward the micro-level.
Studies the use of media as part of everyday social interaction.	
Provides useful insight into adoption of new media.	

(Ruggiero 2000:5) and (Grissa 2017:6)

3.3.1.6 Uses and gratifications of Twitter

As defined in Chapter 1, Twitter is a popular and free social media networking platform that permits users to communicate information in real-time by making concise remarks about their experiences and ideas. (Maclean, Levy, Jones & Hunter 2013:295). The UGT holds the view that various media compete for user's attention and these users choose the medium that satisfy their need of either information, entertainment, personal integration, or personal identity (Chen 2011:756). Twitter can offer audiences all those gratifications, individually or all at the same time, depending on the user's need at a particular time. Weibull (1985) contends that individual needs drive people to use a certain medium especially if that need is satisfied, as they will go back again and again, and because that media was satisfying, the repeat returns will become habitual, reinforcing a relationship (Weibull 1985). For example, there are audiences who have been watching *7de Laan* since its commission and to date they are still watching irrespective of whether the story is good or not good but because it has become a habit and forms part of their individual schedule. Interestingly some audiences will complain if the story is no longer satisfying and threaten to leave but two months down the line, they write back to the producer stating how happy they are with the show.

Users are more inclined to look for alternatives if a medium does not fulfil a particular motivation based on prior experiences (Rosengren & Windahl, 1972). The biggest question the researcher has on the backdrop of being a Drama genre Commissioning Editor (CE) within the Content TV at SABC before the commission of each drama is, what is the message to the audience, what is the relevance and resonance to the audience? All these questions being asked are to ensure the project delivers on the audience's gratification sought and obtained. There are two motives of Twitter which were identified as information motive and social motive by (Johnson & Yung 2009: 2). These two researchers' analysis found that the information motive was linked to Twitter and social motives were not directly linked. The data from the analysis suggests the primary use of Twitter is as a source of information and not a medium for gratifying social needs. This could have been the case in the early days of this social network site. This however has changed as Twitter is not only used as a source of information but for satisfying social needs as well as the entertainment need from the videos posted to memes.

As such, when audiences engage on a second screen, watching television programme while tweeting, it is not only for information, but for entertainment. For example, television soap opera is often for entertainment as well as for personal identity. Ellison, Lampe & Steinfield (2007:167) claim people use Twitter to gain information about others, and the information gained assists them in maintaining interpersonal relationships, which in turn afford them a sense of belonging. Seidman (2013:403) concurs suggesting that SNSs like Twitter can assist users to build, interact and communicate with other people to maintain relations with those know to them or with those they do not personally know. It is crucial to know that users go to this medium for different reasons. LaRose and Eastin (2006: 360), argue that entertainment, information seeking, and social needs are the most prevalent factors of use and gratification from Twitter. Park, Kerk, and Valenzuela (2009: 731) identified four major uses and gratifications of Twitter as:

i. Socialising
ii. Entertainment
iii. Self-status seeking
iv. Information

The growth of Twitter and its popularity it's a clear indicator of the evolution of human communication with each other in a networked society.

3.3.1.7 The relevance of the uses and gratifications theory in the study

This hypothesis is pertinent to our research because it examines what and why viewers of the television show 7de Laan tweet while the show is on and suggests reasons why they would utilise the social networking site (SNT) Twitter. The explanation offered by this theory and the literature shapes the question of what motivates audiences of the television programme 7de Laan tweet during this programme.

3.3.2 Social Network Theory

The social network theory (SNT) which is sometimes referred to as social network analysis, “is loosely organised configuration of presumptive claims about the nature of knowledge system” (Dunn 1983: 453). Additionally, Kadushin (2004) defines SNT as a social science concept that discusses the relationship and connection in a social structure. This theory emerged in the 19th century with the intention to find out what connects people in their groups or communities (Jaafar, Rashid, Aziz & Sahari 2009: 103). The SNT has a long tradition and rich history rooted in social sciences with influences from statistical, computing, and mathematical methodology (Vreugdenhil 2009:16). Moreover, Sih, Hanser and McHugh (2009: 975) concurs, stating that social scientists have long history of applying SNT to examine human interactions. This theory was shaped by a variety of research traditions such as:

i. Sociometric analysis tradition which is dependent on the mathematical graph
ii. Interpersonal relations tradition which is more concerned about the creation of cliques within a group of individuals
iii. The anthropology tradition which seeks to explores the relationship structures within a community of a less developed society (Liu, Sidhu, Beacom & Valente 2017:1).

All these research traditions fall within the social sciences fraternity, they are about the relationships between and among people of the same network. This perspective of the SNT emphases the relationship of the ties rather than the characteristic of the individual within a network (Lunstad 2015: 365).

The SNT is defined as the study of how people, organisations or groups interact with each other inside a network (Claywell [sa]). The world we live in is a networked one both online and offline. The social network theory (SNT) is more concerned with the idea that common norms or values can bring people with common attributes together (Fourie 2017:53). This sounds true looking at audiences of a certain television show comments, retweets and likes on Twitter; where people who do not know each other find themselves retweeting or liking what another viewer of that programme has tweeted. This is not only limited to television programmes but to a tweet that is

retweeted and liked, there is a common attribute. People have an influence on each other's thoughts and behaviour in a network (Wallach 2014:65). This is evident when one visits the trending hashtag where users will be influencing each other either on politics, socio economic and any other matter of interest at the time. For example, the South African socio-political unrest in July 2021 where looters looted shops and these visuals were broadcast on television and users influenced each other to loot.

The SNT is defined as "a network as a set of relationships, and explores the mappings, or ties between the actors or nodes, these nodes are the individuals within the network while ties refer to the relationship between these individuals" (Fourie 2017:53). The ties may be based on conversations, affection, friendships, economic exchange, information exchange or anything that constitutes the basis of relationship (Jaafar et al. 2009:103). Hence SNT sees society as made up of ties and relations between the individuals. De Metri and Zenou (2009:2) define a network as an abstract object that models social interactions. For example, an individual tweet, that tweet goes to the people in the individual's network, and it gets retweeted by those individuals so others in their network can get the tweet notification and subsequent retweets occur and before one knows, every node within the main network site is tweeting about it. Claywell ([sa]) refers to strong, weak, and absent ties within a network:

i. Strong ties within a network are those close to you and you probably have their phone numbers. Granovetter (1985:482) concurs, defining strong ties as a relationship between an individual and his kingship, close family, and friends.
ii. Weak ties will be surprised if you were to call them. These basically show that there are levels of relationships within a network amongst the nodes. Weakness ties are bigger than strong ties in a network, especially on Twitter versus on Facebook where its often people who know each other one way or the other, whereas on Twitter is everyone who might share similar believes as a user. Granovetter (1985:483) states that weak ties are important whenever information is diffused through social interaction because they can quickly move the information to their other ties.
iii. Absent ties, because it is easy to add connections on SNs, some people are added but never communicated with- this is common amongst a lot of users.

This theory (SNT) seeks to reflect a variety of changes that may occur when people form a shared point of view (Wallach 2014:66). For example, the #Metoo movement which a group of women came out naming their alleged abusers within the entertainment industry and this is the advantage that people should be taking off on Twitter (X) to bring world changes. Hillman and Trier (2013:3) concurs, stating that SNT offers a wide range of concepts to explain how people's individual actions are affected by other people because of interactions (Hillman & Trier 2013:3) further state three sub-types of social network theory, which are compliance, identification and internalization:

i. Compliance occurs when an individual accepts the opinion of others, hoping that it receives a favourable reaction from others. This is done through retweets and likes and often people put a disclaimer as part of their profile that might read like "retweets are not and endorsement of the tweet"
ii. Identification means that an individual accepts the opinion of others to maintain a desired relationship. Often people retweet the tweets that they can identify with. Tweets that resonate should not be viewed as accepting the tweet, rather considered as opportunity indicating a share mutual opinion with the tweeter who originally posted it.
iii. Internalisation represents the strongest influence and occurs when an individual accepts and beliefs the opinion of others both in public and private. This has been observed especially with tweets from public figures, where people 'like' the tweets and do not comment negatively on those tweets; at times creating debates within and outside the network (Snijders & Helmes 2014: 2).

The focus of the SNT is on the relations between the attributes of the nodes, and on the structures of the interactions rather than on the secluded individual nodes (Scott, Baggio & Copper 2008:1). Hence to understand SNT, one needs to understand the relationship between independent people within a network, how these people influence each other, and how they interact together (Fant 2013:8). A node can be used as a strategic agent in that, the connection between other nodes flows through a given node (Kadushin 2014:20). People can influence each other within a network, and this has been visible.

3.3.2.1 The meaning of social networks

Social Network (SN) is not a new term, this was created by Barnes, in 1954 (Xerex 2013:2) to pronounce the way a person was related to another person like bounded groups and social categories (Perez & Gomez 2011: 42). This has been clear with the online relationships that continue to exist in the social network sites. Boyd and Ellison (2008:211) define social network sites as: “internet services that allow users to:

i. construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system,
ii. articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and
iii. view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system”.

The use of social networks on the internet continues to grow significantly (Hillman & Trier 2013:2). These social network applications offer different purposes to users, such as discussion forums, newsgroups, chats, video posting, face time which is live chatting through Instagram (Boyd & Ellison 2008:211). The most popular SNs globally are Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube (Perez & Gomez 2011:41). All these SNs have over 300 million active users worldwide. These SNs have changed the way people interact and get connected with each other.

3.3.2.2 Characteristics of social networks

Claywel [sa] mentions five measure characteristics of social networks, which are:

i. User-based – unlike back in the day where content was updated by one user and read by internet visitors, making information flow in one direction, online information is updated and directed by users - these users populate the network with content and conversations and the direction is determined by anyone who is engaging on the conversation. Hence there are different opinions flying around the timelines and this is what makes this network exciting. Audiences of the television programme *7de Laan* uses the show’s hashtag to share in

conversations about the show with other audiences viewing from different parts of the country.

ii. Interactive – these social networks allow for interactive element such as gaming, chess tournament, and other users even post a voting poll on Twitter for audience to vote. For example, the producers of the television programme *7de Laan* can run a poll for audiences to vote for their favourite character and they give maybe 5 options, sometimes it is a competition where audience send it story ideas as the writers go into a yearly story conference where new story ideas for the series are discussed.

iii. Community-driven – social networks build and thrive on a community aspect just like social community back in the day where groups existed because they shared common ideologies, alumni, high school or belonged to the same village, church, or political affiliation. These communities allow for users within the network to connect with new or old acquaintances you lost contact with.

iv. Relationships – social networks thrive on the phenomenon of relationships. The more relationships you have within the network the more established you are towards that network. These days this kind of establishment comes with money in the form of influencers. The more followers you have on Twitter the more influential because when you tweet something it quickly reaches your followers and their followers. Hence it is important for brands to create visibility and build a community to further market their brands actively.

v. Emotion over content – unlike Web sites of back in the day, social networks offer users the emotional security and a sense that no matter what difficulty they are going through, their friends are within reach. This however seems true if users only have people they know within their network as people can be very harsh on the social network where they do not care about other users' emotions. Sometimes one can get support and sympathy from just random people within their network.

Boyd (2007:8-9) mentions four characteristics of SNs, which are, persistence, searchability, replicability and invisible audiences. While Chou (2014:131) mentions five characteristics of SNs, interactivity, information quality, knowledge sharing mechanism, customer relationship and brand equity. However, different to the former, Chou (ibid.) the places emphasis on the aspect of the relationship between nodes (Borgatti [sa]: 4).

3.3.2.3 Why audiences use social networking sites (SNSs)

Television programmes dominate the topics discussed on these social networking sites, especially during prime-time television viewing. The widespread use of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, has brought many changes in how audiences consume television programmes (Giglieto, Artieri, Gemini & Orefice 2016:2460). New profiles are created every day on social network sites by different users from different parts of the world with different motives; hence it is imperative to understand why these users use social network sites. Brandtzaeg and Heim (2009:143) state that research conducted in previous online communities put an emphasis on the following motives for people engaging on SNSs, which are, shared interests, experiences and needs, supportive and sociable relationships, strong social feelings of belonging, and a sense of shared identity. Dervan (2015: 35) concurs stating that, the main reasons people use SNS is to get information, ideas, and opinions from other users, to interact with like-minded people, to develop personal celebrity, to express their imaginations and personal identity, or to simply 'escape' from the daily routine. Fant (2013: sn) states that people in a network share common attributes such as kinship, co-members, and colleagues. SNSs also serve to increase the users' social capital, this means that the user gets to develop personal mutual relationships, build networks, gain access to information, get recommendations and reviews (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe 2007). The SNSs also allow people to connect with new people and old friends as well as people they know. For example, several people use Facebook and LinkedIn to connect to people either went to school/college with or former employees. Rostam (2020:1) mentions nine advantages and eight disadvantages of social networking sites.

3.3.2.4 Advantages of social networking sites

i. Worldwide connectivity- allows for connectivity with anyone, anywhere around the world – new and old friend for anything, ranging from job seeking, friendship romance, bursaries, and many other reasons.

ii. Commonality of interest – allows for one to choose and pick friends whose likes and dislikes are like yours and build a community. People can also unfriend each other if their similarities change. When television programme 7de Laan viewers are watching and one user tweets about the show, those within the network who are watching will either like or retweet this showing commonality of interest. Commonality of interest also happens to famous people when fans 'cancel' them because of their comments which are not what they stand for.

iii. Real-time information sharing **–** this feature allows for news and information to assimilated easy and quicker. It has posed a challenge to journalist as they are no longer the ones breaking the stories but ordinary citizens who are users of these SNS. It however assists in disaster management as the information can be shared and updated as it is received. Around the world during the Corona Virus, COVID-19 outbreak, hashtags such as #coronavirus, #COVID-19, were used and then others will add a country to scale down the information so it can be targeted to a country, like #COVID19SouthAfrica.

iv. Targeted advertising – It has made advertising easy and affordable for brands. It also offers several ways for brands to reach a specific target group. This approach is best to avoid over loading of content to the wrong group. For Example, when the television programme 7de Laan is holding auditions for new characters the post the advert (AD) on their timeline and everyone who follows them will see it on their timeline. So, it is important for brands to follow back those who follow them to at least have an idea of their clientele.

v. Increased news cycle speed – with no doubt, SNs have revolutionised how news is gathered, especially Twitter, where journalist now go on the network

site to get news which they then assimilate to their listeners, viewers, or followers. It has also given rise to fake news as everyone is a reporter.

vi. Trusted referrals- users use these sites for reviews before purchasing a product or going on holiday. So, these SN work as ‘social proof’ of some kind. This also works on television where people can ask other users to recommend for them the shows to watch or Wi-Fi networks which are better or even streaming services with good content. Other users do not ask but visit the hashtag of that service provider or product to see what other users are saying about it.

vii. Professional growth- these SNs have given rise to different groups of different profession were information or topics of the profession are discussed and users can ask questions. It also allows for networks to be built, making that saying that ‘business networking happens in the golf field’, not anymore, it is now virtual.

viii. Increase in human interaction - SNs allow for people to connect with other people, without distance being an issue. It has made it easier for introverts to also interact but it has also opened a platform for bullies too as users believe they are faceless and they can say whatever they want to whomever. These interactions have raised the question of freedom of speech as we see users hackling each other in words, heads of state being insulted and called names.

ix. Benefits for a non-profit – for these organisations, political groups, and educational associations, this enables them to send out the message out quicker and efficiently. These organisations can build exposure and support for a cause through these SNs. This has allowed these organizations to be able to reach the audience they would not necessarily reach due to the limited budget (Blake [sa]).

3.3.2.5 Disadvantages of Social Networking Sites

i. Backlash – this is often the case when a user posts something that’s potentially offensive. There are people from different backgrounds, religions; beliefs,

cultures, and political affiliations, but there are some universal truths in all these people. It is thus imperative to be conscious of such attributes. Highly opinionated individuals always find themselves in a backlash of some sort and this backlash might have potential reputational damage in the presence or the future. There are some users within the television program 7de Laan Twitter community who are known to complain about everything in the show.

ii. Cyberbullying and crimes against children – SNs can expose individual to some form of harassment from other users like body-shaming. School children might be exposed to pornography or even bullying which might have dire consequences on the child and the family. Several children have committed suicide because of cyberbullying. The television program 7de Laan writers and producers have been exposed to a number of these from viewers who are not happy with the storyline and they will call them names and some even stalk them on their personal SNs account. The researcher noted such behaviour during the time serving as a Commissioning Editor on *7 de Laan* television show.

iii. Risk of fraud or identity theft – the information one posts on the internet is available to everyone to see and they can decide what they do with it, good or bad. Several famous people have had their account stolen and people posting messages to their contacts asking for money because they are stranded in some foreign country. The holiday pictures you post and the dinning pictures, the cars, everything posted online can harm one. Twitter then came with the distinction factor where the users account gets verified and shows a blue tick to show the real account holder to the fraud.

iv. Time waster- a lot of time is spent on social networks versus on laptops or pc - this is daily and if this is taking place at work then it can impact on productivity as a certain amount of time is wasted on SNs than doing the actual work. Time waster not only for the employer but the individual too because people when they are bored, they jump to social network and want to chat without caring if the other person is busy or not but because they are bored and require instant

gratification which will be brought by interaction with an individual or in a group chat.

v. Corporate invasion of privacy- SNs invites Major Corporation to invade your privacy and sell your personal information. For example, when you post something and then immediately pop ups related to your post advertising within your timeline. These SNs run algorithms that search for keywords, web browsing habits, and any other data stored in the user computer or social networking profile.

vi. Fake news – SNs have the power to change and manage public opinion and often at times this can be observed during elections and during national disaster as it has the potential to also create panic amongst the citizens. So, as much as it is quick and easy, mainstream media platforms still are a trusted source when it comes to new as people use the 24 hours news channel to verify the SNs news.

vii. Decrease in civil behavior – SNs seem to have a negative impact on the society's moral fiber as people are not kind to each other for example, they may throw insults or are hostile comments towards each other. People seem to have found a way to vilify and disrespect each other, heads of states for example, have been hackled, and have been on the receiving end of insults hailed at them by citizens. So, no one is safe on the streets on SNs.

viii. Depression and loneliness – SNs have potential to be addictive. There are people who go there for affirmation and if they get negative feedback they struggle to come out of the bad experience. Some people have seen their peers or just other people posting pictures of them on holiday or dining or just any picture showing them having a good time and they start comparing themselves to those tweeting such content and start perceiving themselves as failures because the life of SNs can be deceiving. Unlike on television platforms where things are socially controlled in terms of aspirations contrary to SNs which have postings that are too personal (Blake [sa]).

Nirajan (2019) concurs with Rostam (2020) mentioning five advantages and 7 disadvantages of SNs, these have been explained in detail above.

Table 3.2 The strength and weaknesses of social network theory (SNT)

Strength of SNT	Weaknesses of SNT
The theory explains how people are randomly connected.	It is difficult to scientifically replicate
The theory is useful when studying large groups and understanding the relationships within a group.	Interpreting relationships/ties can be subjective.
It provides critical information into global news, such as viral content, the spread of diseases like covid-19, etc.	

Source: Claywell [sa]

3.3.2.6 Assertions of the SNT

It is imperative to note that the SNT assumes social life is created by the online relationships and the patterns that they form (Fourie 2017:54). It also assumes that relationships between the nodes can be held together by weak ties and strong connections (Fourie 2017:54). This is evident online where you see the users who are not even following each other on Twitter connecting through the hashtag. All the users who are commenting in the hashtag, some are strangers who are not even following each other while others are not strangers, but they still unite under one hashtag to discuss whatever the hashtag is about. The SNT assumes that relationships in a

network are not necessarily articulated, spoken about or conceptualised by the participants within that network (Kadushni 2012:15). Moreover, Kadushin (2012: 21) records that SNT assumes that all positions in a network are defined by their relationships with the other nodes.

3.3.2.7 Criticism of the SNT

The SNT has been growing fast and as such it will be subjected to criticism just like any other theory, even though highly criticised than others. Salancik (1995: 348) states that the SNT is too descriptive to be a theory, and further makes the claim that the theory borrows from other theories. The SNT are also criticised for ignoring that people are connected to social relation structures that can be analysed in terms of their different emergent properties (Scott, Baggio & Cooper 2008:88). Scott, et al. (2008:95) states that other researchers claim that the SNT has been static and descriptive because that it is all it can ever be, claiming that it is fundamentally limited in telling the whole story. For example, a picture taken at a particular time might not be a true representation of the social structure at a later stage, as social relations are constantly changing (Scott et al. 2008:95). Hence longitudinal study will not work for this theory due to constant social relations changes.

Emirbayer and Goodwin (1994: 1419) mention that when SNT show a deeper interest in culture, agency, and values, the field will then become theoretical. The other criticism was the assumption that the theory tends to view ties generally, failing to recognise that there are different levels of ties amongst the nodes in a network (Gulati & Westphal, 1999: 499). Granovetter (1973:1362) concurs, criticising SNT for ignoring the types of ties within a network and only focusing on the different network structures surrounding these ties. Watts (2003:41) criticise SNT for ignoring the network changes, Harrington and Fine (2006:5) for its statistical bias, while Granovetter (1992) states that the SNT fails to take historical context into account. One of the most noted criticisms is that the SNT is statics, and it ignores dynamics within a network (Watts 2003:42).

There are several different ideas underlying these criticisms which include:

i. Focus on the effects of the network matters and less on the history;
ii. The data within the network is often cross-sectional rather than longitudinal – this makes sense because there is new data every day, what is trending now, within hours or the following day is old news;
iii. Information within the timeline links are understudied;
iv. When studying the effects of network properties, researchers often do not discuss that nodes have agency within a network and are constantly changing especially the weak and absent ties as they are often not personal.

3.3.2.8 The relevance of the social network theory to the study

This theory is relevant in this study as it looks at the relationships amongst nodes in the network, which in this case it was the relationship between the audiences who engage on Twitter when watching the live broadcast of the television show 7de Laan.

3.4 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 3 AND OUTLINE OF CHAPTER 4

This chapter thoroughly examines the researcher's philosophical position to establish the theoretical foundation upon which the study is based. It offers an inclusive analysis of the historical background, assertions, and relevance to the investigation. It is evident from this chapter that UGT remains a relevant theory for understanding the motivations of users in their decision-making processes. The Social Network Theory (SNT) was shown to be an appropriate framework for understanding the motivations of the 7de Laan audience who actively participate on Twitter while watching the live broadcast of the television show.

Chapter 4 presents the details of the employed research methodology in the study, including the motivation for the chosen research approach, the selection of the target

population, the process of sampling, the determination of the sample size, the method of data collecting, and the specific instruments used for measurement.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the chosen study design and sampling strategy, along with an inclusive examination of the data gathering and analysis methods. It also highlights the data collection instruments used, specifically the online survey and semi-structured interviews. A mixed-approaches research methodology that combines both quantitative and qualitative research methods was employed. In addition, the research examines the indicators of quality, such as reliability and validity, as well as the ethical aspects of the study. The aim of the study and the research questions are restated in this chapter to remind the reader of these aspects. Naidoo (2011:48) defines research as "the diligent systematic enquiry into nature and society to authenticate and improve existing knowledge and to produce new knowledge". Moreover, Ahmad (2016:1) concurs with the above, defining research as a systematic investigation, including research developments, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalisable knowledge to establish facts and reach new conclusions. Thus, this chapter presents the research methodology processes that were applied in this study to address the research questions outlined in sub-heading 4.2.2.

4.2 RESEARCH AIMS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

4.2.1 The Research Aims

This study aimed to develop an broad understanding grounded in the experiences of 7de Laan audiences who engaged on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the TV show. To achieve this, it was imperative to explore these audiences for clear insight to respond to the research questions. Therefore, the researcher was of the view that the interview and the questionnaire would provide participants' opinions on why they participate or tweet when watching the *7de Laan* prime-time broadcast.

4.2.2 The research questions

To achieve the aim of this study, the following research questions as stated in Chapter 1 were posed:

a) Why do *7de Laan* audiences engage on Twitter while watching the prime-time broadcast of the show?
b) What do *7de Laan* audiences use Twitter for when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show?
c) What do *7de Laan* audiences tweet about when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show?
d) What gratifications do *7de Laan* audiences seek by engaging on Twitter during the prime-time broadcast of the show?

4.3 MIXED METHOD METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted and employed a mixed-method approach, combining the qualitative and quantitative research approaches. According to Tashakkori and Creswell (2007:4), mixed-method research is defined as “research where the researcher gathers and examines data, mixes the results, and draws interpretations using qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods in a one study”. This research methodology was selected because it could provide further insight and understanding of the research questions, which would not be the case had qualitative or quantitative research been used in isolation (Creswell 2012:535). In addition, the qualitative and quantitative methodologies used in isolation would not be able to the address research of exploring the motives of 7de Laan audiences who engage on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast. For example, certain audience participation may be evident through their tweets, comments, retweets or likes, while others’ participation through reading comments is not evident; thus, requiring the interview method.

According to Creswell (2012:535), mixed method research “is a process for gathering, analysing, and combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies in one study or a sequence of studies to understand a research problem”. Mixed method research uses

qualitative and quantitative methodology concurrently to construct a stronger research outcome than either methodology individually (Malina, Norreklit & Selto 2011:63).

The researcher adopted Tashakkori and Newman's (2010:515) seven benefits of conducting mixed method research:

i. Complementarity – to blend in two diverse but related responses to a single research question using quantitative and qualitative approaches.
ii. Completeness – to achieve a holistic view of the phenomenon under study by mixing results from the quantitative and qualitative investigation.
iii. Development – to utilise the initial phase of the investigation to develop the research questions, data sources, or sampling decisions necessary for the later phase of the study.
iv. Expansion – to expand the results from the first phase of the investigation.
v. Corroboration/confirmation – to validate the quality of conclusions derived from one type of study by checking it against mixed designs.
vi. Compensation – to balance the inadequacies of one method utilising the supremacy of the other method.
vii. Diversity – to analyse the varied depictions of the same phenomenon.

Mixed method research uses qualitative and quantitative methodology simultaneously to construct a research outcome stronger than either method individually (Malina, Norreklit & Selto 2010:63). It is imperative to note that the strength of both qualitative and quantitative research is found in mixed method research. Therefore, mixed method research will assist the study in exploring the research objectives fully. Quantitative research is largely empirical or experimental and, as its name suggests, is built on the measurement of quantity or amount; for example, how many incidences of a word, event or discussion about an issue occurring in each television programme (ibid.). On the other hand, qualitative research differs markedly from quantitative research in that qualitative researchers believe that there is no one objective "reality" which can be "observed and neutrally quantified, nor do they believe that human beings are homogeneous and that they can be simply categorised" (Du Plooy 2012:33).

Table 4.1 Indicates the differences between qualitative and quantitative research as indicated by Mehrad and Tahriri (2019:2212).

Table 4.1: Differences between quantitative and qualitative research paradigms

Quantitative	Qualitative
Testing the effectiveness, generalisability, validity, and accuracy of a theory.	The generation of theories that may explain phenomena.
Outcome-oriented.	Process-oriented,
The research process tends to be data-driven and determined *a priori*.	The research process tends to be participant-driven and iterative.
Ideas reduced to statistics.	Holistic viewpoint.
Aims to measure numerical variables.	Seeks to document individual perspectives, experiences, thoughts, and behaviours.
Data analysis uses statistics to calculate effect sizes and statistical significance.	Data analysis involves interpreting data to explain or elaborate on events, experiences, and perspectives of persons.
Sample size is mostly determined a priori using statistical methods to achieve representativeness.	Sample size may be determined iteratively depending on the explanatory power of the data collected.

4.3.1 Research designs

Two research designs were executed in this study. The first research design which assisted the researcher in data exploration was the exploratory sequential design (Hanson, Creswell & Plano Clark 2005; Han 2018). This research design means that qualitative data collection and analysis occurs first, followed by quantitative data collection and analysis. The second research design executed was the explanatory sequential design (Hanson, Creswell & Plano Clark 2005; Han 2018), which means that the qualitative data collection and analysis occurred first, followed by quantitative data collection and analysis. The explanatory sequential design was instrumental in

assisting this researcher with data analysis and explanation and to organise and analyse data meaningfully and accurately.

4.3.2 The inclusion and exclusion criteria

The inclusion and exclusion criteria set the stage for who can participate in the study (Hornberger & Rangu 2020). According to Patino and Ferreira (2018:84), inclusion criteria is crucial structures of the target population that the researcher will employ to respond to their research question". This study set specific criteria that participants should meet to be qualified to participate in the study. These criteria included participants 18 years and older, and those who engage on Twitter while watching *7de Laan* during its prime-time broadcast by commenting, liking other comments or tweets as well as tweeting.

On the other hand, the exclusion criteria are defined as "qualities about a person or the external factors around them that would go against the goal of the study or interfere with it" (Hornberger & Rangu 2020:2). If the participant does not tweet about 7de Laan within a week, that participant was not considered for the qualitative study as they were not regarded as active participant. Organisation and brand accounts were not considered as these accounts do not belong to an individual. Because the information shared will not be individual, but organisational viewpoints. Participants who watched episodes from YouTube were not considered as the YouTube broadcast only takes place 30 minutes after the prime-time broadcast ended. Also, the audiences who engaged on Twitter during the omnibus and the repeat were not considered, because the omnibus and repeats episodes are not live.

4.3.3 Population and sampling

4.3.3.1 Population

A population is the entire set of cases from which the researcher draws a sample (Taherdoorst 2017:18). According to Asiamah, Mensah and Oteng-Abajie (2017:1608), " specifying the population is necessary in the investigation of both

qualitative and quantitative studies". However, the population specifications for both qualitative and quantitative samples are not guided by the same principle (Creswell 2003; Denzin & Lincoln 2011). A qualitative study focuses mainly on fewer participants who have the knowledge and can describe their experiences of the research phenomena (Baškarada 2014:1). A total of 15 Twitter users who engaged on Twitter when watching the live broadcast of the television show 7de Laan were the focus of the qualitative study. On the other hand, quantitative studies required the participation of many individuals who are expected to describe their experiences (Williams 2007:66). The population of this study was 500 Twitter users who engaged on Twitter when watching the live broadcast of the television show 7de Laan.

4.3.3.2 Accessible population

The accessible population is defined "as the component of analysis in the target population which is accessible to the researcher" (Du Plooy 2009:109). All Twitter users who participate on Twitter during 7de Laan prime-time broadcast were the accessible population.

4.3.3.3 Target population

According to Creswell (2003:10), "it is the group of individuals with specific traits of interest and significance to the research objective". It is not feasible to study the entire population; hence, having a target population to which the research can draw a sample for the study results to be generalised is crucial (Majid 2018:3). The South African Twitter users, 18 years and above who participate on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of *7de Laan* from 18:00 to 18:30 were the target population. Although other audiences across the world watch the show through YouTube, the focus of this study was on the first broadcast of the episode at 18:00, which is only through SABC 2, broadcast in South Africa (with the exception for audiences who use the DSTV Now App to stream). Hence, the research criteria did not limit the study to only audiences who reside in South Africa.

4.3.3.4 Sampling

The process of selecting individuals or things that have been selected as source of data is called Sampling (Teddlie 2007:77). The purpose of sampling is to test the hypothesis and provide an estimate of the population parameter (Kabir, 2016:170). Sampling was necessary because it is not feasible to study the entire population. This study selected a sample from individual Twitter accounts of users who engage on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show, 7de Laan. A parallel sampling strategy was used for this study as the sample for both quantitative and qualitative respondents was drawn from the same population (Wium & Louw 2018:7).

4.3.3.5 Sampling size

Strauss and Corbin (1998:281) posit that “a digit between 10 and 12 is adequate in a qualitative research study because qualitative research is extensive and exhaustive in its coding procedures”. According to Creswell (2003:9), “a sample size could be about 15 to 20 interviews in a single study”. For this study, 15 individuals who engage on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the TV show 7de Laan and consented to participate in the study were drawn out. However only 12 participated and the other three withdrew from the study due to not being able to afford the internet data since the interviews were all conducted online. For the quantitative part, the original sample was 500 Twitter users who engaged on Twitter while watching the television show's prime-time broadcast. However, a total of 200 Twitter users responded to the survey and fully completed it.

4.3.3.6 Sampling methods

Researchers differentiate between probability and non-probability sampling methods when conducting research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:99). Probability sampling is defined by Du Plooy (2009:115) as “a chosen sample that has a probable chance of representing the target population”. Non-probability sampling is “a sample selected

that does not have a plausible chance of representing the target population" (Du Plooy 2009:123). Non-probability sampling method for was employed for this study. This method was selected because it is purposeful and quick for data collection (Bhardwaj 2019:161). However, there is a significant disadvantage with this type of sampling method technique: the findings lack generalisability (Showcat & Parveen 2017:5). The non-probability sampling method was appropriate because Twitter lacks a central registry like a phone directory, which makes it challenging to know the entire population to draw a random sampling frame (Chen 2011:758).

The sampling procedures employed to choose the study participants are outlined below.

i. Purposive sampling

A purposeful sample of 15 individuals who engaged on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* was drawn from the population. Purposive sampling in a qualitative study (Bolderston 2012:68), involves the researcher selecting potential participants who represent the group to be studied with the aim of talking to a reasonable cross-section of people (Bolderston 2012:67). Du Plooy (2009:255) in addition, defines purposeful sampling as "techniques where individuals are deliberately drawn for a sample because they represent the target population's parameters or characteristics". For this study, the parameters are *7de Laan* Twitter users who tweet, retweet, comment and/or like others' tweets during the prime-time broadcast of *7de Laan* at 18:00 to 18:30 from Monday to Friday. With purposive sampling, the researcher hardly knows whether the cases selected do represent the population or not (Showkat & Parveen 2017:8). It is for this reason that the results from the online interviews were not generalised to the target population. The researcher firmly selected participants who were best to attain the study's objective.

ii. Convenience sampling

Convenience sampling, also referred to as accidental or haphazard sampling, “is a certain kind of non-probability sampling where the members of the target population meet specific criteria such as easy access, geographical proximity and availability for inclusion in the study” (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim 2016:3). Additionally, Etikan and Bala (2017:215) believe that researchers choose individuals who are accessible and satisfy the inclusion criteria. The survey link was posted on the researcher’s Twitter timeline to encourage the show’s audience to participate in the research. The link to the survey was repeatedly tweeted before the start of the show and when the end credit rolls to catch the audience before they watch another show. This sampling method is appropriate as only the survey responded who were available took part.

iii. Snowball sampling

Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling method that utilises respondents to encourage other respondents to participate in the study (Taherdoost, 2017:22*).* Snowball sampling is commonly employed in qualitative research, used in medical science and various social sciences (Kirchherr & Charles 2018:1). However, in this study, snowball sampling was used when the researcher requested Twitter users who got the link to share it with other Twitter users through the retweet option on Twitter. This was to ensure that the research receives a varied number of respondents. Furthermore, snowball sampling was considered appropriate for the study to get the target population which is those audiences who participate on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show 7de Laan as these Twitter users are many and scattered.

4.3.4 Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis refers to the “who” or “what” for which research information is analysed and conclusions are made (Sedgwick 2014:1). The unit of analysis for this study was the individual Twitter users.

4.3.5 Data collection processes and methods

To collect quantitative and qualitative data from the *7de Laan* audience, this study used an online semi-structured interviews (*qualitative approach*) and an online survey (*quantitative approach*) to collect data. The online survey link was posted using the 7de Laan Twitter hashtag to record the views on why the audience engaged on Twitter when watching the television show *7de Laan*. Participants were given the option to select which platform they prefer for the interview. The following platforms were available: television programme through Skype, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and WhatsApp video calls. Interviews are often employed method for collecting qualitative data, while a closed-ended questionnaire is more suitable for quantitative data (Jamshed, 2014:87).

The qualitative and quantitative research data were collected concurrently to manage time (Tirrell, 2012:267). Data was collected from the 1st to the 30th of April 2023. This study adopted the convergent parallel mixed method, which is “when the researcher merges quantitative and qualitative data to derive a holistic inquiry of the research question” (Hafsa, 2019:45). Moreover, Creswell (2012:540) defines the convergent parallel mixed method as the method when, “the gathered data for qualitative and quantitative, are analysed separately, results from the analysis compared to determine if the results support of contradict each other”.

4.3.5.1 Quantitative data collection

The quantitative data method employed in this study is discussed next.

a. Online survey

The online survey was employed to collect quantitative data from audiences that engaged on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan*. Singh, Burgess and Singh (2008:32) define an online survey as “an internet-based data collection method, which allows for an immediate and convenient process for collecting data and downloading of responses”. The primary reason for using an

online survey is that it is inexpensive, and convenient (Singh, Burgess & Singh 2008:32). An online survey typically uses large samples of the population to collect data to obtain information reflecting the demographic and personal characteristics of the participants (Ponto 2015:183). Therefore, the online survey allowed for the process of collecting large amounts of data about different variables (Du Plooy 2009:189). The researcher preferred this data collection method because it allowed for data to be collected from Twitter users who engage on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan*.

Surveys are convenient and allow for data to be collected from a large group of Twitter users. However, a survey is only good because of the questions asked (Hyman & Sierra, 2016:1). Hence, the researcher ensured that the survey was well designed, and the questions were precise and easy to answer. The survey method allowed the researcher to collect consistent and credible data in a structured form that facilitated data analysis and reporting (Showkat & Parveen 2017). The researcher conducted the data collection process, and no other people were sourced to assist; therefore, there was no third-party assistance.

The researcher employed an online survey software program called SurveyMonkey to construct the questionnaire. Online surveys permitted the respondents to complete the questionnaire by themselves without the researcher being present. The questionnaire was administered online, and the link was posted on Twitter using the 7deLaan hashtag (#7delaan). The conscent letter that clearly described the purpose and importance of the study formed part of the questionnaire.

Questionnaires are a very convenient data collection method that enables the process for data to be collected from a large group of people. Questionnaires can produce valid data if the questions posed to respondents are similar, precise, and constant across all participants (Roopa & Rani 2012:273). The quality of a questionnaire is only good because of the questions asked. The researcher ensured that the survey questionnaire was well-designed and that questions were precise and easy to answer (Hyman & Sierra 2016:1). the researcher must be clear on which method the questionnaire will be administered for example, a face-to-face or telephonic method or whether the questionnaire will be administered by an interviewer, independently or by the

participant (Mathers et al., 2009:19). The researcher chose the questionnaire to be administered online and independently by the respondent as it was hosted online. The primary quantitative data collection method for analysing the audience's responses about their engagement on Twitter while watching the prime-time broadcast of 7de Laan was the online survey.

The first page of the online survey included the introduction, the institution, the researcher's details, and the study's aims. The reason for including the introduction is to convince the respondent to complete and submit the questionnaire by the specified date (Creswell, 2012:392). This was in the form of a consent letter which the respondents had to submit before taking part in the survey. The online survey included a button that requested respondents to click 'yes' or 'no' to indicate that they had read, and understood the cover letter, and to confirm consent. A 'no' response automatically stopped the respondent from continuing with responding to the online survey, while a 'yes' response directed the respondent to the questionnaire (Wimmer & Dominick, 2014:83). The questionnaire had five sections, which are outlined below:

Section A: Biographical data and demographic data

Section B: What are the motives of *7de Laan* audiences for engaging on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show?

Section C: What do 7de Laan audiences use Twitter for when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show?

Section D: What do *7de Laan* audiences tweet about when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show.

Section E: What gratifications do *7de Laan* audiences seek by engaging on Twitter during the prime-time broadcast of this show?

Closed-ended questions were used for the following reasons: The verbal communication skills of the respondents were less critical as they only had to choose an answer that best suited their understanding of the question from a list provided; they are easier and quicker to answer (Hyman & Sierra, 2016:2). The main disadvantage of using closed-ended questions was that they are poor at providing new

insights, and respondents cannot give in-depth responses (Hyman & Sierra, 2016:2). This disadvantage was addressed when interviews were conducted, allowing respondents to offer their viewpoint on the topic under study.

For the full online survey questionnaire – in Appendix H.

b. Types of online survey questions

Roopa and Rani (2012:273) mention four types of survey questions for researchers to take a cue from namely:

i. Contingency questions – answered only when the respondent has given a certain answer to the previous question.
ii. Matrix questions – where identical response categories are assigned to multiple questions.
iii. Open-ended questions – offer respondents the opportunity to provide several answers as there are no pre-determined answers (Hyman & Sierra 2016:3).
iv. Closed-ended questions – "format that provides the person taking the survey with a range of response options that he/she can select from to indicate his/her answer" (O'Leary & Israel 2016:1). Mathers et al. (2009:20) concur that "closed question is one where the possible answers are defined in advance so that the respondent is limited to one of the pre-coded responses given".

The main disadvantage of using closed-ended questions was that they are poor at providing new insight, and respondents cannot give in-depth responses (Hyman & Sierra 2016:2). This disadvantage was addressed when interviews were conducted which allowed respondents to share their opinions and views on the topic under study.

c. Distribution of the online survey

The researcher employed Survey Monkey, an online survey software programme to design and execute the survey. An online survey allowed the respondent to complete the survey alone without the researcher being present. The survey was administered online, and the link was posted on Twitter under the 7deLaan hashtag (#7delaan). The

researcher also used the @reply mechanism to contact the respondent by posting the link on their tweets. This @reply mechanism allowed respondents to send questions to the researcher if they had any, providing an immediate response. In addition, the @reply mechanism informed the users that the online survey link was not spam. A consent letter that clearly describes the aims and importance of the study was posted. To guarantee the authenticity of the sample, the researcher targeted to reach 500 Twitter users. Links to the survey were repeatedly tweeted and posted on the researcher's Twitter timelines over 31 days in March 2023. Twitter, @reply and direct message functions were employed to send the survey link to Twitter users with sizeable followers and tweet on various subjects. Each person receiving the link was requested to retweet it to create a varied sample.

d. Response format

The survey was highly structured, which means the questions were presented in the exact wording and the same order to all respondents (Roopa & Rani 2017:274). The study chose a ranking scale, namely a Likert scale, as the response format. Nemoto and Beglar (2014:2) define a Likert scale as a "psychometric scale that has multiple categories which makes it easier for respondents to choose responses from the list provided that best suit their understanding of the question". An example of a Likert scale is presented in Table 4.2 which follows next.

Table 4.2: Five-point Likert scale for items requiring agreement or disagreement (Du Plooy 2009:144)

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

A Likert scale was used because it is easy to construct, and it is easy for the respondents to read and complete the survey. However, there is a weakness to this scale where respondents may avoid extreme response categories, causing a central tendency bias (Taherdoost, 2019:4). Likert scales are associated with surveys, so they

were appropriate to use in this study (Maeda, 2015:2). This study employed a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree, disagree to strongly agree, agree with a neutral option included. The scores were in the same order as in the figure above; for example, strongly disagree had a score of 1, while strongly agree had a score of 5. A five-point Likert scale was employed because the accuracy of Likert items reduces when the scale has fewer than five categories or more than seven (Pimentel 2019:184).

4.3.5.2 Qualitative data collection

The qualitative data collection method employed in this study is discussed.

a) Semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured interviews were employed for the online interviews. Semi-structured interviews are defined as “a discourse between the researcher and respondent, allowing for a flexible interview protocol and follow-up questions, probes, and comments to further understand the interviewee’s response” (DeJonckheere & Vaughn 2019:1). In addition, the semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to gain information that other methods would not have allowed as it offers the interviewer the flexibility to delve deeper into the topic under study (Berger 2020:212). Additionally, Bolderston (2012:71) posits that semi-structured interviews are convenient and economical in terms of budget and time for both the researcher and respondent. Hence, the researcher opted to perform the semi-structured interviews online as an alternative of face-to-face interviews. Furthermore, the researcher opted to conduct these interviews online because the audiences of the television show 7de Laan are scattered across the country, and it would have been expensive for the researcher to travel.

