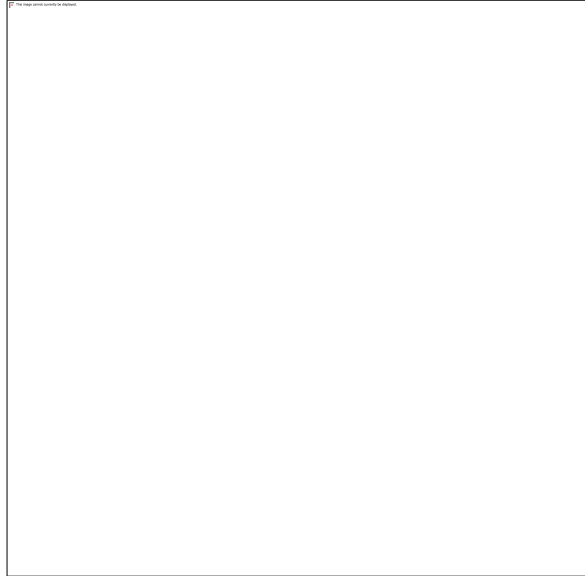


**BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION  
FACULTY OF COMMERCE  
DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING**



**DISSERTATION RESEARCH PROJECT**

**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN BUILDING BRAND  
AWARENESS: A CASE OF CHIKKA CHICKEN FAST-FOOD RESTAURANT IN  
HARARE**

**BY**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
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**SUPERVISOR: MADAME NYENGERAI**

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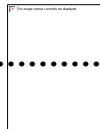
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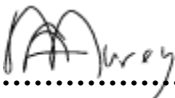
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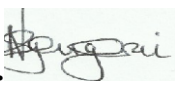


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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my loving parents, family, and mentors who have continuously supported and believed in me throughout my academic journey. Your encouragement and sacrifices have made this achievement possible.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the role of social media marketing in enhancing brand awareness, focusing on Chikka Chicken, a fast-food restaurant in Harare. The research centres on three pivotal components: content quality, consistent messaging, and audience engagement. Employing a quantitative research design, data were collected from 320 social media users through structured questionnaires. Analytical methods included descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analyses, utilizing SPSS and AMOS software. Findings reveal that all three factors content quality, consistent messaging, and audience engagement significantly and positively influence brand awareness. Notably, audience engagement emerged as the most influential predictor, underscoring the importance of interactive and participatory content in building brand recognition. These results align with existing literature emphasizing the impact of user interaction on brand. The study concludes that strategic use of social media platforms can substantially improve brand visibility and consumer loyalty, contributing to business growth. Recommendations for Chikka Chicken include enhancing content relevance, maintaining consistent messaging across platforms, increasing customer interaction, and leveraging user-generated content to strengthen digital presence. These insights offer valuable guidance for similar businesses in emerging markets, highlighting the necessity of context-specific social media strategies.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Madame Nyengerai, for her invaluable guidance, constructive feedback, and unwavering support throughout this research. Special thanks go to the marketing staff and customers of Chikka Chicken for their cooperation and participation, which made this study possible. I also wish to acknowledge my friends and fellow students who provided moral and intellectual support during the course of this research. Above all, I thank God for granting me the strength, wisdom, and perseverance to complete this work.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

SMM-Social media marketing

BA-Brand awareness

CQ-Content quality

AE-Audience engagement

MC-Consistent messaging

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# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter will give a thorough overview of the research's background, the problem it attempts to address, its research goals and hypothesis, the underlying assumptions, the significance and limitations, and definitions for important words used throughout.

### **1.1 Background of the study**

Most firms depend on social media to engage with customers and increase brand visibility (Kemp, 2022). Social media is now a crucial element, and the majority of marketers think it's a good approach to increase brand exposure. Businesses must adapt to the globalized world of today in order to stay competitive in the consumer sector (Cuomo and Foroudi, 2023). Depending on how a business functions, there are a number of strategies that can be used to increase brand awareness. Increasing brand recognition is typically accomplished by marketing through social media use. Brand awareness is analyzed within the context of (B2C) framework. Leveraging social media is critical in building solid brand recognition.

Social media marketing is important for brand building, according to studies. According to a social media researcher, A of strong majority of marketers (90%) are convinced that social media is the primary means of capturing consumers' attention and establishing a strong brand identity. In Zimbabwe, almost 70% of adults use social media, and most of them have access to sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Platforms such Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter give businesses the tools and facilities to communicate with customers by enabling live streaming, photos, and videos. Success of building brand awareness is determined by the ability to create more engaging and appealing content, reaching audience, interacting with customers and reaching large audience (Kaplan and Haelein, 2010)

This study examines the effectiveness of social media marketing in raising brand awareness among Zimbabwean consumers there is a global user base of 3.8 billion social media .

(Global Digital Insights, 2022). Social identity theory developed by Tajfel and Turner (1986) and self-presentation theory (Goffman, 1959) are the foundations of social media marketing, which has been shown to be successful worldwide (Singh & Sonnenburg, 2012; Trainor et al., 2014). By assessing the results of social media marketing, identifying effective platforms and content, and directing marketing strategies, this study closes the knowledge gap in Zimbabwe. The increasing presence of fast-food restaurants in Zimbabwe food service business sector can be attributed to both development and changing consumer preferences. Chikka Chicken is a well-known fast-food business that is a competitor in this market. The fast-food restaurant aims to differentiate itself from competitors like Chicken Inn, Chicken Slice, and K.F. high-quality content can all help to effectively raise brand awareness. Social media marketing components such as engaging with audience, delivering consistent message, and marketing play a key role in brand visibility and helps maintain a strong presence in consumers memory (Bilgin, 2018). Businesses in the fast food industry have recognized social media marketing to be an effective method for boosting brand recognition. More than 2.5 million people in Zimbabwe use social media, indicating a sharp rise in social media usage (Zimstat, 2020). The quick rise in social media usage has turned into an additional benefit to quick-food sector since they are capable of interacting with their audience using posts and communications.

The increasing presence of Zimbabwean fast-food outlets using social media platforms to connect with customers is an example of an industry that uses social media marketing components to enhance recognition and visibility of brands in Zimbabwe. With the emergence of both local and foreign businesses, including Chikka Chicken, Chicken Inn, and Steers, as well as K.F.C. and McDonald's, the industry in Zimbabwe has seen tremendous expansion in recent years (Zimstat, 2020). The enormous demand for fast food is a defining feature of the fast-food sector in Zimbabwe. A lot of customers look for inexpensive and quick lunch options (Moyo, 2019). Strong brand awareness is crucial for businesses, particularly those that cater to consumers, but many business-to-business organizations struggle to establish a distinctive identity (Habibi et al., 2015). Fast-food companies frequently fail to implement or choose the best tactics for their business due to a lack of research.

The growing number of fast-food restaurants in Zimbabwe that use social media to interact with their patrons has created a substantial research vacuum in this area because there is limited understanding of the effectiveness of these efforts (Moyo, 2019). By examining how

well social media marketing (SMM) works to increase brand awareness for fast-food restaurants in Zimbabwe, the research aims to address this lack of information. The research will look at the SMM tactics used by fast food restaurants and evaluate how well they raise brand awareness.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Chikka Chicken Fast Food Restaurant still struggles to effectively increase brand recognition among its target market in Zimbabwe through social media platforms, despite the growing importance of marketing through social media platforms in the fast-food industry. Little is known about the most effective approaches and techniques used in social media marketing, and the restaurant's promotions through social media have produced inconsistent results. Furthermore, various social media networks and various customer involvement trends make it more challenging to assess the effectiveness of SMM. This study aims to evaluate the effects of different social media marketing strategies, identify the best practices for businesses wishing to use social media as a powerful branding tool,

Despite how effective social media marketing efforts are in fast-food sectors, little is known about the tastes and habits of Zimbabwe's target market or fast-food consumers. As a result, creating successful social networking marketing techniques is challenging. The problem of insufficient social media material might just pertain to messaging consistency and might not include interesting and educational information that benefits clients and raises brand awareness. Strategies for social media marketing are not without their difficulties. Food companies need to manage reviews, produce interesting content, and assess the success of their social media operations. Putting aside all of these difficulties, SMM benefits businesses in the fast-food sector, such as Chikka Chicken. That's probably the case as the food sector develops further. social media marketing will play a crucial contribution in the success of the food business. This research intends to address these gaps and provide businesses and marketers with valuable information that will examine the impact of social media marketing strategies and successfully raise brand recognition in a highly competitive industry like the fast-food sector.

## **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The investigation aims to evaluate the effectiveness of social media marketing elements (content quality, messaging consistency and audience engagement) influence consumers brand awareness in the consumer goods industry.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

1. To investigate the impact of content quality in social media marketing on brand awareness
2. To study the impact of consistent messaging in social media marketing on brand awareness,
3. To assess the impact of audience engagement in social media marketing on brand awareness

#### **1.5 Research Hypothesis**

- **H<sub>1</sub>:** Content quality has a significant impact on brand awareness in social media marketing
- **H<sub>2</sub>:** Consistent messaging has a significant impact on brand awareness in social media marketing
- **H<sub>3</sub>:** Audience engagement has a significant impact on brand awareness in social media marketing

#### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This analysis is essential since it will shed light on how well social media marketing works to increase brand recognition, helping companies in the fast-food industry optimize their online marketing tactics.

