THE IMPACT OF AN INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT ON PARTICIPATING CLIENT ORGANISATIONS

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Dylan Henry Cromhout, declare that the contents of this dissertation represent my own unaided work, and that the thesis has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

04 July 2020

Signed **Date**

ABSTRACT

South Africa has long recognised the critical importance of a vibrant small business community for economic growth, job creation, poverty reduction and equality. Unfortunately, however, more than 70 per cent of new businesses in South Africa fail within their first two years of existence. Research conducted in order to curb this trend has discovered that small businesses are able to survive much longer if they adopt certain business management techniques, such as marketing.

In order to support the transformation of South Africa through serving the marketing needs of small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs), the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) in association with Brand Shepherd established a service learning (SL) programme called the Brand Shepherd Advertising Challenge (BSAC). Since its inception in 2010, BSAC has served the marketing needs of more than 700 SMMEs. The aim of the programme is to offer local SMMEs quality marketing services at little-to-no financial cost by employing the services of undergraduate marketing students, who need to obtain practical marketing communication experience in fulfilment of their qualification. As part of the programme, student teams (agencies) conduct market research, develop marketing materials, engage in marketing planning and design, implement integrated marketing communication (IMC) campaigns, and facilitate informal on-the-job training and mentorship for their partner SMMEs (clients). The ultimate goal of the programme is for the student agencies to facilitate marketing for their client-SMMEs so as to generate improved performance and increased sales.

Since the inception of the White Paper on the Transformation of Higher Education (1997), many service-learning (SL) programmes have been developed and implemented by South African universities. For the most part these programmes have engaged students in experiential learning while simultaneously serving the local community. Although extensive research has been conducted to determine the value of such programmes for the participating students, not much formal research has been conducted to determine the value of the programmes for the participating organisations. This is concerning, as a key principle of SL is mutuality and reciprocity.

By using a quantitative research design and employing an empirical survey method, the researcher conducted a client-side programme evaluation to describe the value which the BSAC-SL programme had for participating SMMEs in relation to three sets of criteria, namely, student-SMME outputs; student and SMME inputs; and programme outcomes. In order to gain a short-term, medium-term, and long-term perspective the researcher collected data from SMMEs that had participated in the programme between one and five years before the study (2010-2014). The ultimate goal of the study was to simplify the complex nature of the phenomenon under inquiry by describing the perceptions of participating organisations regarding the value of the programme, and identify areas for programme

improvement. Trained fieldworkers gathered data from 107 organisations by means of a structured questionnaire in an interviewer-administered empirical survey. SPSS (version 23) assisted in the coding and analysis of the data.

Interpretation of the data revealed that the BSAC-SL programme had significant value for participating SMMEs for every area of student-SMME output, including customer research conducted, marketing communication tools and resources developed or acquired, IMC campaign plans developed and implemented, business-related training and knowledge transferred to SMMEs, client-agency relationships formed, and the programme as a whole. Recommendations for programme improvement cover such aspects as programme design, programme coordination, and the nature and quality of student service.

Considering the numerous marketing-related performance benefits that the BSAC-SL programme has had for participating SMMEs, it is clear that it is a valuable programme that should not only continue, but extend its impact through other South African universities as well. The insights gained in this study should be valuable for programme coordinators, university stakeholders, and SL service agencies involved in the BSAC-SL programme. In addition, the findings, conclusions, and recommendations should assist other SL and SMME researchers, higher education and SMME policy advisors, SL practitioners and academic staff in higher education, private sector SL service agencies, small businesses participating in SL, students participating in SMME-oriented SL, and SMME development practitioners in South Africa and other developing countries.

KEYWORDS

Higher education community engagement; university service learning; integrated marketing communication (IMC); small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMME); client-side programme evaluation; community perspective; small business support and development.

DEDICATION

To my parents, Johnny and Suzi Cromhout

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

B2B	Business to business
BER	Bureau of Economic Research
BSAC	Brand Shepherd Advertising Challenge
CE	Community engagement
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CHESP	Community Higher Education Service Partnership
CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
DoE	Department of Education
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
GEM	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor
HEI	Higher education institution
HEQC	Higher education qualifications committee
ICT	Information and communication technology
JET	Joint Education Trust
MBA	Master in Business Administration
NPO	Non-profit organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ROI	Return on investment
SL	Service Learning
SMME	Small, medium, and micro enterprises
SMS	Short message service
WIL	Work-integrated learning

CLARIFICATION OF BASIC TERMS AND CONCEPTS

This section includes the most important terms and concepts used in the present study.

Client-agency relationship	A client-agency relationship involves two parties working together in order to achieve a successful outcome for a creative campaign and has both a relational and contractual aspect to it (Keegan *et al*., 2017:2).
Community engagement (CE)	Initiatives and processes through which the expertise of the higher education institution in the areas of teaching and research are applied to address issues relevant to its community. Community engagement typically finds expression in a variety of forms, ranging from informal and relatively unstructured activities to formal and structured academic programmes addressing particular community needs (i.e. service learning programmes) (HEQC, 2004:15).
Evaluation research	Evaluation research is designed to evaluate the performance of a project or programme that has already been implemented (Bhattacharyya, 2006:15).
Integrated marketing communication (IMC)	IMC is a strategic marketing function designed to ensure that all marketing-related messaging and brand communication strategies are unified across all communication channels, consistent over time, and centred on the customer (Nowak & Phelps 1994; Carlson *et al*., 2003: Kitchen *et al*., 2004; Belch & Belch, 2018:11).
Market / customer research	Market research covers a wide range of survey collection and analysis techniques designed to support marketing decision making. These include both qualitative and quantitative research that aims to improve the quality of decision making, identify problems, understand the market, and foster customer value and quality by analysing a variety of aspects relating to consumers, including product or service purchasing, usage, and attitudes (Leventhal, 2000:271; Lamb *et al*., 2020:175-177).

Marketing	Marketing is a term that embraces the science, art, institutions, activities, and processes for creating, communicating, and delivering offerings that have value for a range of stakeholders including customers, partners, clients and society at large (AMA, 2017; Kotler, 2019).
Marketing communication	Marketing communication is the process businesses use to communicate with their target audiences by making use of a variety of communication methods and tools (Lamb *et al*., 2020:400). The purpose of marketing communication involves three key objectives, namely, to inform consumers about the business and its offerings, to persuade consumers to respond to business offerings, and to remind consumers about the business and its offerings (Pride *et al*., 2015; Lamb *et al*., 2020).
Marketing communication/ promotional mix	A set of tools that a business can use to communicate the benefits of its products and services to its customers. There are six recognised tools: advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and publicity, direct marketing, and digital/interactive marketing (Chartered Institute of Marketing, 2009:2).
Marketing strategy	A marketing strategy is a comprehensive plan formulated to achieve the marketing objectives of an organisation. A marketing strategy usually includes information about market segmentation and targeting, market positioning, and marketing mix decisions (Brassington & Pettitt, 2007:438; Stevens, 2011).
Pedagogy	A method and practice of teaching, especially as an academic subject or theoretical concept (Lexico, 2019).
Sales promotion campaign	Sales promotion consists of marketing activities that provide extra value or incentives for the sales force, the distributors, or the ultimate consumer, and stimulate immediate sales (Belch and Belch, 2018:23). A sales promotion campaign is a set of marketing activities designed to offer consumers an incentive for a limited period in order to stimulate a desired response, such as trial or purchase (Koekemoer, 2011).

Service learning (SL)	Service learning ('academic service-learning', 'academic community service', and 'community-based learning') is a form of experiential education where learning occurs through a cycle of action and reflection as students work with others through a process of applying what they are learning to community problems, and, at the same time, reflecting upon their experience as they seek to achieve real objectives for the community and deeper understanding and skills for themselves (Eyler & Giles, 1999).
Small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs)	SMMEs are all those organisations in South Africa which have fewer than 200 employees and a turnover of less than R25 million. These include survivalist firms like vendors, hawkers, and subsistence farmers; micro organisations which are owner run, lack capital, and have fewer than five employees; very small enterprises that employ between five and twenty people, have access to technology and are formally registered; small businesses, which are generally more established, structured and sophisticated, employ up to 50 people, and generate a turnover of between R150 000 and R20 million; and medium-sized companies which have a high degree of organisation, decentralised forms of management, employ 100-200 employees, and have a turnover of between R6 million and R25 million (Morris & Zahra, 2000:95; Ntsika, 2001:13; Tustin, 2001:10; Njiro *et al*., 2010:8).
Work-integrated learning (WIL)	WIL is an umbrella term used to describe a range of curricular, pedagogic and assessment practices across a range of academic disciplines that integrate formal learning and workplace concerns. Thus it is an educational approach that aligns academic and workplace practices for the mutual benefit of students and workplaces (CHE, 2011:4).

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The Brand Shepherd Advertising Challenge (BSAC) is a Cape Town-based service learning (SL) programme designed to provide small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) with marketing services at no financial cost. Students organise themselves into teams (or agencies), form a relationship with a local SMME, and then facilitate marketing-oriented services for the SMME for a period of approximately three months. Student agencies conduct market research, develop marketing materials, engage in marketing planning, design and implement integrated marketing communication (IMC) campaigns, and facilitate informal training and mentorship for their partner SMMEs. The primary goal of the programme is for students to facilitate the marketing efforts of their partner SMMEs in a way that improves the firm’s performance to the point that increased sales are achieved.

Since the promulgation of the White Paper on the Transformation of Higher Education (1997), many service-learning (SL) programmes have been developed and implemented by South African universities. For the most part these programmes have served as a means to engage students in experiential learning, while simultaneously serving the local community (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995:112). Although much research has been conducted to determine the impact of such programmes on the participating students (Eyler *et al*., 2001; Celio *et al*., 2011), not much formal research has sought to determine the impact of such programmes on the participating organisations (Budhai, 2013:3).

Although the BSAC-SL programme was initiated in 2010, no comprehensive programme evaluation has been conducted to determine the degree to which the programme is achieving its goals. In 2015 the researcher became aware of this problem and began to search out literature that could provide a preliminary understanding of the problem as well as potential methods of assessing it. Based on this analysis, it was determined that a client-side programme evaluation would be a suitable way to determine the degree to which the programme was fulfilling its mandate, and also provide appropriate insights for programme improvement.

What follows is an in-depth introduction to the research study, starting with the background to the research problem from both SL and SMME perspectives. The research problem is then outlined and the rationale, significance and expected outcomes of the research study are described. Next, the main aims and objectives of the research are listed followed by the research questions. Thereafter, a short literature review provides preliminary information about service learning and SMME marketing. This is succeeded by an overview of the conceptual framework, research design and methodology, the delineation of the research, and ethical considerations. The chapter ends with a short outline of the thesis, a note on the importance of the study, and a summary of the chapter.

1.2 Background to the research problem

1.2.1 Service learning

SL is a pedagogical work-integrated learning (WIL) practice that engages students in academically-oriented community service designed to enhance the classroom learning experience by requiring students to participate in activities which integrate course content with volunteer service (Petkus, 2000; Rinaldo *et al*., 2019:115). As such, it is a form of community engagement designed to teach students complex concepts and ideas, but differs from other forms of community engagement such as volunteerism, internships, community outreach, or co-operative education (HEQC, 2006b; Prins & Webster, 2010). SL also differs from traditional forms of WIL because it is an experience-based pedagogy that serves legitimate community needs while also requiring structured student reflection, designed to offer students an effective curricular balance (Zlotkowski, 1996; Post *et al*., 2009:18; Rinaldo, 2019:115). Student activities associated with SL range from structured volunteering times with community organisations to crafting business strategies or implementing communication campaigns (Geringer *et al.,* 2009; Burns, 2011; Rinaldo, 2019:115). As such, SL provides students with the opportunity to implement and test the skills and knowledge gained in the classroom in real-world contexts while also learning the importance of community service (Astin *et al*., 1999; Burns, 2011; Rinaldo, 2019:115).

Authors have found numerous student-oriented benefits resulting from SL, including:

- the ability to apply and master course content and theory (Astin & Sax, 1998; Hagenbuch, 2006; Shaw, 2007; Casile *et al.* 2011; Carson & Domangue, 2012; Cupelli, 2016:115; Harrop-Allin, 2016:10; Paphitis & Pearse, 2017:152; du Toit, 2019:21; Juaneda-Ayensa *et al*., 2019:167);
- better attitudes towards self and learning (Dymnicki, 2011);
- deeper learning (Harrop-Allin, 2016:8; Matzembacher *et al*., 2019:196);
- increased employability (Juaneda-Ayensa, 2019:164);
- improved academic performance (Celio *et al*, 2011; Jameson *et al.,* 2013; Harrop-Allin, 2016:14; Cheng & Wang, 2019);
- reduction of previously held stereotypes about others (Holsapple, 2012; Paphitis & Pearse, 2017:146; Hardin-Ramanan *et al.*, 2018:174; du Toit, 2019:23)
- greater appreciation of the environment, community, diversity, and ethical concerns (Gose, 1997; Jacoby, 1996; Simola, 2009; Harrop-Allin, 2016:8; Paphitis & Pearse, 2017:146);
- ability to integrate knowledge silos and become more interested in the learning process (Berasategi *et al.,* 2016:427; Hardin-Ramanan *et al.*, 2018:173*);*
- clarification of vocational interests (Gibson *et al*., 2011);
- the development of moral sensibilities and cultural sensitivities (Warnell, 2010; Wilson, 2011; Cupelli, 2016:116);

- gaining a different world view and leaving comfort zones (Bamber & Hankin, 2011; Matzembacher *et al*., 2019:196);
- refining problem solving and critical thinking skills (Rutti *et al*., 2016:425; Paphitis & Pearse, 2017:146; Matzembacher *et al*., 2019:196);
- developing soft skills such as leadership, communication, teamwork, self-management, and crisis management (Berasategi *et al*., 2016:427; Paphitis & Pearse, 2017:146; Hardin-Ramanan *et al*., 2018:173; Jones *et al*., 2018);
- nurturing a more inclusive mind-set while also awakening a desire for social justice (Paphitis & Pearse, 2017:146; Hardin-Ramanan *et al*., 2018:173);
- increased civic mindedness and social responsibility (Harrop-Allin, 2016:12; Paphitis & Pearse, 2017:149; and
- developing an appreciation for the diverse needs and challenges of communities (Klink & Athaide, 2004; Harrop-Allin, 2016:8).

Students also gain knowledge from the community (Stanton *et al.,* 1999; Harrop-Allin, 2016:12), gain a sense of responsibility (Jacoby, 1996), make connections between classroom concepts and needs in society (Wallace, 2000), enhance intercultural competencies (Deardorff & Edwards, 2012), and achieve personal development outcomes (Juaneda-Ayensa *et al*., 2019:167).

The literature also provides academic staff and programme coordinators with guidance on how effectively to implement SL in their courses (Petkus, 2000; Klink & Athaide, 2004; Metcalf, 2010; Cupelli, 2016:116). Other benefits that SL provides for academic staff include opportunities to conduct research (Harkavy & Benson, 1998); improvement of teaching practice (Cupelli, 2016:116); and linkages to the external community which can form the basis of journal articles and teaching case studies (Rutti *et al*., 2016:427).

For students, the value of SL is generally measured in terms of development of knowledge, increase in skills, change of attitude, or their satisfaction with the experience (Rinaldo, 2019:115). Interestingly, it has been found that SL programmes create value for students even when they are unsuccessful in meeting the needs of community partners. For example, Furlow (2010) reports on the lessons that students learned through designing a website for local businesses impacted by Hurricane Katrina. Although the website did not gain media attention, the students grew through the process and also learned through analysing the challenges that led to the failure of the project. Such an outcome is also reported by Suckale *et al*. (2018:84), who note that students experienced benefits from SL even though they failed to successfully meet the needs of community partners.

Community partners invest significant levels of time, effort, and resources throughout the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages of the SL programmes in which they participate (Schwartz & Fontenot, 2007; Conville & Kinnell, 2010; Rinaldo *et al.,* 2019:115). When programmes fail to meet the needs of community partners, add no value, or require more input from community partners than what they get out, they may be discouraged from participating in the future and subsequently form and project a negative conception of SL (Rinaldo *et al.*, 2019:115). In contrast, when SL programmes are effectively coordinated and add value to community partners, the result is positive word-of-mouth (WOM) that increases the number of community partners desiring to participate and strengthens the viability of SL (Rinaldo *et al.*, 2019:115).

In view of the importance of the community in SL, it is surprising to find that most SL research focuses on student impacts and pedagogical considerations, often at the expense of community impacts (Vernon & Ward, 1999; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Nduna, 2007:71). This is concerning, as a key principle of SL is mutuality and reciprocity (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 200; Fitzgerald *et al*., 2012; Brown & Schmidt, 2016:49). As such, academic staff and course coordinators are left with very little empirical evidence to help them effectively engage community partners in ways that result in successful community-related outcomes, even though the ongoing commitment of community partners is vital to the success of SL as a pedagogical practice (Rinaldo, 2019:116).

Although SL research has focused heavily on the experiences of students and academic staff, some authors have considered the impact of SL on community partners (Darby *et al*., 2013:125-126; Krasynska *et al*., 2013; Steimel, 2013; Rinaldo *et al*., 2019). In the area of business-related SL alone, a number of studies note the usefulness of SL projects for participating organisations (Whitaker & Berner, 2004) and the fact that they achieved the goals they set out to achieve (Campbell & Lambright, 2011). In relation to community benefits, authors note that SL programmes:

- were beneficial (Bernstein *et al.,* 2003; Preece, 2016:117; Volschok, 2017:6);
- improved the services of the participating organisations and saved money (do Amaral, 2019:133; Rinaldo *et al*., 2019:120);
- made a significant impact on the clients of the participating organisations (Rinaldo *et al*., 2019:120);
- provided additional resources, increased financial leverage, accessed university technology and resources, and identified additional volunteers (Barrientos, 2010);
- increased the status and legitimacy of community programmes (Preece, 2016:117);
- helped access funding, facilitated networking, and increased capacity (Plaut, 2013:3);
- helped organisations gain insights about industry best practice, gave organisations a new sense of confidence, functioned as a reality check, and helped improve budgeting, PR messaging, and strategic planning (Schachter & Schwartz, 2009:449);
- imparted keen skills and knowledge to the organisations, helped the organisations cut costs, improve operations, and engage more strategically (Schoenherr, 2015:52-54);
- facilitated mentoring by students, provided manual labour, helped advance the mission of participating organisations (Budhai, 2013:5);

- freed up staff time and organisational resources, provided access to university resources (like connections to academic staff, technical expertise, and library, printing, and computer resources) (Blouin & Perry, 2009:125);
- helped create a centralised purchasing structure, achieved economies of scale, increased bargaining power, and optimised fuel purchases (Schoenherr, 2015:52-54);
- increased awareness of community engagement and mobilisation, achieved organisational impact, initiated new organisational partnerships, facilitated improvements to physical environments (Goertzen *et al.*, 2016:44-46);
- improved organisational leadership, governance, communications, community outreach, development, fundraising, and human resources (Krasynska *et al*., 2013:16);
- helped marketing campaign planning, created new target markets, gathered insightful research data, developed new products, facilitated benchmarking against competitors, improved advertising reach, streamlined internal operations, updated curricula, improved training and recruitment practices, increased brand outreach, and facilitated better decision making for improving practice and effectively utilising products (Vizenor *et al.*, 2017:8);
- enabled community partners to take on projects which members of the organisation had desired to complete but had not had the time, money, or expertise to do so (Steimel, 2013:245); and
- enabled community partners to gain satisfaction and value from contributing to the learning and development of students (Rinaldo *et al*., 2019:120).

Although there is an increasing number of authors considering the benefits of SL for community partners, most studies still focus largely on the impact of SL on students, with only a few passing comments on the community experience. This is also true for SL in South Africa (Nduna, 2007:70).

Since the inception of SL in South Africa in the 1990s, its use within universities has seen significant growth. Additionally, considerable funding has been made available to support this growth. For example, in 1999 the Community Higher Education Service Partnership (CHESP) was established with funding from the Kellogg and Ford foundations to encourage SL in South African higher education. Additionally, the CHESP was tasked with monitoring and evaluating the progress of such programmes in order to collect data that could inform higher education (HE) policy for the benefit of students, communities, and all other stakeholders involved (HEQC, 2006a:ii).

In order to more effectively evaluate and monitor the success of SL, a number of research studies have also been conducted in South Africa over the years. Most of these South African studies:

- sought to determine how SL affected student perceptions and learning (Palmer, 2005; Roos *et al*., 2005; Bender & Jordaan, 2007; Bheekie *et al*., 2007; Holtzhausen *et al*., 2007; Petersen, 2007; Pennefather, 2008; Alexander & Khabanyane, 2009; De Villiers *et al*., 2009; Stears, 2009; Van Rensburg, 2009; Maistry & Ramdhani, 2010; Marais, 2010; Van Niekerk, 2010; Bansilal & Mthembu, 2011; Cameron *et al*., 2011; Coetzee *et al*., 2011; Boltman-Binkowski & Julie, 2014; Du Plessis *et al*., 2014; Gredley, 2015; Julie, 2015a; Kruger *et al*., 2015; Marks *et al*., 2015; Akhurst *et al*., 2016; Harrop-Allin, 2016; Mitchell & Dabysing, 2016; Preece, 2016; Akhurst, 2017; Kwenda, 2017; Kaiser, 2017; Petersen & Petker, 2017; Westraadt, 2018; Mapukata *et al*., 2019);

- employed qualitative methods to investigate SL (Palmer, 2005; Roos *et al*., 2005; Bheekie *et al*., 2007; Mitchell & Humphries, 2007; Maistry & Ramdhani, 2010; Marais, 2010; Van Niekerk, 2010; Bansilal & Mthembu, 2011; Van Schalkwyk & Erasmus, 2011; McMillan, 2015; Preece, 2016; Ashu, 2017; Kwenda, 2017; Kaiser, 2017; Westraadt, 2018); with an interpretive design (23%) (Mthembu & Mtshali, 2013; Strydom & Tselepis, 2013; Gredley, 2015; Julie, 2015a; Akhurst *et al*., 2016; Mitchell & Dabysing, 2016; Akhurst, 2017; Paphitis & Pearse, 2017; Petersen & Petker, 2017);
- made use of students' reflection journals to collect data (Roos *et al*., 2005; Petersen, 2007; Pennefather, 2008; Alexander & Khabanyane, 2009; De Villiers *et al*., 2009; Joubert & Hargreaves, 2009; Stears, 2009; Van Rensburg, 2009; Marais, 2010; Bansilal & Mthembu, 2011; Cameron *et al*., 2011; Coetzee *et al*., 2011; Du Plessis *et al*., 2014; Gredley, 2015; Marks *et al*., 2015; Wium & Du Plessis, 2016; Kwenda, 2017; Kaiser, 2017; Paphitis & Pearse, 2017; Petersen & Petker, 2017; Westraadt, 2018) and in-depth interviews (20%) (Alperstein, 2007; Mitchell & Humphries, 2007; Maistry & Ramdhani, 2010; Coetzee *et al*., 2011; Van Schalkwyk & Erasmus, 2011; Mthembu & Mtshali, 2013; Du Plessis *et al*., 2014; Gredley, 2015; Marks *et al*., 2015; Mitchell & Dabysing, 2016; Preece, 2016; Ashu, 2017; Kaiser, 2017; Mampane & Huddle, 2017; Westraadt, 2018);
- were conducted by comprehensive universities such as the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the University of the Free State (Bell, 2007; Holtzhausen *et al*., 2007; Mitchell & Humphries, 2007; Pennefather, 2008; Alexander & Khabanyane, 2009; De Villiers *et al*., 2009; Joubert & Hargreaves, 2009; Stears, 2009; Maistry & Ramdhani, 2010; Marais, 2010; Van Niekerk, 2010; Bansilal & Mthembu, 2011; Coetzee *et al*., 2011; Coetzee & Phillips, 2012; Mthembu & Mtshali, 2013; Kruger *et al*., 2015; Marks *et al*., 2015; Akhurst *et al*., 2016; Mitchell & Dabysing, 2016; Preece, 2016);
- were situated in major public fields such as health and education (Alperstein, 2007; Bender & Jordaan, 2007; Bheekie *et al*., 2007; Petersen, 2007; De Villiers *et al*., 2009; Pennefather, 2008; Alexander & Khabanyane, 2009; Joubert & Hargreaves, 2009; Stears, 2009; Van Rensburg, 2009; Maistry & Ramdhani, 2010; Bansilal & Mthembu, 2011; Cameron *et al*., 2011; Coetzee *et al*., 2011; Mthembu & Mtshali, 2013; Boltman-Binkowski & Julie, 2014; Du Plessis *et al*., 2014; Julie, 2015a; Julie, 2015b; Julie *et al*., 2015; Kruger *et al*., 2015; Marks *et al*., 2015; McMillan, 2015; Srinivas *et al*., 2015; Wium & Du Plessis, 2016; Preece, 2016; Ebrahim & Julie, 2017; Kwenda, 2017; Kaiser, 2017; Mampane & Huddle, 2017; Petersen & Petker, 2017; Mapukata *et al*., 2019; Westraadt, 2018);

- studied SL programmes that provided services such as teaching, health care, life skills training, planning, and campaigning (Roos *et al*., 2005; Alperstein, 2007; Bheekie *et al*., 2007; Holtzhausen *et al*., 2007; Mitchell & Humphries, 2007; Pennefather, 2008; Alexander & Khabanyane, 2009; De Villiers *et al*., 2009; Joubert & Hargreaves, 2009; Stears, 2009; Maistry & Ramdhani, 2010; Bansilal & Mthembu, 2011; Coetzee & Phillips, 2012; Du Plessis *et al*., 2014; McMillan, 2015; Srinivas *et al*., 2015; Akhurst *et al*., 2016; Kwenda, 2017; Kaiser, 2017; Petersen & Petker, 2017; Westraadt, 2018); and
- investigated programmes that served groups and institutions such as schools, children and scholars, rural or disadvantaged communities, and medical clinics (Palmer, 2005; Roos *et al*., 2005; Bheekie *et al*., 2007; Bell, 2007; Holtzhausen *et al*., 2007; Mitchell & Humphries, 2007; Pennefather, 2008; Alexander & Khabanyane, 2009; De Villiers *et al*., 2009; Joubert & Hargreaves, 2009; Stears, 2009; Van Rensburg, 2009; Van Niekerk, 2010; Bansilal & Mthembu, 2011; Cameron *et al*., 2011; Du Plessis *et al*., 2014; Marks *et al*., 2015; McMillan, 2015; Srinivas *et al*., 2015; Akhurst *et al*., 2016; Harrop-Allin, 2016; Preece, 2016; Akhurst, 2017; Kwenda, 2017; Mampane & Huddle, 2017; Petersen & Petker, 2017; Mapukata *et al*., 2019).

In contrast, this research study seeks to determine how SL affects community members; it employs quantitative methods, makes use of a questionnaire, and investigates an SL programme implemented at a University of Technology that provides marketing-related services to small businesses. This is particularly valuable considering that in South Africa; only two other studies have considered the marketing-related aspects of SL (Mokoena & Spencer, 2017) and the nature of small business SL (Paphitis & Pearse, 2017). However, neither of these studies examines the value of marketing-related SL for the actual performance of small businesses. This study thus seeks to help close the significant gap in the research pertaining to the value of SL for communities, and to contribute to the understanding we have of marketing-related SL in the field of small business development.

In order to grow SL in South Africa, programme development and improvement needs to be informed by insights from all participating stakeholders, and especially those who are the recipients of SL endeavours, namely, members of the community. The researcher therefore hopes that this study will be the first of many to garner the views of participating client organisations and so encourage a more client-centric approach to SL in South Africa.

1.2.2 SMME marketing in South Africa

The small business sector is seen as the engine of socio-economic development the world over, because of its ability to create jobs, reduce poverty, and help equalise levels of income and wealth distribution (Levine, 2005; Irwin, 2008; European Union, 2012; Potter & Proto, 2013; World Bank, 2013; OECD, 2017:6). This is especially true for South Africa, which has long recognised the critical importance of a vibrant small business community. It was a key state consideration in the 1980s, and became a central part of the manifesto of the African National Congress (ANC) when it took office in 1994 (ANC, 2012). It has been reiterated in every significant economic policy statement since the inception of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) white paper and took centre-stage when the Small Business Act was passed in 1996. Most recently it has received attention in the National Development Plan (NDP). As a result, considerable emphasis has been placed on a healthy small business community as being the cornerstone of a new economic dispensation to address the country's crippling socio-economic problems (SBP, 2013).

However, more than 70 per cent of new businesses in South Africa fail within their first two years of existence (Peyper, 2013:5; Bushe, 2019). Research conducted in order to curb this trend has discovered that small businesses are able to survive much longer if they adopt certain business management techniques, such as marketing (Iorun, 2014; Iwu, 2017). In fact, a number of studies have identified marketing as a key factor that can not only ensure business survival but also facilitate business growth (Stokes, 2000; Van Scheers & Radipere, 2008; Clark & Ambler, 2011; Cant, 2012; Lekhanya & Mason, 2013; Hove & Masocha, 2014; Lekhanya, 2015; Maduku *et al.* 2016; Pugna *et al.*, 2016:312; Soke & Wild, 2016; Kallier, 2017; Rambe, 2017; Oji *et al*., 2017a; Oji *et al.*, 2017b; van Scheers, 2018; Ahmad *et al*., 2019; Cenamor *et al.*, 2019; Gavino *et al*., 2019; Higuchi *et al*., 2019; Makhitha, 2019; Mosweunyane *et al*., 2019; Ritz *et al*., 2019; Sadiku-Dushi *et al*., 2019).

However, a number of studies have found that in addition to limited access to finance, SMMEs suffer from poor management and marketing skills (Cant, 2012; Lekhanya 2015; Lekhanya & Mason, 2015; Mbatha & Ngwenya, 2018). Interestingly, the literature reveals that SMMEs do recognise the importance of marketing (Franco *et al.*, 2014), but simply do not have the skills and resources to implement it effectively (Chiliya *et al*., 2009; van Scheers, 2010; Cant, 2012; Gellynck *et al.*, 2012; Lekhanya & Mason, 2013; Lekhanya 2015; Soke & Wild, 2016; Kallier, 2017; Rambe, 2017; Mbatha & Ngwenya, 2018). For this reason, there have been calls from numerous authors to increase the number of programmes designed to support SMMEs with marketing, and to improve existing programmes through programme evaluation research (Chiliya *et al*., 2009; van Scheers, 2010; Cant, 2012; Lekhanya & Mason, 2013; Lekhanya 2015; Soke & Wild, 2016; Kallier, 2017; Rambe, 2017; Mbatha & Ngwenya, 2018; Higuchi *et al*., 2019).

In South Africa it is generally well known that most SMMEs fail within their first few years of existence, but little is known about the marketing strategies and marketing environments of SMMEs in both urban and rural settings (Lekhanya & Mason, 2013). For this reason, researchers have studied problems that relate to the general marketing of SMMEs, such as the effect of incorrect marketing actions on business failure (Cant, 2012; van Scheers, 2018), the lack of marketing skills as negatively affecting growth (Lekhanya, 2015; Oji *et al.*, 2017a), the marketing and branding challenges faced by SMMEs (Makhitha, 2019), and the impact of competition on SMME retailers (Chiliya *et al*., 2009). In addition, several researchers have examined specific marketing-related problems, such as the lack of knowledge of which marketing communication tools are used by SMMEs (Soke & Wild, 2016; Kallier, 2017); the struggle for rural SMMEs to link to mainstream markets (Rambe, 2017); the lack of marketing-related infrastructure in rural areas like the Internet (Oji *et al*., 2017b); the lack of understanding of the marketing benefits of technological advancements for SMMEs (Hove & Masocha, 2014), and the use of mobile marketing (Maduku *et al*., 2016).

As far as SMME training and support programmes are concerned, numbers of South African researchers have investigated the effectiveness of SMME support programmes (Ligthelm, 2008; Ladzani & Netswera, 2009; Ferreira *et al.,* 2010; Van Vuuren & Botha, 2010; Malapane & Makhubele, 2013; Peters & Naicker, 2013; Briere *et al*., 2015). Selected findings of this research indicates that despite the efforts of SMME support programmes, SMMEs still struggle to grow (Ligthelm, 2008); support programmes are often too expensive and difficult to access (Ladzani & Netswera, 2009); such programmes are often not clear about the needs of SMMEs (Ferreira *et al*., 2010); SMMEs are often not satisfied with support programmes because of a lack of information and limited ongoing support (Malapane & Makhubele, 2013); SMMEs find government support services involve too much red tape and are not that useful (Peters & Naicker, 2013), and projects are often not relevant to the needs of SMMEs (Briere *et al*., 2015).

Considering the great need for South Africa to establish a growing SMME sector and the challenges that SMMEs often encounter with SMME support programmes, this study sought to determine whether a marketing-related SL programme could function as an effective means of support for local SMMEs.

1.3 Statement of research problem

Since 2010, the academic Marketing Department at CPUT has facilitated an IMC-oriented SL programme with local SMMEs called the Brand Shepherd Advertising Challenge (BSAC). In order to assess the value of the programme, Scholtz (2018) analysed feedback from both students and community partners during the 2012 BSAC-SL programme.

Feedback from students was generally positive, highlighting such benefits as the opportunity to apply classroom learning to a real-world environment, learning to work under pressure, team work, time management, and creative and innovative problem solving (Scholtz, 2018:75).

In order to garner the value of the programme for community partners, Scholtz (2018) analysed the informal qualitative feedback forms which many participating organisations submitted at the end of the 2012 programme. The overall feedback was positive, with SMMEs noting specific benefits such as new marketing ideas, the development of marketing tools and resources, being trained to use online platforms for marketing purposes, and being inspired by the creativity and innovation of the students (Scholtz, 2018:76).

Although these insights are valuable in terms of understanding some of the benefits of the 2012 programme for students and community partners, as a resource on which to base programme improvement they leave much to be desired. In the words of Conrad and Hedin (1997:54), “more and better…research is needed to provide deeper understanding and texture to our knowledge of how service-learning can benefit our communities more productively.”

The research aim of the present study is therefore to analyse empirically the impact of the BSAC-SL programme for participating SMMEs over a five-year period (2010-2014) in order to gain insights into how the programme might be improved. The objective is to increase the value of its contribution to participating firms and to the sustainability and growth of the SMME sector in Cape Town and South Africa.

1.4 Rationale, significance, and expected outcomes of the research study

The BSAC-SL programme was initiated to add value to the local SMME community in Cape Town, South Africa. Although more than 700 SMMEs have been assisted since the start of the programme in 2010, no empirical study has been conducted to assess the value of the programme for the participating firms, with a view to improving the programme. For this reason, this study sought to facilitate a client-side programme evaluation in order to assess the value of the programme for community partners and gain insight into how it might be improved.

SL is one of the primary strategies being implemented by universities to help meet the social and educational demands being placed on them (Hatcher, 1997:22-24). In addition to student development through practical, intellectual, ethical and experiential growth (Bawden, 1999), SL seeks to develop mutually beneficial relationships to emphasise the development priorities of communities (Furco, 1996:6). In South Africa, community engagement through initiatives such as SL is an integral part of the transformation of education, responding to calls for HE to “demonstrate social responsibility…through making their expertise and infrastructure available to community service programmes” (South Africa. National Department of Education, 1997a:9).

In order to ensure that South African universities contribute effectively to the reconstruction and development of society, the White Paper on the Transformation of Higher Education in South Africa made room for quality assurance (South Africa. National Department of Education, 1997a:9). The goal of the quality assurance mechanisms has been to assist universities in monitoring, evaluating, and improving the quality of all academic offerings, including SL. When SL was initiated in South Africa in the early 2000s, the Higher Education Qualifications Committee (HEQC) introduced a number of mechanisms to help universities assess the quality of SL through reviewing the outputs and outcomes of SL programmes (HEQC, 2006b:152).

In addition, key SL scholars have promoted the idea that SL should be seen as a means to open HE to participatory, heterogeneous and responsive forms of empirical inquiry (Fourie, 2003:5; Erasmus, 2005:4). For example, Erasmus (2005:4) claims that “SL as a pedagogy is advanced through its integration with scholarly inquiry, and that both disciplinary knowledge production and the broader South African research agenda can be advanced through the philosophy, values, and practice of SL.” As a result, the integration of SL implementation, SL quality assurance, and SL research has been a growing trend in South Africa, with many research publications highlighting these themes.

Considering the great need South Africa has for a vibrant and growing SMME sector, and the benefits which SL has shown to provide to SMMEs, one would think that a number of universities would have established SL programmes designed to serve the needs of small businesses, and that such programmes would have been empirically assessed and improved. However, at the point of writing, only 6 per cent of SL studies in South Africa have made mention of SL programmes serving the needs of small businesses (Paphitis & Pearse, 2017; Mokoena & Spencer, 2017; Scholtz, 2018). For this reason, it is clear that there is a large gap in our knowledge as far as the value of SL for small business support and development in South Africa is concerned. This study seeks to help close this gap by assessing the value of a SL programme for local SMMEs, with a view to gaining insights into how to improve the programme and have a greater impact on SMMEs.

Such insights could directly assist academic staff, programme coordinators, university stakeholders, and SL service agencies to improve the BSAC-SL programme so as to better serve the needs of local SMMEs as well as the learning and engagement of students. The findings could also be valuable to other SL and SMME researchers, higher education and SMME policy advisors, SL practitioners and academic staff in HE, private sector SL service agencies, small businesses participating in SL, students participating in SMME-oriented SL, and SMME development practitioners in South Africa and other developing countries.

The study makes an original contribution to the practice of SL in South Africa by providing descriptive insights into the value of a specific marketing-oriented SL programme for SMMEs in an urban environment within a developing country. The research also compares its findings with those of other SL and SMME researchers from around the world in order to determine areas of similarity and dissimilarity, and to contribute to the establishment of international SL benchmarking and best practice.

Finally, it is hoped that the study will contribute to the dialogue about SMME support and development in South Africa by considering how SL can contribute to this vital work. It will thus set the tone for future research in the context of SL-related small business support and development in South Africa.

1.5 Aim and objectives of the research study

1.5.1 Main objective

To determine the impact of an IMC service learning programme for participating client SMMEs.

1.5.2 Subsidiary objectives

1.5.2.1 To explore the value of student-conducted customer research for participating client organisations.

1.5.2.2 To ascertain the influence of student-developed IMC tools and resources on participating client organisations.

1.5.2.3 To examine the influence of student-planned IMC campaigns on participating client organisations.

1.5.2.4 To examine the value of student-imparted IMC skills and knowledge for participating client organisations.

1.5.2.5 To establish the influence of the working relationship between the students and clients on participating client organisations.

1.5.2.6 To determine the overall influence of the SL programme on participating client organisations.

1.6 Research questions

1.6.1 Primary research question

Since the promulgation of the White Paper on the Transformation of Higher Education (1997), many service-learning (SL) programmes have been developed and implemented by South African universities. For the most part these programmes have served as a means to engage students in experiential learning while simultaneously serving the local community (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995:112). Although considerable research has been done to determine the value of such programmes for the participating students (Eyler *et al*., 2001; Celio *et al*., 2011), not much formal research has been done to determine the value of such programmes for the participating organisations (Cruz & Giles, 2000:28). In addition, only three studies have made mention of the value of SL for SMMEs in South Africa (Paphitis & Pearse, 2017; Mokoena & Spencer, 2017; Scholtz, 2018).

This study therefore aimed to determine the value of a marketing-related SL programme for participating SMMEs in Cape Town, South Africa. As such, the primary research question was:

What is the impact of an IMC-SL programme for participating client SMMEs in Cape Town?

1.6.2 Secondary research questions

To answer the primary question, the following secondary research questions were developed:

- **1.6.2.1** What is the value of student-conducted customer research on participating SMMEs?
- **1.6.2.2** What is the influence of student-developed marketing tools and resources on participating SMMEs?
- **1.6.2.3** What is the influence of student-planned IMC campaigns on participating SMMEs?
- **1.6.2.4** What is the value of student-imparted IMC skills and knowledge on participating SMMEs?
- **1.6.2.5** What is the influence of SMME-student, client-agency relationships on participating SMMEs?
- **1.6.2.6** What is the influence of the overall SL programme on participating SMMEs?

1.7 Literature review

The following section provides a short overview of the key literature relating to this study.

1.7.1 Service learning

1.7.1.1 SL in business education

In recent years there has been a growth of SL in business education (Kenworthy-U'Ren 2008; Kennedy *et al.*, 2015). Many researchers and educationists have promoted SL for its ability to enrich business education while maintaining a high level of academic rigor (Godfrey *et al.*, 2005); to enable students to take charge of their education and engage in active real-life learning (Munter, 2002; Lawrence, 2018); to foster a greater level of inter-personal, inter-cultural, and cultural sensitivity among students (Madsen & Turnbull, 2006); and to provide an opportunity for students to grow in areas of professional, moral and social development (Furco, 1996:6; Bawden, 1999; Osman & Castle, 2006:64; Konukman & Schneider, 2012; Johnson, 2016; Whitley *et al*., 2017; Lee *et al.*, 2018); all while meeting the broader goals of the university and local community (Hatcher, 1997:22-24; O'Brien, 2005:70; Matzembacher *et al*., 2019:191). Thus, well-planned business-related SL that is tied to a field of study and integrated with the curriculum can facilitate the achievement of pedagogical goals in line with a solid academic foundation and with measureable educational outcomes (Munter, 2002; Kenworthy-U'Ren 2008; Kennedy *et al.*, 2015; Lawrence, 2018).

1.7.1.2 SL in marketing education

It has been found that marketing is well suited to SL pedagogy, given that many small businesses and non-profit organisations (NPOs) are often in need of basic marketing services but do not have the funds to procure them (Klink & Athaide, 2004; Soke & Wild, 2016). SL can fill this need while also providing students with an opportunity to apply marketing skills to practical problems (McIntyre *et al*., 2005). Also, as the business environment changes and the marketplace becomes more competitive, marketing educators are making more use of experiential teaching methods in order to equip students with the skills they need to succeed (Bobbitt *et al*. 2000; Dahl *et al*., 2018:101).

1.7.1.3 SL with small businesses

Traditionally, SL was predominantly associated with NPOs because they generally rely on donations and volunteers to achieve their goals (Godar, 2000; Jacoby, 2003). However, in recent years there has been a growing trend of SL serving the needs of small businesses and micro-enterprises (Angelidis *et al*., 2004; Mungaray *et al.,* 2008; Mitchell, 2018). Typical examples of SL work being done for small businesses include the development of marketing and business plans, market research, developing marketing tools and materials such as websites, and campaigns to increase customers and sales (Mitchell, 2018:33).

1.7.2 SMMEs and marketing-related elements

1.7.2.1 SMME marketing

The importance of marketing for SMMEs has been widely highlighted because of its ability to identify what the marketplace needs and then provide for those needs in ways that outperform competitors (Stokes, 2000; Clark & Ambler, 2011; Cant, 2012; Lekhanya & Mason, 2013; Van Scheers, 2018; Lamb *et al*., 2020). Although the principles of marketing are universally applicable, what makes SMME marketing unique is that in comparison to large organisations, SMMEs are often constrained by financial, physical, and human resources (Van Scheers, 2018:28; Odoom & Mensah, 2019:156). In addition, the marketing orientation of SMMEs is greatly dependent on the marketing knowledge of the owner, and is therefore often reactive to environmental changes rather than facilitated in a systematic and strategic way (Hogarth-Scott *et al*., 1996; Bettiol *et al.*, 2012; Pérez-Luño *et al*., 2014:265; Van Scheers, 2018:28). Interestingly, it has been shown that SMME owners do recognise the importance of facilitating marketing in a strategic and systematic way (Franco *et al.*, 2014), but just do not have the skills, time or resources to do so (Gellynck *et al.*, 2012; Van Sheers, 2018:28). Despite these challenges, SMMEs need to survive in a marketplace that has become "increasingly more competitive, more specialised, more globalised and more technologically-driven" (Iwu, 2009). SMMEs thus need marketing that is informed by knowledge and creativity (Iwu, 2009).