The researcher used Zoom, Teams, Google Meet or WhatsApp video call, WhatsApp voice, and all respondents were requested to switch on their cameras for the interview duration. The respondents had the option to choose which virtual platform they preferred for the semi-structured interview to take place.

b) Semi-structured interview instrument

The semi-structured interviews were conducted online with 12 respondents who engaged on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show 7de Laan, from the 1st to the 30th of March 2023. Taherdoost (2021:12) is of the view that online interviews are ideal, as they are not restricted by geography; thus, making it possible to reach a wider group. Taherdoost (2021:13) further states that conducting interviews online is cost-effective and convenient for both the researcher and respondent. Conducting these interviews online was ideal as the television show 7de Laan audiences are scattered across all nine provinces. So, the researcher did not need to travel. The interviewees were comfortable to have the interviews with their videos on, and the researcher was also on video throughout the interviews.

Purposefully sampled synchronous, and asynchronous interviews, comprising 12 respondents were used in this research. Bolderston (2012:71) posits that online interviews are convenient and economical in terms of budget and time. Moreover, online interviews are primarily used to gather original data through the internet to subject them to analysis to provide new evidence related to a specific research question (Hewson 2010:423). The online interview was chosen because it provided the interviewer with the following advantages (Hewson 2010:431):

i. They are not restricted by geography as the interviews can take place with interviewees residing anywhere in the world. However, this study targets people from different provinces in South Africa.
ii. There is no need for traditional interview equipment such as a tape recorder and transcribing machine. Instead, the interviewer used Zoom, Google Meet or Microsoft Teams to record the interviews with participants who would have opted for a virtual meeting app.
iii. They provide great flexibility for the interviewer and interviewee in terms of time and date.

Semi-structured interviews were completed synchronously. The synchronous interview is like a traditional research interview because it takes place in real-time

using online avenues such as video conferencing (Bolderston, 2012:73). For example, Microsoft Teams, Zoom or Google Meet allow interviews to be recorded. Moreover, synchronous interviews enabled the researcher to observe non-verbal messages communicated by participants' behaviour. For example, the interviewer was able to read the interviewee's discomfort through their facial expression. Furthermore, the synchronous interview allowed the researcher to build rapport with the interviewees. The asynchronous interview is a process of interviews that take place offline, and messages are written and read in non-real-time (Daymon & Halloway 2010:227). These two types of online interviews cut the cost of purchasing a recorder and travelling. However, for this study, the synchronous interview was appropriate to avoid delay in completing the study as well as to ensure that the interview was conducted with one interviewee without external influences of friends and family.

c) Interview schedule

According to Arksey and Knight (1999:97), "An interview schedule functions as a framework for the core of a semi-structured interview, grounded in the principal questions the study seeks to address". The interview schedule assists the researcher in ensuring that the data collected from participants is similar (Daymon & Holloway 2010:225). Also, the interview schedule allows the researcher to develop questions before the interview takes place, assisting the researcher in deciding on which issues to pursue. The interview schedule is determined by the interview structure, the nature of the research, and the study's aims and objectives (Ryan, Coughlan & Cronin 2009:311).

i. Types of questions used in the interview schedule

Roberts (2020: 3191) recommends that the interview schedule delineate categories pertinent to the research and the interview enquiries. For example, the questions were easy and non-threatening, such as the demographics section, to ease the interviewee into the interview and build rapport, followed by questions more focused on the study. The interview guide contained closed-ended (in Part I) and open-ended questions (in Part II). Part I comprised demographic questions of the interviewee, while Part II questions were aimed at soliciting information, attitudes, and experiences of these *7de*

Laan audiences who engaged on Twitter during the prime-time broadcast of the TV show. The primary objective of the semi-structured interviews was to rectify any deficiencies arising from the online survey and facilitate a comprehensive discourse about the subject matter being investigated.

d) Recruitment strategy for the semi-structured online interviews

The researcher used the 7deLaan hashtag (#7deLaan) to recruit the interviewees. The researcher searched the *7de Laan* hashtag during the 'live' broadcasts at 18:00. Thus, recruitment for the semi-structured interviews started from 18:00 to 18:30. The researcher did this for a week, from Monday to Friday, which are the days *7de Laan* broadcasts. During this period, the researcher searched for the audience's tweets, retweets, likes, and comments regarding *7de Laan*. The researcher also used Brandwatch and Mention social listening tools to extract tweets related to *7de Laan*. Brandwatch is a social listening tool that allows one to find users relevant to the brand, from demographics to what users are saying and to whom (Chanda 2023). Mention is a Twitter tool that extracts any mentions on your brand or product, it also allows one to monitor mentions outside of Twitter but other platforms, like Instagram or Facebook (Whitley 2020). The researcher employed these two tools to determine which users to contact for the semi-structured interviews.

e) Contacting interviewees for the semi-structured online interviews

The interviewees were contacted through the researcher's personal Twitter account. Once these interviewees were identified, the researcher followed them on Twitter and then sent them a tweet requesting that they follow the researcher's account so that a direct message ('DM') requesting their participation in the interview could be sent to them. The individuals that showed interest were sent the interview link with further information regarding the research. The information link included the consent form, which clearly explained the research and its objective, the authorisation to record the virtual interview, and the procedures to be followed, including the interviewee selecting the virtual app they preferred for the interview. For example, the interviewees chose their preferred app from the following options: Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Google Meet,

or a WhatsApp video or voice call. It was important that the researcher and the interviewee get familiar with each other to allow each party to be free to participate.

4.3.6 Pilot Test

Every researcher should conduct a pilot test to ensure that validity is achieved (Gani, Rathakrishnan & Krishnasamy 2020:140). A pilot study or pilot test is defined as “a preliminary version of a research instrument prior to executing the actual investigation”. (Majid, Othman, Mohamad, Lim & Yusof 2017:1074). Teijlingen and Hundley (2002:34), Dikko (2016:522) and Williams-McBean (2019:1056) outline the benefits of conducting a pilot study in research:

i. To detect any possible flaws in the study at an early stage by identifying potential problems and adjustments required in the instrument.
ii. To enhance the value and credibility of the research.
iii. To discern vague and ambiguous assertions within the research methodology.

The pilot test was applied by pre-testing the semi-structured interview guide questions and the online survey with a small sample of conveniently selected participants with traits similar to those in the main study (Dikko, 2016:522).

4.3.6.1 Pre-testing the online survey

The pilot study for the online survey was conducted with five conveniently selected respondents who engaged on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan*. A sample of five to 50 respondents was considered adequate to conduct a pilot study (Mathers, Hunn & Fox 2009:30). The sample included people who tweet, retweet, like, comment, or read other users’ comments during the 7de Laan’s prime-time broadcast. According to Nemoto and Beglar (2014:6), “piloting involves collecting qualitative and quantitative feedback regarding the construct of the questions in the questionnaire”. The questionnaire and the cover letter were also pre-tested to ascertain that, the questions and the instructions were clear (Williams 2011:66).

The pilot test was administered to ascertain the clarity of the questions, eliminated any ambiguous or misleading questions, to check that pre-codes were correct, and that important issues were not omitted (Mathers et al., 2009:30). Roopa and Rani (2017:275) outline the main purpose of pre-testing the questionnaire:

i. Ensure that questions are properly framed
ii. Ascertain whether the question wording will ensure that the desired outcome is achieved
iii. Ensure questions are placed in the best order
iv. Ensure all respondents understand the questions
v. Ascertain whether additional questions are needed or not
vi. Ensure that instructions to the respondents are clear

The researcher visited the social media listening tool Mention and Brandwatch, two weeks (6 - 10 March 2023) before the pilot test, to search for individuals who fit the study's objectives. Once the individuals were selected, they were contacted through a Twitter Direct Message (DM)to solicit their involvement in the pilot study. Feedback from interview participants was incorporated into the final questionnaire. The questionnaire was subsequently sent to the supervisor for final input before loading it online for data collection. Finally, the questionnaire was pilot tested on 20 - 24 March 2023, to confirm whether the time it took to complete it was within the stipulated timeframe. It took a minimum of 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire from all five respondents.

4.3.6.2 Pre-testing the online semi-structured interview guide

The semi-structured online interview schedule was pilot-tested with four participants who did not participate in the primary research study. The pilot study was done to ascertain the clarity and unambiguity of the questions, the time taken to complete the interview, to establish if the responses could be interpreted and if they responded to the objectives of the study, and for the researcher to refine their interviewing approach (Dikko, 2016:522). Also, the purpose of conducting the pilot test was to validate the questions in the semi-structured interview schedule (Gani, Rathakrishnan & Krishnasamy 2020:142). Berg (2009) states that it is imperative to pilot the interview

schedule with other researchers or people familiar with the topic before the actual study is conducted. Hence, the researcher selected participants using the *7de Laan* hashtag (#7deLaan). These were participants who frequently engaged on Twitter during the prime-time broadcast of the television show 7de Laan. (This information is available on their timeline history).

4.3.7 Data analysis methods

The researcher employed a mixed-method approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methodologies in a single study (Onwuegbuzie & Combs 2011:1). Jandagh and Matin (2011:59) define data analysis as "the process of systematically applying statistical and logical techniques to describe and illustrate, condense and recap, and evaluate data". This study involved separate analyses of both qualitative and quantitative data.

4.3.7.1 Qualitative data analysis method

Marshall and Rossman (2014:192) posit that "qualitative data analysis seeks to formulate overarching assertions regarding the links between types of data". The semi-structured interviews were documented to ensure that the data was properly captured to avoid assumptions during data analysis (Fox 2009:23). The researcher assessed the accuracy of the raw data transcription by examining the semi-structured interview recordings and cross-referencing them with the interview script. The initial phase of qualitative data analysis entails data arrangement (Best & Kahn 2006:270). The semi-structured interview data was recorded, transcribed, and thematically evaluated. The qualitative interview data was analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006:17) six-phased thematic analysis. Fox (2009:36) defines thematic analysis as "a systematic method for identifying all principal concepts that emerge in interviews, subsequently categorising and developing these into common themes". Thematic analysis afforded the researcher the accessibility and flexibility in interpreting the data. Further made it easier for the researcher to handle huge data sets by grouping them into major themes. (Braun & Clark, 2006:78). Braun & Clarke's (2006:17) six-phased thematic analysis requires the researcher to follow the steps highlighted below:

Table 4.3: Six phased thematic analysis

Phase 1: Become familiar with the data
Phase 2: Generate initial codes
Phase 3: Search for themes
Phase 4: Review themes
Phase 5: Define themes
Phase 6: Write-up

Source: Braun and Clarke (2006:78)

i. Become familiar with the data

The researcher actively read through the entire data set collected and made notes. This entailed active listening to the audio recordings and watching the videos of the interviews. The data set included interviews; thus, it was essential for the researcher to be acquainted with the complete data set as it provided an orientation to the raw data and was foundational for all subsequent steps (Kiger & Varpio 2020:847).

ii. Generate Initial codes

Prior to coding, the researcher went over the data once more and made sure that all of the data had been coded before going on to the next data set. The fundamental units of analysis are codes, which are used to identify and categorise data features that may be pertinent to the study issue (Braun & Clarke 2012:6). The researcher created the initial codes after coding the interview transcripts. To make the process of constructing themes easier to analyse, data extracts with comparable codes were grouped together. Every code explained the concept or emotion mentioned in the excerpt from the interview.

At this stage the researcher reviewed every interview transcript and highlighted everything that seemed relevant and interesting. Additionally, all words and sentences corresponding to the codes were emphasised; as the coding process advanced, new codes were incorporated.

iii. Search for themes

This phase commenced following the coding and collation of all data. This step primarily involved organising and categorising all pertinent coded data extracts into themes., which are broader than codes that are often combined into a single theme (Braun & Clarke 2006:82). As the researcher continued to search for more themes, codes that did not appear consistently were discarded. Upon the identification of the primary themes and sub-themes, the researcher started exploring the relationship between the themes to draw inferences.

iv. Review themes

During this iterative stage of thematic analysis, the evolving themes were examined in light of the data coded and the comprehensive dataset (Braun & Clarke 2012:8). By examining the coded data extracts for each theme and determining whether they constituted a coherent pattern, the researcher evaluated the themes to ascertain whether they accurately represented the data that was gathered. Braun and Clarke (2012:9) state that the researcher should not force analysis to be coherent, and suggest the researchers ask themselves these key questions:

a. Is this a theme, or is it simply a code? If yes,
b. what is the quality of the theme (i.e., does it provide insight into the collected data and the study's research question)?
c. What defines this theme's bounds, and what does it contain and exclude?
d. Does this topic have enough (relevant) evidence to sustain it, or is it "thin" or "thick"?
e. Is the data excessively diversified and extensive, resulting in a lack of thematic coherence?

Braun and Clarke (2012:9) further suggest that these questions could result in some themes being combined, some broad ones being split, others being created, and some discarded to form a coherent analysis.

v. Define themes

The researcher enumerated the distinctive and captivating aspects of each theme while characterising them. In this stage, each theme's definition and how it contributes to the understanding of the data were developed (Kiger & Varpio, 2020:7). Braun and Clarke (2006) assert that "theme names must be memorable and immediately convey the essence of the theme to the reader". The researcher searched for overlaps between themes and identified emerging sub-themes that could assist in providing a more detailed account of the themes (Kiger & Varpio, 2020:7). The researcher selected the data extract in preparation for the final report in this phase.

vi. Write-up

After the researcher had established the topics thoroughly and was prepared to start the final analysis and report write-up, the final write-up was started (Braun & Clarke, 2006). King (2004: 259) argued that participant quotes should be included directly in the final report. This made it easier to comprehend some of the themes' points of interpretation and provided a thorough explanation of the raw facts. What the various themes indicated about the subject of study was stated in the final analysis. To facilitate the researcher’s assessment of the alignment between the respondents' opinions and the researcher's interpretation, the analysis was forwarded to the respondents for feedback via member checks.

The theme analysis approach required the researcher to iteratively review the data set, coded extracts, and generated codes to prevent inaccuracies (Braun & Clarke, 2006:85). In addition, Patton (2002:432) is of the view that qualitative analysis transforms collected raw data into study results.

4.3.7.2 Quantitative data analysis

The quantitative data analysis is either descriptive or inferential, according to Wium and Louw (2018:7). Every question's data was examined independently. The online survey data was exported from SurveyMonkey to the Statistical Package for the Social

Sciences (SPSS) for analytical preparation. The data was analysed by a statistician who was hired. Respondents that did not fit the inclusion criteria and incomplete cases that gave the same response to every question were eliminated once the online survey data was loaded into SPSS. This study's analysis was completed in two stages.

i. Phase one: to describe the survey sample and determine the genders within the study, a descriptive statistical analysis of frequencies was conducted on the demographic enquiries. "A mathematical way to summarise the characteristics of data sampled" is what descriptive statistical analysis is (Du Plooy 2009:234). Moreover, James and Simister (2020) define descriptive statistics ‘as a technique of quantitative data analysis utilised to depict or convey facts in a readily comprehensible, quantitative format”. The data were presented using percentages, charts, and frequency tables. The majority of the results are descriptive; they offer brief descriptions of the sample and data collected and forecast demographic characteristics based on data analysis and observation.

ii. Second phase: to examine the hypotheses and the correlations between a few important variables, inferential statistical analysis was done. Two inferential statistical indices were employed during the data analysis: the chi-square test and the t-test. For ease of analysis, certain of the survey's variables were grouped together under specific topics. This action was taken because it was necessary to simplify and ease the survey so that respondents could easily grasp the questions. Researchers can generalise findings from a sample to the complete population through inferential statistical analysis. (Ali 2021:5). Frequency tables, pie charts, and bar graphs were utilised to summarise and visualise the results. Chapter 5 of the study offers a comprehensive report and overview of the online interview responses.

4.4 QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE QUALITY CRITERIA

The requirement associated with demonstrating rigour in a research design in the qualitative analysis must differ from those of a qualitative analysis (Mahar, Hadfield Hutchings & de Eyto 2018:3).

4.4.1 Ensuring rigour in a qualitative analysis

According to Johnson, Adkins and Chauvin (2020:143), “rigour is a means of establishing trust and confidence in a research study's conclusions”. Mahar, Hadfield, Hutchings, and de Eyto (2018:3) assert that trustworthiness is a more fitting standard to use when assessing qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1989) a qualitative study must fulfil four criteria to be deemed rigorous: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The semi-structured interviews were evaluated for trustworthiness using these four criteria. We go over these four requirements below:

i. Credibility – guarantees that the study captures the intended data and accurately reflects the participants' social reality (Mahar et al. 2018:3). According to Merriam (1998), a crucial factor in determining the reliability of research findings and their consistency with reality is their credibility. Similar to validity in quantitative research, credibility in qualitative research makes the promise to yield credible and convincing findings (Van der Riet & Durrheim 2006:90). Because different data collection methods offered for varied perspectives on the research purpose, the researcher chose to use multiple methodologies to ensure the study's credibility. To establish trustworthiness, the entire interview process was refined through a pilot test including three conveniently sampled participants. Additionally, the researcher gave the participant access to the interpreted data to verify the validity of the information gathered prior to publication, thereby adding to the credibility of the semi-structured interviews.

ii. Transferability – suggests that the research's conclusions will be applicable in the future and that they will be same to those obtained in similar circumstances (Ghafouri & Ofoghi 2016:1917). According to Noble and Smith (2015:35), transferability in qualitative research is analogous to external validity in quantitative research. The researcher gave a thorough, in-depth account of the settings they examined to guarantee transferability in this study. In this instance, the reasons behind the 7de Laan viewers' interactions on Twitter during the

show's prim-time broadcast. This gave the reader enough information to help them make an informed decision about how applicable the findings are to the many contexts they are familiar with. Since qualitative research recognises that human existence has several meanings, it does not specifically aim to generalise the research findings (Bryman et al. 2014:45). The population of the 7de Laan audiences that participated on Twitter during the television show's prime-time broadcast was not included in the study's results.

iii. Dependability – pertains to the degree of reproducibility of the results (Kelly, 2016:9). Maher et al. (2018) differentiate dependability in qualitative research from that in quantitative research. To ensure trustworthiness, the research process must be meticulously documented to facilitate replication by future researchers. and the reader can ascertain that appropriate research methods have been adhered to (Johnson et al., 2020:146). Consequently, the researcher maintained an audit trail. that included every action made during the data-gathering process of the semi-structured, as well as the dates and methods of change implementation. The producer of 7de Laan was also given access to the survey by the researcher, who used this information to provide comments and recommendations that helped identify the survey's strengths and problems. In addition, the researcher recorded the adjustments and modifications made to the research methodology.

iv. Confirmability – is an alternative to quantitative research's construct validity (Shenton, 2004:72). The concept of confirmability describes the ease with which study interpretations and conclusions can be verified by other parties (Kihn & Ihantola, 2015:236). A comprehensive, methodical approach to data collecting and analysis was established to guarantee confirmability for this study. The researcher employed audio recording to collect data for the semi-structured interviews, which was subsequently transcribed verbatim. In addition, the researcher stored all the data in an accessible and well-organized for so that, in the event that the results are contested, the reader or participant would have access to it.

4.4.2 Ensuring rigour in a quantitative analysis

4.4.2.1 Internal and external validity of the research design

Patino and Ferreira (2018:183) “internal validity is defined as the degree to which the observed results accurately reflect the truth within the studied population, hence excluding the influence of methodological flaws”. Ten participants selected by convenience sampling were used for the online survey's pilot test, which was conducted on Twitter using the 7de Laan hashtag to ensure the questionnaire's internal validity. Finding the survey's and the questions' strengths and limitations, potential ambiguity in the question formulation, and ambiguous answer options were the goals of the pilot study (Fraser, Fahlman, Arscott & Guillot, 2018:263).

The degree to which the results of an experiment or quasi-experiment may be applied to and across different populations, environments, and eras is the focus of external validity (Taylor & Asmundson, 2008:30). The study's results do not represent the population due to Twitter lacking a sampling frame, so they cannot be applied to viewers of 7de Laan TV show. Nonetheless, the study shed light on the motivations of 7de Laan viewers who interact with the show on Twitter.

4.4.2.2 Validity and reliability of the data gathering instrument

According to Patino and Ferreira (2018:185), validity in a research study refers to the extent to which the results obtained from study participants accurately represent the true findings applicable to similar individuals beyond the study". Face validity, content validity, internal validity, and external validity were employed to assess the validity and reliability of the quantitative research (online survey). Internal consistency of the online survey was used to gauge its dependability. To verify the dependability, content validity, and any other areas that need the researcher's attention, a pilot test with ten respondents was carried out (Creswell, 2014:139). Furthermore, Patino and Ferreira (2018:183), “define Internal validity as the extent to which the observed outcomes accurately represent the true characteristics of the population under investigation, free from any methodological defects”. Ten participants selected by convenience sampling

were used for the online survey's pilot test, which was conducted on Twitter using the 7de Laan hashtag to ensure the questionnaire's internal validity. The pilot study was carried out to ascertain the survey's advantages and disadvantages, the structure of the questions, any potential ambiguity in the question formulation, and the alternatives that were not obvious (Fraser, et al, 2018:263).

The degree to which the results of an experiment or quasi-experiment may be applied to and across different populations, environments, and eras is the focus of external validity (Taylor & Asmundson, 2008:30). The study's findings were not indicative of the general population due to the limited sample size; thus, they cannot be applied to viewers of 7de Laan TV who interact with Twitter during the show's prime-time broadcast. The study highlighted the motivations of 7de Laan viewers who engage with the show on Twitter during its prime-time broadcast.

4.4.2.3 Validity and reliability of the online survey

Shekar Singh (2014: 78) states that validity and reliability lower the opportunity for researcher bias while increasing transparency. Furthermore, reliability and validity are closely related; however, it cannot be assumed that the measure is valid if the measure is not reliable (Bryman, 2012:173). Taherdoost (2016:33) concurs, stating that although reliability is vital in a study, it needs to be combined with validity to be sufficient. The subsequent sub-sections address validity and reliability.

a) Validity of the online survey

Drost (2011:106) highlights four main types of validity, which are used for this study's aims:

i. **Face validity** determines if the questions in the online survey are reasonable to collect the acquired data. The online survey was piloted with 10 individuals who participated on Twitter when watching 7de Laan's prime-time broadcast to ensure face validity. Upon completion, the responses were shared with the supervisor and statistician for input.

ii. **Content validity** ensures that the questions address the issue under study and related areas. The responses from the pilot study, which involved ten participants who follow the 7de Laan prime-time broadcast on Twitter, served as assurance of the content validity of the online survey.

iii. **Internal validity** assesses whether the questions posed in the online survey imply the desired outcome. To ensure the internal validity of the online survey, the questionnaire underwent pilot testing with 10 participants conveniently selected, who participated on Twitter when watching the 7de Laan prime-time broadcast.

iv. **External validity** assesses whether the questions posed in the online survey elicit generalisable responses. This was established through the pilot test that was conducted with 10 conveniently selected respondents.

To ascertain the authenticity of the online survey, the researcher further requested the respondents from the pilot test to share their feedback on any challenges or difficulties they experienced while completing the questionnaire. Two of the ten respondents noted the duplication of the questions in Section B of the survey. One respondent highlighted the ambiguity of a question which was caused by the double-barrelled question. This comment allowed the researcher to improve the questionnaire.

b) Reliability of the online survey

The reliability principle in a survey pertains to the consistency of the information obtained from respondents, even when the wording or structure of the questions is altered (Drost 2011:107). Hence, the researcher deemed it essential to guarantee the internal consistency of the questions and statements in the online survey to ensure that respondents completed the same questionnaire. This was implemented to guarantee the reliability of the online survey, ensuring that the results would remain consistent if the study were to be replicated.

4.4.3.1 Reliability and validity of the online semi-structured interviews

a. Validity of the semi-structured interviews

According to Zohrabi (2013:258), “Validity pertains to the credibility and authenticity of our research, as well as its capacity to assess what it claims to evaluate.” The researcher made sure the questions were pertinent to the research question to accomplish this. Furthermore, enough time was allotted to formulate and prepare the interview questions prior to the actual interviews. Struwig and Stead (2017:137) define validity as “the degree to which the study can depend on the concepts, methods, and inferences.” “If the findings or explanation of the findings lack validity, then the study itself is useless” (Caruth 2013:116). Validity is crucial in a study as it pertains to the significance of research elements, demonstrating the reliability of the study in fulfilling its research aims (Drost 2011:114). Finally, the researcher ensured that the field notes are accurately captured through the recording and transcripts.

b. Reliability of the semi-structured interviews

Zohbari (2013: 259) asserts that "reliability refers to the consistency, dependability, and replicability of the results obtained from a research study." Heale and Twycross (2015:66) assert that “reliability is the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results when employed in identical circumstances on multiple occasions.” For example, administering an instrument designed to assess attitude should yield substantially identical responses upon subsequent enquiries of the same question. The topic of reliability and the extent to which results can be repeated is frequently brought up, (Lichtman 2014:385). Moreover, Bolderston (2012:74) identifies two methods to guarantee the trustworthiness of qualitative research, which are:

i. Verifying that prior to analysis, there are no glaring flaws in the transcripts.
ii. Making sure that when the themes develop, they remain consistent.

The researcher did not have a team of researchers to cross-reference the themes with; therefore, the consistency of themes was manageable. In addition, the researcher ensured reliability throughout the data collection process to avoid unnecessary errors.

Internal consistency, stability, and equivalency are the three characteristics of reliability (Heale & Twycross 2015:66). In quantitative research, the replicability of procedures and outcomes is paramount, whereas in qualitative research, consistency holds greater significance (Leung 2015:326). Therefore, it was crucial for the researcher to make sure that data was accurately recorded and that avoidable mistakes were made.

4.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

“Ethical considerations in research entail obtaining informed consent from prospective subjects, ensuring that participants have the autonomy to willingly accept or decline participation in the study” (Ubi, Orji & Osang 2020:55). The participants were notified that their involvement in the study is voluntary and that they can accept or decline to participate with no consequences. Ethical considerations about qualitative and quantitative research methodologies also pertain to mixed-method research (Caruth 2013:115). Creswell (2012:553) asserts that quantitative studies necessitate researchers to secure permission, safeguard anonymity, prevent site disruption, and accurately convey the study's objectives, whereas qualitative studies mandate researchers to accurately communicate the study's aims, eschew deceptive practices, honour the study population, address potential power dynamics, and ensure confidentiality.” These ethical issues mentioned are also mixed-method research ethical issues. Subsequently, the researcher secured ethical approval from the Ethics Committee of the University of South Africa (UNISA) before to initiating this investigation.

The following ethical standards were upheld when conducting this research:

i. The respondents' rights were not infringed, as informed consent was secured before data collection(Du Plooy, 2009:96). Furthermore, the study's aims and objectives, together with the matters of confidentiality and privacy, were explicitly communicated to the participants before the initiation of the interviews (Matthew, 2012).

ii. No participant was bullied into participating in the study. The participants were advised of their ability to withdraw from the study at any moment without consequences (Neuman, 1997:453). One participant of the interview withdrew after seeking clarity on whether the researcher was going to reimburse the interviewee the data monies.

The participant's ability to ask questions and receive clarification when needed was guaranteed by the researcher. The participants were also told by the researcher that they might end the interview or questionnaire at any moment and resume when they felt ready. But because the answers were anonymous, it was impossible to identify the questionnaire to remove once it was submitted. As a result, the questionnaire cannot be withdrawn once it was submitted. This information was provided to the participants so they could provide their full consent without feeling pressured to take part, even though the study's topic is not thought to be emotionally injurious and is not being conducted with a vulnerable group. Furthermore, sharing information with the participants afforded the researcher the transparency, integrity and accountability required by the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics (2016:12).

I. Participants were provided the necessary information regarding the interview and the online survey cover letter for voluntary consent.

Informed consent is a procedure whereby an individual acquires essential information regarding a clinical experiment, encompassing potential risks and benefits, before making a decision about participation in the study (Kushwaha & Singh 2022:2856). Informed consent is fundamentally important when conducting ethical research. It can be given verbally or through signing a contract (Cacciattolo 2015:58). Fleming and Zegwaard (2018:210) Additionally, the informed consent procedure may be viewed as the contractual agreement between the researcher and the participant, encompassing the following considerations:

i. Information regarding the researcher(s)
ii. The purpose of the research
iii. Data that will be collected from participants

iv. How the data will be collected from participants
v. The level of commitment required from participants
vi. How this data will be used and reported
vii. The potential risks of taking part in the research

The formalised ethical review aims to aid the researcher in evaluating and mitigating the risks of harm to participants (Iphofen 2011:12). There were no foreseen risks for this study as the study was neither physical nor emotional, but about the motives of engagement on Twitter when respondents are watching prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan*.

The respondents were asked not to reveal their identities in interviews or to enter their names on the online poll to ensure their privacy and confidentiality. They also received assurances that the information they provided would be kept private. When conducting a questionnaire, respondents must be allowed to remain anonymous since it encourages honest responses (Mbatha 2015:222). The questionnaire did not have a space for participants to fill in their names; to ensure their anonymity. The interview was conducted online; to afford the respondents the privacy that would have required the researcher to provide by interviewing in a private and quiet room.

Neuman (1997:453) asserts that the researcher must safeguard the anonymity of the participants. Consequently, all retrieved data were securely stored and available only to the researcher. All personal information gathered during the study, including data from the questionnaire and interviews, was maintained in strict confidentiality. The researcher ensured that the collection of the participant's personal data was in line with the POPI Act (4 of 2013) (UNISA Policy on Research Ethics 2016:13). The researcher also clarified in the consent letter that the participants own the raw data, and the researcher owns the analysed data (Fleming & Zegwaard 2018:211). The consent letter also clearly indicated that the participants would not be remunerated, gifted, or reimbursed for internet data used during participation.

Wimmer and Dominick (2013:85) recommend that for online research, the researcher should provide a way for participants to contact the researcher if there is a need and a way for participants to obtain the study results. The researcher provided the

participants four contact details: her cellphone number, email address, LinkedIn account and Twitter handle to provide easy access to her.

The researcher adhered to these recommendations for respondents to participate freely and ensure credible findings. Accurate stages were engaged to guarantee the validity and reliability of the measurements by maintaining consistency and accurately rating the collected data. (Du Plooy 2006:244). This process ensured that the study is credible, and should it be repeated, the same results are yielded.

The transcribing of the collected data from the unstructured interviews took place in a private room using headphones to avoid information leaks, which can compromise the secrecy and privacy of the respondents. The collected data was stored in a laptop, and a password to access the folder with the data was created. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process, including when the results are published.

4.6 CONCLUSION AND OUTLINE OF CHAPTER 5

The chapter examined the justification for choosing the particular approach to investigate the research issues of the study. Additionally, the study's research aims and objectives, data collection methodology, data analysis, sampling techniques, and sample size were all addressed. The employment of the social listening tool Brandwatch and Mention which shows the frequency of participation for each user led the researcher to identify the audiences to contact for the interviews. The use of mixed methods proved to be necessary to achieve the objective of the research study.

Chapter 5 delineates and analyses the research findings and interpretations of the principal qualitative data gathered.

CHAPTER 5: QUALITATIVE DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Qualitative data presentation and analysis offers a potent instrument for discovering the complexities of human behaviour, beliefs, and experience (Renjith, Yesodharan, Noronha, Ladd & George 2021:1). By excelling numerical data and statistical analysis, it presents an insightful viewpoint that can guide decision-making, foster improvement, and improve our comprehension of the surrounding world. Qualitative data analysis offered in-depth and subtle insights into the motives of 7de Laan audiences who engage on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show. The insight had the potential to influence action and create positive change, whether you are analysing the impacts of a social program, understanding consumer motivations, or evaluating the efficacy of an educational intervention.

5.2 QUALITATIVE DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This section presents the processes employed to analyse the raw data obtained from online interviews. Qualitative data analysis involves the identification, evaluation, recognition, coding, mapping, exploration, and description of patterns, trends, themes, and categories within the unprocessed data (Patton 2002:41). This process aims to comprehend these elements and reveal their underlying significance.

5.2.1 Online interviews

The data analysis process followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis methodology, as detailed in Chapter 4.

The researcher commenced by familiarising themselves with the gathered data through the iterative reading and transcription of the recorded interviews from all 12 online sessions into written format. The graph below illustrates the duration of each interview.

Figure 5.1: Interview duration per interviewee

PARTICIPANT	INTERVIEW DURATION
Participant 1	00:59:28
Participant 2	00:50:23
Participant 3	00:51:20
Participant 4	00:45:29
Participant 5	00:48:10
Participant 6	00:52:20
Participant 7	00:52:30
Participant 8	00:49:29
Participant 9	00:50:30
Participant 10	00:44:40
Participant 11	00:46:52
Participant 12	00:53:33

The interview duration for all 12 participants was between 44 minutes, 40 seconds, and 59 minutes, 28 seconds. Participant 1 interview was the longest of all 12 interviews. This could be attributed to the fact that this was the first interview of the 12, so the interviewer had to quickly build rapport. The interviews' completion duration started to decrease and never went above the Participant 1 interview duration as the interviewer started to gain confidence. The variation in interview duration can only be a testament to the fact that the researcher gained more insight and an comprehensive comprehension of the research phenomenon.

Participant 10 conducted the briefest interview among the 12 participants, serving as the pilot test participant who advised the researcher that the interview lasting approximately 45 minutes was sufficient. The replies provided by Participant 10 were markedly succinct, lacking any subsequent enquiries, suggesting a sense of haste on the part of the participant. When the researcher enquired about the participant's comfort level with the interview pace and tone, they responded affirmatively. However,

the answer rate remained invariant, posing challenges for the researcher to pose further questions.

The average interview lasted for 50 minutes and 20 seconds. This indicated that the interview guide was designed to get a comprehensive grasp of the topic being examined. Moreover, this advocated that the 45-minute period that the researcher spent during the pilot test was roughly correct to a certain range. Most interviews lasted between 45 minutes and 53 minutes.

Most interviews lasted between 45 minutes and 53 minutes. This suggested that the interview process was consistent with no alarming discrepancies. Additionally, the interview guide managed to gain the required information required from the participants.

Respondents 5 and 9 advised the researcher that they had constrained availability for the interview following two postponements. Once the date and time were finally agreed, the interview lasted for 25 minutes. It is imperative to note that the respondents of the interview did not participate in the questionnaire, and this assisted the study in gaining new insight as the topics were new to the respondents. Moreover, the motive behind speaking with audiences of the television show 7de Laan who were active on Twitter during the prime-time broadcast was that they may offer comprehensive knowledge and a comprehension of the topic under study.

5.2.2 Characteristics of the Interview Participants

All the participants were Twitter users who engaged on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show 7de Laan.The identities of the 12 participants have been concealed to preserve confidentiality and anonymity. Thus, the participants have been given pseudo names like Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3 and another number up to Participant 12.

Table 5.2. Characteristics of the interview participants

Participant code	Date joined Twitter	Gender	Age	Language	Device used to access Twitter
Participant 1	May 2017	Female	25	Isizulu	Cellphone
Participant 2	January 2014	Female	20	Setswana	Cellphone
Participant 3	July 2019	Female	36	Tshivenda	Cellpjone
Participant 4	June 2022	Male	18	Setswana	Tablet
Participant 5	August 2014	Male	32	Isizulu	Cellphone
Participant 6	July 2018	Female	30	Sesotho	Cellphone
Participant 7	January 2012	Male	23	Afrikaans	Cellphone
Participant 8	February 2012	Female	28	Sepedi	Cellphone
Participant 9	August 2010	Female	34	English	Cellphone
Participant 10	December 2019	Male	28	Isizulu	Cellphone
Participant 11	April 2013	Female	33	Afrikaans	Cellphoene
Participant 12	June 2021	Male	20	Setswana	Cellphone

The traits of the 12 research participants involved in the online interviews are defined above. Using purposeful sampling, the research participants were chosen. This approach was selected because it made it effortless for the researcher to select volunteers who could eagerly provide the data needed to meet the study's objectives. The length of the interview varied from 25-45 minutes and was dependent on the availability of the respondent to engage on the topic. Respondents 5 and 9, informed the researcher that they had limited time to engage in the interview and this was after two postponements. Once the date and time were finally agreed, the interview lasted for 25 minutes.

It is imperative to note that the respondents of the interview did not participate in the questionnaire, and this assisted the study in gaining new insight as the topics were new to the respondents. Additionally, the primary goal of speaking with viewers of the television program 7de Laan who were active on Twitter during the prime-time broadcast was that they could offer in-depth knowledge and apperception of the research study.

Based on the information shown in the table, the researcher has analysed the characteristics below.

i. Participant Gender:

The table provides information regarding the gender, age, language, and device utilised by each participant to access Twitter.

Female Dominance: The data indicates a minor dominance of females (7) over males (5). This may suggest that the sample is biased towards females.

Ratio: The female-to-male ratio is 7:5, which can be simplified to around 1.4:1. This implies that the ratio of female participants to male participants is roughly 1.4 to 1.

ii. Participant age

Age Distribution: The sample consists of individuals aged 18 to 36, suggesting a predominantly young population. The age that appears frequently in the data is 28, with a frequency of three occurrences.

Age Categories:

There are three participants in the young adult age group (18-24).

The interview participants number in the adult aged group is 25-34 is 7.

Adults aged 35 and above: 2 participants.

The data indicates that the target audience or group under investigation is predominantly composed of individuals younger, specifically between 18 and 34 years old.

The substantially elevated frequency of individuals aged 28 may suggest a specific inclination or involvement from this demographic. However additional data would be required to validate this hypothesis.

iii. Participants' language

The participants in the study come from various language backgrounds, which demonstrates the multilingualism of Twitter users. The Nguni languages are predominantly represented in this collection, with isiZulu being the most often occurring language, appearing three times.

The representation of Sotho-Tswana languages includes Setswana listed three times, and Sesotho and Sepedi included once each.

The official languages of the show Afrikaans and English are featured twice and once, respectively. Afrikaans is the main language of the show while every dialogue is subtitled in English. The inclusion of Tshivenda enhanced the linguistic diversity of the data.

iii. Device participant used

Overwhelming cellphone usage: Among the 12 participants, 11 utilised cellphones to interact on Twitter while viewing 7de Laan. This corresponds to a substantial majority of 91.67%.

Minimal Tablet Usage: A solitary individual utilised a tablet, representing a meagre 8.33% of the sample.

iv. Twitter Membership Start Date:

The participants registered on Twitter at various intervals, ranging from August 2010 to June 2022.

This data offered the researcher valuable insights regarding the duration of users' Twitter usage and potential variations in their experience because of the length of time they have been active on the network.

By evaluating this qualitative table, the researcher gained valuable insights on the demographic characteristics, linguistic variety, technical device choices, and timeline of Twitter usage among the participants in the study. Moreover, this table provided crucial contextual information for comprehending the qualitative data collected in this study. The collected data improved the researcher's comprehension of how individuals perceive and engage with Twitter.

v. Other social media networks participants are active on

The table further illustrates the additional social media platforms on which certain individuals are active, in addition to Twitter.

Eleven out of twelve participants are active on both Facebook and Instagram, constituting the overwhelming majority. A sole participant indicated utilising an alternative amalgamation of social media platforms, specifically Facebook and LinkedIn. The participants of the interviews demonstrated a preference towards using both Facebook and Instagram together. The next part includes certain excerpts from the interview transcripts and key emerging themes to support the discussion.

The next part includes extracts from the participants' interview transcripts along with emerged key themes.

5.3 EMERGENT THEMES

The written data enabled the researcher to identify emerging themes, including commonly occurring words and phrases that were analogous or reiterated, and

associated with the study's research objectives. Following this procedure, the first codes were created, which were summaries of the fundamental aspects of the data that could be evaluated. Prior to categorising the data into patterns (themes), the coding procedure entailed dividing data up into smaller pieces (codes). The researcher attempted to code all conceivable themes.

The data obtained using analogous code were subsequently categorised for enhanced analysis during topic development following the establishment of initial codes by the researcher.

The researcher generated a summary for each subject subsequent to categorising the diverse codes into themes. At the conclusion of this phase, the researcher had extracted themes and sub-themes from the collected data. To make sure the themes are relevant to the data set, the identified themes were further examined and improved. It was determined that while some of the themes were distinctive, others related to the study's objective and research questions. Each theme was then divided into a category that clarified its subject matter. In the concluding phase of the data analysis process, the researcher disseminated a report examining and discussing the topics. The topics were additionally linked to the literature study and thoroughly examined in Chapter Seven of the synthesis of qualitative and quantitative data.

The key patterns, ideas, or concepts that emerge from the data during the analysis process are specified as emerging themes in qualitative research. In contrast to quantitative research which, tests, and predetermines hypotheses, qualitative research seeks to examine and comprehend the complexity of a phenomenon from the perspective of the participants. The researchers were able to collect extensive, detailed data from online interviews, which was then carefully examined to identify recurring trends. These themes weren't planned; rather, they emerged because of the coding and categorising of the data. Since it represented the underlying meanings, experiences, or viewpoints that participants shared, the researcher attained a sophisticated comprehension of the issue.

The findings based on the theme analysis of the semi-structured online interviews with the 12 viewers of the television program 7de Laan are presented in this part. The objective of the study was to determine what motivates audiences of the television show 7de Laan to engage on Twitter while watching the prime-time broadcast of this show. Applying Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phased thematic analysis, a total of six themes were produced to accomplish the study's goal. The themes that came out of the online interviews are listed below.

Table 5.3: Emergent Themes and number of interviewees

EMERGENT THEMES	NUMBER INTERVIEWEES
Entertainment	10
Connectedness	9
Social interaction	8
Information seeking	7
Storyline speculation	6
Character-centric discussion	5

5.3.1 Theme 1: Entertainment and Escapism

Entertainment was one of the themes that came out of why audiences engaged on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show 7de Laan, while other audiences engaged to relax and to escape from the pressures and stresses of daily life as engagement with the show offers temporal emotional relief. This theme spoke to (Ruggiero 2000:8), that uses and gratification is more concerned about the active audience and these audiences engage on media platforms for entertainment. The audience further noted that the entertainment they get from engaging on Twitter with 7de Laan helps them relax as they are not seeking information or social interaction but reading others' comments.

It is worth noting that 10 interviewees from 17, said they engage on Twitter when watching the television show 7de Laan for entertainment and escapism. For that

question this interviewee noted that they engage on Twitter to connect with other audiences, meaning that they connect to seek social interaction.

It is worth noting that 10 interviewees, said they engage on Twitter when watching the television show 7de Laan for entertainment and escapism. The following quotes from participants below to substantiate this emerging theme.

Table 5.4: Theme 1: Entertainment and escapism	
Interviewee	**Quoted Statement(s)**
Participant 1	*"I seek entertainment and to escape from a busy day at work."*
Participant 2	*"I seek entertainment."*
Participant 3	*"I seek entertainment."*
Participant 4	*"I seek entertainment."*
Participant 5	*"Entertainment and more entertainment."*
Participant 8	*"Entertainment is what I seek."*
Participant 9	*"Overall to escape from my reality and for entertainment."*
Participant 10	*"To escape from reality and enjoy the show."* *"Entertainment and more entertainment."* *"I like it because it allows me to relax and escape my reality."*
Participant 11	*"Overall to escape from my reality and for entertainment."* *"I like it because it allows me to relax and escape my reality."* *"Entertainment, connect with other audiences and escapism."*
Participant 12	*"Overall to relax."* *"Entertainment and to relax."* *"I like it because it allows me to relax and escape my reality."* *"Entertainment, connect with other audiences and escapism."*

5.3.2 Theme 2: Connectedness

One of the primary discoveries derived from this thematic analysis was the interconnectedness of all identified themes with a central core topic: Connectedness. Previous studies as shown in the literature review indicated that connectedness was one of the motives for television audiences to engage on Twitter when watching a television show. Participants felt more connected to a larger audience when they tweeted while watching television shows. A television show can allow the phenomenon

of connectedness' among the viewers of a certain show. Since it encourages these audiences to participate with audiences outside their living room who are also watching the television show 7de Laan. The literature further shows that audiences get drawn to a television show because they want a sense of connectedness with other audiences (Naerland 2020:94). Additionally, Twitter gratifies the need for audiences to connect to other audiences creating a ritualised social relationship connected by a television show (Steiner & Xu 2018:83).