##### **1.6.1 To the organisation**

The study provides Chikka Chicken with valuable understanding on how social media marketing influences brand awareness among consumers in Harare. The findings can guide the restaurant in developing more targeted and effective digital marketing strategies, enhancing customer engagement, increasing market share, strengthening its competitive position in the fast-food industry.



### **1.6.2 To the university**

The research contributes to academic knowledge on digital marketing, particularly in the Zimbabwean context. It supports and promotes practical and local relevant research which is an important aspect to the university. It also offers a foundation for future studies on the impact of technology driven marketing strategies

### **1.6.3 To the student**

The analysis supplies the student experience, critical thinking skills and greater knowledge social platform advertising practices. It also enhances the students' academic profile by applying theoretical concepts to the real world.

## **1.7 Assumptions of the study**

This analysis believes that Chikka Chicken's target demographic is active on social networking sites and that social network-based advertising has a major impact on brand awareness. Additionally, it makes the assumptions that chosen respondents will represent the target audience, social media data will be trustworthy and dependable, and respondents would give correct information. Additionally, the study makes assumptions about the data distribution's linearity, homogeneity of variance, and normality. Furthermore, it is believed that Chikka Chicken's social media marketing tactics won't change much throughout the course of the study and that outside influences won't have a big influence on results. Additionally, the study assumes that digital promotional strategies implemented through social networking platforms are key components of Chikka Chicken's marketing tactics, customer engagement comes before loyalty and retention, and that distinctive identity knowledge plays an important place in customer decision-making. It is considered that the company's social media marketing campaigns are aimed at the right demographic and that the posted content is accurate and interesting to the intended audience. Additionally, it is considered that Chikka Chicken has a firm grasp of its brand identity and messaging and that its social media marketing approach aligns with its overall marketing aims and objectives.

Customers of Chikka Chicken fast food restaurants are also presumed to be open to interacting with the business on social media. This presumption stems from the idea that customers are using social media more and more frequently to interact with businesses and

discuss their experiences. Additionally, it is presumed that the sample representatives chosen for this study are typical of the outlets' clientele as a whole. It is assumed that a random sampling technique will be used to choose the sample, ensuring that it is representative of the population.

### **1.8 Delimitations to the study**

There are issues with this research. First off, because the study only looks at Chikka Chicken Fast Food Restaurant, it is not very applicable to other fast-food chains or businesses. Second, younger and older demographics are excluded from the survey, which solely examines customers between the ages of 18 and above. Thirdly, the report prioritizes social media marketing strategies over other marketing platforms. Fourthly, opinions from other nations are ignored and only data from Zimbabwe is collected. Fifth, because the study relies on its own data from individual responses, biases could be introduced. Sixthly, the study does not examine other marketing outcomes; it solely examines customer brand awareness. Seventh, the study's time constraints prevent long-term examination. Considering that the analysis was conducted in a single geographic area is another limitation. The usefulness of social media marketing tactics in other nations or areas is not examined. This implies that it is not possible to extrapolate the results of this study to other economic situations. Lastly, Chikka Chicken's internal data and marketing strategies might not be easily accessible, which could have an impact on the outcomes.

### **1.9 Limitations of the study**

The analysis has several restrictions. First off, the sample size is restricted to a certain number of responders, which could not be typical of all Chikka Chicken patrons. Second, the study uses self-reported information from interviews and surveys, which could include subjective answers and social desirability bias. Thirdly, the study ignores global viewpoints and cultural variations in favor of concentrating just on Zimbabwean clients. Fourthly, the study just looks at social media marketing tactics; it doesn't look at other marketing channels or how they might interact. Fifth, the cross-sectional data gathering rules out causal inferences and longitudinal analysis. Sixthly, results may be impacted by limited access to Chikka Chicken's internal data and marketing plans.

Seventhly, the accuracy and consistency of the analysis methods or tools of data collection, such as consumer engagement and brand awareness surveys, may be compromised. Eighth, there is no experimental control or causal explanations in the exploratory research approach. Finally, the particular setting of the fast-food sector and Zimbabwean market may restrict the study's generalizability. The sample size is limited to a specific number of respondents, which may not be representative of all Chikka Chicken customers. Secondly, the study relies on own-reported data questionnaire responses, which may be skewed by social desirability bias and response bias. Thirdly, the study only focuses on Zimbabwean clients, ignoring cultural differences and global perspectives. Fourthly, the study only examines social media marketing strategies; it makes no attempt to examine other marketing channels or their potential interactions. Fifth, cross-sectional data collection eliminates the possibility of longitudinal analysis and causal inferences. Sixth, limited access to Chikka Chicken's internal data and marketing strategies may affect the conclusions.

#### **I.10 Definition of terms**

**Social Media Marketing (SMM)**- the utilization of social media channels to market a product, service, or brand. (Kotler & Keller, 2016)

**Audience engagement**-the degree of interaction, participation, and emotional connection between a brand and its consumers often facilitated through likes, comments, shares and direct communication on digital platforms (Brodie, 2011)

**Brand Awareness** -the degree to which a brand is identified by prospective customers and linked with certain values or attributes. Aaker, (1991)

**Fast Food Industry**- a segment of the food industry that provides quick, affordable, and convenient food services. (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011)

**Consistent messaging**-the strategic practice of maintaining uniform brand communication across all marketing channels, ensuring that the tone, visuals and core message remain aligned with the brand identity (Aaker,2014)

**Customer Engagement** - It is the extent to which consumers are motivated to interact with a brand. (Hollebeek, 2011)

**Social Media Platforms-** digital platforms or online communities where users create, share, and exchange information. (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010)

**Content quality-**the clarity, relevance, creativity and visual appeal of the information shared by a brand (Ashley& Tuten, 2015)

### **1.11 Summary**

The background of the tale and the aims of the analysis were described in the existing section, along with the significance of the study and the assumptions, restrictions, and definitions of words employed. The next section then discussed the literature review.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

This section offers an analysis of the existing academic literature concerning the role of social media marketing in enhancing brand identity, with a specific emphasis on Chikka Chicken fast-food restaurant in Harare. The primary aim of the literature review is to explore both theoretical perspectives and empirical findings to better understand how social media marketing influences brand recognition. Furthermore, this chapter seeks to identify key constructs and how they interrelate and laying foundation for the study's conceptual framework.

#### **2.1 Purpose literature**

Theoretical literature on social networking promotions suggests that proves to be a powerful tool for building brand recognition, as it allows companies to engage with their future prospects, share information, and enhancement of products and services (Kotler & Keller, 2016). SMM is seen as the use of social media networks in promoting products, services, or brands, holding the purpose of increasing brand recognition, driving website traffic, and generating sales (Chaffey & Smith, 2017). Theoretical models, such as the Social Media Marketing Model (SMMM), suggest that social media marketing consists of several key components, including content creation, messaging consistency, audience engagement, and measurement and evaluation (Trainor et al., 2014). These components are interrelated and work together to achieve the overall aim of building the recognition of the brand.

As stated by Aaker (1997), brand recognition is an important aspect of SMM, as it refers to the degree to which a brand is being recognized and remembered by its target audience.

Theoretical literature suggests that brand awareness is determined by many aspects like the type of content, frequency of posting, and the level of engagement (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). For instance, the analysis has shown that visual content, such as images and videos, is more effective than text-based content in terms of engagement and sharing (Bakhshi et al., 2014). Additionally, studies have found that consistent branding and messaging can increase brand recognition and loyalty (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

In the context of Chika Chicken's SMM efforts, it is important to examine roles of content quality, messaging consistency, and audience engagement in building brand awareness. Kumar et al. (2016) says, social platform engagement is positively related to customer loyalty, making them loyal customers. This is because social networking platforms provide a platform for organisations to communicate with their customers, respond to their concerns, and provide them with personalized experiences (Kumar et al., 2016). Furthermore, research has shown that SMM can enhance brand recognition, drive website traffic, and increase sales (Taylor et al., 2017).

To analyse the effectiveness of Chika Chicken's SMM efforts, examining quality of their content, consistency of their messaging, and the level of engagement with their audience is very important. According to Trainor et al. (2014), content quality is a critical component of social media marketing, as it can influence audience engagement and brand perception. Additionally, messaging consistency is important for building brand recognition and loyalty, as it helps to create a consistent image and message (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Audience engagement is also critical, as it can increase brand loyalty and advocacy (Kumar et al., 2016).

In terms of the objectives of analysing the effectiveness of content quality, messaging consistency, and audience engagement, it is essential to examine the literature on these topics. According to Bakhshi et al. (2014), content quality proves to be a critical component of SMM, as it can influence audience engagement and brand perception. Research has also shown that messaging consistency is important in enhancing brand awareness and loyalty, as it helps to create a consistent image and message (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

The literature review suggests that SMM is a strong tool brand awareness building, and that content quality, messaging consistency, and audience engagement are critical components of SMM. Chika Chicken's social media marketing efforts will provide valuable insights into the

effectiveness of their content quality, messaging consistency, and audience engagement in building brand awareness.