1.7.2.2 SMME customer research

Although market research is one of the key requirements for a successful marketing strategy, SMMEs are often unable to facilitate it in a systematic way due to a lack of knowledge and resources (Henninger & Alevizou, 2017:29). Therefore, small firms often make use of informal processes to manage knowledge (Hutchinson & Quintas, 2008; Centobelli *et al*., 2019), through, for example, continually interacting with their customers and acquiring new knowledge based on the demand (Marrocu & Paci, 2011). Fourie (2015) reveals that 86.9 per cent of South African SMMEs do ask for, analyse, and respond to customer feedback. However, what is often lacking is the incorporation of such data into long-term strategic planning and action (Berndt & Tait, 2014; Mourtzis *et al*., 2018). The BSAC-SL programme therefore sought to assist SMMEs to use customer research data to facilitate strategic planning, with the goal of maximising customer satisfaction, sales, and business growth.

1.7.2.3 SMME marketing communication

Numerous studies have shown the benefit of marketing communication for small business performance (Keh *et al*., 2006; Quresi & Mian, 2010; Oboreh *et al*., 2011; Michael *et al*., 2013; Dzisi & Ofosu, 2014; Ardjouman & Asma, 2015; Massiera *et al.*, 2017). Although marketing communication is a vital factor for the success of SMMEs, research has indicated that SMMEs lack the necessary marketing and marketing communication skills (Franco *et al*., 2014; Massiera, 2017), as well as the marketing expertise and the finance to effectively implement marketing communication (Mpofu & Chigwende, 2013; Aggarwal, 2018). What exacerbates this problem is that SMMEs have to compete with larger organisations which generally have more resources to invest in marketing communication activities (Hassan *et al.,* 2015; Juneja, 2019). In addition, because marketing communication activities are often implemented according to the SMME owner's intuition (Seyyedamiri & Faghih, 2015; Chipunza & Phalatsi, 2019:2), marketing communication is often informal, reacting to the market environment rather than strategic and systematic (Seyyedamiri & Faghih, 2015; Chipunza & Phalatsi, 2019). Therefore, to support SMMEs, the BSAC-SL programme trained student teams to develop and implement strategic marketing communication plans based on data gathered from customer research.

1.7.2.4 SMME IMC

In its simplest form, IMC is a business strategy that coordinates and integrates all communication tools, channels, and sources into a seamless programme in order to maximise the communication impact on target stakeholders in such a way as to facilitate profitable relationships at a minimal cost (Belch & Belch, 2018:10; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019:515; Lamb *et al*., 2020:417). Rather than communicating marketing messages in random and ad-hoc ways, following an IMC approach enables SMMEs to coordinate their communication messages more effectively and thus ensure greater impact and cost savings (Belch & Belch, 2018:8-16). A well thought-out IMC plan is therefore vital for every small business in order to ensure that money invested in marketing communication efforts is not wasted (Scarborough & Zimmerer, 2006). Fortunately, effective IMC does not necessarily require a big budget, and with a little creativity and ingenuity small businesses can effectively communicate with consumers in ways that surpass their competitors (Groenewald *et al*., 2014:527). However, SMMEs often lack the marketing expertise and resources needed to plan and implement effective IMC strategies (Massiera, 2017:3). For this reason, the BSAC-SL programme sought to develop strategies that could integrate communication elements such as advertising, sales promotion, and digital marketing, as well as marketing tools such as pamphlets, websites, and customer databases, into a seamless and systematic IMC programme designed to build the SMME brand and increase sales and customers. In order to do so effectively, SMMEs and students formed client-agency relationships which could actualise a real-world IMC scenario. In addition, student teams trained the SMME staff in the strategies and practices of IMC so that the firms could continue to facilitate effective IMC once the programme ended.

1.8 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of the present study is depicted in Figure 1.1, below. In order to ensure planning and quality assurance in SL the Higher Education Qualifications Committee (HEQC) introduced a quality cycle designed to improve SL programmes with the completion of each cycle (HEQC, 2006b:152). A key aspect of this cycle is programme review/evaluation (seen in step 3).

SL involves numerous stakeholders including communities, external service providers/ agencies, and the university, comprising students, academic staff, and the institution as a whole (Mouton & Wildschut, 2005:117; Timur & Getz, 2008; Longart *et al*., 2017:94). In a comprehensive programme evaluation (pictured in the middle column), the value of an SL programme is determined for all the above-mentioned stakeholders, and programme improvements are implemented to serve the needs of all. In a student-side programme evaluation (which is the most common, and pictured in the first column), the value of SL for students is determined and recommendations are put forward for programme improvements that would primarily serve the needs of students. The final column represents the present study, which focuses specifically on the value of SL for community partners in order to identify areas for programme improvement to enable SL to better serve their needs. To accomplish this, the present study surveyed programme criteria which specifically influenced the community partners, namely, student-SMME outputs, student and SMME inputs, and SMME programme outcomes.

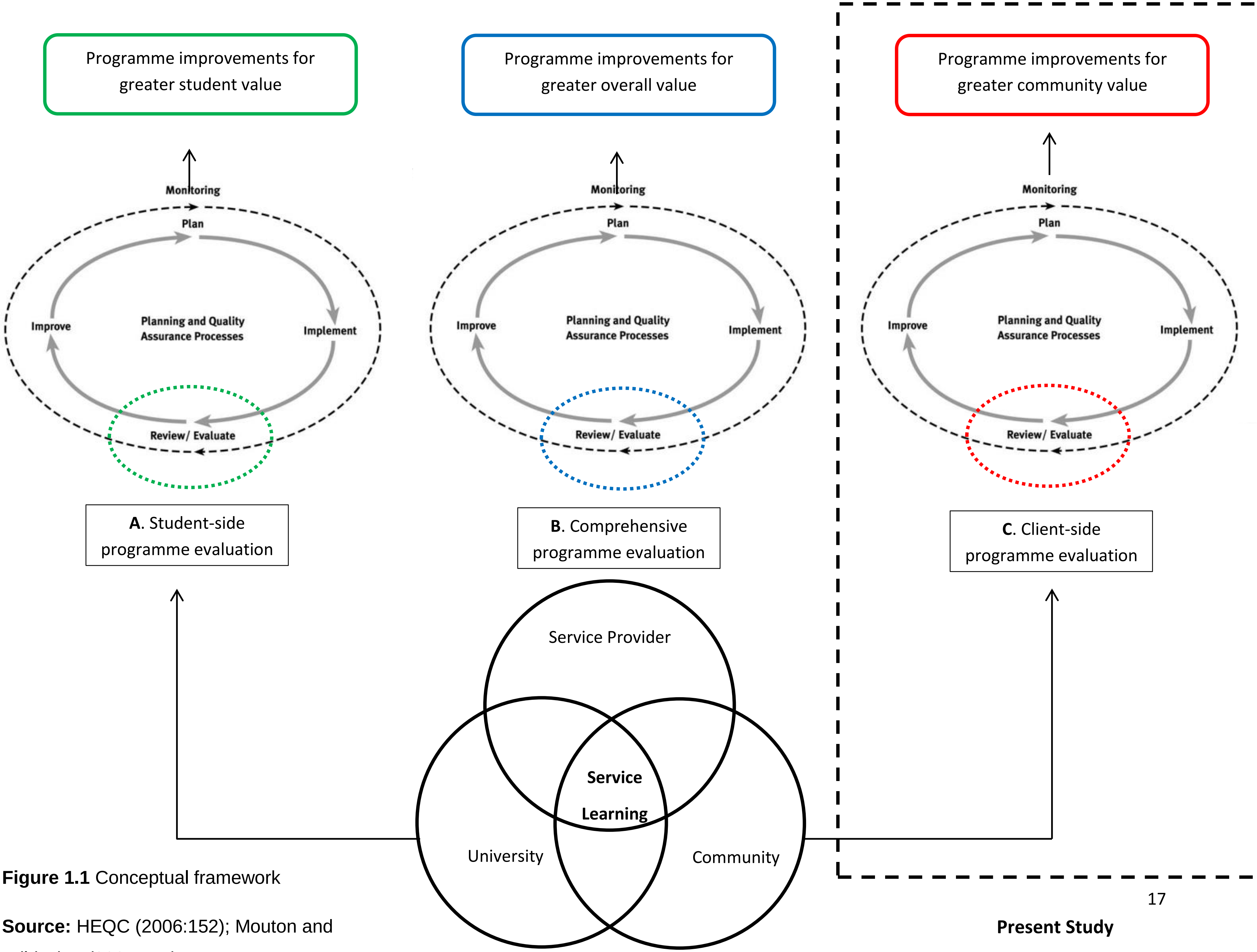

Figure 1.1 Conceptual framework

Source: HEQC (2006:152); Mouton and Wildschut (2005:117)

1.9 Research design and methodology

1.9.1 Research paradigm

This study sought to observe social behaviour scientifically, in line with a positivist research paradigm (Bhattacherjee, 2012:75). Although the feedback forms submitted by SMME clients after each programme provided a large amount of qualitative data, the themes within the data needed to be empirically tested in order to be verified scientifically. Deductive reasoning was therefore employed to develop a number of propositions for testing using quantitative methods, in order to analyse the phenomenon in an objective way.

1.9.2 Research method / approach

In order to better understand and simplify the complex nature of the phenomenon under inquiry, a quantitative research design was used (Cohen *et al*., 2007:205). This design was used to describe the value which participating SMMEs derived from the BSAC-SL programme over the short term, medium term, and long term. Data was thus gathered from SMMEs that had participated in the programme between one and five years before the study (2010-2014).

The quantitative research design sought to produce credible results that approximate reality and are judged to be accurate, trustworthy, and reasonable (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In addition, the research design sought to enhance credibility by showing relationships between various hypothesised variables while taking potential sources of error into account.

1.9.3 Research design

The research endeavoured to determine the value of the BSAC for participating SMMEs by conducting a quantitative, descriptive client-side programme evaluation using an empirical survey, through describing the perceptions of respondents in terms of three sets of criteria: student-SMME outputs, student and SMME inputs, and SMME programme outcomes.

According to Churchill and Iacobucci (2010:84), descriptive research serves to describe the characteristics of individuals and assess the number of people who share similar behaviours. This study aimed to group and quantify SMMEs based on the benefits they experienced as a result of the SL programme based on the three sets of criteria, combined with their demographic profile for cross-referencing purposes.

1.9.4 Sampling/ research processes

1.9.4.1 Population and sample

A total of 331 SMMEs had participated in the BSAC between 2010 and 2014. Judgement sampling was used to select only those organisations which had already participated in informal programme evaluation through submitting written feedback immediately after participating in the programme; a total of 294 SMMEs. Considering the small number of firms in the sample frame, it was decided that a complete enumeration of the sample frame would generate more accurate data.

- **Research population:** The research population consisted of 331 SMMEs that had participated in the BSAC-SL programme between 2010 and 2014.
- **Sample unit:** The sample units included the SMME business organisations.
- **Sampling technique:** Judgement sampling was used to select a sample frame from the research population. A total of 294 businesses had given written feedback regarding their experience in the BSAC-SL programme since its inception in 2010 and were thus eligible to participate in the study.
- **Sample frame:** a total of 294 businesses provided written feedback about their experience in the BSAC-SL programme between 2010 and 2014 and were therefore eligible to participate in the study. There were a total of 14 businesses for which contact details were not listed, and so these were excluded from the list. The final sample frame thus comprised 280 businesses.
- **Sample:** Considering the small size of the research population, all members of the sample frame were considered eligible for inclusion in the study and therefore all formed part of the final sample (280 SMMEs).
- **Sample element**: because the unit of analysis was business organisations, owners or managers who had worked with student teams during the BSAC-SL programme were selected to function as proxies for the businesses (Bhattacherjee, 2012:73).

1.9.4.2 Data collection instrument

An empirical, interviewer-administered survey was conducted using a structured questionnaire. Using a structured questionnaire allowed the researcher to obtain complex information from the respondents in an open and direct manner. Results obtained from the survey were thus easy to quantify and generally accurate (Rousseau, 2007:21; Kardes *et al*., 2008:25).

The questionnaire followed a traditional structure as described by Alreck and Settle (2004:146), in which the first section introduced the survey to the respondents; the middle section contained the scales and items relating to the survey topic; and the final section comprised questions to measure the characteristics of the organisations for grouping and comparison purposes.

The structured questionnaire was designed to determine the value of the SL programme for participating SMMEs. It included multiple closed-ended questions combined with options for further written clarification.

1.9.4.3 Data collection / fieldwork

Although personal interviewing has certain disadvantages (like cost) (Bowling, 2005), because of the nature of the study, the flexibility of personal interviewing made it the only choice. The study required direct contact with a special, qualified selection of respondents at special locations (namely, their places of work).

Therefore, face-to-face person-administered surveys were conducted by fieldworkers in order to take advantage of the benefits of collecting data in person, such as having direct access to low incidence respondents and the opportunity to provide respondents with personal assistance to minimise the incidence of missing or erroneous data (Sincero, 2012).

Respondents in the initial sample frame were screened via telephone and interviewers were recruited from the third-year Marketing Research class taught by Dr Norbert Haydam in the Marketing Department at CPUT. Students were chosen because of their availability, level of education, proficiency in language, research knowledge and experience, and familiarity with the BSAC-SL programme (Alreck & Settle, 2004:224-225). Before commencing with the fieldwork, the fieldworkers were thoroughly trained and briefed by the principal researcher. They were meticulously supervised by the principal researcher and roughly 18 per cent of the completed questionnaires were used for verification purposes as recommended by Cooper and Schindler (2006:456).

1.9.4.4 Data coding and analysis

To save time, the post-coding of the data and the transferring of the data were done simultaneously and keyed into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet (Alreck & Settle, 2004:246-253). The data from each questionnaire was keyed into a spreadsheet row and identified by the interviewer's surname in the first column.

In order to reveal important and meaningful patterns and relationships in the data (Alreck & Settle, 2004:258), statistical data analysis was conducted using SPSS (version 23).

The first set of statistics calculated in the quantitative analysis was a set of descriptive statistics that included response frequencies, means (measure of central tendency), and standard deviations (to measure variability). Each question was analysed separately and the results of the analysis used to develop frequency graphs.

Questions relating to the value that the programme had for participating SMMEs (represented by three scales, namely usefulness, satisfaction, and lasting impact) were evaluated using a one-way ANOVA. This has the flexibility of being able to accommodate more than two means at once (Kulas, 2009:126), and provides a measure of significance by comparing the means between the groups (Leard Statistics, 2013).

Because the one-way ANOVA is an omnibus test it cannot determine which groups were different from the others. For this reason, Leard Statistics (2013) recommends a post-hoc test. Although there are different forms of post-hoc test, the Bonferroni was chosen to determine the pair-wise comparisons of the estimated marginal means. Pair-wise comparisons enabled the researcher to compare one variable with another in order to find the significant differences between them.

1.10 Demarcation / delimitation / delineation of the research

In this descriptive client-side programme evaluation, only SMMEs that participated in the BSAC-SL programme facilitated by 2nd year IMC students at CPUT in Cape Town, South Africa, between 2010 and 2014, formed part of the research study. The perceptions of students, academic staff and service partners therefore fell outside the scope of the study.

1.11 Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance for the research was received from the Faculty of Business and Management Sciences' Research Ethics Committee at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (Appendix B).

Permission to conduct research relating to the BSAC-SL programme was obtained from participating client organisations by contacting each telephonically. A total of 107 business owners gave permission for further research to be conducted with their employees on their business premises.

In order to ensure that participants in the quantitative phase of the research understood the nature of the survey, a respondent information leaflet and consent form was given to them by the fieldworker before the interview commenced (Appendix A). This briefing explained certain ethical issues associated with the study. For example, each respondent was given the right to privacy and confidentiality as well as the right to withdraw from the survey at any time. This consent form was read and signed by each respondent before the fieldworker commenced the research.

1.12 Outline of thesis

The dissertation is divided into the following chapters:

- **Chapter 1:** Introduction and background to the research study
- **Chapter 2:** Service learning
- **Chapter 3:** SMMEs and marketing-retailed elements
- **Chapter 4:** SMME IMC and SMME training
- **Chapter 5:** Research framework
- **Chapter 6:** Research findings
- **Chapter 7:** Discussion and analysis of findings
- **Chapter 8:** Conclusions and recommendations of the study.

1.13 Significance/ importance of the study

South Africa currently has one of the highest unemployment rates in the world: officially 29%, unofficially closer to 40% (Webster, 2019). Although many are looking to the SMME sector to supply much-needed jobs, 70 per cent of small businesses are struggling to survive past the two-year mark (Peyper, 2013:5). Fortunately, it has been found that SMMEs can survive much longer and even grow and produce employment if they adopt strategic management practices such as marketing (Iorun, 2014; Iwu, 2017). However, most SMMEs in South Africa lack the marketing skills to facilitate business sustainability and growth (Lekhanya & Mason, 2013; Mbatha & Ngwenya, 2018). For this reason, there have been calls from numerous authors to increase the number of programmes designed to support SMMEs with marketing, and improve existing programmes through programme evaluation research (Chiliya *et al*., 2009; Van Scheers, 2010; Cant, 2012; Lekhanya & Mason, 2013; Lekhanya 2015; Soke & Wild, 2016; Kallier, 2017; Rambe, 2017; Mbatha & Ngwenya, 2018; Higuchi *et al*., 2019).

Interestingly, international research has revealed that SL has numerous performance and growth benefits for SMMEs (Schachter & Schwartz, 2009:449; Goertzen *et al.*, 2016:44-46; Preece, 2016:117; Vizenor *et al.*, 2017:8; Volschok, 2017:6; do Amaral, 2019:133; Rinaldo *et al*., 2019:120). Yet in South Africa, although SL has been in operation for more than two decades, only 6 per cent of studies make mention of SL programmes serving the needs of SMMEs (Paphitis & Pearse, 2017; Mokoena & Spencer, 2017; Scholtz, 2018). Considering the immense challenges being faced by the SMME sector, and the large capacity which South African universities have to serve the needs of SMMEs through SL, why are more universities not facilitating SMME-oriented SL?

In response to the ever-pressing need for effective and wide-spread support for the development of SMMEs in South Africa, the BSAC-SL programme was created in 2010. Since its inception it has served the needs of more than 700 SMMEs with marketing services designed to increase sales and performance, and ultimately, sustainability, growth and job creation. In order to more effectively serve the needs of South African SMMEs, this study sought to determine the value of the programme for SMMEs and also identify areas for improvement. Numerous research findings affirm the benefits of the programme for participating SMMEs such as increased sales, new customer acquisition, increased brand awareness, increased customer loyalty, increased competitive advantage, increased employee motivation, and increased business efficiency. The study makes it crystal clear that the programme has immense performance benefits for SMMEs, which can lead to long-term sustainability, growth, and even job creation. In addition, the study makes a number of recommendations which, if implemented, can significantly improve the programme in ways that will result in even greater benefits for participating SMMEs.

In the face of widespread poverty, a growing unemployment rate, an ever-weakening currency and decreasing economic growth, SMMEs, the primary solution to South Africa's economic challenges, are failing at a rate of 70 – 90 per cent every two to five years (Durban Chamber of Commerce, 2009; Peyper, 2013:5). For this reason, it has been imperative to engage in empirical inquiry to assess the value of the BSAC-SL programme, in order to facilitate research-based improvement to increase its impact on the SMME sector. In addition, it is hoped that this study will inspire other SL practitioners and researchers to create, implement, evaluate and improve SL programmes which support the needs of the SMME sector, and in so doing, help South Africa tap into the vast positive resource which higher education community engagement such as SL can be for the South African economy.

1.14 Summary

This chapter began by introducing the research study as a client-side programme evaluation of the BSAC-SL programme facilitated by CPUT and Brand Shepherd since 2010. The chapter then discusses the background to the research problem by highlighting the nature of SL and briefly reviewing many of the South African SL and SMME research studies which have been conducted over the last two decades. This review made it clear that the need for a vibrant and growing SMME sector is being hampered by a number of challenges which SMME support programmes are struggling to address effectively, and that there is a lack of SL studies which consider the community experience, and particularly the nature and benefits of marketing-related SL programmes for SMMEs.

The next section in the chapter set out the research problem, which centres on the need to analyse empirically the value of the BSAC-SL programme for participating SMMEs over a five-year period

(2010-2014), in order to gain insights to improve the programme and increase its value for SMMEs. The rationale, significance, and expected outcomes of the research study constitute the next section in Chapter 1, which highlights the gap in our knowledge of SMME-oriented SL despite South Africa's great need for a vibrant SMME sector and the benefits which SL has for supporting SMMEs. It also explains how the insights emerging from the study could assist numerous stakeholders to improve the BSAC-SL programme to better serve the needs of local SMMEs. The chapter then outlines the aims and objectives of the research and the primary and secondary research questions, which centre on determining the value of the IMC-oriented BSAC-SL programme for participating SMMEs. Thereafter a brief literature review is provided to cover such topics as SL in business education, SL in marketing education, SL with small businesses, SMME marketing, SMME customer research, SMME marketing communication, and SMME IMC.

Section 1.8 visually represented the conceptual framework of the research study by highlighting the client-side programme evaluation nature of the study. Thereafter, section 1.9 outlined the research design and methodology, which can be summarised as a quantitative face-to-face interviewer-administered survey with 107 SMMEs that had participated in the programme between 2010 and 2014. The aim was to ascertain the value of the programme for SMMEs in terms of three criteria, namely, student-SMME outputs; student & SMME inputs; and SMME programme outcomes. The delineation of the research was the topic of the following section, which stressed the fact that only SMMEs that had participated in the SL programme between the years of 2010 and 2014 formed part of the study, and that the perceptions of students, academic staff, and service partners went beyond the scope of the study. Ethical issues associated with the study were outlined in the following section, itself followed by a brief structural outline of the study's sight chapters.

The final section discussed the importance of the study and highlighted how it revealed that SL can and should be seen as a successful SMME support mechanism in South Africa that deserves to be tested and implemented by other SL practitioners and researchers, in order to serve the growing needs of the SMME sector in South Africa.

CHAPTER TWO

SERVICE LEARNING

2.1 Introduction

This service learning (SL) literature review is divided into four main sections. First, SL is defined, its rationale is discussed, and its international context adumbrated. Thereafter, SL in South Africa is treated in the context of the transformation of higher education in the country. Later, the evaluation of SL is considered, with a focus on the perspectives of participating communities. Lastly, SL is placed within the context of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, with a special focus on the SL endeavours of the Marketing department and its second-year integrated marketing communication (IMC) SL programme called the Brand Shepherd Advertising Challenge (BSAC).

2.2 Introduction to service learning

2.2.1 Service learning defined

SL is an active teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with academic instruction and reflection. The goal is to meet identified community needs while also giving students an opportunity to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995:112). Stanton *et al.* (1999) describe SL as a form of experiential learning in which students receive academic credit for addressing human and community needs.

Figure 2.1, below, illustrates that as a form of community engagement, SL finds its significance at the intersection of teaching, service, and the community. Most definitions of SL point to this intersection: for example, according to Anderson *et al*. (2001:xi), service learning "involves intentionally linking service activities with the academic curriculum to address real community needs while students learn through active engagement and reflection."

Similarly, the South African Higher Education Quality Committee states that SL is"…applied learning which is directed at specific community needs and is integrated into an academic programme and curriculum. It could be credit-bearing and assessed, and may or may not take place in a work environment" (HEQC, 2006b:24). Finally, the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (NSLC, 2009) defines SL as: "…a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility and strengthen communities*."*

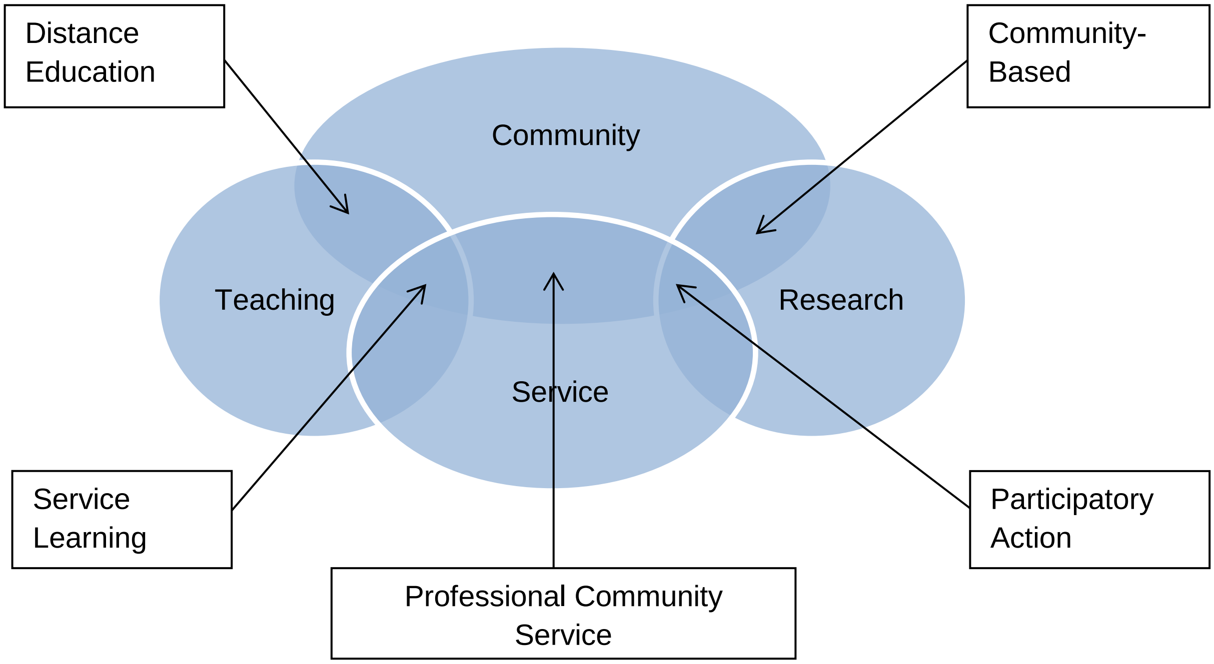

Figure 2.1: Types of community engagement

Source: Adapted from Bringle *et al.* (1999)

Although similar, SL is essentially different from community service. Furco (1996:5) points out that what sets SL apart from community service is that valuable (often academically-oriented) learning takes place while the service is being rendered. Thus it can be said that SL creates a reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationship between students and community partners (Osman & Castle, 2006:64; Konukman & Schneider, 2012; Johnson, 2016; Whitley *et al*., 2017; Lee *et al.*, 2018). It also has powerful learning consequences for other participating parties like academics and service providers (Mouton & Wilschut, 2005:118-119; Rutti *et al*., 2016; Molderez & Fonseca, 2018).

Therefore, in summary, SL can be said to:

- be a form of community engagement (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995:112);
- which uses experiential teaching and learning strategies (Stanton *et al.,* 1999; HEQC, 2006b:24);
- is integrated into an academic programme (HEQC, 2006b:24);
- can be assessed and is credit bearing (Stanton *et al.,* 1999; HEQC, 2006b:24);
- involves instruction and reflection (Anderson *et al*., 2001:xi; NSLC, 2009);
- is focused on specific community needs (Stanton *et al.,* 1999; Anderson *et al*., 2001:xi; HEQC, 2006b:24);
- facilitates personal, academic and vocational growth for students, as well as civic learning (NSLC, 2009);

- creates reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationships between students and community partners (Osman & Castle, 2006:64; Konukman & Schneider, 2012; Johnson, 2016; Whitley *et al*., 2017; Lee *et al.*, 2018); and
- provides benefits for other participating parties like academics and service agencies (Mouton & Wilschut, 2005:118-119; Rutti *et al*., 2016; Molderez & Fonseca, 2018).

2.2.2 Service learning rationale

Traditionally, a high value was placed on pure research and disciplinary knowledge in education. In recent decades this notion has been challenged by societal demands for accountability and relevance (O'Brien, 2005:70; Matzembacher *et al*., 2019:191). The implication of this has been that academic programmes have begun striving to produce graduates who are competitive individuals, and who are able to function effectively in an emerging global market-driven economy, while also being involved citizens who are able and willing to address local challenges (O'Brien, 2005:70; Matzembacher *et al*., 2019:191). SL has been implemented by many universities as a means of pursuing these new approaches to education.

Those who advocate SL argue that it is well placed to meet a myriad of social and educational demands on higher education. For example, it is founded in Deweyian ideas of linking knowledge and experience, reflection and action, individuals with society, and democracy with community (Hatcher, 1997:22-24). It also encourages a holistic approach to human development because it promotes practical, intellectual, ethical, and experiential growth (Bawden, 1999). It seeks mutually beneficial relationships by focusing equally on the development priorities of communities and the learning goals of students (Furco, 1996:6), and it appreciates the skills and knowledge of people outside the confines of mainstream academia (Plater, 1999).

2.3 International perspectives on social responsibility in higher education

A prominent trend in the new millennium has been the increase in the number of students entering higher education (HE) (this is especially true for developing countries like South Africa). Furthermore, when taking the Talloires Declaration (Tufts University, 2005) into consideration, it can be assumed that the number of students in HE will have doubled between 2005 and 2025.

The Talloires Declaration was signed on 17 September 2005 in the city of Talloires in France by numerous university representatives from around the world. The primary vision of the declaration was to champion a HE that used its expertise and resources in ways that would be of mutual benefit to students, academics, and the local community. The declaration supports a HE that values all groups within society and promotes an inclusive ethic of local collaboration that ultimately contributes to social transformation and development. With that, the members of the declaration vowed to be "dedicated to strengthening the civic role and social responsibility" of universities worldwide (Tufts University, 2005:1).

HE's primary focus has traditionally been teaching, learning, and research, a mission which serves and strengthens society at large by producing economically active citizens, a key ingredient in developing a society that is free of poverty and crime. For this reason, it is vitally important that institutions of higher learning instil a sense of social responsibility in their students, so that when they go out into the working world they are equipped to function as effective democratic citizens (Tufts University, 2005:1).

With SL as one of the primary strategies being used by universities to pursue this mandate, the question arises, "Is it working? Are universities effectively contributing to transformation?" This is a question that this study hopes to investigate in South Africa.

2.4 The transformation of higher education in South Africa

Community engagement forms an integral part of the White Paper on the Transformation of Higher Education (South Africa. National Department of Education, 1997a:9). The White Paper encourages institutions of higher learning to "demonstrate social responsibility … through making their expertise and infrastructure available to community service programmes." It goes on to say that students need to become active participants in social and economic development through community engagement programmes and therefore charges HE to promote, develop, and create awareness about social responsibility among students through community service programmes. Fundamentally, the White Paper posits that community service can be used as a mechanism to improve the quality of teaching, learning, and research by deepening a student's experiences through application of their academic curriculum (HEQC, 2006b:8-9).

The National Plan for Higher Education (South Africa. National Department of Education, 2001:5) believes that community service should be linked to the traditional HE practices of teaching, learning and research, and therefore encourages institutions of higher learning to prioritise their responsibility to the "regional and national needs for academic programmes, research and community services."

The Higher Education Qualifications Committee (HEQC) has felt so strongly about the responsibility of higher education institutions (HEIs) to their surrounding communities that it has incorporated community engagement and SL into its national quality assurance criteria. Therefore, in order to keep their accreditation and standards of quality assurance, HEIs must now incorporate knowledge-based community service into their teaching, learning and research practices (HEQC, 2006a:i).

2.5 Service learning in South Africa

In North America, SL has been implemented as a strategy for educational reform since the early 1970's (Stanton *et al*., 1999). Osman and Castle (2006) observe that it has long been viewed as a way for universities to promote social responsibility and democratic awareness.

In South Africa the implementation of SL has been increasing. For the most part, this has been due to government pressure on universities to become more responsive to the developmental needs of the local communities of which they form a part. Specifically, government has encouraged universities to form partnerships with other community agencies to address issues like poverty, unemployment, sickness, and crime (South Africa, National Department of Education, 1997a; 1997b; 2001).

The influence of SL in South Africa is certainly growing. It has been the focus of local research endeavours (Erasmus, 2003; O'Brien, 2005:66; Scholtz, 2018; du Toit *et al*., 2019); it has found mention in university policy documents (Nduna, 2005), disciplinary publications, and local conference presentations (Hlungwani, 2002; Naude, 2003); and it has even been included as one of three state-prescribed criteria for evaluating quality in South African academic programmes (CHE, 2004). In addition, a journal focusing on community engagement issues such as SL has been under consideration in South Africa (Preece, 2016:105).

2.5.1 South African service learning model

In 1999 the Joint Education Trust (JET) (with funding from the Kellogg and Ford Foundations) introduced the Community Higher Education Service Partnerships (CHESP) initiative, which aimed to encourage SL in South African higher education, monitor and evaluate the progress made, and collect data that could inform HE policy makers of the benefit of SL to students, academics, communities, and other stakeholders (HEQC, 2006a:ii; Lazarus *et al*., 2008:58). The CHESP developed a different SL model from the one predominantly used in America, namely, one that involved a "three-way partnership." The South African model has been expanded to include the involvement of a service partner at a campus level, and the involvement of the service sector at a module or course level (Mouton & Wildschut, 2005:117). Osman and Castle (2006) notes that key to this model is the development of partnerships between HEIs, communities, and the service sectors for the purpose of addressing national development priorities, such as developing historically disadvantaged communities. As a result, HEIs have been required to develop appropriate institutional strategies, policies, organisational structures, and accredited academic programmes to facilitate SL.

After analysing over 100 narrative reports by course convenors who implement SL in South Africa, it was found that there was no single generally accepted definition for SL. For this reason, JET laid out broad parameters of what constituted SL in South Africa, and provided the academic community with a "model" for SL in South Africa. This would help to ensure that those institutions seeking funding for SL programmes could plan effectively in order to meet the minimum criteria and qualify for funding (Mouton & Wildschut, 2005).

The CHESP Implementation Grant Strategy of 25 January 2001 states that each SL course should (Mouton & Wildschut, 2005):

- address some community development priority;
- integrate teaching (and learning), research, and service;
- be developed in partnership between the university (academic staff and students), the service sector, and the community (refer to Figure 2.2); and
- be credit-bearing and require that a minimum of 20% of the notional hours of the course be made up of community-based learning experiences.

The CHESP model of SL places strong emphasis on the partnership relationship of the three different stakeholders, as shown in Figure 2.2, below. As far as CHESP is concerned, it is such a triad/three-way partnership that results in optimal development and delivery of SL programmes.

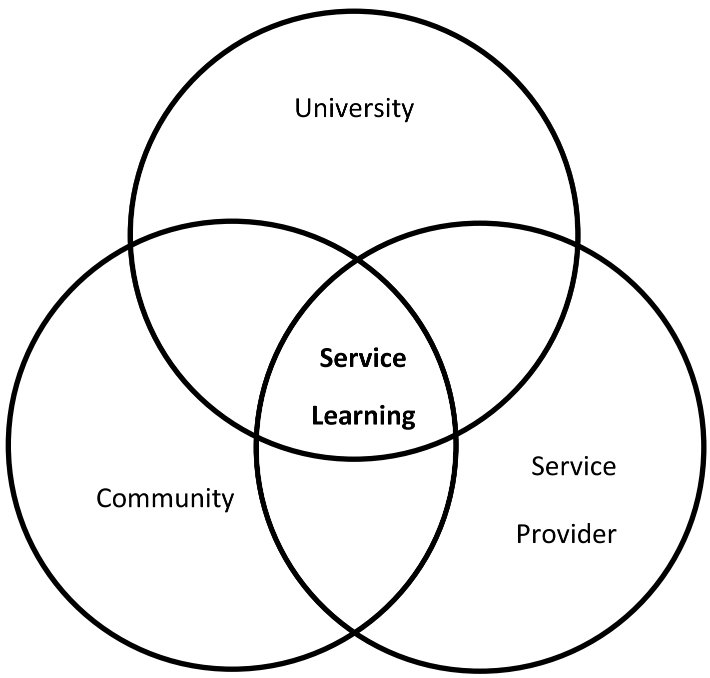

Figure 2.2 Triad service learning model: the CHESP model
Source: Adapted from Lazarus (2001); HEQC (2006b:93)

2.5.1.1 The university

The university is a critical element in the three-way partnership and includes both students and academic staff.

a. The students

Students are a crucial part of SL programmes as they are the primary service providers to participating communities. Students generally have the least power within the context of SL because they are often 'forced' to engage in SL in order to gain the needed credit towards completing their qualifications (Timur & Getz, 2008). Students are required to take the knowledge that they gain in class and apply it within the SL context for the benefit of the community. They also often see themselves as the key university representatives within the community and as responsible for managing the community's expectations (Longart *et al*., 2017:94). Although students often feel they have no choice but to participate in SL, it has been found that they experience numerous benefits from doing so.

b. The academic staff (instructors, teachers, lecturers, tutors)

Academic staff members include course instructors who often also function as programme coordinators, and tutors or mentors supporting SL initiatives. Academic staff members play a key role in facilitating SL initiatives by liaising with communities, service providers and students. They also play an important role in the design of programmes, collecting data during programmes, managing and monitoring programmes, as well as evaluating programmes. In addition, instructors link curriculum activities with the programme and support students with the training needed to serve communities effectively (Longart *et al*., 2017:95).

2.5.1.2 The service provider/ agency

Service providers (or service agencies) are usually in a position of power and can influence the outcomes of SL because they have resources and are perceived as legitimate stakeholders by the community (Longart *et al*., 2017:94). Service providers are generally not-for-profit or other private organisations which already serve the community in question or have a vested interest in engaging with the community. Service providers sometimes form the key link to the community and help direct and facilitate SL endeavours on the ground. In such cases students work with existing service providers to serve communities (Longart *et al*., 2017:94). In other cases, service providers simply support students with training, resources, or mentorship.

2.5.1.3 The community

The community is the stakeholder that is the direct beneficiary of the service. These stakeholders have different degrees of power, with some being able to greatly influence the activities of SL by being involved in the design, monitoring and evaluation of programmes, and others having very little influence or power due to not being included as a partner but rather seen as a means to a pedagogic or community engagement end (Longart *et al*., 2017:96). In most cases, communities participate in SL because they recognise potential benefits for themselves. Ultimately all SL should focus keenly on the needs of communities and include them in every step of the SL process as equal partners (Longart *et al*., 2017:96).

Considering the crucial role that communities play, and the challenges they sometimes face in SL programmes with regard to a lack of power, this study aimed to garner insights into their experiences in order to consider their perspectives and give them a greater level of power in the SL programme in question.

2.5.2 Quality assurance in service learning

In South Africa, the relationship between HEIs and society has changed since the country's democratic transition in the 1990s. HEIs have been encouraged to contribute more effectively to "the reconstruction and development of a society weakened by racial discrimination, political oppression and social inequity" (HEQC, 2006b:1). For this reason, the third White Paper on Higher Education implemented a host of policy changes in order to transform higher education into a system that could address the developmental needs of the new democracy. Certain aspects of the policy changes focused on creating a higher education system that would not only serve the needs of individuals desiring to reach their potential and support the skills needs of the country, but also serve the greater good of society and the needs of local communities (Department of Education, 1997a:11).

Implementation of the goals set out by the White Paper is underpinned by three key mechanisms, namely, planning, funding, and quality assurance. As a mechanism, quality assurance is designed to assure the government, civil society, and individuals that HEIs actively monitor, evaluate and improve the quality of their academic offerings (Department of Education, 1997a). The Higher Education Act (Republic of South Africa, 1997) states that quality assurance is the responsibility of the CHE and implemented by the HEQC. For this reason, the vision and mission of HEIs need to be aligned with the approach that the HEQC has to quality assurance. In addition, the policies, procedures, processes, and systems of HEIs need to facilitate this alignment.

Since 2001, the HEQC has worked on implementing a national system of quality assurance designed to facilitate (HEQC, 2006b:5):

- the effectiveness of internal institutional systems;
- the continuous improvement of all programmes and provisions; and
- the enhancement of institutional capacity to plan, act, and report on quality-related objectives and achievements.

A key aspect of the drive for quality promotion and capacity development was to strengthen institutional and systemic knowledge, skills and practices in quality assurance in such a way as to enable HEIs to develop "their own internal quality assurance mechanisms" (HEQC, 2006b:3).

As an area of new priority, SL was included in this development process. A number of good practice guides were developed to support universities in its design, implementation and evaluation. An area of particular importance was that of managing the quality of service. For this reason, the HEQC developed a *Good practice guide and self-evaluation instruments for managing the quality of service-learning*. The guide took its lead from the criteria set for institutional audits, which focused on three areas, namely, the importance of integrating SL into academic planning, supporting SL with adequate resources and skills development, and evaluating SL in order to gauge its impact on all stakeholders (HEQC, 2006a:11).

The HEQC also produced a quality cycle for SL which involves planning, implementing, evaluating and improvement (Figure 2.3, below).

Figure 2.3: The service learning quality cycle
Source: HEQC (2006b:152)

As can be seen in Figure 2.3, the quality assurance cycle is an ongoing process designed to improve SL programmes. With each iteration of the cycle, the lessons learnt through reviewing and evaluating the outputs and outcomes of the SL programme are used to make improvements before the next programme is planned and implemented. The monitoring process is on-going and ensures that each phase of the SL programme and quality assurance cycle is effectively managed.

The HEQC suggests the development of a strategy that can be used to monitor and evaluate the implementation of SL so that data can be gathered. Such data, they suggest, can then be used to evaluate the SL activities and make improvements where possible.

Evaluation occurs when a specific group makes judgements about the worth of a programme, activity or institution (CTP, 2004:48). It can involve evaluating the quality of an activity's conception, delivery, resourcing, or impact. Evaluation can take place as an external activity or as an internal activity with external support, and may be formative or summative in nature. According to the HEQC (2006b:153), evaluation is usually conducted by the SL coordinator or the quality assurance department.

The goal of the present study is to facilitate quality assurance in SL in the marketing department at CPUT in the manner set out by the HEQC. In particular, the study focuses on evaluating the value of the BSAC-SL programme for participating SMMEs in order to implement programme improvements and complete the quality cycle depicted in Figure 2.4.

2.6 Evaluating service learning

The effective implementation of SL involves successfully delivering the planned course components to the intended beneficiaries. By its very nature, SL has two primary intended beneficiaries, namely, the students and the community. There are also secondary beneficiaries, the academics involved, the service providers, and possibly even the university and other faculty members. The relationships between primary and secondary benefits are illustrated graphically in Figure 2.4, below.

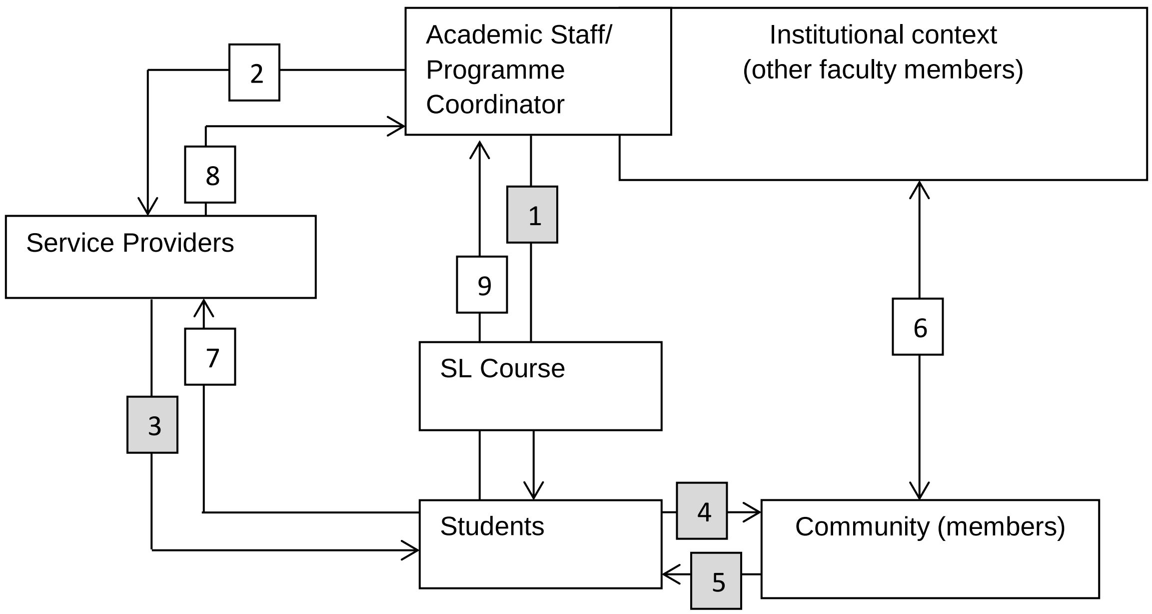

Figure 2.4: Relationship between primary and secondary service learning benefits
Source: Adapted from Mouton and Wilschut (2005:127)

In Figure 2.4 the relationships between the various constituencies are denoted by arrows. The grey number boxes denote primary beneficiary engagement and the white boxes secondary benefits. The following list describes each corresponding number in Figure 2.4 (Mouton & Wilschut, 2005:127):

1. Students receive academic instruction from their lecturer;
2. Academic staff engage with the service provider to develop and deliver the SL programme;
3. Students engage with the service provider (receiving additional training, work from their premises, go out into the field with their staff members, etc.);
4. Community receives a service from students (like business development, counselling, training, etc.);
5. The community members interact with the students and share their stories, lives, unique knowledge and skills;

6. Other faculty members gain indirect benefits through interaction with colleagues involved in the SL programme, and the community gains indirectly through feedback given via outreach forums and other mediating bodies;
7. Students give feedback to the service providers about time spent with community members;
8. Service providers give feedback to programme coordinators about their engagement with students and the logistics of the programme; and
9. Students give the lecturer feedback about their engagement with community members and service providers. They possibly also share their reflections on what they have learned and gained from the experience.