The participants conveyed that they use Twitter while watching 7de Laan to experience a feeling of connectedness with others.

While other participants discussed different motives of engagement on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show 7de Laan, such as connecting with different audiences, engaging in conversations, or being part of a virtual community, it is worth noting that Interviewee 9 explicitly used the phrase "connectedness."

Moreover, these responses highlight the significance of social connection and virtual community for these audiences. The audiences value the chance to engage with other audiences, express their opinions, and experience a sense of camaraderie in a broader discourse while enjoying 7de Laan.

Theme 2: Connectedness	
Interviewee	**Quoted Statement(s)**
Participant 1	*"It makes me look forward to watching the show because I get to engage with people outside my room."*
Participant 3	*"It makes me look forward to watching the show because I get to engage with people outside my room."*
Participant 4	*"It makes me look forward to watching the show because I get to engage with people outside my room."*
Participant 6	"To be entertained and to engage with other people outside my living room." "Connection with other audiences who are tweeting about the show."
Participant 7	"To connect with other people." "Connection with other audiences who are tweeting about the show and also being part of the conversation."
Participant 8	"To connect with other people who are watching the show."
Participant 9	"Because I feel like I am watching with other people in the same room. So, I get a feeling of connectedness with others."

	"To connect with other audiences who are also tweeting." "I get to connect with other users and form a community of 7de Laan Twitter viewers."
Participant 10	"To connect with other audiences of the show." "To connect with other audiences who are also tweeting." "I like it because I get to l connect with other people."
Participant 11	"To discuss the show with other audiences." "To connect with other audiences who are also tweeting and to relax."

5.3.3 Theme 3: Social Interaction

Social interaction was one of the emerging themes which the interviewees indicated as one of the motives that make them engage on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show 7de Laan. Participant 1,2, 6,7,9,10,11mentioned that Twitter allowed interaction with other audiences outside their living rooms. Some of these audiences they interact with, do not even know them personally but online under the hashtag. The interactions are often about the plot twist, characters, and performances, fostering a sense of an online community. Social interaction, a key aspect of the uses and gratifications theory, is described as the use of social media for communication and engagement with others (Williams 2013:364). The participants' quotations related to this theme are shown below.

Table 5.6: Theme 3: Social interaction	
Interviewee	**Quoted Statement(s)**
Participant 1	*"I feel happy especially when other audiences comment on my tweet."*
Participant 2	*"It makes me look forward to watching the show because I get to engage with people outside my room."*
Participant 6	*"To be entertained and to engage with other people outside my living room."*
Participant 7	"I get excited, especially when the story is good and I see other audiences also tweeting." "Yes, because I want to be part of the conversation."
Participant 9	"Because I feel like I am watching with other people in the same room.
Participant 10	"To read both local and international news. To engage on local television shows during broadcast.."
Participant 11	"To discuss the show with other audiences."

5.3.4 Theme 4: Information Seeking

Information seeking was a theme that also emerged from the interviews where audiences indicated that they engage on Twitter for updates on any related information on the television show 7de Laan, such as cast changes, special episodes, or interviews on Twitter spaces, currently known as X spaces. Twitter space is a part of Twitter where the user can make a room and start a discussion (Sufidiana, Mustofa & Nashir 2023: 683). This theme was one of the salient motives for audience engagement on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show 7de Laan to seek information and learn about social storylines of national importance. Information-seeking came out as one of the motivators for Twitter usage among the audiences. Interviewees further stated that they watch the television show 7de Laan. Sometimes 7de Laan showcases educational storylines that raise awareness on certain issues of national importance such as cancer month, gender-based violence, racism and many other issues.

Table 5.7: Theme 4: Information seeking

Interviewee	Quoted Statement(s)
Participant 2	*"Yes, during loadshedding I only read other tweets and when I have missed an episode."* *"Yes, through other audience tweets and comments."*
Participant 3	*"Yes, during loadshedding I only read other tweets and when I have missed an episode."* *"Yes, through other audience tweets and comments."*
Participant 4	*"Yes, during loadshedding I only read other tweets and when I have missed an episode."* *"Yes, through other audience tweets and comments."*
Participant 5	"No, is not possible for me. I have tried to do that during loadshedding, and I found myself only reading other users' comments on the show to understand what could have happened on the episode that I have missed."
Participant 8	"No, I find it challenging, hence I will just read the tweets of other users to catch up on the story."
Participant 10	"No, it is a challenge, so I just read other users' tweets."
Participant 9	"No, it is a challenge for me, so I just read other users' tweets, comments and like."

These quotations from the interviewees do not indicate as the main motivator, that Twitter can function as a means for obtaining information for other 7de Laan audiences who engage on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show, particularly when they have missed an episode.

5.3.5 Theme 5: Storyline Speculation

Storylines emerged as a prominent theme from the data analysis, as all interviewees indicated their engagement on Twitter during the prime-time broadcast of the television show 7de Laan due to the captivating narratives. The storyline is the key driver of audience engagement on Twitter during the prime-time broadcast of a television show. The researcher noted during the research that a number of television shows especially long forms which include telenovelas and soap operas are the ones that top the trend list. The titles range from #7deLaan, #SkeemSaam, #HouseofZwide, #Gomora, #TheRiver, #UmkhokhaTheCurse, and finally #GqeberhaTheEmpire, this is a clear indication of the dominance of long- form during prime- time television viewing in the country.

Table 5.8: Theme 5: Storyline

Interviewee	Quoted Statement(s)
Participant 1	*"I tweet about the storyline and characters because that's what I watch the show for."* *"Yes, I do feel like I am missing out because I like engaging on tweets about the storylines so I can share my opinions."*
Participant 2	*"Love stories melt my heart."* *"I tweet about the storyline and characters because that's what I watch the show for."* *"Yes, I do feel like I am missing out because I like engaging on tweets about the storylines so I can share my opinions in real time because once the show ends people move to other shows to tweet about."*
Participant 4	"Love stories melt my heart." "I tweet about the storyline and characters because that's what I watch the show for." "Yes, I do feel like I am missing out because I like engaging on tweets about the storylines so I can share my opinions in real time because once the show ends people move to other shows to tweet about."

Participant 6	"Family conflicts and sibling rivalry are my favourite stories because I get to feel like I am part of the story because I also have those conflicts with my siblings." "Yes, I do read others' tweet when I don't feel like tweeting and the twists and turns are unpredictable." "The story twists and turns as well as the characters." "Excited, especially when the storyline is interesting and is the kind, that I like."
Participant 7	"Oh! they improve the story because I see how some of my tweets are implemented to improve the story." "The storyline, the characters and the performance."
Participant 8	"Love stories and location adventure stories that break away from the genre. For example, when they had the story of the young characters getting lost in Mpumalanga." "I like it because it means the story is good."

5.3.6 Theme 6: Character-centric discussions

Another noteworthy finding was that the audiences of 7de Laan who engage on Twitter when watching the live broadcast of this show discussed the characters' performance. In these discussions, others would try to predict the storyline and share their opinions on character development, which often they get right because there are only seven stories in the universe. It was also interesting to note that other interviewees engage on Twitter when watching the television show 7de Laan for emotional engagement with the characters and their struggles. This allows them to empathise as they attempt to put themselves through the characters' struggles. This is further noted when one goes to the hashtag, audiences will be discussing how they will or will not react in certain ways that you find the character reacting given the situation.

Table 5.9: Theme 6: Character-centric discussions	
Interviewee	**Quoted Statement(s)**
Participant 1	*"I tweet about the storyline and characters because that's what I watch the show for."*
Participant 4	*"I tweet about the storyline and characters because that's what I watch the show for."*
Participant 6	*"The story twists and turns as well as the characters."*
Participant 7	"The storyline, the characters and the performance."

Participant 8	"The storyline, the actors, the performance, and the wardrobe. I love their current storytelling way which is fast-paced, and it does not drag like before. The actors truly give great performances, and the wardrobe is beautiful, and it is current fashion."

Table 5.10 Hierarchy of Emergent Themes

No.	Themes	Descriptions
1.	Entertainment/ Escapism	Allowing audiences to enjoy the show, while allowing them to escape from the busy day to day life.
2.	Connectedness	When one wants to connect with other audiences online to create a connectedness community.
3.	Social interaction	Engaging on media to interact with other people, family members, and friends about a show.
4.	Information seeking	Engaging with media to seek information on social issues and any other news.
5.	Storyline speculation	Engaging to speculate on the storyline development and sharing story opinions.
6.	Character-centric discussion	Discussion of character traits, flaws, development, and impact on the story.

Table 510 provides a theme description for a better understanding of what each theme means in the context of the study and the data collected.

This section presents the findings from the thematic analysis of online interviews conducted with 12 Twitter users who engaged in discussions during the prime-time broadcast of the television show 7de Laan. Quotes from the research participants were used to give a narrative account and insight into the research study.

The thematic analysis of the qualitative interview transcripts with the 12 interviewees who actively participated on Twitter during the broadcast of 7de Laan revealed shared

motivations, behaviours, and gratifications among the participants. These users used Twitter to establish connections with other viewers, engage in discussions about the show, and seek amusement. Their tweets revolve around plots, characters, and performance, to exert a favourable effect on the show. The engagement on Twitter enriches the viewers' experience, offering a feeling of camaraderie and tranquillity. In general, the participants highly prioritise honesty in their tweets, actively want to establish connections with other viewers and derive pleasure from the interaction that takes place during the broadcast.

5.4 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 5 AND AN OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER 6

This chapter provides a thorough and sophisticated comprehension of the intricate processes that form the basis of audience interaction with media content. By incorporating a diverse array of motivations, behaviours, and interactions, it establishes a strong basis for investigating the various ways in which audiences engage with and gain benefits from media. This concept not only recognised the enjoyment and distraction provided by media but also emphasised the societal, informative, and interactive aspects of audience involvement. The study gained a more profound comprehension of how audiences actively interact with media information, influencing their perceptions, opinions, and behaviours, by acknowledging the interrelationship between these different components. A thematic analysis using inductive reasoning was performed to uncover six emerging themes from the qualitative data collected through online interviews with 12 7de Laan audiences who engage on Twitter when watching the television show. The prevailing themes that emerged were entertainment, connectedness, social interaction, information seeking, storyline speculation and character-centric discussions.

Chapter 6 contains the quantitative data, which is then examined. Chapter 6 provides descriptive data that delineates the characteristics of the respondents through descriptive statistics, including frequencies and appropriate percentages. In addition, Chapter 6 illustrates the inferential statistical analysis, which sought to conclude.

CHAPTER 6: QUANTITATIVE DATA PRESENTATION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter shows and evaluates the quantitative data obtained from practical research. The primary objective of this study was to systematically examine the quantitative data collected from surveys to address the research objectives outlined in Chapter 1. Furthermore, the study sought to thoroughly comprehend the motivations of 7de Laan audiences who engaged on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of this television show by carefully analysing the quantitative data to reveal the underlying patterns, correlations, and trends within the data. The chapter articulates the basis for formulating well-informed conclusions and how analysed data contributes to the overall body of knowledge on the topic. Also outlined are sub-headings and topics supported by the attainment of the following study goals:

i. To explore the *7de Laan* audience's motives for engaging on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show.
ii. To explore what the *7de Laan* audiences use Twitter for when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show.
iii. To determine what the *7de Laan* audiences tweet about when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show.
iv. To establish the nature of gratifications that *7de Laan* audiences seek from tweeting when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show.

The next session presents quantitative data and analysis.

6.2 QUANTITATIVE DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Quantitative data analysis involves the systematic collection and evaluation of verifiable and measurable data (Creswell 2007). For numerical data, it has a statistical assessment or analysis process. Quantifying an idealised condition is a quantitative research analyst's main objective. Scholars skilled in quantitative analytic methods

usually complete it by hand or with the use of computers (Cowles 2005). The quantitative approach to a phenomenon typically offers two important advantages. It can be used by a researcher to methodically categorise, summarise, and present observations first.

6.2.1 Online survey data

The aim of utilising an online survey was to explore why the audiences of the television show 7de Laan engage on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast. Thus, the survey questionnaire was shared with Twitter users under the 7de Laan hashtag (#7delaan). SPSS version 25.0 was employed for the analysis of the quantitative data. After the importation of data from Microsoft Excel, errors were fixed. Among the discrepancies found were the misspellings in the recorded data. The study did not include the survey questionnaire's missing data. Additionally, a five-point Likert scale was employed in the survey's formulation to assess respondents' degrees of agreement or disagreement with many statements and enquiries. Questions using a Likert scale yielded ordinal data.

Thus, rather than using strict assumptions like normal distributions to assess ordinal data, the researcher chose to employ non-parametric tests. According to Taylor (2020), non-parametric tests are statistical analysis techniques that do not depend on a distribution meeting certain assumptions to be evaluated. Three non-parametric tests—Chi-square, Kendall's tau-b, and Gamma—were selected for this study to evaluate the data and address the research objectives outlined in the previous section. Here is a brief description of these three tests:

6.2.1.1 Chi-square

Chi-square tests are used to analyse the association between two or more variables that are measured on categorical scales (Liptáková 22: 50). The null hypothesis in a Chi-square test posits the absence of a link between the two variables. A p-value below 0.05 is required to reject the null hypothesis at a 95% confidence level. If the null hypothesis cannot be rejected and the p-value is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), we can

conclude that the two variables under study have a statistically significant link or association. The reasons why viewers of the television show 7de Laan interact on Twitter during the prime-time broadcast are not different based on their age or language background.

6.2.1.2 Kendall’s tau-b

Kendall's tau-b is a non-parametric correlation statistic that assesses the degree of relationship between two variables. (Crichton 1999:763). This measure was used to evaluate the correlation between Twitter usage and the TV series 7de Laan. The data for this analysis was gathered via a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. To utilise Kendall's tau-b, both variables must be categorised uniformly, either from low to high or from negative to positive.

6.2.1.3 Goodman and Kruskal’s Gamma Test

The non-parametric Goodman and Kruskal's Gamma test is employed to ascertain the strength and direction of correlation between two ordinal scale variables (Barbiero & Hitaj 2020:906). This study involved data analysis conducted in two phases, which were: The non-parametric Goodman and Kruskal's Gamma test is employed to ascertain the strength and direction of correlation between two ordinal scale variables (Barbiero & Hitaj 2020:906). This study involved data analysis conducted in two phases, which were:

i. **First phase:** The data was examined utilising descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics summarise data in an organised manner by elucidating the relationship between two variables in a sample or population (Kaur, Stoltzfus, & Yellapu, 2018:60). Because of this, descriptive statistics are used to characterise the study's sample and gauge how much respondents agree or disagree with the assertion regarding their use of Twitter and their viewing of the television show 7de Laan prime-time broadcast. Pie charts and bar graphs are utilised to illustrate the results of descriptive statistics.

ii. **Second phase:** Analysis and evaluation of the correlation between each Twitter user's answer and the viewers of 7de Laan were included in this step. Non-parametric tests were the best suitable for assessing the independence and association among the variable responses due to the nature of the questions in the survey questionnaire.

The results of this investigation were exhibited by the application of inferential and descriptive statistics through three distinct non-parametric test types: Chi-square, Kendall's tau-b, and Gamma tests. Furthermore, the results were summarised and visualised using bar graphs and pie charts. Every choice on the Likert scale received a response, and all of them were analysed. Additionally, inferential statistics were employed to derive conclusions on the broader population, while descriptive statistics were utilised to summarise the findings' data (Kaur et al. 2018: 63). The study provided valuable information about the Twitter usage patterns of the television audience of the show 7de Laan during prime-time broadcasts. Nonetheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that the results are not universally applicable to all Twitter users of 7de Laan during the show's prime-time broadcast.

6.2.2 Findings

This research aimed to examine the motivations behind audiences of the television show 7de Laan who engage on Twitter during its prime-time broadcast. Because the study concentrated on the live broadcast, which is only available in South Africa at 18:00, Monday through Friday, this component of the study gives the results from the survey that was given to South African Twitter users. Even though there were 500 Twitter users in the original sample, 209 Twitter users in total answered the poll; only 200 of these respondents answered every question. Respecting the study's research ethics, which stipulated that participation was optional, was essential for the researcher. In addition, participants were free to leave the research at any moment and would not face any consequences.

The reliability of the survey questionnaire was tested in the first section of the results, followed by a descriptive analysis in the second part and a test to see if there was any

correlation between Twitter use and the television programme 7de Laan in the third and final section.

6.2.2.1 Test for online survey reliability

The reliability of the online survey was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha. The reliability of 12 items relating to the motives of *7de Laan* audiences' engagement on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show was tested. SPSS software was employed to evaluate Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's alpha is occasionally misapplied to assert that an instrument is unidimensional i.e., it only measures once concept (Taber 2017: 1273). This survey measured what 7de audience tweet about, and the gratifications sought.

ii. What the audiences tweet about

The reliability was measured through the seven questions relating to what 7de Laan audiences' tweet about when watching the prime-time broadcast.

Table 6.1: Alpha coefficient of 0.84

Mean inter-item covariance:	**0.46**
Quantity of items on the scale:	**7**
Coefficient of scale reliability:	**0.84**

Table 6.1 indicates an alpha coefficient of 0.84 (rounded off). The alpha value is within the permissible range of 0.65 to 0.8. or higher, hence indicating that the scale is reliable.

6.2.2.2 Gratifications sought from Twitter during 7de Laan

The reliability of 7 items relating to what 7de Laan audiences sought when they engaged on Twitter watching the prime-time broadcast was tested. Table 5.4 indicates an alpha coefficient of 0.9. This alpha value indicates that the scale is reliable for

testing the gratifications 7de Laan audiences sought by engaging on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show.

Table 6.2 Alpha Cronbach coefficient of .09

Mean inter-item covariance:	0.57
Quantity of items on the scale:	7
Coefficient of scale reliability:	0.90

The aforementioned alpha values signify that the online survey questionnaire was well constructed and can be trusted to assess the motivations behind the audience participation with the television show 7de Laan on Twitter during its prime-time broadcast.

Figure 6.1: Respondents' age

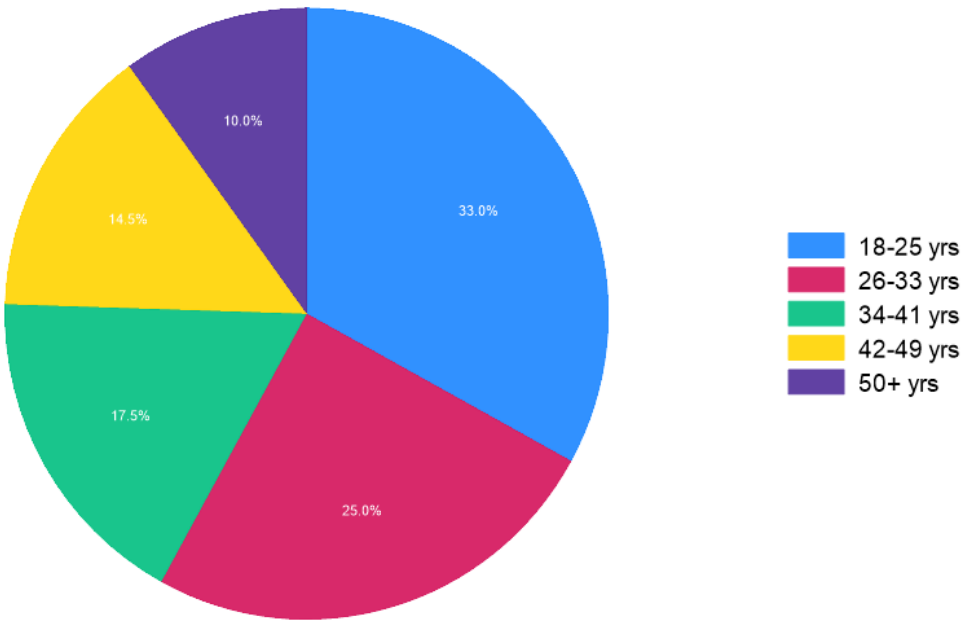


Figure 6.1 indicates that 66 of the respondents (i.e., 33% of the sample), were between the ages of 18-25 years, followed by participants aged between 26-33 years who were 50 (representing 25% of the sample), followed by those aged from 34-41 who were 35 (17.5% of the sample), then those aged from 42-49 years, who were 29 persons (14.5% of the sample), and finally those aged 50 and over who were 20 and represented 10.0% of the sample. According to McInnes (2023) social media users in South Africa are predominately between the ages of 18-24 years (27%) and 25-34 years (29.6%). These numbers clearly demonstrate that the bulk of responders are aged 18 to 25 years.

Figure 6.2: Respondents' gender

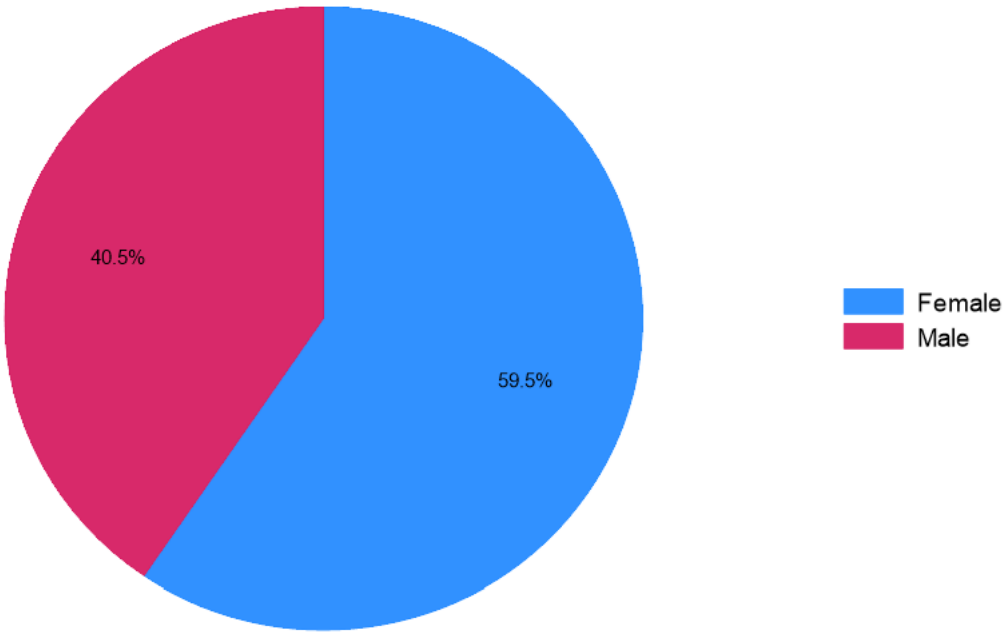


Figure 6.2 illustrates that 119 of the respondents (i.e., 59.5%) were female and 81 (40.5%) were males. These results are interesting because it affirms that the television show 7de Laan, as a soap genre, is more skewed to female audiences than males. This result confirmed a finding by Iqbal and Abdar (2016:10), who stated that soap operas have a predominately female audience.

Figure 6.3: Respondents' home language

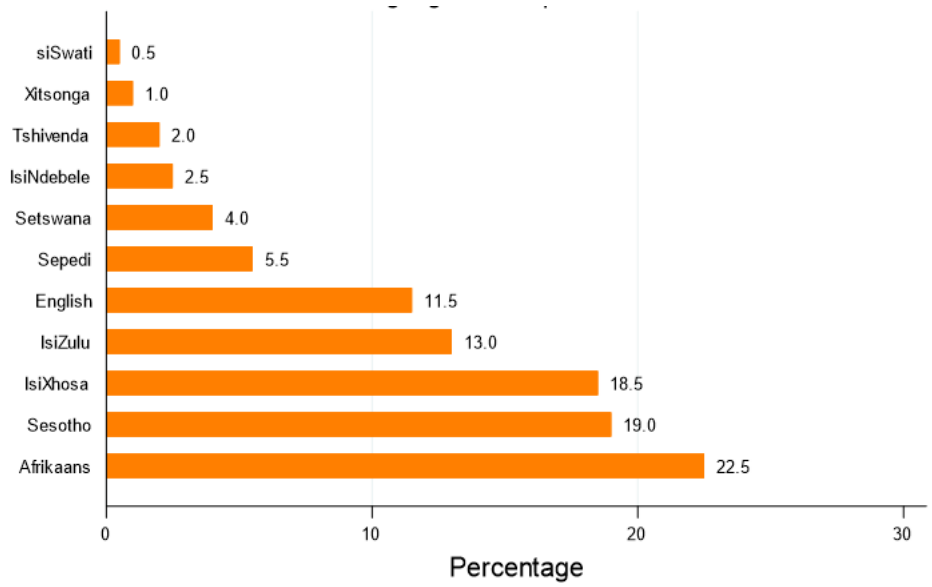


Figure 6.3 indicates that 45 respondents (22.5%) were Afrikaans speakers, 38 respondents (19%) were Sesotho speakers, 37 respondents (18.5%) were IsiXhosa speakers, 26 respondents (13%) were IsiZulu speakers, 23 respondents (11.5%) were English speakers, (5.5 %) 11 respondents (5.5%) were Sepedi speakers, eight respondents (4%) Setswana speakers, five respondents (2.5%) were IsiNdebele speakers, four respondents (2%) were Tshivenda speakers, two respondents (1%) were Xitsonga speakers and one respondent (0.5%) was siSwati speakers. These data indicate that most respondents were Afrikaans speakers and the percentage of Afrikaans speaking respondents was expected to be higher than any language as the television show 7de Laan is in the Afrikaans language with wall-to-wall English subtitles.

Figure 6.4: Respondents' level of education

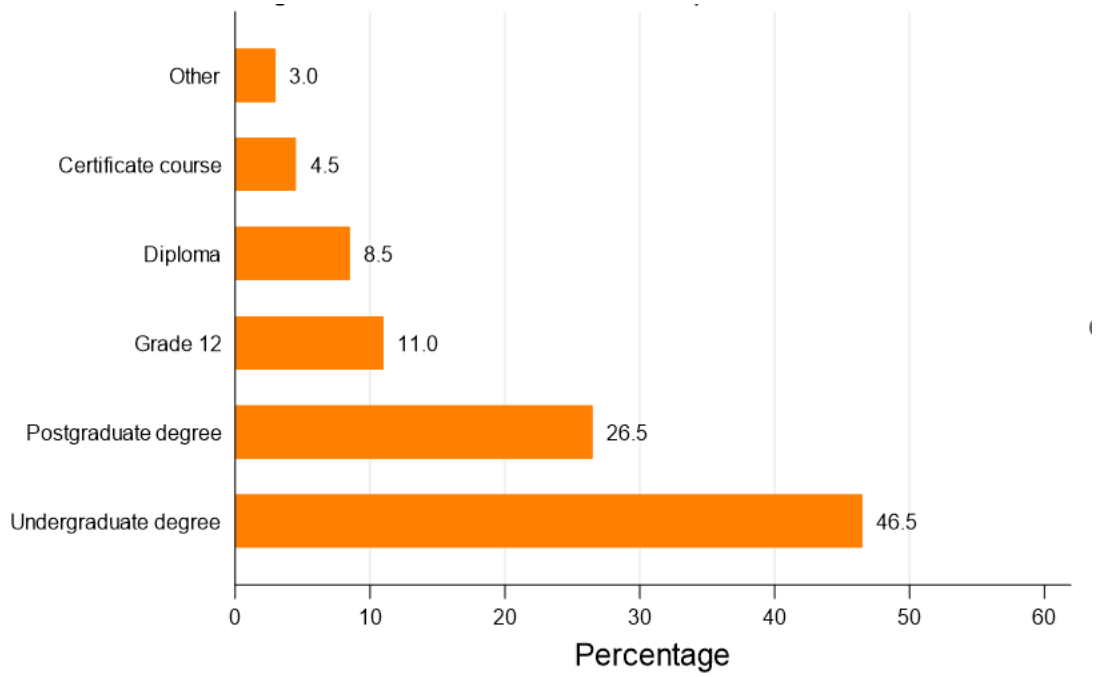


Figure 6.4. indicates that 93 respondents (46% of the sample) obtained an undergraduate degree, while 53 (26.5%) had a post-graduate degree, 22 (11.0%) obtained Grade 12, 17 (8.5% of the sample), nine respondents (4.5%), had a Diploma, nine respondents (4.5%) had a certificate course while 3.0% had other qualifications. This figure reveals that the majority of respondents have an undergraduate degree and could be employable.

Figure 6.5: Respondents' employment status

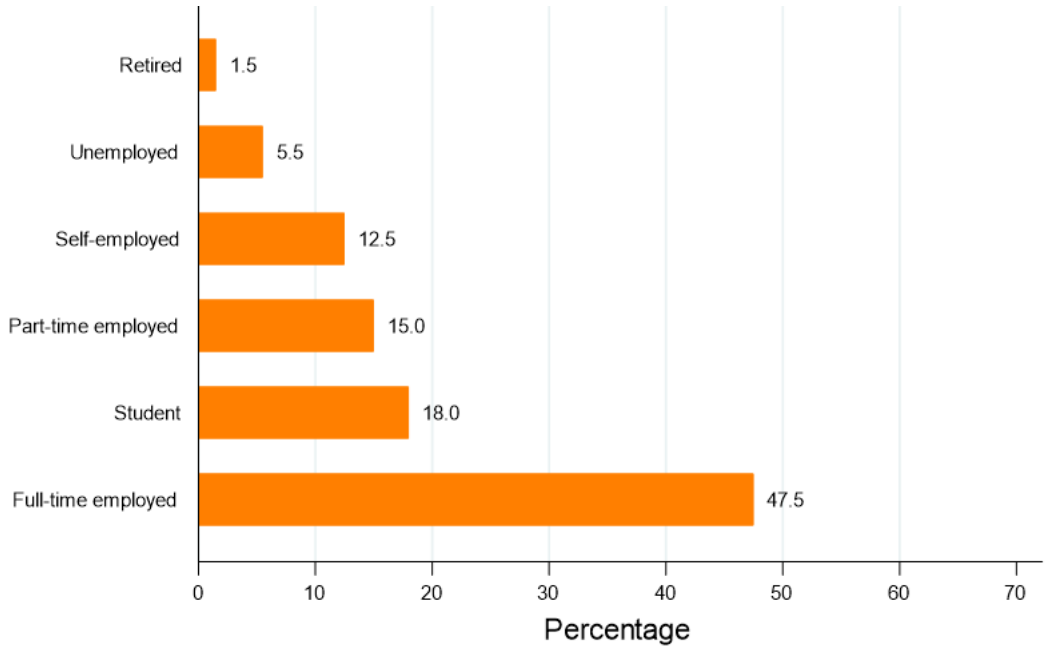


Figure 6.5 indicates that 95 respondents (47.5% of the sample) were employed full-time, 36 (18%) were students, 30 (15% of the sample) were part-time employed, 25 (15%) were self-employed, 11 (5.5%) were unemployed and three (1.5%) were retired. The data indicate that most respondents were employed full-time and active on Twitter while watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show 7de Laan.

Figure 6.6: Participants' Province

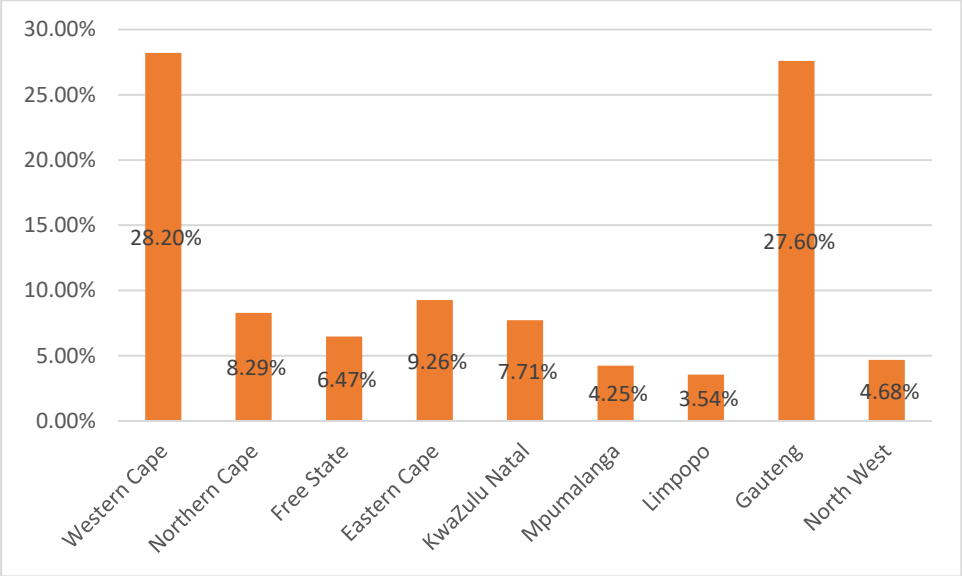


Figure 6.6 indicates that 56 of the participants (28.2% of the sample) resided in the Western Cape, 17 (8,29%) lived in the Northern Cape, 10 (6,47%) resides in the Free State, 18 (9.26%) lived in the Eastern Cape, 14 (7,71%) resided in the KwaZulu Natal (KZN) province, nine respondents (4.25%) resided in Mpumalanga, seven respondents (3,54%) resided in Limpopo Province, followed by 55 (27,60%) who resided in Gauteng Province and nine respondents (4.68%) stayed in North West Province.

These results mean that the Western Cape and Gauteng were the two provinces with the majority of 7de Laan audiences who engaged in the survey.

Figure 6.7: Respondents with own Twitter account

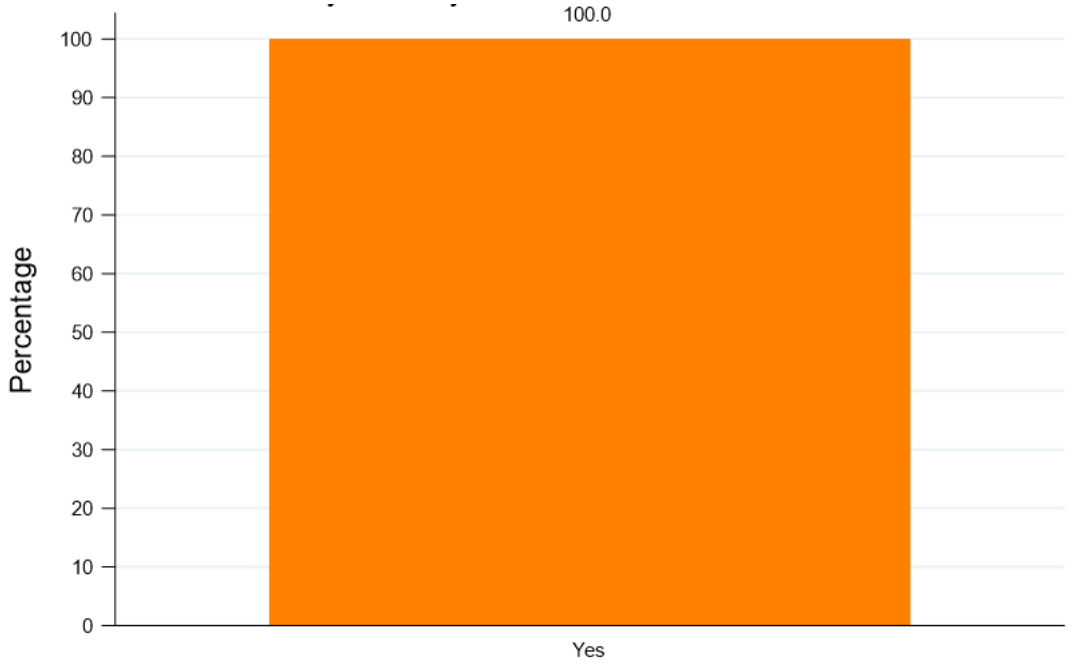


Figure 6.7 indicates that 200 respondents (100% of the sample) had their own Twitter accounts. These respondents did not engage on Twitter using other accounts or an account of an institution.

Figure 6.8: Respondents following *7de Laan* Twitter account

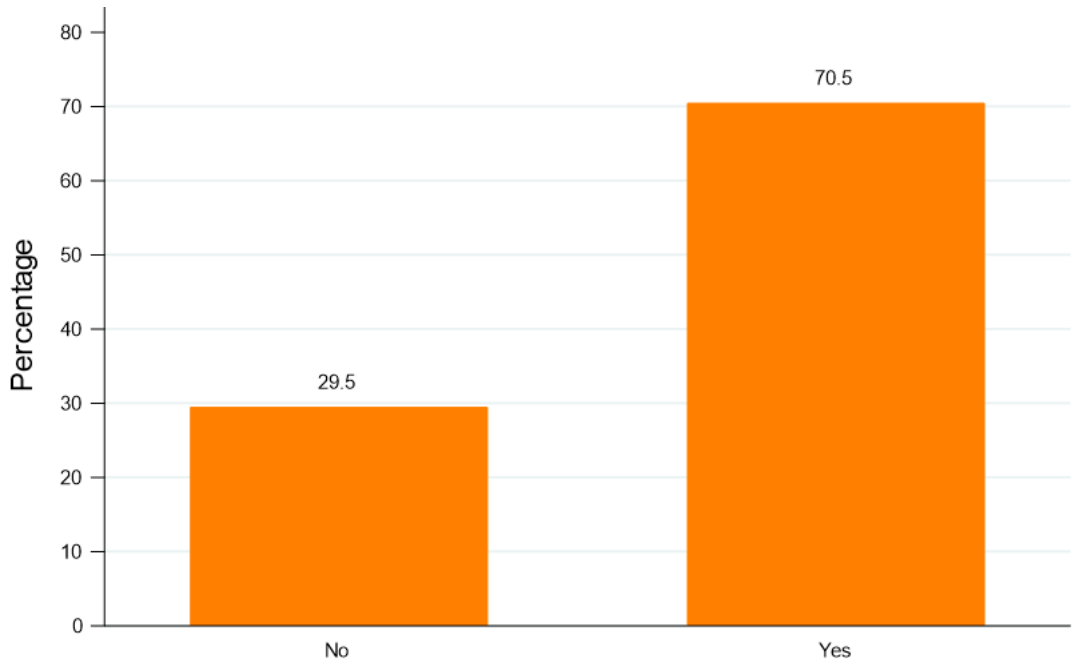


Figure 6.8 indicates that 141 respondents (i.e., 70.5% of the sample) followed the television show *7de Laan's* Twitter account while 59 (29.5%) did not follow the account. However, these respondents not following the *7de Laan* account did not limit their engagement on Twitter when the television was broadcasting during prime-time as they used the hashtag to access the conversations about the show on Twitter. So, one did not need to follow an account to engage on content related to that account, especially when there was a hashtag that existed.

Figure 6.9: Respondents engage on Twitter

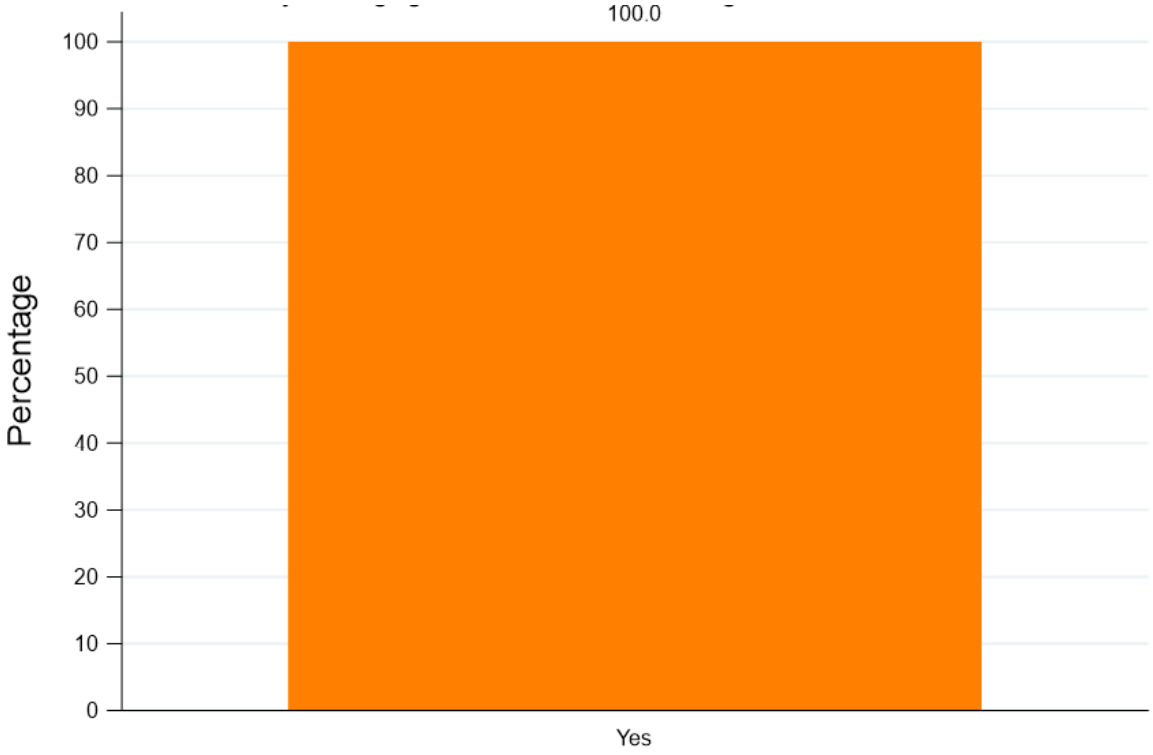


Figure 6.8 indicates that 200 respondents (100% of the sample) engaged on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan*. This indicates that all survey participants connected with the television show 7de Laan utilising the hashtag.

This further indicates that the sample was the correct one to respond to the survey.

Figure 6.9: Respondents engaging on Twitter while watching the prime-time broadcast

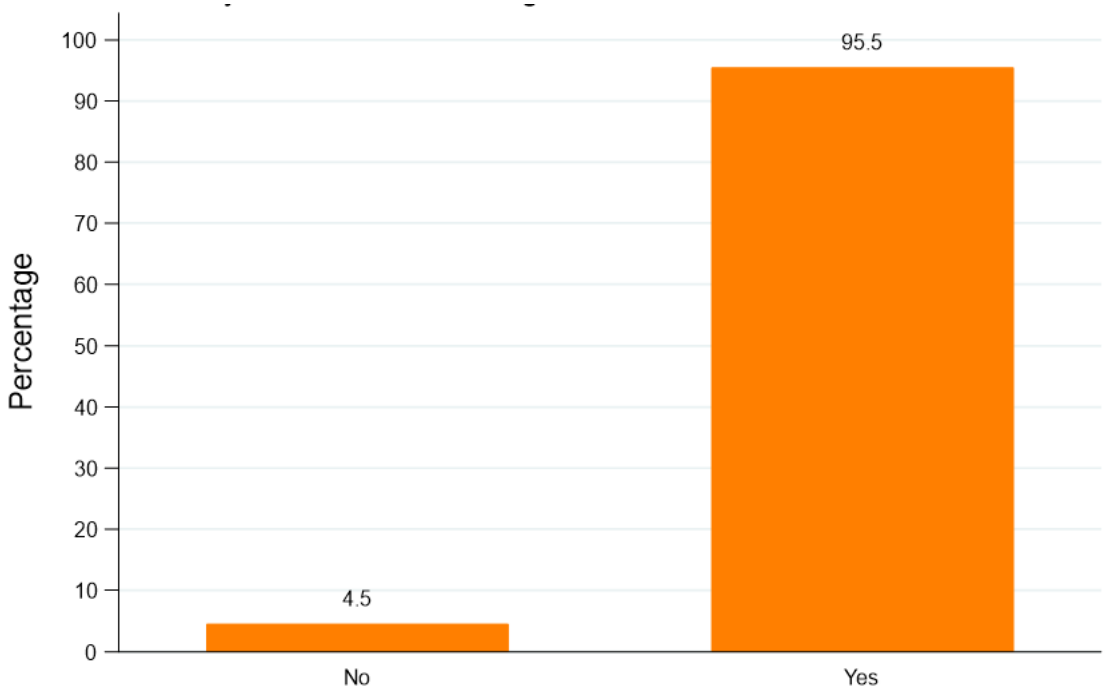


Figure 6.9 indicates that 191 respondents (i.e., 95.5% of the sample) tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show, with nine respondents (4.5%) did not tweet. This offers a clear indication that most of the respondents tweeted during the prime-time broadcast of the show. These nine respondents could be the ones that engaged by reading tweets of other tweeter users and commented – few respondents mentioned that on other days they engaged on Twitter by reading tweets and comments from others.