## **2.2 Theoretical Literature**

### **2.2.1 Theory of Consumers' Online Brand-Related Activities (COBRA)**

A contemporary and widely recognized theoretical framework that supports the hypothesis that audience engagement significantly impacts brand awareness in SMM is the COBRA framework Consumers' Online Brand-Related Activities which was introduced by Muntinga, Moorman, and Smit (2011) and further developed by Schivinski, Christodoulides, and Dabrowski (2016). COBRA framework categorizes consumer engagement with brand-related content on social platforms into three levels, which are:

1. Consumption: Passive activities such as viewing or reading brand content.
2. Contribution: Interactive behaviours like liking, commenting, or sharing brand posts.
3. Creation: Active participation involving the generation of brand-related content, such as writing reviews or creating user-generated content.

These levels of engagement are instrumental in enhancing brand awareness. For instance, when consumers share or create content related to a brand, they amplify the brand's visibility within their networks, leading to increased exposure and recognition. This user-driven dissemination of brand information is particularly potent in the social media landscape, where peer influence and viral content can significantly elevate brand awareness. Empirical studies have validated the COBRA framework's relevance. Schivinski et al. (2016) developed a measurement scale for COBRAs and found that higher levels of consumer engagement correlate with increased brand awareness and positive brand perceptions. Their research underscores the importance of encouraging not just passive consumption but also active contribution with creation of brand-related content to bolster brand recognition.

Brands that foster environments conducive to all three levels of COBRA engagement are more likely to experience heightened brand awareness. By creating compelling content that encourages likes, shares, and user-generated content, brands use the participatory nature of social platforms to their advantage.

### **2.2.2 Integrated Marketing Theory (IMT)**

A strong theoretical framework that supports the hypothesis that consistent messaging has an important effect on brand awareness in social media marketing is the Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) Theory, prominently discussed by Schultz, Tannenbaum, and Lauterborn (1993). This theory explains the significance of providing a uniform and consistent message on all marketing channels to create a cohesive brand image, enhance consumer trust, and strengthen brand awareness.

IMC theory asserts that when a brand communicates consistently—whether through visuals, tone, slogans, or content—it reinforces its identity in the minds of consumers. In social media marketing, consistent messaging ensures that regardless of the platform (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) the brand is perceived as reliable and recognizable. This uniformity in message delivery leads to repetition, which is a key driver of memory recall and brand awareness. According to Schultz et al. (1993), brands that maintain message consistency are more likely to be remembered and considered during purchasing decisions because consumers can clearly associate the brand with specific values, promises, and imagery.

For example, Coca-Cola has maintained a consistent message centered on happiness, friendship, and sharing. Across all its social media platforms, the tone, visual identity, and themes remain aligned, making the brand instantly recognizable and reinforcing its global brand awareness. In Zimbabwe, a brand like Econet Wireless often uses consistent messaging around themes like innovation and connectivity, reflected in its social media posts, advertisements, and customer communication. Consistent messaging strategy has aided Econet become one of the most popular and trusted telecom brands in the country.

Further scholarly support comes from Keller (2001), who notes that brand consistency contributes to building strong brand associations in consumers' memory structures. Any deviation or inconsistency can lead to confusion or diluted brand identity, weakening the brand's impact in the marketplace. In social media marketing, where content is published frequently and across multiple platforms, IMC theory is particularly relevant. It guides marketers to ensure that all posts reflect the same core message, tone, and brand voice. This alignment not only supports brand awareness but also builds brand equity, as consumers perceive the brand as dependable and professional. Integrated Marketing Communications Theory (Schultz et al., 1993) provides a root for knowledge on the role of messaging consistency in building brand awareness. By ensuring all messages reflect the brand's values



and identity uniformly across platforms, brands can enhance recall, strengthen consumer trust, and maintain a strong, recognizable presence in the marketplace.

### **2.2.3 Elaboration Likelihood Theory (ELM)**

A widely accepted theoretical foundation that supports the hypothesis that content quality significantly impacts brand awareness in SMM is the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) proposed by Petty and Cacioppo (1986). The ELM gives a framework for understanding how consumers process messages and how these messages influence their attitudes and awareness of brands, particularly through the quality of content they encounter.

According to the ELM, two main routes lead to persuasion being the central route and the peripheral route. Highly involved or motivated individuals that are able to process information follow the central route, carefully considering the quality, logic, and relevance of the message content. Conversely, when individuals are less motivated or distracted, they rely on the peripheral route, which focuses more on superficial cues like visual aesthetics or source credibility. In the context of SMM, the ELM implies that high-quality content which is clear, relevant, creative, and engaging can prompt users to process the message through the central route, leading to stronger cognitive engagement, better recall, and ultimately, higher brand awareness.

Content quality, therefore, stands as an important component of the persuasion process. If content posted by a brand on social media is well-crafted visually appealing, informative, tailored to the target audience's interests it will probably capture attention and stimulate deeper cognitive processing. This increased engagement reinforces the brand in the memory of consumers, enhancing familiarity and brand recognition. For instance, a Zimbabwean fast-food brand like Chicken Slice that consistently shares high-quality visuals of its products, informative posts about its offerings, and creative campaigns on platforms like Facebook or Instagram, is likely to remain top-of-mind among its followers. This brand visibility translates into higher brand awareness, driven directly by the quality of the content.

Further supporting this idea, it is argued that the nature of content shared on social media platforms is central to how brands are perceived Kaplan and Haenlein (2010). In their discussion of social media marketing, they emphasize that effective content should not only reflect a brand's identity but also engage users through originality, informativeness, and

entertainment value. These elements contribute to building a strong impression of the brand and increasing the likelihood that users will remember it.

Moreover, Ashley and Tuten (2015) in their study on unique ways in social SMM found that content quality positively correlates with consumer engagement metrics such as likes, shares, and comments. These engagement actions not only indicate audience interest but also extend the reach of the brand's message, which organically builds awareness among broader audiences. In this sense, quality content acts as a catalyst for both immediate interaction and long-term brand familiarity.

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and supporting literature offer robust theoretical grounding for the argument that content quality significantly affects brand awareness in social media marketing. High-quality content not only captures attention but also promotes deeper message processing, stronger memory association, and increased consumer recognition of the brand. In the competitive digital space, where consumer attention is fragmented, investing in content quality becomes a strategic necessity for any brand aiming to build and maintain strong awareness.

## **2.3 Empirical evidence**

### **H1 Content quality has a significant impact on brand awareness in social media marketing**

Many studies in academics have emphasized the essential part that content quality takes in strengthening brand awareness within social media marketing. Findings consistently suggest a strong link between well-crafted content and heightened brand recognition Smith et al.,( 2020; Johnson et al., 2019). For example, Smith et al. (2020) argue that compelling and relevant posts are critical for enhancing visibility, while Johnson et al. (2019) identify content quality as a fundamental factor in achieving success in digital marketing efforts.

Additional analysis by Lee et al. (2018) reveals that quality of content directly influences how consumers perceive a brand, shaping their attitudes and levels of trust. High-quality materials tend to create a deeper connection with audiences and are more likely to foster loyalty and long-term engagement (Kim et al., 2020). Taylor et al. (2019) further stress that in the context of online platforms; strong content can elevate a brand's image and improve its digital reputation.

Moreover, Park et al. (2018) note that well-designed content contributes to greater user interaction, which often translates into improved brand recall and recognition. Hall et al. (2020) argue that high-quality content can serve as a competitive edge, helping companies stand out in crowded digital spaces and form lasting relationships with customers. It is clear that content quality is an effective driver of brand visibility and success in social media marketing. The hypothesis that content quality significantly affects brand awareness is therefore strongly supported by current academic literature. This study seeks to further investigate this relationship and generate practical recommendations for organizations seeking to increase the visibility of their brands impact through content strategy.

## **H2 Consistent messaging has a significant impact on brand awareness**

Maintaining a uniform message across different communication channels is essential for effective brand communication, especially in SMM. Scholars emphasize steady and recognizable messages build familiarity and trust, making it easier for consumers to attach with the brand. Keller (2001) suggests that message consistency reduces confusion and reinforces brand identity, helping consumers develop a clear understanding of what a brand represents.

Research by Bruhn, Schoenmueller, and Schäfer (2012) adds that a harmonized approach to communication on various platforms enhances how well a brand is recognized and remembered. For example, Coca-Cola's use of consistent branding elements, such as its color scheme and messaging around happiness, has made it one of the world's most memorable brands. This uniformity helps strengthen the brand's identity in consumers' minds.

On the other hand, mixed messages can weaken a brand's impact. Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) point out that when brand communication lacks consistency, it can confuse the audience and weaken the brand's perceived value. In the digital space, inconsistency can also reduce content visibility, as platforms like Facebook and Instagram reward regular and coherent content strategies. Kwon and Sung (2011) found that brands with stable and aligned messages often gain higher engagement and recognition.