In a well-designed SL programme both primary and secondary benefits are intended, however, “the success or failure of a SL course should be measured in terms of whether the primary benefits have been achieved” (Mouton & Wilschut, 2005:128). Thus, when evaluating SL programmes, Mouton and Wilschut (2005) recommend the use of “conditionalities.” These they define as the factors and processes that constitute the necessary conditions for the delivery and outcomes of a course to be successful. Rossi et al*.* (2001) define these “conditionalities” within four different categories:

- *Appropriateness (course design):* how appropriate is the course in addressing the real problem at hand?
- *Implementation (course delivery):* how effective has the implementation of the course been (in relation to quality of delivery, adequate coverage of interventions, and standardisation)?
- *Sufficiency (course intensity):* how sufficient is the intervention to address the problem?
- *Receptiveness (course reception):* how receptive are the target groups to the intervention?

The authors show how the success or failure of SL programmes is typically determined within one or more of these four areas, and they encourage programme coordinators to consider the different challenges that each represents for course design and delivery.

As is recommended by Mouton and Wilschut (2005:128), the present study sought to determine – by measuring some of the conditionalities mentioned above – whether the primary benefits envisioned for the BSAC-SL programme were actually achieved. The evaluation of SL programmes will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

2.7 Service learning research

Internationally, SL has been situated within an academic context that encourages collaborative, participatory knowledge generation. In the South African academic environment, too, a shift in this direction has taken place. The idea is not merely that universities do “community service” as an added extra, but that serving the community happens within the scholarly contexts of higher learning (Mouton & Wilschut, 2005). The premise is that by integrating community service into academia, HEIs can contribute to the social and economic development of the country while simultaneously creating opportunities for the production of new knowledge in society.

Kraak (2000:2-12) notes that a profound paradigm shift is taking place. He posits that there is a move away from the hegemonic position of the elite systems and "expert" knowledge of the privileged to a much more open, inclusive and responsive system of knowledge production within the higher education context. He classifies this as Mode 2 (problem-solving) forms of knowledge production, "which involve many more players than university intellectuals, and which are trans-disciplinary and accountable to larger social and economic needs than is currently the case" (Kraak, 2000:9).

Erasmus (2005:4) further encourages the idea that SL should be seen as a means to help open HE to participatory, heterogeneous, and responsive forms of inquiry. Her twofold proposition is that "SL as a pedagogy is advanced through its integration with scholarly inquiry, and that both disciplinary knowledge production and the broader South African research agenda can be advanced through the philosophy, values, and practice of SL."

Fourie (2003:5) also emphasises the importance of integrating SL and research: "This [integrated] approach to community service is so powerful because it recognises and builds upon what is most distinctive about universities: scholarship and critical inquiry, where knowledge and truth and insight and understanding are pursued – without fear or favour – not for gain or foreseeable tangible reward […] but because it is our task."

This paradigm shift encourages the inclusion of community members in the university's approach to research. Erasmus (2005:11) emphasises this premise by stating that "community members possess and can generate valid knowledge about the social systems in which they participate and … should be full partners in defining, investigating and acting to meet the relevant challenges, and reflecting on service experiences and the actions for bringing about social change."

This study seeks to contribute to mode 2 forms of knowledge production by engaging in a responsive form of critical inquiry into SL that includes the voice of community members.

2.7.1 South African service learning research

A number of South African universities have successfully implemented SL, resulting in numerous benefits for them such as improved teaching and learning practices, academic development, research development, access to capacity building resources, networking, as well as monitoring and evaluating skills (Mouton & Wildschut, 2005; Erasmus, 2007; Lazarus, 2007; Ashu, 2017:32). A range of benefits for students have also been noted, such as a greater understanding of course content, the opportunity to apply theories in practice, personal and academic growth, improved soft skills, improved tolerance of those who are different, and the breaking down of stereotypes, to name a few (HEQC, 2006b; Lazarus, 2007; Lazarus *et al*., 2008; Holsapple, 2012; Harrop-Allin, 2016:8; Paphitis & Pearse, 2017:146; Hardin-Ramanan *et al.*, 2018:174; du Toit, 2019:23; Juaneda-Ayensa *et al*., 2019:167; Matzembacher *et al*., 2019:196).

In addition, research has outlined some factors that promote the effective implementation of SL, such as good relationships and existing links with partners, careful planning, financial support, strong and supportive coordination, assistance with logistics, highly motivated students, good relationships with other institutions, access to people with a good knowledge of SL, and international linkages (Lazarus, 2007:104).

Research has also identified aspects that constrain the success of SL, such as poor planning, limited financial support, hurried implementation, heavy workloads of students, partnership difficulties, political tensions in communities, lack of participation in partnership activities, logistical issues such as transport and timetabling, class sizes, cultural and language differences, and a lack of departmental commitment to SL (Lazarus, 2007:104).

In order to avoid some of these impediments to SL, Bender and Jordaan (2007:636) propose some criteria for success:

- service with the community must be meaningful and relevant to all stakeholders;
- enhanced academic learning must take place while the community is being served;
- structured opportunities for reflection should be provided to students;
- purposeful civic learning must intentionally prepare students for active community participation in a diverse and democratic society; and
- a scholarship of engagement should be promoted.

Other important factors include incentives for staff, students, and communities, adequate resources, and an enabling mechanism to support the implementation of SL, including staff, student, and community capacity development (Erasmus, 2007:111).

In order further to explore the nature of SL research in South Africa as well as where the current study fits into it, the following section will cover the last 15 years of SL research in South Africa in detail.

2.7.1.1 Fifteen year literature review of service learning research in South Africa

Since the inception of SL in South Africa there have been studies conducted on the theoretical perspectives, institutionalisation, management, implementation and impact of SL. As will be shown below, by a large margin, most research has focused on the value of SL for students, and on how to implement and improve SL programmes in order to enhance student learning. Table 2.1, below, highlights 50 of the most relevant articles assessing SL in South Africa in the years 2005–2019.

Table 2.1: 15 years of service learning programme evaluation research in South Africa (2005–2019)

Author and title	**University and department**	**Students and clients**	**Project details**	**Research details**
Palmer (2005) Service learning: relevance and meaning.	Central University of Technology, Bloemfontein.	Human Resource Management students worked with members of the Mangaung township community.	Students gave the community members training in human resources, career planning, entrepreneurship, management, and marketing.	Qualitative case study approach making use of pre and post questionnaires to evaluate student learning and growth.
Roos *et al*. (2005) Service learning in a community context: learners' perceptions of a challenging training paradigm.	Faculty of Humanities, North-West University, Potchefstroom, and the University of Pretoria.	Students worked in marginalised communities, children's homes, old-aged homes, a victim support centre, and a state hospital.	Psychology students helped children develop life skills through creative means, criminology students participated in crime awareness and taught self-defence techniques to the elderly, social work students improved the life skills of homeless children, various students hosted a recreational day for different community members, and communication pathology students engaged in projects aimed at preventing infant neglect and abuse.	A qualitative study made use of thematic content analysis of student journals to describe and understand students' self-reported perceptions of SL.
Bell (2007) Service-learning in LIS education: the case of the University of Natal's Inadi initiative.	University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus.	UKZN Information Studies students worked with the Emzamweni High School.	Students conducted research on the information needs of the school library and also provided learners with career information in the form of leaflets and pamphlets.	Participatory action research was carried out by post-graduate Diploma in Information Studies students and explored opportunities and challenges of SL for research, curriculum reform, and community development in South Africa.

Bender and Jordaan (2007) Student perceptions and attitudes about community service learning in the teacher training curriculum.	Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria.	N/A	N/A	A quantitative survey was used to measure the preliminary attitudes and perceptions of third-year teacher training students relating to SL before having participated in any SL programme.
Bheekie *et al*. (2007) Contextualising undergraduate pharmacy training in service learning at the University of the Western Cape.	School of Pharmacy, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town.	Students worked alongside pharmacists in the national primary health care system.	Students assisted pharmacists and completed a number of projects during the programme to help pharmacists and patients.	Case study approach using focus groups, written reports, on-site assessments, and feedback sessions, to assess the impact that the SL programme had on students and how SL can improve the professional competencies of students.
Holtzhausen *et al*. (2007) Using a mirror, microscope, and binoculars to reflect on a strategic agricultural management community service learning module.	Centre of Agricultural Management, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein.	B. Agric students worked at the Etsa Phapand peri-urban agricultural development project in Bloemspruit	Students needed to develop plans to improve the production, marketing, and financial management of two projects in the community.	Mixed method research employing pre and post questionnaires with students and a qualitative narrative report of the programme. Research was conducted to determine the nature and success of the programme and the learning gained by students.
Mitchell and Humphries (2007) From notions of charity to social justice in service learning: the complex experience of communities.	University of KwaZulu-Natal	Third year psychology students worked with local teachers and learners.	Students conducted life skills lessons once a week for 10-13 weeks.	Qualitative research making use of participatory data collection techniques, focus groups, and semi-structured interviews to investigate the experiences of two communities (learners and schools) of a SL programme.

Petersen (2007) Pre-service teacher education students' engagement with care and social justice in a service learning module.	Faculty of Education, University of Johannesburg.	N/A	N/A	A critical discourse analysis, content analysis, and ethnomethodological analysis of student portfolios to determine whether students portrayed any signs of social justice and care as a result of engaging with SL.
Pennefather (2008) "Rural" schools and universities: the use of partnerships as a teaching strategy in enhancing a positive response to rurality.	Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban.	Students worked in rural schools.	Students spend time with the learners, teachers, principal and key people in the community. Students prepared lessons and taught them to large classes, and worked with the classes of teachers when they were away. Students also produced resource packs for the teachers.	Mixed method research in which students' reflective journals, mentor reports, questionnaires, and focus group meetings were used to capture the views and experiences of the students and the rural teachers. Data was used to evaluate the programme in terms of its impact on all parties involved, and provided information for improvement.
Alexander and Khabanyane (2009) Service learning as a response to community/school engagement: towards a pedagogy of engagement.	Department of Comparative Education and Education Management, Faculty of Education, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein.	B.Ed. Honours students partnered with local schools.	Students developed education management interventions to help community partners improve their education programmes.	Students' reflective journals were analysed to determine the learning they gained through the SL programme.

Alperstein (2009) Getting closer to the community voice in curriculum development: an exploration of the possibilities.	Public Health and Primary Health Care, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Cape Town.	Fourth-year medical students' work with homeless shelters.	Students assisted the shelters with research and health promotion relating to the awareness of HIV/AIDS amongst staff and residents in the shelter.	Pilot research project to explore the experience of the community organisation and the potential for the community to contribute to curriculum development. Data was gathered by interviewing representatives of the community organisation.
De Villiers *et al*. (2009) The fostering of competence through an authentic integrated assessment strategy for wound care in nursing.	School of Nursing, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein.	Third year nursing students' work in local clinics and communities.	Students needed to identify patients with chronic wounds and implement a six-week wound care plan.	Three-year participatory action research with project coordinators, facilitators, students, and partners to analyse the effectiveness of the project and determine how to improve it with regard to its coordination and impact on students. Data was collected using observation, nominal group techniques, reflective discussions, reflection reports, module evaluations, and minutes of meetings.
Joubert and Hargreaves (2009) Reflective journals in service learning: a window into assessing learning and change in students' attitudes.	Department of Audiology, Occupational Therapy, and Speech and Language Pathology, University of KwaZulu-Natal.	Final year audiology, occupational therapy, and speech pathology students work in a semi-rural area close to Durban for one morning each week for eight months.	Students helped provide rehabilitation and support for the community health workers, mothers, and caregivers of severely disabled children.	Twelve randomly selected student reflective journals were analysed to determine the learning that students gained and ways in which their attitudes had changed during the programme.
Stears (2009) Incorporating service learning in science education: the impact on students and teachers.	Education Faculty, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban.	B.Ed students completing a Biology Education module worked with local school teachers.	Students developed an environmental policy in collaboration with local schools.	Questionnaires were used in combination with an analysis of students' reflective journals to gauge the benefits of the SL programme for students. In addition, questionnaires were used to determine the attitude of teachers to SL as well as their views on the engagement of the students.

Van Rensburg (2009) CSL, multi-literacies, and multimodalities.	Faculty of Education, University of Johannesburg.	Students worked with members of brain injury-centres, drug and alcohol rehabilitation centres, old age homes, nursery schools for abandoned children with HIV/AIDS, nature conservation projects, hearing disability schools, homes for homeless children, and family health services.	Students provided community members with writing services as a part of their Language Teaching programme. Students did such things as produce letters to donors, grant proposals, advertising pamphlets and posters, learning guides, and short magazine articles.	Critical discourse analysis of students' reflective journals, and the verbal and visual texts and artefacts that students generated through SL to assess the learning students gained through the SL programme.
Maistry and Ramdhani (2010) Managing tensions in a service-learning programme: some reflections.	Faculty of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban.	Students worked with disadvantaged orphans in Durban.	Students were required to work with the orphans to develop a business plan.	Qualitative research study using open-ended questionnaires, focus group interview, and semi-structured individual interviews to examine the experiences of pre-service teachers engaging in an entrepreneurship education programme. The study aimed to determine the complexities that emerge in SL programmes relating to tensions between service, learning, charity, empowerment, student autonomy, and faculty supervision.
Marais (2010) "Welcome to my side of town" – teaching and learning by means of service learning in translator education.	Humanities Faculty, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein.	First year BA Language Practice students worked with semi-literate and illiterate elderly people.	Students translated various texts for the elderly individuals, mostly from Afrikaans or Sesotho into English.	Qualitative case study research to analyse student experiences of an SL programme. Data generated includes researcher observations and student reflective journals.

Van Niekerk (2010) CSL: a credible instrument of learning? Findings from selected projects.	Department of Economics, Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein.	Economics students worked with a range of less fortunate and unschooled community members as well as school learners in Bloemfontein.	Students taught community members about various economic principles such as international economics, the micro-finance industry, and basic economics.	Three SL case studies were analysed to determine the value of SL to student learning and growth.
Bansilal and Mthembu (2011) The impact of a community service learning project on the professional growth of pre-service teachers.	Education Faculty, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban.	Students worked with school learners at three drop-in care centres in Durban.	Students provided extra science tuition to learners.	Qualitative interpretive research design employing a case study method to explore how participation in SL contributed to the learning of third- and fourth-year science student teachers. Data was generated from the field notes and reports of the lecturer, the reflections of students, as well as the summative reports and presentations of students.
Cameron *et al*. (2011) Medical student participation in community-based experiential learning: reflections from first exposure to making the diagnosis.	Department of Family Medicine, School of Health Systems and Public Health, University of Pretoria.	Medical students worked at urban and peri-urban clinics.	N/A	Qualitative research by analysing student reflection journals to assess the impact of their experience.
Coetzee *et al*. (2011) Students' reflections on the attainment of competencies in a community service-learning module in human movement science.	Department of Exercise and Sports Science, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein.	N/A	N/A	Multi-method strategies of data collection including a web search, nominal group technique, personal document analysis of structured and unstructured reflection and interviews, to assess the perceptions of students about their own learning from a SL module to determine whether SL is a suitable method of instruction for recreation students to acquire the competencies needed in their field.

Van Schalkwyk and Erasmus (2011) Community participation in higher education service learning.	Department of Clothing and Fashion, Central University of Technology (CUT), Bloemfontein.	Sewing technology students worked with unemployed members of the Rocklands community.	Students taught community members sewing skills.	Evaluation research making use of an empirical mixed methods case study, in which community members could share their perspectives on the long-term outcomes of the SL programme for them. Data was collected through participatory observation research and semi-structured interviews with 12 community members that took part in the SL programme.
Coetzee and Phillips (2012) 'Taking a lead in life': the fundamentals of criminology in practice.	Department of Criminology, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein.	Fourth-year criminology students visited the Bloemfontein Secure Care Centre to work with juvenile delinquents.	Students visited the centre weekly in order to present an adapted version of the "Take a Lead in Life" programme to youths who had had interactions with the law.	The nature of the SL programme is discussed with reference to how it relates to students, academic facilitators, service partners, and the target population. No methodology is discussed.
Mthembu and Mtshali (2013) Conceptualisation of knowledge construction in community service-learning programmes in nursing education.	Department of Nursing, University of KwaZulu Natal, Durban.	N/A	N/A	Qualitative approach based on a grounded theory research design, using structured interviews with 16 nursing educators from two nursing education institutions, and observation of students in a community setting, to explore nurse educators understanding of knowledge construction in SL, and analyse the strategies utilised by nurse educators in the process of knowledge construction in SL programmes.
Strydom and Tselepis (2013) Applying the design process to apparel prototype development: students' experiences of a community service-learning project.	Department of Consumer Science, University of Pretoria.	Consumer Science Clothing Management students worked with the Amajobjob social entrepreneurship hub, which works with the homeless, unemployed, and less fortunate.	Students developed a range of innovative products to expand and improve the African Happy Pants clothing line for Amajobjob.	A qualitative approach with a participatory action research design to describe and explore the experiences of a real-life SL project.

Boltman-Binkowski and Julie (2014) Evaluating blogging as a reflective strategy in a service-learning module for undergraduate nursing students.	School of Nursing, Faculty of Community and Health Science, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town.	N/A	N/A	Quantitative questionnaire completed by fourth-year undergraduate nursing students to evaluate whether blogging can enhance reflective learning and depth of reflection.
Du Plessis *et al*. (2014) Health-promoting schools as a service learning platform for teaching health-promotion skills.	Community Nutrition, Division of Human Nutrition, Department of Interdisciplinary Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Stellenbosch University, Cape Town.	Final-year BSc Dietetics students assisted local school health teams and worked with school learners.	Students helped by weighing and measuring Grade 1 learners to assess early indications of growth problems and then suggest appropriate actions. They also performed a health education and promotion session with Grade 1 learners as well as an advocacy presentation on the dietetics profession to secondary school learners.	Descriptive, cross-sectional study with dietetic students, teachers, school principals, from 10 primary schools in a low socio-economic community, making use of structured interviews with teachers and principals, and a thematic analysis of the structured reflective journals of students, to explore if SL can be used to teach dietetic students health promotion skills.
Gredley (2015) Learning through experience: making sense of students' learning through service learning.	University of Cape Town.	N/A	N/A	Small-scale, qualitative, interpretive study making use of in-depth interviews, reflective writing, and online blogs to track the learning journeys of students through an SL course in order to understand how it affected their values, knowledge, practice, and 'being.'
Julie (2015a) Piloting of a service-learning pedagogical model: students' perceptions of the gender-based violence service-learning module at a school of nursing in the Western Cape	School of Nursing, Faculty of Community and Health Science, University of the Western Cape (UWC), Cape Town.	N/A	N/A	Quantitative, exploratory, descriptive study using structured questionnaires with 162 final-year nursing students to determine their perceptions of SL.

Julie (2015b) The development of an implementation framework for service-learning during an undergraduate nursing programme in the Western Cape Province.	School of Nursing, Faculty of Community and Health Science, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town.	N/A	N/A	Mixed method approach using the first four phases of the design and development intervention research model of Rothman and Thomas to develop an SL implementation framework for the School of Nursing at UWC.
Julie *et al*. (2015) Cracking the nut of service-learning in nursing at a higher education institution.	School of Nursing, Faculty of Community and Health Science, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town.	N/A	N/A	A quantitative, exploratory, descriptive study using a structured questionnaire to determine the readiness of academics to embed SL into the curricula of their nursing programme.
Kruger *et al*. (2015) Implementing and managing community-based education and service learning in undergraduate health sciences programmes: students' perspectives.	Faculty of Health Sciences, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein.	N/A	N/A	Nominal group discussions used to identify topics to explore, followed by a questionnaire to all undergraduate health sciences students to assess their perceptions of community-based education (CBE) and SL in order to make recommendations for the improvement of CBE and SL.
Marks *et al*. (2015) The inextricable link between community engagement, community-based research and service learning: the case of an international collaboration.	Partnership between Virginia Commonwealth University in America, the University of KwaZulu Natal, and the Durban University of Technology.	Students from a variety of fields including community development, media and communications, public health, psychology, and physiotherapy undertook a photo-voice project with school-going youth.	The students came together with the high school learners to explore significant people, places and things in the Kenneth Gardens community, by taking photos and then developing relevant captions and narratives for them. The teams then presented their work at three different exhibitions.	The research outlines multi-layered learning benefits for community members, students, and academic staff members. Data was gathered from personal journals, web blogging, interviews, and debriefing focus groups.

McMillan (2015) '[We] have to be… interpreters to negotiate': service learning and boundary workers	School of Public Health and Family Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, and Department of Environmental and Geographic Sciences, Faculty of Science, University of Cape Town (UCT).	Fourth-year MBChB students doing primary health care, public health, and family medicine worked with members of under-resourced communities. Third-year human geography students worked with a community-based.	Students conducted epidemiological research within communities and then planned, designed and implemented a health promotion project within in the community. Students conducted research on the lives of people living in backyard shacks to collect data for the organisation to negotiate better housing with the City of Cape Town.	Qualitative case study approach using activity theory to explore the experiences of two educators playing the role of boundary workers.
Srinivas *et al*. (2015) Service-learning based environmental health promotion activities for pharmacy students: educating youth on the safe disposal of medicines and used sharps.	Faculty of Pharmacy, Rhodes University, Grahamstown.	Final-year pharmacy students worked with school students attending the 2014 National Science Festival in South Africa.	Students participated in an environmental health promotion activity at the 2014 National Science Festival by developing an interactive quiz, posters, models and leaflets to raise awareness of the safe disposal of medicines and used sharps.	Utilising a computer-based pre and post quiz with 413 participants to determine the effects of SL-based environmental health promotion on raising awareness about the safe disposal of medicines and used sharps
Akhurst *et al*. (2016) Embedding community-based service learning into psychology degrees at UKZN, South Africa	Psychology Department, University of KwaZulu Natal, Durban.	Third-year, honours and masters students worked with local schools and disadvantaged communities.	Students provided life skills lessons at local schools and conducted psycho-educational workshops in the community.	Qualitative interpretive research design making use of focus group interviews to gain an understanding of the experiences of students.
Harrop-Allin (2016) Higher education student learning beyond the classroom: findings from a community music service learning project in rural SA.	School of Arts, University of Witwatersrand in collaboration with Tshulu Trust NGO	Music students studying BMus degree worked with the HaMakuya community in rural Limpopo	Students engaged in music teaching, musical collaboration and cultural exchange.	Used focus groups and academic essays to research student learning.

Mitchell and Dabysing (2016) An exploration of students' experiences of a distance service-learning course in four African countries.	University of KwaZulu Natal, with students in Lesotho, Kenya, Malawi, and Zimbabwe.	Students studying Community-Based Work with Children and Youth via distance learning are placed with a local organisation for 6 weeks.	N/A	Qualitative interpretive approach making use of telephone interviews with students to determine the benefits and challenges experienced while participating in a distance SL programme in an African context.
Preece (2016) Negotiating service learning through community engagement: adaptive leadership, knowledge, dialogue and power.	Faculty of Education of the University of the Free State and the Education and Politics departments in the College of Humanities at UKZN.	Third-year education and development students and fourth-year media studies honours students.	Programmes included an early childhood development project, publicity material for a disability advocacy NGO, and a national reading club campaign in collaboration with a local NGO.	A multiple comparative case study approach using in-depth interviews to analyse power relations, knowledge, and ownership over decision making between the various stakeholders in the SL programmes.
Wium and du Plessis (2016) The usefulness of a tool to assess reflection in a service-learning experience	School of Health Care Sciences, Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University, Pretoria.	N/A	N/A	Retrospective study using document review through collecting qualitative data from the reflection journals that students had previously completed to determine the usefulness of reflective journals as an assessment tool.
Akhurst (2017) Student experiences of community-based service learning during masters' level training, as related to critical community psychology practice	Psychology department, Rhodes University, Grahamstown.	Trainee masters level psychologists in both clinical and counselling programmes work in pairs to help a range of clients in underprivileged areas.	Students undertook a 12-week SL project in pairs to assist people with disabilities, children with severe impairments, educators in under resourced rural schools, staff and parents at a care and development centre in an impoverished area, educators in a local primary school serving the disadvantaged, and members of an elderly day-centre.	A qualitative study to investigate the reflections of psychology students regarding their service learning project work to determine how SL is experienced by the students in relation to community psychology practice.

Ashu (2017) Service-learning implementation within one faculty at a South African higher education institution.	Walter Sisulu University.	N/A	N/A	A qualitative single case study research methodology making use of semi-structured interviews and observation to determine the understanding that academic lecturers have of SL and their SL practices.
Ebrahim and Julie (2017) Developing a service-learning module for oral health: a needs assessment	Dental Therapy and Oral Hygiene Department, School of Oral Health Sciences, Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University, Pretoria.	N/A	N/A	Needs assessment research making use of a quantitative questionnaire and qualitative focus group with academics involved in curriculum development and students with exposure to the community, to determine the need for an SL module in the curriculum.
Kwenda (2017) Engaging with communities: student-teachers' experiences working at child and youth care centres	Faculty of Education, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town.	Fourth-year student teachers worked at child and youth care centres.	Education students volunteered their time and subject knowledge at child and youth care centres (CYCCs) by assisting children with study and homework and staff with centre activities.	Qualitative case study using reflective journals and project reports to determine the experiences of 138 student teachers while working with children and youths in Cape Town.
Kaiser (2017) Surviving the multilingual jungle: a collaboration between pre-service language teachers and in-service content teachers to promote academic literacy	English Department, Faculty of Education Sciences, North West University.	B.Ed. Honours students worked with school learners to improve their language competencies.	N/A	Qualitative research employing a multiple case study approach and using semi-structured individual interviews, focus group interviews, observation data, and reflective journals and narratives to determine what the pre-service teachers learnt from the service learning experience.

Mampane and Huddle (2017) Assessing the outcomes of school-based partnership resilience intervention	Department of Education Psychology, Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria.	Postgraduate education psychology students worked with Grade 9 learners and teachers.	Students offered career and educational-psychology-related support to learners and teachers in rural schools in the Mpumalanga-Swaziland area.	A mixed method approach making use of quantitative document sampling of learner results and qualitative interviews with teachers to determine the effects of a resilience intervention educational psychology SL programme on the academic performance of learners in rural schools.
Paphitis and Pearse (2017) Developing and implementing a service-learning course in an MBA programme: critical perspectives from students.	Rhodes University Business School, Grahamstown.	MBA students partnered with small businesses that were being monitored by the Assumption Development Centre (ADC)	Students undertook organisational diagnoses of businesses and submitted reports with recommendations of how they could further develop themselves. Students then prepared and presented training to the businesses based on their needs.	A formative evaluation of the SL programme using qualitative thematic analysis of documents from the programme, including teaching materials, students assessment tasks and course evaluations and reflections from students, to determine the impact of the programme on students.
Petersen and Petker (2017) Teacher education students' struggles with group work in service learning	Department of Childhood Education, University of Johannesburg.	Foundation phase teaching students provided service to learners at a laboratory school in Soweto.	Students take part in three years of SL and complete different service assignments each year, such as planning and executing an event, facilitating an anti-bullying campaign, engaging learners with children's literature and storytelling, and providing other services to the wider Soweto schooling sector.	A qualitative research design making use of reflective journals, photographs, video recordings, and a questionnaire to investigate students' accounts of their experiences or struggles with group work during the SL projects. In addition a cross section of students were surveyed over three years of SL engagement to determine the value of the incremental SL model on the learning and development of students over time (i.e. where students engage in deeper levels of SL every year with the same community over the course of their studies).

Westraadt (2018) Service learning through Art Education.	Faculty of Education, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town.	Bachelor of Education students worked with children from a local children's home.	Children visited the university weekly in order to be taught art by students.	A descriptive case study was conducted to determine the contribution of the SL programme to the development of participating learners and to the learning of students. Data collection methods included informal interviews with participating children, discussion with caregivers of children, field notes of recorded observations of the children, examples of work completed by children, student evaluations and interviews upon completion of the programme.
Mapukata *et al*. (2019) Final-year medical students' rating of service-learning activities during an integrated primary care block.	Department of Family Medicine and Primary Care, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg	Final-year medical students are placed in primary healthcare facilities for 6 weeks.	Students consulted with community members and offered medical services.	A cross sectional descriptive study with 245 final-year medical students to assess the personal and educational value to them of service learning activities.

In order to make sense of Table 2.1, a number of factors have been extracted and summarised in the form of bar charts, below.

a. Research objectives

In terms of the research objectives, Figure 2.5 reveals that most studies (54%) sought to determine how SL affected students' perceptions and learning (Palmer, 2005; Roos *et al*., 2005; Bender & Jordaan, 2007; Bheekie *et al*., 2007; Holtzhausen *et al*., 2007; Petersen, 2007; Pennefather, 2008; Alexander & Khabanyane, 2009; De Villiers *et al*., 2009; Stears, 2009; Van Rensburg, 2009; Maistry & Ramdhani, 2010; Marais, 2010; Van Niekerk, 2010; Bansilal & Mthembu, 2011; Cameron *et al*., 2011; Coetzee *et al*., 2011; Boltman-Binkowski & Julie, 2014; Du Plessis *et al*., 2014; Gredley, 2015; Julie, 2015a; Kruger *et al*., 2015; Marks *et al*., 2015; Akhurst *et al*., 2016; Harrop-Allin, 2016; Mitchell & Dabysing, 2016; Preece, 2016; Akhurst, 2017; Kwenda, 2017; Kaiser, 2017; Petersen & Petker, 2017; Westraadt, 2018; Mapukata *et al*., 2019).

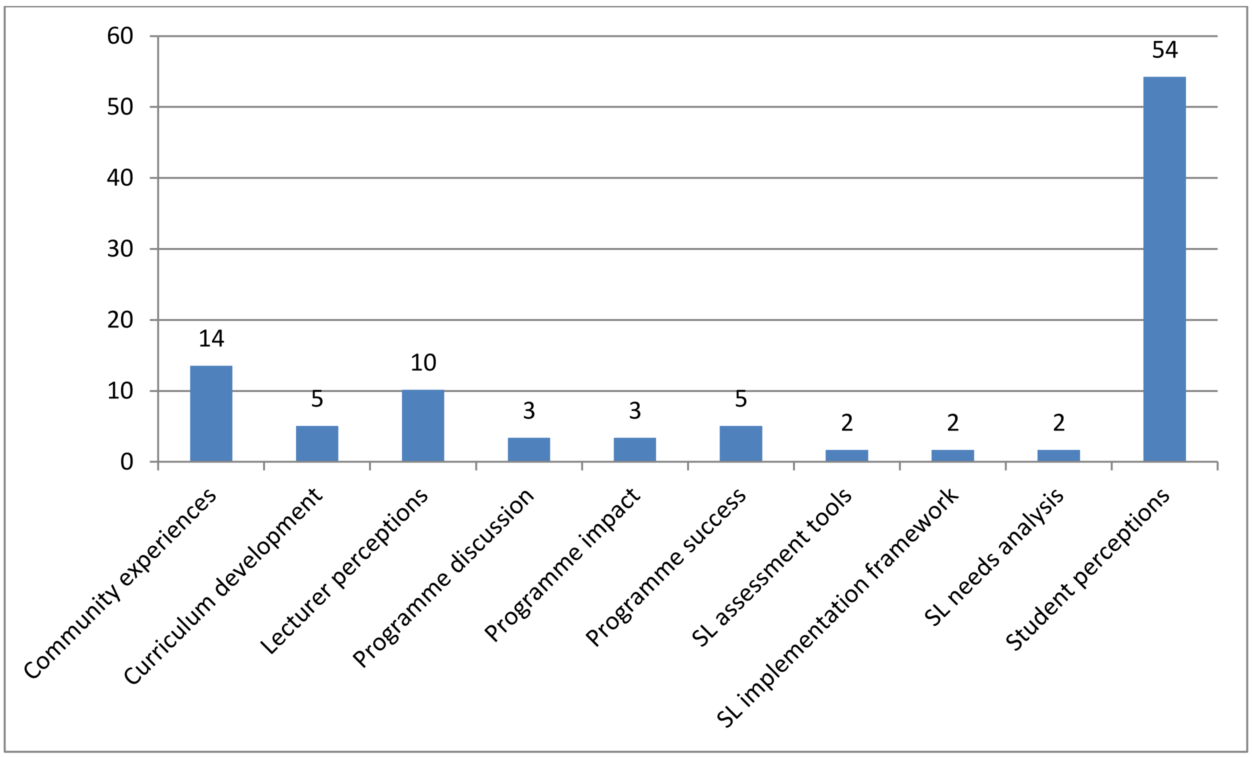

Figure 2.5: Research objectives of South African service learning studies (2005-2019)

Some studies (14%) did consider the experiences of the community (Alperstein, 2007; Mitchell & Humphries, 2007; Pennefather, 2008; Stears, 2009; Van Schalkwyk & Erasmus, 2011; Marks *et al*., 2015; Preece, 2016; Westraadt, 2018) or the experience, understanding, and implementation readiness of lecturers (10%) (Mthembu & Mtshali, 2013; Julie *et al*., 2015; Marks *et al*., 2015;

McMillan, 2015; Preece, 2016; Ashu, 2017). Only a handful considered such things as curriculum development (5%) (Alperstein, 2007; Bell, 2007; Ebrahim & Julie, 2017), programme discussions (3%) (Coetzee & Phillips, 2012; Strydom & Tselepis, 2013); programme impact (3%) (Srinivas *et al*., 2015; Mampane & Huddle, 2017); and programme success (5%) (Holtzhausen *et al*., 2007; Pennefather, 2008; De Villiers *et al*., 2009). Only a very small percentage of studies focused on SL assessment tools (2%) (Wium & Du Plessis, 2016); a SL implementation framework (2%) (Julie, 2015b), and an SL needs analysis (Ebrahim & Julie, 2017).

b. Methodology

As can be seen in Figure 2.6, below, the predominant methodologies used include qualitative case studies (36%) (Palmer, 2005; Roos *et al*., 2005; Bheekie *et al*., 2007; Mitchell & Humphries, 2007; Maistry & Ramdhani, 2010; Marais, 2010; Van Niekerk, 2010; Bansilal & Mthembu, 2011; Van Schalkwyk & Erasmus, 2011; McMillan, 2015; Preece, 2016; Ashu, 2017; Kwenda, 2017; Kaiser, 2017; Westraadt, 2018); followed by other qualitative interpretive designs (23%) (Mthembu & Mtshali, 2013; Strydom & Tselepis, 2013; Gredley, 2015; Julie, 2015a; Akhurst *et al*., 2016; Mitchell & Dabysing, 2016; Akhurst, 2017; Paphitis & Pearse, 2017; Petersen & Petker, 2017); and mixed method research (18%) (Holtzhausen *et al*., 2007; Pennefather, 2008; Coetzee *et al*., 2011; Van Schalkwyk & Erasmus, 2011; Julie, 2015b; Ebrahim & Julie, 2017; Mampane & Huddle, 2017).

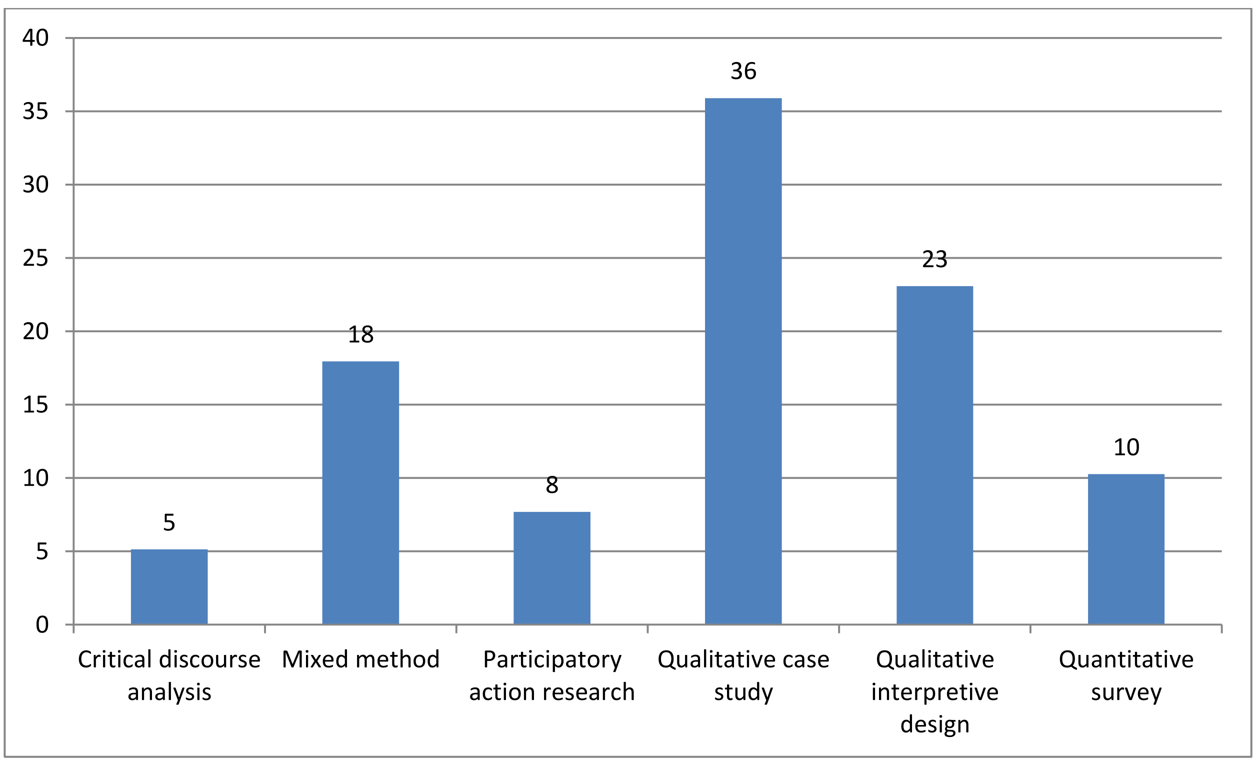

Figure 2.6: Methodologies of South African service learning research studies (2005-2019)

Lesser used methodologies include quantitative surveys (10%) (Bender & Jordaan, 2007; Boltman-Binkowski & Julie, 2014; Julie *et al*., 2015; Mapukata *et al*., 2019); participatory action research (8%) (Bell, 2007; De Villiers *et al*., 2009; Strydom & Tselepis, 2013), and critical discourse analysis (5%) (Petersen, 2007; Van Rensburg, 2009).

c. Data collection

In terms of data collection techniques, Figure 2.7 reveals that many researchers made use of students' reflection journals (29%) (Roos *et al*., 2005; Petersen, 2007; Pennefather, 2008; Alexander & Khabanyane, 2009; De Villiers *et al*., 2009; Joubert & Hargreaves, 2009; Joubert & Hargreaves, 2009; Stears, 2009; Van Rensburg, 2009; Marais, 2010; Bansilal & Mthembu, 2011; Cameron *et al*., 2011; Coetzee *et al*., 2011; Du Plessis *et al*., 2014; Gredley, 2015; Marks *et al*., 2015; Wium & Du Plessis, 2016; Kwenda, 2017; Kaiser, 2017; Paphitis & Pearse, 2017; Petersen & Petker, 2017; Westraadt, 2018), and in-depth interviews (20%) (Alperstein, 2007; Mitchell & Humphries, 2007; Maistry & Ramdhani, 2010; Coetzee *et al*., 2011; Van Schalkwyk & Erasmus, 2011; Mthembu & Mtshali, 2013; Du Plessis *et al*., 2014; Gredley, 2015; Marks *et al*., 2015; Mitchell & Dabysing, 2016; Preece, 2016; Ashu, 2017; Kaiser, 2017; Mampane & Huddle, 2017; Westraadt, 2018).

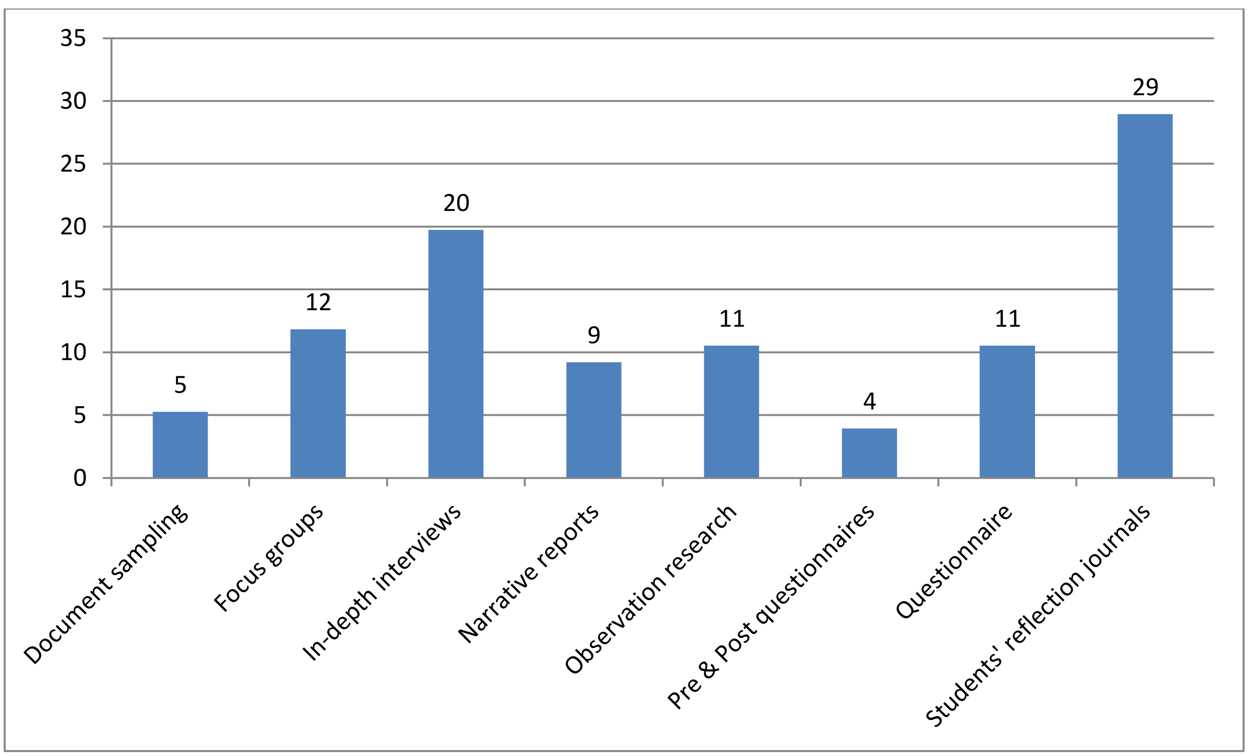

Figure 2.7: Data collection techniques of South African service learning research studies (2005-2019)

Others made use of focus groups (12%) (Bheekie *et al*., 2007; Mitchell & Humphries, 2007; Pennefather, 2008; Maistry & Ramdhani, 2010; Marks *et al*., 2015; Akhurst *et al*., 2016; Harrop-Allin, 2016; Ebrahim & Julie, 2017; Kaiser, 2017); observation (11%) (Bheekie *et al*., 2007; De Villiers *et al*., 2009; Marais, 2010; Van Schalkwyk & Erasmus, 2011; Mthembu & Mtshali, 2013; Ashu, 2017; Kaiser, 2017; Westraadt, 2018); questionnaires (11%) (Stears, 2009; Maistry & Ramdhani, 2010; Julie, 2015a; Julie *et al*., 2015; Kruger *et al*., 2015; Ebrahim & Julie, 2017; Petersen & Petker, 2017; Mapukata *et al*., 2019); and narrative reports (9%) (Bheekie *et al*., 2007; Holtzhausen *et al*., 2007; Pennefather, 2008; De Villiers *et al*., 2009; Bansilal & Mthembu, 2011; Kaiser, 2017; Westraadt, 2018).