Figure 6.10: Frequency of respondents' tweet when watching the prime time *7de Laan broadcast*

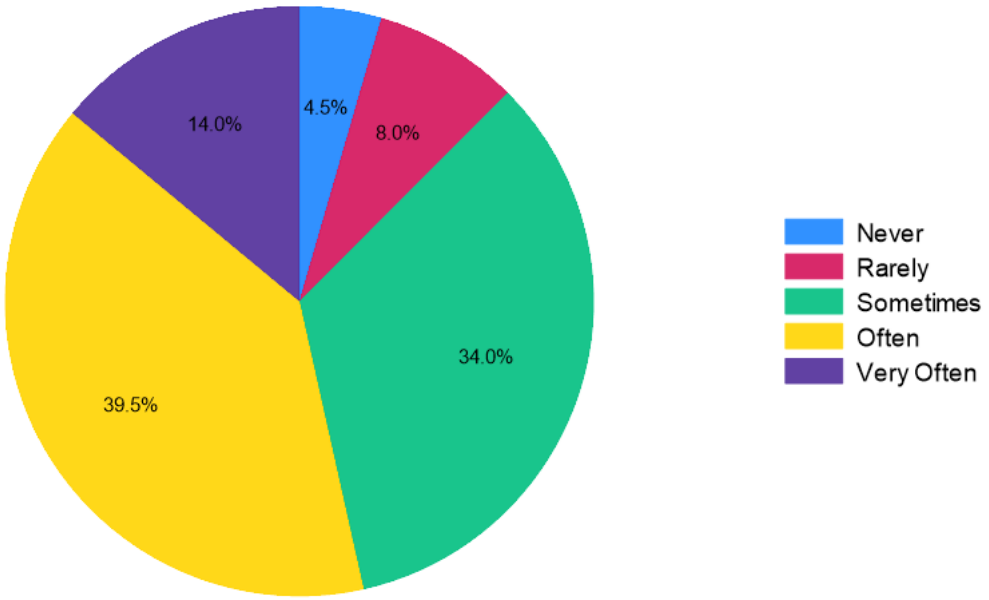


Figure 6.10 indicates that 79 respondents (39.5% of the sample) often tweeted when watching the broadcast of the television show *7de Laan*, followed by 68 (34%) who sometimes tweeted, then 28 (14%) of the sample, who watched the show very often, and 16 (8%) who rarely tweeted while watching the show. However, nine respondents (4.5% of the sample) indicated they never tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of this television show. The data indicate that most respondents tweeted while watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show 7de Laan.

Figure 6.11: Devices respondents used to engage on Twitter

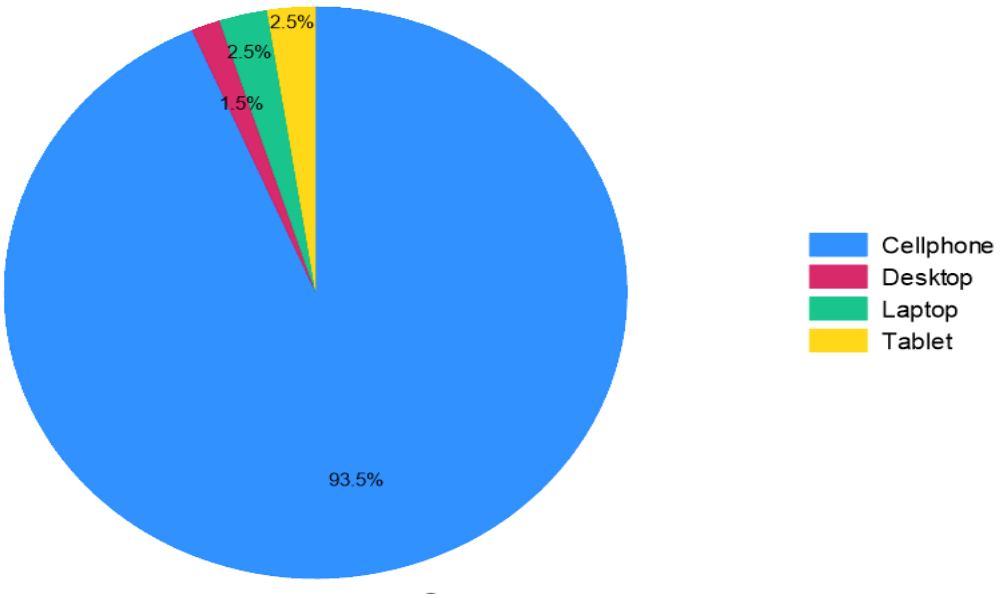


Figure 6.11 demonstrates that 187 respondents (93.5% of the sample) accessed Twitter using their cellphones, followed by laptop and tablet users who were five (2.5%), and three respondents (1.5%) who accessed Twitter via desktops which could be from the office. The majority (94%) of the respondents accessed Twitter via their cellphones. This finding supports other studies, for example, Parsons (2022), who found out that 80% of Twitter users worldwide, access Twitter via their smartphones.

Figure 6.12: Respondents' way of engaging on Twitter

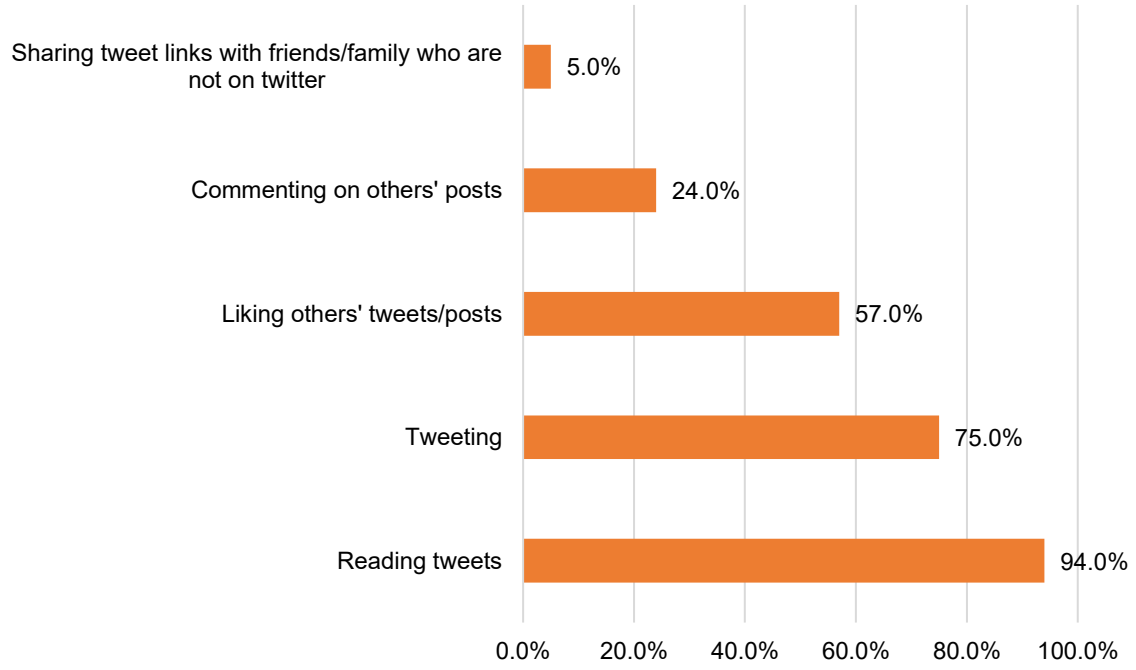


Figure 6.12 indicates that 10 respondents (i.e., 5% of the sample), engaged on Twitter by sharing tweet links with friends and family who were not watching, 24,0% (48) engaged by commenting on others' tweets, 57.0% (114) engaged by liking others' tweets, while 150 respondents (75,0% of the sample) engaged by tweeting with, 188 respondents (94,0% of the sample) stating that they engaged by reading the tweets. The data further demonstrate that most respondents engaged on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* to read others' tweets.

SECTION B: THE MOTIVES OF 7DE LAAN AUDIENCES FOR ENGAGING ON TWITTER WHEN WATCHING THE PRIME-TIME BROADCAST OF THE SHOW

6.2.2.3 Scale reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient

The Cronbach's alpha is a measure that is used to test the reliability of a scale of items. The acceptable range for this alpha coefficient is between 0.65 and 0.8 or higher. The alpha coefficients that are less than 0.5 are usually unacceptable.

Table 6.3 Cronbach's alpha coefficient

Mean inter-item covariance:	**0.36**
Quantity of items on the scale:	**12**
Coefficient of scale reliability:	**0.88**

Within this context, the reliability of 12 items relating to the motives of the *7de Laan* audiences for engaging on Twitter when watching the broadcast of the show was tested. Table 5.3 shows an alpha coefficient of 0.88 (rounded off). This alpha value shows that the scale is considered reliable for testing the viewer's motives.

Figure 6.13: Respondent tweet when watching the broadcast

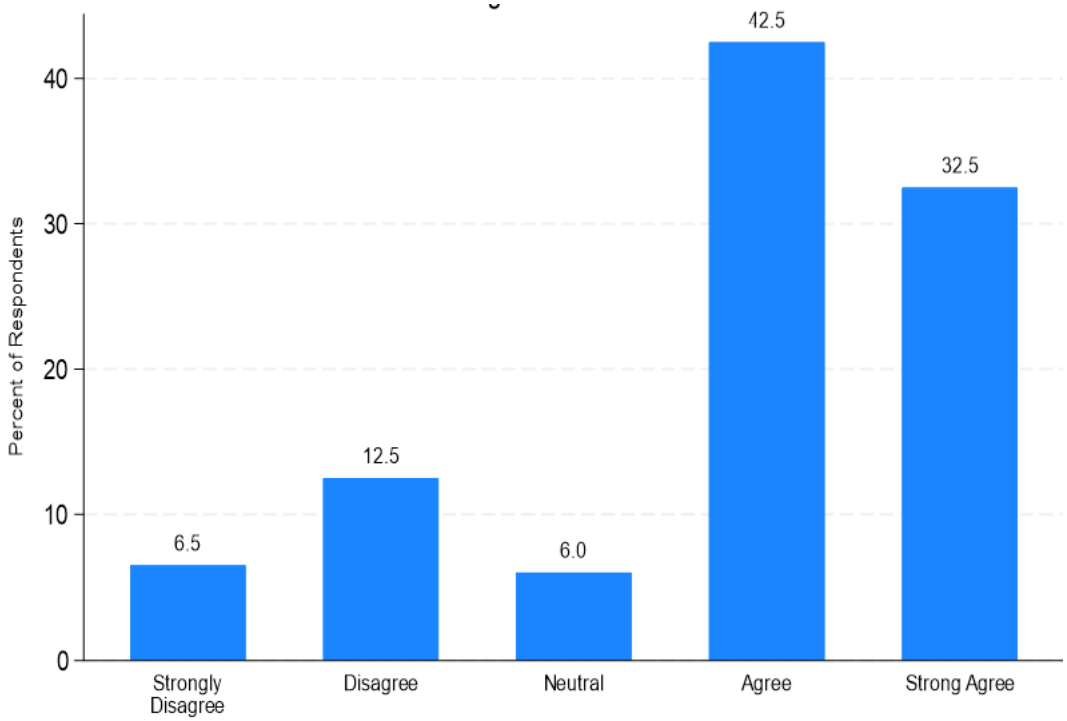


Figure 6.13 demonstrates that 85 respondents (42.5%), agreed that they tweeted when watching the broadcast of the television show *7de Laan*, followed by those who strongly agreed who were 65 and represented (32.5%), 25 disagreed and this group represented (12.5%) who were 25 respondents, and 13 respondents (6.5%) who strongly disagreed that tweeted when watching the show. However, (12%) were neutral in their response. These results reveal that the majority of the sample tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan*.

Figure 6.14: Gender analysis - Respondents who tweet when watching *7de Laan*

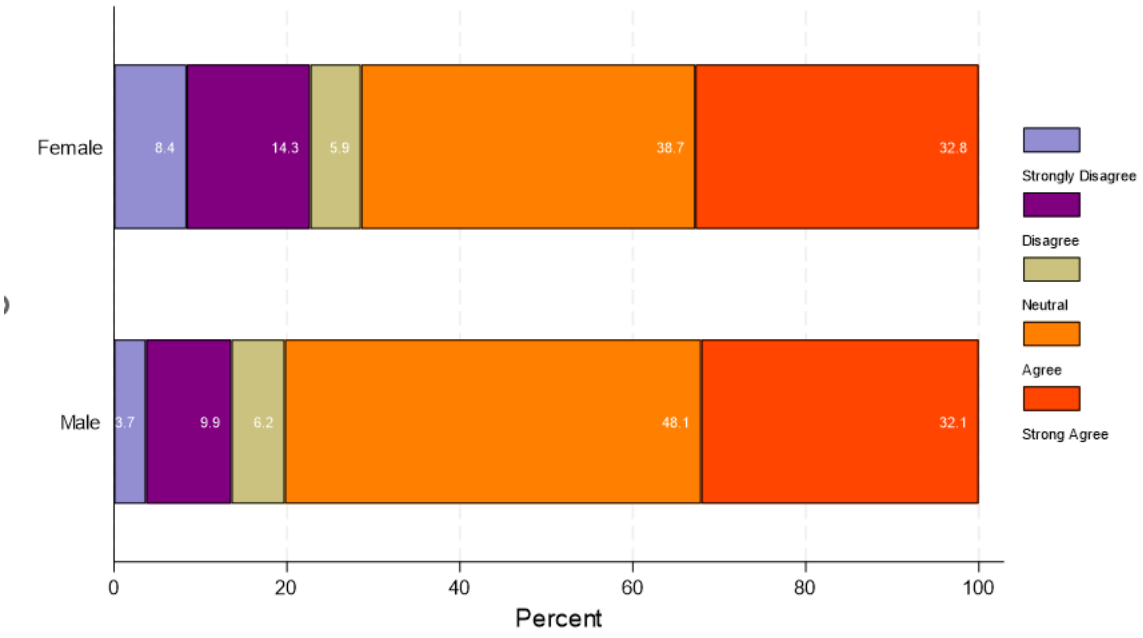


Figure 6.14 indicates that the majority 39 respondents (48%) respondents who were male agreed that they tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show, 26 respondents (32.1%) strongly agreed, eight respondents (9.9%) were neutral, five respondents (6.2%) disagreed and three respondents (3.7%) strongly disagreed.

However, it is interesting to note that from these respondents, 46 females (38.7%) strongly agreed that they tweeted when watching the television show, 39 females (32.8%) agreed, seven females (5.9%) were neutral, 17 females (14.3%) disagreed, and 10 females (8.4%) strongly disagreed. These findings reveal that the majority of the respondents who tweeted when watching the television show were male.

Figure 5.15: Respondents who tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of 7de Laan to make online friends

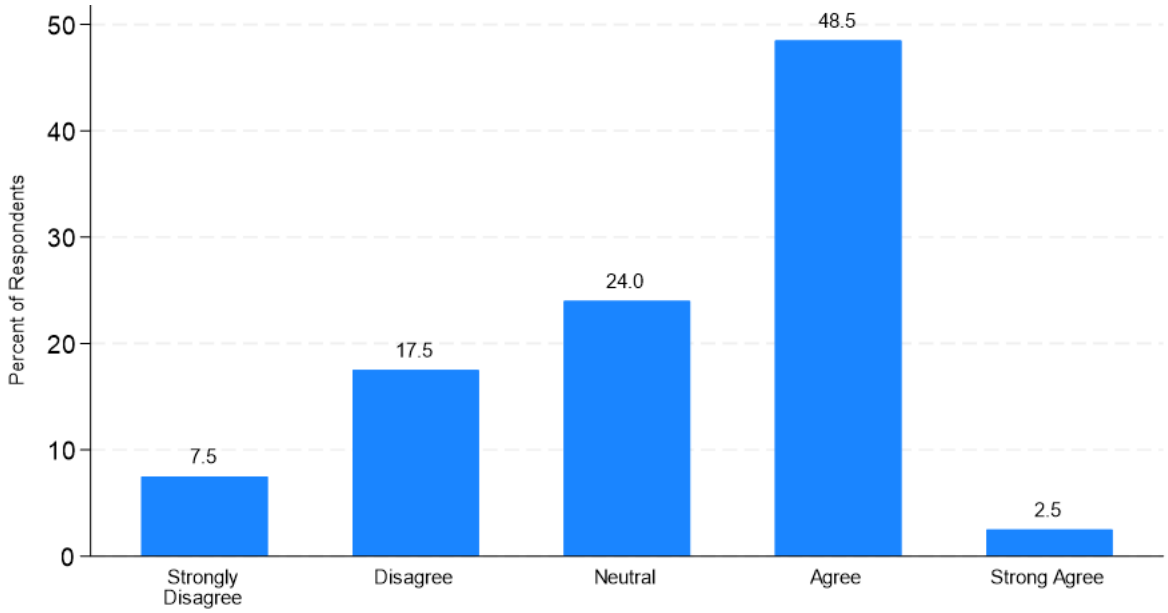


Figure 5.15 indicates that 97 of the respondents (or 48.5%) tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television *7de Laan* to make online friends who had similar interests as them. While 48 respondents (24.0%) were neutral, 35 respondents (17.5%) disagreed, 12 respondents (7.5%) strongly disagreed and only five respondents (2.5%) strongly agreed. Nonetheless, these findings indicate that most respondents concurred with the assertion that they tweeted while viewing the prime-time broadcast of the show to cultivate online friendships with individuals who shared similar interests.

Figure 6.16: Respondents who tweet to interact with other audiences watching *7de Laan*

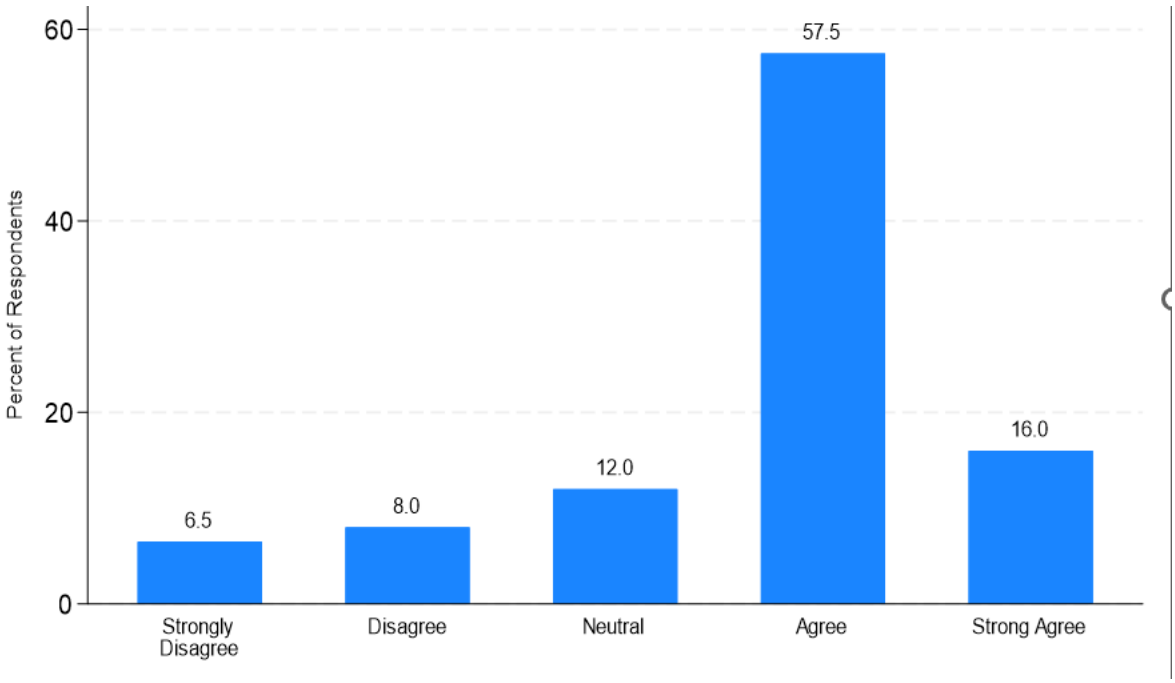


Figure 6.16 indicates that 115 respondents (57.5%) tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* to interact with other audiences who were also watching the show, followed by 32 respondents (16.0%) who strongly agreed, 24 respondents (12.0%) who were neutral, 16 respondents (or 8.0%) disagreed, and 13 respondents (6.5%) strongly disagreed. The results demonstrate that most respondents concurred they tweeted while seeing the prime-time broadcast of 7de Laan to engage with other viewers.

Figure 6.17: Respondents who tweeted for exciting storylines

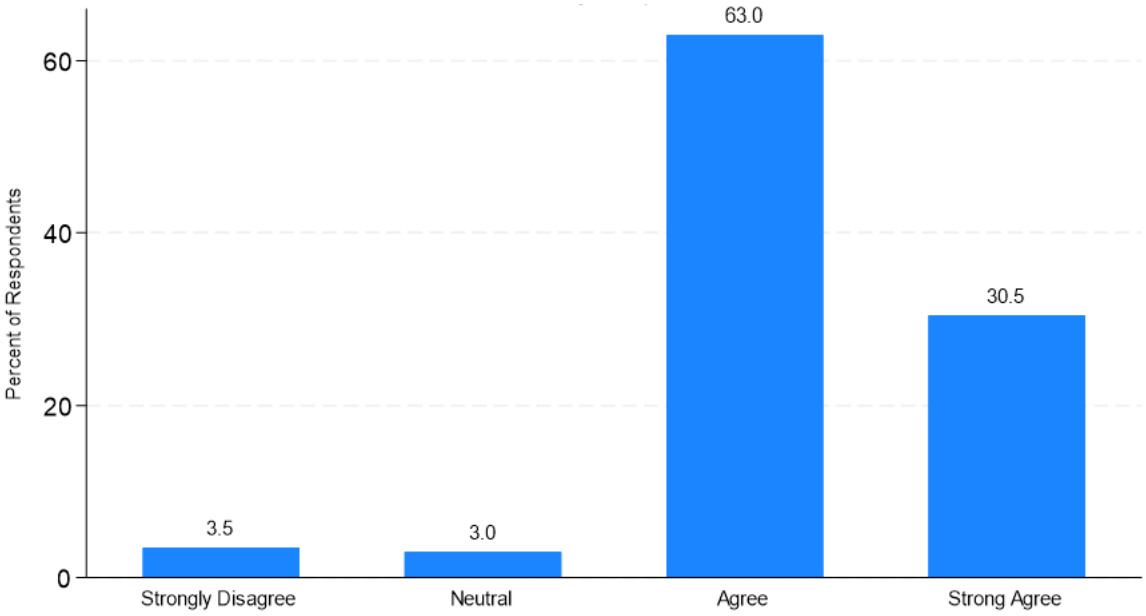


Figure 6.17 indicates that 126 respondents (or 63.0%) agreed that they tweeted when watching prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* because of the exciting storylines. This group was followed by 61 respondents (30.5%) who strongly agreed, seven respondents (3.5%) who strongly disagreed and six respondents of (3.0%) were neutral.

This finding suggests that the storyline is one of the main themes that influenced these respondents to tweet when watching the television show.

Figure 6.18: Respondents who retweeted others' tweet

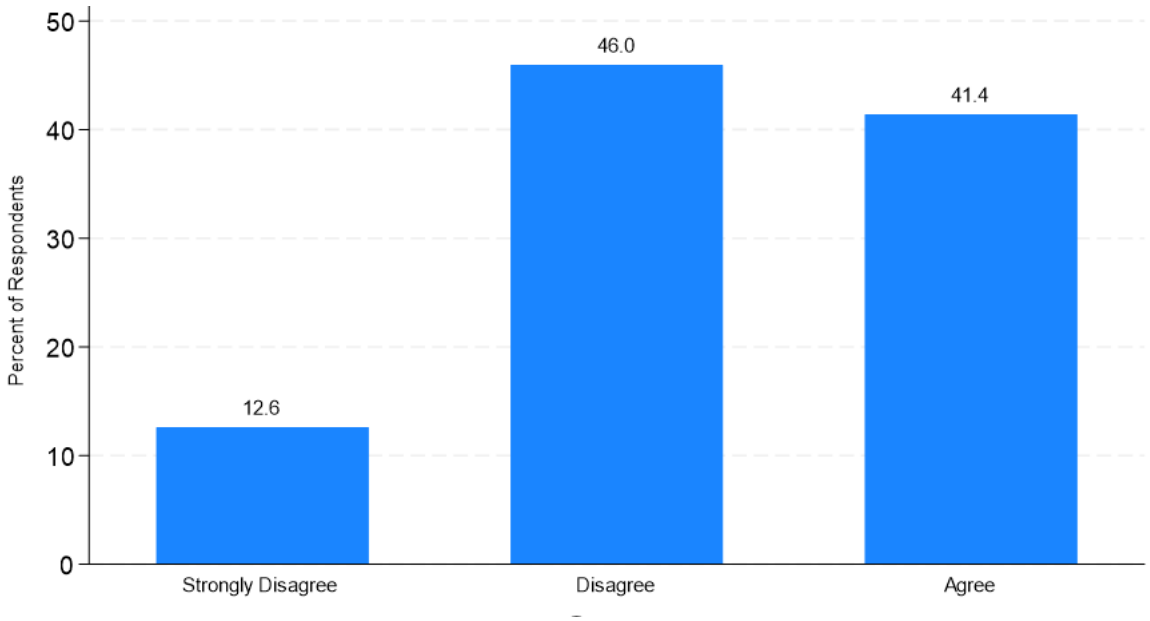


Figure 6.18 suggests that 92 respondents (46.0%) disagreed that they watched the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* to retweet others' tweets, while 83 respondents (41.4%) agreed that they watched to retweet others' tweets and 25 respondents (12.6%) strongly disagreed that they watched the television show to retweet others' tweets. This result clearly indicates that 117 respondents (58.6%) did not watch the prime-time broadcast of the television *7de Laan* to retweet others' tweets.

Figure 6.19: Watch to read others' comments

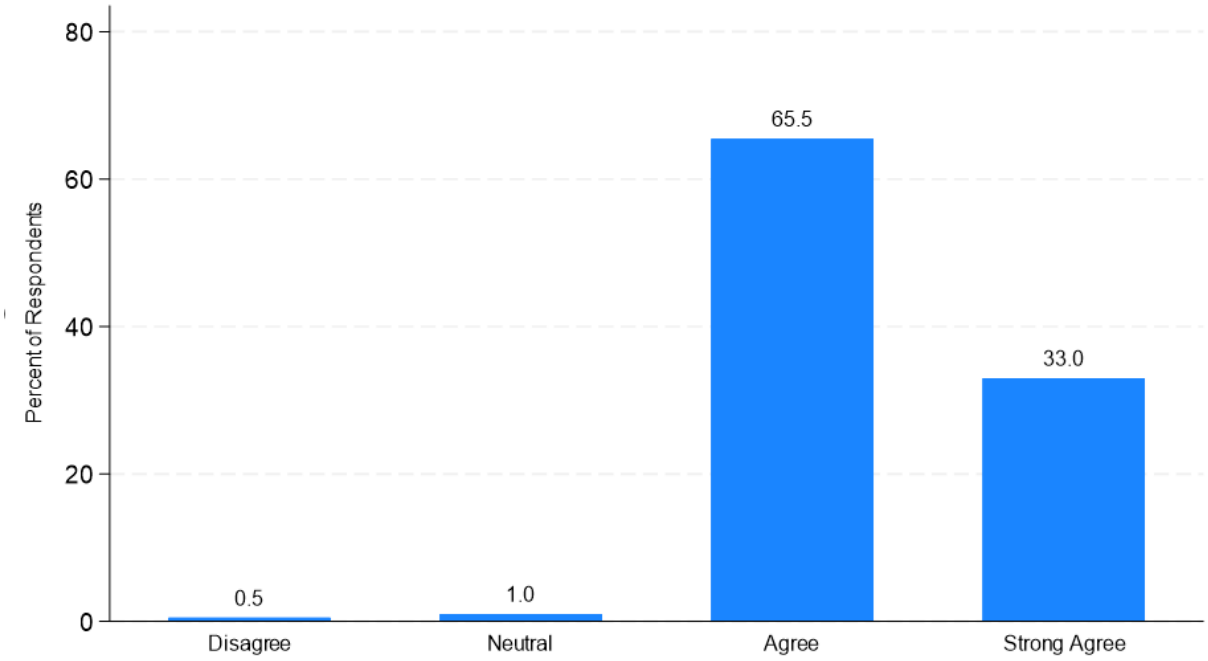


Figure 6.19 shows that 131 respondents (65.5%) agreed that they watched the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* to read others' comments, followed by 66 respondents (33% of the sample) who strongly agreed, the two respondents (1.0%) who were neutral and one respondent (0.5%) disagreed.

This result is a clear indication that there was a majority of the respondents audiences who engaged on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of *7de Laan* to read other users' comments under the *7de Laan* hashtag.

Figure 6.20: Respondents who tweeted to enhance the viewing experience

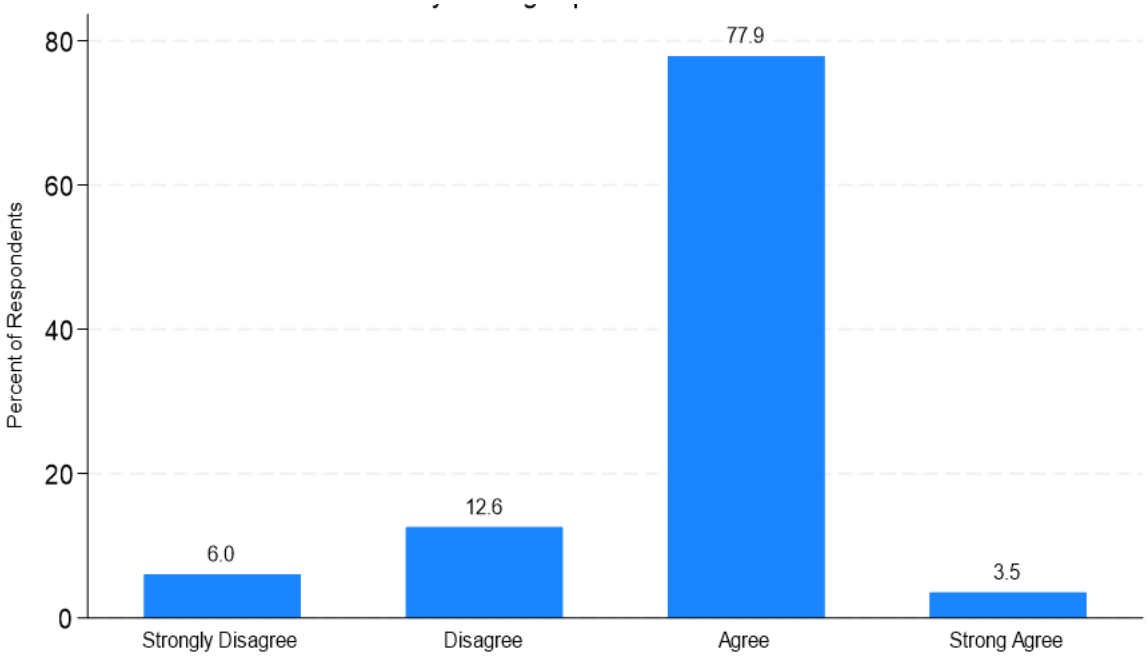


Figure 6.20 shows that 156 respondents (i.e., 77.9% of the sample) (156) tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* to enhance their viewing experience, while 65 respondents of 12.6% of the sample disagreed, 12 respondents (6.0%) strongly disagreed and seven respondents of (3.5%) strongly agreed.

Figure 6.21: Respondents who engaged on Twitter to like and comment on others' tweets

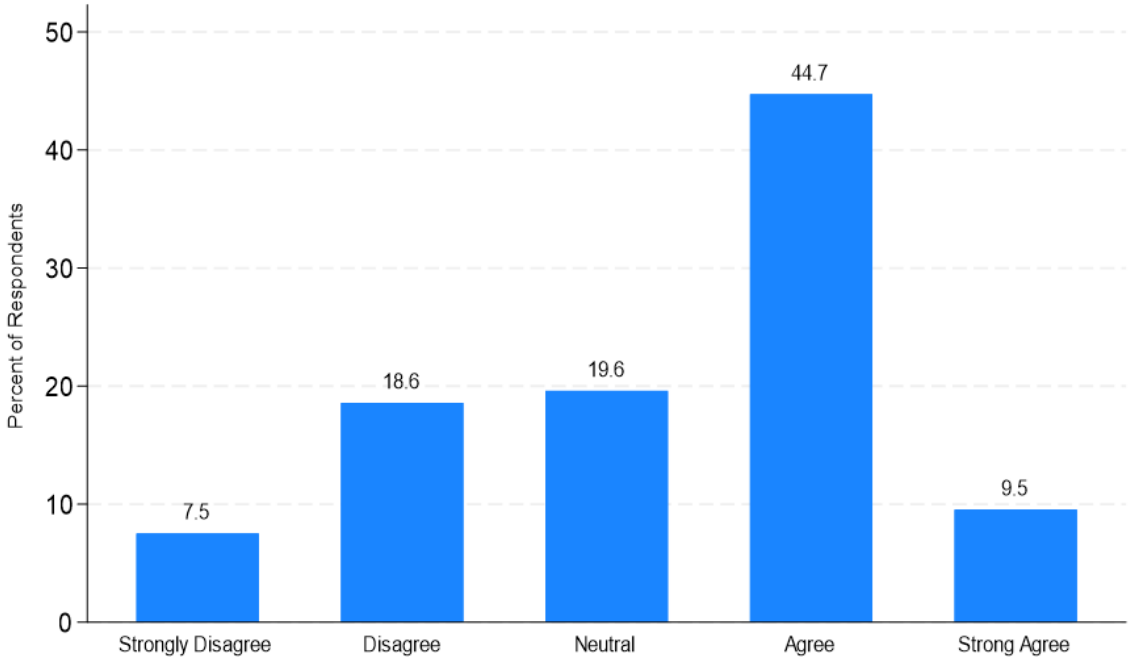


Figure 6.21 indicates that the majority 90 respondents (44.7%) agreed that they engaged on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* to like and comment on others' tweets while 39 respondents (19.6%) were neutral, 37 respondents (representing 18.6%) disagreed, 15 respondents (7.5%) strongly disagreed and 19 respondents (9.5%) strongly agreed.

Figure 6.22: Respondents who engaged on Twitter to join in the conversations

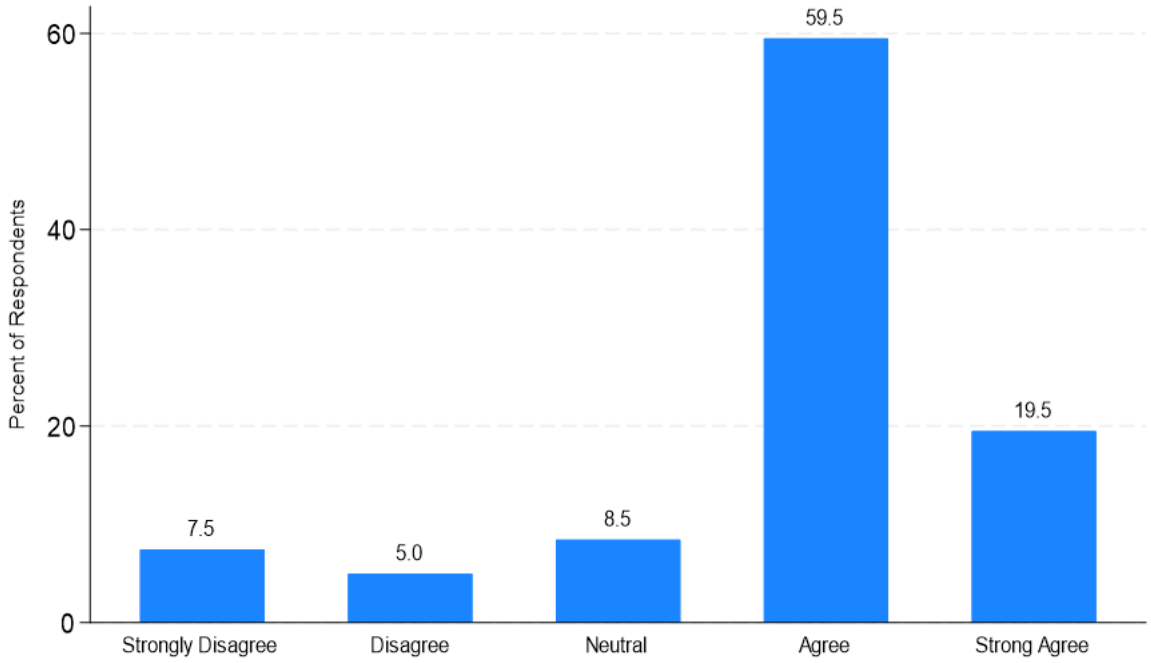


Figure 6.22 demonstrates that 119 respondents (59.5%) agreed that they engaged on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* to join in on the conversations about the show, while 39 respondents (19.5%) strongly agreed, 15 respondents (7.5%) strongly disagreed, 10 respondents (5.0%) disagreed, and 17 respondents or 8.5% of the sample were neutral.

Figure 6.22. indicates that most respondents engaged on Twitter when watching the show to join the conversations about the show.

Figure 6.23: Respondents who connected with other people who were also watching

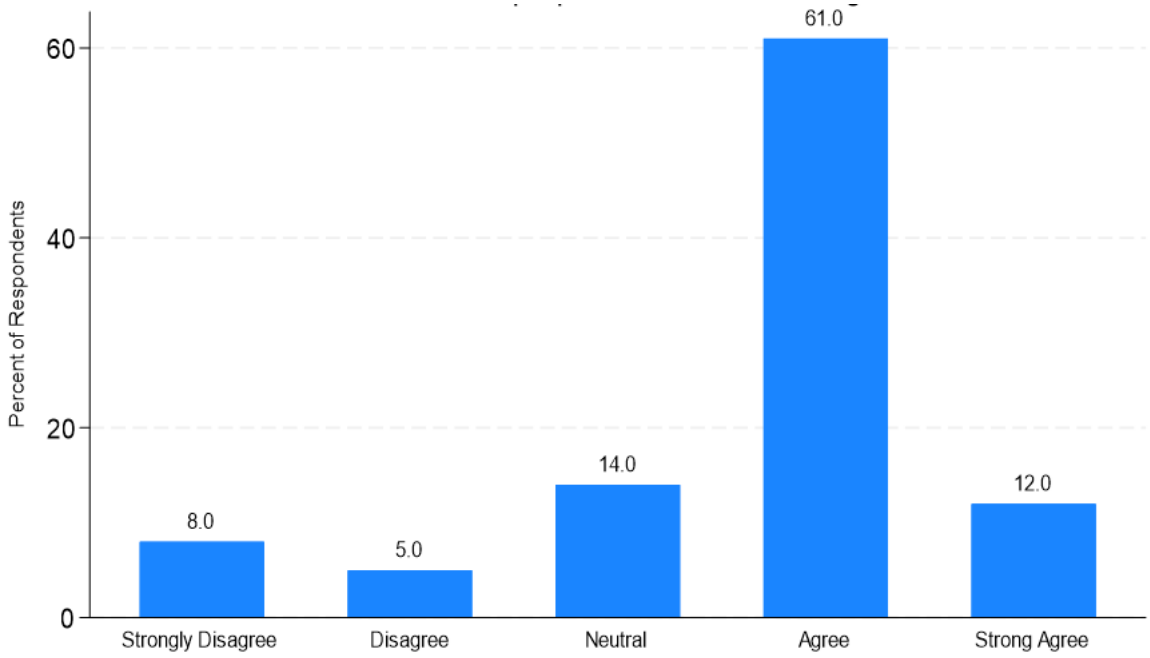


Figure 6.23 indicates that 122 respondents (61.0%) agreed that they tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* to connect with other people who were also watching, so did 24 respondents (12%) who strongly agreed, while the second highest percentage was that of 28 respondents (14.0%) who were neutral in their response, then, 16 respondents (8.0%) strongly disagreed and 10 respondents (5.0%) disagreed that they tweeted to connect with other people watching the television show 7de Laan.

Figure 6.24: Respondents who only tweeted when watching *7de Laan*

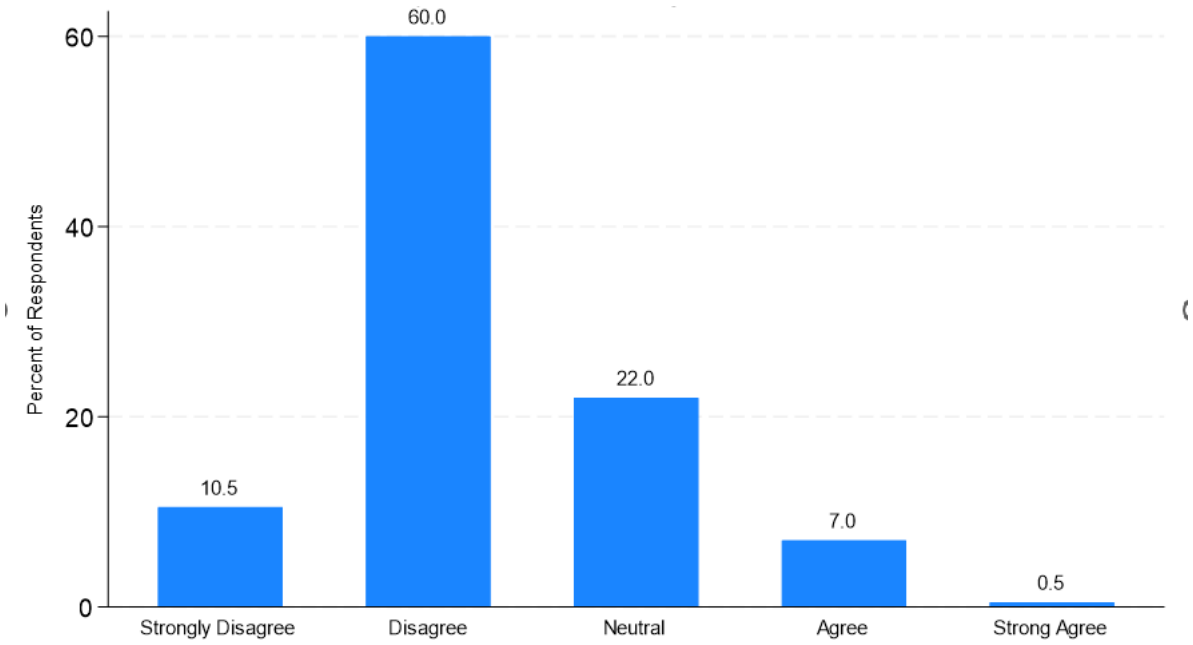


Figure 6.24 indicates that 120 respondents (60.0%) disagreed that they only tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show 7de Laan, while 44 respondents (22.0%) were neutral, 21 respondents (10.5%) strongly disagreed, with only 14 respondents (7.0%) agreeing and 10 respondents (0.5%) strongly agreeing. This result clearly indicates that most of the respondents did not only tweet when watching the television show 7de Laan.