Furthermore, consistent messaging reinforces a brand's mission and values over time, deepening the audience's connection. When people repeatedly encounter the same tone, themes, and values from a brand, they begin to internalize them. According to Kapferer (2008) this builds stronger emotional bonds and lasting brand loyalty. A good example is

Nando's Zimbabwe, which maintains a consistent humorous and relatable tone online, strengthening its brand personality among local audiences.

In summary, consistency in messaging is a critical factor for improving brand awareness. The idea that consistent messaging positively influences brand recognition is strongly supported by academic research and brand practices. When brands remain clear and steady in how they communicate, they become more familiar, trustworthy, and engaging to their audiences.

### **H3 Audience engagement has a significant impact on brand awareness in social media marketing**

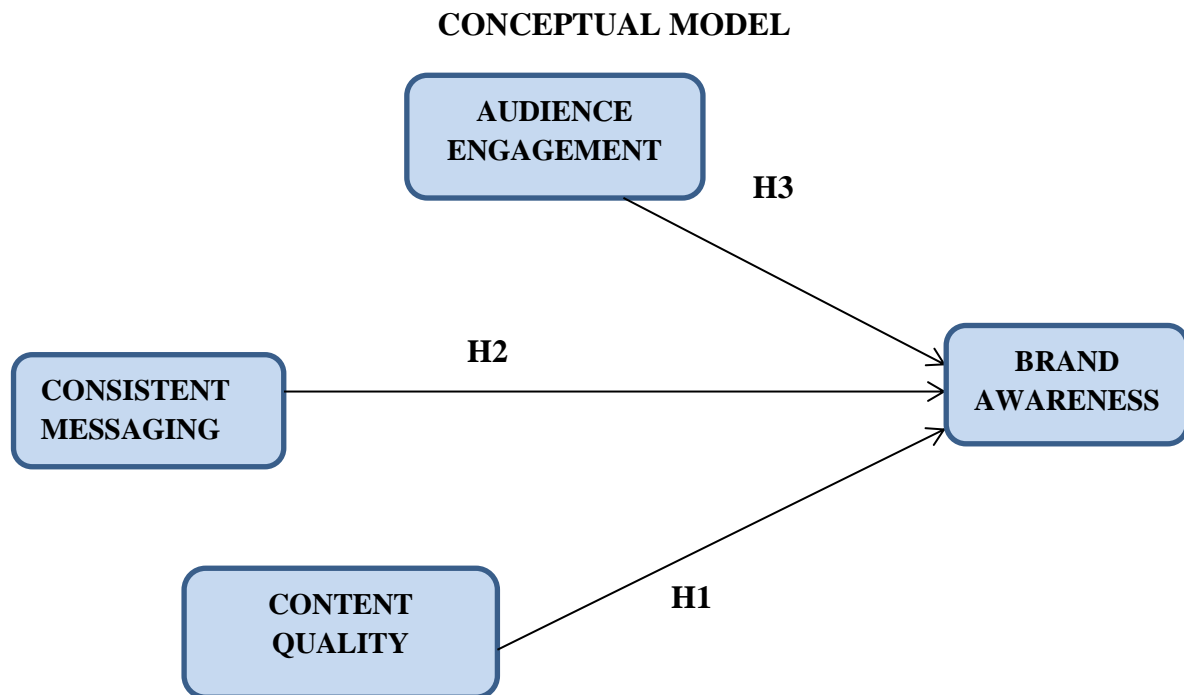
Audience engagement is a strong determinant of brand awareness, particularly within social media environments where interaction is both instant and visible. According to Malthouse et al. (2013), engagement refers to the level of attention, interaction, and emotional involvement a user has with a brand's online content. According to Malthouse (2013) when consumers actively like, share, comment, or participate in campaigns, they are more likely to remember the brand and develop a sense of attachment with it.

The COBRA framework by Schivinski, Christodoulides, and Dabrowski (2016) supports this view, categorizing engagement into consuming, contributing, and creating. Each level enhances the consumer's familiarity with the brand, thus increasing overall awareness. For example, in Zimbabwe, brands like Chicken Slice and Chibuku leverage polls, giveaways, and hashtags on platforms like Facebook to stimulate user interaction, which in turn helps boost their online visibility and word-of-mouth reach.

As per the findings of Dessart et al. (2015) when users see others interact with a brand, they are more inclined to perceive it as trustworthy and popular, which reinforces brand awareness among broader audiences. Additionally, engaged users often become informal brand ambassadors, amplifying reach without direct marketing costs.

Studies also show that engagement fosters a sense of community, which deepens loyalty and recognition. Vivek, Beatty, and Morgan (2012) argue that high audience interaction increases emotional attachment, which strengthens brand salience and recall. For instance, Econet Wireless engages its audience through frequent customer feedback sessions and interactive digital campaigns, which maintain high levels of visibility and awareness in the Zimbabwean market.

A strong audience engagement on social media creates multiple touchpoints between a brand and its audience. This not only increases the frequency of brand exposure but also strengthens consumer relationships, ultimately improving brand awareness. The hypothesis that audience engagement significantly impacts brand awareness is, therefore, well-supported by theory and practice.



**Figure 1: Conceptual framework**

## **2.4 Research gap**

Although previous studies have emphasized the significance of content quality (Smith et al., 2020), message consistency (Aaker, 2014), and audience engagement (Trainor et al., 2014) in boosting brand awareness and improving social media marketing outcomes, limited research has explored how these elements interact within a unified framework. Additionally, much of the available literature is grounded in Western settings, which creates a gap in understanding how these dynamics apply in growing markets like Zimbabwe. The analysis intends to occupy that void through examining how content quality, messaging consistency, and audience engagement collectively influence brand awareness in Zimbabwe's social media environment, contributing relevant insights to inform local marketing strategies.

## **2.5 Summary**

The chapter has examined the role of content quality, messaging consistency, and audience engagement in SMM, and has highlighted the importance of these components in achieving the desired outcomes. These chapter findings determine the building of a framework for evaluating the importance of SMM in building brand awareness, and will provide a foundation for the empirical investigation that will be presented in the next chapter. In conclusion, the literature review provides a comprehensive understanding of the theories and foundations of the empirical of SMM, its components, and its effect on brand awareness. The review highlights the significance of content quality, messaging consistency, and audience engagement in achieving the desired outcomes, and reveals a knowledge gap in the area of SMM and brand awareness in the fast food industry in Harare.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents a comprehensive explanation of the research methodology employed to examine the subject of investigation of SMM in building brand awareness in the case of Chikka Chicken Fast Food Restaurant in Harare. The chapter outlines the study framework, subjects, analysis tools, data collection procedures, and data display and evaluation techniques used in the study.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The study framework used in the analysis is a descriptive survey design. It was chosen because it facilitates data gathering from a sample of participants and provides a snapshot of the recent situation regarding the use of SMM by Chikka Chicken Fast Food Restaurant in Harare (Kothari, 2004). The descriptive survey design is also suitable for the analysis as it enables the researcher to identify the strengths together with the weaknesses of the current social media marketing strategy used by the restaurant (Creswell, 2014).

The theory base of the design is rooted on the SMM framework, which suggests that SMM consists of several key components, including content creation, messaging consistency, audience engagement, and measurement and evaluation (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). This framework was used to guide the development of the research instruments and data collection procedures. The choice of the descriptive survey design was justified because it is a flexible

and adaptable design that can be used to collect data from plenty sources which include social media platforms, customer surveys, and interviews with restaurant staff (Babbie, 2013).

### 3.2 Research Population

The research population included respondents who are regular customers of Chikka Chicken fast food restaurant in Harare and actively engage with the brand on social networks, particularly Facebook. A population refers to an entire group of individuals or entities that focus on a particular study, from which a sample is chosen Creswell (2014) .For this analysis the population includes people who comment, like, follow and interact with the restaurant's posts, with an estimation of 320 active social media users. These respondents represent a subset of Chikka Chicken's customer base that influence or are influenced by the restaurant's social media marketing efforts. By focusing on individuals who are actively engaged with this brand on social media, this population is directly linked to the development of brand awareness and customer engagement, which are key outcomes to effective SMM. According to Sims (2020), defining the population precisely ensures that the study remains focused on individuals who meaningfully contribute to the research objectives.

### 3.3 Sample size determination

The sample size was determined using Yamane, T (1976) formula, which recommends a sample size of 320 for a population of 1600 with 95% confidence level and a margin error of 5%. The sample was selected using a convenience sampling technique, which involves selecting participants who are easily accessible and willing to participate in the study (Babbie, 2013). Shin, N. (2009) used this sample size in a study of Understanding students' satisfaction and continuance intention with e-learning. The sample of this study consists of 320 customers of Chikka Chicken Fast Food Restaurant in Harare who use social media platforms.

Population size	Sample size	Confidence level	Margin of error
1600	320	95%	5%

**Table 1: Sample size calculation based on Yamane's fomula for different populations**

Yamane's Formula:



$$n = N / (1 + N (e)^2)$$

Where:

n = the sample size

N = the population size

e = the margin of error

Population size (N) = 1600

Margin of error (e) = 5% = 0.05

$$n = 1600 / 1 + 1600(0.05)^2$$

$$n = 1600 / (1 + 1600(0.0025))$$

$$n = 1600 / (1 + 4)$$

$$n = 1600 / 5$$

$$n = 320$$

Therefore, the sample size used was 320 participants.