Only a small number made use of document sampling (5%) (De Villiers *et al*., 2009; Mampane & Huddle, 2017; Paphitis & Pearse, 2017; Petersen & Petker, 2017) and pre and post questionnaires (4%) (Palmer, 2005; Holtzhausen *et al*., 2007; Srinivas *et al*., 2015).

d. Universities

As can be seen in Figure 2.8, SL programmes at a number of different universities in South Africa have been studied, with a large percentage being from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) (23%) (Bell, 2007; Mitchell & Humphries, 2007; Pennefather, 2008; Joubert & Hargreaves, 2009; Stears, 2009; Maistry & Ramdhani, 2010; Bansilal & Mthembu, 2011; Mthembu & Mtshali, 2013; Marks *et al*., 2015; Akhurst *et al*., 2016; Mitchell & Dabysing, 2016; Preece, 2016); and the University of the Free State (UFS) (17%) (Holtzhausen *et al*., 2007; Alexander & Khabanyane, 2009; De Villiers *et al*., 2009; Marais, 2010; Van Niekerk, 2010; Coetzee *et al*., 2011; Coetzee & Phillips, 2012; Kruger *et al*., 2015; Preece, 2016).

Other university SL programmes that have been studied to a moderate extent include the University of Pretoria (UP) (10%) (Bender & Jordaan, 2007; Cameron *et al*., 2011; Strydom & Tselepis, 2013; Wium & Du Plessis, 2016; Mampane & Huddle, 2017), the University of the Western Cape (UWC) (10%) (Bheekie *et al*., 2007; Boltman-Binkowski & Julie, 2014; Julie, 2015a; Julie, 2015b; Julie *et al*., 2015), Rhodes University (RU) (6%) (Srinivas *et al*., 2015; Akhurst, 2017; Paphitis & Pearse, 2017), the University of Johannesburg (UJ) (6%) (Petersen, 2007; Van Rensburg, 2009; Petersen & Petker, 2017) and the University of Cape Town (UCT) (6%) (Alperstein, 2007; Gredley, 2015; McMillan, 2015).

Universities that have produced fewer studies of SL programmes include the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) (4%) (Kwenda, 2017; Westraadt, 2018), the Central University of Technology (CUT) (4%) (Palmer, 2005; Van Schalkwyk & Erasmus, 2011), North West University (NWU) (4%) (Roos *et al*., 2005; Kaiser, 2017), the University of Witwatersrand (Wits) (4%) (Harrop-Allin, 2016; Mapukata *et al*., 2019), Durban University of Technology (DUT) (2%) (Marks *et al*., 2015), Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) (2%) (Ebrahim & Julie, 2017), Stellenbosch University (SU) (2%) (Du Plessis *et al*., 2014), and Walter Sisulu University (WSU) (2%) (Ashu, 2017).

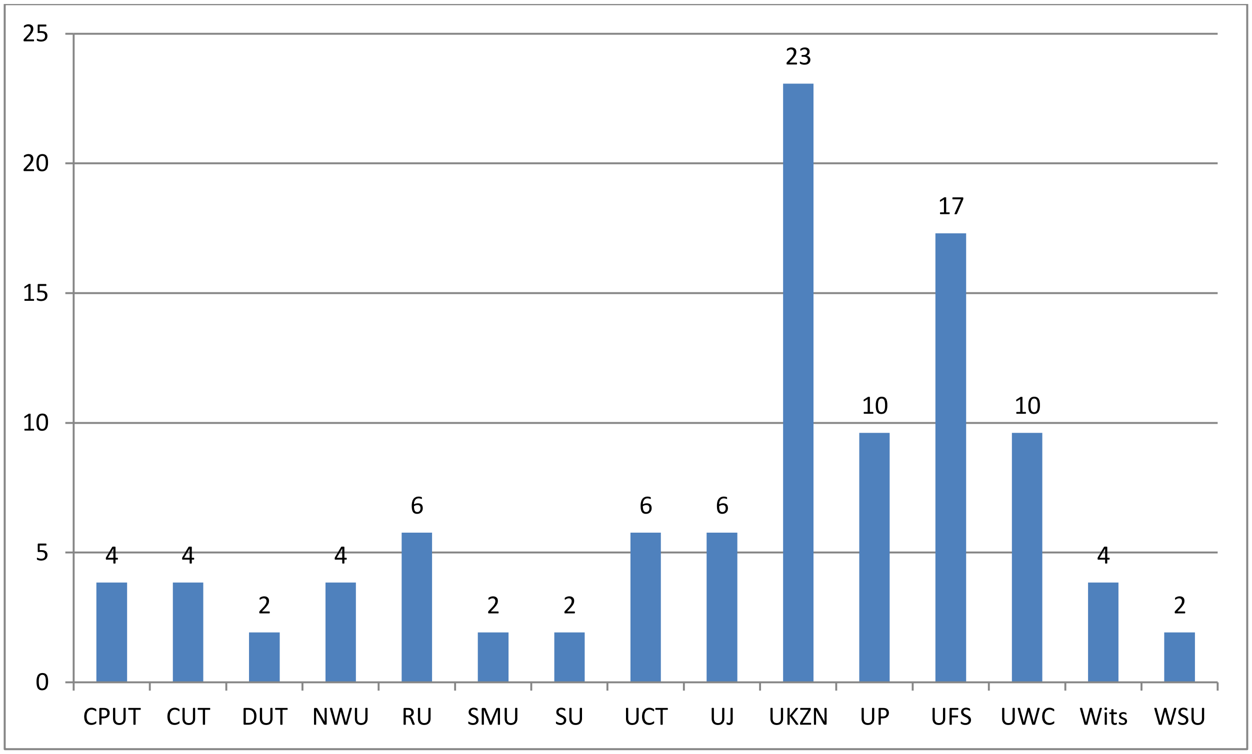

Figure 2.8 University service learning programmes studied in South Africa (2005-2019)

e. Academic field

With regard to academic fields, Figure 2.9 shows that most SL programmes that were studied were in the field of health (38%) (Alperstein, 2007; Bheekie *et al*., 2007; De Villiers *et al*., 2009; Joubert & Hargreaves, 2009; Cameron *et al*., 2011; Coetzee *et al*., 2011; Mthembu & Mtshali, 2013; Boltman-Binkowski & Julie, 2014; Du Plessis *et al*., 2014; Julie, 2015a; Julie, 2015b; Julie *et al*., 2015; Kruger *et al*., 2015; Marks *et al*., 2015; McMillan, 2015; Srinivas *et al*., 2015; Wium & Du Plessis, 2016; Ebrahim & Julie, 2017; Mapukata *et al*., 2019) and education (28%) (Bender & Jordaan, 2007; Petersen, 2007; Pennefather, 2008; Alexander & Khabanyane, 2009; Stears, 2009; Van Rensburg, 2009; Maistry & Ramdhani, 2010; Bansilal & Mthembu, 2011; Preece, 2016; Kwenda, 2017; Kaiser, 2017; Mampane & Huddle, 2017; Petersen & Petker, 2017; Westraadt, 2018).

Other notable fields include humanities (14%) (Roos *et al*., 2005; Mitchell & Humphries, 2007; Marais, 2010; Marks *et al*., 2015; Preece, 2016; Akhurst *et al*., 2016; Akhurst, 2017), and business and management (10%) (Palmber, 2006; Bell, 2007; Van Niekerk, 2010; Marks *et al*., 2015; Paphitis & Pearse, 2017).

Rare fields include agriculture (2%) (Holtzhausen *et al*., 2007) (2%), the arts (2%) (Harrop-Allin, 2016), design (2%) (Strydom & Tselepis, 2013), law (2%) (Coetzee & Phillips, 2012) (2%), and science (2%) (McMillan, 2015).

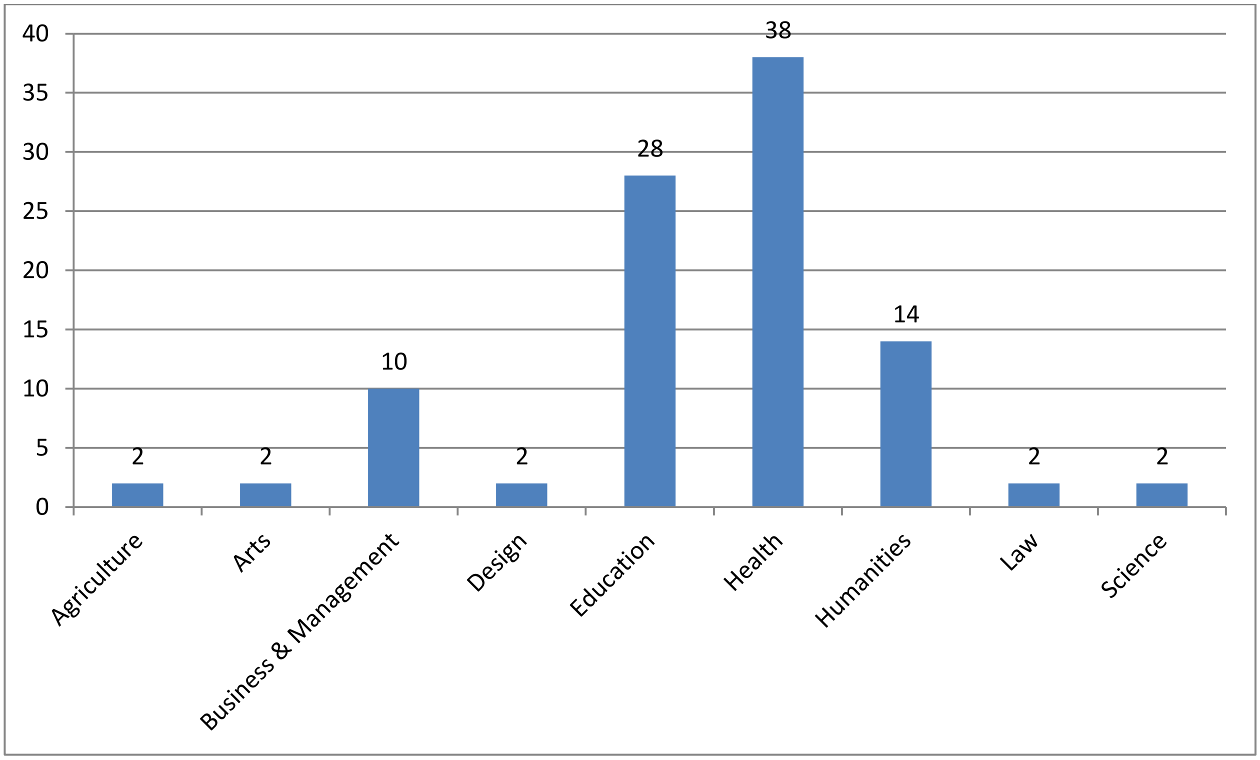

Figure 2.9: Academic fields studied by service learning research in South Africa (2005-2019)

f. Service

Figure 2.10 shows that as far as the types of service provided to communities by students are concerned, many engaged in teaching (19%) (Pennefather, 2008; Stears, 2009; Bansilal & Mthembu, 2011; Kwenda, 2017; Kaiser, 2017; Westraadt, 2018), health care (13%) (Bheekie *et al*., 2007; De Villiers *et al*., 2009; Joubert & Hargreaves, 2009; Du Plessis *et al*., 2014), life skills training (13%) (Roos *et al*., 2005; Mitchell & Humphries, 2007; Coetzee & Phillips, 2012; Akhurst *et al*., 2016), planning (13%) (Holtzhausen *et al*., 2007; Alexander & Khabanyane, 2009; Maistry & Ramdhani, 2010; Petersen & Petker, 2017), and campaigning (13%) (Alperstein, 2007; McMillan, 2015; Srinivas *et al*., 2015; Petersen & Petker, 2017).

Some students offered career guidance (6%) (Bell, 2007; Mampane & Huddle, 2017), or writing (6%) (Van Rensburg, 2009; Preece, 2016) as a service, and others engaged in collaborative projects (6%) (Marks *et al*., 2015; Preece, 2016).

A small number of students offered analysis & recommendations (3%) (Paphitis & Pearse, 2017), economics training (3%) (Van Niekerk, 2010), entrepreneurship training (3%) (Palmer, 2005), product development and design (3%) (Strydom & Tselepis, 2013), research (3%) (McMillan, 2015), therapy (3%) (Akhurst, 2017), and translation services (3%) (Marais, 2010).

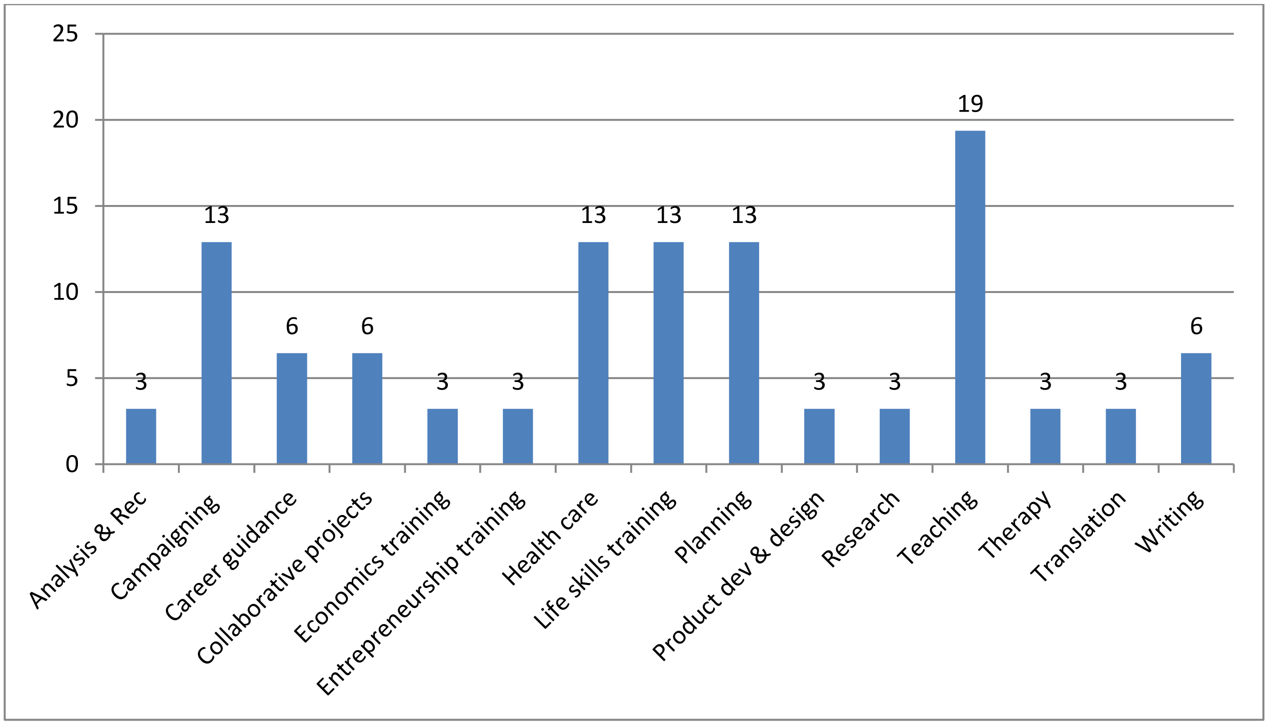

Figure 2.10: Services rendered in service learning research in South Africa (2005-2019)

g. Community

Finally, in terms of the community groups served by students, Figure 2.11 reveals that many served the needs of schools (25%) (Bell, 2007; Mitchell & Humphries, 2007; Pennefather, 2008; Alexander & Khabanyane, 2009; Stears, 2009; Van Rensburg, 2009; Bansilal & Mthembu, 2011; Du Plessis *et al*., 2014; Akhurst *et al*., 2016; Akhurst, 2017; Mampane & Huddle, 2017; Petersen & Petker, 2017), children or scholars (21%) (Roos *et al*., 2005; Joubert & Hargreaves, 2009; Van Rensburg, 2009; Van Niekerk, 2010; Marks *et al*., 2015; Srinivas *et al*., 2015; Preece, 2016; Akhurst, 2017; Kwenda, 2017; Mampane & Huddle, 2017), rural or disadvantaged communities (15%) (Palmer, 2005; Holtzhausen *et al*., 2007; Van Niekerk, 2010; McMillan, 2015; Akhurst *et al*., 2016; Harrop-Allin, 2016; Akhurst, 2017), or helped patients and health care workers at local clinics (13%) (Bheekie *et al*., 2007; De Villiers *et al*., 2009; Joubert & Hargreaves, 2009; Van Rensburg, 2009; Cameron *et al*., 2011; Mapukata *et al*., 2019).

Some students also serviced the needs of the elderly (6%) (Van Rensburg, 2009; Marais, 2010; Akhurst, 2017), homeless and unemployed (6%) (Alperstein, 2007; Van Rensburg, 2009; Strydom & Tselepis, 2013), orphans (4%) (Maistry & Ramdhani, 2010; Westraadt, 2018), community farmers (2%) (Holtzhausen *et al*., 2007), those in need of drug and alcohol rehabilitation (2%) (Van Rensburg, 2009), juvenile delinquents (2%) (Coetzee & Phillips, 2012) a local community organisation (4%) (Mitchell & Dabysing, 2016), and small businesses (6%) (Mokoena & Spencer, 2017; Paphitis & Pearse, 2017; Scholtz, 2018).

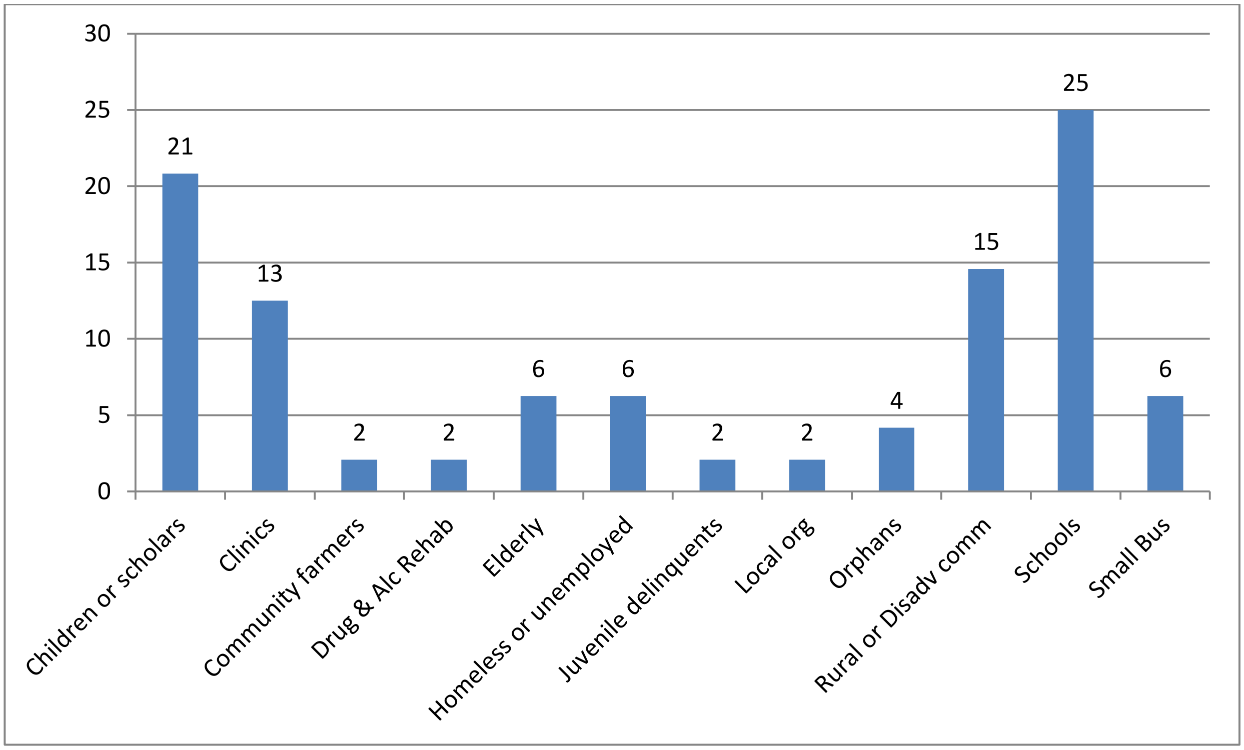

Figure 2.11: Communities served in service learning research in South Africa (2005-2019)

Besides research covering the evaluation of SL programmes, a number of other important SL studies, which fell outside the scope of Table 2.1, also need to be mentioned. These studies include a consideration of institutional models to implement SL (Castle & Osman, 2003); the way in which the legacies of apartheid influence the success of SL in South Africa (Mahlomaholo & Matobako, 2004); the use of mentoring strategies to improve SL (Van Wyk & Daniels, 2004); a comparison of the various forms of community engagement and an exploration of the role of SL in the curriculum (Witbooi, 2004); a discussion of the similarities and dissimilarities between SL and experiential learning as forms of experiential education (Snyman, 2004); an analysis of SL practices to consider theoretical framework shortcomings, potential real-world tensions, implications for SL in higher education in South Africa, and issues for future research (Mitchell & Rautenbach, 2005); an analysis of the tools and processes used to research the institutionalisation of SL at a local university (Mitchell *et al*., 2005); how action research can be used to improve SL (Seale *et al*., 2005); an exploration of possible SL opportunities within a specific programme at a local university (Aghdasi & Kaye, 2005); knowledge sharing and the development of SL champions in South Africa (Venter *et al*., 2006); exploration of the complex relationships between the SL office and other existing structures within and outside of the university (Nduna, 2006); a discussion about the way that critical education theory can illuminate and expose imbalances and gaps in mutuality, partnership, and policy in SL (Osman & Castle, 2006); the implications of civic engagement and SL for higher education in America and South Africa (Bringle &

Hatcher, 2007); the perceptions of university staff regarding the lack of institutional support for SL (Erasmus, 2007); a conceptual alternative to cooperative education, and directives towards the structural development and management of SL in universities of technology (Wessels & Jacobsz, 2007); a review of the theoretical roots of SL (Le Grange, 2007); a Dewey and Nyerere-informed comparative analysis between SL in the United States and South Africa (Hatcher & Erasmus, 2008); the chronicling of a faculty's journey into SL (Petersen *et al*., 2008); the use of design-based research principles to refine a SL curriculum (Petersen & Henning, 2010); community development as an approach to SL in South Africa (Netshandama, 2010); the institutionalisation of service learning at South African institutions (Swanepoel & Bezuidenhout, 2010); the value of using interactive reflective activities during SL in the development of a universal orientation among students (Naude, 2011); the degree to which SL can bring together social justice and the creation of sustainable learning environments (Tlali, 2013); an argument for the Africanisation of SL (Preece, 2013a); the challenges of adaptive leadership and collaboration in SL (Preece, 2013b); a corporate definition of the term 'service learning' (Julie, 2014); the degree to which universities have created an enabling environment for the institutionalisation of SL (Julie *et al*., 2014); the nature of the partnerships between universities and communities, and potential factors that could hinder or enhance the sustainability of partnerships (Roman *et al.,* 2016); and the way that SL can contribute to the transformation and decolonisation of teaching and learning (Tlali, 2017).

As was mentioned in Chapter 1, this study sought to focus on a subject that seldom features in the field of SL research in South Africa, namely, the community. In addition to research relating to the pedagogy of SL, Erasmus (2005:17) has suggested that future SL research in South Africa should allow the community participants of SL to contribute to and benefit from knowledge production within the context of SL. According to the review above, it is clear that her suggestion has largely fallen on deaf ears as most research continues to focus on the experiences of students. In contrast, this study sought to address this lacuna by focusing squarely on the value of SL for community participants in South Africa.

2.7.2 Service learning's impact on the community

The lack of research relating to the community experience of SL is not just a South African phenomenon. A basic international search on the impact of SL yields numerous academic works as far as students and academic staff members are concerned. Students have reported a positive impact on learning outcomes, personal and professional development, as well as academic and civic engagement (Eyler *et al.*, 2001; Celio *et al.*, 2011; Meyer *et al*., 2016; Farooq *et al*., 2017; Juaneda-Ayensa *et al*., 2019:167). SL experiences have also been shown to benefit students after they graduate, by helping with job searches, informing their career paths, and improving overall job skills

(Plaut, 2013; Sprague & Percy, 2014; Berasategi *et al*., 2016:427; Paphitis & Pearse, 2017:146; Hardin-Ramanan *et al*., 2018:173; Jones *et al*., 2018).

What is far less common, though, is research relating to the impact of SL on the community recipients of SL. Internationally, the literature reveals far fewer works revealing “the voice” of community members benefitting from SL.

This “gap” in empirical SL research has been noted by numerous authors (Cruz & Giles, 2000; Ferrari & Worrall, 2000; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2000; Schmidt & Robby, 2002; Nduna, 2007; Budhai, 2013). Although some research has been done in the area, Tyron and Stoecker (2009) believe that most of it is superficial. In fact, according to Budhai (2013:3), much of the research on the community side of SL has focused on university-community partnerships rather than the actual impact of services rendered. This is predominantly the case in South Africa as well. In some cases researchers assume that the benefits of SL to the community are obvious, and therefore see no need to investigate the actual experiences and impact of SL by listening to the community’s voice (Nduna, 2007:71).

Although there is currently little such research, Sprague and Hu (2015) stress that it is essential to determine the effect of SL programmes on participating organisations, as such programmes are expected to benefit all parties involved. Additionally, an understanding of client satisfaction can provide academic staff and programme developers with valuable indicators as to the effectiveness of the programme design.

2.7.3 Client perspectives on service learning

Studies in America reveal that organisations do indeed benefit from their involvement in SL programmes (Sprague & Hu, 2015:1). A study by Schachter and Schwartz (2009) shows that organisations that worked with final-year public administration students from New York University’s Wagner Business School reported gaining numerous benefits from SL projects. As much as 71 per cent of respondents claimed that they would follow recommendations made by students, and many were highly appreciative of tools and resources developed by the student teams. A study by Bushouse (2005) reveals how almost all client organisations implemented at least 50 per cent of the recommendations made by public administration student teams from the University of Massachusetts. Another study of final-year public administration student teams from the University of North Carolina highlights very positive comments from clients about the high quality and usefulness of SL practicum projects (Whitaker & Berner, 2004). Campbell and Lambright (2011) also note the success of individual public administration SL projects at Binghamton University in New York.

Studies focusing on academic programmes other than public administration also record positive remarks from participating organisations. Organisations engaged in a SL programme with a

Management master's degree course at the University of San Diego report an improvement in their services and operations as a result of students' efforts (Krasynska *et al.,* 2013). Studies of client perspectives on SL programmes with undergraduate courses at Eastern Michigan University (Bernstein *et al.*, 2003) and Wright State University in Ohio (Killian, 2004) also show numerous benefits and positive impacts.

In South Africa a few authors make mention of SL courses which had positive benefits for participating communities. Marks *et al*. (2015) report on multi-layered learning benefits gained by high school learners as a result of a photo-voice SL programme run by UKZN and DUT in Durban. Preece (2016) highlights the perspectives of community members with regard to power-relations, knowledge, and ownership over decision-making in an education-oriented SL programme run by UFS and UKZN. Westraadt (2018) investigates the contribution of an art education SL programme run by CPUT to the development of participating school children.

Partner organisations have also reported positive experiences with other, more traditional forms of SL, such as direct SL (one-on-one tutoring or care), and research-based SL (conducting surveys, studies, evaluations, experiments, interviews, etc. for the benefit of the community). Many of the non-profit community-based organisations (CBOs) that participated in SL programmes run by De Paul University in Chicago claimed that the benefits of the programme far outweighed the challenges (Worral, 2007). Blouin and Perry (2009:132) note that CBOs involved with SL programmes at Indiana University reported "a net positive" as far as their partnerships were concerned. Non-profit community service organisations that had engaged with SL in Montana experienced students as effective in helping the agency meet its goals (Vernon & Ward, 1999). Additionally, CBOs in Indiana were satisfied that taking on short-term volunteers was worth the effort that went into it (Gazley *et al.*, 2013).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, CBOs report gaining numerous benefits from participating in both project-based and traditional SL, such as new ideas and outside perspectives (Blouin & Perry, 2009); inspiration and motivation from the high energy and enthusiasm of students (Vernon & Ward, 1999); workable recommendations (Schwartz & Schachter, 2009); access to additional resources (Barrientos, 2010); improved services (Rinaldo *et al*., 2019:120); financial savings (do Amaral, 2019:133; Rinaldo *et al*., 2019:120); valuable skills (Schoenherr, 2015:52-54); new tools and resources (Schwartz & Schachter, 2009; Vizenor *et al.*, 2017:8); access to funding (Plaut, 2013:3), and increased efficiency (Krasynska *et al*., 2013:16).

Conversely, some CBOs note that among the reasons for getting involved in SL programmes is a desire to "give back" through training students and sharing their real-world knowledge and expertise (Gazley *et al*., 2013; Rinaldo *et al*., 2019:120).

Client organisations do also mention a variety of challenges that arose during their SL experiences:

- increased workload on already overburdened staff members (Darby *et al.,* 2013:127-128; Harrington, 2014:51; Preece, 2016:119);
- students' lack of knowledge prevent them from effectively supporting their community partners (Schwartz, 2010:6; Steimel, 2013:249; Preece, 2016:118);
- students are sometimes unprepared, unreliable, unprofessional, and uninterested (Blouin & Perry, 2009:128; Gazley *et al*., 2012:10; Darby *et al*., 2013:127; Sprague & Hu, 2015; Goertzen *et al*., 2016:42);
- students' academic calendars and busy schedules often result in short-term or haphazard commitment (Vernon & Ward, 1999; Worral, 2007);
- lack of effective communication from students (Gelmon *et al*., 1998; Vernon & Ward, 1999; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Worrall, 2007; Blouin & Perry, 2009; Campbell & Lambright, 2011; Gazley *et al*., 2013; McReynolds, 2014; Vizenor *et al*., 2017:10).
- lack of communication and involvement from academic staff members (Campbell & Lampbright, 2011; Steimel, 2013:249);
- the amount of time, money, and resources needed can become burdensome, and sometimes outweighs the benefits (Bushouse, 2005; Schachter & Schwartz, 2009:451; Krasynska *et al.*, 2013:13);
- a lack of staff members to supervise students (Gazley *et al.,* 2012:12; Plaut, 2013:8);
- sometimes students' projects do not effectively address the client's needs (Schwartz & Schachter, 2009); and
- students' recommendations can sometimes be too costly, or require too much manpower to implement (Schwartz & Schachter, 2009).

Previous studies also discuss some of the ways in which such obstacles have been addressed or could be addressed in the future (Gelmon *et al*., 1998; Vernon & Ward, 1999; Allard & Straussman, 2003; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Blouin & Perry, 2009; Campbell & Lambright, 2011; Gazley *et al*., 2013; Shea & Weiss, 2013; Sprague & Hu, 2015:275). Many authors suggest that greater involvement of community organisations in the planning of SL programmes could assist in overcoming some of the above-mentioned challenges and result in projects and programmes that better serve their needs. Some authors suggest overcoming the challenge of burdensome demands by changing the type of SL programme to one that is project-based rather than shaped by the traditional volunteer-based configuration. One university in particular overcomes this challenge by implementing a fairly strict request for proposal (RFP) procedure in order to educate potential clients on the demands of involvement, and then working with only those clients who are willing to assume the necessary responsibility to ensure a successfully run programme. To improve the quality of student work, Sprague and Hu (2015:275) note a number of methods that can be incorporated, including having instructors evaluate drafts, incorporating peer review, providing writing guidelines, hosting writing workshops, and having students work with campus writing centres.

This study has sought to determine both the benefits gained and the challenges encountered by small business community partners in the context of marketing-related SL. The goal has been to better understand the needs of small businesses, identify obstacles, and consider potential methods to improve the success and value of the programme.

2.8 Service learning in business education

There has been growing criticism from business practitioners of the nature of business education. In 1991, for example, Candy and Crebert commented that even though graduates understand business theories, they are generally not prepared to solve real problems and make informed decisions. In 2010 (nearly two decades later), Farazmand *et al.* drew similar conclusions, and in 2019, nearly three decades since it was first mentioned, the problem is still drawing complaints (Marques, 2019; Matzembacher *et al*., 2019:192). It appears to stem from a (possibly, growing) disconnect between the theoretical bias of business schools and the dynamic, ever changing practical environment of the business world (Angelidis *et al.*, 2004; Ahmad *et al*., 2018).

SL has been recommended as a pedagogy that provides a solution to the apparent shortcomings in business education (Kenworthy-U'Ren 2008; Kennedy *et al.*, 2015). SL provides a means for students to take charge of their education and really engage in relevant real-life situations that relate to their discipline of study. Students become active learners rather than passive observers of lecturers (Munter, 2002; Lawrence, 2018).

The value of SL for education in business and management is important to note. Godfrey *et al.* (2005), for example, present a compelling argument as to why business educators should incorporate SL into their courses. In particular they demonstrate the way in which the "four Rs" of SL (reality, reflection, reciprocity, and responsibility) could enhance and enrich business education, while at the same time maintaining a high level of academic rigour. Madsen and Turnbull (2006) similarly encourage the use of SL as a means of overcoming the potentially limiting educational experiences of many business students. In addition, they believe that SL fosters a greater level of inter-personal, inter-cultural and ethical sensitivity among students.

Although there is much evidence demonstrating the benefits of SL for the education of business students, it has only seen more use as a teaching technique since the early 2000s (Coffey & Wang, 2006; Andrews, 2007; Govekar & Rishi, 2007). Before this, SL was primarily the domain of academic areas such as philosophy, healthcare, history, psychology, sociology, gerontology, political science, and journalism (Rama *et al.*, 2000).

The argument is simple: humans learn best through doing and teaching. SL provides an environment where academic study can be applied in a relevant context while also helping to achieve the broader goals of the university and local community (Hatcher, 1997:22-24; O'Brien, 2005:70; Matzembacher *et al*., 2019:191). The SL experience also provides an opportunity for students to grow in areas of professional, moral, and social development (Furco, 1996:6; Bawden, 1999; Osman & Castle, 2006:64; Konukman & Schneider, 2012; Johnson, 2016; Whitley *et al*., 2017; Lee *et al.*, 2018). Thus, well-planned business-related SL that is tied to a field of study and integrated with the curriculum can provide pedagogy with a solid academic foundation and measureable educational outcomes (Munter, 2002; Kenworthy-U'Ren 2008; Kennedy *et al.*, 2015; Lawrence, 2018).

2.8.1 Growth of service learning in business education

By 2005, Kenworthy-U'Ren and Peterson (2005) noted that the practice of SL as a teaching tool in business education had been steadily increasing. Desplaces *et al*. (2006:66) list some of the potential underlying reasons for the increase: a response to questions about the societal relevance of management education, a shift away from disciplinary silos to more integrated forms of teaching and learning, and an acknowledgement that SL is one of the most effective tools through which students can apply academic knowledge and practice reflective learning while participating in active citizenship. Papamarcos (2005:326) exhorts fellow management educators by stressing the responsibility that business schools have to prepare students for "lives of civic engagement…involving students as voluntary agents of social change."

Although it may be difficult to isolate exactly what has brought about the increased engagement in SL by business schools, it is evident that this drive has been making a difference for students, institutions, and communities (Desplaces *et al*., 2006:66; Juaneda-Ayensa *et al.*, 2019:167; Matzembacher *et al.,* 2019:193). Table 2.2, below, elaborates on the beneficial outcomes of SL in business education for these three stakeholders.

Of the many benefits it is clear that students grow personally, intellectually, and academically as they are able to engage in active learning in a real-life situation; they learn skills specific to their field of study as they apply theory to solve discipline-related problems; and they grow socially by taking up their civic responsibility and engaging with people from a wide variety of backgrounds (Black, 2002:3).

The university benefits by giving lecturers the opportunity to make their teaching more learner-centred by enabling students to take responsibility for their own learning; lecturers can lead social responsibility initiatives by planning effective SL programmes and championing social change in their faculty; lecturers get to incorporate knowledges from other sources (like the community) into their teaching and learning; and the university as a whole can get involved in the community in a positive way by making its resources and knowledge available, which among other things leads to positive public relations (Black, 2002:3).

Table 2.2: Service learning outcomes for students, universities, and communities

Students	University	Community
Personal Growth and Development • Self-esteem • Personal efficacy and sense of responsibility • Ethical/moral development and reinforced values and beliefs • Exploration of new roles, identities, and interests • Willingness to take risks and accept new challenges Intellectual Development and Academic Learning • Basic skills including oral and written communication, expressing ideas, conducting research, learning about careers, reading, and calculating • Higher-level thinking skills, such as problem-solving, decision-making, and critical thinking **Skills and issues specific to degree program and service experience** • Motivation to learn • Learning skills, including observation, inquiry, and application of knowledge • Insight, judgment, and understanding Social Growth and Development • Social responsibility, corporate responsibility, and concern for others • Business efficacy • Civic participation • Knowledge and exploration of careers • Understanding and appreciation of, and ability to relate to, people from a wide range of backgrounds and life situations (Conrad and Hedin, 1989)	**Paradigm shift: teachers as coaches and facilitators; students responsible for their own learning** • Motivated learners engaged in authentic and significant work • Cooperative learning environment • Teachers as reflective practitioners engaged in planning, curriculum development, and inquiry • Collaborative decision making among administrators, academic staff, students, and community members • Positive academic climate • Community involvement, resources, and support in the educational process	**Valuable service to meet direct human, business, educational, health, and environmental needs** • Schools as resources: schools/teacher/student teams serving as researchers and resources in problem-solving and community development • Empowerment: school/community partnerships to assess, plan, and collaboratively meet needs • Citizenship: students become active stakeholders in the community • Infusion of innovation toward improving the institutional practices of schools and communities • Understanding and appreciation of diversity - across generations, cultures, perspectives, and abilities

Source: Adapted from Black (2002:3)

The community benefits because it gets much-needed support and resources that can solve problems; people get empowered with knowledge and skills that can help them help themselves; they form relationships with students and lecturers that can be mutually beneficial in an ongoing way; and the community gets to give back by sharing its unique knowledge with students and helping them learn how to be well-rounded citizens (Black, 2002:3).

Wittmer (2004) notes the results of a survey conducted with students who had participated in an SL programme as part of the University of Denver's Masters in Business Administration (MBA) course: 48 per cent of students acknowledged an increased level of recognition of the kinds of needs that exist in the community; 46 per cent reported an increased awareness of how individuals and businesses are involved in professional service; and 35 per cent noted a sense of personal satisfaction at having been involved in a community service activity.

At an institutional level, SL projects offer real-life opportunities for students to apply the theories they learn in class, and thus helps educators to achieve academic goals. For example, Vega and McHugh (2003:114) note the benefits of leading an SL project where students worked with senior citizens in their local community: “We believe that this project was worthwhile. It met our academic goals, it provided a valued service, it provided an experiential learning opportunity for students who might not otherwise have been involved in one, and it cemented relationships between the institution and the community.”

McIntyre *et al.* (2005:36) believe that SL is a win-win situation for all parties involved. Community partners benefit from the physical and intellectual inputs from students, and the students benefit in gaining an enriched skill base, improved learning, new professional relationships, a deeper understanding of the needs of the community, and an increased sensitivity to their civic responsibilities. Laurie Dipadova-Stocks (2005:346) summarises what she regards as the key reasons for the growth of SL in business education:

> This distinctive instructional method has the capacity to break down social class barriers, integrate universities and their local communities, and diminish disciplinary barriers within our own institutions, while providing exceptional course substance learning for students.

2.8.2 Incorporating service learning into business education

Three different models for incorporating SL into the curriculum are widely recognised: embedded SL course projects, optional credit-bearing SL projects, and SL internships.

Of the three, the embedded SL course module is the most popular. This model integrates SL into the curriculum by combining it with course content and instruction. Educators assign students a SL project that includes doing work for a community partner as well as completing academic work, attending lectures, and doing group assignments that all relate to the project. Often students are required to achieve specific outcomes that relate to the SL project, like the development of a research report and the delivery of an oral presentation. In some cases the same deliverables (like reports) need to be given to the community partners as well (Salimbe, 2013).

To be most effective, SL in business should be integrated with the course curriculum and relate to specific course objectives (Salimbe, 2013). Students should therefore be assessed on certain outcomes of the SL project relevant to course content. The SL experience should also incorporate and be supplemented by lectures, classroom discussions, reading, research, and other forms of scholarly engagement. Students should in addition be given the opportunity to reflect on the experience and share the experience with others (Salimbe, 2013).

Research by Markus *et al.* (1993) and Niemi *et al.* (2000) reveal that there are three notable aspects of successful SL programmes in business education:

1. There are well-articulated goals that are linked to course content;
2. The programmes are long enough for students to develop effective working relationships with the community partners; and
3. The project provides lots of opportunities for reflection on the learning experience and related course work.

The BSAC-SL programme was designed as an embedded SL course including both community work and academic work. Students were required to deliver specific academic outcomes that serviced community needs. In the case of the BSAC-SL programme they developed a marketing plan document which, in addition to being given to participating businesses, was also assessed for academic credit. The SL programme was linked to specific course objectives and served as a platform to help students practically apply all the theoretical knowledge they were learning about marketing communications. The programme ran over four months, giving students ample time to form effective working relationships with participating small businesses. The only aspect that was not actively and intentionally embedded in the programme was the provision of opportunities for structured reflection.

2.8.2.1 Examples of service learning in business education

A few examples of business-oriented SL programmes can be seen in Table 2.3, below. At the Kelly School of Business at Indiana University, first year MBA students pair up with small businesses or non-profit organisations (NPOs) in order to do research and develop workable recommendations (Spaw, 2013). At the Hong Kong University in China, teams of five students from any level of study team up with small businesses or social enterprises in order to support their development and growth by functioning as business consultants (Chau & Leung, 2013). Students at Chaminade University (Chaminade University, 2018) in Hawaii also work as consultants in order to assist local organisations by developing business reports designed to provide recommendations for further development.

Participating businesses acknowledge a range of benefits stemming from such support, including (Chau & Leung, 2013; Spaw, 2013; Chaminade University, 2018):

- the capability to implement recommendations successfully;
- the means with which to save their businesses from closing down;
- access to professional services that they would otherwise not be able to afford; and
- personal growth and reward from the experience of working with students.

Some examples of the types of projects pursued and businesses worked with include (Chau & Leung, 2013; Spaw, 2013; Chaminade University, 2018):

- a business plan to convert a staff of massage therapists from working as independent contractors to being paid employees;
- a strategy designed to help a local rock climbing gym expand by opening a new store;
- a production efficiency study for a manufacturing company; and
- a human resource policy consulting project for a property management company.

Table 2.3: Examples of service learning programmes in business education

Author	University, Department, Students, and Clients	Project Objectives and Outcomes	Project Examples	Client Feedback	Noteworthy details
Spaw (2013)	Indiana University: Kelly School of Business. First-year MBA students. With local businesses and non-profit groups	Students pair up with clients for seven weeks and do research and analysis in order to develop recommendations for each client.	Strategy designed to convert a staff of massage therapists from independent contractors to paid employees. Strategy designed to help a local rock climbing gym expand by opening a new store.	Clients were able to implement recommendations and integrate plans successfully. SL programme saved some businesses from closing down. Some noted that they would not have been able to afford such services normally.	None.
Chau and Leung (2013)	Hong Kong University. Teams of five students from any department at any level of study. Students apply to participate. With small and medium companies & social enterprises.	Provide a valuable service to support the development and growth of the business community in Hong Kong. Students develop a business consulting report and deliver an oral presentation.	Business plan for a social enterprise that nurtures women entrepreneurs in home care service with environmentally friendly elements. Production efficiency study for a manufacturing company. Human Resource policy consulting project for a property management company.	None.	Professional mentors are recruited to support students, including industry professionals and university alumni.
Chaminade University (2018)	Chaminade University of Honolulu. Business students.	Student teams function as consultants and analyse an organisation's situation, develop recommendations, and implement an appropriate project. Teams accomplish their project, complete a project report and group assessment, and present their results.	Students worked with an organisation that needed help updating their brand image, and increasing business awareness.	Organisation staff members found the project rewarding and challenging. They enjoyed working with the student consultants. In addition they were appreciative of the useful analysis of their organisation, the ideas that were generated to increase membership and income, and the attractive and creative graphics designed for their logo, newsletter, and other branding elements.	Small businesses present their business, mission, vision, goals, and struggles to students first. Then a group of students contacts them.