Figure 6.25: Respondents who tweeted to share comments and tweeted with family and friends

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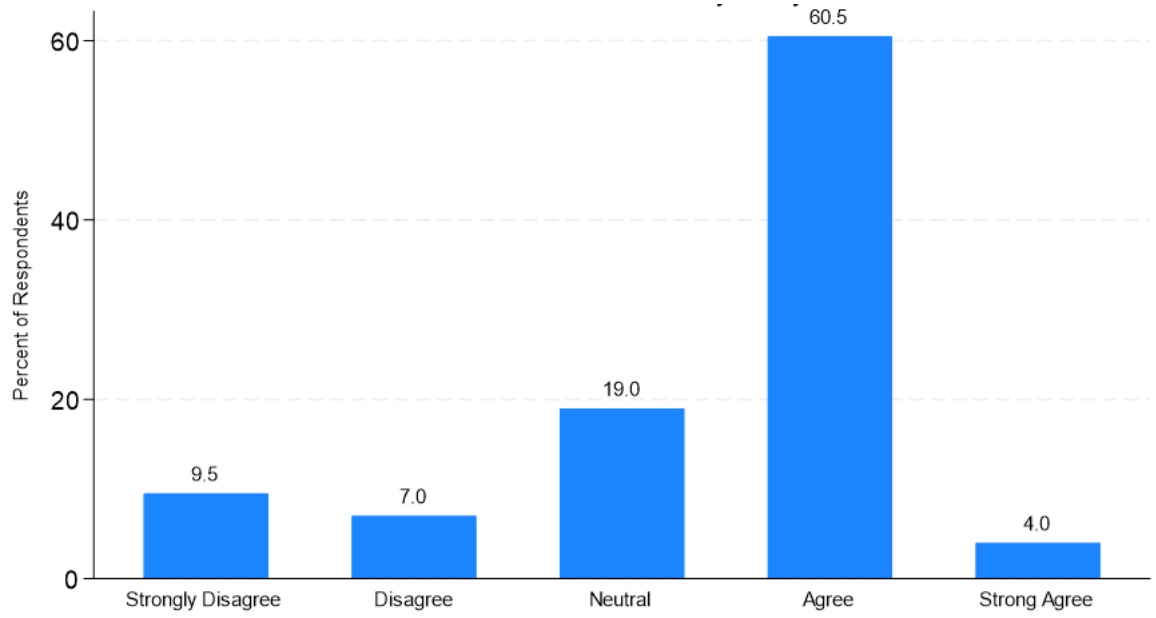


Figure 6.25 demonstrates that 121 respondents (60.5%) agreed that they tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* to share comments and tweets with family and friends, while eight respondents (only 4.0%) strongly agreed, 19 respondents (9.5%) strongly disagreed and 14 respondents (7.0%) disagreed, and 38 respondents (19.0%) were neutral. However, Figure 6.25 reveals that the majority of respondents concurred that they tweeted while viewing the prime-time broadcast of the television program 7de Laan to share remarks and tweets with friends and family.

SECTION C: WHAT 7DE LAAN AUDIENCES USE TWITTER FOR WHEN WATCHING THE PRIME-TIME BROADCAST OF THE SHOW

6.2.2.5 Scale reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient

The reliability of 7 items relating to what *7de Laan* audiences use Twitter for when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show was tested.

Table 6.4 Scale reliability Cronbach's alpha coefficient

Mean inter-item covariance:	**0.46**
Quantity of items on the scale:	**7**
Coefficient of scale reliability:	**0.84**

Table 6.4 shows an alpha coefficient of 0.84 (rounded off). The alpha value is within the recommended range of 0.65 to 0.8 or higher, indicating that the scale is dependable.

Figure 6.26: Tweet to feel like part of a connected community

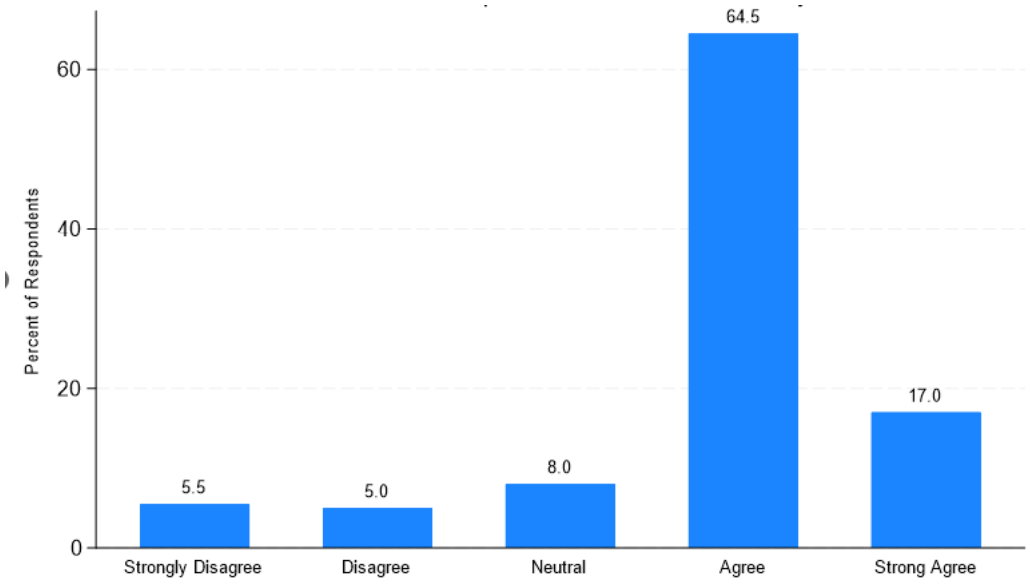


Figure 6.26 indicates that respondents 129 (64.5%) agreed they used Twitter to feel like part of a connected community. Followed by 34 (17.0%) of respondents who strongly agreed, 16 (8.0%) of respondents were neutral in their response while 11 (5.5%) strongly disagreed and 10 (5.0%) disagreed. This clearly indicates that the majority of the respondents agreed that they used Twitter to feel like a part of connected community and this is evident because these audiences of the television show *7de Laan* do not all know each other but they feel connected when engaging on Twitter about the show.

Figure 6.27 Response by the age category

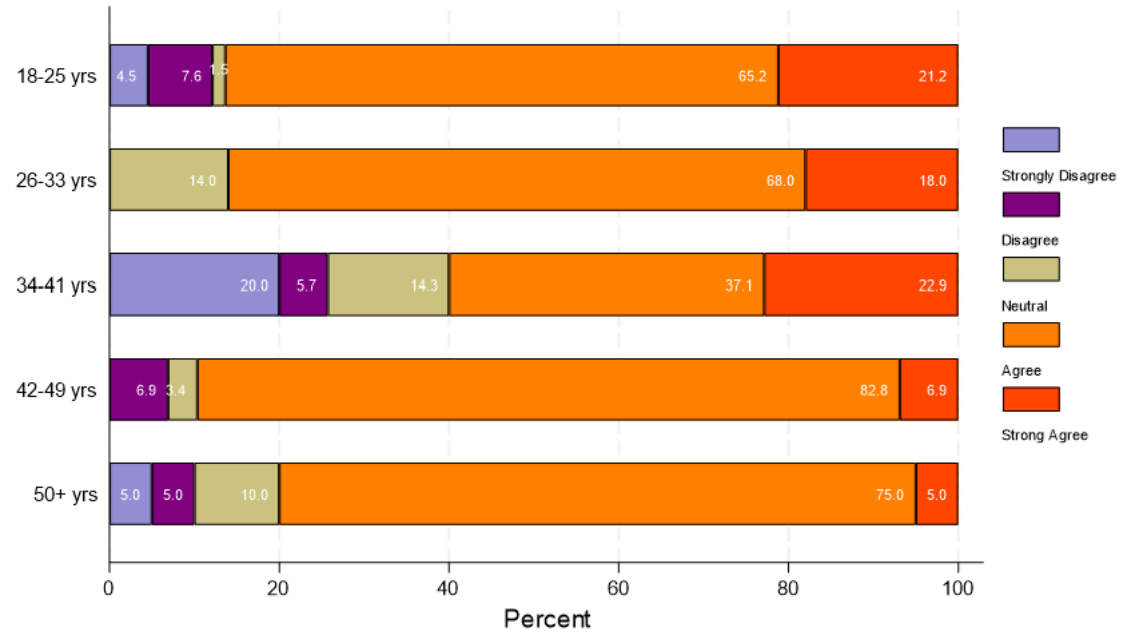


Figure 6.27 indicates that: **Ages 18-25 years** at 43 respondents (65.2%) agreed, 14 respondents (21.2%) strongly agreed, five respondents (7.6%) disagreed, three respondents (4.5%) strongly disagreed and one respondent (1.5%) was neutral.

Ages 42- 49 years, 24 respondents (82.8%) agreed that they used Twitter to feel like part of a connected community, followed by six respondents (21.1%) who strongly agreed, two respondents (6.9%) disagreed, two respondents (6.9%) and one respondent (3.4%) was neutral. None of the respondents in this age category strongly disagreed that they used Twitter to feel like part of a connected community.

Ages 50+ 15 respondents (75.0%) agreed, one respondent (5.0%) strongly agreed, two respondents (10%) were neutral one respondent (5.0%) disagreed and one respondent (5,0%) strongly disagreed that they used Twitter to feel like part of a connected community.

Ages 26-33 years, 34 respondents (68.0%) agreed, nine respondents (18%) strongly agreed, seven respondents (14%) were neutral, and there were no respondents in this age group that disagreed or strongly disagreed that they used Twitter to feel like part of a connected community.

Ages 34-41, 13 respondents (37.1%) agreed, eight respondents (22.9%) strongly agreed, seven respondents (20%) strongly disagreed, five respondents (14.3%) were neutral and two respondents (5.7%) disagreed that they used Twitter to feel like part of a connected community.

This was a clear indication that the majority of the respondents agreed that they used Twitter to feel like part of a connected community aged 18-24 years, 43 respondents (65.5% of the sample).

Figure 6.28: Gender analysis – Respondents who tweeted to feel like a part of a connected community

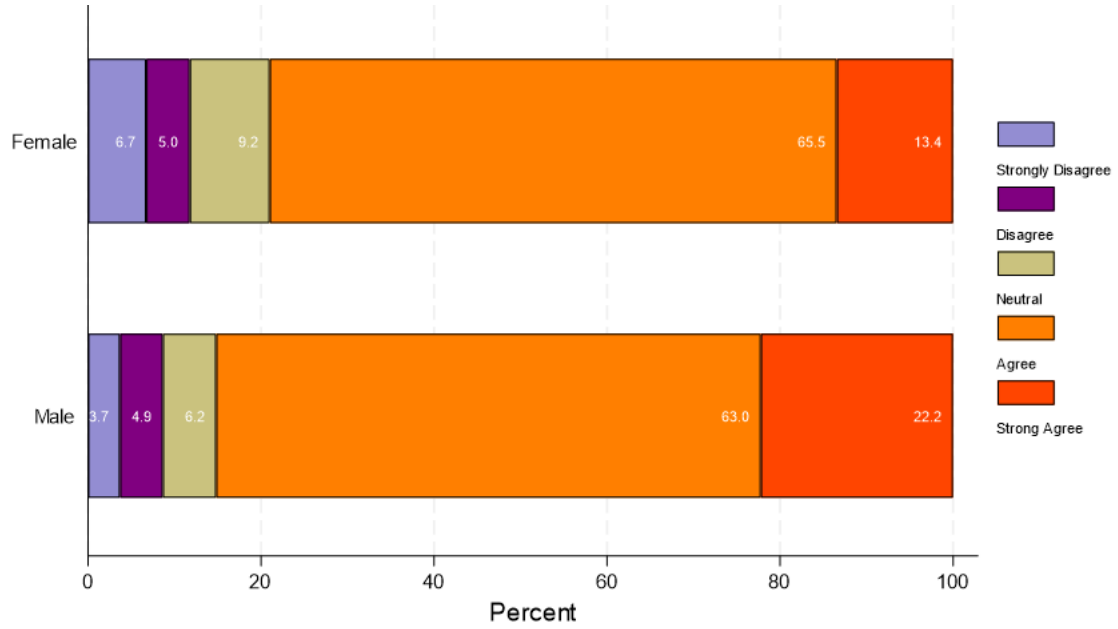


Figure 6.28 indicates that 78 of female respondents (65.5%) agreed that they used Twitter to feel like part of a connected community, 15 respondents (13.4%) strongly agreed, 10 respondents (9.2%) were neutral, eight respondents (6.7%) strongly disagreed and six respondents (5.0%) disagreed.

Male respondents showed a slightly low percentage of (63.0%), representing 51 respondents, from that of female respondents. However, most male respondents strongly agreed that they used Twitter to feel like part of a connected community which is higher than the 18 female respondents at (22.2%).

Figure 6.29: Language analysis- Motives for Twitter use

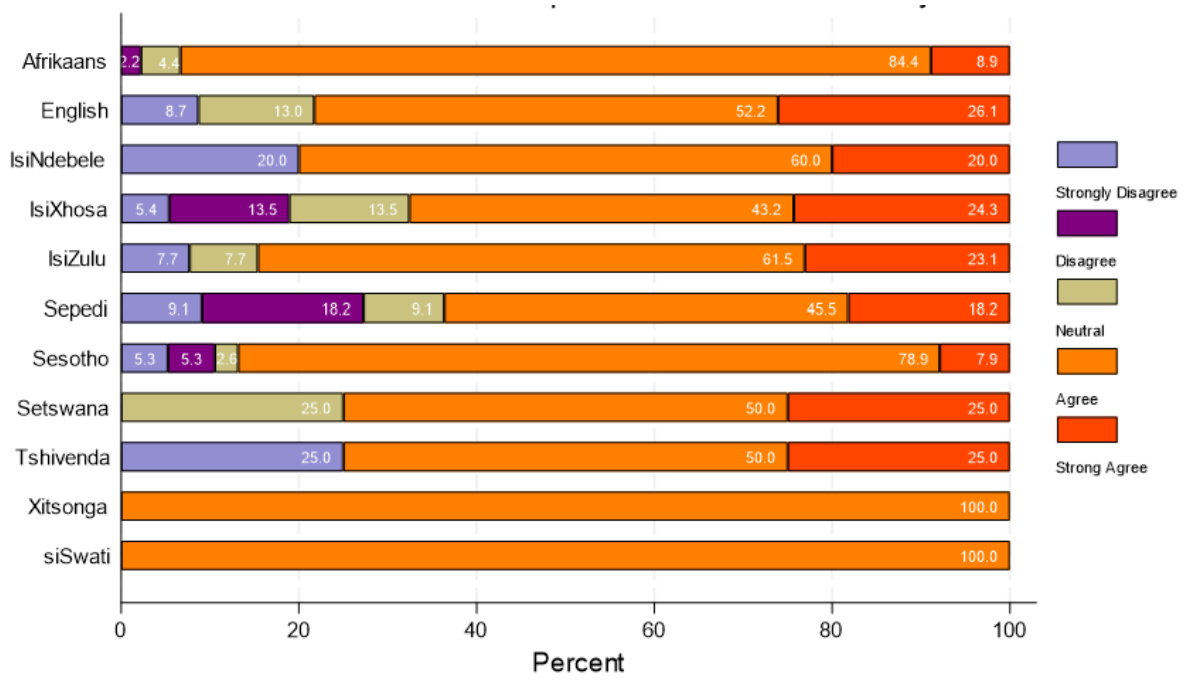


Figure 6.29 indicates a majority of siSwati and Xitsonga (two) respondents (1%) agreed that they used Twitter to feel like part of a connected community, followed by Afrikaans respondents 38 who agreed at (84.4%), 30 Sesotho respondents at (78.9%), 16 IsiZulu respondents at (61.5%), three IsiNdebele respondents at (60.0%), 12 English respondents at (52.2%), four Setswana respondents at (50%) and two Tshivenda respondents at (50%), with five Sepedi respondents at (45.5%) and 19 IsiXhosa respondents below (50%). Afrikaans language speakers have the highest numbers, at (84.4%), 38 respondents out of the 45 respondents in the sample of 200 respondents.

Figure 6.30: Respondents who tweeted to express themselves freely

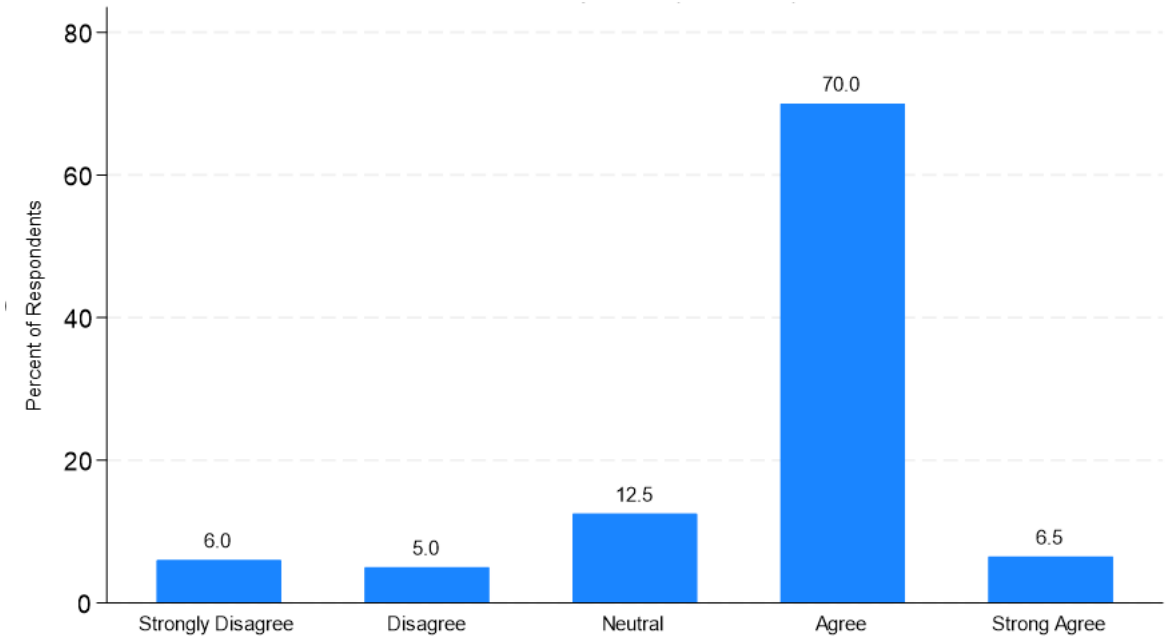


Figure 6.30 indicates that 140 respondents (70.0%) agreed that they used Twitter to freely express themselves, 13 respondents (6.5%) strongly agreed, while 12 of the respondents (6.5%) strongly disagreed, followed by 10 of the respondents (5%) who disagreed and 25 respondents of (12.5%) of the sample who were neutral.

Figure 6.30 indicates that the majority of the respondents agreed that they used Twitter to express themselves freely.

Figure 6.31: Respondents who used Twitter for entertainment

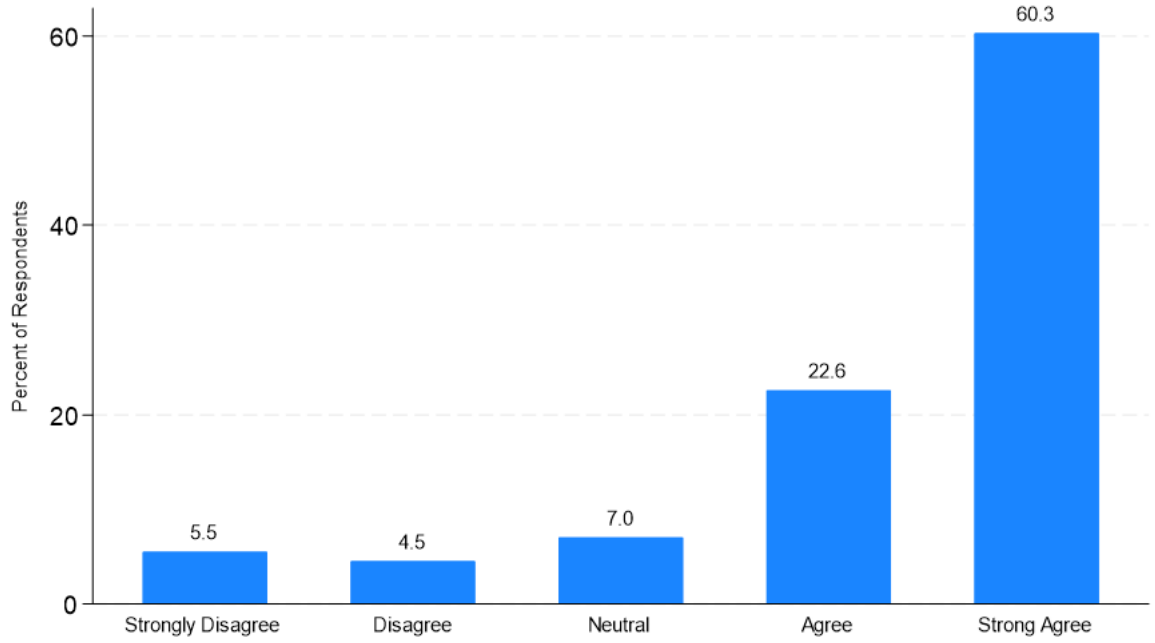


Figure 6.31 clearly indicates that 121 respondents (60.3%) strongly agreed that they used Twitter for entertainment, followed by 45 respondents (22.6%) who agreed, then 14 respondents (7.0%) were neutral, 11 respondents (5.5%) strongly disagreed, and nine respondents (4.5%) disagreed. This indicated that most respondents strongly agreed that they used Twitter for entertainment. This finding supported that by Johnson (2009: 7) concurs that Twitter users use media for entertainment.

Figure 6.32: Respondents who used Twitter to pass time

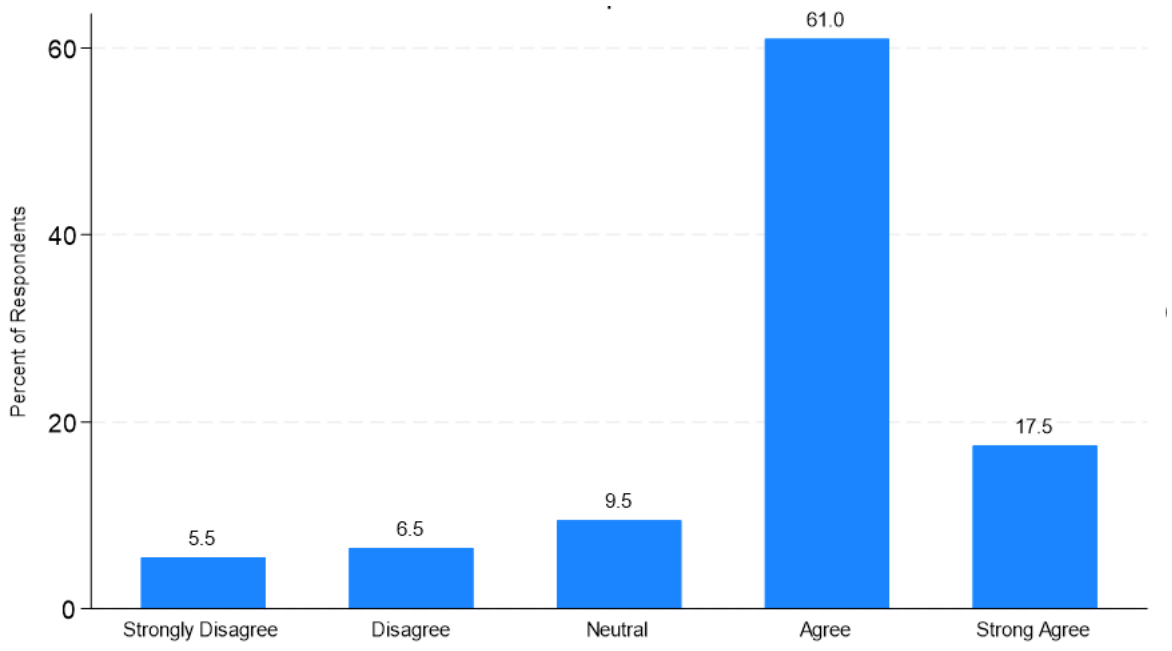


Figure 6.32 shows that 122 of the respondents (61%) agreed that they used Twitter to pass the time, while 35 respondents (17.5%) of the sample) strongly agreed, 19 respondents (9.5%) were neutral, 13 respondents (6.5%) and 11 respondents (5.5%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. This was an indication that most respondents agreed to using Twitter to pass time.

Figure 6.33: Respondents who used Twitter for local and international news

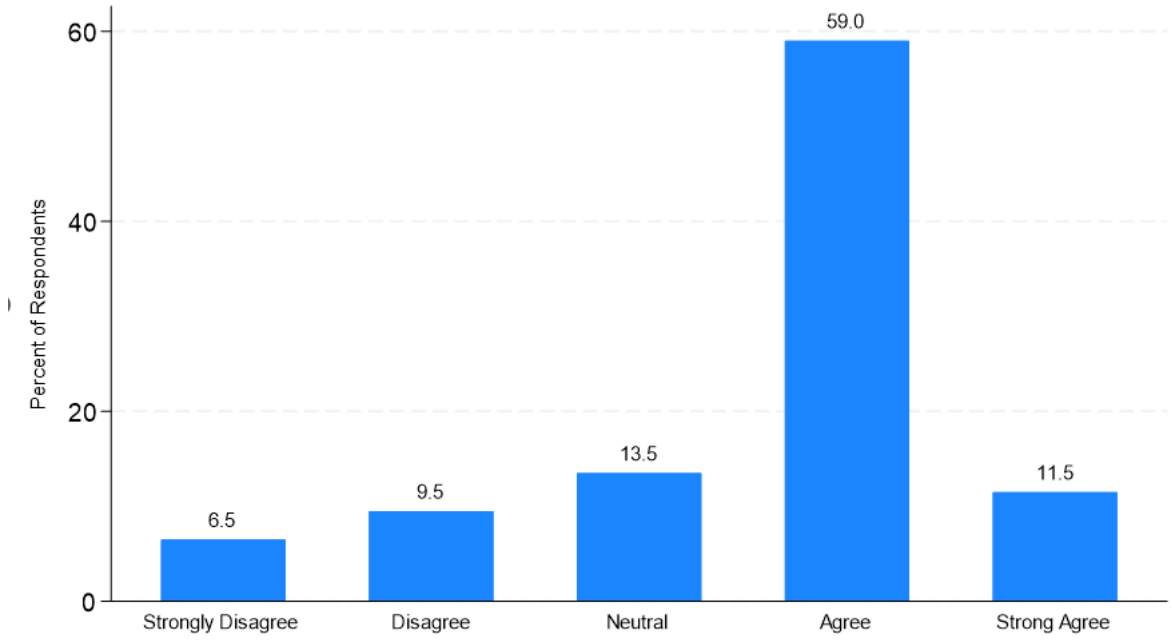


Figure 6.33 indicates that 118 of the respondents (59%) agreed that they used Twitter to read about local and international news, followed by neutral 27 respondents (13.5%), 23 respondents (11.5%) strongly agreed, 19 respondents (9.5%) disagreed, and the last 13 respondents (6.5%) strongly disagreed. This is a clear indication that most respondents agreed that they used Twitter to read local and international news. These results concur with Rugero (2000) who stated that the motives for the audience's use of media is that they use media for information gain.

Figure 6.34: - Respondents who used Twitter to stay in touch with friends

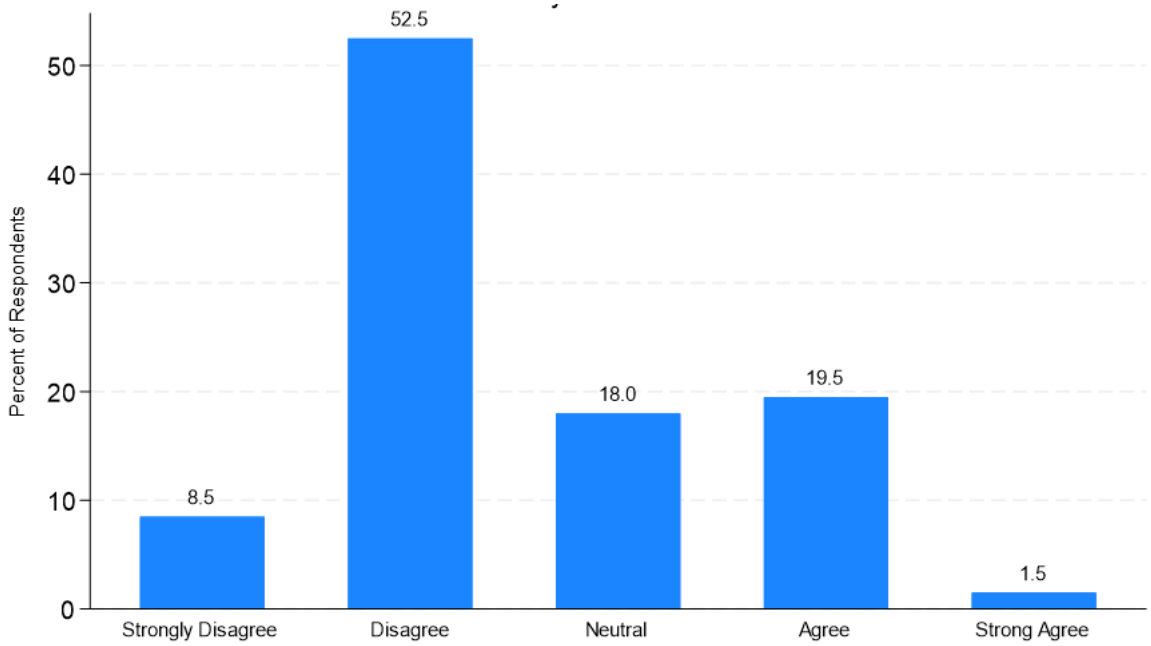


Figure 6.34 indicates that the majority of the respondents, 105 (52.5%) disagreed that they used Twitter to stay in touch with friends, while 39 respondents (19.5%) agreed that they used Twitter to stay in touch with friends, 36 respondents (18.0%) were neutral in their responses, 17 respondents (8.5%) strongly disagreed with only three respondents (1.5%) strongly agreeing that they used Twitter to stay in touch with friends. This result indicates that most of the respondents, 106 (53%), did not use Twitter to maintain connections with friends. This is a clear indication that the majority of the respondents did not use Twitter to maintain a connection with friends because several people that a user interacts with are usually strangers than a friend because the platform allows strangers to interact without having to know each other or follow each but because of the common interest which in this case will be the television show 7de Laan.

Figure 6.35: Respondents using Twitter out of fear of being left out

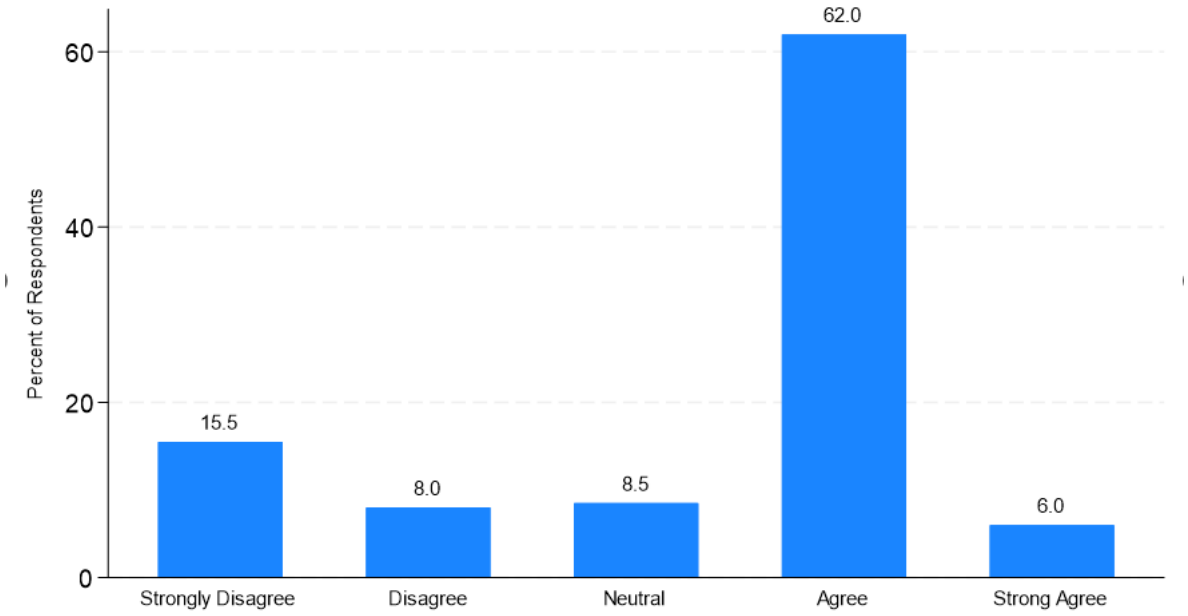


Figure 6.35 reveals that 124 respondents (62.0%) agreed that they used Twitter because other people were using it and did not want to feel left out, while 31 respondents (15.5%) strongly disagreed, 16 respondents (8.0%) disagreed, 17 respondents (8.5%) were neutral and 12 respondents (6%) strongly agreed that they used Twitter because other people were using it and did not want to feel left out. Figure 6.35 reveals that the majority of respondents agreed that they used Twitter because other people were using it and did not want to feel left out. In the language of this platform, one can deduce that these respondents used Twitter out of the fear of missing out (FOMO).

SECTION D: WHAT 7DE LAAN AUDIENCES TWEET ABOUT WHEN WATCHING THE PRIME-TIME BROADCAST OF THE SHOW

The reliability of 8 items relating to what 7de Laan audiences' tweet about when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show was tested. Table 6.5 shows an alpha coefficient of 0.88 (rounded off). This alpha value indicates that the scale is reliable for assessing what *7de Laan* audiences tweet about when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show.

Table 6.5 Alpha coefficient of 0.88

Mean inter-item covariance:	**0.43**
Quantity of items on the scale:	**8**
Coefficient of scale reliability:	**0.88**

Figure 6.36: Respondents who tweeted opinions about the storyline

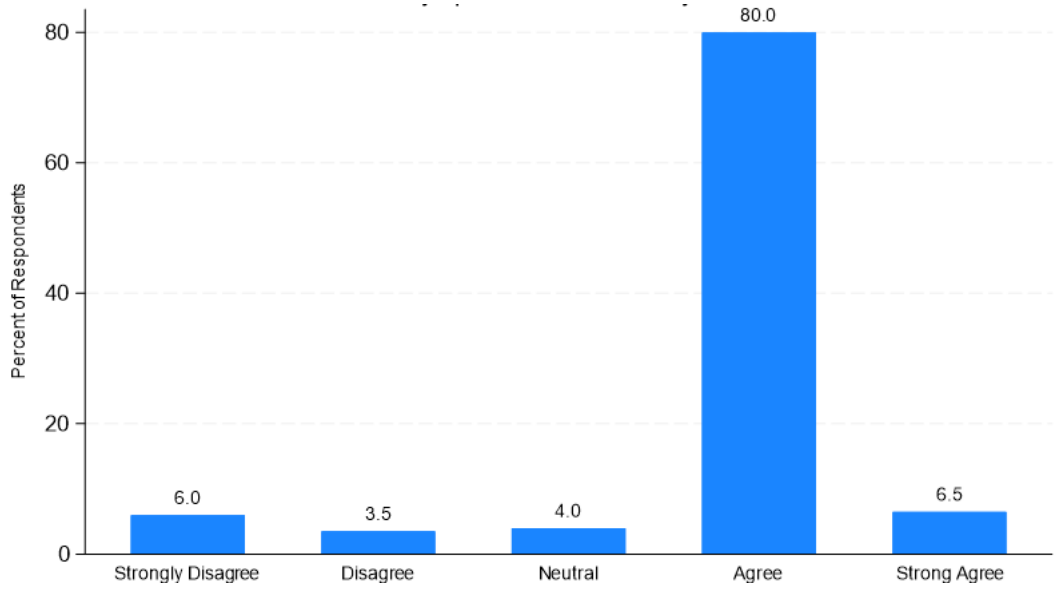


Figure 6.36 indicates that 160 respondents (80%) agreed that they tweeted their opinions about the storyline when watching the prime-time broadcast television show *7de Laan*, while 13 respondents (6.5%) strongly agreed, 12 respondents (6.0%) strongly disagreed, seven respondents (3.5%) disagreed with eight respondents (4.0%) were neutral in their responses. This finding suggests that most respondents concurred that they tweeted their opinions when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan*.

Figure 6.37: Age analysis – Respondents who tweeted opinions about the storyline

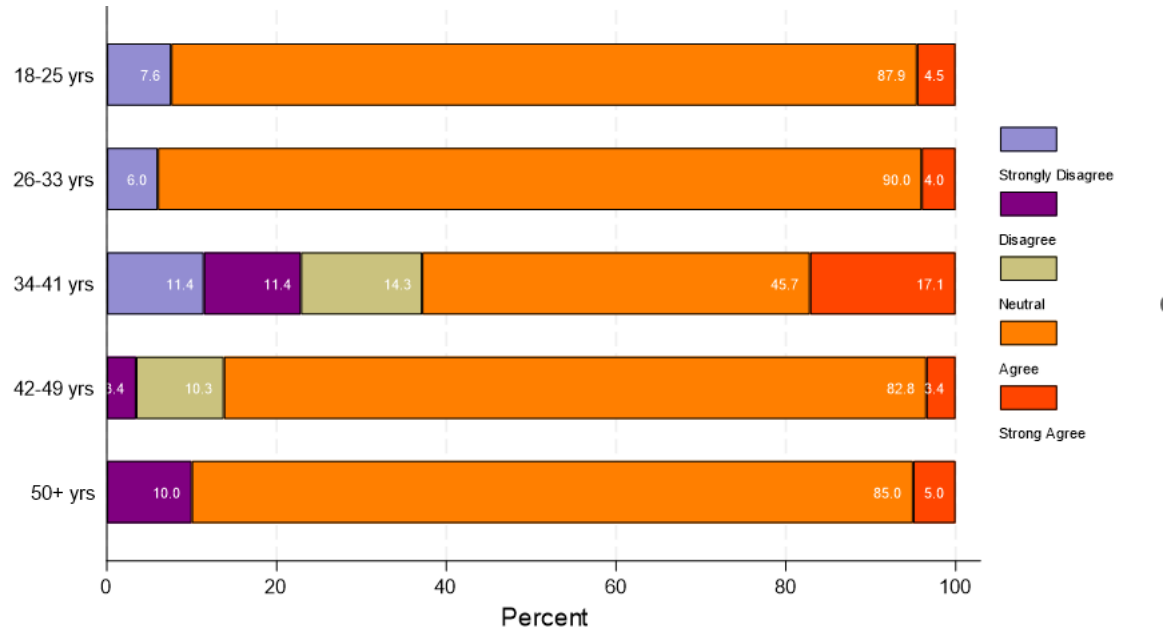


Figure 6.37 reveals that the majority of the respondents aged 26-33 years 45 (90%) agreed that they tweeted their opinions about the storyline when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laa*n, followed by ages 18-25 years old at (87.9%) 58, 50+ at (85.0%)17, and ages 42-49 years at (82.8%) 24 and ages 34-41 years old at a low (45.7%) 16. This indicated that many respondents 18-25 years and 34-41 years agreed that they tweeted their opinion about the storyline when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show 7de Laan.

Figure 6.38: Gender analysis – Respondents who tweeted opinions about the storylines

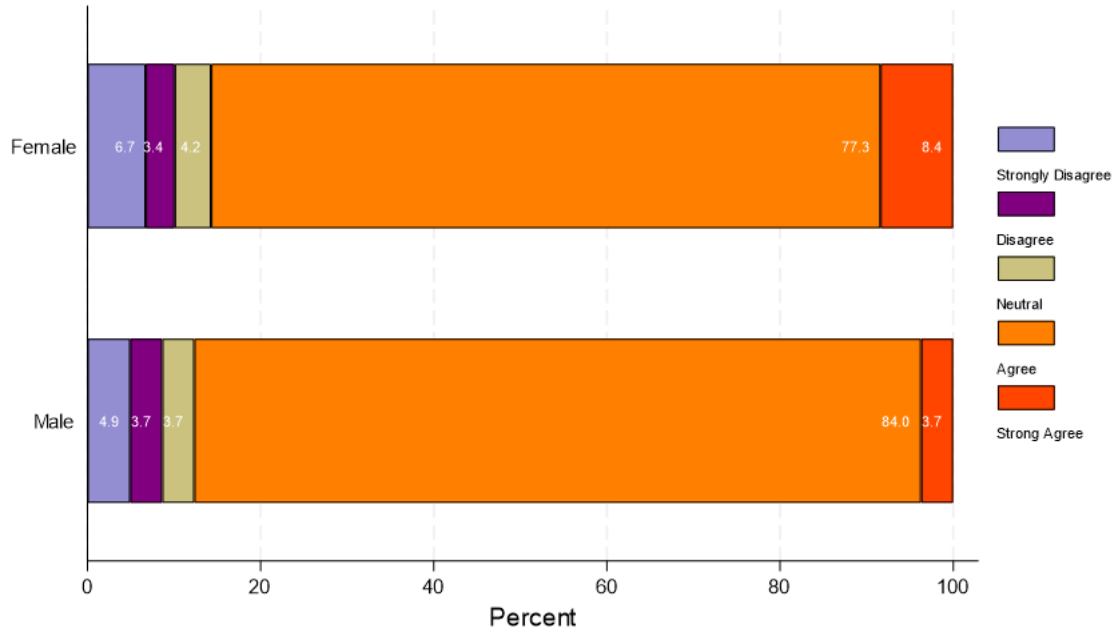


Figure 6.38 indicates that 68(84.0%) of male respondents agreed that they tweeted their opinions about the storylines when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan*, four (4.9%), strongly disagreed, three (3.7%) disagreed, three (3.7%) were neutral and three (3.7%) strongly agreed.

While 92 (77.3%) of females also agreed, 10 (8.4%) strongly agreed, 8 (6.7%) strongly disagreed, five (4.2%) and four (3.4%) strongly disagreed. This was a clear indication that the majority of both males and females agreed that they tweeted their opinions about the storylines when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* at 92 (77.3%) females and 68 (84.0%) of male respondents.