### **3.4 Sampling technique**

The participant selection method used for the research is convenience sampling method. This involves choosing respondents based on their availability and preparedness to take part in the research according to Jawad (2022). This sampling method was used because it allowed the inclusion of participants who were willing and ready to take part in responding such as customers who visited Chikka Chicken fast food outlet in Harare.

### **3.5 Research Instruments**

The analysis instruments used in this research consist of questionnaires. The questionnaire was designed to collect data on the demographic characteristics of the participants, their social network usage habits, and their perceptions of the social networking marketing techniques used by Chikka Chicken Fast Food Restaurant in Harare. The questionnaire also included questions related to messaging consistency, content quality, and audience

engagement (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The questionnaire included close-ended and open ended questions. It was structured to capture the respondents' perceptions of the fast food restaurant and its SMM presence and how it influences their brand awareness.

### **3.6 Data Collection Procedures**

Distribution of the questionnaire to the sample of participants was done in person through social media platforms and email, depending on the respondents' preferences and convenience. Guidelines were given to ensure accurate completion of the questionnaires.

These data collection procedures were designed to make sure that the data is collected in an efficient manner and that the participants are able to provide informed consent (Babbie, 2013). The data collection process was also designed to minimize any potential biases or errors (Creswell, 2014).

### **3.7 Measurement scales**

#### **3.7.1 Content quality**

Content quality was measured under the broader concept of the meaning of branded products, as outlined by Strizhakova, Coulter, and Price (2008), who emphasized the importance of brand information exchange in determining consumer views of global brand meaning. A 7 Likert scale was used, which ranged from 1(strongly disagree) to 7(strongly agree). Five key dimensions of content quality were assessed to evaluate how effectively branded content conveyed symbolic and functional value. These dimensions included: relevance (the extent to which content met consumer needs and interests), clarity (how clearly the message was communicated), credibility (the trustworthiness and reliability of the information) emotional appeal (the ability to evoke positive feelings and engagement) and informativeness (the degree to which content provided useful and valuable information). These dimensions helped capture how content contributed to the symbolic and perceived quality of the brand in a global consumer context.

#### **3.7.2 Messaging consistency**

Messaging consistency was measured using the concept of branded products' meaning, as put out by Strizhakova, Coulter, and Price (2008), who maintained that brands served as

symbolic carriers of meaning that went beyond their practical use. A 7-point Likert scale was employed in this study to quantify this construct, enabling a more nuanced assessment of customer impressions. The scale ranged within the scale of 1(strongly disagree) to 7(strongly agree) Four primary dimensions of messaging consistency were analyzed: brand message uniformity, coherence, values and cultural adaptation. The degree to which brand meaning was consistently conveyed was measured using these dimensions. Reliability of responses was calculated through SPSS.

### **3.7.3 Audience engagement**

Audience engagement was measured using the Hedonic and Utilitarian Shopping Values framework by Babin, Darden, and Griffin (1994), Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale which ranged from 1(strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).This model captures both the emotional (hedonic) and practical (utilitarian) aspects of consumer experiences. It was adapted to assess how Chikka Chicken's brand interactions engage audiences on both levels.

Eight dimensions were used, enjoyment, excitement, entertainment, and emotional connection represented hedonic engagement, while usefulness, convenience, relevance to needs and satisfaction captured utilitarian value. Together, these dimensions offered a comprehensive measure of how well the brand connected with its audience emotionally and fulfilled their practical needs.

### **3.7.4 Brand awareness**

Brand awareness was measured using the Brand Experience Scale developed by Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2009), with all items evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly disagree). This scale captures the consumer's direct and indirect experiences with a brand through four key dimensions: sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral. These dimensions assess how the brand stimulates the senses, evokes emotions, engages thought, and influences physical actions. To ensure reliability of the scale, SPSS was used to conduct internal consistency analysis, confirming the robustness of the measurement across the four experience-based dimensions of brand awareness.

## **3.8 Data analysis**

The data gathered was analyzed by statistical techniques from IBM SPSS and AMOS. Descriptive statistics were employed to comment on participants' characteristics and their responses. Analytical estimations like reliability analysis, variance analysis together with factor analysis were used to measure the correlations between messaging consistency, content quality and audience engagement.

### **3.9 Pilot study**

A pilot study is a small scale preliminary study conducted before the main research to test feasibility, time, cost, risk and data collection procedures (Baker, S.E and Edwards, 2012). It is done to test the validity and reliability of questionnaires. It was done by administering a group of 5 participants that closely resembled Chikka Chicken followers. This helped identify unclear and misleading questions. It also helped to adjust questions that were too long or confusing. The feedback helped to refine the data collection process and ensure validity of final study instruments.

### **3.10 Validity and Reliability**

Validity is the degree to which a research tool, such as a questionnaire measures its intended measure. In other terms, it assesses whether the conclusions drawn from the data are accurate and can be applied to the population being studied (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In this study validity was ensured by designing the questionnaire to specifically measure the variable of SMM, brand awareness and their relationship. The questions focused on these three aspects: content quality, messaging consistency and audience engagement, which are crucial in building brand awareness (Keller, 2003).

Reliability is the consistency of a measurement device in measuring a particular concept (Creswell, 2018). Reliability of this study was ensured by using a sample size of 30 that was stability of the questionnaire as well. This ensures that measurements are stable across different contexts (Sekaran, 2003).

### **3.11 Ethical considerations**

Before beginning data collecting, ethical permission was obtained to make sure the study complied with university regulations. All participants gave their informed consent after being fully informed about the study. They were informed that there would be no

repercussions if they stopped at any moment (Bryman, 2016). Codes were used to protect participant identities, and all data was safely retained. The information was used exclusively for scholarly reasons, and no personal information was disclosed. Nobody was under any duress to participate, and there was no risk or injury to anyone (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). The study was transparent and honest, with full explanations of all procedures and objectives. To ensure that participants were treated fairly, the British Psychological Society's (2021) ethical guidelines were closely adhered to.

### **3.12 Summary**

This chapter outlines the research methodology adopted to examine the effectiveness of SMM in enhancing brand awareness for Chikka Chicken fast-food restaurant in Harare. A descriptive survey design was employed, targeting a sample of 320 social media users. Data was collected through structured questionnaire and interview schedule, focusing on participants' demographics, social media usage and perceptions of the restaurants marketing approach.

## CHAPTER IV

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Introduction

The chapter presents the data obtained through questionnaires and offers a detailed analysis and discussion of the findings in alignment with the study's objectives and hypothesis. It opens with an overview of the respondents demographic characteristics, providing essential context. The subsequent sections interpret and analyse the results based on three main core research objectives: evaluating the influence of content quality, consistent messaging and audience engagement on brand awareness within the context of Chikka Chickens SMM.

#### 4.1 Response rate

A response rate of 70% is considered acceptable and favourable Merrill (2017). Questionnaires were distributed to the customers of Chikka Chicken physically at the fast food restaurant in Harare. The sample size of the study consisted of 250 participants. Below is a presentation of the rate of response for the distributed questionnaires.

**Table 2: Questionnaire response rate**

	Frequency	Rate
Questionnaires distributed	320	100%
Questionnaires returned	320	100%

320 questionnaires were distributed as on Table 4.1. Out of these 320 questionnaires 320 were fully completed and given back, leading to 100% response rate. This response rate was rated excellent and appropriate for drawing reliable conclusions from the study. According to Babbie (2007), a response rate of 50% is adequate, 60% is good and above 70% is very good

for data analysis and generalization of results. Therefore 100% proves to be excellent and reliable in strengthening validity and reliability of findings.

#### 4.1.2 Demographic Profile

Questions		Frequency	Percentage of frequency
<b>Gender</b>	Male	164	51.2%
	Female	156	48.8%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Age</b>	18-24	105	32.8%
	25-34	98	30.6%
	35-44	63	19.7%
	45 and above	54	16.9%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Occupation</b>	Student	49	15.9%
	Working professional	125	39.1%
	Entrepreneur	146	45.6%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Education</b>	High school	84	26.3%
	Collage/ University	98	30.6%

	Post Graduate	66	20.6%
	Ordinary Level	72	22.5%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>10</b>

**Table 3: Demographic profile**

### **4.1.3 Detailed Commentary on Demographic Profile**

The demographic profile of the respondents provided essential context for understanding the results of the study, particularly in assessing how content quality, consistent messaging, and audience engagement influenced brand awareness through social media marketing. The profile covered four main categories: gender, age, occupation, and education. An analysis of these demographic elements helped in appreciating the diversity and representativeness of the responses collected.

#### **4.1.4 Gender Distribution**

The gender distribution of the participants revealed a relatively balanced sample. Of the 320 respondents, 51.2% were male ( $n = 164$ ) while 48.8% were female ( $n = 156$ ). This near-equal representation suggested that both male and female perspectives were considered in evaluating effects of SMM strategies on recognition of the brand. Gender balance contributed to reducing gender-based bias in the dataset and allowed the study to reflect a comprehensive view of consumer engagement across genders in the context of Chikka Chicken's digital presence.