Other examples of SL-related business courses include the following:

- **Research:** Caplan (2002) had almost 100 of his students help local health agencies administer surveys to under-served members of the community;
- **Economics:** Mungaray *et al.* (2008) describe how their students served as economic consultants to micro enterprises in Mexico by reporting on the economic performance of the enterprise;
- **Statistics:** Hoyt (2002) had her students partnered with community agencies to analyse data and conduct research projects for interested community partners;
- **Public Management:** Sprague and Percy (2014) report on a programme in which students assessed public policy issues and made recommendations or evaluated public policy programmes and recommend changes; and
- **Strategic Management:** Simola (2009) had her management students developed strategic recommendations for a local laundromat.

SL has in fact been integrated into a wide variety of business-related disciplines and courses like management (Angelidis *et al*., 2004; Madsen & Turnbull, 2006); marketing (Klink & Athaide, 2004; Barr, 2008a; Barr, 2008b); human resource management (Gie, 2007); public management (Schachter & Schwartz, 2009); project management (Larson & Drexler, 2010); business information systems (Hoxmeier & Lenk, 2003); supply chain management (Schoenherr, 2015), and accounting (McCoskey & Warren, 2003).

Besides the many good examples mentioned above, one particularly noteworthy SL programme is discussed by Desplaces *et al.* (2006). The SL programme is facilitated by the University of Hartford in the USA in partnership with the Upper Albany Street Program. It is known as the Upper Albany Micro Business Incubator Program (MBI) and includes a number of junior and senior students completing their majors in business, entrepreneurship, communication, graphic arts, and any other interested students. What makes the programme unique is that the university has “adopted” a specific business area (Upper Albany Main Street) that is in need of support and is located fairly close to the university campus. Students work with the small retail and service businesses in this area.

The programme focuses on creating relationships and developing the human capital potential of culturally diverse local entrepreneurs. Simultaneously, the programme creates a sense of positive energy while directing attention to the challenges and opportunities associated with urban entrepreneurship. Finally, it helps make business owners aware of the key role that they can play in taking control of the destiny of their own professional lives and the future of their businesses, in overcoming challenges and contributing to the economic development of the neighbourhood (Desplaces *et al.*, 2006).

Students conduct needs assessments, develop recommendations, set up learning plans for the business's staff members, and measure the progress of the businesses and their owners. Students engage in lectures, class discussion, and other academic activities, and also present to their class an account of the development of the business, the owner, and their working relationship. Some of the visible outcomes of the programme have been upgraded storefronts, improved signage, and better product merchandising. In addition, the ability of some business owners to access loans can be directly linked to the support of students in developing adequate financial records. For this reason, the Upper Albany MBI programme has been referred to as a role model for regional economic revitalisation. It has received public recognition and attracted calls for the university to replicate the success of the programme in other cities in the country. When asked about their prospects for survival, 27 per cent of participating firms claimed that the programme had been very helpful, while 38 per cent allowed that it had been somewhat helpful. One business owner noted that the programme had "opened up a new world" for him, and another said, "I would not exist without MBI" (Desplaces *et al*., 2006:76).

Considering the influence that effectively designed and implemented SL programmes can have on local economic development, it is the hope of the researcher that this study might also contribute to the long-term success and value of the BSAC-SL programme for the small business community in South Africa.

2.9 Service learning in marketing education

As the business environment changes, marketing curricula need to keep up with those changes in order to provide students with the skills needed to be competitive in the marketplace (Cunningham 1995; Mishra *et al*., 2017:204).

Klink and Athaide (2004) posit that marketing courses are unique in their receptiveness to SL, given that marketing as a discipline is interested in social causes and behavioural change. They go on to say that marketing support from undergraduate students can be very helpful for many NPOs, given their prevailing need for basic marketing services. They suggest that the application and implementation of basic marketing models and processes can make a noticeable impact on NPOs.

Marketing educators seem to be placing more emphasis on the use of experiential methods of teaching and learning (Bobbitt *et al*. 2000; Dahl *et al*., 2018:101). Considerable attention has been focused on using cooperative experiential learning projects in marketing programmes (Williams *et al.,* 1991; Titus & Petroshuis, 1993; Graeff, 1997). Klink and Athaide (2004:145) note that it is challenging for first-year Principles of Marketing students to be placed in real word environments, given their lack of knowledge and experience. For this reason, it is seen as the most challenging marketing course in which to implement SL (Petkus, 2000).

Zlotkowski (1996:12) argues that, "much of the momentum behind service learning has been provided by academics tied to social sciences and liberal arts." Business faculties have taken longer to embrace SL as an effective educational tool. Easterling and Rudell (1997) believe that in comparison to other business subjects, marketing is particularly well suited to SL because of its longstanding interest in social causes (i.e. Societal Marketing and Social Marketing). This is especially relevant, considering the definition that Jacoby and Associates (1996:5) give to SL:

> …a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development.

Of some importance in the arena of education is the model of experiential learning introduced by Kolb (1981, 1984). An important aspect of this model is the role that experience plays in the learning process. Petkus (2000) shows how marketing-related SL projects can effectively address all four stages in Kolb's model, namely, concrete experience (e.g. students consulting with small businesses); reflective observation (e.g. students keep reflective journals); abstract conceptualization (e.g. students apply their marketing coursework in order to solve a problem of diminishing sales); and active experimentation (students develop a promotional campaign strategy in order to increase sales). In addition, Furlow (2010:42) suggests,

- SL offers business students an opportunity to apply themselves to a real-life situation where they can solve problems, learn skills, and put academic knowledge into practice;
- because of the nature of marketing work and SL, students often develop consultant-like relationships with small business, social enterprises, or NPOs and
- SL has been shown to improve the achievement of learning objectives in undergraduate courses like management, marketing, and information systems.

Berry and Workman (2007:21) note that SL provides an ideal opportunity to apply discipline knowledge in marketing:

> SL is a particularly relevant pedagogy for marketing classes because marketing as a discipline is concerned with a broad range of social causes. SL is an academically rigorous pedagogy that combines traditional course content with the opportunity for students to experientially use their classroom knowledge and theory in real-world settings.

Whether an organisation needs to market products, services, or ideas, marketing tools are needed. For most organisations, whether public or private, for-profit or non-profit, marketing plays a critical role in developing marketing strategies, creating marketing communications, identifying and targeting key market segments, and providing customer service (Soke & Wild, 2016). In particular, small businesses and NPOs often themselves lack the minimum requisite marketing capacity, and generally do not have the funds to outsource the work (Soke & Wild, 2016). SL can meet this need while also providing students with the opportunity to apply marketing skills to practical problems (McIntyre *et al*., 2005). For example, a SL programme surveyed by Schwartz and Fontenot (2007) reported that the cash benefit to Habitat for Humanity equalled $3,700 after marketing students worked to develop a fundraiser for them.

McIntyre *et al.* (2005) surveyed a group of marketing educators and discovered that roughly 81 per cent participate in at least one form of SL, including consulting, independent or group study, individual placement, optional placement, or partnership. Although this is a fairly high percentage, Martin (2015) believes that much work still needs to be done to assist marketing academics to successfully integrate SL into the curriculum and realise its full potential.

This study aims to generate insights which could assist marketing academics to design, plan, and implement effective marketing-related SL programmes with students and local small business communities.

2.9.1 Models of service learning for marketing education

Programme outcomes for SL are usually tied to the model of SL being employed. Cone (2001, in Heffernan, 2001) identifies six different models of SL:

- **Pure service learning:** students are sent out into the community to serve as volunteers.
- **Discipline-based service learning:** students have a presence in the community for an extended period of time and reflect on their experiences using course content as a basis for their analysis.
- **Problem-based service learning:** students relate to the community in a way that is similar to consultants working for a client. Students determine the community problem or need, draw on their knowledge to develop a solution, and then develop recommendations and/or implement the proposed suggestions.
- **Capstone courses:** usually offered to students in their final year of study. Students need to draw upon all the knowledge they have gained throughout their coursework and integrate it into service that is beneficial to the community.

- **Service internships:** students spend an extended period of time working in the community setting and produce a body of work that is of value to the community site or partner. Such internships differ from traditional internships in that students have regular opportunities to reflect, and a reciprocal relationship is formed where both the students and the partners benefit equally.
- **Community-based (action) research:** students work closely with academic staff members in order to learn research methodology, while also serving the research needs of the community or serving as advocates for the community with higher bodies.

Although there are many different models for incorporating SL into a curriculum, Geringer *et al.* (2009:5) suggests using either Discipline-Based Service Learning (DBSL) or Problem-Based Service Learning (PBSL) for an undergraduate Principles of Marketing SL course. Hettche and Clayton (2013:30) suggest the use of the PBSL model when engaging in website redesign and usability analysis. In this model, students engage with community partners in a similar way that marketing consultants or agencies engage with their clients. The working relationships usually start with preliminary meetings to acquaint the students with the client's strategic vision and desired objectives. This is usually followed up by more in-depth research, analysis and interaction.

The SL programme being investigated in this study followed a PBSL approach, in which students worked with small businesses as consultants by assessing some of their marketing problems and opportunities, developing solutions, and implementing their proposed strategies.

2.9.2 Overview of literature pertaining to marketing-related service learning courses

Numbers of authors have written about the implementation of SL in marketing, on topics such as the benefits and methods of SL in marketing education (Easterling & Rudell, 1997; Holtzman *et al.*, 2008; Martin, 2015), theoretical and practical frameworks for SL in marketing (Petkus, 2000; Barr, 2008a; 2008b; Barr, 2010), marketing students' experiences of SL (Gore, 2006; Berry & Workman, 2007; Geringer *et al*., 2008; Garver *et al*., 2009; Kennett-Hensel, 2010; Metcalf, 2010; Gonzalez-Pardon & Ferguson, 2015), views of academic staff about SL in the marketing curriculum (McIntyre *et al*., 2005), as well as SL within different marketing courses such as Principles of Marketing (Klink & Athaide, 2004; Schwartz & Fontenot, 2007; Geringer *et al*., 2009), Personal Selling (Hagenbuch), Marketing Communication (Johnson, 2000; Cook, 2008; Furlow, 2010; Hettche & Clayton, 2013), Consumer Behaviour (Buff, 2011), Marketing Research (Levenburg, 2003; Bove & Davies, 2009; Neese *et al*., 2013), Social Marketing (Rudell, 1996; Domegan & Bringle, 2010), and interdisciplinary courses (Wiese & Sherman, 2011: Hardin-Ramanan *et al.,* 2018).

Many of these authors cite the work of Easterling and Rudell (1997), who outline the application of SL in a marketing curriculum, as well as the work of Petkus (2000), who offers a theoretical and practical framework for implementing SL in a marketing curriculum.

Easterling and Rudell (1997) provide a convincing rationale and history for SL, and go on to summarise both the benefits of SL for stakeholders and the general methods of SL. The authors also give insights into the insertion of SL into a business school across all disciplines, before applying the method specifically to a marketing curriculum. Petkus (2000) goes further by discussing the introduction of SL into specific marketing subjects, namely Principles of Marketing, Marketing/Management Strategy, Marketing Research, Personal Selling, Integrated Marketing Communications, and Consumer Behaviour.

Based on an analysis of subsequent articles, it would seem that these authors laid the foundation for the implementation of and research into SL in marketing education in future years. While their contribution concerned a general framework for the implementation of SL in marketing, future publications went further by assessing specific SL programmes, sharing insights from various stakeholders, and making recommendations with a view to the development and implementation of more successful SL programmes.

This study hopes to go even further by offering deeper insights into the views of community partners, which is something that has been lacking in marketing-related SL research thus far.

2.9.2.1 Marketing service learning research

Table 2.4 contains a list of many of the publications that elaborate on the development and implementation of marketing-related SL programmes in the US. The table denotes the author and year of publication, the university and department in which the SL programme is situated, the type of student and community member participating in the programme, and the objectives and outcomes of the SL programme.

What follows thereafter is a detailed analysis of the SL studies by considering the subject areas in which SL was embedded, the types of organisations which students worked with, the types of services that students rendered, the impact which the SL programmes had on the participating organisations as well as insights relating to the feedback which participating organisations provided, and recommendations which the authors make for future SL implementation.

Table 2.4: 20 years of marketing service learning research (2000-2019)

Author	University and department	Students and clients	Project objectives and outcomes
Johnson (2000)	Texas Tech University, USA	Advertising campaigns course in which students form small agencies and work with local businesses.	Student agencies select a local business and then develop advertising campaigns for them. Students start by conducting research with the target market of the business and then develop a one-year advertising/marketing campaign for them. Students present their campaign to local businesses and include a campaign book detailing all strategies.
Levenburg (2003)	N/A	Marketing research students work with local non-profit organisations and small businesses that are affiliated with the Michigan Small Business Development Centre in the USA.	Students conduct research according to the needs of local organisations. They develop research proposals, design questionnaires, collect and analyse primary data, develop conclusions and recommendations, and prepare written reports and oral presentations for clients.
Klink and Athaide (2004)	Sellinger School of Business and Management, Loyola College in Maryland, USA	Problem-based SL where students recommend solutions to marketing related problems (consulting). Students spend time at an NPO, contact them once a week and produce a written report which includes recommendations.	The students produce a written report that includes the following: organisational background, problem or opportunity, different courses of action to address problem or opportunity, team recommendations, conclusion. Students also do an oral presentation and reflection paper.
Hagenbuch (2006)	Department of Management and Business at Messiah College in Pennsylvania, USA	Personal Selling SL project with local NPOs.	NPOs usually need fund raising and donor recruitment. Students set project objectives, create marketing plans, and develop personal selling strategies. Once sales plans are accepted by the instructor and NPO, students implement them over a six week period. Students submit sales call logs to catalogue the time, place and outcomes of their sales activities. Students make phone calls, set appointments, go to meetings, and secure real donations for their clients.
Holtzman *et al.* (2008)	Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, USA	Strategic marketing students assist the Main Street Atlantic City (MSAC), a non-profit organisation which aims to improve the historic downtown area of New Jersey in the USA.	After a needs assessment is done for the NPO, student teams each work on a different aspect of a comprehensive marketing plan which when combined is given to the organisation.
Geringer *et al.* (2009)	California State University, USA	Students assist local NPOs in a Principles of Marketing course.	Students act as consultants and assist local NPOs to take advantage of marketing opportunities, develop promotional materials, and assist with any other business-related needs.

Furlow (2010)	Department of Marketing at the University of Southern Mississippi, USA	Undergraduate marketing promotion elective in the Marketing course that took place as a response to Hurricane Katrina to address community needs and revitalize business along the Gulf Coast.	Students needed to develop and promote a website called shoptobuild.org. Students developed a promotional plan designed to raise awareness about the website and increase web traffic to the websites of participating businesses. Students had direct access to the media and the business owners.
Metcalf (2010)	California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, USA	Capstone marketing course students engage in an international SL programme called "The Gift of Mobility Project" with The Wheelchair Foundation.	Students approach sponsors and community supporters, generate ideas for fundraising events, and plan, implement, and execute a fundraising project. The goal is to raise money to provide wheelchairs for people in need in Ethiopia and Thailand.
Wiese and Sherman (2011)	School of Business and Leadership, University of Puget Sound, USA	Student teams are assigned to local retail stores.	Students design and implement a social marketing plan aimed at reducing the use of disposable shopping bags among local businesses and residents.
Akpabio (2012)	Department of Media Studies, University of Botswana	Media campaign students work with large businesses, corporates, and government departments.	Students develop marketing communication campaigns and materials to promote local businesses.
Hettche and Clayton (2013)	N/A	Advertising students work with small businesses or NPOs.	Students help clients assess their website in terms of the tasks the website is primarily performing. They then help redesign websites to include attractive customer contact points and develop an ongoing schedule for content management and review.
Gonzalez-Pardon and Ferguson (2015)	University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, USA	Semester-long integrated team project through collaboration with the local Better Business Bureau (BBB).	Students serve as consultants who complete a service audit based on the EICS Award criteria, and then assist businesses with completing an application for an Excellence in Customer Service Award (EICS).
Hardin-Ramanan *et al.* (2018)	Charles Telfair Institute, Mauritius	Students from the Schools of Design, Mass Communication, and Law developed a communication campaign for the entire Mauritian population.	Students from various departments worked together with a local NGO to develop a communication campaign to create awareness of persons with disabilities.
Bonaparte (2019)	North Carolina Central University, USA	Principles of Marketing students assist the local police department.	Students develop recommendations to assist the local police department recruit women and underrepresented minority officers.

a. Subject area in which service learning was embedded

Although there are those who suggest that first-year marketing students do not have enough knowledge or experience to engage in SL effectively, Klink and Athaide (2004) and Geringer *et al.* (2009) demonstrate that SL can be successfully integrated into a Principles of Marketing course. Hagenbuch (2006) similarly shows that SL can be effectively integrated into a Personal Selling course (a course that is often presented at first-year level), and Johnson (2000), Furlow (2010), Akpabio (2012), and Hettche and Clayton (2013) reveal how they implemented SL programmes in their undergraduate Marketing Communication courses. Other authors note how effectively SL can be implemented at higher levels of study. For example, Levenburg (2003) notes how Marketing Research students were able to assist local organisations overcome problems and take advantage of opportunities by engaging in industry-standard research projects. Holtzman *et al.* (2008) demonstrates how Strategic Marketing students were able to develop high quality marketing plans for a local NPO, and Metcalf (2010) shows how Capstone Marketing Course students were able to combine their knowledge and skills successfully to raise funds for the Wheelchair Foundation in an international SL programme.

b. Types of organisations partnered with

SL programmes described by Klink and Athaide (2004) and Hagenbuch (2006) required their students to engage with a range of local NPOs that the instructors had identified beforehand. Geringer *et al.* (2009), on the other hand, gave students the liberty to choose their NPO partners as long as they had no prior working relationship with them. Holtzman *et al.* (2008) and Metcalf (2010) detail SL programmes designed around serving one large NPO, while Johnson (2000) describes designing a programme in service of one local medium-sized business. Some SL programmes like those described by Johnson (2000), Furlow (2010), Wiese and Sherman (2011), and Gonzalez-Pardon and Ferguson (2015), put students in touch with local small businesses, whereas others like those by Levenburg (2003) and Hettche and Clayton (2013) gave students the freedom to choose either a local small business or an NPO. Akpabio (2012) had students develop campaigns for larger businesses, corporates, and government departments, while Bonaparte (2019) involved students with a local police department, and the students of Hardin-Ramanan *et al*. (2018) worked with a local NGO to develop a campaign for the entire Mauritian population.

c. Types of services rendered

The literature notes a wide variety of activities engaged in by students participating in marketing-related SL programmes. Many authors describe programmes where students work as consultants and engage in a process in which they do preliminary research and then develop strategies and recommendations that are presented to the participating organisations in the form of written reports (Johnson, 2000; Levenburg, 2003; Klink & Athaide, 2004; Holtzman *et al.*, 2008; Geringer *et al.*, 2009; Akpabio, 2012; Gonzalez-Pardon & Ferguson, 2015; Bonaparte, 2019). Others describe situations where the students develop and then implement specific campaigns or strategies. Hagenbuch (2006), for example, describes a situation where Personal Selling students actually make sales calls, set appointments, go to meetings and secure real donations for their NPO clients. Furlow (2010) identifies a programme in which Marketing Communication students developed and promoted a website called shoptobuild.org and then implemented a promotional plan designed to increase web traffic to the websites of participating businesses. Metcalf (2010) details a programme where students plan and execute projects designed to raise funds to provide wheelchairs to people in need. Wiese and Sherman (2011) describe a programme in which students from Marketing and Environmental Studies combine to develop and implement a social marketing plan aimed at reducing the environmental impact of disposable shopping bags among local retailers and residents. Hettche and Clayton (2013) give an account of a programme involving Advertising students who help organisations redesign their websites in order to make them more engaging, and then develop materials designed to help the organisation manage the websites more effectively. Finally, Hardin-Ramanan *et al.* (2018) report on a programme where students developed a national communication campaign to support the cause of persons with disabilities (PWDs) by creating a campaign identity and logo, developing a range of advertising media including billboards, posters, radio spots, and video advertisements, facilitating social media engagement through Facebook, filming video testimonials from PWDs, encouraging the Mauritian population to sign a petition relating to the enactment of their National Disability Bill, and creating brochures to sensitise the public on the rights of the disabled.

In the BSAC-SL programme students worked with small businesses by doing customer research and then developed, and in some cases also implemented, marketing communication campaigns designed to increase sales.

d. Impact on participating organisations and feedback

Johnson (2000) created a SL programme for his Advertising Campaigns course. He reports on one programme, where four student groups did work for a pet company called Petsmart which focuses on pet adoption, pet food and pet sales, and also sponsors national campaigns to encourage pet spaying and neutering. This business was chosen because it was unique and had some advertising budget to allocate to the SL project, thereby enabling students to develop campaigns which included mass media advertising channels such as newspaper and broadcast media. Student agencies were successful in developing campaign ideas that urged customers to continue supporting Petsmart's work on animal adoption, spaying/neutering, and fundraising activities. Students also developed a host of clever promotional tactics including adoption fee rebates, cutest pet contests, "Save Our Pets" and "Protect Our Animals" bumper stickers, adoption campaigns, educational park days for children, free educational textbook covers for elementary school children, support for local book drives, and in-store displays. The business used several of the items and ideas created by students in its annual Save-A-Pet campaign.

Levenburg (2003) incorporated SL into a Marketing Research course in which students conduct research studies for local small businesses. At the time of publication the programme had already served more than 200 small businesses and had cultivated a positive reputation in the community, to the point that local organisations actively seek to become involved in the programme. The author notes that the programme has made a noteworthy impact on the local business community and suggests that it has contributed significantly to the local business region's being considered a "hot bed" for small businesses in the USA. Levenburg (2003) claims that the participating businesses benefitted from the student-conducted research studies in the following ways: a better understanding of customers, improved promotional methods, enhanced successfulness of new product launches, and increased internal effectiveness and efficiencies. "In short, students' research studies have enabled many organisations to enhance their profitability and competitiveness in the marketplace" (Levenburg, 2003:55).

Hagenbuch (2006) facilitated SL through his Personal Selling course in order to support local NPOs like Big Brothers Big Sisters, Bretheren Housing Association, Urban Young Life, Centre for Champions, and New Hope Ministries. In 2004 the sales teams collected more than $10 000 for their NPO clients, and in 2005 the total raised was more than $8,500. For one NPO, student teams increased amounts raised from a yearly golf tournament from $1,700 in 2003, to $4,300 in 2004, and finally to $6,500 in 2005. The evaluative feedback from client organisations included notice of the following benefits (Hagenbuch, 2006):

- greater dissemination of the mission statement of organisations;
- increased visibility in the community;
- assistance with new promotional material (like letters, brochures, and t-shirts), and
- building new relationships with potential long-term benefactors.

The result was that many NPOs indicated a desire to participate in the SL programme again in the future. Negative feedback included (Hagenbuch, 2006):

- students did not always communicate effectively; and
- did not follow all the instructions of clients.

Furlow (2010) engaged his Marketing Communication students in a SL project designed to assist local businesses after hurricane Katrina. Students needed to develop and promote a website called shoptobuild.org, in order to drive sales to participating organisations affected by the hurricane. Feedback from businesses was positive with one stating, “We have received orders from customers throughout the country.”

Metcalf (2010) developed an SL programme for a project-based capstone marketing course in which students develop strategies to raise funds for an NPO that distributes wheelchairs. In its first year students hosted a brunch and silent auction followed by a live auction, which made enough money to purchase a container of wheelchairs that was distributed to Lima, Peru.

Wiese and Sherman’s (2011) marketing students designed strategies to aid local retail stores in reducing the use of disposable shopping bags among their customers. Students developed marketing materials (like posters and brochures), facilitated media advertising (in the newspaper or on radio), coordinated awareness-building events, and distributed reusable shopping bags. Students also collected data from the participating organisations and their customers through interviews and surveys. Findings from the project reveal that there was an uneven level of commitment from participating organisations to lowering their environmental impact. Some were not very interested because of the extra effort needed, whereas others went beyond the call of duty in order to promote the project and its effort to lower the environmental impact of the community.

The students of Akpabio (2012) developed advertising campaigns for large businesses, corporates, and government departments. Students developed TV and radio spots, street pole ads, posters, t-shirts, mascots, blogs, newspaper and billboard ads, brochures, as well as commuter media ads for organisations such as the Botswana Stock Exchange, Screen Magazine, Eco Beef, Class Craft Botswana, Itekanele Medical Aid, and the Department of Road Transport and Safety. The findings reveal that some businesses were very impressed with student work because of its creativity, quality, execution of the brief, and alignment with their corporate identity. Others complained about poor lighting in TV commercials, unconvincing print ads, and incorrect targeting, to name a few. A slight majority of respondents said they were willing to implement the campaign materials of students. Of these, about 50 per cent felt that the materials still needed some improvement before being ready for implementation.

A semester-long, integrated team-based SL programme investigated by Gonzalez-Pardon and Ferguson (2015) at the University of Colorado collaborated with the Better Business Bureau (BBB) to help businesses complete an application for an Excellence in Customer Service Award (EICS). Students who were part of a Service-Marketing course served as consultants to businesses and completed service audits based on the EICS award criteria, and then suggested service quality improvements. Participating community businesses recognised a number of benefits stemming from the programme, such as getting objective external perspectives on their service operations, access to free analysis, documentation, recommendations on their service operations, an opportunity to explore new ideas and tools relating to customer service, and getting assistance in areas such as marketing in which the business lacks expertise (Gonzales-Pardon & Ferguson, 2015:107).

The goal of the current study was similarly to gain insights from community partners about their experience of the BSAC-SL programme, its value for their businesses, and recommendations for improvements. The study thus sought to generate current data from South Africa to contribute to this ongoing research conversation.

e. Recommendations for future implementation

Marketing-related SL authors (Klink & Athaide, 2004; Geringer *et al.*, 2009; Furlow, 2010; Hettche & Clayton, 2013; Gonzalez-Pardon & Ferguson, 2015; Mitchell, 2018; Bonaparte, 2019) note several critical success factors for the implementation of marketing-related SL programmes. These include:

- **Screening:** participating organisations should be thoroughly screened to ensure that they are suitable for the programme. Three elements relating to suitability are recurrently noted: 1) the organisation's staff can commit to working with the students on a regular basis, 2) the location of the organisation should be convenient for students to access and reasonably safe, and 3) the organisation should intend to implement the recommendations of students (Klink & Athaide, 2004). Gonzalez-Pardon and Ferguson (2015:110) recommend collaborating with a business association partner to assist with selecting and screening local businesses for marketing-related SL programmes.
- **Managing expectations:** instructors should manage the expectations of both the students and the participating organisations. For the students this could include things like workload, working relationship, off-campus engagement, assessment requirements, organisational status and potential lack of resources, ambassadorial responsibility, and so forth. For the organisations this could include the time and effort needed, the abilities of the students, the responsibilities of the university, etc. (Klink & Athaide, 2004).

- **SL should be an option:** SL works better when those involved are eager to participate. This results in more successful relationships, projects and eventual outcomes. It also results in good word of mouth from one student cohort to the next (Klink & Athaide, 2004).
- **Ongoing assessment and evaluation:** Because of the importance of reciprocity in SL, authors suggest a formal mechanism (like a survey) be used to obtain feedback from participating organisations in order to gain insights into student performance and recommendations for programme improvement (Klink & Athaide, 2004; Bonaparte, 2019:12). In addition, Gonzalez-Pardon and Ferguson (2015:111) recommend midway feedback from students and clients, to identify any issues that need addressing and to ensure that both parties are meeting expectations.
- **Tracking implementation:** In order to effectively measure the impact of SL, the extent to which organisations implement student recommendations should be tracked. It is suggested that such tracking could be used as a basis for determining future collaboration with organisations (Klink & Athaide, 2004).
- **Instructor time:** the time commitment for the instructor is vast. For this reason, it is suggested that the SL team possibly collaborate with for-profit organisations and training teaching assistants to assist with the monitoring and implementation of the programme (Klink & Athaide, 2004; Mitchell, 2018:41).
- **Student knowledge:** SL projects would work better with students that have a bit more knowledge of the subject matter (Furlow, 2010).
- **Prior relationship with organisations:** SL would work better if there is a prior relationship with an existing community organisation (Furlow, 2010).
- **University resources:** Instructors believe that more resources should be made available to SL programmes by the university. This would enable more effective projects (Furlow, 2010).
- **Student interest:** It is ideal when the personality and interests of the students match the focus and mission of the participating business or organisation they work with (Hettche & Clayton, 2013:30).
- **Students choose community partner:** Geringer *et al.* (2009:4) note that getting students to find and choose their own NPO or small business to work with benefits the instructors in that they do not need to source organisations for the students to work with, which dramatically decreases their workload.
- **Action planning & communication:** In order to ensure effective planning and communication, an action plan document should be used by students in conjunction with contact logs, peer reviews, and regular meetings between academic staff, students, and community partners (Gonzalez-Pardon & Ferguson, 2015:111; Bonaparte, 2019:12).
- **Course integration:** Marketing academic staff should support the programme effectively through lectures, exercises, and assignments which equip students with the knowledge they need to apply to the project (Gonzalez-Pardon & Ferguson, 2015:111).
- **Coordination:** Academic staff members should keep their fingers on the pulse of the programme by communicating with students and community partners regularly, to ensure that deliverables are relevant and that expectations are being met (Bonaparte, 2019:13).

A number of studies have thus surveyed marketing-related SL programmes in countries like the USA, applying various research models and SL frameworks, analysing the implementation of the critical success factors mentioned above, and garnering the experiences of students and community partners. As a result they have been able to generate empirical data about marketing-related SL and develop research-informed recommendations for improving SL programmes. Unfortunately, such insights and materials are sorely lacking for marketing-related SL in South Africa. What is more, as is true for SL research generally in South Africa, most of the marketing-related research only makes passing mention of the community experience while focusing most of the research effort on the experiences of students. Again, this study hopes to remedy this situation by contributing empirically verified information and recommendations for marketing-related SL in the South African context, at the same time according prominence to the community experience of marketing-related SL.

2.10 Service learning with small businesses

Although the traditional model of SL suggests that universities create partnerships with non-profit organisations (Godar, 2000; Jacoby, 2003), there have been persuasive arguments in favour of partnership creation with for-profit organisations (Crutsinger *et al.,* 2004). In particular, there has been something of a surge in SL programmes that involve providing business consultation services to microenterprises or other small businesses (Angelidis *et al*., 2004; Mungaray *et al.,* 2008; Mitchell, 2018).

The business-related service needs of small businesses usually include the development of a marketing or business plan, doing market research, designing web pages, and pursuing other organisational enhancement projects (Mitchell, 2018:33). Such assistance is valuable to small businesses in that it helps them to serve their own customers more effectively (Salimbe, 2013:64). However, the services do come at something of a price. The staff members of the businesses involved need to collaborate with academic staff members, put time aside to work with students, oversee students on site, and assist in solving problems as and when they arise during the service period. Bushouse (2005) notes that because many small businesses lack resources, some may find the price in terms of time and energy too high to be able to engage in SL partnerships. However, if the benefits outweigh the price to be paid, small businesses will nevertheless engage in SL.

Munguray *et al.* (2007) provide a convincing argument for conducting SL projects with small businesses:

- small businesses are similar to NPOs in that they confer on communities certain social benefits like community service provision, employment, poverty reduction, and support of local & social causes;
- small businesses face similar financial and human resource constraints as NPOs;
- both small businesses and NPOs often have little access to professional business consultation and support services (like seminars, business coaches, and workshops) designed to help move the business forward;
- small businesses often lack the time needed to engage in such services, making the opportunity cost associated with them too high; and
- small business owners can offer the students reciprocal benefits in the form of experience, training, and expertise, which can positively benefit the learning and development of the students.

As noted by McIntyre *et al.* (2005) and Mitchell (2018:33), small businesses and NPOs often lack a number of the financial resources and internal capacities needed to fulfil basic business functions like marketing, advertising, strategic planning, and employee performance reviews. Thus there is often a natural fit, as far as mutual benefits are concerned, between small business and NPOs (who gain from the services rendered), and universities and their students (who gain from the learning experience).

There are however more risks involved in placing students with a range of small businesses rather than with NPOs, risks that Simola (2009) suggests should be managed in a proactive way in order to ensure the success of the programme. The concerns include the misappropriation (stealing, copying, and sharing) of business models, plans, or other private information which could jeopardize the competitive position of the business, as well as liabilities that could occur if small business managers unsuccessfully implement student suggestions and plans. For this reason, Simola (2009) suggests that risks of perceived and actual conflict of interest between the university, students, and business owners should be further explored and effectively managed by SL conveners.

2.10.1 Small business service learning research

As mentioned above, there are a number of articles that make mention of SL programmes run in conjunction with small businesses, but few of them focus on the experiences of small businesses or the value and nature of the outcomes of SL programmes for small businesses. Findings regarding the experiences of small business participants generally form only a small part of studies geared towards evaluating the success of SL programmes. Overall, much more emphasis is placed on the experiences of students and academic staff, as well as descriptions of the SL courses and the unique ways in which the programmes are managed.

For example, Calvert (2009) published a study called "Enhancing small business performance through service learning" in the *Journal of Economics and Business*. The article has a lot to say about what the students did to assist the businesses, how the SL programme was managed, how businesses interacted with the students, how the programme was integrated into the curriculum, as well as the author's beliefs as to how the programme benefitted participating businesses. Yet very little is said about the feedback given by the small business participants. The results obtained from a casual feedback mechanism revealed that more than 90 per cent of clients had found the consulting process worthwhile in providing strategic insight, and that roughly 10 per cent hired the students to implement some aspect of the plan. These two findings are the sum total from an entire research study supposedly reporting on how SL can enhance business performance. It is notable that no business performance indicators (like increased sales, increased competitive advantage, increased business efficacy, and so forth) were considered.

There are some studies that provide more substantial insights into the experience of participating small businesses. A study by Simola (2009) had the objective of extending previous research on community SL initiatives by examining the use of SL projects with community-based small businesses. He conducted a case study of a strategic management SL project with a local laundromat, facilitated by a small Canadian university.

The small business owner identified a number of compelling reasons to work with students on SL projects, such as that the students were honest and did not "sugar-coat" their opinions; it was useful to have a team of students to work with; students' youth and creativity provided new ideas; students would be welcomed in the future because of the value added; students were noted as being organised, serious, and well prepared; and students made the experience worthwhile for the business owner. Simola suggested that future research should continue to explore the use of SL in a broader range of undergraduate business courses, and that it would be helpful if pragmatic frameworks and proactive risk management protocols could be developed for SL initiatives in small business settings (Simola, 2009:578).

Since the work of Simola (2009), more authors have highlighted the voice of small businesses in the context of SL (Niehm *et al*., 2015; Vasbinder & Koehler, 2015; Miller *et al.*, 2017; Mokoena & Spencer, 2017; Mitchell, 2018). These are summarised in Table 2.5, below.

Table 2.5: Recent small business service learning research studies highlighting the client / community voice

Author	University, students and clients.	Project objectives and outcomes	Methodology & client-related findings
Niehm *et al*. (2015) Bridging the gap between entrepreneur-ship education and small rural businesses: an experiential service-learning approach.	Iowa State University, USA. Retail Merchandising and Hospitality Management students work with small rural retail and hospitality firms.	Students helped small businesses with management practices and the implementation of experiential marketing and branding strategies. Students started with a situation analysis and then developed business plans and makeovers. They also worked on the retail property, product offerings and presentations, promotions, and staff service quality.	Qualitative research was done with participating businesses using telephone interviews to determine the impact the programme had on them. Clients reported that they benefitted from the fresh perspectives of students and from the students' energy and creativity, and they found the students' ideas and strategies valuable and implementable.
Vasbinder and Koehler (2015) Socially conscious ventures and experiential learning: perceptions of student engagement.	School of Management, Bay State College, USA. Students worked with the owners of socially conscious start-up firms.	Students did a situation analysis through gathering primary and secondary data and provided strategic suggestions for improvement.	Qualitative study designed to explore the stakeholder perceptions of programme outcomes. Business owners noted that they had positive experiences, that students were professional, knowledgeable, highly engaged and committed, and that the insights and recommendations given by students were accurate, helpful, and implementable.
Miller *et al.* (2017) Applied learning through student-led microfinance programs.	University of Tampa, Florida, USA. Final year Service Leadership students worked with entrepreneurs.	Small loans were made available to selected entrepreneurs. Students helped them develop business plans, and provided advice, guidance, and encouragement on business-related issues.	Qualitative feedback was gained from the participating entrepreneurs. They appreciated the business guidance and human capital provided by students. Those interviewed were able to start up new businesses through the programme.

Mokoena and Spencer (2017) Working towards community upliftment: a case of tourism management service learning project.	Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town, South Africa. Undergraduate Tourism Management students work with small tourism enterprises.	Students conducted a situation analysis and then developed business and marketing plans for each business.	Action research methodology using self-administered questionnaires and interviews to assess the perceptions of the participating firms regarding the benefits of the SL programme, and to gain insights for programme improvement. Most organisations found the programme beneficial and noted that students were professional, brought outside perspectives, gained from the business plan, used student recommendations, although it was found that some business owners were resistant to change and did not allow the students to advise them in the business. Negative comments included a lack of student involvement, a lack of quality strategic work, and a lack of practical knowledge.
Mitchell (2018) Small business website development: enhancing the student experience through community-based service learning.	Drake University, USA. Students work with small businesses in a small town.	Students developed an online web presence for the small businesses. Students interviewed the clients and developed an initial website. After receiving feedback from the clients, students finalised the website, and provided website documentation and maintenance instructions.	Both students and small business clients were surveyed, but the methodology used is not specified. Clients found that students were professional, communicated well, were enthusiastic, and they appreciated having a website built for their businesses. Some clients struggled with the timing of the project and were not sure about the maintenance of the websites.

Four of the studies were conducted in the USA (Niehm *et al*., 2015; Vasbinder & Koehler, 2015; Miller *et al.*, 2017; Mitchell, 2018), and one at CPUT in Cape Town, South Africa (Mokoena & Spencer, 2017). In each case students worked with small businesses helping them in areas such as management, marketing, and branding consulting (Niehm *et al*., 2015; Moekoena & Spencer, 2017), research and analysis (Niehm *et al*., 2015; Vasbinder & Hoehler, 2015; Mokoena & Spencer, 2017), business planning (Niehm *et al*., 2015; Miller *et al.*, 2017; Mokoena & Spencer, 2017), business mentorship (Miller *et al.*, 2017), and website development (Mitchell, 2018).

In respect of the methodology employed, most authors conducted qualitative research in order to explore the perceptions and experiences of participating small businesses regarding the impact and outcomes of the SL programmes (Niehm *et al*., 2015:149; Vasbinder & Koehler, 2015:89; Miller *et al.*, 2017:46; Mokoena & Spencer, 2017:301).

The findings reveal that small business clients benefited from the fresh perspectives and ideas of students (Niehm *et al*., 2015:150; Mokoena & Spencer, 2017:302-303), the energy and creativity of students (Niehm *et al*., 2015:150; Mitchell, 2018:39-40), the strategic planning and guidance from students (Niehm *et al*., 2015:150), the professionalism of students (Vasbinder & Koehler, 2015:89; Mokoena & Spencer, 2017:302-303; Mitchell, 2018:39-40), the knowledge and insights of students (Vasbinder & Koehler, 2015:89; Mokoena & Spencer, 2017:302-303), the highly engaged and committed approach of students (Vasbinder & Koehler, 2015:89), and the practical human-capital facilitated guidance and support of students (Miller *et al.*, 2017:46). A number of small businesses also commented that they found the work of students relevant and implementable (Niehm *et al*., 2015:150; Vasbinder & Koehler, 2015:89; Miller *et al.*, 2017:46; Mokoena & Spencer, 2017:302-303; Mitchell, 2018:39-40).

Negative comments included a lack of student involvement, a lack of quality strategic work, and a lack of practical knowledge (Mokoena & Spencer, 2017:304-305), as well as problems associated with the timing of the project and the sustainability of student input (Mitchell, 2018:39-40).

It is promising thus to have found a growing number of SL programmes facilitated with small businesses, and an increasing number of studies highlighting their experiences and perceptions. However, these studies are generally void of findings relating to the value of SL for the performance of small businesses. In addition, most small business SL research studies still focus mainly on the experiences of students (Moorer, 2009; D'Agostino, 2010; Molee *et al.,* 2010; Calvert & Kurji, 2012; Lafond & Wentzel, 2015; McCord *et al.,* 2015; Hoffman *et al*., 2016; Munoz *et al*., 2016), or on SL designs and pedagogical approaches (Butchery, 2014; Geho & McDowell, 2015; Marom & Lussier, 2017).

The present study aims not only to highlight the perceptions and experiences of small businesses, but also to report on the business value that the SL programme had for them.

2.11 Service learning in the National Diploma of Marketing at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology

At the time of writing (2019), the author of the present study is employed in the Marketing Department at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) in Cape Town, South Africa. CPUT has responded to the White Paper on the Transformation of Higher Education (South Africa. National Department of Education, 1997) by developing a new mission statement that stresses its commitment to community engagement:

> To develop and sustain an empowering environment where, through teaching, learning, research and scholarship, our students and staff, in partnership with the community and industry, are able to create and apply knowledge that contributes to development. (CPUT, 2009, cited in Bitzer, 2009:188)

In order to realise the aspect of community referred to in the mission statement, the university established the Department of Community Engagement and Service Learning under the leadership of Dr Joyce Nduna (2005), one of the authors of the Draft Policy on the Integration of Service Learning with Teaching, Learning and Research at CPUT. The policy outlines CPUT's strategic plan for implementing SL (Nduna, 2005:13-17):

1. Establish and develop Service Learning programmes as part of the core functions at CPUT;
2. Develop Service Learning programmes and curricula;
3. Develop co-operative partnerships with communities and service sectors;
4. Promote research that aims to improve the quality of Service Learning;
5. Include Service Learning in CPUT's quality assurance programme;
6. Integrate Service Learning and research into national and international processes;
7. Fund and market Service Learning programmes and projects;
8. Give recognition and support to the University's staff for Service Learning;
9. Recognise the role of students as being central to the effectiveness and success of Service Learning projects and programmes; and
10. Promote co-teaching and other effective teaching and learning strategies.

The CPUT community engagement policy has taken its cue from the HEQC/JET Education Services Guide to Good Practice of Service Learning Draft Document (HEQC, 2006b). The guide identifies the most important factors for the successful implementation of SL, which include:

- *Reciprocity:* mutual benefit for both the students and the communities involved by addressing both the service and the learning outcomes;
- *Collaboration:* the course is designed, implemented and assessed in partnership with the community and service agencies;
- *Needs assessment:* the course design is informed by an assessment of community needs. This can be built into the programme as one of the first tasks that the students complete;

- *Alignment of service and learning goals:* the goals of the service and the learning needs to be aligned in order for service to inform learning and conversely for learning to inform service;
- *Student placements:* the student placement must be suited to the desired service and learning outcomes. Site supervisors must be capable and prepared to take responsibility for the students;
- *Student orientation:* students need to be adequately prepared for their community placement;
- *Role clarification:* all participating groups (i.e. academic staff, students, community, and service agencies) need to be clear about their roles and responsibilities;
- *Reflection:* adequate time must be set aside for structured critical reflection on the service experience by students. This process illuminates and links the theory presented in the course to the SL experience; and
- *Logistics:* proper and effective planning needs to be done to account for things like student timetables, transport, etc.

It is important for university departments to take all these factors into consideration if they hope to develop a successful SL programme. One department that has been running a number of successful SL programmes at CPUT is the Marketing Department. Over the years its national diploma course has included the following SL programmes:

Table 2.6: Marketing-related service learning programmes in the CPUT Marketing Diploma (2010-2019)

Project	**Subject**	**Level**	**Community**
Sales Plan	Communication	First Year	Street vendors of magazines
Marketing Plan Development	Marketing 1	First Year	Micro enterprises
Brand Plan Development	Marketing 2	Second Year	Micro enterprises
IMC Campaign Development	Advertising and Sales Promotion	Second Year	Small, medium, and micro enterprises

Each of the above-mentioned SL programmes has addressed a specific area of expertise required in the marketing industry. The outcomes of the SL courses thus relate very closely to the overall purpose and rationale of the National Diploma in Marketing, as expressed by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA):

> The qualifying learner will be able to develop and apply marketing and sales-related plans, policies and strategies in small, medium and micro enterprises independently or under supervision in larger organisations, in a range of marketing positions in both profit and non-profit seeking organisations. (SAQA, 2009)

The learning aims of each course have also been closely aligned with the needs of the relevant community members. In each course, some form of plan is created to support the survival and growth of an independent entrepreneur, a micro-sized enterprise, or a small business.