Figure 6.39: Language analysis - Tweet opinion about the storyline

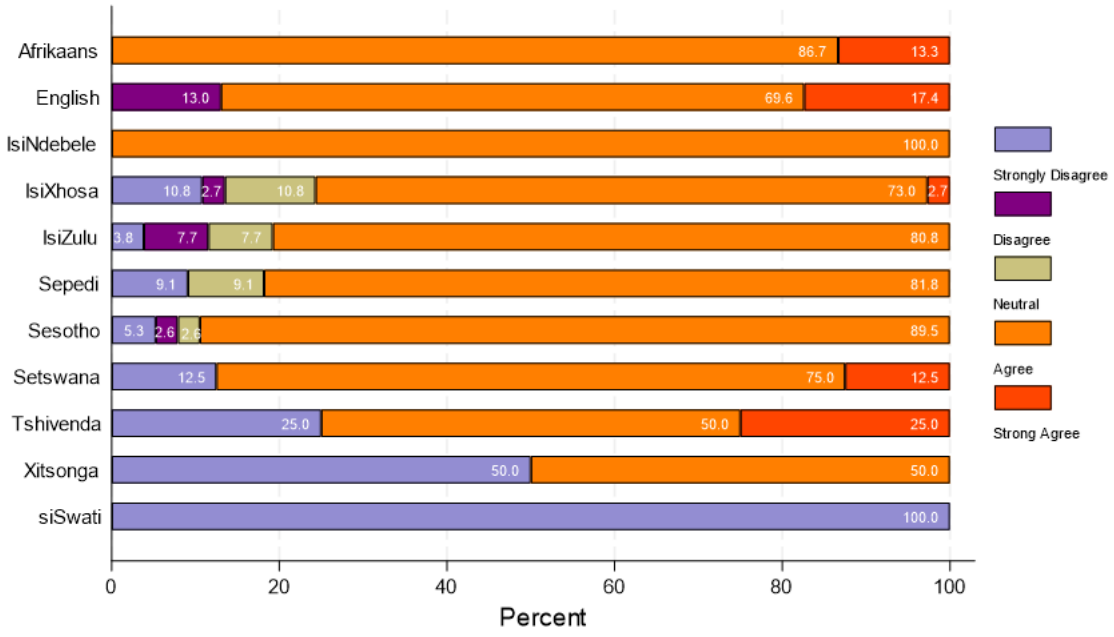


Figure 6.39 indicates that 1 (100%) siSwati language respondent strongly disagreed that they tweeted their opinion about the storyline when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show 7de Laan. While 34 (89.5%) of Sesotho language respondents agreed, 39 (86.7%) of Afrikaans language respondents agreed, 81.8% (9) of Sepedi language respondents agreed, 80.8% (5) of IsiZulu respondents agreed, 75.0% (6) of Setswana language respondents agreed, 73.0% (27) of IsiXhosa language respondents agreed, English language respondents at 69.6% (16) agreed, both Tshivenda at 50% (2) and Xitsonga language respondents agreed at 50.0% (1). This figure was a clear indication that the majority of South African language speakers agreed that they watched the show to tweet their opinions about the storylines.

Figure 6.40: Respondents who tweeted about the characters

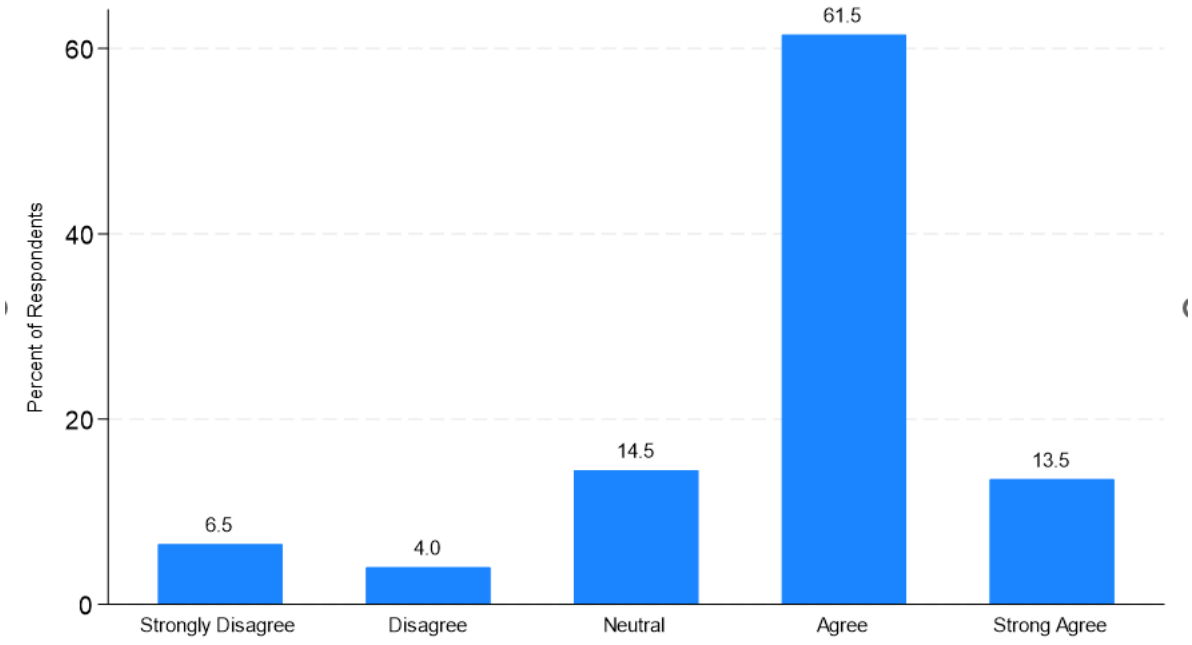


Figure 6.40 shows that 123 respondents (61.5%) agreed that they tweeted about the characters when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan*. In comparison, 29 respondents (14.5%) were neutral in their responses, 27 respondents (13.5%) strongly agreed, 13(6.5%) strongly disagreed, and eight respondents (4.0%) disagreed. This result indicated that the majority of respondents agreed that they tweeted about the characters when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show 7de Laan.

Figure 6.41: Respondents who tweeted about the subtitles

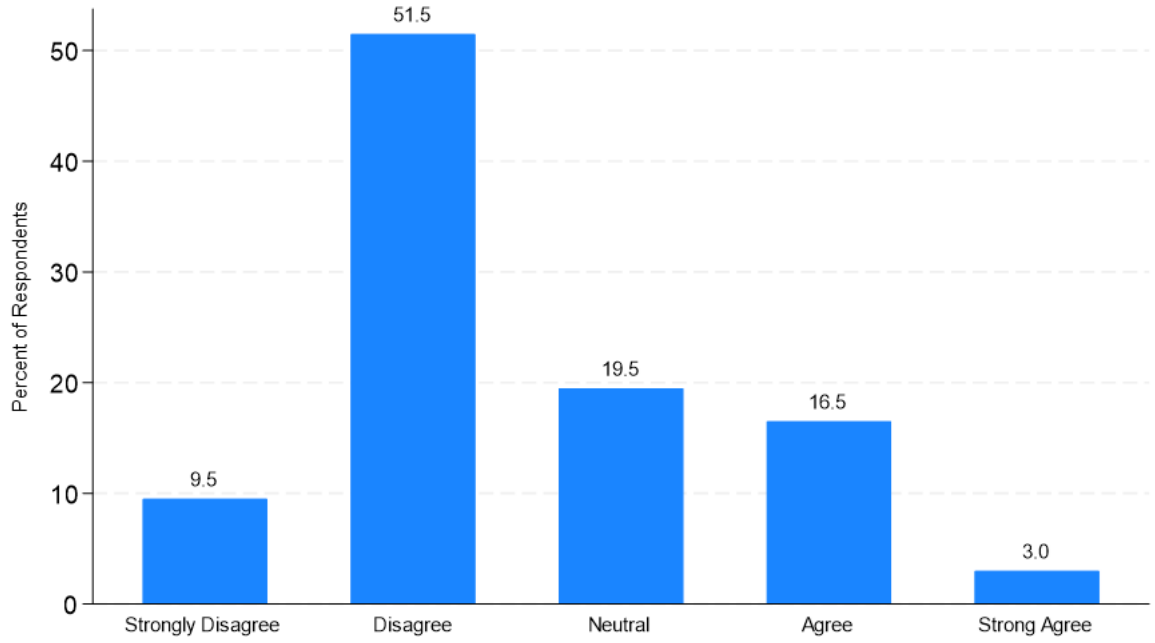


Figure 6.41 indicates that 103 respondents (51.5%) disagreed that they tweeted about the subtitles when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan*, while 39 respondents (19.5%) were neutral, 33 respondents (16.5%) (33) agreed, 19 respondents (9.5%) strongly disagreed and six respondents (3.0%) strongly agreed. Figure 6.41 reveals that the majority of respondents disagreed that they tweeted about the subtitles when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan*, and is also interesting because the television show is in Afrikaans language with English subtitles, shows that the audiences were accustomed to watching with subtitles and this was not something they tweeted about.

Figure 6.42: Respondents who tweeted about the actors' performances

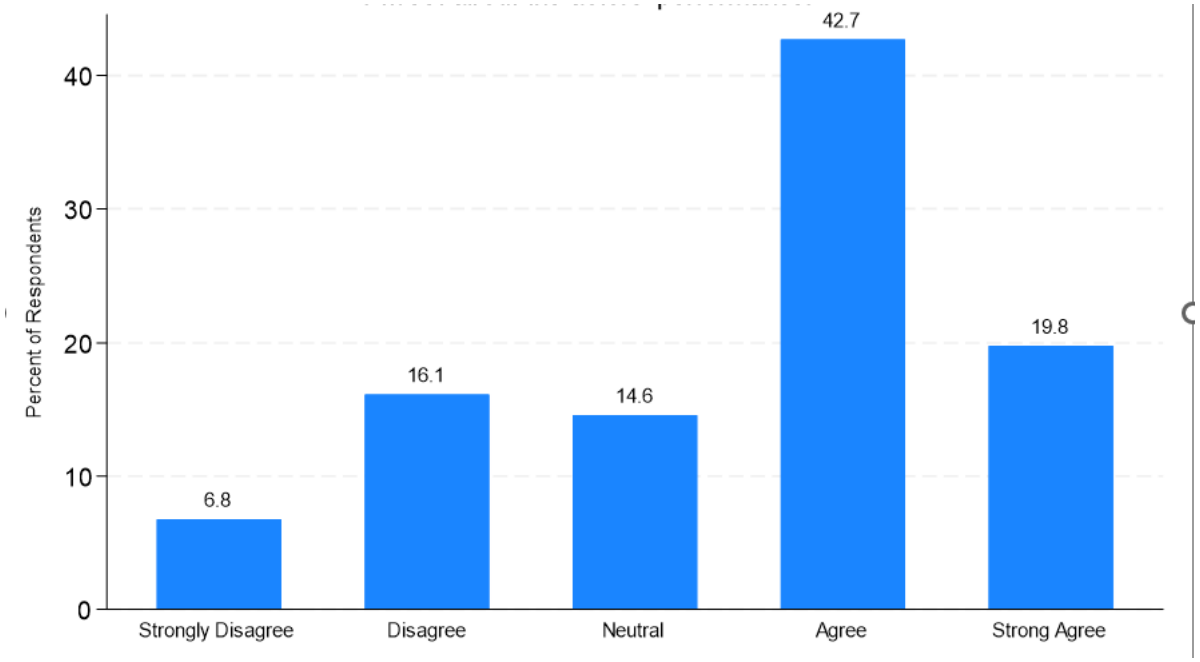


Figure 6.42 indicates that 85 respondents (42.7%) agreed that they tweeted about the actors' performances when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan*. In comparison, 40 respondents (19.8%) strongly agreed, 32 respondents (16.1%) disagreed, 29 respondents (14.6%) were neutral, and 14 respondents (6.8%) strongly disagreed. Figure 6.42 reveals that the majority of respondents agreed that they tweeted about the actors' performance when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan*.

Figure 6.43: Respondents who tweeted about the resonance and relevance of the storylines

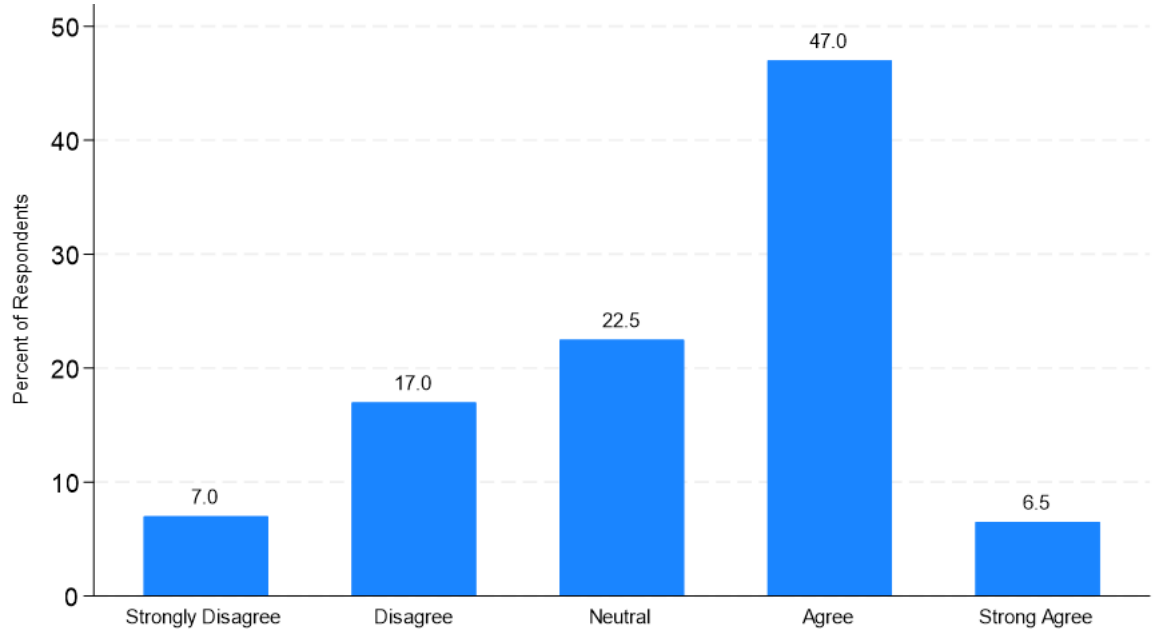


Figure 6.43 indicates that 94 respondents (47.0%) agreed that they tweeted about the resonance and relevance of the storylines to everyday life, while 45 respondents (22.5%) were neutral in their responses, 34 respondents (17.0%) disagreed, 14 respondents (7.0%) strongly disagreed and 13(6.5%) strongly agreed. Figure 6.43 indicates that numerous respondents agreed that they tweeted about the resonance and relevance of the storyline to everyday life.

SECTION E: WHAT GRATIFICATIONS 7DE LAAN AUDIENCES SOUGHT BY ENGAGING ON TWITTER WHEN WATCHING THE PRIME-TIME BROADCAST OF THE SHOW

6.2.2.6 Scale reliability using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient

The reliability of 7 items relating to what *7de Laan* audiences tweet about when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show was tested. Table 6.6 shows an alpha coefficient of 0.9 (rounded off). This alpha value indicates the scale is reliable for

testing the gratifications *7de Laan* audiences seek by engaging on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show.

Table 6.6: Alpha coefficient of 0.9

Mean inter-item covariance:	**0.57**
Quantity of items on the scale:	**7**
Coefficient of scale reliability:	**0.90**

Figure 6.44: Respondents who tweeted to get information about the show

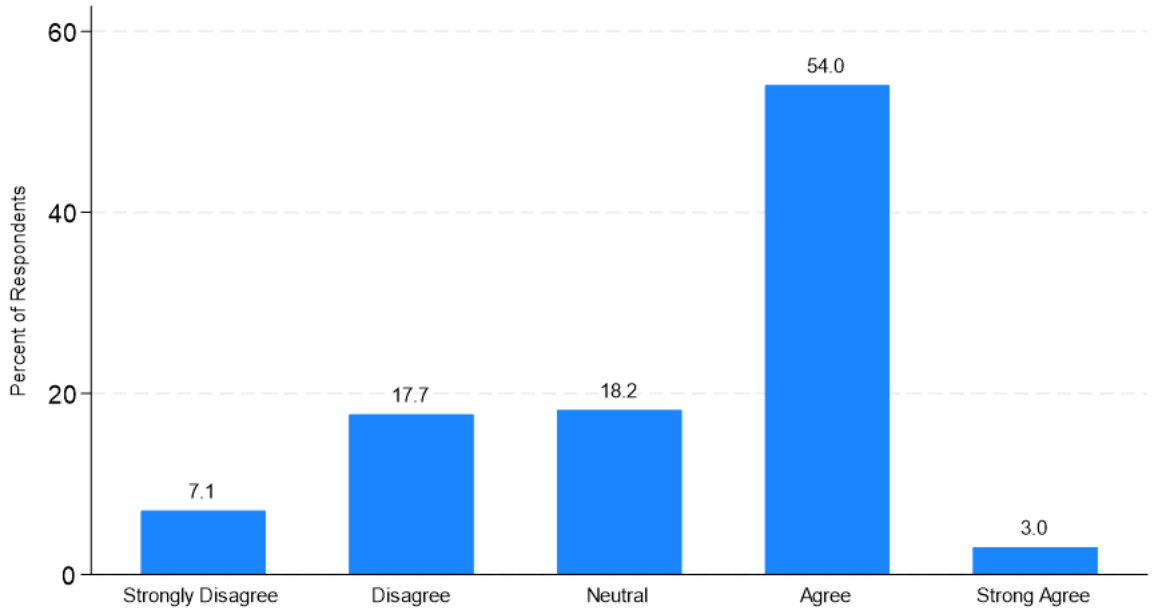


Figure 6.44 indicates that 108 respondents (54.0%) agreed that they tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show to get information, while 37 (18.2%) of the sample were neutral in their responses, followed by 35 respondents (17.7%) who disagreed, 14(7.1%) strongly disagreed and six respondents (3%) strongly agreed. Figure 6.44 reveals that numerous respondents agreed that they tweeted to get information about the show.

Figure 6.45: Age analysis – Respondents who tweeted to get information about the show

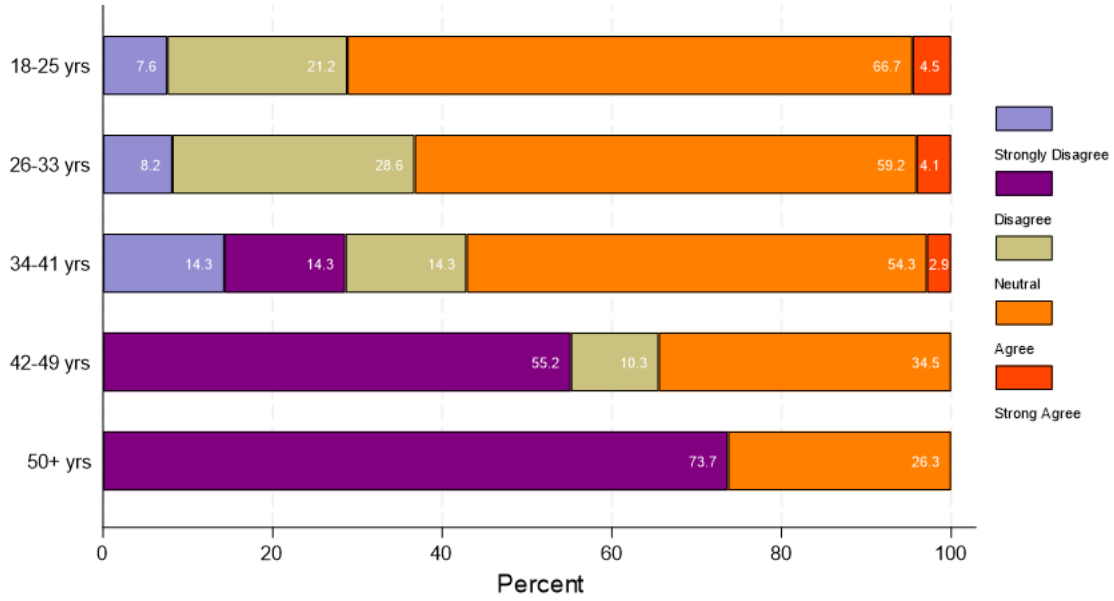


Figure 6.45 indicates that ages 50+, 15(73.7%) and ages 42-49 years 16(55.2%) disagreed that they tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* to get information about the show. While ages 18-25 years 44 (66.7%), ages 26-33 years 30 (59.2%), ages 34-41 years 19 (54.3%) agreed that they watched the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* to get information about the show. Figure 6.45 shows that numerous respondents agreed that they tweeted to get information about the show.

Figure 6.46: Gender analysis – Respondents who tweeted to get information about the show

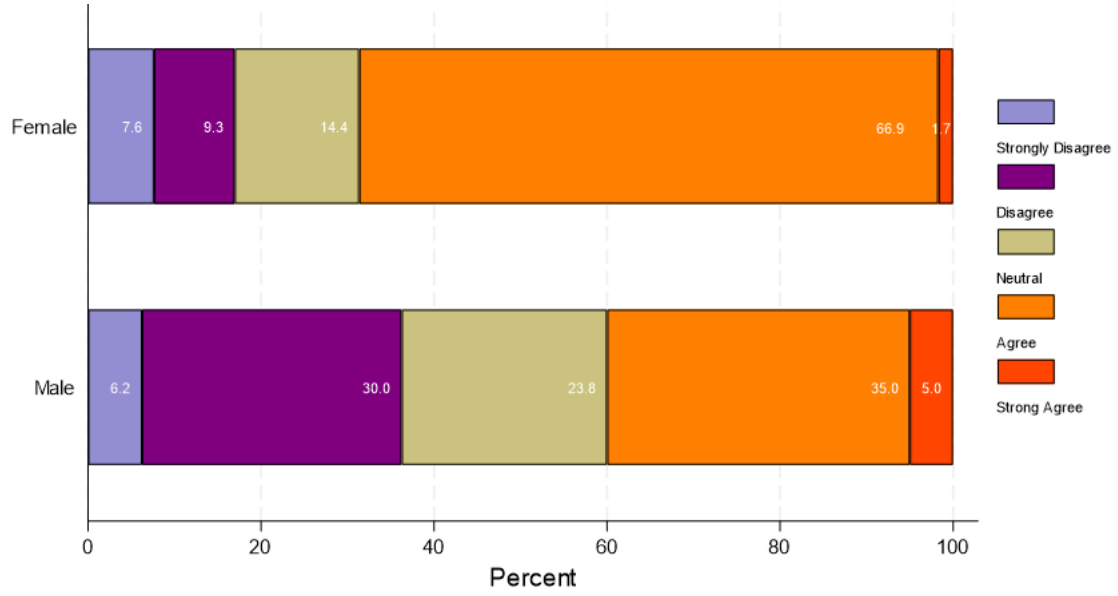


Figure 6.46 suggests that 80 (66.9%) of females and 28 (35.0%) of males agreed that they tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* to get information about the show. While 24 (30.0%) of males and 11 (9.3%) females disagreed. Both males and females were neutral in their responses at 19 (23.8%) and 17 (14.4%) respectively. Figure 6.46 shows that the majority of females agreed that they tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show to get information about the show.

Figure 6.47: Language analysis – Respondents who tweeted to get information about the show

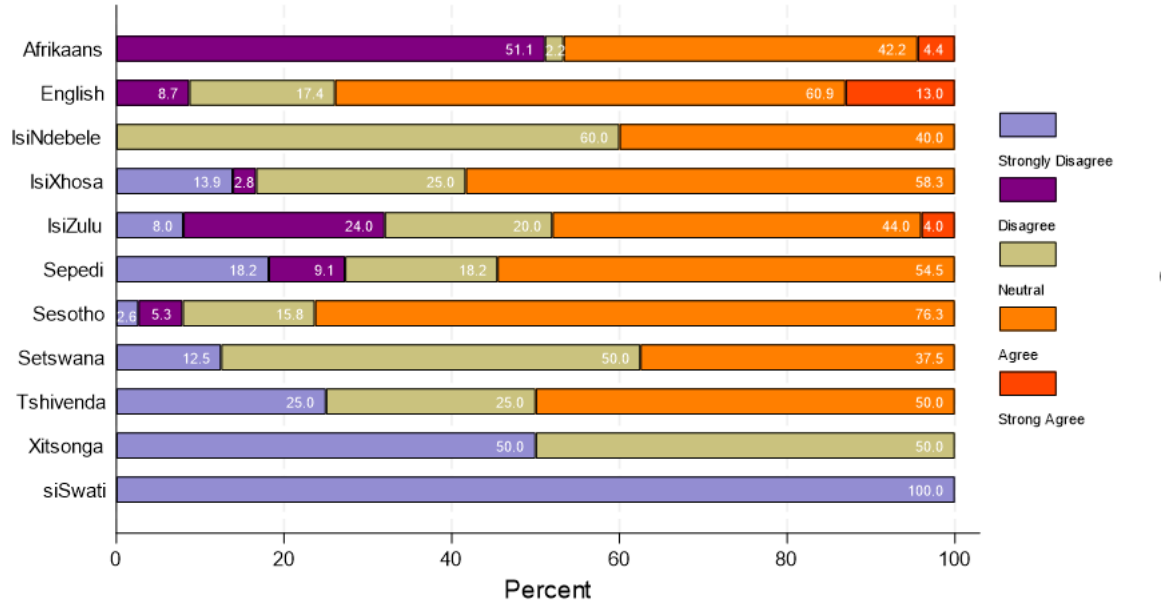


Figure 6.47 suggests that 1(100%) of siSwati respondents and 1 (50.0%) of Xitsonga respondents strongly disagreed that they tweeted when watching the television show to get information about the show. While Sesotho respondents 29 (76.3%), English respondents 14 (60.9%), IsiXhosa respondents 21 (58.3%), Sepedi respondents 6(54.5%), and Tshivenda respondents 2 (50.0%) agreed that they tweeted when watching the show to get information about the show. There is also an interesting percentage of respondents who were neutral in their responses, IsiNdebele 3 (60.0%), Setswana 4 (50.0%), and Xitsonga 1 (50.0%).

Figure 6.48: Respondents who tweeted when watching for entertainment

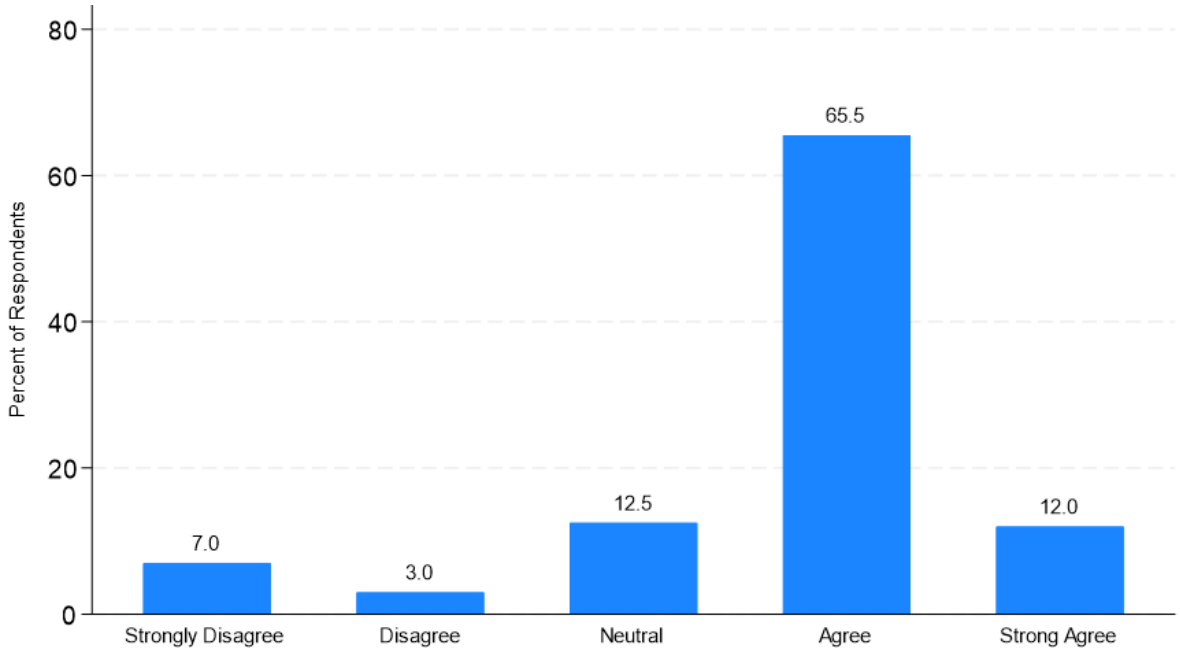


Figure 6.48 indicates that most of the respondents 131 (65.5%) agreed that they tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* for entertainment. In comparison, 25 respondents (12.5%) were neutral, 24 respondents (12.0%) strongly agreed, 14 respondents (7.0%) strongly disagreed, and six respondents (3.0%) disagreed.

Figure 6.49: Tweet when watching to identify with characters

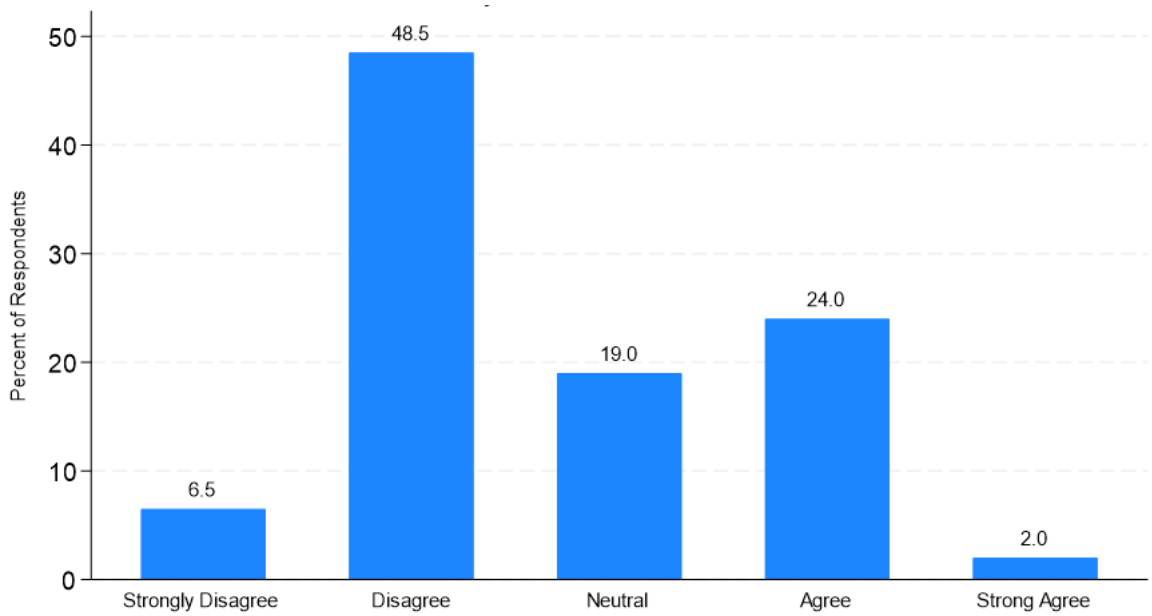


Figure 6.49 suggests that 97 respondents (48.5%) disagreed that they tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* to identify with the characters, followed by 48 respondents (24.0%) who agreed, 38 respondents (19.0%) who were neutral in their responses, 13 respondents (6.5%) who strongly disagreed, and four respondents (2%) who strongly agreed.

Figure 6.49 then indicated that most respondents, 110 (55%) disagreed that they tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan t*o identify with the characters.

Figure 6.50: Respondents who tweet when watching for escapism

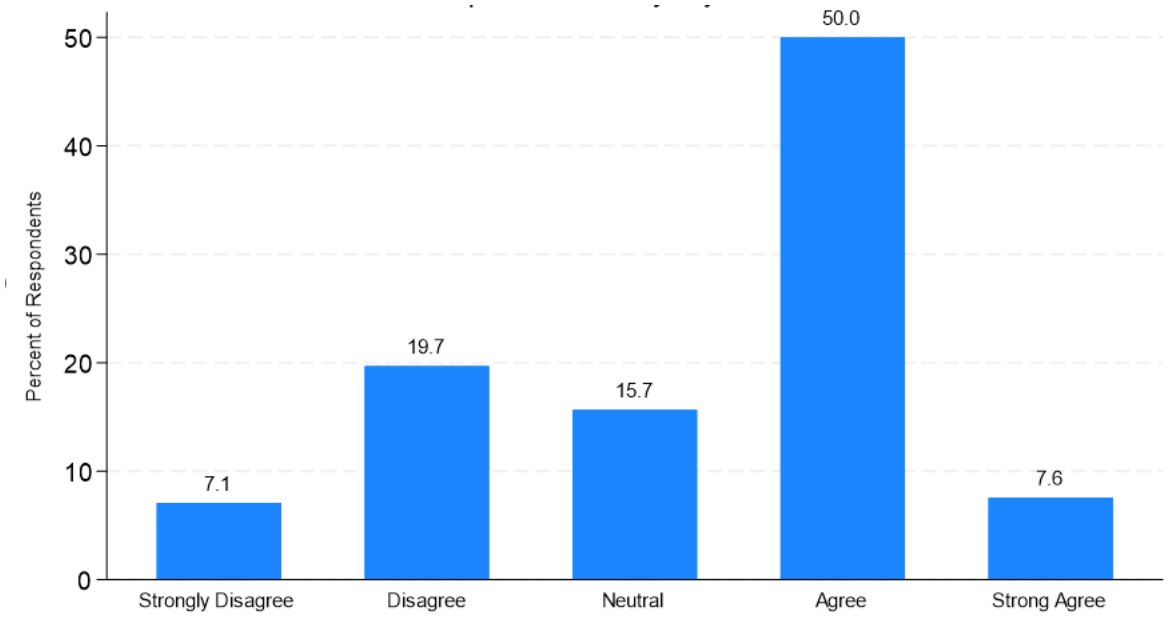


Figure 6.50 indicates that 100 respondents (50.0%) agreed that they tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* to escape from the busy day they had, followed by 40 (19.7%) who disagreed, then 31 (15.7%) who were neutral in their responses, 15 (7.6%) strongly agreed and 14(7.1%) strongly disagreed. Figure 6.50 reveals that the numerous respondents, 115 (57.6%), agreed that they tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* to escape from the busy day they had.

Figure 6.51: Respondents who tweeted when watching to share opinions with others

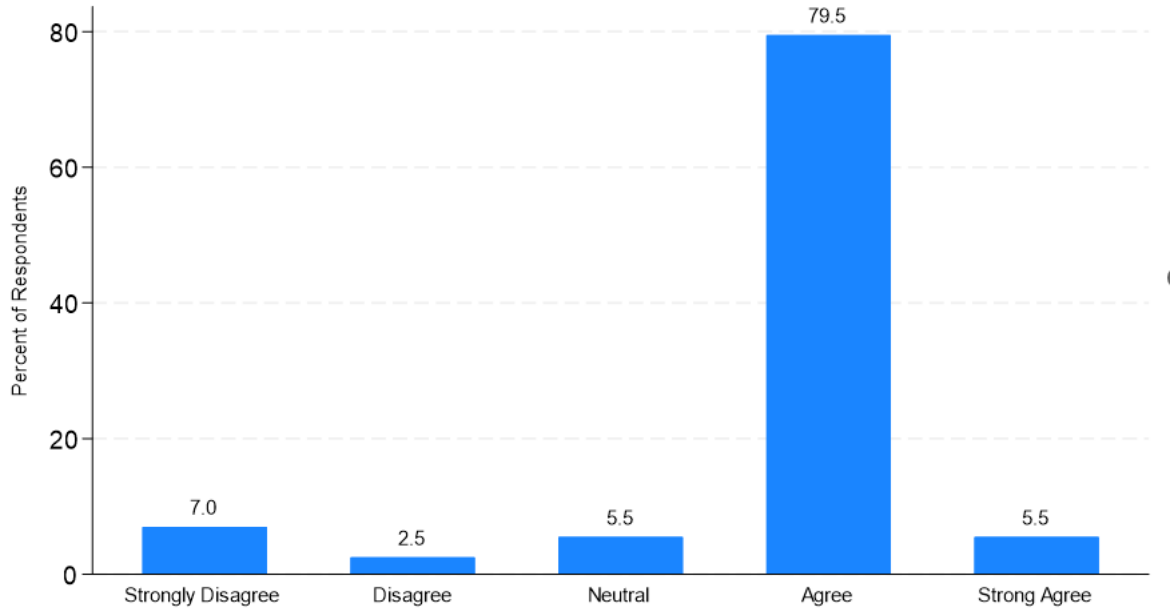


Figure 6.51 indicates that 159 respondents (79.5%) agreed that they tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* to share their opinions with other viewers, followed by 14 (7.0%) who strongly disagreed, with 11 (5.5%) strongly agreed, 11(5.5%) were neutral in their responses, and five respondents (2.5%) disagreed.

Figure 6.51 suggest that numerous respondents, 170, representing 85% of the sample, agreed that they tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* to share their opinions with other viewers.

Figure 6.52: Respondents who tweeted to pass time

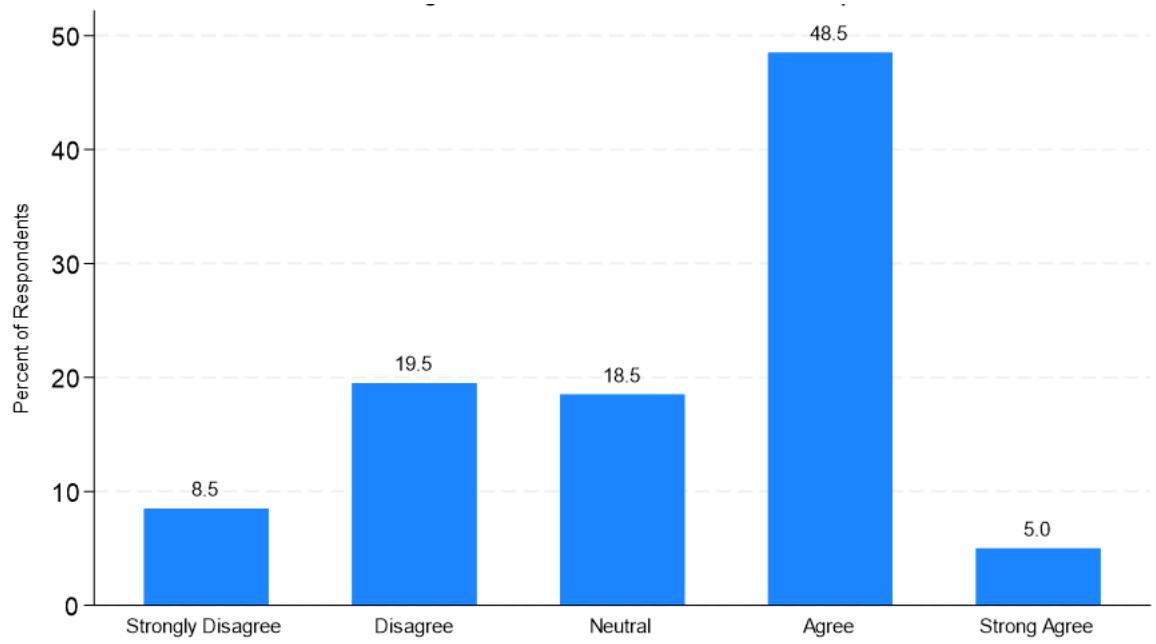


Figure 6.52 shows that 97 respondents (48.5%) agreed that they tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* to pass the time, followed by 39 (19.5%) who disagreed, 37 (18.5%) were neutral in their responses, 17 (8.5%) disagreed, and 10 (5.0%) strongly agreed. Figure 6.52 indicates that 98 (49%) agreed that they tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* to pass the time.

Figure 6.53: Respondents who tweet to relax

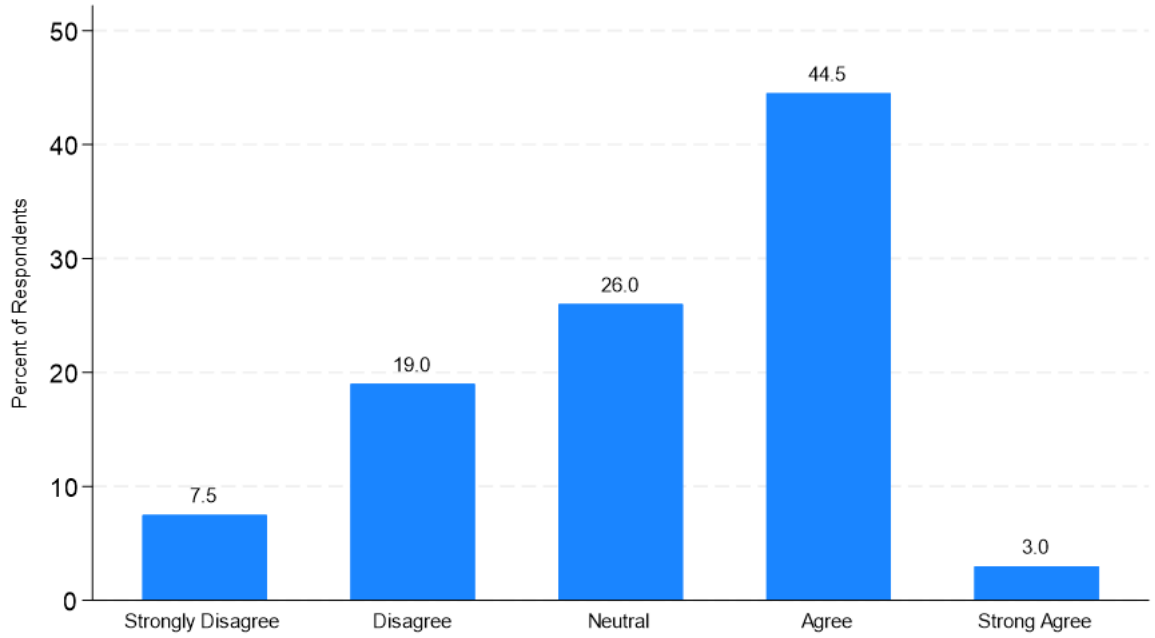


Figure 6.53 indicates that 89 respondents (44.5%) agreed that they tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* to relax, followed by 52 (26.0%) who were neutral in their responses, 38 (19.0%) disagreed, 15 respondents (7.5%) strongly disagreed, and six respondents (3.0%) strongly agreed. Figure 6.53 suggests that the majority of respondents agreed that they tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show 7de Laan to relax.

6.3 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 6 AND AN OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER 7

This chapter presented an analysis of the quantitative data collected through questionnaires. The researcher employed the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Statistics and Microsoft Excel to analyse and interpret the data, as illustrated by the accompanying Tables and Figures. The examined criteria encompassed the motivations behind Twitter engagement while watching the television show 7de Laan, the respondents' spoken language, as well as their age and gender.

Chapter 7 aims to provide a comprehensive and deep understanding of the research problem through the synthesis and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data collected. The researcher transitioned from mere data description to generating

significant insights and drawing conclusions during this critical phase of the study procedure.

CHAPTER 7: A SYNTHESIS AND ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE DATA: REFLECTIONS AND INTERPRETATION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a synthesis of qualitative and quantitative findings. This procedure was intricate to understand yet provided the researcher with profound insight into the investigated phenomenon. The qualitative methodology provided the researcher with profound insights, an exploration of relationships, and an appreciation of participants' nuanced replies. Qualitative methodology on the other hand provides a wide lens angle into the research.

The objective of this chapter was to give a transparent and clear analysis of the research results; depict any pattern, conflict, and hidden meaning; show complex relationships including nuanced human behaviour. This chapter summarises both data sets and illustrates the appropriateness of utilising qualitative and quantitative approaches. Qualitative results offered context and a thorough comprehension of the quantitative outcomes. The integration of qualitative and quantitative research approaches examined issues of validity and dependability. This chapter also examines the inherent bias of qualitative and qualitative methods, and the consequences thereof in relation to the results of this study.

7.2 EXPLANATION OF THE CODING PROCESS IN PREPARATION FOR DATA ANALYSIS

i. Data Familiarisation

Braun and Clarke (2006, 2023) propose the method of data familiarisation during data analysis. Consequently, the researcher reviewed the interview transcript repeatedly to ensure the information captured was correct, and to gain context and comprehension of the content. The researcher engaged a statistician to conduct the statistical analysis. Data from the survey was exported into an excel spreadsheet before it was put into

graphs and pie charts. The analysed data was sent to the researcher to be familiar with the graphs and to verify the data captured.

ii. Initial coding

Data was divided into smaller components and provided descriptive labels that accurately represented each idea or theme. The codes included words, phrases, and brief sentences that captured thoughts conveyed by the participants (Braun & Clarke 2023).

iii. Code Optimisation

The aim was to improve the initial codes to guarantee uniform and precise instruction by merging the codes to appropriately depict the data.

iv. Creating a Codebook

The researcher developed an exhaustive codebook (Byrne 2022; Braun & Clarke 2023) that methodically enumerated all the codes employed and the meaning attached, including illustrations, and any other pertinent subcategories. The codebook functioned as a reference manual for the coding process, guaranteeing uniformity throughout the analytical process.

v. Theme Development

Braun and Clarke (2006, 2023) additionally advocate for the process of theme generation in thematic analysis throughout data examination. In this study, theme development included organising the codes that were related into a bigger category that represented overarching ideas. The statistician analysed the codes to identify consistent emerging patterns and linking them to create a logical and organised category structure**.**

vi. Data Reduction and Organisation

The researcher utilised codes and categories to systematically arrange and condense data, generate visual representations like matrices and diagrams that aided the process of data interpretation and highlight significant discoveries made.

vii. Constant Comparison

The researcher constantly examined the incoming data relating to the current code and categories, making changes and adjustments when necessary to the coding framework to maintain a representation of the emerging patterns and insights.

viii. Theoretical Saturation

The researcher carried out the process of coding to a point where there were no additional codes or themes emerging, an illustration that the data was thoroughly examined and analysed.