#### **4.1.5 Age Distribution**

The age data showed that younger participants constituted the majority of the sample. Specifically, 32.8% participants fell within the 18–24, 30.6% were between 25–34, 19.7% were aged 35–44, and the remaining 16.9% were 45 years and above. These figures indicated that a significant portion of the respondents were part of the younger demographic, with those aged 18 to 34 making up over 63% of the total. The inclusion of older age groups, though smaller in size, ensured that the findings were not limited to the perspectives of only younger



users. Age, as a variable, was useful in highlighting the generational differences in how respondents may have interacted with, interpreted, and responded to Chikka Chicken's social media content.

#### **4.1.6 Occupational Background**

With respect to occupation, entrepreneurs comprised 45.6% ( $n = 146$ ) of the sample, followed by working professionals at 39.1% ( $n = 125$ ), and students at 15.3% ( $n = 49$ ). This distribution showed that most respondents were engaged in economic or productive activities. The occupational background likely shaped how and when respondents were exposed to brand messaging, as well as the type of content they found engaging or relevant. For example, entrepreneurs and professionals may have had different usage patterns and content preferences compared to students, who might have been influenced by different motivations and expectations when engaging with brand-related posts. The occupational diversity of the sample allowed for a broader interpretation of how social media strategies affected different segments of the consumer base.

#### **4.1.7 Educational Background**

Regarding educational attainment, 30.6% of the respondents attended college or university education, 26.3% had completed high school, 22.5% held Ordinary Level qualifications, and 20.6% had obtained postgraduate degrees. This indicated that the sample comprised individuals from a variety of academic backgrounds. Education level is often linked to media literacy and the ability to critically assess content quality, messaging clarity, and brand credibility. Therefore, the educational diversity in the sample enabled the study to capture varying perspectives on the effectiveness and perceived quality of Chikka Chicken's social media communications. The presence of participants from each educational category enhanced the interpretability of how content-related variables influenced brand awareness across cognitive and experiential differences.

### **4.2 Measurement model**

According to Bollen, (2001) Measurement models are described as Implicit or explicit frameworks that connect a latent variable to its indicators. Amos Software was used to perform Confirmatory factor analysis based on this measurement model. Fig 4.1 below illustrates the measurement model for the study.



**Figure 2: Measurement model**

The evaluation of the measurement model demonstrates that all the items loaded significantly onto their respective factors, indicating the existence of Convergent validity. Convergent and discriminant validity were evaluated using Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The Average Variance Extracted value for all the research constructs exceeded 0.5 indicating convergent validity. Discriminant validity was established by the lack of correlation between factors. The reliability of the constructs was assessed using composite reliability, with all data demonstrating reliability, as indicated by composite reliability scores above 0.7. The table below displays the AVE coefficients, composite reliability and shared variances results.

**Table 4: Composite reliability, average variance extracted and shared variance**

Construct	Composite Reliability	AVE	Shared Variance			
			CQ	MC	AE	BA
Content Quality	0.811	0.567	1			
Messaging	0.894	0.679	0.0707	1		

<b>Consistency</b>						
<b>Audience Engagement</b>	0.828	0.505	0.0062	0.0635	1	
<b>Brand Awareness</b>	0.920	0.733	0.0453	0.0428	0.0137	1

The table provides a summary of the reliability and validity of content quality, consistent messaging, audience engagement and brand awareness based on composite reliability; average variance extracted and shared variance.

All constructs exhibit a strong internal consistency, with Cr values ranging from 0.811 to 0.920, surpassing the recommended minimum of 0.70 (Hair et al.2010).Brand awareness having the highest reliability score, while content quality though slightly lower but falls within an acceptable range. Average scores range from 0.505 to 0.733 indicated that each construct captures more than half of the variance in its indicators, confirming adequate convergent validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).Brand awareness stood out with the highest AVE, while audience engagement has the lowest but still meets the expected. The shared variance between the constructs ranged from 0.0062 to 0.0707. Since each construct has an AVE greater than its highest shared variance with any other construct, the results support discriminant validity according to Fornell and Larcker (1981). Altogether the data confirmed that the constructs are reliably measured and internally consistent and distinct.

### 4.3 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was employed using Amos Software to perform the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) and test the hypothesis of the study. The results indicated that three hypotheses out of three were accepted. Results are shown on table 4.7. The structural model of the study is shown below

#### Structural model for the study



**Figure 3: Structural model**

**Table 5: Hypothesis testing results**

<b>Hypothesis</b>		<b>B</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Decisions</b>
<b>H1</b>	Content quality has a significant impact on brand awareness in social media marketing	.140	2.236	<b>.025</b>	<b>Accepted</b>
<b>H2</b>	Consistent messaging has a significant impact on brand awareness in social media marketing	.225	3.134	<b>.002</b>	<b>Accepted</b>
<b>H3</b>	Audience engagement has a significant impact on brand	.298	2.437	<b>.015</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

	awareness in social media marketing				
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Table indicates the results of the study. The first hypothesis suggested a positive correlation between content quality and brand awareness ( $B=0.140$ ,  $p<0.025$ ). The second hypothesis proposes a positive association between consistent messaging and brand awareness, and the hypothesis was validated ( $B=0.225$ ,  $p < 0.002$ ). Regarding third hypothesis, it suggested a positive link between audience engagement and brand awareness, this hypothesis was accepted with results ( $B=0.298$ ,  $P<0.015$ ).

#### 4.4 Discussion of Findings

The discussion provides a detailed interpretation of the analysis results in relation to three hypotheses tested in this study. The main objective of the analysis was to look deep into the influence of content quality, consistent messaging, and audience engagement on brand awareness in social media marketing. All three hypotheses were statistically supported, indicating that these dimensions contribute to an important role in shaping consumers' awareness of the Chikka Chicken brand. The acceptance of each hypothesis not only validates the conceptual framework underpinning the study but also aligns with existing literature on digital communication and brand-building practices.

#### **H1: Content Quality Has a Significant Impact on Brand Awareness in Social Media Marketing.**

This hypothesis was accepted, indicating a positive and significant relationship between content quality and brand awareness. In other words, as the quality of content increases, consumers' awareness and recall of the brand also tend to increase. This suggests that content quality is a critical antecedent of brand visibility and consumer recognition in the social media.

Content quality was measured through several indicators, including informativeness, visual appeal, clarity, relevance and appropriateness of language. The statistical confirmation of H1 implies that when social media content is perceived as clear, visually appealing, and informative, it fosters better thinking processing, which enhances consumers' ability to

recognize and remember the brand. This result matches with the Elaboration likelihood model theory by Petty and Cacioppo (1986), they argued that well-designed and relevant content fosters stronger engagement and brand associations.

This hypothesis being accepted indicates that content quality is not merely visually appealing but important in shaping how audiences perceive and connect with a brand. According to Kapoor et al. (2021), content that aligns with audience interests and is easy to understand builds brand credibility and trust, both of which are precursors to brand awareness. The implication here is that content acts as a medium of brand storytelling, and its quality determines the effectiveness of brand communication in crowded digital environments.

## **H2: Consistent Messaging Has a Significant Impact on Brand Awareness in Social Media Marketing**

This hypothesis was also accepted, indicating that consistent messaging exerts an effective and strong influence on brand awareness. This suggests that when a brand maintains coherence in its messaging across different posts and platforms in terms of tone, design, themes, and core values it enhances audience recognition and memory of the brand identity.

The acceptance of H2 underscores the importance of strategic message alignment, particularly in a disconnected digital ecosystem where consumers are exposed to countless messages daily. According to Keller (2001), consistent messaging helps form a stable and unified brand image in the consumer's mind. This cognitive consistency reduces confusion and increases familiarity, both of which contribute to higher levels of brand awareness. This result implies that brands must treat their messaging as a cumulative and reinforcing mechanism. When messages are consistent over time and across channels, they facilitate stronger plan development, mental frameworks that help consumers store and retrieve brand-related information (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Thus, message consistency acts not just as a communication tactic but as a long-term brand-building strategy as supported by the Integrated theory model Tannenbaum, Schults et al.(1993). The statistical support for H2 also resonates with Bruhn et al. (2012), who observed that integrated communication enhances recall of a brand by reinforcing brand messages in multiple contexts. The implication here is that inconsistency such as variations in tone, visuals, or messaging may dilute brand meaning and hinder awareness.

### **H3: Audience Engagement Has a Significant Impact on Brand Awareness in Social Media Marketing.**

The third hypothesis, H3, was similarly accepted, demonstrating that audience engagement possesses a strong and significant effect on brand recognition. This means that there is an increased consumer communication of social media content of the brand through actions such as liking, commenting, sharing, or tagging directly contributes to raising the brand's visibility and awareness among existing and potential followers.