2.12 Brand Shepherd Advertising Challenge

2.12.1 Programme introduction

The integrated marketing communication (IMC) SL project conducted with second year Advertising and Promotion students is also known as the “Brand Shepherd Advertising Challenge” (BSAC). This is because the project has been conducted in association with a Cape Town-based marketing firm called Brand Shepherd (the service agency/partner). The SL programme was born out of the collaborative efforts of CPUT and Brand Shepherd to serve local businesses with marketing and advertising solutions by developing and training students to function as marketing and advertising consultants. According to the course coordinator, “the project is designed to encourage consultation with the community… so as to assist SMMEs (in the local community) that are in need of help in terms of their marketing communication strategies” (Duffett, 2013:1). The SL programme has been successfully conducted since its inception in 2010 and has assisted over 700 businesses with support in the area of marketing communications.

The main purpose of the SL project is for students to develop a sales promotion campaign to increase the sales of their client (community partner). On the one hand, the project provides students with an opportunity to gain experience in a real-life IMC campaign development situation, while on the other hand the community partners obtain marketing communication-related support at no financial cost. At the same time, the students get an opportunity to serve their community in a way that is linked to their diploma, discipline of study, and future area of employment. Some of the other benefits of the project as described by Duffett (2013:3) are as follows:

- it simulates a typical everyday advertising scenario that takes the student through the industry-specific campaign development process and thus facilitates work-integrated learning (WIL);
- it promotes collaboration between departments at the university as marketing students often make use of the skills of graphic design and multi-media students to assist them with the development of artwork and other graphic media;
- students are exposed to other experts in the industry who impart skills and knowledge that is industry-related and current;
- it enhances pedagogical practices by creating an opportunity for theoretical knowledge to be applied to real-life situations;
- it gives a better understanding of the advertising process so that if students embark on a career in the industry they will have had first-hand experience of the process from start to finish;
- it allows students to be recognised in the industry before they graduate;
- it serves as an experience that they can place on their curriculum vitae (CV) and promote to future employers;
- it teaches students the value of serving without compensation and thus instils a sense of social responsibility; and
- it stimulates entrepreneurship by giving students access to clients that they can continue to serve with marketing-related services once the project is complete.

The benefits to the community partners include the following (Duffett, 2013:6-7):

- primary research is conducted with the customers of the organisations and the insights are shared with the business owners;
- an IMC campaign plan is designed to increase sales;
- IMC tools and resources are developed that can be used to promote the organisation's brand and increase sales and clientele;
- students offer basic marketing-related skills training and knowledge sharing;
- students provide hands-on support in the area of the application of marketing-related theories;
- the work is done at no financial cost to the client;
- the programme provides a way for small businesses to form a relationship with a local university;
- the programme offers a way for businesses to form a relationship with budding marketers that can lead to future business-related benefits; and
- students who are willing to grow the relationship with the businesses often provide ongoing service.

Examples of work done by students for SMME clients (Scholtz, 2018:75):

- developing online marketing resources like a Facebook page;
- designing a website;
- using Twitter as a promotional channel;
- designing logos, pamphlets, business cards, letterheads, and posters;
- introducing promotional offers;
- introducing loyalty cards with benefits for returning customers;
- writing a press release for a local community publication; and
- developing customer surveys to track customer satisfaction.

2.12.2 Programme details

Every year students are given a brief that outlines the details of the programme. Students need to form their own "mini-advertising agencies," and then approach, establish, and grow a relationship with a local SMME of their choice (primarily in the retail sector), which has no or very little marketing communication in place.

Students are charged with serving their SMME clients in such a way as to help them increase their sales. This involves doing primary research, developing marketing tools and resources, and developing and implementing a sales promotion campaign designed to increase sales.

Students are assisted by their lecturer through every phase of the programme by means of mini-assignments. These assignments (also known as practicals or activities) break down the project into smaller, more manageable tasks (Duffett, 2013:3). Students need to submit these assignments so that the lecturer can give them feedback before they share or implement their suggestions with their SMME client. As such, these assignments enable the lecturer to advise, guide, correct, and direct students to ensure that high quality work is produced, and that community partners receive service that is relevant, practical, realistic, and has every chance of being successful (Duffett, 2013:3).

After finding a local SMME to work with, students need to complete a number of tasks, including (Duffett, 2013:3-4):

- Create a name for their agency and allocate specific roles to each team member (e.g. managing director, account executive, strategic planner, designer, etc.); however, each team member may play multiple roles as is the norm in most small advertising agencies;
- Do primary research with the customers of their client SMME to determine client satisfaction levels and client needs;
- Develop a range of marketing communication tools which can be used by the SMME to facilitate marketing communication efforts (such as a website, flyer, Facebook page, etc.);
- Develop an IMC campaign proposal designed to increase sales. This needs to be presented to the client and a hard copy needs to be given to them;
- Help the SMME client to implement the campaign based on their capabilities and preferences;
- Complete a portfolio, which includes:
    - Minutes – every meeting with the client, team members, service agency (Brand Shepherd) and the lecturer.
    - Correspondence – all emails, telephone calls, and SMSs with the client and outside service providers (such as designers or printers);
    - Research – all primary and secondary research materials;
    - Client feedback – written feedback from SMME client about the programme, written on a letterhead together with their contact details;
    - Other – any other elements that could enhance the portfolio (such as rate cards, graphic material, photographs, agency materials, and so forth);
- Present the IMC campaign to the lecturer and Brand Shepherd in a five minute presentation using a PowerPoint presentation.

2.12.3 Programme evaluation

Over the years, informal feedback has been gained from a number of programme stakeholders such as programme coordinators, students, and community partners. In addition, a study by Scholtz (2018) sought to assess the 2012 BSAC-SL programme in terms of its benefits for participants as well as for student learning. The study made use of a questionnaire to assess the value of SL as a WIL pedagogy for students and was administered after the completion of the programme. In addition, the author made use of thematic content analysis to analyse the informal client feedback letters, so as to gain insight into their perceptions of the programme.

2.12.3.1 Feedback from students

Feedback from students (Scholtz, 2018:74):

- The SL project provided a learning experience that students could not get from in-class lectures only;
- Students were able to apply class learning to the SL environment;
- Students were able to link theory to practice;
- The work was directly related to what students learnt in class; and
- The programme provided a valuable learning experience.

The BSAC-SL programme has proven to be a successful WIL pedagogy as it provides students with a learning opportunity which enables them to apply classroom-acquired knowledge to a real-world work experience (Scholtz, 2018:74). A large majority of students (90%-95%) recommended that the SL programme continue to form part of the Advertising and Promotion syllabus.

Students also reported on the type of learning opportunities which the SL programme afforded them, a type of learning that Scholtz (2018:75) notes "traversed academic, personal and social transformational spheres." In addition to embedding conceptual knowledge for practical purposes, students also noted that the SL programme taught them to (Scholtz, 2018:75):

- work under pressure to deliver project outputs on time;
- work in a team to develop ideas and solve problems;
- manage time effectively to cope with deadlines;
- build confidence in presenting to clients;
- use multi-media platforms and social media to advertise;
- make research-informed decisions; and
- be creative and innovative.

At the same time, students noted that the programme was challenging: labour-intensive, financially burdensome, and time consuming (Scholtz, 2018:75).

2.12.3.2 Feedback from community partners

Findings based on the client feedback letters revealed that SMMEs acknowledged their own lack of knowledge in the area of marketing and advertising, and as such were open to what students presented in their campaign proposals. In some cases it was evident that the SMMEs had never considered using advertising to promote their businesses or increase sales, and that despite their scepticism, the students had been able to educate them in marketing best practice (Scholtz, 2018:76).

A key response from the SMMEs registered their recognition of how much the students had taught them about marketing, especially with regard to digital marketing and how to maintain various social media pages. Some comments such as, "students provided new ideas such as Facebook and SMS", and, “I have learnt a lot from them, setting up online accounts, uploading pictures, and importantly, teaching me how to do it myself”, reveal how advertising and marketing knowledge and practices were communicated and shared (Scholtz, 2018:76).

Additional benefits reported by SMMEs include such things as an appreciation of marketing materials such as price lists, posters, flyers, and so forth, increased profits, inspiration through student creativity and innovation, and business growth (Scholtz, 2018:76).

SMMEs also conveyed their appreciation of students’ work, professionalism, creativity, dedication, confidence, and passion (Scholtz, 2018:76). The overall feeling from participating firms can be summarised by the following comments: “these students showed us their creativity, hard work, ambition and determination in the work they do,” and “I am grateful for all their hard work, support and concepts and it will definitely be put into action” (Scholtz, 2018:76). In addition, SMMEs noted that they appreciated being part of a programme in which they could assist students in their careers, pointing to the reciprocal nature of the SL programme (Scholtz, 2018:76).

2.12.3.3 Feedback from academic staff

Staff involved in the project have mentioned that it has been encouraging to see the programme grow over the years to a point at which it serves multiple SMMEs each year (Duffett, 2013; Scholtz, 2018). Duffett (2013:4) mentions that by implementing stricter control measures in 2012, the programme coordinators could ensure that those community partners selected by student teams were actually in need of assistance in the area of marketing communication solutions to help grow their businesses, thereby ensuring the maximum level of impact for the programme.

Duffett (2013:4) reported that the programme encouraged students to work diligently on a real-world project, to learn how to pitch their campaigns, to engage with a real client, while motivating them to produce quality work for both their clients and Brand Shepherd. He notes that this has led students to produce work of an extremely high standard, demonstrating the pedagogical benefits of the programme.

2.12.4 Empirical evaluation of value for clients

Since the inception of SL there has been a call for assessment studies to obtain valid reaction from client organisations (Johnson, 2000:54). In the case of the BSAC-SL programme, this has occurred thus far in an informal manner, using client feedback forms. Scholtz’s (2018) study, for example, included qualitative data derived from the responses of some of the SMMEs from the 2012 BSAC-SL programme, but the study focused mainly on the experiences of students and the reciprocal nature of the programme. There is still a need for empirical assessment of the perceptions and experiences of community partners, and of the value that the programme has had for their businesses – not just in the short term, but also over time.

There is therefore a gap in our understanding of the value of the BSAC-SL programme, especially of the kind that can contribute to its improvement. In the words of Conrad & Hedin (1997:54), “more and better … research is needed to provide deeper understanding and texture to our knowledge of how service-learning can benefit our communities more productively.”

In order to help close this gap, this research study sought to analyse empirically the value that the BSAC-SL had for participating SMMEs over a four-year period, to determine ways in which the programme might be improved in order to increase its value for SMMEs. Considering the great need that South Africa has for a growing SMME sector, every SMME-related support and development programme needs to perform optimally for the country to meet this need. The nature of the SMME sector and the state of SMME marketing in South Africa will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

2.13 Summary

This chapter began by defining SL, combining the ideas of several SL scholars who have published over the last two decades. It then moved on to consider the rationale of SL (both internationally and in South Africa), which highlights the need for universities to focus equally on the development needs of local communities and the learning goals of students, while also training students to be involved citizens with a sense of social responsibility. An important difference between SL in South Africa and in the rest of the world was noted, a difference resulting from the unique SL model developed for South Africa that includes a “three-way partnership” between universities, communities, and service partners.

The chapter then considered the HEQC-established quality assurance cycle for SL in South Africa, designed to monitor and evaluate SL programmes through a four-step process that involves planning, implementing, reviewing, and improving. Consideration was given to where this study fits into the cycle. In addition, some of the key aspects of SL evaluation were discussed by considering four categories of “conditionalities,” namely, appropriateness, implementation, sufficiency, and receptiveness, which are the necessary conditions for the delivery and outcomes of SL programmes to be successful.

The bulk of the chapter highlighted a number of different forms of SL research, including an extensive survey of South African SL research, SL research considering the impact on community participants, client perspectives on SL, SL in business education, SL in marketing education, and small business SL research. Finally, the nature of SL in the Marketing Department at CPUT is discussed, and the chapter ends by considering the BSAC-SL programme, describing the programme details, benefits, and evaluation.

Chapter 3 takes a closer look at the small business sector in South Africa, focusing on its marketing practices.

CHAPTER THREE

SMMEs AND MARKETING-RELATED ELEMENTS

3.1 Introduction

The first and second sections of this chapter briefly consider the importance of small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) and the SMME sector in South Africa. The third section then covers in some detail the importance and uniqueness of SMME marketing, the nature of SMME marketing strategy, international SMME marketing literature, as well as offering a detailed review of South African SMME marketing literature.

In the fourth section, the value of customer knowledge, customer satisfaction research, and market research evaluation are considered in the context of SMME customer research and marketing intelligence. The final section looks at SMME marketing communication by considering the marketing communication mix, with a special emphasis on social media, as well as SMME branding and marketing communication tools like logos and websites.

3.2 The importance of SMMEs

It is near universally recognised that SMMEs make a significant contribution to employment and economic stability (Levine, 2005; Irwin, 2008; European Union, 2012; Potter & Proto, 2013; World Bank, 2013; OECD, 2017:6). In developing countries SMMEs substantially influence the economic wellbeing of rural communities that are generally unable to garner employment from larger corporate businesses (Mitrovic *et al.*, 2007; Grater *et al*., 2017:1).

SMMEs play a vital role all over the world, with numerous studies showing them to be a key vehicle of job creation (Levine, 2005; Irwin, 2008; European Union, 2012; Potter & Proto, 2013; OECD, 2017:6). The contributions made by SMMEs are even more important in developing countries than in developed countries (SBP, 2013:2; Grater *et al*., 2017). Advocates of SMME support reiterate the World Bank's pro-SMME policy, which states that "relative to larger firms, SMMEs enhance competition, entrepreneurship, job growth and spur economy-wide efficiency, innovation, growth and poverty alleviation" (website text cited in Potter & Proto, 2013:16).

3.3 The SMME sector in South Africa

3.3.1 SMME contribution to the economy

In South Africa, SMMEs account for an estimated 36 per cent of the nation's gross domestic product. This means that the SMME sector makes a contribution to our GDP estimated at R350 billion (Herrington *et al.,* 2017). This is far less, however, than the contribution of small businesses in developed countries, which on average makes up 60 per cent of their GDPs (SBI, 2018:4).

3.3.2 Types and definitions of SMMEs

There does not seem to be a universal definition of SMMEs despite the economic and social significance of the sector. In South Africa, the National Small Business Act (South Africa, 1996) identifies SMMEs according to the following five categories, which take into account assets, turnover, and number of employees.

- **Survivalist:** these are informal businesses which comprise activities on a pre-entrepreneurial level. They include vendors, hawkers, and subsistence farmers. These are often people who are unable to find paid employment (Ntsika, 2001:13), who have few assets, and have incomes below the poverty level (Morris & Zahra, 2000:95).
- **Micro:** these usually lack formal registration for licensing and taxation. They also lack capital and have only a basic level of technical and business skills. These businesses have fewer than five employees and their turnover is less than the limit for value-added-tax (VAT) registration (R150 000 per year) (Tustin, 2001:10).
- **Very small:** these businesses are generally run by a self-employed person and employ fewer than ten people full time (except construction, electricity, manufacturing and mining sectors, where the figure is 20 employees). They also have access to technology and operate in the formal "registered" market (Ntsika, 2001:13).
- **Small:** such businesses are generally more established and their organisations are more structured and multifaceted. They also exhibit a higher degree of business sophistication. They usually function from business parks or industrial premises, employ up to 50 people, generate a turnover of between R150 000 and R20 million and are tax registered.
- **Medium:** these enterprises are far more sophisticated and often have a high degree of organisational structure, with additional management providing for decentralisation of power. They employ a maximum of 100-200 employees, have a total turnover of between R6 million and R25 million and are often found in the mining, electricity, manufacturing, and construction industries (Njiro *et al*., 2010:8).

3.3.3 The current SMME business environment

Although considerable effort has been exerted to support SMMEs in South Africa, the current environment is one in which running a successful SMME is difficult and risky, and the rate of failure is high. Rob Davies, the then Minister of Trade and Industry, a few years ago acknowledged that 70 per cent of small businesses fail within one year in South Africa (Peyper, 2013:5). This figure increases to 90 per cent within five years of existence (Durban Chamber of Commerce, 2009). Despite all the efforts to support SMMEs in South Africa this extremely high failure rate continues (Leboea, 2017:15). By way of contrast, in the Unites States, 70 per cent of small enterprises survive for at least two years, according to the US Small Business Administration (Hirsh, 2015).

Many believe that access to finance is the biggest obstacle business owners' face when desiring to start up or expand (DTI, 2004:38; Herrington *et al*., 2017:9; OECD, 2018:5). According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) (Herrington *et al*., 2017:28), it is also one of the primary reasons for business discontinuance in South Africa. The main reasons entrepreneurs struggle to obtain finance include their inability to produce a business plan that meets the standards of the financial institutions, a lack of credit history, poor market research, a lack of access to growing markets, and the lack of a viable business idea (Herrington *et al*., 2015:36).

Additional challenges that SMMEs face in South Africa include poor profitability (DTI, 2008), infrastructure facilities (DTI, 2004:41), crime (OECD, 2015), access to information, advice, and support networks (DTI, 2004:32), access to markets, procurement, and export opportunities (BER, 2016:10), preferential procurement, differential taxation and incentives (DTI, 2004:37), burdensome legal and regulatory conditions (OECD, 2015; BER, 2016:8), inefficient government bureaucracy (Herrington *et al*., 2017:11), and access to skills, technology, research, and development (DTI, 2008; Booysens, 2011; Herrington *et al.*, 2015).

Although researchers have made several recommendations for improving the environment for SMME survival and growth in South Africa, there is a key focus on increasing the effectiveness of SMME support services. One key recommendation by the DTI (2004:26), which has had an impact on this study, is that support programmes need to be monitored and evaluated regularly in order to ensure effective service delivery.

3.4 SMME marketing

3.4.1 Introduction to SMME marketing

Small business owners are generally responsible for most or all of the tasks in the business. Certain tasks (like operations) receive more attention than others (Chiliya *et al*., 2009; Van Scheers, 2018:27), but for a business to thrive and grow, all aspects of its existence have to be attended to. For this reason, business owners and staff members need to possess a variety of skills (Bowler *et al.*, 2007; Van Scheers, 2018:29).

One area that is often neglected, but which is critical to the long-term success of small businesses, is marketing (Lekhanya & Mason, 2013).

Marketing is defined as: "the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large" (American Marketing Association, 2013).

3.4.2 The importance of marketing for SMMEs

There are a number of reasons why marketing can have a striking effect on small business survival and growth. For example, Lamb *et al*. (2020) maintain that marketing is about sensing what the marketplace needs and then effectively providing for those needs in ways that outperform competitors, while at the same time benefiting the firm.

Stokes (2000) found that marketing is very important in the early years of SMME existence as it provides a vital connection between the firm and its external environment. Once established, marketing contributes significantly to the innovation process at SMMEs by helping them to understand their market and develop products to suit the needs of the market (Clark & Ambler, 2011). In fact, Cant (2012:1108) and Van Scheers (2018:27) argue that the marketing decisions taken by SMMEs can be more important to the success of the firm than business planning or strategy. As a strategy for growth, small businesses marketing helps firms develop their market, continuously search for new market opportunities, and consistently increase their customer base (Lekhanya & Mason, 2013).

3.4.3 Uniqueness of SMME marketing

SMME marketing theories are largely underdeveloped as most scholars rely on the application of classical marketing models used for large organisations from developed countries (Chaston, 2002; Bateman & Snell, 2010; Van Sheers, 2018:27). The basic assumption is that the fundamental principles of marketing are universally applicable to both large and small businesses (Gabrielli & Balboni, 2010). However, SMMEs are constrained in terms of financial, physical, and human resources in comparison to larger firms, and as such they engage in marketing differently (Van Scheers, 2018:28; Odoom & Mensah, 2019:156).

The marketing orientation of SMMEs is greatly dependent on the marketing knowledge of the owner (Hogarth-Scott *et al*., 1996; Pérez-Luño *et al*., 2014:265; Van Scheers, 2018:28). Bettiol *et al.* (2012) reveal that marketing strategy in most SMMEs is driven by the owner/manager of the business. They found that SMME marketing is therefore more of a reactive process of response to changes in the business environment, rather than the result of a structured analysis of the market or a systematic search for opportunities.

Murphy (2006) discovered that this haphazard approach to marketing, which also causes a low return on marketing investment, was the result of inadequate marketing skills on the part of SMME owners. Turton & Herrington (2012) confirms this, observing that in addition to limited access to finance, SMMEs also suffer from poor management and marketing skills. Interestingly, the literature reveals that SMMEs do recognise the importance of marketing (Franco *et al.*, 2014), but just do not have the skills and resources to implement it effectively (Gellynck *et al.*, 2012; Van Sheers, 2018:28).

Today, small businesses need to survive in a marketplace that has become “increasingly more competitive, more specialised, more globalised and more technologically-driven” (Iwu, 2009). In order to remain relevant, small businesses need to facilitate marketing that is both knowledgeable and creative (Iwu, 2009).

Despite these challenges and limitations, marketing strategy and practice is by no means the privilege of large firms alone, and this study focuses on exploring the value of marketing for SMMEs when such marketing is facilitated by groups of students in the context of service learning.

3.4.4 SMME marketing strategy

Marketing strategy refers to the means that organisations use to achieve their marketing objectives. These objectives flow from the firm’s overall vision, mission, and business goals, and can range from increasing sales volume, improving profitability, or holding the firm’s position (through increasing prices, reducing costs, streamlining operations, and/or changing the product mix) (Brassington & Pettitt, 2007:438).

Walker *et al.* (2008) describe marketing strategy as specifying the target market for a particular product offering and then ensuring that all marketing mix elements are integrated and tailored to meet the needs of customers in a way that facilitates competitive advantage.

Marketing strategy determines how businesses compete against their major rivals and is documented in a marketing plan, which guides the day-to-day marketing operations and activities (Makhitha, 2016). Marketing plans enable managers to evaluate and monitor the value of the firm’s efforts in each market segment, and how these efforts relate to the objectives of the firm and the expectations of their customers (Venter & Janse van Rensburg, 2014; Makhitha, 2019:150).

Small businesses are less likely to have formal marketing plans than larger businesses (Sengupta & Chattopadhyay, 2006; Makhitha, 2019:150). Although it should be the preferences of customers that drive marketing strategies, often with SMMEs it is the personal values of the owner or manager that do the driving (Pelbani, 2000; Van Scheers, 2018:28).

Very few SMMEs have established marketing strategies, and those that have are prone to use ineffective strategies (Lekhanya & Mason, 2013). As mentioned above, up to 90 per cent of small businesses close their doors in South Africa within their first five years of existence (Durban Chamber of Commerce, 2009). This is not always because they have inferior products or services, but because they fail to establish themselves effectively in the market (Lekhanya & Mason, 2013:41).

A major factor determining the success or failure of marketing strategy is whether it suits the needs of the firm's marketing environment (Finoti *et al*., 2017). Therefore, Cant (2012) argues that in order to develop effective marketing strategies, SMMEs need to have a clear understanding of the environmental factors influencing them. Kotler (2005) adds that firms need to define their target markets clearly, position themselves effectively in the minds of their customers, and use relevant tools to differentiate themselves from competitors.

The BSAC-SL programme is built on the premise that because students are trained in these skills, they are able to assist SMMEs with developing effective marketing strategies. The question that this study poses is whether the help of students is actually having a positive effect on the marketing performance of SMMEs.

3.4.5 SMME marketing mix strategies

A marketing strategy is generally facilitated through the development of a marketing programme, which is made up of four elements, known as the marketing mix. These four elements are the product or service offering strategy (product), the strategy for setting a monetary value for offerings (price), the distribution strategy (place), and the strategy for communicating with consumers (promotion) (UNISA, 2007; Venter & Janse van Rensburg, 2014). In order to achieve success in the marketplace, these four elements need to be blended together in an effective and efficient way. Whether a product is new, an imitation of a competitor's offering, or an update of an existing product, the marketing mix for the offering needs careful planning in order to ensure that it meets customers' needs and wants, has a significant competitive advantage, and is accepted in the marketplace (Brassington & Pettitt, 2007:191; Makhitha, 2019:149).

Although the product element receives relatively little attention in the literature, according to Epstein (2006:35), in order to stimulate sustained, positive word-of-mouth, SMMEs need to provide products and services that consistently outperform competitors in terms of quality and customer service. Such products can be acquired through research and innovation and/or effective procurement procedures, and often lead to profitability and growth among SMMEs (O'Dwyer *et al.*, 2009; Makhitha, 2019:150).

A study by Laljit (2006:22) reveals that price has become the basis for competition among South African SMMEs. This is confirmed by Makhitha (2019:150), who found that craft producers in South Africa often use low prices to make their products competitive. Even government tenders with SMMEs are determined by price. However, using price as the foundation for marketing strategy can have a negative impact on SMMEs, reducing their ability to be profitable or sustainable by limiting their ability to gain a competitive advantage based on a unique differentiating characteristic (Lekhanya & Mason, 2013:42). As a result, businesses which lack a competitive advantage or market orientation simply price their products by copying their competitors, or mark up costs to achieve the desired profit margin (Best, 2000:151). Such businesses end up damaging their market share and profit margins, and erode customer loyalty (Diale, 2008).

With regard to place, Makgoe (2008:7) reports that the location of an SMME can greatly impact its costs. The quality of the local transportation system affects SMMEs' ability to receive goods and deliver products/services to end consumers. For SMMEs located in rural areas, transport costs and poor road conditions pose real challenges for transporting and selling their products in urban or international markets (Lekhanya & Mason, 2013:42). For this reason, Makhitha (2019:150) argues that choosing the right distribution channel is critical for SMMEs in South Africa.

Once a product has been developed at a specific price level and an appropriate distribution channel has been selected for getting the product to end consumers, the business must promote the product to potential buyers (O'Connor & Galvin, 1997:209).

Marketing communication is a major way for SMMEs to differentiate their offerings from competitors (Van Scheers & Radipere, 2008; Makhitha, 2019:150). However, small businesses are often not sure of how effectively and affordably to communicate their offerings to their target consumers (Clow & Baack, 2004:474). What SMMEs often experience as a constraint is their inability to develop marketing communication activities on a scale that is sufficient to allow them to compete with other, often larger competitors (Chaston, 1999:162). A way that some firms overcome this obstacle in domestic markets is by partnering with other firms in order to achieve greater promotional impact.

For this reason, the main focus of this study is to assess the value of partnerships between SMMEs and marketing students. Could such partnerships help SMMEs overcome their lack of experience in marketing communications, and help them to improve their competitiveness in the market?

3.4.6 International SMME marketing literature

In a UK-based study, Chaston (1997) discovered that small businesses were able to achieve growth as a result of implementing marketing strategies. The study revealed, however, that SMME owners should not implement a marketing strategy without continuously reviewing the strategy to ensure that it actually meets organisational goals. A study by Richardson *et al.* (2004) found that Ethiopian, Zambian, and Tanzanian businesswomen experienced more marketing-related challenges than their male counterparts, because of their lack of knowledge of promotional and marketing strategies, and their lack of knowledge of information and resources that could assist them in this regard. It was also found that female entrepreneurs lacked the necessary techniques for negotiating prices with customers and suppliers. Most of them seemed to rely on word-of-mouth, which meant that they were limited in their ability to access new markets.

A study conducted in Europe found that SMMEs evinced a debilitating lack of strategic marketing which negatively affected their ability to identify their customer base (Avoiding Business Failure, 2004). Several South African researchers are united in the belief that a lack of effective marketing strategy is a significant contributor to small business failure (Clay, 2005; Radipere & Van Scheers, 2005; Van Scheers, 2010). Chaston (1997) suggests that effective marketing strategies are a mechanism that small businesses can use to achieve growth, but does stress that small business owners should not implement marketing strategies without having first done research to determine the needs of the consumers and the business.

Pugna *et al.* (2016:312) found a significant relationship between marketing activity and company turnover for Romanian small businesses. Organising marketing activities was overwhelmingly influenced by turnover, rather than employee numbers or specific business sector. A lower turnover prevented small businesses from undertaking organised marketing activities. Finally, a study by Sadiku-Dushi *et al*. (2019) with 217 SMMEs in Kosovo revealed that entrepreneurial marketing does positively impact the performance of SMMEs, especially the dimensions of opportunity focus, resource leveraging, and value creation.

3.4.7 South African SMME marketing literature

A wide variety of research has been done in South Africa pertaining to small business marketing. Some of the research is broad in nature, looking at the general marketing approaches of small businesses, whereas other studies are more specific, focusing on particular types of marketing communication (like social media). A selection of 11 studies covering a span of 8 years was reviewed, and these are summarised in Table 3.1, below. The table is separated into six columns, for author, date and title; problem; purpose; methodology; findings; and noteworthy details and recommendations. Each of these sections is also discussed in more detail after the table.

Table 3.1: Eleven years of SMME marketing research in South Africa (2009–2019)

Author, date, title	**Problem**	**Purpose**	**Methodology**	**Findings**	**Recommendations/ Noteworthy Details**
Chiliya *et al.* (2009) The impact of marketing strategies on profitability of small grocery shops in South African townships	Competition in the retailing sector in South Africa is fierce. In order to survive in this market, independent, locally owned SMMEs need to implement effective marketing strategies.	To determine empirical support for the relationship between the marketing strategies and financial performance of black-owned small grocery stores in South Africa.	An empirical study using a self-administered questionnaire with 50 black-owned grocery stores in the Mdantsane area of East London in South Africa.	Price was considered the most important factor in the application of the marketing mix. There was a lack of implementation of the other Ps in the marketing mix. The majority of respondents did not indicate an increase in new customer acquisitions, neither did they recognise their responsibility to stimulate demand. Most respondents did not allocate a part of their budget to marketing activities and they did little to differentiate themselves from direct competitors.	The authors believe that the owners/managers should be educated on the importance of marketing strategy. Stores should determine customer needs and train all employees in customer service.
Cant (2012) Challenges faced by SMEs in South Africa: are marketing skills needed?	When small businesses fail it is often assumed that the reason lies with the finances of the business, without much attention being paid to other contributing factors, like a lack of or even incorrect marketing action taken by SMEs.	To obtain feedback on the need for marketing skills amongst SMEs and to determine whether an absence of such skills have an impact on the success of SMEs, as well as their perceptions of the importance of marketing for SMEs in South Africa.	Qualitative study with 1000 small business owners using personal interviews achieving an 80 per cent response rate.	Respondents considered the following market-related aspects as having an impact on business success, namely, increased competition (100%), low product demand (88%), poor location (85%), ineffective marketing (84%), and a lack of marketing knowledge (80%). The two key problems identified as having an impact on the failure of small businesses were finance problems and a lack of marketing skills. Over 90 per cent of respondents felt that the failure of small business can be attributed to a lack of marketing skills.	The author recommends that SMMEs adopt sound marketing practices in order to ensure business success. Unfortunately he does not give recommendations as to how such business should gain the marketing skills that they need.

Lekhanya and Mason (2013) The use of marketing strategies by small, medium and micro enterprises in rural KwaZulu-Natal	Although it is generally known that most SMMEs fail within their first few years of existence, little is known about the marketing strategies and marketing environments of rural SMMEs.	To determine if rural SMMEs use formal marketing strategies, to identity factors that limit their marketing activities, to gauge their understanding of marketing, and to gain insight into the marketing communication techniques they use.	A qualitative survey was conducted with 374 owners/managers of SMMEs in rural KZN, using self-completed questionnaires administered by fieldworkers.	Most respondents understood marketing to be a combination of knowing what customers want (92.5%) and selling products or services (84.2%). The major forms of marketing communication methods used included local advertising (57.5%), special offers (42%), personal selling (39.6%), and brochures (36.9%). 67 per cent of respondents reported that they lacked the knowledge and experience to engage in marketing, and 32.9 per cent conceded that they lacked the funds to invest in marketing. With regard to the benefits of marketing, most of the respondents agreed that marketing helps their business in terms of referrals (69%), loyalty (74.3%), and sales (76.8%).	The authors recommend a focus on the use of personal selling because of the illiterate nature of rural communities, which would make most written forms of communication tactics ineffective. They further recommend that the government implement education and training initiatives to improve the knowledge and skills of rural SMMEs in the area of marketing. In addition they feel that funding should be made available for technology infrastructure (to be used for marketing purposes) and to hire marketing specialists, consultants and agents to serve the needs of rural SMMEs.
Hove and Masocha (2014) Interaction of technological marketing and Porter's five competitive forces on SME competitiveness in South Africa.	There is a lack of knowledge of whether technological advancements are beneficial for SME marketing in South Africa.	To determine whether technology constrains or strengthens the performance and competitiveness of SMEs in business environments.	A descriptive survey using a self-administered questionnaire with 211 SME owners/managers of manufacturing and retailing firms in the Buffalo City Metropolitan area in the Eastern Cape of South Africa.	Although new marketing technologies are believed to increase business performance (like sales growth and profitability), it is not believed to increase a firm's competitive edge against other firms in the market.	SME firms in the Buffalo City area should adopt new marketing technologies in order to increase their sales, profits, and overall performance.

Lekhanya (2015) Key factors affecting the small, medium and micro enterprises' (SMMEs) marketing strategies in rural South Africa.	In South Africa, access to finance, skills, leadership, managerial skills, education and training, as well as the skills of personnel are the primary obstacles for SMME survival and growth.	To identify the key internal factors that affect the success of SMMEs' marketing strategies in rural South Africa.	A quantitative and qualitative questionnaire collected data from 374 SMME owners/managers in rural KZN.	When asked what affects their marketing abilities, respondents affirmed that they never thought about marketing their businesses (94.4%), do not know why they should do marketing (93.9%), lack knowledge and experience to do marketing (67.%), and lack the funds for marketing (32.9%).	The study reveals that because of a lack of marketing knowledge and experience, SMMEs are not able to fully utilise promotional methods to grow. In addition, because of a lack of finance, rural SMMEs find it difficult to employ qualified personnel to properly implement marketing strategies. The author recommends that the government provides access to funding for SMMEs as well as education and training programmes for key marketing skills.
Maduku *et al.* (2016) Understanding mobile marketing adoption intention by South African SMEs: a multi-perspective framework.	Even though it has been shown that mobile marketing can be very beneficial to SMEs (considering its low cost), there is limited understanding of the drivers of mobile marketing acceptance among SMEs.	To determine the key drivers of mobile marketing adoption intention by South African SMEs.	Data was collected from a random sample of 830 SMEs from Gauteng, South Africa and achieved a 61.6 per cent response rate. All the non-adopters of mobile marketing were selected for further analysis resulting in 204 respondents.	The study revealed that the most important drivers of mobile marketing adoption intention are perceived relative advantage, perceived cost, perceived top management support, perceived employee IT capability, and perceived customer pressure. Of these significant factors, perceived top management support exerts the strongest influence on the intention of SMEs' decision-makers/managers to adopt mobile marketing.	Developers of mobile marketing innovations need to develop mobile marketing systems that provide functionalities that are capable of addressing the most common marketing challenges of SMEs. Developers can overcome cost barriers by emphasising the benefit of the technology for successful marketing activities and also focus on educating top management about these benefits.

Soke and Wild (2016) Small-business marketing in Soweto: the importance of the human touch	SMMEs experience high failure rates in South Africa. It is unclear to what degree small businesses are increasing their chances of success by using marketing activities and promotion and communication tools to meet customers' needs.	To explore the use of integrated marketing communication tools by SMMEs in Soweto for the purpose of informing, reminding, and persuading current and potential customers.	273 responses were gained from SMMEs located in Soweto using hand delivered self-administered questionnaires.	The following tools received positive ratings, word-of-mouth (91.4%), advertising (72.9%), sales promotion (52.9%), direct marketing (74.5%), personal selling (87.7%), and public relations (76.3%). Internet marketing received a 63.2 per cent negative rating. Businesses with 10 or fewer employees were 50 per cent less likely to make use of Internet marketing than those with 10 or more employees. Businesses that had been in operation for 1 year or less underemphasised the importance of sales promotion to increase revenue.	Considering that tourism clientele are not locally located, SMMEs should consider adopting Internet marketing methods in order to promote their businesses to these customers.
Kallier (2017) The focus of the marketing communication efforts of SMEs within South Africa.	There is a lack of knowledge about the communication tools used by SMEs in South Africa, and to what degree these tools help them succeed.	To determine the usage of both traditional and technology-enabled marketing communication tools by SMEs in South Africa.	Questionnaires were administered electronically to registered SMEs in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. 123 useable responses were received from owners/managers.	Those tools that were used often and always include business cards (82%), websites (71.4%), emails (71.7%), Facebook (56.6%), social media (56%), mobile media (41.8%), and pamphlets (43.8%). Those that were never and rarely used include posters (43.6%), the local newspaper (60.7%), Twitter (46.5%), short message service (SMS) (42%), MMS (65.9%), voice message (67.4%), and blogs (65.3%).	The author suggests that SMEs should not simply use the communication tools that they know or like but should do market research and then use the tools that are used by their target market.

Rambe (2017) Social media marketing and business competiveness: evidence from South African tourism SMMEs	Tourism SMME's located in rural areas struggle to link to the mainstream tourist market.	To determine to the extent to which tourism SMMEs utilise social media technologies (SMTs) to extend their market share of customers, and the impact that the use of SMTs has on their competitiveness.	Quantitative survey research with owners/managers of 234 SMMEs in the Free State. A response rate of 53 per cent was achieved resulting in 123 completed questionnaires.	83.9 per cent of businesses made use of social media technologies. 61.8 per cent used social networking sites (like Facebook). In general, owners/managers (58.8%) handled social media technologies for the business. Most businesses used SMTs to attract new customers (46.7%) or engage with existing customers (71.1%). However, most considered their knowledge of SMTs to be either novice (32.5%) or intermediary (44.7%)	Although a majority of tourism SMMEs make use of SMTs, most do not fully comprehend their importance for business operations. In addition, their lack of knowledge about them and skills to use them often constrain them in their marketing efforts. SMMEs are encouraged to develop comprehensive SMT strategies.
Oji *et al*. (2017a) The use of social media marketing strategies by SMMEs in the hospitality sector in the Cape Metropole, South Africa.	Although SMMEs are considered vital for economic growth and job creation in South Africa, Radipere and Sheers (2005) reveal that many lack proper marketing and managerial skills, which negatively affects their growth.	To determine the use of social media platforms as a marketing strategy by restaurants in the Cape Metropole in order to grow their businesses.	Descriptive survey using a self-administered questionnaire with 180 restaurant owner/managers in the Cape Metropole resulting in a 52.7% response rate (95 completed questionnaires).	92.6 per cent of businesses used social media platforms for business purposes. 58.9 per cent of businesses used Facebook, 27.5 per cent used Twitter, 82.3 per cent used WhatsApp, and 76 per cent used other forms of marketing such as SMS, email, fliers, telephone calls, and so forth. Social media was used for promotion (67.6%), new product marketing (58.8%), customer loyalty (65.2%), and socialising with clients (77.3%).	Use of the social media for marketing purposes could boost the marketing capability of small restaurants and help them make their marketing strategies more sustainable.

Oji *et al.* (2017b) Social media adoption challenges of small businesses: the case of restaurants in the Cape Metropole, South Africa	Much of the world's population remains offline due to the high cost of devices, lack of infrastructure, and poor/intermittent supply from service providers. This influences the degree to which small business are able to make use of social media.	To determine which factors prevent the use of social media among restaurants in the Cape Metropole of South Africa.	100 owners/ managers of local restaurants were approached to complete a self-administered survey.	Factors that hindered the use of social media included, a lack of Internet facilities (37.3%), a lack of understanding of the capabilities of the various platforms (25.8%), a lack of awareness of social media platforms (22.6%), a lack of knowledge about social media marketing strategies (24.7%), and a lack of interest in social media (15.9%).	The author recommends investment in Internet infrastructure to ensure that small businesses have access to the Internet. Further recommendations from the findings are lacking.
Van Scheers (2018) Marketing challenges small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are facing in South Africa.	Small businesses in South Africa have a very high failure rate. This is influenced by their lack of marketing skills.	To determine which marketing challenges SMMEs face and how they contribute to the high business failure rates in South Africa.	Quantitative study with 1000 business owners.	Findings indicate that SMME owner managers have a low level of marketing skills. Challenges included increased competition (100%), low demand (88%), poor location (85%), ineffective marketing (84%), and lack of marketing knowledge (80%). The majority of respondents (74%) expressed a positive link between a lack of marketing skills and SMME failure.	The author notes that SMMEs need to improve their marketing skills in order to overcome some of the marketing challenges they face.

Makhitha (2019) Marketing strategies for closing the market access gap experienced by small craft producers in South Africa.	There is a lack of reliable and accessible research data related to the craft industry, and marketing and branding are some of the major challenges facing local craft producers.	To determine the needs that small South African craft producers have for marketing strategy.	Qualitative conceptual analysis.	N/A	SMMEs must have a proper marketing plan; must select the target markets that they can effectively serve by matching; must produce a broad range of branded products based on market research which are distinct from competitors' products and maintain high quality standards; must monitor communication trends, use social media, communicate product information to customers, develop marketing communication materials, and attend exhibitions; must understand pricing trends, consider the quality of their products compared to competitors, and focus on developing unique products that they can charge a premium for; must develop distribution strategies that will enhance buyers' access to their products, have access to delivery services, and should produce items in the low seasons and store them for high demand seasons.

a. Problem

Although it is generally known that most SMMEs fail within their first few years of existence, little is known about the marketing strategies and marketing environments of SMMEs in both urban and rural settings (Lekhanya & Mason, 2013). For this reason, many researchers consider problems that relate to the general marketing of SMMEs, such as the effect of incorrect marketing actions on business failure (Cant, 2012; van Scheers, 2018), the lack of marketing skills negatively affecting growth (Lekhanya, 2015; Oji *et al.*, 2017a), the marketing and branding challenges faced by SMMEs (Makhitha, 2019), and the impact of competition on SMME retailers (Chiliya *et al*., 2009). Researchers also look at specific marketing-related problems, like the lack of knowledge about which marketing communication tools are used by SMMEs (Soke & Wild, 2016; Kallier, 2017); the struggle for rural SMMEs to link to mainstream markets (Rambe, 2017); the lack of marketing-related infrastructure in rural areas like the Internet (Oji *et al*., 2017b); the lack of understanding of the marketing benefits of technological advancements for SMMEs (Hove & Masocha, 2014), and the use of mobile marketing (Maduku *et al*., 2016).

b. Purpose

The purpose of these studies is often to understand how SMMEs implement marketing strategies in general, like identifying key internal factors that affect the success of SMME marketing strategies (Lekhanya, 2015); exploring the use of integrated marketing communication tools by SMMEs (Soke & Wild, 2016); the use of marketing strategies by rural SMMEs (Lekhanya & Mason, 2013); the relationship between marketing strategies and financial performance (Chiliya *et al*., 2009); the specific marketing challenges which SMMEs face (Van Scheers, 2018); the specific strategic marketing needs of SMMEs (Makhitha, 2019); and to understand the marketing skills needs of South African SMMEs (Cant, 2012; Van Scheers, 2018). Interestingly, many studies consider the influence and impact of marketing technologies on South African SMMEs. These include the extent to which SMMEs use social media technologies (SMTs) (Oji *et al.,* 2017a; Oji *et al.,* 2017b; Rambe, 2017); the impact of technology on business performance and competitiveness (Hove & Masocha, 2014); the use of both traditional and technology-enabled marketing communication tools (Kallier, 2017); and the key drivers of mobile marketing adoption intention by South African SMMEs (Maduku *et al.,* 2016).

c. Methodology

Almost all the researchers followed a descriptive quantitative methodology to survey local SMMEs, using a self-administered questionnaire with owners/managers. The number of respondents ranged from 50 to 1000 and the studies generally achieved a response rate of 50 per cent and above. The studies surveyed businesses in the Free State (Rambe, 2017); Western Cape (Kalliers, 2017; Oji *et* *al.,* 2017a; Oji *et al.*, 2017b); KwaZulu-Natal (Lekhanya & Mason, 2013; Lekhanya, 2015; Kalliers, 2017); Gauteng (Maduku *et al.,* 2016; Soke & Wild, 2016); the Eastern Cape (Chiliya *et al*., 2009; Hove & Masocha, 2014), and throughout South Africa (Van Scheers, 2018). Only Cant (2012), van Scheers (2011), and Makhitha (2019) made use of a qualitative approach to personally interview 1000 small business owners.

d. Findings

The findings of the various studies are vast. In the Freestate, Rambe (2017:417) found that 83.9 per cent of SMMEs made use of social media technologies for business purposes. The most popular forms of SMT were social networking sites like Facebook (61.8%), and in most cases the SMTs were handled by owners/managers (58.8%). Most businesses used SMTs to attract new customers (46.7%) and to interact with existing customers (71.1%).