7.3 INTEGRATED THEMATIC DATA ANALYSIS OF THE SOAP OPERA 7DE LAAN AUDIENCES

Table 7.1: Themes, Sub-themes and Related Research Questions.

No.	Theme	Sub-Theme	Related Research Question
1.	Entertainment/ Escapism	Relaxation/ stress relief, Emotional release,	What gratifications do *7de Laan* audiences seek by engaging on Twitter during the prime-time broadcast of the show? What do *7de Laan* audiences use Twitter for when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show?
2.	Connectedness	Fandom and Community, Social Capital.	What do *7de Laan* audiences use Twitter for when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show?
3.	Social interaction	Virtual watercooler,	What gratifications do *7de Laan* audiences seek by engaging on

		Debate and discussion,	Twitter during the prime-time broadcast of the show? What do *7de Laan* audiences use Twitter for when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show?
4.	Information seeking	Behind the scenes content, Character analysis, Social and cultural commentary	What gratifications do *7de Laan* audiences seek by engaging on Twitter during the prime-time broadcast of the show?
5.	Storyline speculation	Hypotheses and prediction, Foreshadowing and clues, Fan-led narratives.	What do *7de Laan* audiences' tweet about when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show?
6.	Character-centric discussion	Character shipping, Character critique Emotional investment	What do *7de Laan* audiences' tweet about when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show?

The study analysed different motives relating to the question asking, "why audiences of 7de Laan engage on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show". The comprehensive qualitative interviews enabled the researcher to identify several sub-themes that shed light on interactive elements that influenced these audiences' behaviour on Twitter. The main objective of analysing the sub-themes was to gain clarity on how Twitter enhanced the 7de Laan audience viewing experience, developed the spirit of community, and how the audiences engaged with the television show 7de Laan. The analysis examined how these sub-themes influenced audience participation on Twitter, offering insight into the motives, social interactions, and emotions involved.

7.3.1 Entertainment/Escapism

From the analysed data, 7de Laan audiences engaged on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast for relaxation and enjoyment purposes, including seeking relief from stressful daily activities, such as work, school, parenting, and many other activities. Their engagement on Twitter symbolised 7de Laan's ability to provide the

needed break and experience of tranquillity. 7de Laan's ability to transport audiences to a recognisable, yet fictional realm; allowed for a temporary reprieve from the demands of daily reality.

i. Sub-Theme Light-hearted entertainment

Over and above providing relaxation, 7de Laan's comic relief, interesting characters, and the original character-driven dialogue attract audiences to the show. The analysis revealed that tweets regularly discussed the scenes and provided entertaining commentary which Twitter users looking for laughter and entertainment enjoyed. This suggests that the show's overall comedy, its interesting characters, and the storyline enhances its overall entertainment appeal.

7.3.2 Connectedness

The audience of 7de Laan utilised Twitter as the accurate virtual platform that connected all the audiences of the show who shared common interests in the show. When these audiences engaged in live tweeting during the broadcast, it promoted a feeling of collective participation and immediate interaction. Even though these audiences were interacting during #7deLaan, they forged a bond of connectedness and inclusion, that provided a sense of belonging amongst themselves. The power of Twitter to make connections between people is recorded by other studies as well, for example, Brooker (2021) stated that Twitter has the power to make wonderful connections between people.

i. Fandom and Community

Relating to the show, online communities and fan clubs form a nurturing and all-encompassing atmosphere for fans to engage, exchange viewpoints, and forge enduring friendships. These communities offer a platform for enthusiasts to openly display their affection for the show, participate in conversations, and foster a deep sense of companionship.

ii. Social capital

Engaging in debates about the show fostered social capital, that is, enhancing current social ties and facilitating the formation of new connections, thereby expanding one's social networks. Engaging in online discussions about 7de Laan allowed fans to establish connections with like-minded others. This promotes the development of new friendships and social connections.

Participants 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10 and 12 mentioned that they tweet when watching the television show to connect with other audiences who were watching the show.

Participant 6
"I tweet during 7de Laan viewing to be entertained, and to engage with other people outside my living room."
Participant 8
Connection with other audiences who are tweeting about the show.

Figure 7.1 (also Figure 6.23): Connect with other people who are also watching

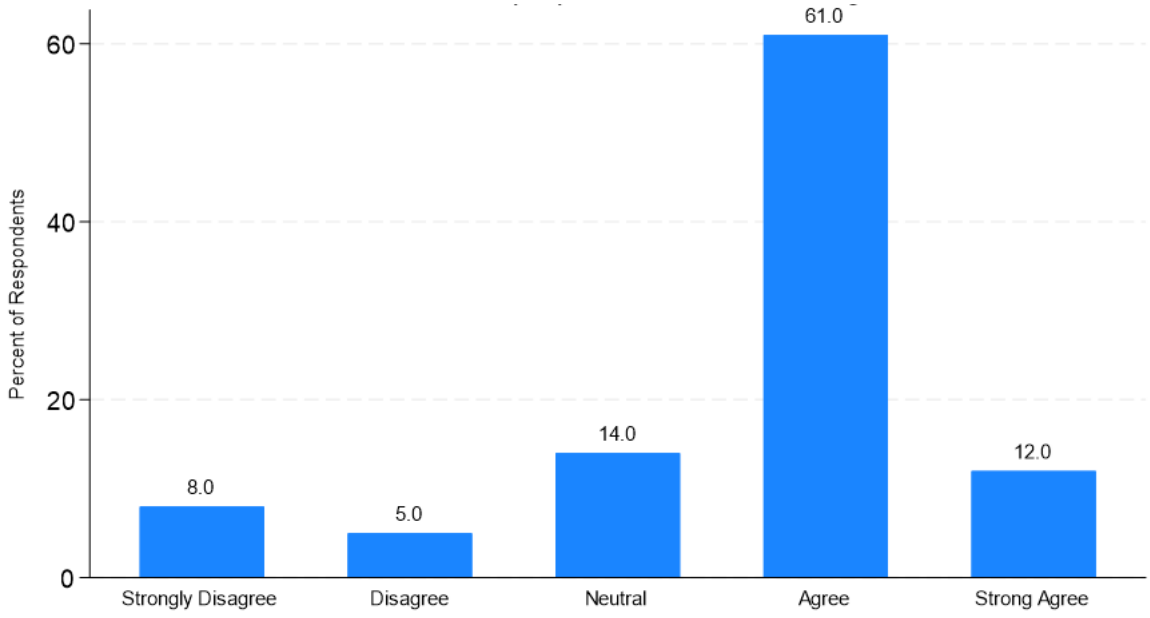


Figure 7.1 indicated that 122 respondents (61.0%) agreed that they tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* to connect with other people who were also watching, and so did 24 (12%) who strongly agreed, while the second highest percentage shows 28 (14.0%) were neutral in their responses. Then, 16 (8.0%), strongly disagreed and 10 (5.0%) disagreed that they tweeted to connect with other people watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show 7de Laan.

7.3.3 Social Interaction

i. Virtual watercooler

Twitter functions as a digital forum where friends, family or colleagues can engage in discussions and analyse the most recent episodes, fostering a virtual watercooler ambience. The show's ability to engender dialogue and discourse among viewers enhanced its societal influence.

ii. Debate & Discussion

Audiences actively participated in animated discussions around plotlines, underlying motivations of characters, and societal themes explored in the show, promoting intellectual stimulation, and a wide range of viewpoints. Engaging in these debates enabled a deep understanding of 7de Laan’s underlying themes and messages, encouraging critical thinking and open dialogue.

7.3.4 Information seeking

i. Behind-the-scenes content

Viewers frequently expressed the desire to view exclusive insights into the show's creation, such as interviews with the actors and crew, tours of the set, and documentaries that reveal the process of producing the show. The user's need for more information demonstrated the ability to engage and arouse viewers' curiosity about the production process.

ii. Character Analysis

Enthusiasts may actively pursue details of their preferred characters' origins, drives, and individual progressions, immersing themselves further into the show's fictional universe. The show's intricately crafted characters and intricate plotlines inspired fans to delve into their personalities and origins, thereby fostering a profound emotional bond with the characters.

iii. Social and Cultural Commentary

Viewers may utilise Twitter to participate in debates about pertinent social issues addressed in the broadcast, thereby increasing awareness and fostering critical thinking. The show's ability to tackle social and cultural concerns has ignited significant discussions that facilitate societal transformation.

7.3.5 Storyline forecasting

i. Hypotheses and Predictions

Fans engaged in the active construction of elaborate hypotheses regarding forthcoming plot developments, meticulous analysis of character interactions, and the anticipation of prospective results. This interaction with the show's storyline showcased the show's capacity to captivate and involve viewers in the narrative.

ii. Foreshadowing and Clues

Viewers diligently scrutinise episodes for concealed hints and foreshadowing, actively participating in a detective-like process to unravel the enigmatic aspects of the show. The show's utilisation of tension and intrigue leads viewers to actively engage in deciphering the plot.

iii. Fan-Led Narratives

Occasionally, fans may construct their own alternate stories or character arcs, showcasing their imaginative involvement with the show's universe. This display

confirmed the show's ability to influence and enable 7de Laan fans to aggressively engage in the process of storytelling.

7.3.6 Character-Centric Discussion

i. Character Shipping

Fans frequently demonstrate their endorsement of particular character pairings by developing fan-based ships and participating in conversations regarding the potential romantic relationships between them. The show's intricately crafted characters and their dynamic interactions provided fans with the chance to establish deep emotional bonds and become emotionally invested in their relationships.

ii. Character Critiques

Audiences have the latitude to provide constructive criticism or praise regarding the development of characters and examine their storylines and personal development throughout the series. The show's competence to produce complex and empathetic characters excited audiences to participate in thoughtful conversations regarding their evolution and motivations.

iii. Emotional Investment

Developing intense emotional bonds with characters can result in fervent debates about their experiences, obstacles, and victories including cultivating a sense of empathy, and mutual emotions. The potential of the show to elicit intense emotional reactions from viewers underscored its ability to establish a personal connection with audiences.

7.4 INTEGRATED QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS OF 7DE LAAN AUDIENCES

All participants possessed individual Twitter accounts and actively participated throughout broadcasts, with the majority routinely posting tweets. Mobile phones served as the predominant means of accessing Twitter.

i. Reasons for involvement**:** The primary objectives for the audience to engage on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show 7de Laan, was to have a sense of belonging to a virtual community, connect with other audiences watching the show and exchange ideas that could end up being implemented in the show, like discussions on the storyline. The storyline and characters played a significant role in driving engagement by generating excitement.

ii. Twitter Usage Patterns**:** Several 7de Laan audiences engaged on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast to read tweets and comments from other audiences. Interestingly, some audiences share the tweets with friends and family who could be watching the show or not watching. 7de Laan audience engagement on Twitter served as entertainment, escapism, relaxation, and passing time. The engagement on Twitter by the 7de Laan audiences when watching the prime-time broadcast was merely driven by the need to consume news and connect with friends.

iii. Desired gratifications: Entertainment is the most desired form of satisfaction. Additionally, social connectivity and the need to belong to a group were significant advantages. Although some individuals used tweeting to acquire information about the show, this was not the main motivation.

7.5 KEY FINDINGS

7.5.1 Major themes from qualitative and quantitative data analysis

i. Social connection and community

The analysed data of qualitative and quantitative demonstrated a significant inclination towards social interaction and the establishment of a virtual community among Twitter users who watch the television show 7de Laan.

Qualitative: Participants reported a desire to engage in active listening and establishing social connections while watching the prime-time broadcast of the show.
Quantitative: Data revealed that 128 (64.5%) participants agreed with the statement that they utilise Twitter to experience a sense of belonging to a group connected to.

ii. Entertainment

Both datasets highlighted entertainment and active interaction as significant themes.
Qualitative: Viewers reported that they used Twitter for the purpose of being entertained and to improve their overall viewing experience.
Quantitative: 121 (60.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed that they use Twitter for entertainment purposes, while 156 (77.9%) stated that they tweet in order to enhance their viewing experience.

iii. Self -Expression and sharing personal opinions

The inclination to articulate viewpoints and engage in dialogues was apparent in both sets of data.
Qualitative: Numerous interviewees expressed their inclination to tweet about "the narrative and characters" and need to "articulate their viewpoints."
Quantitative: 80% (160) of the participants acknowledged that they expressed their opinions about the storyline through tweeting, while 79.5% (159) confirmed that they tweet to share their viewpoints with other viewers.

iv. Perceived Influence on Narrative

An exceptional pattern surfaced in the qualitative data, as numerous participants held the view that their tweets had the potential to exert influence over the storyline of the show. This view emphasises the perceived influence of social media in activity determining television storylines.

Qualitative: Multiple interviewees reported observing their comments being included in the narrative or acknowledged by writers who occasionally pay attention.
Quantitative: Although not explicitly quantified in the survey, this subject emphasises the potential influence of the audiences' input in the process of content creation.

v. Multitasking and focus

The qualitative data uncovered many ways that viewers utilise to maintain a balance between their Twitter participation and viewing the broadcast.
Certain people engage in tweeting during commercial breaks, while others interrupt the show to tweet. This emphasises the different degrees of multitasking and the inclination to remain connected while avoiding the omission of important plot details.

vi. External Factors

Qualitative interviews revealed that external factors, such as loadshedding, had a significant interference on Twitter activity. The inclusion of this contextual variable enhances the comprehensiveness of the quantitative findings and draws attention to the need to consider practical limitations influencing audience behaviour.
Topics that provided a comprehensive view on active and involved audiences of the show 7de Laan Twitter platform, had to do with audiences' being motivated to

i. engage in social interaction;
ii. deriving amusement from the interaction;
iii. freedom to express themselves, and
iv. feeling empowered.

7.5.2 Convergences and Divergences of the qualitative and quantitative data sets

The integration of the qualitative and quantitative data unveiled an intricate interaction of motivations and behaviours among Twitter users who watched the prime-time broadcast of the television show 7de Laan. Although there were certain sections in the qualitative interviews and the quantitative surveys where consensus was mutual, there were also apparent minor differences. For example, the rich tapestry of motives such as behaviours, and gratifications as to why 7de Laan audiences engaged on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show were revealed. A rich tapestry of motives gathered utilising both qualitative and quantitative data, offered a nuanced understanding of 7de Laan audience motives for engaging on Twitter when watching the show during prime-time broadcast.

7.5.2.1 Convergences of qualitative and quantitative data sets

Both qualitative interviews and quantitative numbers confirmed that Twitter served as a social platform for audiences of 7de Laan and fostered the promotion of virtual communities. The qualitative interviews highlighted that shared viewing experience and a sense of belonging were significant to 7de Laan audiences. The quantitative data concurred, that Twitter offered the 7de Laan audiences a sense of belonging to a connected community.

The datasets of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies demonstrated 7de Laan audiences' strong desire towards seeking amusement and involvement. The qualitative interview participants categorised Twitter as a platform that enriched their viewing experience and assisted in passing the time. Quantitative surveys highlighted the major association between Twitter usage and the pursuit of enjoyment.

Participant 12
I engage on Twitter when watching the television show 7de Laan to pass the time while connecting with other audiences.

Figure 7.2 (also Figure 6.32): Respondents who tweeted to pass time

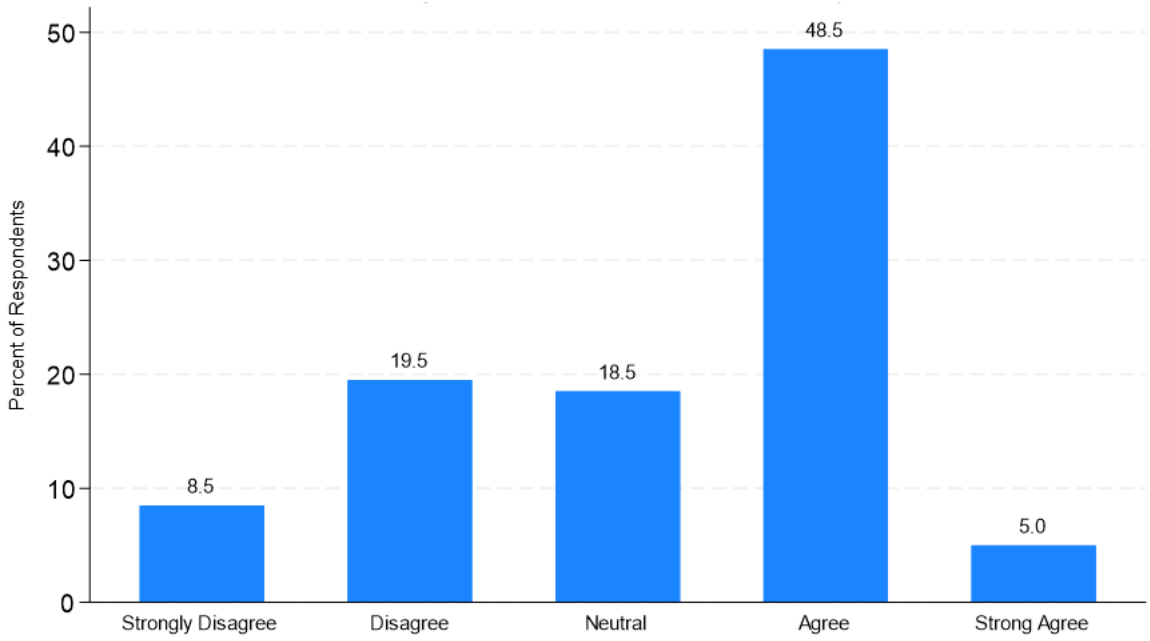


Figure 7.2 (same as Figure 6.52) indicated that 97 respondents (48.5%) agreed that they tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* to pass the time, followed by 39 (19.5%) disagreed, 37 (18.5%) were neutral in their responses, 17(8.5%) disagreed, and 10 (5.0%) strongly agreed. Figure 7.1 indicated that 98 respondents (49%) agreed that they tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* to pass the time.

The qualitative interviews uncovered that the show provided a forum for people to express themselves and share their thoughts, leading to debates. This was corroborated by quantitative data, which showed that a substantial percentage of participants expressed their viewpoints on plots and characters through tweets.

i. Convergence of Themes

Various overlapping themes were identified in both qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys.

Connectedness: This was one of the major motivators for the 7de Laan audience to engage on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show. Both participants and respondents in the interviews and surveys respectively cited that the engagement on Twitter offered them a sense of belonging and a shared experience. This was apparent in both qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys.

Participant 9
"I engage on Twitter because I feel like I am watching with other people in the same room."

Figure 7.3 (also Figure 6.26): Respondents who used Twitter to feel like part of a connected community

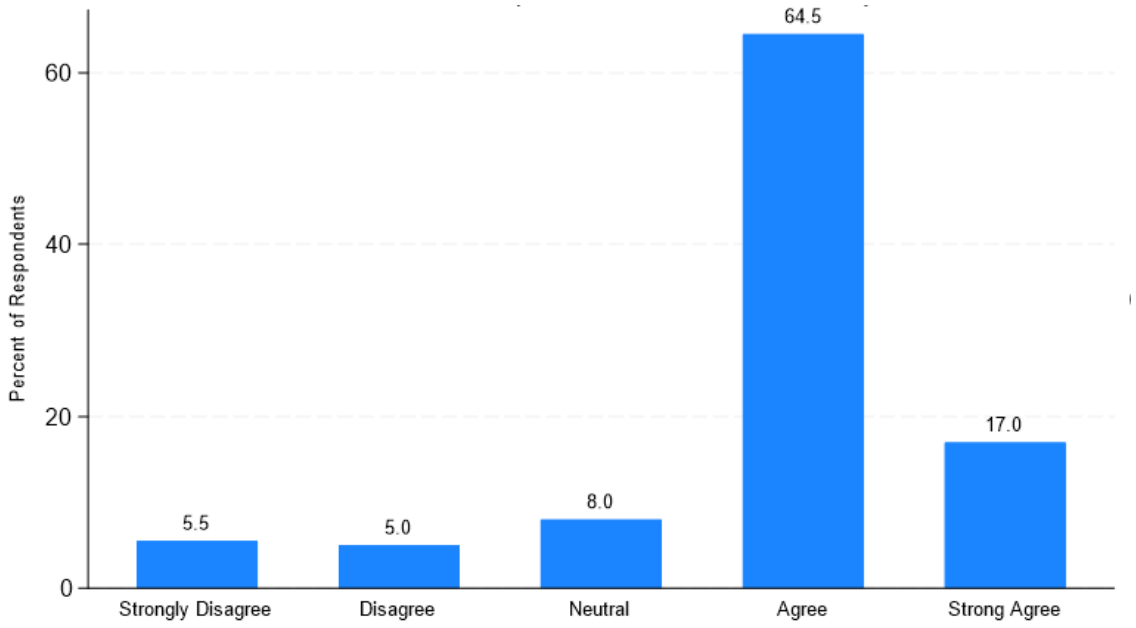


Figure 7.3 indicated that most respondents 129 respondents (i.e., 64.5% of the sample) agreed that they used Twitter to feel like part of a connected community, followed by 34 (17.0%) who strongly agreed, 16 respondents (8.0%) were neutral in their response while 11(5.5%) strongly disagreed and 10 (5.0%) disagreed. This clearly indicated that most of the respondents agreed that they used Twitter to feel like a part of a connected community and this is evident because the audiences of the

television show *7de Laan* do not all know each other but they felt connected when engaging on Twitter discussing the show.

Engagement with story and characters: This aspect is central to the Twitter conversation under the hashtag 7de Laan regarding the storyline and the characters. The respondents on both datasets stated that they engaged on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show and anticipating the storyline twists and turns, shared their opinions, and debated the characters.

Entertainment and escapism: 7de Laan's entertainment value was enhanced by offering the audience real-time conversations and connections with other audiences who were watching the show through Twitter. Both the qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys echoed this statement

Participant 1
"I engage on Twitter when watching the television show 7de Laan to seek entertainment and to escape from a busy day at work."

Figure 7.4 (same as Figure 6.50): Respondents who tweeted when watching for escapism

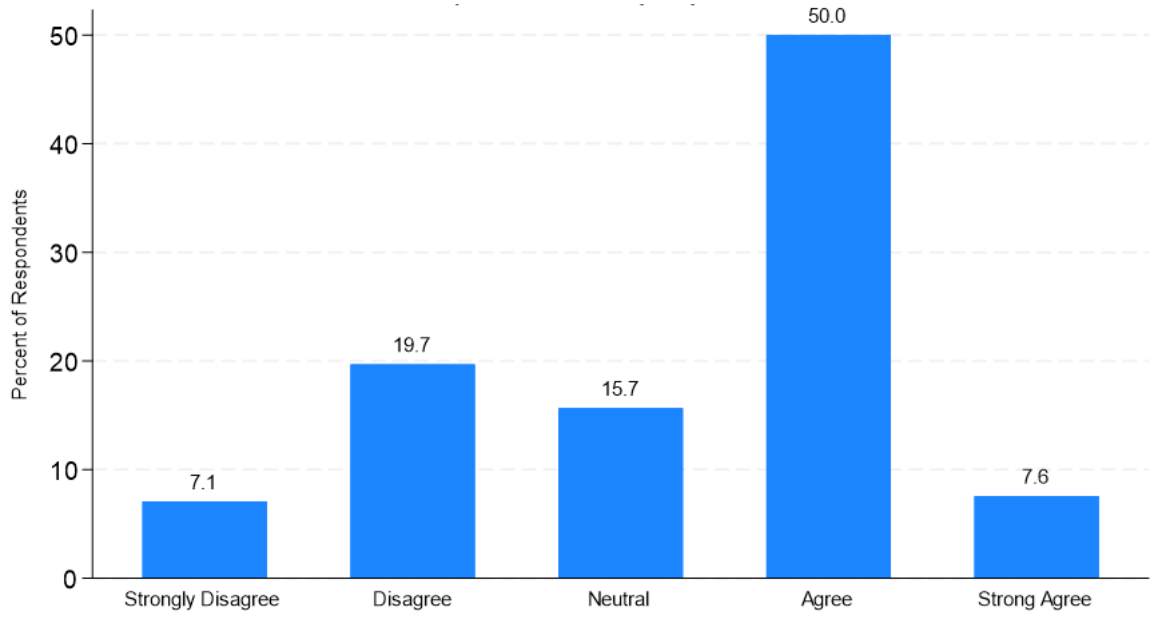


Figure 7.4 indicated that 100 respondents (50.0%) agreed that they tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* to escape from the busy day they had, followed by 40 (19.7%) who disagreed, with 31(15.7%) neutral in their responses, while 15 (7.6%) strongly agreed and 14 (7.1%) strongly disagreed. This figure indicated that most respondents, that is, 57.6% (115) agreed that they tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* to escape from the busy day they had.

Figure 7.5 (also Figure 6.31): Twitter use for entertainment

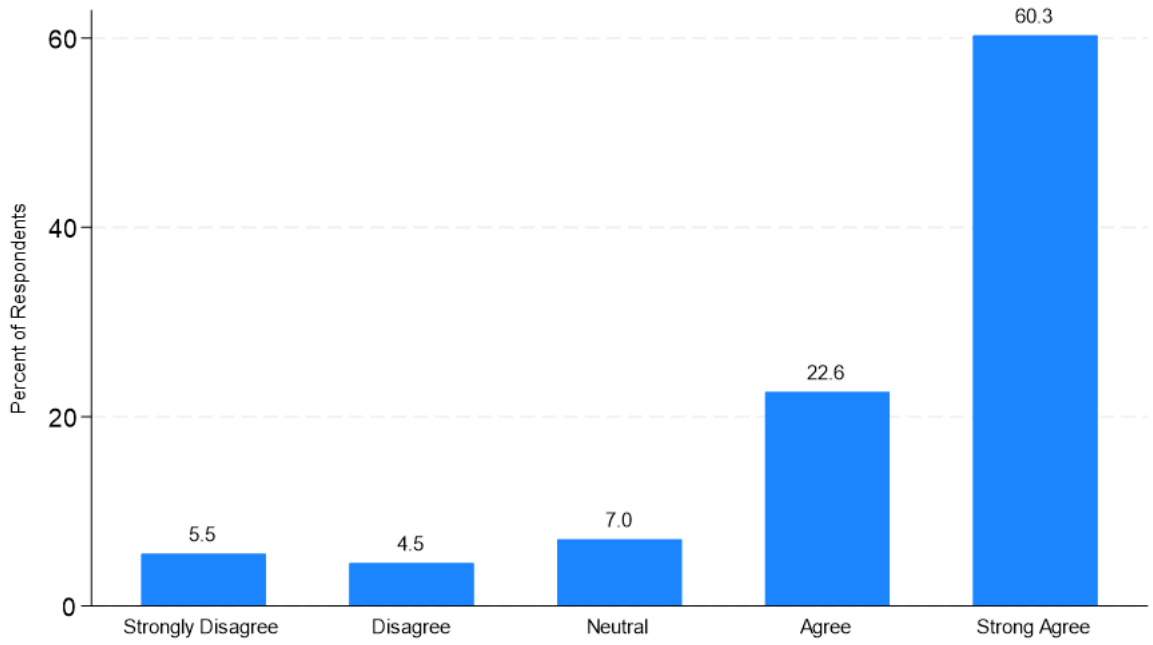


Figure 7.5 clearly indicated that 121 respondents (60.3%) strongly agreed that they used Twitter for entertainment, followed by 45 (22.6%) who agreed, then 14 (7.0%) were neutral, and 11 (5.5%) who strongly disagreed, and nine (4.5%) disagreed. This was an indication that most respondents strongly agreed that they used Twitter for entertainment. Notably, Johnson (2009:7) also concurs that Twitter users use media for entertainment.

Information seeking**:** Further to providing entertainment, Twitter, served as a platform central to the dissemination of information about the show, such as updates on new

actors joining, and leaving the show, behind-the-scenes of big stories, and interviews with cast and producers. This statement was clearly articulated in both qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys.

Figure 7.6 (also Figure 6.44): Tweet to get information about the show

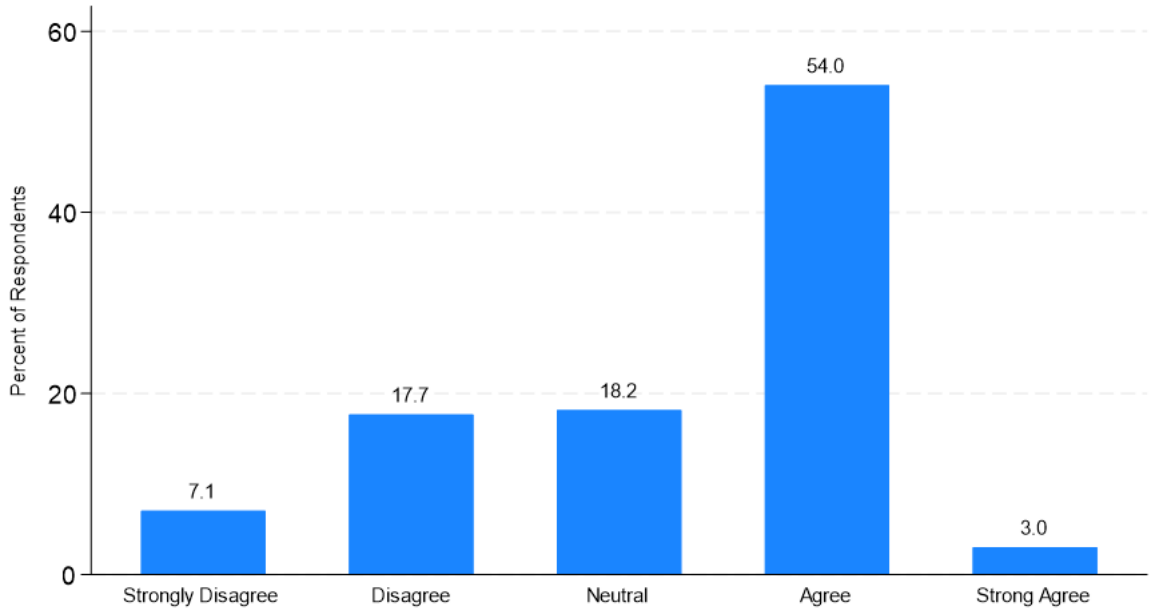


Figure 7.5 indicated that 108 respondents (54.0%) agreed that they tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show to get information, while 37 (18.2%) were neutral in their responses, followed by 35 (17.7%) who disagreed, 14(7.1%) strongly disagreed and six (3.0% strongly agreed. Figure 7.5 suggested that the majority of 114 (57%) of the survey respondents agreed that they tweeted to get information about the show.

7.5.2.2 Divergences of the qualitative and quantitative data sets

i. Information Seeking: Although the quantitative data indicated that some of the audience utilised Twitter to gather information about the show, qualitative interviews indicated that this was not a major motive. This discrepancy emphasises the significance of considering both forms of data to acquire a sophisticated comprehension of audience behaviour.

ii. Retweeting behaviour: The quantitative data indicated a comparatively low occurrence of retweeting behaviour, which was unexpected considering its capacity for interaction and its simplicity. Additional investigation could delved into the factors underlying this inclination and its consequences on audience involvement.

iii. The analysis of qualitative data uncovered diverse strategies for Twitter involvement**,** with certain viewers skilfully incorporating it into their viewing experience, while others predominantly utilising it during commercial breaks. The study did not specifically address this topic, highlighting the importance of qualitative research in revealing subtle behaviours.

iv. Contextual circumstances: Qualitative data revealed how external circumstances, such as loadshedding, impacted Twitter engagement. Although the poll did not specifically investigate this issue, the qualitative results emphasised the significance of considering wider contextual elements when interpreting audience behaviour. Combining qualitative and quantitative data yielded a more comprehensive comprehension of 7de Laan audience interaction on Twitter than using either method individually. Although there are certain places where ideas align, the differences emphasised the significance of employing diverse methodologies to fully comprehend the intricate nature of audience experiences and motives.

7.6 INTEPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

The combination of qualitative and quantitative data yielded a comprehensive and intricate comprehension of the motivations, actions, and satisfaction experienced by 7de Laan audiences who actively participated on Twitter during the prime-time broadcasts.

7.6.1 The implications and importance of the integrated results

i. Social connection and community

The main topic that is present in both datasets is the importance of social connection and the act of forming a community. Twitter provided the 7de Laan audiences with a digital gathering space where audiences could share and express their ideas, and opinions and feel like they belong to a virtually connected community. The virtual communal nature of this gathering enhanced the audiences' viewing experience of the television show 7de Laan.

Figure 7.7 (also Figure 6.26): Tweet to feel like part of a connected community

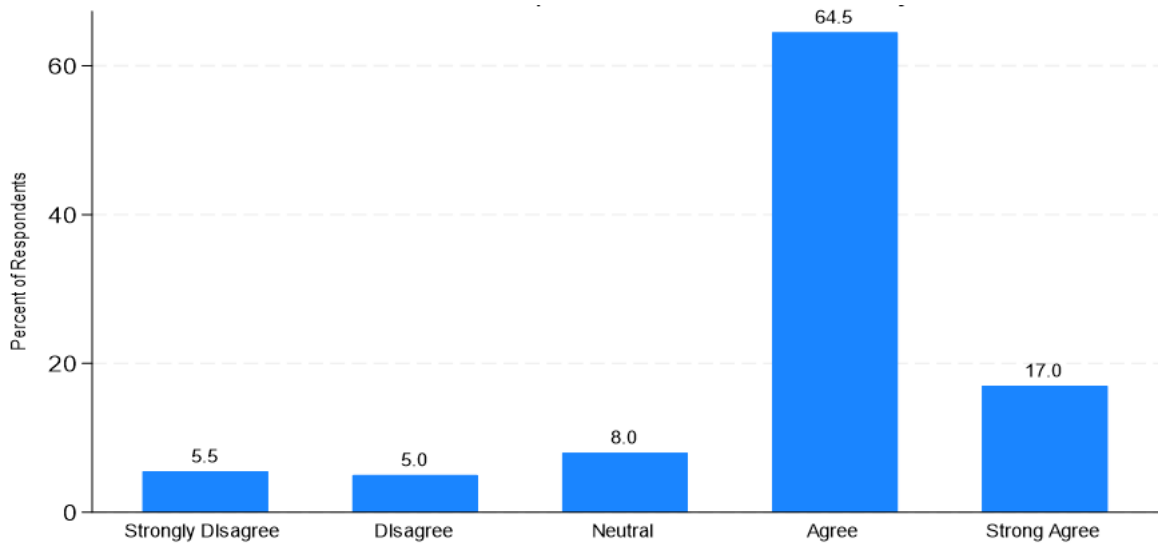


Figure 7.7 (6.26 in previous Chapter) indicated that most respondents, 129 respondents (64.5%) agreed they used Twitter to feel like part of a connected community, followed by 34 (17.0%) who strongly agreed, 16 (8.0%) were neutral in their response, 11 (5.5%) strongly disagreed and 10 (5.0%) disagreed. This suggested that the majority, 163(81.5%) of the respondents agreed that they used Twitter to feel like a part of a connected community and this is evident because the audiences of the television show *7de Laan* do not all know each other but, these respondents feel connected when engaging on Twitter about the show.

ii. Enhanced Entertainment and Engagement Beyond the Digital Display

The findings emphasised the way in which Twitter engagement expands and improves the entertainment aspect of 7de Laan. Tweeting during the prime-time broadcast

facilitated an engaging and participatory experience, enabling audience members to express their opinions, exchange humorous content, and establish connections with audiences who shared related interests. Engagement on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show 7de Laan, turned audiences from passive audiences to active audiences.

Participant 7
"I tweet honestly because I love the show and I want the show to perform great so, sharing my opinions matters to me."
Participant 8
"When other users disagree with my opinion, I laugh it off and move on. I am entitled to my opinion."

Figure 7.8: (also figure 6.51) Respondents who tweet when watching to share opinions with others

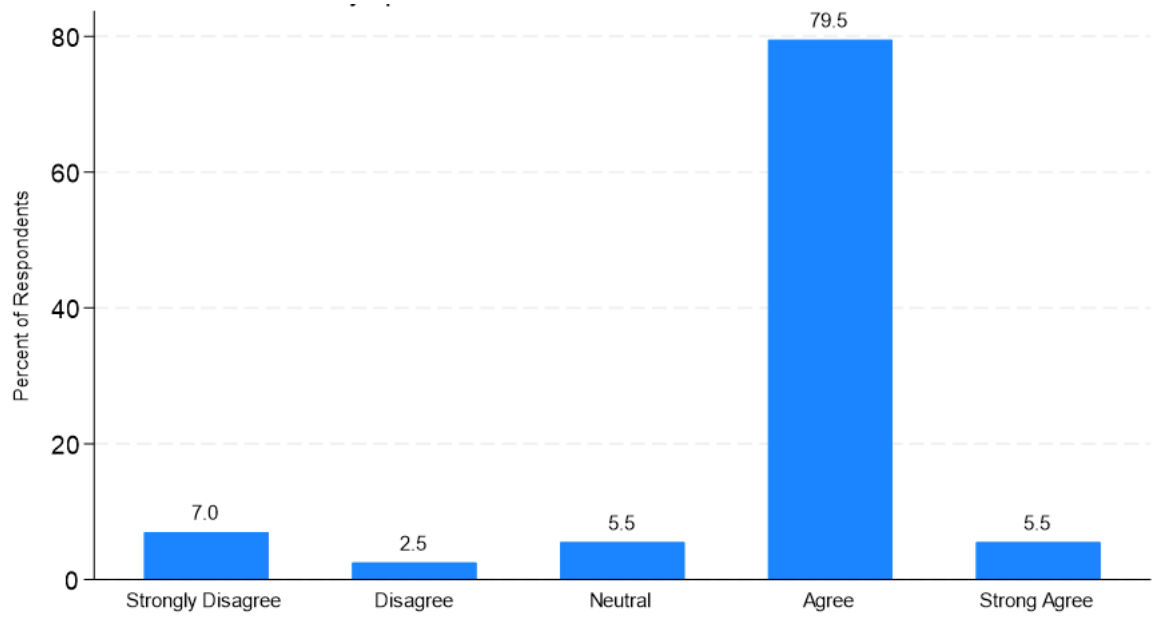


Figure 7.8 indicated that 159 respondents (79.5%) agreed that they tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* to share their opinions with other viewers, followed by 14 (7.0%) who strongly disagreed, with 11

(5.5%) who strongly agreed, 11 (5.5%) were neutral in their responses, and five (2.5%) who disagreed. Figure 7.8 suggested that the majority of the respondents, i.e., 170 (85%) agreed that they tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* to share their opinions with other viewers.

iii. Self-expression and the perception of influence

Audiences on Twitter actively seek an active role due to their desire for self-expression and belief in the potential influence of narratives. While the direct influence on the show's plot may be open to interpretation, the act of giving audiences a voice enhanced their sense of empowerment and cultivated a feeling of agency. This demonstrated the increasing convergence of roles between content makers and consumers in the digital era.

iv. Multitasking and Navigating attention

The diverse tactics employed by fans to maintain a balance between Twitter activity and watching the show emphasised the intricacies of multitasking and attention management in the digital age. It highlighted the flexibility of viewers and their inclination to stay connected while maintaining the fundamental viewing experience.

v. Contextual Factors and Real-world-constraints

The qualitative data demonstrated the impact of practical limitations, such as load shedding, on Twitter activity. The significance of considering the wider context in which media consumption takes place was emphasised by this contextual aspect.

The comprehensive analysis demonstrated that Twitter engagement during 7de Laan prime-time broadcasts was not simply a supplementary activity, but rather an essential element of the viewing experience for audiences. It satisfied social, emotional, and recreational requirements, promoting a feeling of togetherness and enabling spectators to engage in a collective cultural encounter. This study enhanced our understanding of the evolving interactions between television and social media, offering valuable insights into how audiences actively influenced and improved their media intake in the era of digital technology.

The results indicated that social media platforms, television producers, and content creators should acknowledge and utilise the influence of social interaction and audience participation to cultivate stronger engagement and loyalty for their television shows.

7.6.2 Connecting findings to objectives and research questions

The integrated qualitative and quantitative findings addressed the primary research question and objectives of this study. This provided an understanding and knowledge of the motives of the audiences of 7de Laan who engage on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show.

i. To explore the 7de Laan audience's motives for engaging on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show

The quantitative survey discovered various motives for 7de Laan audiences who engage on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show, such as connection, entertainment, self-expression, and the perceived power of influence to the storyline. The viewers of 7de Laan constitute a virtual community based on common values, norms, ideals, beliefs, behaviours, and attitudes (Ngcongo 2022.25).

The qualitative interviews revealed in-depth insight into the complexity of these motives, with quantitative data confirming their prevalence and importance among the 7de Laan audiences.

ii. To explore what the 7de Laan audiences use Twitter for when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show

Both qualitative and quantitative results indicated that Twitter primarily served as a social media network for social engagement and promoting virtual community building during the broadcast. Further, it was revealed that Twitter was used by audiences to engage with fellow fans of 7de Laan, exchange opinions, enhance their viewing experience, and engage in a shared cultural experience. This is consistent with the base assumption of social network theory, which suggests that individuals can adjust

their attitudes and behaviours, according to assessments of social references, to gain approval from peers and build their own identity, so guaranteeing the validity of group existence. (Mahmood,2022:170.

iii. To determine what the 7de Laan audiences tweet about when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show

The study identified key subjects of audiences' Twitter discussions, which included the narrative, cast of characters, actors, performance, and subtitles. The audiences commonly shared their opinions, engaged in conversations, and exchanged humour and insights about 7de Laan through the tweets.

iv. To establish the nature of gratifications that 7de Laan audiences seek from tweeting when watching the show

The study discovered that audiences mainly sought satisfaction in entertainment, social connection, and self-expression. Twitter provided audiences with a platform to relax, disconnect from the real world and experience a feeling comradeship in a connected community. The 7de Laan audiences could only disconnect from the real world when engaging on Twitter about fictional television shows.

7.6.3 Drawing on Relevant Theories and Literature

The findings of the study aligned with well-established theoretical frameworks in the disciplines of media studies and audience research, including the Uses and Gratifications Theory and Social Network Theory. Additionally, the findings provided an insightful contribution to the increasing body of work that explored the convergence of television and social media.

7.6.3.1 The Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G)

The U&G theory suggests that viewers actively pursue and utilise media to fulfill specific needs and gratifications (Gao, 2023:2). These results are consistent with this

notion, indicating that viewers of 7de Laan use Twitter to fulfil different gratifications, such as:

i. Social and Psychological Needs: The fulfilment of social and psychological needs is demonstrated through Twitter engagement, which comprises the need for social connection, virtual community building and self-expression. Sichach (2023: 2), states that social interaction and integration needs focused on utilising media to establish connections with family, friends, and the external environment, underscoring the significance of technology in nurturing relationships.

ii. Information and Surveillance Needs**:** these are demonstrated by the audience's use of Twitter to get more information about the story as they discuss different story direction scenarios. For example, in the interview transcript under section C,

Participant 11
"To read both local and international news. To engage in local television shows during broadcasts. Overall to escape from my reality and for entertainment."