This finding supports prior research that positions engagement as a core mechanism of digital influence. According to Muntinga et al. (2011) and Gensler et al. (2013), engaged users often serve as brand advocates, boosting brand content and increasing its reach through peer-to-peer networks. This whole spread, facilitated by the interactive nature of social platforms, serves as a catalyst for brand awareness. The acceptance of H3 suggests that brand awareness is not only driven by content output but also by how users respond to and participate in that content. This aligns with the COBRA theory Muntinga, Moorman and Smit (2011) who emphasize the virility potential of emotionally and socially engaging content. Furthermore, Brodie et al. (2013) argue that engagement leads to co-creation of brand meaning, which deepens brand associations and recall.

This result implies that brand communication is no longer unidirectional. Instead, it is dialogic and participatory, with audience engagement functioning as both a metric and a mechanism for brand dissemination. Engaged users effectively become co-authors of the brand narrative, contributing to a broader and more dynamic formation of brand awareness.

Altogether the acceptance of H1 suggests that high content quality enhances users' ability to process, understand, and remember brand messages, reinforcing the cognitive dimension of brand awareness. The acceptance of H2 indicates that consistent messaging ensures coherence in brand communication, leading to stronger brand schema and more reliable recall in the consumer's memory. The acceptance of H3 highlights the crucial role of audience participation in spreading brand messages and building brand recognition through social proof and peer validation. The positive confirmation of all three hypotheses implies that brand awareness in social media is a complex construct, driven by a combination of content excellence, message discipline, and interactive user relationships. The results aid to theory

knowledge of brand-building in digital contexts and validate the conceptual model proposed in the study.

#### **4.5 Summary**

This chapter examined the effect of SMM in brand recognition for Chikka Chicken. This study focused on three core constructs: content quality, consistent messaging, and audience engagement, in relation to their effect on brand awareness. The results from the structural equation modelling revealed that media communication (MC), content quality (CQ), and audience engagement (AE) both having a statistically strong positive effect on brand awareness (BA), with p-values below 0.05. Among the three, media communication showed the strongest effect, highlighting the power of message clarity and frequency in shaping consumer perception. These findings underscore the importance of a strategic, well-executed social media presence in enhancing brand recognition in competitive fast food markets. Specifically, engaging content and consistent messaging emerged as critical factors. The insights derived from this study are instrumental for marketers in the food service industry, as they emphasize the need for interactive, value-driven social networking techniques to create effective consumer connections and elevate brand visibility.



## **CHAPTER V**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Summary**

The chapter presents the conclusion, findings, and suggestions for improvements of this analysis titled "The Effectiveness of Social Media Marketing in Building Brand Awareness: A Case of Chikka Chicken Fast Food Restaurant in Harare. The section provides a summary of the entire project steps, from the objectives to the methodology and key findings, prior to formulating conclusions based on the research hypothesis. It also offers practical recommendations on how Chikka Chicken's social media promotion strategies can be improved, discussion of how the project adds to theory, the limitations, and future project directions. This chapter serves to conclude the observations made during the course of the study and provides strategic advice for scholars and practitioners in digital marketing and brand management.

The goal of this research was to measure the effectiveness of social media advertisement as a strategy for building brand awareness, using Chikka Chicken fast food restaurant in Harare as a case study. The research was guided by three primary objectives were to investigate the impact of content quality on brand awareness, to quantify the impact of messaging consistency in shaping consumer recognition, and to test the impact of audience engagement on awareness levels. The research was founded on the assumption that strategic use of digital media can significantly enhance a brand's visibility, recall, and customer loyalty. A quantitative approach was employed, using a structured questionnaire for a sample of 320 users who are following or accessing Chikka Chicken's social media pages. SPSS software and Amos were applied in data analysis, including descriptive statistics.

Demographic survey indicated that the majority of the respondents fall in the age group of 18-24 years, which is the age group utilizing social media, most. This finding justified that using social media marketing for accessing Chikka Chicken's target market.

According to the project findings, it is clear that social media marketing can be an effective too in building the awareness of brands if used the correct strategic ways. Chikka Chickens presence on social media platforms is not being overlooked. Most of the respondents in the study were familiar with the brand and interacted with it one way or another. The study confirmed that three primary factors which are content quality, consistent messaging and audience engagement are the drivers of how a brand is perceived online. The primary aim of this analysis was to investigate the impact of messaging consistency, content quality, and audience engagement on brand awareness. Information was collected using a causal research design then analyzed through SPSS AMOS .320 participants participated in the study to assess the predictors of brand awareness.

The first objective focused on evaluating the effect of content quality on brand awareness. The results demonstrated a significant positive association between content quality and brand awareness, with coefficients ( $B = 0.140$ ,  $p = 0.025$ ). Participants rated the brands' content as clear, informative, and visually engaging, reinforcing the notion that professionally arranged and relevant content enhances brand recall (Ashley & Tuten, 2015; Kumar et al., 2016). This implies that high-quality content contributes meaningfully to strengthening brand recognition among consumers.

The second objective was to examine the relationship between consistent messaging and brand awareness. The findings revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between messaging consistency and brand awareness, as indicated by the regression coefficient ( $B = 0.225$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ). Respondents also identified the brand's tone and communication style as consistent across platforms, which supports the idea that integrated and coherent messaging reinforces brand identity and aids in cognitive recognition (Bruhn et al., 2012; Keller, 2013). This suggests that consistent messaging across communication platforms enhances consumer awareness of a brand.

The third objective sought to determine the influence of audience engagement on brand awareness. The findings showed a statistically significant and positive relationship, supported by coefficients ( $B = 0.298$ ,  $p = 0.015$ ). High engagement through likes, shares, comments, and participation in promotional activities correlated with heightened awareness and brand advocacy. This supports the assertion by Tuten and Solomon (2017) that interaction fosters emotional attachment and strengthens consumer-brand relationships. This indicates that

active engagement with the audience, such as through interactive content or responsive communication, has a notable impact on improving brand awareness.

Overall, all three independent variables, messaging consistency, content quality, and audience engagement were found to significantly predict brand awareness, thus validating the conceptual framework proposed in this study. Particularly when content is engaging, messaging is consistent, and aligned with audience expectations

## **5.2 Conclusions**

According to the research findings, it is clear that SMM can be a strong tool to build brand recognition if used strategically. Chikka Chicken's presence on sites like Facebook and Instagram is not being overlooked most of the participants in this study knew the brand and interacted with it in one way or another. The study confirmed that three primary factors quality of content, messaging consistency, and audience engagements each contribute to strong establishment of a brand and how the brand is perceived online.

The quality of social networking content published was discovered to be the greatest contributor towards building brand awareness. Participants stated that they felt Chikka Chicken's content as informative, visually stimulating, and interest-oriented. If content is designed well and easy to understand, it stands out and increases the chances that individuals will remember and engage with the brand. This means that simple posting on social media is not enough the content must deliver value, be designed to the intended audience, and be consistent in style and tone. For Chikka Chicken, this means continuous content creation that explicitly tells the brand's story, via easy-to-understand imagery, promotion deals, and customer-centric messages.

Second, consistent messaging was also found to improve brand recall. When a brand's tone, words, and image remain consistent across different channels, this establishes trust and familiarity. In the analysis most of the participants could identify Chikka Chicken's posts without even seeing the name, just by how it looks and feels. This means that the brand has already established a recognizable online presence, but there is still room for improvement specifically in ensuring that the same look is used consistently across all platforms, even as the brand experiments with different types of content.

Third, engagement was the best in terms of building brand recall. People, who liked, shared, commented, or participated in Chikka Chicken's online contests were more likely to recall and recommend Chikka Chicken. Engagement is a two-way communication it transforms fans into interactive members who belong to the brand. This proves the fact that interaction is better than message broadcasting. If customers are heard and visible, they are going to become loyal and tell others about the brand.

Combined, the results of this study validate the belief that effective SMM is not just about simply being present online but being intentional. It's about creating intentional content, having a distinct voice, and inciting engagement that engages customers and makes them feel valued. For Chikka Chicken, the key is that its online promotional strategies are on the right track, but continued focus and improvement in content strategy, message coordination, and interactive campaigns will help the brand grow even further. For other businesses, especially fast food or retail, this study is an eye-opener that success in social media comes from a combination of creativity, consistency, and communication.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

From the results laid out in this study, several key implantation ideas are offered to help Chikka Chicken and similar brands refine their social media marketing campaigns and develop stronger brand awareness. The recommendations are tailored to the three main areas of research, which include content quality, message consistency, and audience engagement. They are actionable steps that can be implemented immediately as well as part of a long-term digital marketing plan.

#### **1. Investing more in richer content creation**

For one, improving the quality of content should remain a priority. While most respondents believed Chikka Chicken's content is informative and visually appealing, there is still room for the brand to take it a notch higher by investing more in richer content creation. These could come in the form of short videos, behind-the-scenes, user-generated stories, as well as educational or entertaining content related to food and dining. In addition to this, the brand must also read social media analytics regularly in order to obtain knowledge on the type of content that is working and produce future content accordingly. This will ensure that not only does the content look good, but it also resonates with the followers on a more fundamental

level. Incorporating more local and culturally relevant content can also help the brand resonate more personally with its Harare-based followers.