When surveying restaurants in the Cape Metropole, Oji *et al.* (2017a) found similar results to Rambe (2017). In addition, they found that 82.3 per cent of businesses also used WhatsApp for business purposes. The restaurants used SMTs for business promotion (67.6%), new product marketing (58.8%), customer loyalty (65.2%), and socialising with clients (77.3%). In general, small businesses felt that SMTs were effective for marketing purposes. Oji *et al*. (2017b) revealed factors that hindered the use of social media for marketing purposes, included a lack of Internet facilities (37.3%), a lack of knowledge of the capabilities of the various social media platforms (25.8%), and a lack of knowledge of social media marketing strategies (24.7%).

Hove and Masocha (2014) found that a significant relationship existed between the adoption of new and advanced technologies (technological marketing capability) and SMME performance. Adopting new marketing technologies can enable an SMME to positively influence its profitability, sales growth, and general performance. However, it was found that SMMEs in the Eastern Cape area do not employ the latest marketing technologies in order to compete.

In terms of mobile marketing adoption, Maduku *et al.* (2016) found that the most important drivers of mobile marketing adoption intention amongst South African SMMEs are perceived competitive advantage, perceived cost, perceived top management support, perceived employee IT capability, and perceived customer pressure. Of these significant factors, perceived top management support exerts the strongest influence on the intention of SMMEs' decision-makers/managers to adopt mobile marketing.

Soke and Wild (2016) asked SMMEs in Soweto which communication tools and methods they used to promote their businesses. Word-of-mouth achieved a 91.4 per cent positive rating, advertising a 72.9

per cent positive rating, sales promotion a 52.9 per cent positive rating, Internet marketing a 63.2 per cent negative rating, direct marketing a 74.5 per cent positive rating, personal selling an 87.7 per cent positive rating, and public relations a positive rating of 76.3 per cent. Businesses with 10 or fewer employees were 50 per cent less likely to make use of Internet marketing than those with 10 or more employees. In addition, businesses that had been in operation for one year or less underemphasised the importance of sales promotion to increase revenue.

Interestingly, the very two strategies which Soke and Wild's (2016) SMMEs underemphasised (Internet marketing and sales promotion) were those that student teams who participated in the BSAC-SL programme assisted SMMEs with the most. Could it be that the reason that SMMEs underemphasised these was because they did not have the requisite knowledge and skills to implement them properly?

A large number of owners/managers of rural SMMEs in KwaZulu Natal felt that promotional activities were very effective in increasing the popularity/awareness of their businesses and were therefore very important for business success. With regard to the benefits of marketing, most respondents agreed that marketing helps their businesses in terms of referrals (69%), loyalty (74.3%), and sales (76.8%). Lekhanya and Mason (2013) determined that most respondents understood marketing to be a combination of knowing what customers want (92.5%) and selling products or services (84.2%). The marketing communication methods that these SMMEs made most use of included local advertising (57.5%), special offers (42%), personal selling (39.6%), and brochures (36.9%). However, when Lekhanya (2015) asked them what affects their marketing abilities, respondents postulated that they never thought about marketing their businesses (94.4%), did not know why they should do marketing (93.9%), lacked the knowledge and experience to do marketing (67%), and lacked the funds for marketing (32.9%). In general, respondents were of the opinion that marketing needed special skills and was very expensive.

Kallier (2017) did similar research with urban SMMEs in both Kwa-Zulu Natal and the Western Cape, and came up with somewhat different results. The tools that were used often and always, included business cards (82%), websites (71.4%), emails (71.7%), Facebook (56.6%), social media (56%), mobile media (41.8%), and pamphlets (43.8%). Those that were never and rarely used include posters (43.6%), the local newspaper (60.7%), Twitter (46.5%), SMS (42%), MMS (65.9%), voice message (67.4%), and blogs (65.3%).

Chiliya *et al*. (2009) surveyed 50 small grocery stores in East London and found that price was considered the most important factor in the application of the marketing mix. There was in fact little implementation of the other P's in the marketing mix. The majority of respondents did not indicate an increase in new customer acquisitions, neither did they recognise their responsibility to stimulate demand. Most respondents did not allocate a part of their budget to marketing activities and they did little to differentiate themselves from direct competitors. One of the key purposes of the BSAC-SL programme was to change such ideas by showing SMMEs how to stimulate demand, and hopefully to have sufficient influence on performance indicators like sales to convince them to allocate some of their budget to marketing activities.

A lack of consistency with regard to pricing was also highlighted. A majority of 69 per cent of the stores did not follow a consistent mark-up policy by keeping their prices stable from day to day. In some cases two different customers buying the product on the same day could pay different prices at the owner's discretion, causing potential for customer defection. As many as 67 per cent of respondents offered discounts to customers regularly, and 33 per cent offered discounts to loyal customers.

Although the owners/managers felt that customers' desires should be prioritised (94% agreement), 61 per cent did not measure customer satisfaction levels regularly. As far as customer research is concerned, some businesses consulted customers yearly (8%), monthly (22%), weekly (17%), and not at all (25%). In the BSAC-SL programme, students helped SMMEs develop simple customer satisfaction questionnaires that they could use regularly to survey the views and perceptions of customers.

As far as advertising is concerned, stores mostly used word of mouth (93%) in order to promote their products. Most (80%) respondents were happy with the limited variety of products they stocked because most purchases are staples and ad hoc items. While 89 per cent of respondents repacked goods into smaller packages, 78 per cent felt that they did not have the correct/most effective packaging. In addition, only 8 per cent of respondents checked the expiry dates of products before repackaging them. Only 42 per cent of respondents indicated that they knew their competitors well and could respond quickly to their marketing efforts. Overall it was found that marketing strategies did not play a significant role in determining profitability (Chiliya *et al*., 2009:76).

The BSAC-SL programme was designed to assist SMMEs with all these forms of day-to-day marketing activity, such as giving suggestions for better packaging, pricing, and advertising, and developing a customer research tool that owners could use to measure customer satisfaction and gain insight into customer preferences.

Factors that hindered the implementation of marketing strategies and decreased performance were mostly financially oriented, including bad debts, excessive debt, banking, budgeting, forecasting, and accounting. Although small businesses do not have many funds, it was found that this does not conclusively prevent them from implementing marketing strategies, as there are affordable ways to do so, including good customer service, till slip promotions, and so forth (Chiliya *et al.,* 2009:77). In order to overcome this challenge, the BSAC-SL programme tried to help SMMEs to develop approaches to marketing which were either free or very cost effective.

Chiliya *et al.* (2009:79) argue that grocery shops in East London do not display behaviour that reflects a high degree of marketing orientation. They conclude that the fact that the grocery stores offered discounts to loyal customers was a desperate attempt to increase their turnover, rather than the result of a focus on customer needs and wants. Furthermore, they feel that the grocery stores did not apply the principles of marketing strategy to enhance profitability to a significant degree. The use of marketing strategy, rather than simply using discounts, was something that the BSAC-SL programme tried to instil in the minds SMME owners/managers, by developing strategies that could work over the long term.

Cant (2012) and Van Scheers (2018) did extensive qualitative and quantitative research with 1000 SMMEs using personal interviews and questionnaires to survey each one. The two key problems identified as causing the failure of small businesses were finance problems and a lack of marketing skills. Over 90 per cent of respondents felt that the failure of small businesses can be attributed to a lack of marketing skills, while 70 per cent of respondents whose first businesses had failed attributed the failure to a lack of money for running expenses or expansion/capital items. What results is a lack of funds to use for marketing the business. A total of 74 per cent of SMMEs confirmed a positive relationship between a lack of marketing skills and small business failure in South Africa. They declared their need for marketing support services such as training, mentorship, and financial assistance. In addition it was evident that SMMEs were constrained by non-financial factors such as a lack of education in certain key business areas, inadequate technical skills, poor access to markets, a lack of information, and unreliable infrastructure. The research also revealed that there was a gap between the marketing skills that SMMEs have and those that they actually need. SMME owners recounted the specific marketing skills challenges they experienced in the running of their businesses. These included access to finance (95%), gaining an understanding of the market and the areas that have potential for growth (93%), market needs analysis (85%), market segmentation (76%), education and training (66%), marketing of products (64%), and competitiveness (56%).

The BSAC-SL programme was designed to deliver the skills needed by local SMMEs, through implementing marketing activities and training SMMEs in their use. In addition to a number of other goals, this study sought to determine the value that exposure to these skills had for participating SMMEs.

On the basis of this survey of SMME marketing research in South Africa, the following conclusions can be reached:

- There is a big difference between the marketing capabilities of SMMEs in rural and urban areas in South Africa;
- Large numbers of urban SMMEs are making use of technology for marketing purposes, including social media and mobile technologies. This is having a positive influence on SMME performance;
- Aspects that hinder the use of technology for marketing purposes among rural SMMEs include a lack of infrastructure/facilities, a lack of funding, and a lack of knowledge;
- Most businesses, both rural and urban, make use of marketing communication techniques such as sales promotion, advertising, and personal selling;
- Most SMMEs make use of marketing communication tools in order to promote their offerings. Urban SMMEs mostly use e-media (like email and the social media) to promote their businesses, whereas rural SMMEs mostly make use of traditional media (like word-of-mouth and brochures);
- Price seems to be the most important marketing mix factor for businesses, especially rural businesses. The other marketing mix elements are often neglected;
- In general, businesses do not have a marketing orientation, even though they agree that understanding customers' needs is important;
- Businesses feel that the two most important elements that impact business success or failure are marketing and access to funding;
- Most businesses mention a lack of knowledge, a lack of funds, and a lack of time or resources to implement marketing effectively; and
- Businesses report a need for marketing support services such as training, mentorship, and funding.

Considering all the unique aspects of SMMEs in South Africa from a marketing perspective, the BSAC-SL programme was poised to make a real difference as far as the understanding and implementation of marketing are concerned, especially for the purposes of increasing the chances of business survival. Although it did not offer businesses any funding in this regard, it did seek to have a positive effect in many of the other marketing-related areas. The main question is, "did the programme truly have a beneficial effect on the marketing practices and performance of participating firms?"

e. Recommendations/noteworthy details

Various authors make recommendations to advance the marketing function of SMMEs in South Africa. The recommendations can be roughly divided into four key areas: the use of technology for marketing purposes, marketing orientation, overcoming marketing challenges, and overall marketing recommendations.

i. Making use of technology for marketing purposes

Rambe (2017) encourages SMMEs to develop coherent social media marketing strategies that make the application of social media tools, social media marketing training, and the targeted use of social media integral components of business operations. Oji *et al*. (2017a) simply encourage small businesses to make social media a part of the marketing strategy as the authors believe it will render their marketing strategies more sustainable. Soke and Wilde (2016) encourage businesses to adopt Internet marketing methods in order to access new markets and foreign clientele. Hove and Masocha (2014) believe that business should adopt new marketing technologies in order to increase their sales, profits, and overall performance. Maduku *et al*. (2016) encourage developers of mobile marketing innovations to develop mobile marketing systems that provide enough functionalities to address most of the common marketing challenges of SMMEs, and to communicate these benefits to SMME decision makers, while also making provision for SMME training. In order to help business adopt new marketing technologies, the BSAC-SL programme tasked students with implementing numerous digital marketing strategies (such as a Facebook page) in order to help SMMEs increase their performance.

ii. Improving marketing orientation

Chiliya *et al.* (2009) feel that SMMEs should do marketing research with their customers to determine the product price, quality and variety they desire. This, the authors believe, will help SMMEs to segment their markets and determine their targeting strategies in order to develop their particular niche. In order to improve service quality and customer loyalty the authors suggest a paradigm shift in managerial thinking towards being more customer-centric; the product offerings and prices need to be consistent and reliable; time should be spent building relationships with customers and receiving customer feedback; and pricing strategies should be based on sound accounting practices rather than intuition. In addition, Kallier (2017) suggests that SMMEs should not simply use the communication tools that they know or like, but should do market research and use the tools that are used by their target markets. These are some of the very things that the BSAC-SL programme tries to instil in the SMME partners throughout the programme.

iii. Overcoming marketing challenges

In order to overcome the lack of marketing knowledge and finance for marketing purposes (for instance, to employ qualified marketing personnel), Lekhanya (2015) recommends that the small business development community provides access to funding for SMMEs as well as education and training programmes for key marketing skills. Oji *et al.* (2017b) believe that the South African government and other small business development support agencies should invest in Internet infrastructure to ensure that small businesses have access to the Internet. Lekhanya & Mason (2013) add that marketing specialists, consultants and agents should be made available to serve the needs of

SMMEs. By participating in service learning, SMMEs gain free access to some university infrastructure (through the students) as well as to budding marketing specialists.

iv. Overall marketing recommendations

Makhitha (2019) gives small South African craft producers a number of recommendations linked to each element of the marketing mix. In addition to having a proper marketing plan, the author recommends that SMMEs must select the target markets that they can effectively serve. As far as their product selection is concerned, Makhitha (2019) suggests that firms produce a broad range of high quality, differentiated, and branded products based on market research. In terms of marketing communication, the author recommends that businesses monitor communication trends, make use of social media, develop marketing communication materials, communicate product information to customers, and attend product exhibitions. With regard to pricing strategies, Makhitha (2019) suggests that in addition to monitoring pricing trends SMMEs should focus on developing products that are unique and therefore different from those of their competitors. They can then charge a premium for them. In terms of distribution strategies, the author recommends that SMMEs should develop strategies that enhance the access that buyers have to their products, such as the use of delivery services and stocking up on products in seasons of low demand in order to make provision for high demand seasons.

It is clear that SMMEs do not only need assistance in marketing communication, but also with the rest of the marketing mix. In the BSAC-SL programme, student agencies did not only develop work related to marketing communication, but also gave their client SMMEs recommendations for each element of the marketing mix. This helped SMMEs see the marketing of their businesses from a more holistic perspective. To what degree this actually improved their knowledge and firm performance is the key question explored by this study.

3.5 SMME customer research

Literature emphasises that market research is vital in creating successful marketing strategies, but this is not always feasible for SMMEs because of a lack of knowledge and resources (Henninger & Alevizou, 2017:29). They tend to need assistance to perform this marketing task.

Thus market research was the first major area that students assisted partner businesses with in the BSAC-SL programme. Students designed basic customer satisfaction and feedback questionnaires and then used them to interview the customers of their SMME partners. In the case of retail clients, students also left smaller feedback forms for customers to complete. In other cases they either contacted existing customers to make an appointment to conduct an interview, or they simply interviewed potential customers in and around the business premises of the SMME. The primary purpose of the market research was to produce data to inform marketing strategy development.

The American Marketing Association (2004) defines marketing research as:

> the function that links the consumer, customer, and public to the marketer through information – information used to identify and define marketing opportunities and problems; generate, refine, and evaluate marketing actions; monitor marketing performance; and improve understanding of marketing as a process. Marketing research specifies the information required to address these issues, designs the method for collecting information, manages and implements the data collection process, analyses the results, and communicates the findings and their implications.

Market research covers a wide range of survey collection and analysis techniques designed to support marketing decision making. These include both qualitative and quantitative research designed to improve the quality of decision-making, identify problems, understand the market, and foster customer value and quality by analysing a variety of aspects relating to consumers, including product or service purchasing, usage, and attitudes (Leventhal, 2000:271; Lamb *et al*., 2020:175-177).

As far as product or service quality is concerned, market research is the systematic collection, recording, and analysis of data concerning product or service quality as viewed by the customer (Rhey & Gryna, 2001:31; Ramanathan *et al*., 2018:1941). Market research provides management with the information needed to make short-term decisions as well as long-term strategies for the purpose of enhancing the quality of their product or service offering (Lamb *et al.*, 2020:176). The three key areas of the market research that is necessary for this type of planning are measuring customer satisfaction, determining customer needs for product development, and analysing customer retention and loyalty (Rhey & Gryna, 2001:31; Marinda, 2018:8).

3.5.1 The value of marketing / customer knowledge

Customer knowledge is the term used to refer to the understanding of customer preferences, and is very important for product and service development (Tseng, 2009; Kumar *et al.,* 2010; Taghizadeh *et al.*, 2018:162).

Learning from customers has long been considered to be the most important source of learning for business organisations (Poon, 1993:272; Rampton, 2016; Yachin, 2018:201). The notion that customers, users, and consumers are an important source of knowledge for firms is scattered throughout a number of conceptual and empirical research studies from various theoretical streams. For example, open innovation (Brunswicker, 2016; Efstathiades & Papageorgiou, 2019), new service development (Matthing *et al*., 2004; Yu & Sangiorgi, 2018), service dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Vargo & Lusch, 2016; Ng & Vargo, 2018; Brodie *et al*., 2019), and user-driven innovation (Von Hippel, 2005; Grabher & Ibert, 2018) all support involving and learning from customers as a key source of knowledge for firms. The key idea is that sourcing information from customers about their interests, past experiences, satisfaction, and latent desires has the potential to increase innovation capacity for firms and enhance value for customers (Yachin, 2018:201).

According to the service-dominant (S-D) model, a firm cannot deliver value, but instead develops value propositions (Vargo & Lusch, 2016) based on the needs and wants of customers and their perceptions of value. One of the key elements of the S-D model is that "value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary" (Vargo & Lusch, 2016:19). This idea stresses how important it is for firms to learn from their customers.

Hjalager and Nordin (2011) have presented 16 different methods to source information from customers including customer surveys, reviewing complaints and product ratings, customer interviews and observations, virtual communities, and innovation camps. Fuchs *et al.* (2015) have shown how customer knowledge can be sourced using business intelligence, web-mining, and electronic tracking devices, whereas Konu (2015) discovered that the Delphi method can generate an abundance of information and ideas from potential customers. Kanu and Komppula (2016) show that customer databases can be used to target specific customers for specific feedback.

Generally, however, market research literature discusses knowledge sourcing methods that are presumably beyond the means of small businesses, which often lack the resources, time, and expertise to commission systematic data collection and analysis (Yachin, 2018:203). Small firms thus often use informal processes to manage knowledge (Hutchinson & Quintas, 2008; Centobelli *et al*., 2019). As they continuously interact with their customers, small firms acquire new knowledge relating to demand (Marrocu & Paci, 2011). For example, Brunswicker (2016) demonstrates that an application-oriented knowledge sourcing strategy (which involves engaging directly with customers) is usually more applicable to small firms, as it allows them to learn about the emerging needs of customers and improve their product and service offerings accordingly. Pikkemaat and Zehrer (2016) therefore believe that small firms benefit from being in close contact with customers, and can become very good at identifying the unique preferences and interests of their customers. Consequently, small firms' ability to gain customer knowledge depends to a large degree on their relationships with their customers, rather than on systemised methods (Hutchinson & Quintas, 2008; Brunswicker, 2016; Pikkemaat & Zehrer, 2016; Centobelli *et al*., 2019).

3.5.2 Customer satisfaction research

If small businesses want to survive long term, they need to develop strong relationships with their customers (Tatikonda, 2013:38). In order to do so, SMMEs need continually to maximise customer satisfaction. Considerable research indicates that customer satisfaction is what ultimately leads to customer loyalty and repurchase intentions, which result in increased profits and long-term survival and growth (Mittal & Kamakura, 2001; Seiders *et al*., 2005; Helgesen, 2006; Curtis *et al*., 2011; Okharedia, 2013; Gong & Yi, 2018; Cheng *et al*., 2019).

Positive customer satisfaction occurs when a customer evaluates a product or service offering and determines that it has met or exceeded their expectations (Zeithaml *et al*., 2006:110; Lamb *et al*., 2020:3). If an SMME knows what customers' expectations are it can tailor its offerings in order to satisfy them.

Numerous studies have discovered a positive correlation between customer satisfaction and business success (Seiders *et al*., 2005; Helgesen, 2006; Curtis *et al*., 2011; Cant & Van Heerden, 2013; Okharedia, 2013; Aremu *et al.*, 2017). These authors report that consistent customer satisfaction leads to customer loyalty, greater intention to purchase, lower levels of price sensitivity, increased share of wallet, lower customer service costs, and positive word-of-mouth.

In order to measure customer satisfaction, customer feedback needs to be collected regularly to determine how satisfied customers are with the business and its product and service offerings (Berndt & Tait, 2014; Mourtzis *et al*., 2018). To ensure on-going customer satisfaction, the information gathered should be interpreted and incorporated into strategic planning and action. For example, should customers be dissatisfied about a certain aspect of the business, the owner/manager should consider ways to correct the problem. Or, should customers be very satisfied about an aspect of the product offering, the business should continue to offer that aspect to customers and even seek ways to do so more consistently.

This cyclical process of gathering feedback from customers and implementing strategies based on the data is vital to building profitable long-term relationships with customers. Fourie (2015:181) stresses that this is especially important for SMMEs, as acquiring new customers is expensive. It is therefore imperative that SMMEs engage in processes that can ensure ongoing customer satisfaction. Fourie (2015) adds that in addition to supporting customer retention, customer satisfaction can lead to new customer acquisitions through positive word-of-mouth.

Wiid (2014) notes that the type of data that should be collected from customers includes their perceptions of value, how the business can serve them better, and what would lead to a better relationship with the firm. Grigoroudis and Siskos (2010) have identified several key reasons as to why businesses should measure customer satisfaction:

- to gain awareness of customer dissatisfaction;
- to reveal potential market opportunities;
- to gain insight into the market and determine the business's own competitive position in the market;
- to develop a customer satisfaction instrument and process that serves the unique needs of the business; and
- to reveal differences between perceptions of quality and service between the business and its customers.

Organisations can achieve a considerable competitive advantage if they are aware of the needs of their customers, and put strategies in place to meet them (Kumar & Bhagwat, 2010; Kuncoro & Suriani, 2018). For this reason, collecting feedback from customers should be “natural, interactive and effortless” (Kumar & Bhagwat, 2010).

Customer satisfaction can be measured either directly from customers or indirectly through monitoring and tracking (Machado, 2014:148). For example, customer complaints and comments can be collected from comment cards, website reviews, social media platforms, telephone conversations, or from frontline personnel. In addition, SMMEs can conduct more structured research by using self-administered surveys, person-administered surveys, or telephone surveys (Lamb *et al.,* 2020:183-187).

Temkin (2014) notes that in order to ensure the effective use of customer feedback, the organisation should determine what it would like to do with the data before collecting it. Cant and Van Heerden (2013) observe that to avoid damage to the relationship between the business and its customers, customer satisfaction feedback should be measured on a regular basis to ensure that all customer concerns are continually addressed.

A South African study by Fourie (2015) found that most SMME owner/managers (86.9%) ask for, analyse, and respond to feedback and comments from their customers. In addition, SMMEs indicated that they regularly measured customer satisfaction (75.6%), researched why customers leave (72.7%), and used this data to improve their service (77.9%). As a result of these practices, SMMEs felt that their way of doing business was customer friendly (95%), and that their procedures were customer friendly (93.9%).

When asked which methods they used to gather customer feedback, 61.62 per cent of SMMEs indicated that they do so verbally, 20.20 per cent indicated that they use a questionnaire, 15.15 per cent indicated that they do not ask, and 3.03 per cent used other methods like suggestion boxes, email, SMS, and social media. The majority of SMMEs (60.9%) measured customer satisfaction on a regular basis, such as daily (19.6%), weekly (12.4%), or monthly (28.9%). The author recommends that in order to help SMMEs improve customer satisfaction, programmes should be implemented to educate them about the value of measuring customer satisfaction and how to do so. This is exactly what was attempted with the BSAC-SL programme, the effect of which is evaluated by this study.

3.6 SMME marketing communication

Marketing communication is the process businesses use to communicate with their target audiences through a variety of communication methods and tools (Lamb *et al*., 2020:400). Marketing communication has three key objectives: to inform consumers about the business and its offerings, to persuade consumers to respond to business offerings, and to remind consumers about the business and its offerings (Pride *et al.,* 2015; Lamb *et al*., 2020). Marketing communication is vital for small businesses, as without it consumers would not know about the business and its offerings (Popescu *et al*., 2013).

There are hosts of marketing communication tools used by marketers. These include traditional methods such as pamphlets, posters, business cards, and newspaper adverts, as well as new forms of technology-enabled methods such as social media, Internet marketing, and mobile marketing (Salehi *et al.,* 2012; Camilleri, 2018:88).

Although there are many factors that contribute to the success of an SMME, one that is of particular importance is the ability of businesses to provide the market with information about the business, its offerings, as well as the quality, features, and benefits of its offerings (Lamb *et al*., 2020:400). In this way, marketing communication delivers value to customers by giving them options to consider for satisfying their needs (Cacciolatti & Fearne, 2013).

Numerous studies have shown the benefit of marketing communication for small business performance. Keh *et al*. (2006:593) note that the use of marketing information gained from sales promotion has a positive effect on firm performance. Dzisi and Ofosu (2014:108) confirm that the use of traditional communication strategies attracts the attention of prospective customers, while Oboreh *et al*. (2011:231) found that such strategies help SMMEs attract and retain customers as well as increase sales and profits. Michael *et al*. (2013:2) report a strong relationship between marketing communication and SMME performance in relation to growth in revenue, efficiency, and growth in employment. Ardjouman and Asma (2015:144) found that technology-enabled marketing communication can assist firm performance by making products and services available on the Internet, and Quresi and Mian (2010) discovered that SMMEs using more advanced technology-enabled marketing communication boast improved financial performance. Finally, Massiera *et al.* (2017:7) discovered that when SMMEs experience repetitive performance failures they begin to seek out the benefits of marketing communication principles and practices.

Although marketing communication is a vital factor for the success of SMMEs, research has shown that SMMEs lack the necessary marketing and marketing communication skills (Franco *et al*., 2014; Massiera, 2017), as well as the marketing expertise and finance for the effective implementation of marketing communication (Mpofu and Chigwende, 2013; Aggarwal, 2018). What exacerbates this problem is that SMMEs also have to compete with larger organisations which generally have more resources to invest in marketing communication activities (Hassan *et al.,* 2015; Juneja, 2019).

All aspects of a small business, including marketing communication, are largely influenced by the business owner/manager, the skills and resources of the business, and the environment in which the firm operates (Franco *et al.,* 2014; Chipunza & Phalatsi, 2019:2). Important decisions are generally made by the owners of SMMEs, and as such, marketing communication activities are usually implemented according to the owner's intuition (Seyyedamiri & Faghih, 2015; Chipunza & Phalatsi, 2019:2). For this reason, the marketing communication activities of SMMEs are often more informal and reactive to the immediate market environment of the business (Seyyedamiri & Faghih, 2015; Chipunza & Phalatsi, 2019:2).

In order to help overcome this haphazard approach to marketing communication (MC), the BSAC-SL programme was designed to help SMMEs formalise their MC through the development of a communication plan and accompanying communication tools. The effect of this is analysed in this study.

3.6.1 Marketing communication mix

There are six major elements in the traditional marketing communication mix, namely, advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, direct marketing, public relations, and e-marketing (Jobber, 2004; Strydom, 2004; Lamb *et al*., 2020). Students participating in the BSAC-SL programme assisted their client SMMEs by developing campaign plans involving strategies to facilitate every single one of the marketing communication mix elements. For this reason, these are covered in more depth below.

3.6.1.1 Advertising

Advertising consists of planned, non-personal, one-way messages paid for by an identified sponsor and disseminated to a broader audience in order to influence their attitudes and behaviour (Du Plessis *et al*., 2010; Frey & Rudolf 2010:4; Lamb *et al.*, 2020:401). Advertising is used to create brand awareness, inform, remind, influence, and persuade the target market (Koekemoer, 2014:123), and can be implemented through various channels such as radio, television, interactive media, in-store media, and print media (Cant *et al*., 2006:474; Lamb *et al*., 2020:401). SMMEs generally make use of cost-effective forms of local advertising rather than national media channels (Ruzzier *et al*., 2013:222). It has been found that SMMEs engage in advertising in order to create awareness of their products and stimulate purchase action from consumers (Tsikirayi *et al.,* 2012:7). In the case of the BSAC-SL programme, student agencies developed cost-effective advertising measures for their SMME partners, such as making use of posters and pamphlets.

3.6.1.2 Publicity

Publicity is defined as a form of non-personal communication regarding an organisation, product, service, or idea not directly paid for or run under identified sponsorship (Belch & Belch, 2018:26). A company would usually get publicity in the form of a news story, newspaper editorial, or public announcement about its organisation, brand, product, or service (Berger *et al*., 2010:816). Publicity is similar to advertising in the sense that it also involves non-personal communication to a mass audience; however it is different from advertising in that it is not directly paid for by the firm (Lamb *et al*., 2020:410). Firms usually attempt to get publicity by doing product launches, hosting events, or doing something that is newsworthy. There are many techniques used to try to gain publicity, including hosting press conferences, writing news releases, submitting feature articles, sponsoring an event, or sending photographs, films, or videotapes for use by the media (Armstrong *et al.,* 2009:14). One of the key advantages of publicity over other forms of paid media is its credibility. Consumers are generally much less sceptical about company information that comes from a source that is perceived as unbiased (Belch & Belch, 2018:26). The second important advantage, especially for SMMEs, is its low cost, as the firm does not have to pay for the coverage via broadcast media or the space in print media. The only costs that the firm needs to consider is that which is necessary to develop newsworthy articles, events, open days, speeches, charitable work, or press conferences, which are minimal when compared to the cost of advertising (Ruzzier *et al.,* 2013:225). These days, SMMEs also make frequent use of social media in order to publish news about their brand and products (Egeonu, 2012:1). The student agencies consequently made frequent use of social media to facilitate publicity for their partner SMMEs. Many also wrote press releases, planned events, and engaged in charitable work on behalf of their client SMME in order to generate good publicity for the firm.

3.6.1.3 Public relations

Belch and Belch (2018:26) indicate that when a firm "systematically plans and distributes information in an attempt to control and manage its image and the nature of the publicity it receives," it is engaging in public relations (PR). Moore and Canfield (1977:5) define PR as "the management function which evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual or organisation with the public interest, and executes a programme of action to earn public understanding and acceptance." The primary purpose of PR within a firm is to establish and maintain a favourable image among its various publics, which include staff, customers, investors, and other stakeholders (Cohen, 2011:1). SMMEs use a range of tools in order to achieve this goal, including fund-raising, special publications, sponsorship of special events, participation in community activities, and various public affairs initiatives (Ruzzier *et al*., 2013:225). SMMEs also use a range of interactive tools such as social media and websites to facilitate PR today. In the BSAC-SL programme, some students planned special events and arranged sponsorship agreements in order to facilitate effective PR for the firm. In other cases, the students simply showed SMMEs how to make use of email and social media to remain in continuous contact with their publics.

3.6.1.4 Sales promotion

Belch and Belch (2018:23) define sales promotion as marketing activities that "provide extra value or incentives to the sales force, the distributors, or the ultimate consumer, and stimulate immediate sales." Sales promotion is any activity that offers consumers an incentive for a limited period in order to stimulate a desired response, such as trial or purchase (Koekemoer, 2011). Sales promotion seeks to increase the overall sales of a product or service over a short period of time (Cant *et al.,* 2006:462), and includes such things as coupons, price reductions, competitions, samples, and sweepstakes (Ruzzier *et al*., 2013:222). Sales promotions can be targeted at the final consumer, trade customer, or at a different member of the distribution channel, and more specifically at the organisation's employees or sales force (Blattberg & Nelsin, 1990; Lamb *et al*., 2020). A recent trend in corporate marketing communications is that many companies have shifted the emphasis of their promotional strategies and budgets from advertising to sales promotion (Joyce, 2005:AR3-6). Belch and Belch (2018:26) assert that this is because of declining brand loyalty, increasing consumer price sensitivity, and a great demand among consumers for promotional deals. SMMEs use discounts and other promotions to get rid of old stock, promote the sale of new products, encourage customer loyalty, and attract new customers (Dzisi & Ofosu, 2014:106). A key goal of the BSAC-SL programme was to help local SMMEs increase sales, and for this reason, sales promotion was the central marketing communication mix element that student agencies needed to develop for their client SMMEs. Students developed such sales promotions as competitions, rebates, premiums, and loyalty cards to help stimulate immediate action from potential customers.

3.6.1.5 Personal selling

This form of communication is defined as "person-to-person communication in which a seller attempts to assist and/or persuade prospective buyers to purchase the company's product or service or to act on an idea" (Belch & Belch, 2018:27). The sales person learns about the customer's needs and seeks to satisfy those needs by offering the customer the opportunity to purchase something of value, such as a product or service (Van Heerden & Drotsky, 2011). Personal selling involves a dialogue between the salesperson and potential customer, and can be facilitated through face-to-face contact, telecommunication, or the Internet (Koekemoer, 2014:116). Personal selling also often involves the demonstration of a product to prospective customers (Rix, 2001). Because of the heavy reliance of personal selling on human resources, it is a very expensive form of marketing communication to maintain. In addition to using personal selling to facilitate customer relationships and sales, SMMEs also use it to gather information about the needs of their customers, which is something they depend on in order to maintain ongoing customer satisfaction (Dzisi & Ofosu, 2014:106). In some cases, students participating in the BSAC-SL programme helped their partner organisations by engaging in personal selling work with their customers. In other cases students simply gave SMMEs advice about how they might utilise personal selling more effectively, and how to integrate it with other MC elements.

3.6.1.6 Direct marketing

Direct marketing is when "organisations communicate directly with target customers to generate a response and/or a transaction" (Belch & Belch, 2018:19). Direct marketing involves a variety of activities, including telemarketing, database marketing, and direct-response adverts through direct mail, the Internet, and broadcast and print media (Du Plessis *et al*., 2010:36). Belch and Belch (2018:21) note that direct marketing has become very popular in recent times because of changes in family lifestyles. The growth of double-income families means that people have more discretionary income but less time to go shopping. For this reason, more people are making use of conveniences like printed product catalogues with toll-free numbers, door-to-door shipping, and online shopping using a credit card (Cant *et al*., 2006:474; Percy, 2008:153). SMMEs use direct marketing in order both to discover and to satisfy the needs of their customers, with the goal of promoting their products and services to them (Shima & Varfan, 2008:08). Additional advantages of direct marketing for SMMEs are that they can advertise according to their budget, they can measure the return on investment down to the last cent, and they can communicate directly with target customers (Soke & Wild, 2016:188). There are a number of direct marketing tools that the BSAC-SL programme students used to help their partner SMMEs, such as setting up email databases, SMS campaigns, and even WhatsApp groups.

3.6.1.7 E-marketing

Recent developments in technology have led to the growth of marketing communications through interactive media, particularly the Internet. Interactive media "allow for a back-and-forth flow of information whereby users can participate in and modify the form and content of the information they receive in real time" (Belch & Belch, 2018:21). E-Marketing includes Internet marketing tools (like websites and social media), and electronic marketing tools (like mobile phones and email) (Trainor *et al.,* 2011). E-marketing seeks to build and maintain customer relationships through online activities that facilitate the exchange of ideas, products, and services (Swanepoel, 2007). Unlike traditional forms of media, like advertising, where communication is only one-way, e-marketing allows for two-way communication (Lamb *et al*., 2020). It also allows consumers to do things like make inquiries, respond to personalised brand engagement, receive and alter information and media, and make purchases. E-marketing is immediate, enables instant feedback, and is much easier to track compared to traditional marketing communication tools (Ahmed & Hussain, 2014; Nobre & Silva, 2014). Many businesses have discovered that e-marketing tools have much to contribute to the promotion of their offerings. A study by Eid and El-Gohary (2013) discovered that, if used properly, e-marketing tools lead to improved marketing performance.

Empirical research has shown that SMMEs are unable to achieve competitiveness and remain profitable without adopting new and necessary technology (Thurasamy *et al.*, 2009; Harvie, 2010; Lip-Sam & Hock-Eam, 2011). The research of Castronovo and Huang (2012) shows that the effective adoption and use of alternative marketing practices and marketing technologies, such as social media, can be beneficial for SMMEs, which often lack the resources needed to employ traditional forms of marketing. The benefits of interactive media for SMMEs are that it has precise targeting abilities, is low cost, and can support traditional promotional methods (Masterman & Woods, 2006; Lamb *et al*., 2020). Thus, especially when compared to traditional marketing communication methods, e-marketing appears to be a viable and inexpensive marketing communication option for SMMEs (Patil & Bhakkad, 2014). However, a study by Levy and Powell (2005) reveals that SMME owners/managers have a natural scepticism that causes them to be over-cautious when it comes to the adoption and use of information and communication technology (ICT).

Considering the many benefits of e-marketing, especially the fact that it is a low cost communication method, it was a key input in the BSAC-SL programme. Students were encouraged to develop technology-enabled MC tools and strategies for SMMEs. For this reason, the various interactive tools, and especially social media, are considered in more detail below, with specific reference to SMMEs.

a. The Internet

Belch and Belch (2018:21) assert that out of all the interactive tools available, it is the Internet which is having the biggest influence on modern marketing communications. Many companies, from large multi-national businesses to small local enterprises, have developed an online presence in the form of a website. These websites are designed to promote their products and services, provide current and potential customers with necessary information, offer access to communication portals, and even house media designed to entertain.

Additionally, Belch and Belch (2018:21) consider the Internet to be a multifaceted promotional tool because it can be used to facilitate all the other promotional mix tools. For example, adverts can be placed on other websites that customers visit, publicity and PR can be facilitated on social media websites, personal selling can be facilitated through direct communication software, and direct marketing can take place through email and other forms of direct media.

The Internet has many other advantages for marketing communications. These include:

- gathering valuable personal information from customers and prospects;
- the ability to adjust offers immediately based on the information gathered; and
- precise measurement of the effects of advertising and other promotional tools.

The BSAC-SL programme tried to introduce SMMEs to the Internet as a marketing tool by encouraging students to develop marketing tools and strategies making use of the Internet.

b. Social media marketing

Social media form part of ICT and are built on the ideology and technological capacity of Web 2.0, which allows for the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Chu & Kim, 2011; Mosweunyane *et al.*, 2019). Social media technologies (SMTs) include a vast range of Internet-enabled applications (including software), which are designed to facilitate collaborative communication, interaction, and networking (Ananda *et* al., 2015). Such interaction can happen synchronously or asynchronously, meaning they can happen immediately between collaborators, or participants can post information that can then be engaged with at a later time. Social networking can take place through social networking websites, video games, content repositories, and virtual reality (Rambe, 2017:412), It can also form part of e-commerce and include customer relationship management, online marketing and advertising, portals, e-tailing, hubs, and online auctions (Mulero, 2012). Examples of popular social media platforms that are used for marketing purposes are Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Google Plus, and YouTube.

SMTs are a low-cost kind of technology that is inexpensive to maintain and can be sustained through existing free platforms (Levinson & Gibson, 2010; Carson *et al*., 2016). They also represent a low threshold technology for product launches, product trials, and assessing the brand loyalty and brand awareness of customers through analysing web traffic (Gilbert, 2002; Primmer *et al*., 2016:206). In addition, they function as effective direct platforms for customer relationship management (Kimani, 2014), and can be used to clarify customer needs, share company information, and understand customer behaviour (Nguyen, 2010). Those SMMEs that adopt social media for marketing purposes do so because of its lower cost, speed to market, accessibility, wide reach, and ease of use when compared to traditional forms of marketing communication (Frey & Rudolff, 2010; Mulero, 2012).

These benefits make SMTs an excellent marketing tool for small businesses in South Africa. However, as seen in the research displayed in Table 3.1, above, small businesses in South Africa are not making the most effective use of SMTs. Carson (2013) and Burgess *et al.* (2014) note that the reasons that SMMEs struggle to integrate SMTs into their marketing strategies include a lack of technological knowledge; an absence of competitive strategies, which includes technology (Boyles, 2011); a lack of trust in technologies (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010); and a lack of understanding of the benefits of SMTs (Rambe, 2017:412). Other obstacles include a lack of ability and time to use social media platforms (Michaelidou *et al*., 2011), and a lack of knowledge of what content is appropriate (Wally & Koshy, 2014). The implication is that businesses need to invest time to learn the platforms, make time to use them, and understand what content is appropriate for customers (Oji *et al*., 2017b).

A study in South Africa by Ndlodo and Dhurup (2010) found that the factors which inhibited SMMEs from using technology for marketing purposes included a lack of knowledge about the capabilities of the platforms, the stakeholders not being ready to use social media technology, technology incompatibility with the target audience, and a lack of interest in and misconceptions about the social media on the part of business owners. Naturally, these obstacles are more severe for rural communities in South Africa which lack a steady power supply, and suffer from a lower user acceptance and usage rate, a lack of ICT equipment, and a high illiteracy rate (Boateng, 2012).

In order to help SMMEs overcome some of the challenges they face with regard to the use of SMTs for marketing purposes, the BSAC-SL programme sought to demonstrate to SMMEs its marketing relevance, set up SMT platforms for them, equip them with the needed skills to facilitate marketing via SMTs, develop strategies with which they can direct the use of SMTs, and provide them with examples of content that can be placed on SMTs. Some of the key factors affecting the use of SMTs by SMMEs are discussed in more depth below.

i. SMMEs' need for the visibility and accessibility of their products/services

Considering the wide distribution of SMMEs in South Africa, the often rural nature of their locations, the extent of competition among SMMEs and with larger businesses, and the lack of resources, the utility of SMTs for SMME marketing purposes is undeniable. Because the consumption of products and services generally hinges on their visibility and accessibility, the use of SMTs can increase the reach of SMME brands (Arca, 2012). Those businesses (especially larger businesses) that aggressively promote their products and services on SMTs through posting up content, making comments, and facilitating engagement tend to secure a substantial share of the local and international markets compared to firms that do not extensively and consistently exploit SMTs (usually smaller firms). Jagongo (2013), for example, found that social media offered a large amount of market access which resulted in significant return on investment (ROI) for small businesses. In some industries (especially tourism), SMTs are indispensable to the online visibility and accessibility of small businesses (Rambe, 2017:413). Through the BSAC-SL programme, students therefore tried to help SMMEs understand how they could access new, and even international markets through the use of SMTs.

ii. Electronic word of mouth

It is uncontested that for new businesses, the establishment of the brand through exposure is vital, while for existing businesses the persistence of such exposure is paramount. As Arca (2012) notes, exposure is an important milestone in an emerging business's launch, without which the launch would fail. The challenge is that the persistent visibility and exposure of newly launched brands is contingent on ongoing marketing and promotion of the brand (and its products and services) through media that are consumed by the business's target audience. If the business is tourism-related or situated in an urban area, then a large portion of such media would be on SMT platforms (Tech Central, 2017). Karami and Naghibi (2014) note the transactive and communicative abilities of SMTs, especially their ability to reach new audiences and strengthen relationships with existing customers. For this reason, SMTs (such as Facebook and Twitter), and the opportunities they provide for conveying messages through electronic word-of-mouth to existing customers and stakeholders, as well as broader targeted and imagined audiences both locally and internationally, cannot be taken for granted by SMMEs in South Africa (Rambe, 2017:413). This was therefore a key fact which students of the BSAC-SL programme sought to convey to SMMEs: that even though SMTs may not always relate directly to sales, they play a large role in brand exposure and electronic word of mouth (WOM).

iii. Over-dependence on traditional marketing media

Despite the growth of SMT usage for marketing purposes by large organisations, as well as the benefits that many small businesses realise SMTs can have for marketing, Rambe *et al.* (2015) express disappointment over the underutilisation of SMTs by SMMEs and their seemingly unsubstantiated faith in traditional media such as television, radio, and newspapers. Rambe (2017) believes that the reluctance could stem from the workload and seeming complexity associated with using SMTs for marketing. Musa *et al*. (2016) note that the effective implementation of social media marketing depends on a firm's ability to use SMTs to deliver their message to the intended target audience, the alignment of SMT use to the firms' overall strategic objectives, and their ability to use SMTs to form meaningful relationships with consumers. Rambe (2017:414) believes that because of their limited communication and interaction capabilities, South African SMMEs may prefer to rely on traditional, more conventional technologies (such as pamphlets or radio). For this reason, the BSAC-SL programme sought to equip SMMEs with the knowledge and skills needed to begin to utilise SMTs for marketing purposes.

iv. International research on social media marketing

The benefits of SMTs for SMMEs and the barriers they often face have not only been found in South Africa. Internationally, social media research related to small businesses has also emphasised the usage and measurement of social media marketing to promote brands (Michaelidou *et al.,* 2011); the effectiveness of social media marketing for small business growth (Musa *et al.,* 2016); the capacity of small businesses to capitalise on the benefits of social media (Cesaroni & Consoli, 2015); and the social media strategies employed by businesses and their impact on firm performance (Karimi & Naghibi, 2014).