Entertainment and Diversion Needs: Entertainment was one of the common motives for audiences who engaged on Twitter when watching the television show 7de Laan. Entertainment is an important source of fulfilment identified as a tenant of U&G theory and consistent with the media function of providing pleasure and relief.

7.6.3.2 Social Network Theory (SNT)

The SNT is a conceptual framework that examines the patterns of relationships and interactions among individuals or groups (Nimmon, Artino & Varpio 2019:247). The Social Network Theory (SNT) primarily examines the dynamics and connections among individuals within a given network (Mahmood 2022:35). The findings emphasise the use of Twitter as a social network for viewers of 7de Laan, enabling:

i. Network Ties: Twitter facilitated the establishment of both strong and weak connections among users, fostering a feeling of community and a shared sense of identity. Connectedness was the second theme from the qualitative interviews suggesting that 7de Laan audiences shared tweets while viewing of the show with others also viewing the show.

Participant 1
"I engage on Twitter when watching the television show 7de Laan to connect with other people and to find out what is happening in the show."

ii. Information Diffusion: Twitter enabled the spread of 7de Laan information audience viewpoints and responses. Through the show hashtag (#7deLaan), the audience knew what was happening in the show, and joined in the conversation or only reacted to others' tweets.

iii. Social Influence: The assumed power that the audience had to influence the storyline's direction, emphasised the possibility of their influence in the production processes. Participants further expressed the following statement during the interview:

Participant 2
"My Tweets assist the writers in writing better stories because I see some of my tweets and comments implemented in the story."

7.6.4 Literature on Television and Twitter

This study contributed to the developing body of research concerning the interaction that occurs between television and Twitter, specifically in the setting of television broadcasts and producers. This was consistent with prior research that emphasised the social and interactive aspects of second-screen engagement.

i. Enhanced Viewing Experience: The findings emphasised the previous research that indicated that Twitter enhances audiences' television viewing

experience, by offering a platform for immediate engagement, criticism, and the building of virtual communities. The results from both qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys concur that Twitter enhanced the viewing experience of the 7de Laan audiences.

Participant 6
"Twitter enhances my viewing experience. It makes me look forward to watching the show because I get to engage with people outside my room."

Figure 7.9 (also Figure 6.20): Respondents who tweeted to enhance the viewing experience

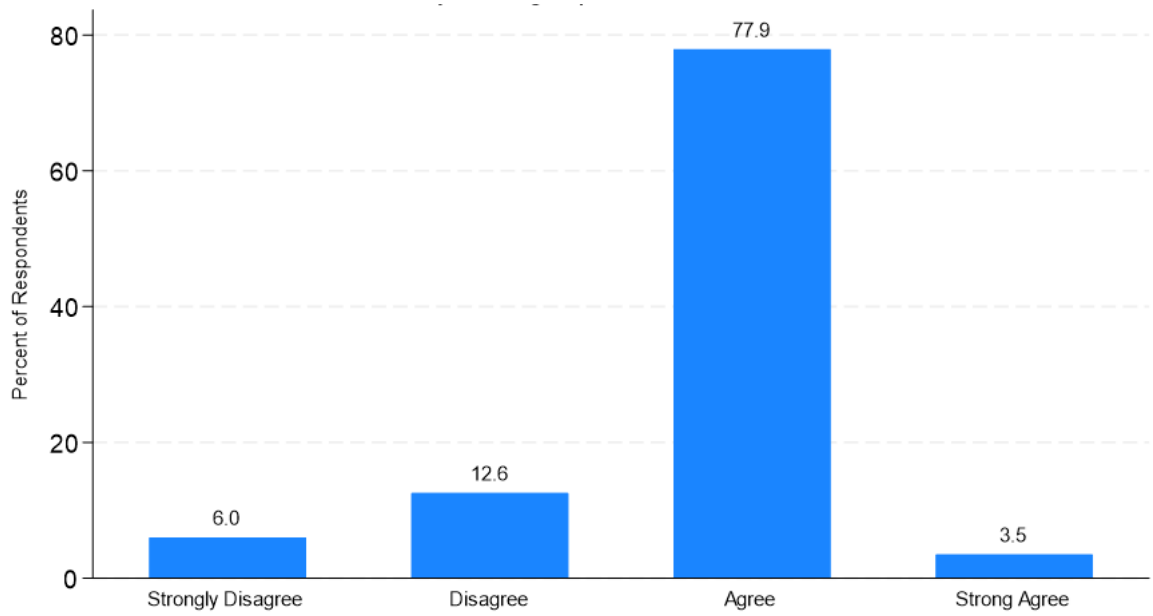


Figure 7.9 shows that 156 respondents (77.9%) tweeted when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show *7de Laan* to enhance their viewing experience, while 25 (12.6%) disagreed, 12 (6.0%) strongly disagreed and seven (3.5%) strongly agreed.

ii. Audience Agency: The perceived influence on the storyline was consistent with the research that examined the growing sense of control and involvement among audiences in the digital era.

iii. Multiplatform Engagement: the survey confirmed the growing trend of second-screen interaction, in which audiences switch between television and Twitter to enhance their viewing experience.

7.7 REFLECTION ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS

7.7.1 Strengths and Limitations of the Mixed Method Research

The research employed a mixed methods approach, including qualitative interviews and a quantitative survey, to achieve a comprehensive understanding of audience involvement with 7de Laan on Twitter. Nevertheless, like any other research methodology, it is important to recognise and consider both the strengths and limitations.

7.7.1.1 The strengths of the mixed method approach

By employing both qualitative and quantitative data, the researcher acquired comprehensive insights into the motives, behaviours, and gratifications of the 7de Laan audience. The “what” and the “why” of the study were carefully captured by integrating these two approaches. To enhance the reliability and validity of the results, the researcher had to employ triangulation which resulted in a strong and more convincing interpretation. The mixed-method approach afforded the researcher the chance to collect and examine data with flexibility. Further, the mixed method provided a comprehensive context and in-depth explanations collaborating with the statistical patterns that were noticed from the quantitative analysis of data, yielding additional insights into the phenomenon studied. The strategic use of a mixed-method approach effectively resolved the research questions, providing a profound comprehension of the 7de Laan audience's participation on Twitter during the prime-time broadcasting of the television show.

7.7.1.2 Limitations of the mixed method approach

Mixed methods research necessitated expertise in both qualitative and quantitative methodologies and required substantial time and resources for implementation. An intricate process, integrating data from several sources was employed. The process required a comprehensive analysis of the data obtained from the methodology section and the reviewed literature. Employing convenience sampling technique for the interviews and surveys enabled findings to be generalised to a wider population. The researcher's presence and the questioning manner eliminated any bias that could have influenced the participants' responses. Bias refers to the tendency for individuals to submit responses in a survey that they see as socially acceptable, potentially leading to inaccuracies in self-reported data (Bispo Júnior, 2022).

7.7.2 Potential Impacts of Researcher Bias

The researcher worked on the soap opera 7de Laan before. Hence it was important to address the issue of biases that could have potentially occurred. Qualitative research methodologies have been traditionally perceived to lack rigour, as well as their tendency to produce impressionistic and biased findings (Mackieson, Shlonsky & Connolly 2018: 967). Interviewer bias pertains to the subjective viewpoints, convictions, and attitudes of the interviewer that can impact the interviewing process and interpretation of the interviewee's data (Kühne, 2023). To address the issue of interviewer bias, the researcher followed these steps as mentioned by Bergen & Labonte 2020:783).

i. Selection Bias

Selection bias seems unavoidable in qualitative research due to how participants are selected (Florczak 2022:21). Selection bias "occurs when a sample used in a study isn't completely representative of the population of interest or is sub-optimal for answering the specific research question" (Gordon 2024). Throughout the qualitative interviews, the researcher deliberately avoided selecting individuals who shared the same view about the research topics. The researcher followed a

systematic approach when choosing the 15 individuals for the interview sample. The researcher started by monitoring activities in the 7de Laan hashtag (#7deLaan). At the end of each episode, the researcher would assess the level of engagement and the conversation, then select the top 20 user accounts that would form the sample size including the pilot sample of five participants. These accounts were then updated to reflect the less active users on subsequent days, resulting in new additions to the top 20 ranked accounts. This was because the accounts were not all equally active every day, some accounts would not engage on other days which resulted in those accounts not making it into the final top 20. On Friday, the researcher finalised the top 20 and three accounts which made it on the first day of monitoring did not make it to the top 20 by the end of the episode on Friday.

ii. Question Wording and Probing

The researcher was careful in how the questions were phrased and how further information was probed during the interview to ensure that the participant was not steered towards certain responses that favour the researcher. The researcher guaranteed that the questions were standardised in the interview guide, and meticulously organised to lessen any inconsistency in the interviews. The researcher was more interested in the participants' views that would address the assumptions entertained by the researcher around the topic.

iii. Data Interpretation

The researcher's own assumptions and interpretations were grounded in data analysed to rule out biases or selective reporting of findings.

iv. Reflexivity:

The researcher engaged in continuous critical examination of own assumptions, self-reflection and potential biases during the research process. This involved documenting the researcher's thoughts and feelings in a reflexive journal which aided the researcher in developing self-awareness skills.

v. Transparent Reporting:

The research methods were reported, including any potential biases that might have had a significant influence on the findings or compromised any research procedure due to a lack of transparency in the methods employed. Hence the decision to conduct a pilot test with the five participants to identify and address any biases that may arise during the data collection process.

7.8 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 7 AND OUTLINE OF CHAPTER 8

An integrated data analysis of 7de Laan provided a robust tool for comprehending the intricate dynamics, of audiences who engage on Twitter when watching the television show. This chapter offered an insightful understanding and knowledge of the study's objectives and the motive for employing mixed-method research. An extensive analysis of responses from interviewees revealed that, although the show had a dedicated Twitter fan page, it appealed to a wider audience of different demographics.

The qualitative interviews and quantitative survey results confirmed that Twitter participation is a very social and participatory experience for viewers of 7de Laan. The qualitative interviews emphasised the audiences' need to actively interact with other audiences in live discussions and express their opinions on evolving storylines. Additionally, this chapter highlighted the importance placed on social contact as acknowledged by the participants who confirmed that they used Twitter to engage with other users and to fulfil a desire to be part of a larger virtual community. Further, the results of this study emphasised the importance of Twitter individuality in television viewing and interactive viewing that fosters a mutually shared viewing experience within virtual communities.

Chapter 8 offers the study conclusion, contribution to knowledge, recommendations, and limitations.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The research problem of this study centred on the growing trend showing that several television audiences were engaging on a second screen when watching live broadcasts of television shows. The researcher needed to explore these motives of engagement using the television show 7de Laan as report to assimilate why these audiences participate on Twitter when watching the live broadcast. Consequently, the researcher commences on exploratory research to gain insight about this uncharted field of study.

8.2 SUMMARY

The summary is divided into two sections which are briefly discussed below.

8.2.1 Summary of Chapters

Chapter 1, the discussions provided an overview of the thesis and foundation. It primarily provided the background and motivation of the study and explained the study's objectives, aim, and relevance. This chapter further detailed the research questions shaping the study. A limited number of studies have been conducted on the phenomenon of "media multitasking the case of the soap opera 7de Laan. Although a sizeable number of studies on South African soap operas have been conducted with 7de Laan taking the lead in that list, the gap in literature however, points to limited research conducted that explores "media multitasking" in prime-time broadcast viewing of the television show 7 de Laan and, simultaneous real-time mediated audience engagement on its Twitter platform while watching the TV show. Terms that form part of the literature were also identified and defined in this chapter for easy referencing.

Chapter 2 focused on literature reviewed on the phenomenon "media multitasking" – live broadcast television viewing and simultaneous active audience engagement on

the Twitter platform while watching the 7 de Laan TV show – second-screen engagement. The research objectives were derived after conducting a literature review on the topic under study. The study also sought to discover gratifications that television audiences of 7de Laan sought to experience when engaging on Twitter while watching the live broadcast of the show.

Chapter 3 used philosophical perspectives and theoretical framework comprising of theories identified from literature reviewed to:
i) explore the motives of audiences engaging on Twitter while watching the broadcast TV show 7de Laan;
ii) examine factors influencing audience participation and connectedness; and
iii) employ the respective theories deemed fitting to explore the phenomenon namely, the UGT and the SNT. This encompassed acquiring an insight on the theories' history, assumptions, and relevance of the theories to the study.

Chapter 4 discussions centred on the mixed methodology research approaches and the methods that were used to collect the primary data to explore the motives of 7de Laan audiences who engage on Twitter when watching the live broadcast of the television show. Included in the discussions were the population, sampling, instruments for data collection, pilot test, reliability, and validity.

Chapter 5 presented data which were analysed by applying utilising thematic analysis in extracting re-occurring themes and patterns from data and combining the themes into detailed narratives and illustrative excerpts derived from semi-structured interviews. Visual representations, such as charts, graphs, or diagrams, were utilised to arrange and present intricate qualitative data comprehensible to facilitate understanding. Direct quotations from participants were frequently incorporated to ground the analysis, coupled with examples supporting identified themes. The thick descriptions provided an exhaustive description of the research environment, participants, and observations made by the researcher. This contextual framework aided the reader with an inclusive understanding of the intricacies inherent in data grounded in participants' encounters.

Chapter 6 presented and analysed data from the quantitative research using descriptive statistics, to summarise and describe the measure of central tendency, measures of dispersion and frequency distribution. Tables and charts were also used to visually communicate the quantitative data effectively.

The purpose of Chapter 7 was to integrate and analyse the results obtained from the qualitative and quantitative data gathered in the study on the engagement of 7de Laan audiences on Twitter when watching the show. The main emphasis was on delivering a thorough examination and explanation of the findings, while also establishing their relevance to research enquiry and goal attainment. The chapter also provided a critical examination of the advantages and drawbacks of the mixed-methods strategy employed in the study. This chapter desired to offer a comprehensive and perceptive comprehension of the reasons and methods by which 7de Laan viewers utilise Twitter while watching the show. It accomplishes this by utilising both quantitative data and in-depth interviews to construct a more comprehensive depiction.

Chapter 8 offered the study's summary, conclusion, and recommendations. Discussions in this Chapter articulate the analysis of the research objectives and how they link back to the literature reviewed. Also discussed was the context of the theoretical framework, issues uncovered, also, future research recommendations.

8.2.2 Summary of Results

The study's main objective was to explore why the audiences of the television show 7de Laan engage on Twitter when watching the live broadcast.

i. The results revealed that every participant actively participated on Twitter while watching the live airing of the television programme 7de Laan, albeit in the varying manner. For example, some participants actively participated by sharing tweets, while others engaged by leaving comments on tweets from others, and some showed their interest by "like" tweets sent by others. Surprisingly, the results revealed that other viewers on Twitter were only interested in reading the tweets written during the live broadcast of 7de Laan.

One of the findings revealed that the majority of audiences who tweet when watching the television were male. One would have expected female respondents to be in the majority because soap operas are female-skewed in their nature.

ii. The results indicated that most participants utilised Twitter to engage in conversations about the plot and the performance of actors with fellow viewers who were simultaneously watching the live broadcast but not physically located in the same vicinity. An intriguing finding was that a small proportion of participants admitted to using Twitter to stay updated on the story when they were unable to watch the live broadcast at home or during power outages. Additionally, some respondents used Twitter while watching the live broadcast of the television show 7de Laan to read the opinions of other viewers about the show's plot, storyline, and the actors' performance. Most respondents did not utilise Twitter as a means to maintain contact with friends. Unlike traditional friendships, Twitter enables individuals to engage with one another without the need for personal acquaintance or mutual following. However, the shared interest in the television show 7de Laan served as a common ground for interaction.

iii. A noteworthy observation was that most respondents tweeted truthfully regarding the unexpected turns in the tale. These participants held the belief that their tweets provided valuable assistance to the show's authors, as their proposals were grounded in personal experiences. They also stated that some of their plot suggestions were incorporated into the show and were aired. This writers' gesture fostered a sense of inclusion among the contributors, prompting them to actively participate on Twitter with the view to offer commentary when necessary.

iv. The findings indicated that the primary gratifications sought by the participants who utilised Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show 7de Laan were entertainment, social interaction, and affiliation. The same gratifications were also popular in a survey where participants were requested to rate the frequency with which they pursued those satisfactions using a Likert

scale. These findings corroborated previous research indicating that those who utilise social networking platforms, such as Twitter, agreed. Furthermore, the findings indicated that these desired gratifications were frequently fulfilled with participants openly stating that they would switch to a different channel once their needs were not met. Others stated they left the television programme playing while they engaged in other activities.

Furthermore, the findings indicated that these desired gratifications were frequently fulfilled. The participants indicated that if their desires were not fulfilled, they would switch to a different channel, while others would allow the television programme to continue playing while they engaged in other activities.

8.3 FURTHER AREAS OF RESEARCH

Considering the discoveries and constraints of the present investigation, below are a few encouraging domains for future research on Twitter interaction noted from responses of the 7de Laan audience:

i. Longitudinal Studies: The present study offers a momentary glimpse of audience involvement at a particular moment in time. Conducting longitudinal studies that monitor changes in audience behaviour and motivations over a lengthy period would provide significant insights into the evolution of Twitter usage in relation to narrative developments, character arcs, and broader social trends. An investigation of the disparity in engagement levels between 7de Laan and other soap operas or television genres can provide further insights into distinct characteristics that influence Twitter interactions related to forms of television soap operas.

ii. Qualitative Deep Dives: Although the current study incorporated qualitative interviews, undertaking further comprehensive qualitative research methods, like focus groups or ethnographic observations, would yield comprehensive insights and experiences that motivate Twitter involvement. An examination of

the affective and interpersonal aspects of engagement might uncover how Twitter enhances viewers' perception with respect to the aspect of belonging and selfhood.

iii. Impact on Narrative and Production: Additional investigations that explore the degree to which fan criticism on Twitter truly affects the show's narrative and production choices could be researched. This may entail examining modifications to the screenplay, advancements in character development, or narratives in connection with Twitter discussions.

iv. Technological advancements and audience engagement: As social media platforms continue to grow and new technologies emerge, it is imperative to research how these advancements influence how audiences interact and participate. Subsequent investigations could be explored. For example, the effects of features such as live video streaming or virtual reality concerning audience engagement and interactivity.

v. Cross-Platform Analysis: Examining how viewers employ various social media platforms alongside television watching can yield a more inclusive understanding of the multi-platform media-enabled environment and its impact on audience behaviour. Expanding the research to encompass audiences from other countries or regions where 7de Laan is aired could provide cross-cultural comparisons and a detailed understanding of the global nature of audience engagement regarding television content.

vi. Overcoming Constraints: Subsequent research can overcome certain constraints experienced in this present study. Perhaps using a more comprehensive sampling approach or investigating alternate ways of data gathering to minimise potential biases or adopting sophisticated statistical techniques different to this study to analyse intricate relationships within data sets.

Further investigation into these areas, for audiences interested in research this phenomenon, may uncover interesting insights that will shed a comprehensive

understanding of audience engagement in the digital era. This information would be particularly valuable for content creators, broadcasters or any other party utilising social media platforms concerning effectively engage and catering for the needs of audiences.

8.4 RELATING THE FINDINGS TO THE USES AND GRATIFICATIONS THEORY

The UGT remains relevant for this study, based on its theoretical tenants on gratification regarding the audience of the television show 7de Laan, evidencing that they sought some form of gratification when they engaged on Twitter while watching the live broadcast. Arguably, from this finding, the UGT can be reckoned as a theory of choice when conducting a study on media use by audiences.

8.5 RELATING THE FINDINGS TO THE SOCIAL NETWORK THEORY

The SNT was one of the theories used to guide this study. The study confirmed the assumption of this theory that people engage on Twitter so they can connect with other people who share similar views as theirs. It further confirmed that people engage on SMN to create a sense of social community which enables them to share common ideologies, and political affiliations, rendering a sense of belonging. The focus of SNT is on the connections that people build with others within a networked community (Gamper 2022:36). Additionally, this study confirmed that there were relationships that formed among these users from interacting often. For example, when the researcher asked one interviewee if they knew the other interviewee through their Twitter handle - they responded that they knew them through the network platform but had never met them or engaged with them. This was strange because these two users engaged each other during the viewing of the episodes as if they knew each other.

8.6 MAIN CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY TO THE FIELD OF COMMUNICATION SCIENCE

In attempting to discuss the relevance of this study to the discipline of Communication Science, the researcher draws the reader's attention to the understanding that although several studies on the use of social media networks, especially Twitter have been conducted, there is a research gap confirmed through this study concerning soap opera 7de Laan audiences' participation when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show. This study explored the motives of the television 7de Laan audiences who engaged on Twitter when watching the live broadcast. Below are some of the contributions from this study.

i. This study can make substantial contributions to both scholarly research and the television industry. This research aims to provide significant insights into the intricate connection between television watching and social media use by examining the motivations and experiences of Twitter participation among 7de Laan viewers. The results could provide valuable insights for creating more captivating and interactive television programming. Additionally, they could assist broadcasters and producers in comprehending and utilising the power of social media networks to attract and retain audiences.

ii. Bridging old and new media: Studying on how TV viewers use Twitter and their viewing patterns, helps illuminate the complex relationship between traditional, and new media. This can assist communication academics in understanding how audiences use several media sources to gratify their needs.

vi. Understanding the social elements of television consumption: The thesis can illuminate the role of social contact and community in television by investigating motives of Twitter consumers. This can help researchers learn how TV viewers interact and connect.

vii. Twitter and audience engagement and participation: Studying how viewers discuss, analyse, and exchange opinions on TV shows on Twitter can show

how new media platforms empower audiences. This can add to digital audience agency and participatory culture discussions.

viii. Finding new television gratifications: The thesis may find new television gratifications, such as feeling connected to a larger community discussing the same programme, finding more information or perspectives, or expressing opinions and influencing conversations. This can illuminate audiences' motives and on how to take advantage of media consumption opportunities.

ix. Methodological contributions: The thesis may introduce new television-social media research approaches or framework which can aid in generating more sophisticated analysis on audience behavioural studies, especially in complex media environments.

x. Practical implications for media producers and broadcasters: Understanding how people use Twitter in conjunction with TV might be useful. This information can improve their content, interactive techniques, and audience engagement.

xi. This study will illuminate the digital age by changing interaction patterns between television audiences and social media networks. The study will add to the growing body of literature when applying the theoretical framework of the uses and gratifications and social network theory in analysing Twitter and television audiences.

xii. Moreover, this study has the potential to enhance comprehension of how social media networks such as Twitter can influence public opinion and cultural discourse on a broader scale. This research aimed to explore the motives of Twitter participation based on viewers' experience interacting with the show, and their attachment to characters, including storylines. The view is to discover social media's potential to influence and magnify cultural narratives.

xiii. Ultimately, this study can provide valuable insights for creating impactful social media tactics for television broadcasts. This research aims to uncover the primary determinants of Twitter engagement among viewers of the television

show 7de Laan. The results of this study can assist the producers and broadcasters of the show in developing more focused and impactful social media initiatives. This can result in enhanced audience participation, broader social media exposure, and eventually, elevated ratings for the show.

8.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

According to Creswell (2003:147), “limitations” are inherent in every study. Creswell (2003:148) further claims that it is important to highlight the limitations experienced throughout the research process. The first limitation encountered by the researcher was discovering that Twitter did not have a central registry list that telephone directory books have. This posed a challenge in terms of drawing a random sample frame due to the lack of readily available information on the targeted population. As such, the results could not be a representation of the entire population and could not be generalised to the audiences engaging on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show, 7de Laan. This necessitated a change from simple random sampling to convenience sampling which enabled the researcher to access a smaller sample of Twitter users as a target group. This sampling method yielded an inclusive understanding of the nuances of a new growing social media network.

Another limitation related to the high cost of internet data as the survey was conducted online and respondents were required to have a stable internet connection. This was an inconvenient cost to respondents as some pulled out of the interview on establishing that there would be no remuneration offered by the researcher. The researcher had to guarantee that the consent letter clearly stated that internet costs would be covered by the respondent.

8.8 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study’s findings attest to social media networks such as Twitter, now called ‘X’, as being a good source to collect authentic data. Television conversations are no longer limited to people who are watching together but people who are also outside the room, interacting virtually on the same show as if they are in a shared space.

This study recommended that future research be conducted to find out how the trending of a television show translates to television viewing ratings. Several shows trend during prime time in South Africa and it is still not clear if this translates to the number of audiences viewing a show.

Additionally, the study further recommends that research be conducted on how media multi-tasking affects the audiences' viewing experience of a television show.

A further recommendation is for research to be conducted on how Twitter can be used to market a television show.

8.9 CONCLUSION

The uses and gratifications theory remains a relevant theory to study internet use in research. The study explored the motives of the television show 7de Laan audiences who engage on Twitter when watching the show. The results indicate that the audiences engaged on the platform because they sought to gratify a certain need in the form of entertainment, obtaining information, engaging in social interactions, and relaxing. The study further affirmed that television is a platform enabling interactions that take place on Twitter during prime time in South Africa. Further, Twitter promotes audiences' active engagement on its platform when watching television shows as users interact with others using a second screen. It was also interesting to discover that the 7de Laan audiences do not only tweet about the television show but other topics and events. Besides, Twitter has changed the way watercoolers used to engage through physical interaction – whereby people gathered to discuss a television show. Now Twitter allows for the gathering to take place virtually online. This study has further highlighted the influence of television, and how relevant it is as a mass communication medium, and that online technologies like video on demand (VOD) will not replace it.

Although there were certain limitations, the mixed methods approach proved to be the most fitting method in examining the intricate dynamics of audience participation with the 7de Laan television show on Twitter. The utilisation of multiple methods enabled the researcher to conduct a thorough and perceptive examination that would have

been unattainable by applying a single method. The study significantly contributes to the media field by enhancing the understanding of audience behaviour in the digital era, while acknowledging the inherent limitations of such research and advising caution to researchers when interpreting its findings.

8.9.1 Qualitative Conclusions

The qualitative results of this study provided a thorough understanding on the motives of 7de Laan audiences who engaged on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast. Below is a detailed qualitative conclusion established through semi-structured interviews with twelve people who engaged on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show 7de Laan.

Section B: Motives for Participating on Twitter

The primary motive for the 7de Laan audiences to engage on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show 7de Laan is for entertainment, connectedness, social interaction, information seeking, storyline speculations and character discussions. These audiences engaged on Twitter because it enhanced their viewing experience of the show and gave them some kind of belonging to a virtual community with common interests.

Section C: The use of Twitter by 7de Laan Viewers

The 7de Laan audiences used Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of this television show, to share their viewpoints on the story, the characters, and actors' performances. Further, the 7de Laan audiences used Twitter to comment, retweet, like, read others' comments and join in on the conversation about the show with other users who are engaging through the show's hashtag.

Section D: Audience Sentiments on Twitter

The audience of the television show 7de Laan tweeted about the storyline's twists, and turns. Additionally, these audiences tweet about their emotional reactions to the storyline. This is often seen on Fridays when the episode ends on a cliffhanger and audiences complain that they have to wait for the whole weekend to know what happened in the story. Further, tweet about tweet about the speculation of the upcoming storyline as vested viewers.

Section E: Uses and gratifications sought

The audience of 7de Laan sought to gratify the need for entertainment, social interaction, and information. Engagement on Twitter during the prime time broadcast of 7de Laan allowed these audiences to relax, pass-time and feel connected to other audiences who were watching the show outside of their living rooms.

8.9.2 Quantitative Conclusions

Section A: Demographic and Twitter Usage Patterns

Age: The predominant age group among the survey participants was young adults, specifically within the ages of 18 and 25, accounting for (33%) 66 of the respondents. This was closely followed by individuals aged 26 to 33, making up (25%) 50 of the participants. This is in line with the overall pattern of social media usage in South Africa.

Gender: This demographic shows gender predominantly favours female audiences, with (60%)120 of respondents identifying as female and (40%) 80 as male.

Language: A majority of respondents (22.5%) 51 indicated that their home language was Afrikaans, which is not surprising considering that the show is aired in Afrikaans.

Education and Employment: A significant proportion of the participants owned bachelor's degrees (46.5%) 93 and are employed on a full-time basis (47.5%) 95,

indicating that they have the means to utilise the internet and actively participate on Twitter.

All participants possessed their individual Twitter accounts and actively participated on Twitter while viewing the prime-time broadcast of 7de Laan. Approximately (70.5%) 141 of people follow the 7de Laan account, although even those who do not, still engage in conversations using the hashtag.

Section B: Motives for Participating on Twitter

Tweeting Activity: 90 (95%) of participants engaged in tweeting while watching the prime-time broadcast of the television show 7de Laan, with the majority doing so frequently or occasionally. Key motivations identified were that users established connections with like-minded individuals, engaged with fellow viewers, and engaged in discussions surrounding captivating narratives. Additional motivations included the desire to read and engage with other users' comments, as well as the intention to enhance the overall viewing experience.

Section C: The use of Twitter by 7de Laan Viewers

Community and Expression: Twitter users utilised the platform to feel like they belong to a virtual community and to express their thoughts and viewpoints freely. Entertainment and News: Many people commonly used the device for entertainment purposes and to stay informed about local and international news.
Social Connection: Maintaining communication with friends did not serve as a significant driving force.
FOMO: Numerous participants acknowledged their utilisation of Twitter because of their apprehension of experiencing a sense of exclusion or missing out on something (FOMO).

Section D: Audience Sentiments on Twitter

The storyline and characters: This category was a predominantly discussed subject on Twitter which users shared opinion on.

Tweeting about subtitles: This was infrequent, although discussions regarding performers' performances were widespread.
Significance: The show's ability to connect with everyday life also generated discussions on Twitter.

Section E: Uses and gratifications sought

Acquiring knowledge about the show and experiencing amusement were significant sources of satisfaction discussed.
Engaging in escapism and engaging in opinion sharing: These were both significant activities that individuals seeking to detach themselves from their everyday routines engaged in, including viewpoints with others.
Character Identification: The act of identifying with characters has a lesser impact on driving engagement.

In summary, the results of this study validate and enhance current theoretical frameworks and contribute to the continuing academic discourse on the changing interaction between television viewers and social media. They present concrete evidence that justifies various routes in which viewers can actively interact with television content via social media platforms, this emphasising the significance of comprehending the audiences' motives and gratification desires sought in the digital era.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

UNISA university of south africa

COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

10 February 2023

NHREC Registration # :
Rec-240816-052
CREC Reference # :
47027487_CREC_CHS_2023

Dear Ms Lufuno Lefowa

Decision:
Ethics Approval from 10 February 2023 to 10 February 2024

Researcher(s): Name: Ms. L. Lefowa
Contact details: 47027487@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Supervisor(s): Name: Prof N. C. Lesame
Contact details: lesamnc@unisa.ac.za

Title: MEDIA MULTITASKING:THE CASE OF 7DE LAAN TELEVISION VIEWING AND SYNCHRONOUS TWEETING
Degree Purpose: PhD

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa College of Human Science Ethics Committee. Ethics approval is granted for one year.

The ***low risk application*** *was reviewed by* College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee, 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:

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 College Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

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
www.unisa.ac.za

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. No fieldwork activities may continue after the expiry date **(10 February 2024).** Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:
*The reference number **47027487_CREC_CHS_2023** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Yours sincerely,

Signature:

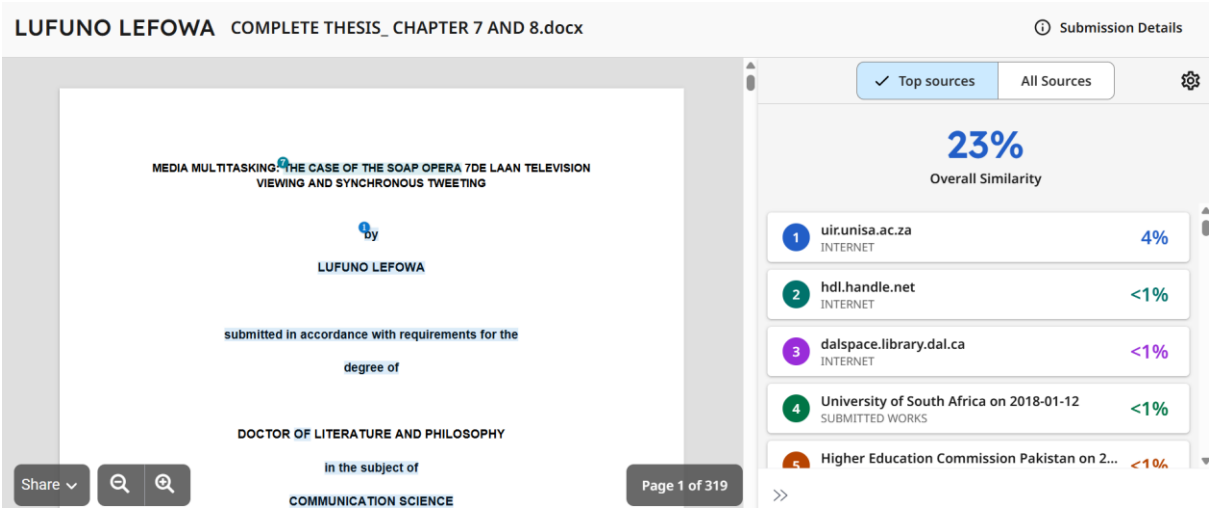
Signature: PP

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APPENDIX B: TURNITIN REPORT



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LUFUNO LEFOWA

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APPENDIX C: LANGUAGE EDITING LETTER

Academic editing & proofreading services

10 September 2024

8 Mgwali Crescent
Sunnyridge
East London
5201

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter serves to confirm that the proposal authored by LEFOWA L. titled,

MEDIA MULTITASKING: THE CASE OF THE SOAP OPERA 7DE LAAN TELEVISION VIEWING AND SYNCHRONOUS TWEETING

was edited by,



Dr Naledi Sekeleni (DLitt et Phil)
Language practitioner: editing, translation & proofreading
Cell: 060 300 8163
Fax: 086 510 9563
Email: inthedott@gmail.com

APPENDIX D: 7DE LAAN PERMISSION LETTER TO USE IMAGE

DANIE ODENDAAL PRODUKSIES

Request for permission to use 7de Laan cast image and the poster card shown below for research purposes.

TITLE: "TWITTER AND TELEVISION AUDIENCES: A USES AND GRATIFICATIONS OF TWITTER USE DURING THE VIEWING OF THE SOAP OPERA *7DE LAAN*

28 January 2024

Thandi Ramathesele
Executive Producer
thandi@izwimultimedia.co.za
083 274 9308

Dear Mrs Thandi Ramathesele

I, Lufuno Lefowa am doing research with Prof Ntombizandile Carol Lesame a Professor in the Department of Languages and Communication Studies towards a PhD, at the University of South Africa. I would like permission to use the following images in my thesis which will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings.



Yours sincerely

Lufuno Lefowa

APPROVER:

Thandi Ramathesele ..... Date 30/01/2024

APPENDIX E: CONSENT LETTER FOR THE INTERVIEW

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

MEDIA MULTITASKING: THE CASE OF THE SOAP OPERA 7DE LAAN TELEVISION VIEWING AND SYNCHRONOUS TWEETING.

(Lufuno Lefowa)

I confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this study has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits, and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified. I agree to the recording of the interview.

Researcher's Name & Surname: Lufuno Lefowa



01 March 2023

Researcher's signed…….Date……

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TWITTER USERS

INSTRUCTIONS:

This interview schedule consists of five sections (A-E) that explore the motives of 7de Laan audiences who engage on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show.

Section A: General questions

Section B: Motives of 7de Laan audiences for engaging on Twitter while watching the prime-time broadcast of the show

Section C: What 7de Laan audiences use Twitter for when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show

Section D: What 7de Laan audiences tweet about when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show

Section E: Gratifications sought by *7de Laan* audiences engaging on Twitter during the prime-time broadcast of this show

The interview is anticipated to not last longer than 45 minutes.

Section A: General questions	**Notes**
How old are you?	
What is your gender?	
When did you join Twitter?	
Which device do you use to access Twitter?	
Which other social media platforms are you active on?	
What is your home language?	
Do you understand Afrikaans?	

Section B: What are the motives of 7de Laan audiences for engaging on Twitter while watching the prime-time broadcast of the show?	**Notes**
Why do you participate on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of 7de Laan?	
How do you manage to concentrate on the story while tweeting at the same time?	
How do you think your tweets improve the story?	
What types of storylines encourage you to tweet when watching 7de Laan?	
Is it possible to participate on Twitter about 7de Laan when you are not watching it, and how?	
Are there days where you only read others' tweets, and why?	
Section C: What do 7de Laan audiences use Twitter for when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show?	**Notes**
What do you use Twitter for?	
How do you react when 7de Laan is trending on Twitter?	
Has your use of Twitter changed? If so, how?	
Section D: What do *7de Laan* audiences use Twitter for when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show?	**Notes**

What do you tweet about when watching 7de Laan, and why?	
How honest are you in your tweets about 7de Laan?	
How do you feel when other audiences disagree with your tweet?	
What do you think about before you post your tweet?	
Section E: What gratifications do *7de Laan* audiences seek by engaging on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show?	**Notes**
What gratifications do you seek when tweeting while watching 7de Laan?	
What do you do when these gratifications are not satisfied?	
How do you feel tweeting when watching 7de Laan?	
Do you ever feel that you are missing out if you don't tweet while watching prime-time broadcast of 7de Laan and why?	
What are the benefits of engaging on Twitter when watching 7de Laan?	

APPENDIX G: ONLINE SURVEY CONSENT FORM

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SURVEY

TITLE: MEDIA MULTITASKING: THE CASE OF THE SOAP OPERA 7DE LAAN TELEVISION VIEWING AND SYNCHRONOUS TWEETING.

I confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits, and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to participate in the survey without remuneration.

Researcher's Name & Surname …….Lufuno Lefowa……

Researcher's signature… ……Date…01 March 2023……

APPENDIX H: ONLINE SURVEY FOR TWITTER USERS

INSTRUCTIONS:

This questionnaire consists of five sections (A-E) that explore the motives of 7de Laan audiences who engage on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show.

Section A: Biographical and demographic data

Section B: Motives of 7de Laan audiences for engaging on Twitter while watching the prime-time broadcast of the show

Section C: What 7de Laan audiences use Twitter for when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show

Section D: What 7de Laan audiences tweet about when watching the prime-time broadcast of the show

Section E: Gratifications sought by *7de Laan* audiences engaging on Twitter during the prime-time broadcast of this show

The responses for every page will be saved when you click the "NEXT" button.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

This section focuses on information about you. Kindly respond to all questions by choosing the appropriate answer from the ones provided below.

1. Gender
   - O Male
   - O Female
   - O Do not want to state

2. Age
   - O 18 -25
   - O 26-33
   - O 34-41

O42-49

O 50 and above

3. Highest educational qualification

O Grade 12

O Certificate course

O Diploma

O Undergraduate degree

O Postgraduate degree

O Other (Specify)…….

4. Home language

O Afrikaans OEnglish OIsiZulu OIsiXhosa OSesotho OSepedi OSetswana

O Tshivenda OXitsonga OIsiNdebele OIsiSwati O Other (Specify)…**……**

5. Employment status

O Student

O Retired

O Full-time employed

O Part-time employed

O Self-employed

O Unemployed

O Other (Specify)…….

6. Do you have your own personal Twitter account?

O Yes

O No

7. Are you following 7de Laan main account on Twitter?

O Yes

O No

8. Do you engage on 7de Laan hashtags on Twitter?
   - O Yes
   - O No

9. Do you tweet when watching prime-time broadcast of 7de Laan?
   - O Yes
   - O No

10. How often do you tweet when watching 7de Laan prime-time broadcast?
   - O Very often
   - O Often
   - O Sometimes
   - O Rarely
   - O Never

11. Which device do you access Twitter from?
   - O Cellphone
   - O Tablet
   - O Laptop
   - O Desktop

12. How do you engage on Twitter when watching the prime-time broadcast of 7de Laan? (Select all that apply to you)
   - O Tweeting
   - O Commenting on others' posts
   - O Liking others' tweets/posts
   - O Reading tweets
   - O Sharing tweet link with friends/family who are not on Twitter
   - O Other (Specify)…….

SECTION B: THE MOTIVES OF 7DE LAAN AUDIENCES FOR ENGAGING ON TWITTER WHEN WATCHING THE PRIME-TIME BROADCAST OF THE SHOW

Instruction: Please select the response that closely resembles your experience.

Scale weight: Strongly agree=5, **Agree=4, Neutral=3, Disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1**

	Statement	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
	I tweet when watching 7de Laan prime-time broadcast.					
	I tweet when watching 7de Laan prime-time broadcast to make online friends who have similar interests as mine.					
	I tweet when watching 7de Laan prime-time broadcast to interact with other audiences who are also watching the show.					
	I tweet when watching 7de Laan prime-time broadcast because of the exciting storyline.					
	I watch 7de Laan prime-time broadcast so that I can 'retweet' others' tweets.					
	I watch 7de Laan prime-time broadcast to read others' 'comments'.					
	I tweet when watching 7de Laan prime-time broadcast to enhance my viewing experience of the show.					
	I tweet when watching 7de Laan prime-time broadcast to 'like' others' tweets and comments.					

	I tweet when watching 7de Laan prime-time broadcast because I want to join in on the conversations about the show.					
	I tweet when watching 7de Laan prime-time broadcast to connect with other people who are also watching.					
	I only tweet when watching 7de Laan.					
	I tweet when watching the prime-time broadcast of 7de Laan so I can share the comments and tweet with my family and friends.					

SECTION C: WHAT 7DE LAAN AUDIENCES USE TWITTER FOR WHEN WATCHING THE BROADCAST PRIME-TIME OF THE SHOW

Instruction: Please select the response that closely resembles your experience.

Scale weight: Strongly agree=5, **Agree=4, Neutral=3, Disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1**

	Statement	**Strongly agree**	**agree**	**neutral**	**disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
	I use Twitter to feel like part of a connected community.					
	I use Twitter for general news.					
	I use Twitter to express myself freely.					
	I use Twitter for entertainment.					
	I use Twitter to pass time.					

	I use Twitter to find the latest local and international news.					
	I use Twitter to stay in touch with friends.					
	I use Twitter to see what is currently happening around me.					
	I use Twitter to see what is happening in the world.					
	I use Twitter because other people are using it and do not want to feel left out.					

SECTION D: WHAT 7DE LAAN AUDIENCES TWEET ABOUT WHEN WATCHING THE PRIME-TIME BROADCAST OF THE SHOW

Instruction: Please select the response that closely resembles your experience.

Scale weight: Strongly agree=5, **Agree=4, Neutral=3, Disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1**

	Statement	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
	I tweet my opinion about the storyline.					
	I tweet about the characters.					
	I tweet about the character's wardrobe.					
	I tweet about the show's subtitles.					
	I tweet about the music used in the show.					

	I tweet about the set design.					
	I tweet about the actors' performance.					
	I tweet about the resonance and relevance of the storyline to everyday life.					

SECTION E: **WHAT GRATIFICATIONS 7DE LAAN AUDIENCES SEEK BY ENGAGING ON TWITTER WHEN WATCHING THE SHOW**

Instruction: Please select the response that closely resembles your experience.

Scale weight: Strongly agree=5, **Agree=4, Neutral=3, Disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1**

	Statement	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
	I tweet when watching the prime-time broadcast of 7de Laan to get information about the show.					
	I tweet when watching the prime-time broadcast of 7de Laan for entertainment.					
	I tweet when watching the prime-time broadcast of 7de Laan to identify with the characters.					
	I tweet when watching the prime-time broadcast of 7de Laan to escape from the busy day I had.					
	I tweet when watching the prime-time broadcast of 7de Laan to share my opinions about the show with other viewers.					

	I tweet when watching prime-time broadcasts of 7de Laan to pass time.					
	I tweet when watching prime-time broadcasts of 7de Laan to relax.					