## **2. Developing and maintaining one brand voice across all its online platforms**

When it comes to messaging consistency, it is essential that Chikka Chicken develops and maintains one brand voice across all its online platforms. It means more than just having the same logo or color scheme. The tone, vocabulary, and values expressed in each posting need to be aligned with the overall brand image. To accomplish this, the brand should create a social media style guide for use by internal marketing teams as well as external partners. This document would establish catchphrases, subject matter, brand voice (e.g., professional, approachable, informal), and formatting guidelines to be used on each channel. Periodic audits of past content can also help ensure that consistency is maintained as the brand grows and increases the scope of its communications.

## **3. Increasing two way interactions (polls, lives, Q and A sessions and giveaways)**

For audience engagement, Chikka Chicken can make the shift from passive posting to active community building. As would be understood in the study, people who engage with content are more aware of and loyal to the brand. Therefore, increasing two-way interactions replying to comments, making polls, hosting live Q&A sessions, or hosting giveaways can go a long way in cementing customer relationships. Apart from that, the brand must recognize and reward loyal fans through online loyalty campaigns or public shout-outs. Such acts go a long way in emotional connection and word-of-mouth marketing.

## **4. Employ targeted advertising to reach audiences**

Another recommendation is to employ aimed advertising to reach audiences that are still unaware of the brand. With tools like Facebook Ads Manager or Instagram Promotions, Chikka Chicken can design campaigns that specifically target people by location, age, interest in fast food and online behavior. These paid tactics, when combined with engaging organic content, can increase brand awareness among new customers.

## **5. Investing in digital marketing partnerships**

Lastly, Chikka Chicken can invest in digital marketing partnerships or staff training to enhance its technical competencies in content creation, analytics and audience management. As the digital landscape evolves quickly, being up-to-date with platform algorithms, content

trends, and customer expectations will maintain the brand's competitiveness and relevance. In brief, these recommendations highlight the fact that success in social platforms is not about posting frequently alone, but posting with intention, clarity and responsiveness. By improving content quality, consistency of messages, and responsiveness initiatives, Chikka Chicken can strengthen its online presence and continue growing its loyal customer base. These recommendations are also applicable to other fast food firms planning to achieve the same in Zimbabwe or anywhere else.

Action model and the brand resonance pyramid, which state that brand communication must be transparent, emotionally compelling and frequent in order to create strong brand associations. Findings validate the hypothesis that strategic social media marketing is not so much a branding tactic but an instrument for building relationships that deepens consumer trust and loyalty.

In practical terms, the research presents actionable evidence for Zimbabwean and similar market marketing professionals. It provides an illustration of how some of the features of social media visual appeal, message clarity, frequency of engagement and choice of platform can directly influence the perception and memorability of a brand by customers. Findings of the project are particularly efficient for small and medium-sized organisations (SMEs) in hospitality and food industries that may not have large advertisement capital but are able to maintain maximum influence via direct and calculated methods of exploiting the social media tools.

## **5. Future Research Suggestions**

Even though this research has provided valuable information on the effectiveness of social media marketing to build brand awareness, it also posed a number of opportunities for future research. Future researchers can extend the scope, use other methodologies, or explore adjacent areas not covered in this research.

Secondly, subsequent studies may be open to a broader geographical scope, including other Zimbabwean cities and towns or even cross-border comparisons within the SADC region. This would be capable of determining whether the effect of social media promotion on brand awareness is transferable across different cultural, economic and technological contexts.

Brands in rural areas or regions with limited internet penetration may have different challenges and opportunities compared to urban areas like Harare.

A further area of research is the implementation of a more bigger and more representative sample size. While this research sampled 320 respondents, there would be greater statistical power and the ability for researchers to explore how variables such as gender, income level, or occupation category influence consumer interaction with brands on social media. This would facilitate enhanced marketing segmentation practices for brands.

Future studies can also investigate the long-term results of SMM on consumer loyalty, retention, and brand equity. While this study only looked at brand awareness, it could be important to understand whether social media use generates long-term customer relationships and repeat business. A longitudinal survey that tracks the same respondents over time could offer proof of whether increased awareness leads to more intensive brand engagement and long-term patronage.

Researchers can explore the potential for considering mixed-methods designs that mix quantitative data and qualitative understanding. For example, in-depth interviews or focus group discussions among social media users may uncover the underlying motivations, emotions, and attitudes that shape the way customers view and communicate with brand content across social media. This would put numbers into context and give a richer, more complete understanding of consumer behaviour.

Another direction for future analysis would be determining roles of single social media platforms or content types in creating brand awareness. For instance, comparisons across TikTok, Instagram and Facebook would help determine the most successful platform-specific strategies for each cohort. Similarly, comparisons of video content against static content, influencer-created content against created content by the company, or organic advertising versus advertising with funds can help companies maximize content strategy.

Researchers may also examine the effect of emerging digital trends such as artificial intelligence marketing, chatbot responsiveness, and real-time engagement tools on customer experience and brand awareness. These technologies are becoming more common and can potentially have a strong contribution on the way customers engage with brands online.

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# **BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**

## **FACULTY OF COMMERCE**



### **INTRODUCTION**

My name is Natsai Polite Mureyani a 4<sup>th</sup> year marketing student at Bindura University of Science Education. I am carrying out a research to assess the effectiveness of social media marketing in building brand awareness for Chikka Chicken, a fast food outlet in Harare. Social media marketing has become an essential tool for businesses to reach their target audience and create a strong online presence. Chikka Chicken fast-food restaurant, being a popular fast-food chain in Harare, has also ventured into social media marketing to promote its brand. This study aims to investigate the impact of social media marketing in building brand awareness for Chikka Chicken fast-food restaurant, with a focus on the individual factors that influence customer perception, learning, motivation, attitudes and lifestyles. Your responses and those of others will add valuable input to the research and shall be used strictly for academic purposes only. Findings of the research will be forwarded to you in case you may need them. Kindly complete sections **A, B, C, D, and E**. Kindly return the completed questionnaire to the researcher.

### **SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

**1. What is your Gender?**

MALE	1
FEMALE	2

**2. What is your age?**

18-24	1
25-34	2
35-44	3
45 and above	4

**3. What is your highest level of education?**

HIGH SCHOOL	1
COLLEGE/ UNIVERSITY	2
POST GRADUATE	3
ORDINARY LEVEL	4

**4. What is your occupation?**

STUDENT	1
WORKING PROFFESIONAL	2
ENTREPRENEUR	3

**SECTION B: CONTENT QUALITY**

The relevance, accuracy, and appeal of social media content as well as the uniformity and coherence of messages across all platforms and overtime. Please use the following scale when responding to each item (tick the appropriate box). 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4 neutral, 5=somewhat agree, 6=agree, 7=strongly agree

	STATEMENTS	S	C	O	R	E		
<b>CQ1</b>	Chikka Chicken's social media posts are visually appealing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>CQ2</b>	The information shared on their platform is clear and easy to understand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>CQ3</b>	Their content is relevant to my interests and preferences	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>CQ4</b>	The creativity on their posts makes them stand out online	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>CQ5</b>	The information shared is credible and trustworthy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

#### SECTION C: CONSISTENT MESSAGING

Messaging consistency is how uniformly a brand communicates its message, tone and values across all platforms and overtime. Please use the following scale when responding to each item (tick the appropriate box) 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4 neutral, 5=somewhat agree, 6=agree, 7=strongly agree

	STATEMENTS	S	C	O	R	E		
<b>MC1</b>	Chikka chicken uses consistent voice tones across all social media platforms	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>MC2</b>	Their messaging matches their brand values	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>MC3</b>	They post on social media regularly and consistently	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>MC4</b>	Key messages are repeated often and are easy to recall	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## SECTION D: AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

Audience engagement refers to how actively and meaningfully customers and followers interact with a brand's content. Please use the following scale when responding to each item (tick the appropriate box). 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree.

	STATEMENTS	S	C	O	R	E
AE1	I often like, share and comment on Chikka Chicken posts	1	2	3	4	5
AE2	Chikka Chicken responds promptly to customer questions and comments	1	2	3	4	5
AE3	Their social media encourages interaction through polls or giveaways	1	2	3	4	5
AE4	I feel encouraged to engage with the content they post online	1	2	3	4	5
AE5	I have interacted with their social media posts before	1	2	3	4	5
AE6	Their social media posts make me feel connected to the brand	1	2	3	4	5
AE7	I find their posts enjoyable and entertaining	1	2	3	4	5
AE8	Their posts are useful and relevant to my needs	1	2	3	4	5

## SECTION E: BRAND AWARENESS

Brand awareness refers to how familiar you are with a brand. Please use the following scale when responding to each item (tick the appropriate box). 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree`

	STATEMENTS	S	C	O	R	E
BA1	I can easily recall the Chikka Chicken brand name when I	1	2	3	4	5

	think of fast food					
<b>BA2</b>	I recognize their logo and slogan when I see it online and offline	1	2	3	4	5
<b>BA3</b>	I am aware of products and services Chikka Chicken offers	1	2	3	4	5
<b>BA4</b>	I have mentioned or shared something about Chikka Chicken	1	2	3	4	5