A study by Öztamur and Karakadılar (2014) of Turkish SMMEs analysed the contribution of social media marketing to firm performance. Their findings showed that dynamic industries like retail fashion tended to use social media to communicate with customers and disseminate information aimed at product differentiation to a greater extent than conventional industries such as bakery retailers. In Malaysia, Razak and Latip's (2016) study of SMMEs showed that perceived usefulness and ease of use influenced the usage of SMTs.

A study in the US by Chua (2013), which considered the impact of social media on restaurants in New York, revealed that restaurants were able to use social media to attract positive customer ratings that they believed led to increased revenue generation. A study in Sweden by Frey and Rudolf (2010) found that social media can be used to identify a market, analyse it, and target it for growth, based on continuous interaction with customers. The authors nevertheless advise companies wishing to engage in social media marketing to be guided by a set of rules for structured and strategic organisational communication before implementing a social media marketing strategy.

A number of studies note the role that SMTs play in enhancing effective SMME communication and cooperation with both customers and other firms. Wang *et al.* (2016) reveal that increasing communication performance through social media can positively affect business performance. Fischer and Reuber (2014) demonstrate how growth-oriented SMMEs use new media such as Twitter to reduce customer uncertainty. Felzensztein and Gimmon (2009) note the importance of strategic social media tools to facilitating cooperation in managing marketing activities. Michaelidou *et al.* (2011) analyse the role that social media play in achieving brand objectives in a business-to-business (B2B) SMME context. There are some contributions that suggest that social media have a positive impact on SMME business networking (Gavino *et al*., 2019), customer service and relations (Palmer *et al.*, 2011; Ainin *et al.,* 2015), as well as on access to international markets (Bell & Loane, 2010).

From this survey of international research, it is clear that SMMEs the world over are beginning to see the benefits of SMTs for marketing purposes. Bearing in mind the global nature of businesses in the 21st century the BSAC-SL programme regarded it as essential to empower SMMEs with the skills and knowledge needed to participate in the global economy. This study seeks to determine how much the social media strategies, tools, and skills imparted to SMMEs actually benefited them.

v. Social media marketing strategies

Based on Kotler *et al.'s* (2005) promotion of using push marketing strategies to push products through distribution channels, Rambe (2017) believes that SMTs can be used to push products through the value chain. Li and Kang (2011) studied the integration of social media by large firms into their relationship marketing strategies. They developed a social media marketing construct that includes four ways to realise integration, namely, web construction (building engaging websites), web promotion (increase customers through online brand advertising), traffic conversion (transforming traffic into leads and sales), and customer management and service (creating and sustaining customer relationships).

Although social media strategies have been demonstrated to be of great benefit to SMMEs, studies still show some resistance to them as owner/managers question their credibility and sustainability (Nakara *et al*., 2012; Durkin *et al*., 2013; Gavino *et al*., 2019). When they are implemented, social media strategies are often characterised by unplanned behaviour by owners or managers who are not fully aware of their benefits, nor of how to implement them effectively (Michaelidou *et al*., 2011; Meske & Stieglitz, 2013; Wamba & Carter, 2014; Gavino *et al*., 2019).

vi. Pitfalls of exploiting social media marketing

According to a study by Cesaroni and Consoli (2015) of Italian SMMEs, although it is common for SMMEs to make use of social media marketing, the technology was not being used in productive and value-adding ways. The reason for this stemmed from the fact that most SMMEs did not use SMTs because they understood the strategic advantages this afforded them, but because their competitors were doing it. Öztamur and Karakadılar's (2014) study of SMMEs' SMT usage in Turkey revealed challenges that included the use of formal vs informal language when communicating with customers, and the prevalence of unappealing content that did not attract the attention of customers. Although there are more benefits to SMTs than just reaching target audiences, facilitating relations management, and keeping track of customer purchases, most SMMEs do not realise these benefits (Rambe, 2017:415). Often SMME social media marketing techniques are informal, spontaneous, and reactive rather than intentional, consistent, and strategic (Gilmore *et al*., 2004). There generally seems to be a large divide between SMME's marketing activities and the best practices advanced by marketing theory and the broader marketing industry (Taiminen & Karjaluoto, 2015). In addition, SMMEs are constrained by a lack of human and financial resources in the planning and implementation of social media marketing (Jones *et al*., 2015).

This is why it was so important for students in the BSAC-SL programme not only to set up social media platforms for SMMEs and teach them how to use them, but to develop accompanying strategies which could guide the use of the SMTs in a way that was strategic, intentional, and consistent. It was therefore helpful to survey SMMEs that had taken part in the programme in previous years in order to discover the longevity of the programme's influence regarding such things as social media usage.

vii. Social media marketing and firm competitiveness

Even though the benefits of the social media for business competiveness has been widely investigated (Michaelidou *et al.*, 2011; Taneja & Toombs, 2014), their exact impact remains contested. For example, Taneja and Toombs (2014) discovered that social media are critical for customer relationship management and building brand communities. They found that social media helped shift organisations from having a product orientation towards a more customer-centric approach. This shift encouraged them to develop products that were more relevant to customers' needs, resulting in increased customer loyalty and increased business competiveness.

In addition to determining whether the use of social media had a positive influence on SMMEs, this study sought to understand what type of affect it had on firm performance, by assessing factors such as sales, new customers, and brand awareness.

3.6.2 SMME branding and marketing communication tools

A brand is a name, term, design, symbol, or any feature that identifies one seller's goods or services as distinct from those of other sellers (American Marketing Association, 2004, in Cohen, 2011). Branding involves the process of differentiating a product or service, using a mix of brand elements such as logos, names, symbols, characters and colours (Keller, 1993; Aaker, 1996). The goal of branding is to enhance the image and reputation of the brand in such a way as to increase the financial performance and competitiveness of the firm (Mudambi, 2002).

Keller (2013) recommends the use of four processes when engaging in brand building, namely, choosing brand elements/identities, developing marketing programmes, integrating marketing communications, and leveraging secondary associations. The way in which firms blend these efforts ultimately results in the accrual of brand equity, which is the commercial value of all the associations and expectations (both positive and negative) that consumers have of an organisation and its products or services (Van-Auken, 2003).

Once students had conducted market research for SMMEs as part of the BSAC-SL programme, they went about developing or acquiring tools and resources which could be used for branding and communication activities. Such tools included logos, websites, Facebook pages, and a range of other tools designed to improve brand positioning, awareness, and promotion. These tools will be discussed at length in the following sections.

3.6.2.1 Logos

The success of any SMME depends in part on the target market's ability to distinguish their business from their competitors. Branding is the tool that is typically used to accomplish this. A brand is "a name, term, symbol, design or combination thereof that identifies a seller's products and differentiates them from competitors' products" (Lamb *et al*., 2020). A brand name generally includes something that can be verbalized, like letters, words, or numbers, whereas a brand mark cannot be verbalized and involves a visual symbol.

A logo is a visual representation of a brand that usually includes both the brand name and the brand mark. It is generally used to identify a firm on all printed advertising, building signage, communications, literature, products, stationery, and vehicles (BusinessDictionary, 2007). The logo plays an important role in the marketing activities of SMMEs in that it is specifically designed to remind customers of the brand as well as to help them identify it (Grobert *et al*., 2016). Logos assist in building the company brand and developing brand equity through increased brand recognition (Girard *et al.*, 2013). Hoeffler and Keller (2003) believe that a logo is one of the most powerful brand elements a company has, due to its impact on brand knowledge and therefore on brand equity.

Because a logo is such an essential component of brand identification, it is vital that SMMEs have a simple, relevant, and recognisable logo (Schechter, 1993). Crowther (2017) asserts that a logo (and its colours) are vital for small businesses because they can convey emotions associated with the brand, increase influence with the target market, make the business look more professional, help tell the business's brand story, and launch the brand and make it recognisable.

Small businesses in South Africa often have very crude logos that are not very effective branding tools (Antonelli, 2016). For this reason, it is often necessary for their logos to be redesigned (Keller, 2003; Chan & Subinas, 2019). Logos can be designed using a range of computer programmes including Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, Gimp, or even Microsoft Word or Paint. There are numerous online software applications that also allow for the development of logos like Canva, Graphic Springs, and Logomaker.

Students used a range of these tools to help SMMEs redesign their logos in the BSAC-SL programme. But to what degree were SMMEs satisfied with the logos that students developed? And did the new logos actually improve the performance of the firm? These are some of the questions which this study sought to answer.

3.6.2.2 Business cards

A business card is a standard 2x3 inch (5 x 7.6 cm) card used to display information for an individual employed by a business. Typically a business card includes the person's name, phone number, email address, website address, street address, company name, and logo. Business cards are used for networking purposes and are given to someone as an easy source for them to retrieve one's contact information (BusinessDictionary, 2009).

Joseph (2012) asserts that despite its small size, a business card is very important for small business marketing. He notes the following benefits of professionally designed business cards: they create a good first impression, they are an inexpensive form of marketing, they are portable, and they enable every employee to help build the company brand. Allan (2014) adds that the business card saves time, it gives a potential customer something physical to take away, it can be shared with others, it can be kept to refer to at a later point, and unlike the use of technology, it is personal and can aid in making meaningful connections. For SMMEs, business cards can make all the difference when engaging in networking and personal selling.

Allan (2014) suggests that a business card should be professionally designed and printed in order to present a professional image. He further suggests adding one's photo, adding an incentive like a special offer to encourage people to get in touch, potentially adding a QR code, choosing the right font, and ensuring that it is printed with good ink on high quality paper.

During the years that the BSAC-SL programme has been running a number of small businesses have been found not to have business cards. In response, a number of student teams have helped design and print business cards for the owners and other staff members of their client SMMEs.

3.6.2.3 Posters

A poster is a printed piece of paper that is designed to be attached to a wall or any vertical surface (Gosling, 1999). Generally posters include both graphic and textual elements and are designed to be informative and eye-catching. Although posters can be used for any purpose they are often used as an advertising tool for businesses which desire to communicate a message to customers.

Tolliday (2018) notes that posters provide a very cost-effective way for small businesses to communicate with their target customers. When placed correctly, the author asserts that well-designed posters can attract nearby consumers to an upcoming event or inform them of company products or special offers. In addition, Tolliday (2018) mentions that posters have the ability to be very memorable and are therefore a great tool to increase brand awareness. In addition, posters can create a positive call to action, are highly visible, and can be placed in strategic locations frequented by the SMMEs' target market. Kokemuller (2017) notes that posters also offer small businesses flexibility in terms of size, shape, and distribution, and can provide ongoing, long-term exposure.

When it comes to the design of posters, Clarke (2014) suggests developing unique content, ensuring effective design and creativity, including company branding, printing with high quality ink on high quality paper, and ensuring that the posters are placed in the right locations. The author asserts that effective poster design can strengthen a SMMEs branding message and dramatically enhance the impact of the marketing strategy.

Considering the marketing benefits of posters, a number of students developed posters for their partner SMMEs during the BSAC-SL programme in order to promote their services, upcoming events, or promotions. The study therefore sought to gain a deeper understanding of the degree to which these posters were able to serve the needs of SMMEs and improve firm performance.

3.6.2.4 Flyers, brochures, and pamphlets

Flyers, brochures, and pamphlets are a very simple form of advertising which is fairly cost effective to implement. However, a number of SMMEs participating in the BSAC-SL programme were found to lack the knowledge or contacts to design and print such materials. Considering the impact that such materials can have on SMMEs, a number of student teams developed these for SMMEs over the years the programme has run.

a. Flyers/ leaflets

A flyer/ leaflet is a low-cost form of paper advertisement that is intended for wide distribution in a public place, to be handed to individuals, or sent through the mail (Piccio, 2016). Flyers are usually two-sided, A5 in size, and can be plain, with minimal colours, and printed on simple paper, or they can be more expensive, glossy, and printed in full colour. Flyers can be used to advertise events, communicate a special offer, promote products, campaign for a political party or non-profit organisation, recruit members for an organisation, or convey a specific message.

Flyers are beneficial to small businesses because of their low cost, their relative ease of reaching the target audience, and the fact that they are tangible and can be kept by prospective customers. An incentive can be added to the flyer like a coupon code or voucher, and analytical elements like QR codes or unique website URLs can be added to assist with calculating return on investment (Digital Printing, 2013).

b. Brochures

Brochures are normally printed on a single sheet of paper and then folded to create bi-folds or tri-folds. Producing a folder brochure takes a little bit more technical expertise than creating a flyer as it requires the correct alignment in order to look professional. Because they usually take a bit more time and cost to produce, brochures are not usually handed out in the same way that flyers or business cards are. Instead they are typically used in more targeted campaigns (Piccio, 2016). Brochures are popular as product or service reference materials for employees or customers, as they can contain more information than a flyer, albeit in a limited space. Other uses for brochures include providing details about a brand, product or service, supplying additional information to what is seen on a marketing flyer, and closing a deal or sale.

c. Pamphlets

Pamphlets are small booklets of a limited number of pages and are used to provide more information than flyers or brochures. Usually pamphlets only focus on one topic, are between five and 10 pages, do not have a hard cover, and do not have permanent binding. Many companies, political parties, event coordinators, and non-profit organisations use pamphlets to provide a more comprehensive description of their organisation. Pamphlets are good for informing and educating a target audience, advertising in more depth an upcoming meeting or event, or promoting a business's vision, mission, history, and products or services (Examples.com, 2018).

Bruce (2015) asserts that printed forms of advertising like flyers, brochures, and pamphlets are still a very effective form of marketing for SMMEs because they are not affected by the challenges that online forms of advertising face like bounce rates, advertising dilution, slow Internet connections, and so forth. Jabr (2013) makes reference to studies that have been done to compare consumer patience and engagement with printed media vs. online media. The majority found that consumers engage with printed media more intensively than they do with media on a screen.

3.6.2.5 Press release

A press release is an official statement that gives information to the public, often through formal avenues such as newspapers, magazines, or radio stations. They can also be posted on the websites or blogs of companies and are a task of the PR function of the business (Merriam-Webster, 2019).

McCoy (2015) notes a number of benefits that press releases can have for small business, like instant exposure, increased sales potential, boosting the effectiveness of the marketing plan, the opportunity to brand the business as an industry expert, increased traffic to the business website, benefits for search engine optimisation, another way to reach the target market, a way to distribute information across different channels, a good relationship with journalists, and a cost-effective way to attract customers and investors.

Over the years that the BSAC-SL programme has run, a number of students have developed press releases or branded marketing emails that SMMEs have used to promote their products and services to customers, suppliers, employees, journalists, bloggers, and the like.

3.6.2.6 Loyalty cards

A loyalty card is a card that is given by retailers to customers as part of an incentive programme. Every time customers purchase they gain points that they can use for future discounts or promotions (Dictionary.com, 2019). The purpose of such a programme is to gather data about customer purchases and encourage repeat purchases (Rouse, 2009). The simplest form of loyalty programme is the type run by Kauai in South Africa which gives you a card with open slots and a sticker every time you purchase a smoothie. Once all the slots on the card have been filled up with stickers, you are entitled to a free smoothie.

According to the IRI Consumer Connect Survey, 74 per cent of consumers choose a retail store because of a loyalty or discount programme (Grigoreva, 2018). The Hawk Incentives Research discovered that 79 per cent of consumers look for loyalty deals and rewards programmes before making a purchase (Grigoreva, 2018). Loyalty programmes are designed to create a space of trust between brands and customers. Consumers also seem to appreciate brands that gather data from their purchasing behaviour in order to give them a more personalised shopping experience.

Willy Rewards (2018) states that loyalty cards have numerous benefits for small businesses, including helping to build stronger relationships with existing customers; the fact that repeat customers help generate more business and that it is more affordable to keep an existing customer than to attract a new one; it is a simple way to retain customers and build a long-term relationship with them; it can boost the reputation of the business and attract new customers; it can function as a form of competitive advantage, and it is an effective and relatively affordable way of competing with larger competitors.

Loyalty cards are very simple to implement, and can have a large impact on repeat sales. For this reason, the BSAC-SL programme encouraged students to help SMMEs develop simple and easy-to-use loyalty cards that would be easy for SMMEs to implement. This study therefore sought to determine how effective this tool has been at improving firm performance.

3.6.2.7 Customer database

A customer database is a record of past, present, and potential customers. In it is a collection of information gathered from each customer, such as their name, contact details, address, buying habits, last interaction with the firm, and possibly also future needs. Such databases help companies understand customer buying patterns which can be used to offer new products or make pricing decisions. In addition, such databases allow businesses to offer customers more personalised services that cater to their unique needs (MBA Skool, 2019).

A customer database can benefit small businesses in numerous ways, for instance, to facilitate customer relationship management, customer and product analysis, effective stock management, and more effective selling; as well as to reduce costs through efficient transaction processing (Ozgener & Iraz, 2006; Core Media Design, 2010). Sales Force (2016) adds that customer relationship management (made possible by a customer database) can improve information sharing in the organisation, enhance communication, improve customer service, and increase the ability to automate everyday tasks. Perfect Mind (2019) notes that customer database management can improve customer relations, increase customer revenues, maximise upselling and cross-selling, facilitate better internal communication, and optimise marketing.

The use of a customer database is a key strategy that can be adopted by SMMEs. For this reason, the BSAC-SL programme encouraged students to help SMMEs develop a database of customers by using simple methods such as a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to collect and store customer contact details, purchasing preferences, and birth dates. The value of this marketing tool has been assessed by this study to determine the degree to which it helped SMMEs increase sales, gain new customers, and increase brand awareness.

3.6.2.8 Websites

Websites are a collection of static web pages that contain content that is available through the Internet (BusinessDictionary, 2016). Businesses make use of websites to provide customers with relevant business information, such as product information, business location, corporate structure, how to make contact, and special offers (Marketingdonut.com, 2016).

Bussing (2017) notes a number of benefits that websites have for small businesses: they can improve business credibility, attract new customers, enhance the business's online presence, and distribute content widely. A website is open 24/7, meaning that potential customers can always access information about the business; it offers an affordable and efficient way to promote the business; it can boost the reputation of the business as an authority, showcase the business's work, and professionalise the brand.

The benefits of the Internet and social media have already been discussed at length. However, the use of a simple website is also a very significant SMME marketing tool that students sought to develop for some SMMEs during the BSAC-SL programme. A number of free website development options exist, such as Wix.com and Wordpress.com. Students used these to establish a website for their client SMMEs. The perceived impact of these websites is one of the things that this study set out to establish.

3.6.2.9 Facebook and Twitter

Facebook is a free social networking platform which enables registered users to create profiles, send messages, upload photos and videos, and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues (WhatIs.com, 2014). In a similar vein, Twitter is defined as a free social networking and microblogging platform that allows registered users to broadcast short posts called "tweets." Users can follow other users' tweets on multiple platforms and devices and can reply to tweets or repost tweets to their followers.

Facebook and Twitter have dramatically influenced the way in which people communicate with each other, as well as the way in which firms interact with consumers on the Internet. In a study in the USA, Brown (2010) discovered that 67 per cent of respondents used Twitter and 51 per cent used Facebook to buy what was posted on the social media accounts of local businesses that they followed. In Kenya, a study by Waithaka *et al.* (2014) found that Facebook and Twitter have impacted small businesses by improving communication between the business and its customers. The respondents in their study also felt that these platforms were more affordable than other media. In a similar study in South Africa, Khan and Karodia (2013) found that 51 per cent of business respondents felt that Facebook was an effective marketing channel, 70 per cent felt that it was useful for public relations, and 43 per cent felt that it was useful for customer relations.

a. Facebook page

A Facebook page is a public profile on Facebook created for brands, businesses, causes, celebrities, and other organisations. Pages gain “fans” when people who are interested in the organisation choose to “like” the page. Pages work similarly to profiles in that administrators can update the status of the page, add links, events, photos, and videos. This data appears on the “wall” of the page, which the “fans” can then view in their personal news feeds (Rouse, 2010).

Ayres (2014) and Danoy (2017) note the multiple benefits of Facebook pages for small business, including increased exposure to potential customers, the ability to gather more leads, lower marketing expenses, the ability to reach a targeted audience, gathering analytical insights (market research), building brand loyalty, increasing website traffic, boosting search engine optimisation (SEO) on the company website, mobile engagement with customers, building long-term relationships with customers, customer communication and support, referrals and customer reviews, keeping up with the latest trends and best practices, and competitor research.

In order to help SMMEs access these benefits, a number of student teams developed Facebook pages for their client SMMEs during the BSAC-SL programme. In addition, the student teams trained the SMMEs in how to make use of the Facebook page for their businesses, interact with customers on Facebook, and make updates to the page regularly. In order to determine the value of this tool for the SMMEs, this study sought to elicit the perceptions of managers and owners in this regard.

b. Twitter profile

A Twitter profile is similar to a Facebook page in that it is a public profile that can be created for both individuals and brands. Twitter profiles also gain followers when people are interested in the brand. Businesses can post “tweets” in the form of updates, news, photos, events, videos, and so forth. Followers can view these tweets in their Twitter news feed.

Twitter (2017) notes that the platform can be used by small businesses to discover new trends in the market, grow brand awareness, provide timely customer service, and connect with potential customers, brand advocates, and influencers. Saladino (2012) adds that small businesses can use Twitter profiles to increase customer satisfaction with better customer service, break with the distanced corporate image by communicating more intimately, generate traffic for a local store and website, follow trends in the industry, analyse competitors, and strengthen the business’s connection with the local community. Monaghan (2017) believes that businesses can use Twitter to network with others, distribute content, improve sales, reach a bigger audience, increase brand authority and voice, and gather customer feedback.

These benefits are definitely relevant to SMMEs in South Africa, which is why students of the BSAC-SL programme developed Twitter profiles for some of their clients and trained them how to use the medium for businesses purposes. This research study also sought to determine the impact that SMME owner/managers perceived to have resulted from this aspect of the programme.

3.7 Summary

This chapter started off by highlighting the importance of SMMEs in society for their contribution to employment and economic stability, especially in developing countries. It then turned to the SMME sector in South Africa, considering the types and definitions of SMMEs and the current SMME business environment, which is one in which up to 70 per cent of SMMEs fail within their first year of existence.

The next section took a look at SMME marketing by considering the importance of marketing for SMMEs, the uniqueness of SMME marketing, SMME marketing strategy, SMME marketing mix strategies, and international SMME marketing literature. The section ended with a thorough analysis of South African SMME marketing research conducted between 2009 and 2019, and considered how the purpose, problem, methodology, findings, and recommendations of the various articles relate to the BSAC-SL programme and the current study.

Section 3.5 took an in-depth look at SMME customer research and marketing intelligence by considering the value of marketing/customer knowledge, which is seen by many as the most important learning area for organisations. It then examined the importance of customer satisfaction research in order to facilitate ongoing improvements to business offerings and systems.

SMME marketing communication was the subject of the last section, which emphasised the importance of MC for business success through its ability to provide the market with information about the business, its offerings, as well as the quality, features, and benefits of its offerings (Lamb *et al*., 2020:400). The section then provided insights into the marketing communication mix with reference to SMMEs, by considering each of the elements in detail and in relation to the BSAC-SL programme, with a special emphasis on social media marketing and its value for SMMEs.

The chapter concluded by highlighting a number of SMME branding and marketing communication tools that students developed for their partner SMMEs in the BSAC-SL programme. These tools include logos, business cards, posters, flyers, brochures, pamphlets, press releases, loyalty cards, customer databases, websites, and Facebook and Twitter pages.

After gathering data and developing branding tools and resources, students went about developing integrated marketing communication (IMC) campaigns for their partner SMMEs. The next chapter explores the theoretical underpinnings of IMC, the benefits of and barriers to IMC, SMME IMC features, barriers, benefits, and research, as well as the IMC planning process and the relationship formed between clients and agencies. The chapter also considers the nature of SMME training, mentorship, and knowledge transfer.

CHAPTER FOUR

SMME IMC AND SMME TRAINING

4.1 Introduction

This chapter starts off with an overview of integrated marketing communication (IMC) that includes a definition of IMC and an account of both the benefits of and the barriers to IMC. The chapter goes on to consider the nature of IMC amongst small, micro, and medium-sized enterprises (SMMEs), with a focus on its benefits and barriers. Section two ends with a detailed analysis of SMME IMC research over the last eight years (2012– 2019).

IMC campaign planning is the subject of the third section, with detailed consideration given to the IMC planning model. Section four reflects on the IMC client-agency relationship, first by deliberating on the golden triangle of marketing communication players and then by discussing the elements required for organising IMC in SMMEs. It then goes on to note the elements involved in agency evaluation, and concludes with a lengthy review of the IMC client-agency literature, broaching areas such as conflict, co-creation, and contracts.

The final section covers SMME training, mentoring, and knowledge transfer by considering the nature of SMME training, the influence of SMME training on organisational performance, and business effectiveness. It concludes with a summary review of 18 years of SMME training literature.

4.2 Integrated marketing communication

Integrated marketing communication is a process for managing customer relationships in a way that drives brand value through communication efforts (Lamb *et al*., 2020:417). Such efforts seek to control and influence all messages sent to stakeholder groups through cross-functional processes that facilitate purposeful data-driven dialogue. This integration affects all the firm’s communication efforts including business-to-business, customer-focused, internal, and marketing channel communications (Sharma, 2015:75).

In its simplest form, IMC is a business strategy that coordinates and integrates all communication tools, channels, and sources into a seamless programme, in order to maximise the communication impact on target stakeholders in such a way as to facilitate profitable relationships at a minimal cost (Belch & Belch, 2018:10; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019:515; Lamb *et al*., 2020:417).

IMC theory was first popularised by Schultz, Tannenbaum, and Lauterborn in 1993, with the release of their book, *Integrated Marketing Communication: Putting it together and making it work*.

Although scholars have developed the theory and scope of IMC over the years, many acknowledge that there is still no agreed-upon definition of IMC (Schultz & Schultz, 1998; Swain, 2004; Kitchen, 2005; Kliatchko, 2005; Madhavaram *et al*., 2005).

Table 4.1 shows how definitions of IMC have evolved over the years.

Table 4.1: The development of IMC definitions (1989–2008)

Author	**Date**	**Definition**
American Association of Advertising Agencies	1989	A concept of marketing communications planning that recognises the added value in a programme that integrates a variety of strategic disciplines – e.g., general advertising, direct response, sales promotion and public relations – and combines these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency, and maximum impact.
Schultz	1991	The process of managing all sources of information about a product/service to which a customer or prospect is exposed, which behaviourally moves the customer towards a sale and maintains customer loyalty.
Keegan *et al.*	1992	The strategic coordination of all messages and media used by an organisation to collectively influence its perceived brand value.
Kotler *et al.*	1999	IMC is the concept under which a company carefully integrates and coordinates its many communication channels to deliver a clear, consistent and compelling message about the organisation and its products.
Duncan	2002	A cross-functional process for creating and nourishing profitable relationships with customers and other stakeholders by strategically controlling or influencing all messages sent to these groups and encouraging data-driven purposeful dialogue with them.
Schultz & Schultz	2004	IMC is a strategic business process used to plan, develop, execute and evaluate co-ordinated, measurable, persuasive brand communication programmes over time with consumers, customers, prospects, and other targeted, relevant external and internal audiences.
Kliatchko	2005	IMC is a concept and process of strategically managing audience-focused, channel-centred and results-driven brand communication programmes over time.
Kliatchko	2008	IMC is an audience-driven business process of strategically managing stakeholders, content, channels, and results of brand communication programmes.

Source: Adapted from Kerr *et al*. (2008)

As can be seen in Table 4.1, there is no agreement on the exact meaning attached to the concept of IMC, as it has evolved significantly over the years.

The term relates to several factors including the relationship between communication and other marketing functions (Sirgy, 1998); the internal and external relations of the firm (Stewart, 1996); communication planning (Mazzei & Esposito, 2011); the integration of marketing communication with other areas of corporate communication (Schultz & Kitchen, 2000); the simultaneous use of multiple communication media (Cornelissen, 2000); the consistency and classic nature of corporate messages (Schultz & Schultz, 1998), and the synergy of using different mediums of marketing communication (Duncan & Everett, 1993; Schultz, 1993; Belch & Belch, 2018).

In a review of the IMC literature, Luck and Moffat (2009) identified seven common themes relating to IMC:

- **Communication:** IMC uses media channels to establish two-way communication between the brand and its stakeholders in order to achieve certain communication objectives (Schultz *et al*., 1994; Keller, 2001; Duncan 2002);
- **Branding:** marketing communication represents the voice of the brand by developing and sustaining brand identity and brand equity (Keller, 2001; Belch & Belch, 2004), and managing the touch points of the brand with stakeholders (Shimp, 2003; Kotler & Armstrong, 2006);
- **Relationship management:** IMC seeks to manage and maintain profitable long-term relationships between the brand and all its stakeholders, especially key customers (Duncan, 2002);
- **Cross-functional planning:** IMC requires the involvement and collaboration of multiple departments and functions in an organisation to ensure consistency in all brand messages and improved internal communication (Duncan & Moriarty, 2006);
- **Integration:** IMC fundamentally means integrating all the sources of brand messages so that stakeholders perceive one coherent and consistent voice, no matter which communication medium they engage with. IMC thus ensures a clear and consistent brand image and positioning across all communication platforms (Nowak & Phelps 1994; Carlson *et al.*, 2003);
- **Synergy:** If used together, each communication medium, channel, or tool enhances the contribution of all the other media due to the existence of potential synergy, the whole being greater than the sum of its parts (Van Riel, 1995; Keller, 2001). In addition, the strengths of one medium offset the weaknesses of others (Kitchen *et al*., 2004); and
- **Market orientation:** IMC encourages brands to monitor communication coming from all stakeholders in order to listen, learn, and respond effectively. It encourages a form of two-way communication between the brand and its stakeholders to ensure that it responds effectively to the needs of the market (Schultz *et al*., 1994; Schultz & Schultz, 1998; Duncan 2002; Shimp 2003; Kitchen *et al.*, 2004).

Kliachko (2009:8) includes an additional two themes in the list:

- **Strategic management:** IMC requires strategy formulation, which takes into account the market environment, the marketing mix, and the various communication tools that enable a move towards an outside-in customer-focused approach (Henninger & Alevizou, 2017:7); and
- **Evaluation and measurement:** In order to determine communication success, the results of IMC programmes need to be measured and evaluated against pre-determined criteria (Porcu *et al*., 2017).

All of the key themes are underpinned by data-driven communication technology and the effective management of the highly interconnected knowledge economy (Day & Montgomery, 1999). The impact of IMC in the 21st century is that firms are able to deliver and manage vast and highly complex forms of communication between brands and their stakeholders (Duncan, 2002:416; Belch & Belch, 2018:11).

As a theory, IMC is relevant to both product and service markets and can be considered a complete and inclusive business model that manages one of the most important business drivers: communication.

4.2.1 Benefits of IMC

Marketing communication activities such as IMC are believed to play an important role in building and maintaining strong brands (Belch & Belch, 2018:11).

Because consumers today are constantly exposed to a variety of media, marketing communication must be unique, timely, informative, usable, creative, and memorable (Groenewald *et al.,* 2014:526)

Sharma (2015:79) reports several shifts in marketing that have led to increased use of IMC:

- a move to multiple forms of communication rather than only media advertising;
- a move to specialised (niche) media focused on specific audiences rather than mass media;
- a move to retailer-dominated, consumer-controlled markets from manufacturer-dominated markets;
- a move to database marketing from general focus advertising; and
- a move from limited access to high speed constant Internet access and thus 24/7 access to goods and services.

A number of positive results are associated with IMC, including customer satisfaction, increased profits, increased sales, cost savings, increased brand loyalty, brand awareness, positive brand image, and unique brand associations (Saeed *et al*., 2013; Belch & Belch, 2018:14-16).

Marketing communication helps brands by connecting organisations with their customers and by assisting consumers with information processing (Mahyari, 2010:10-11; Belch & Belch, 2018:14-16). In addition, it assists consumers to understand the value of an organisation's products and services (Bangura, 2011:14; Belch & Belch, 2018:14-16).

Sharma (2015:80) summarises the benefits that IMC holds for businesses as follows:

- it helps firms consolidate their brand image and keeps messaging consistent;
- it can function as a competitive advantage for a firm;
- it encircles communication around the customers in order to help them move through the various stages of the buying process;
- it can reduce risks in the minds of buyers which in turn can help shorten the search process;
- it develops a dialogue with customers and facilitates relationship building with them;
- it facilitates customer loyalty which can protect the firm against competitive onslaughts;
- it can increase profits through increased efficiency and increased sales;
- it can save money through eliminating unnecessary duplication and redundancies; and
- it increases the credibility of a firm by ensuring message consistency (Sharma, 2015:80).

By following an IMC approach organisations can offset the disadvantages of any one communication tool with the advantages of the others (Nielsen, 2009; Stocia & Cretoiu 2009; Polyorat, 2012; Sahaf, 2019:452).

According to Kitchen and Burgmann (2015:34), where IMC is implemented with the purpose of creating synergy among different promotional mix elements, it assists in creating greater consistency between messages, saves costs, facilitates better relations between different departments, enables better use of media, and thus leads to greater efficiency and enhanced returns. An additional and possibly most important benefit is that customers and consumers experience being understood and valued by communication that is clearly catering to their needs.

Although early critics dismissed IMC as a managerial fad, the evidence reveals that it continues to achieve widespread adoption among practitioners and theorists (Schultz *et al*., 2011). For this reason, it was important for the BSAC-SL programme to include this aspect in the programme, and for the effects of its implementation to be evaluated in this study.

4.2.2 Barriers to IMC

Schultz (1993) points out that a number of elements are required to ensure the success of IMC, including infrastructure, marketing budget, and marketing skills. In addition, Kitchen *et al.* (2004) stress that IMC is greatly influenced by the nature of the business, marketing capacity, and the available finance for marketing purposes. In addition, the types of products, the nature of the market, the price, and stage of product life cycle all affect IMC.

There are also numerous barriers that could limit the ability of firms to implement IMC successfully:

- **Lack of senior level support:** it is generally accepted that the successful implementation of IMC hinges on the involvement of senior management (Swain, 2004; Sahaf, 2019:325);
- **Misperception of marketing practitioners**: Because of the rise of interactive and web-based technologies, and decreasing marketing budgets, marketers and agencies alike can approach IMC in a way that is just tactical rather than strategic (Economist, 2007; Adebiyi & Bello, 2018);
- **Specialisation of agencies and within client organisations**: many companies and agencies still break up their marketing communications functions into departments like “advertising,” “PR,” and “sales promotion.” This often stands in the way of effective integration focused on customers and consumers (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2015:37); and
- **Staff resistance**: IMC requires horizontal co-ordination within organisations, which can often result in conflict between departments due to a perceived loss of control and authority (Kim *et al.*, 2004; Kitchen & Burgmann, 2015:37).

Schultz (1993) notes that reorganising departments in order to adapt to the needs of IMC is often required in order to overcome some of the barriers mentioned above.

Over the last few decades the marketing communication environment has changed considerably due to the advent of emerging technologies (Keller, 2009; Belch & Belch, 2018:8-16). Keller (2010) therefore contends that organisations need to understand what communication tools are available and how to combine these in order to integrate marketing communications effectively.

One of the key goals of the BSAC-SL programme was to provide SMMEs with a pseudo "marketing department" for a short period of time in order to help them establish IMC-related tools and activities. This study assesses to what degree this approach was able to help SMMEs overcome the numerous challenges to implementing IMC.

4.3 SMME IMC

IMC is uniquely designed to help firms plan, implement, and monitor brand communication programmes with key stakeholders over time, in order to generate short-term financial returns as well as build long-term brand and shareholder value (Belch & Belch, 2018:8-16). Brands with consistent communications make it easier for consumers to identify products and be reassured that they will get consistent quality, making the buying process simpler and encouraging brand loyalty (Miller & Layton, 2000:308; Chatzigeorgiou *et al*., 2019:5).

One of the key reasons for the growing importance of IMC is because of the vital role it plays in developing and maintaining a consistent image in the market (Groenewald *et al*., 2014:527). Considering that there are many products and services competing for the attention of consumers, brands that can sustain their brand awareness will gain a unique competitive advantage (Kitchen *et al.,* 2004:19; Tresna *et al*., 2019:182-189).

These important characteristics do not only apply to large businesses, but to SMMEs too. However, IMC research mostly focusses on large organisations and authors have only recently begun to explore its applicability to SMMEs (Gabrielli & Balboni 2010). This is surprising, given the economic importance of small businesses in South Africa (they account for 47 per cent of employment) (Liedtke, 2019).

One of the major elements that determine the success of small businesses is their ability to become noticed in the marketplace (Groenewald *et al*., 2014:526). In order to achieve this, small businesses need carefully planned and well thought-out IMC strategies (Clow & Baack, 2007:438; Gomes & Pissichio, 2018:5).

Yet there is a mind-set amongst small businesses that spending money on marketing communications is a luxury and should only occur if there is budget left over after dealing with other expenses

(Groenewald *et al*., 2014:527). Groenwald *et al.* (2014) reject this perspective, arguing that communicating with customers should be seen as an investment in the success of the business. They also point out that effective marketing communication does not necessarily require a big budget, and that with a little creativity and ingenuity small businesses can effectively communicate with consumers in ways that go beyond their competitors.

The strategic benefits of IMC are crucial for SMMEs, which often lack marketing expertise and the resources needed for marketing (Massiera, 2017:3). Rather than communicating marketing messages in random and ad-hoc ways, following an IMC approach would allow SMMEs to coordinate their communication messages and thus ensure greater impact and cost savings (Belch & Belch, 2018:8-16).

The key requirement, according to Scarborough and Zimmerer (2006), is that marketing communication programmes be efficient, consistent and integrated in order to reach consumers. They insist that a well thought-out IMC plan is vital for every small business in order to ensure that money invested in marketing communication efforts is not wasted. Although such a plan does not guarantee success, it does increase the likelihood of achieving positive results.

Considering the numerous benefits of having an effectively thought-out IMC, the BSAC-SL programme focused on developing IMC plans for participating SMMEs. The question that this research asks, however, is "what benefits did the student-developed IMC plans have for the participating SMMEs, if any?" Did it actually save them money and have a positive effect on their customers and sales figures?

4.3.1 Barriers to SMME IMC

Even though IMC is considered an important strategy for business growth and performance, there are a number of obstacles in the way of its implementation (Saeed *et al.*, 2013; Laurie & Mortimer, 2019:236). This is certainly true for most SMMEs, which do not have marketing or communication plans because of a lack of resources and expertise (Massiera, 2017:3). Those who do have such strategies in place often do not implement them and end up engaging in IMC in an ad-hoc and nonstrategic way (Mpofu & Chigwende, 2013). Luxton *et al*. (2017) confirm this by reporting that the IMC implementation challenges of SMMEs are intensified due to their resource constraints and lack of marketing expertise. Longenecker *et al*. (2006) admit that a shortage of financial resources is a key barrier to IMC implementation by SMMEs, and Thrassou and Vrontis (2006) add to this a shortage of time and marketing skills.

Although a number of small businesses do make use of marketing communication tools, literature reveals that poor management, including human resources, financial, general, and marketing management, results in the poor implementation of IMC and also poor financial performance among SMMEs (Mpofu & Chigwende, 2013).

SMME managers tend to use IMC to take advantage of short-term opportunities in the market rather than to plan and consistently communicate the brand and product values in an integrated way (Esposito, 2013). With regard to human resource planning, SMMEs generally seek employees who have multiple skills and who can perform multiple roles, often within the operational side of the business, rather than in the management or marketing side (Fallon, 2015).

Esposito (2013) highlights the tension regarding IMC between internal and external forces within SMMEs. External forces (like competition) necessitate the effective implementation of IMC, whereas internal factors (such as a lack of marketing skills or limited finances) restrain investment in IMC. As a result, Tsikirayi *et al.* (2012) have determined that many SMMEs do not actually have a clear understanding of the importance of IMC in creating awareness of their products and building profitable relationships with customers, and therefore do not prioritise it among the business's functions.

Reijonen and Laukaken (2010) believe that the solution to this problem is to provide marketing training and expertise to SMMEs to enable them to implement marketing communications effectively and efficiently. This is exactly what the BSAC-SL programme set out to do through the use of students, seeking to provide a solution that is cost effective and flexible.

4.3.2 SMME IMC research

The literature on IMC was initially focused on the benefits associated with the model, such as better interdepartmental working relations, greater efficiencies, and cost savings (Henninger & Alevizou, 2017). However, over the last eight years, a number of studies have been conducted around the world which explore the relationship between SMMEs and IMC. These are summarised in Table 4.2, below and discussed in detail thereafter.

Table 4.2: Eight years of SMME IMC research (2012–2019)

Author, date, title	Problem	Purpose	Methodology	Findings	Recommendations/ noteworthy details
Hopkins (2012) Can Facebook be an effective mechanism for generating growth and value in small businesses?	Little literature currently exists on the adoption of Social Networks by small businesses for value creation.	To determine if Facebook is an effective mechanism for generating growth and value in small businesses.	Qualitative case study of a family owned business in Australia, using a series of interviews over a period of several months.	After implementing Facebook marketing, the businesses gained new customers through increased awareness. Orders also increased to the point of having to employ more staff. The owners have also gained new insights about their market through engaging with customers via this platform. Customers indicated that they preferred to give feedback via a public platform like Facebook where other users can see and respond to their comments, rather than communicating privately via email. Staff found this to be time saving as they could respond to multiple customers at the same time. It was found that Facebook was an effective channel for sales promotions like one-day spot sales in order to clear old stock.	Running an effective Facebook page requires a considerable investment of time. One staff member spends 50 per cent of her day managing the Facebook page.
Esposito (2013) Insights about integrated marketing communication in small-and-medium-sized Italian enterprises	Few studies are aimed at investigating the practice of integrated marketing communication in small and medium-sized enterprises in Italy.	To understand how SMEs in Italy use different mediums of communication in IMC.	An explorative study making use of three qualitative case studies. Data collected using unstructured interviews with the communication manager and top management of all three firms.	The importance and implementation of marketing communication in SMEs is influenced by the industry, the degree of internationalisation, the maturity of the products, the management style, the strategic objectives, the stakeholders, and the level of resources available. In all three firms, decision making takes place by top management, the creative process takes place within the firm, and marketing materials and graphics are outsourced. The firms pursue MC in order to increase brand awareness, improve brand reputation, reposition the corporate image, make their products more visible, and most importantly, increase sales. In terms of MC tools, firms made the most use of trade shows and point of sale support. Some use was made of events, sponsorships, catalogues, PR, digital communications & social media, and	The study highlights that IMC improves customer attitudes and loyalty. It also suggests that firms implementing IMC improve their sales performance and profitability.

				product placements. Direct marketing, sales promotion, and television ads were scarcely used. In terms of message content, the primary aspect conveyed by media comprised descriptions of product features. Communication planning was not considered very important by the firms, therefore tools were not implemented in an integrated way. As such, marketing was more an operative function and thus used to simply grab opportunities in the marketplace rather than plan and communicate brand values to target audiences in an integrated way. Although a budget was always set for communication efforts, regular evaluation and monitoring of communication activities was often lacking.	
Groenewald *et al.* (2014) Strategic marketing insights for small business meat retailers	In order to gain a competitive advantage small business meat retailers in South Africa need to differentiate themselves decisively.	To propose an IMC strategy for SMME meat retailers to effectively market their branded meat products.	The study followed both a descriptive and exploratory approach, making use of both quantitative and qualitative methods. 588 questionnaires were completed and 612 semi-structured interviews were conducted with consumers who purchase branded meat products in Middelburg in Mpumalanga, South Africa. Semi-structured interviews were	Consumers indicated which marketing communication methods influenced their meat purchases the most, including word of mouth (63%), the local newspaper (15%), retailer promotions (14%), retailer functions (3%), retailer publicity (3%), local radio station (1%), and sponsorships (0%). Consumers also indicated which marketing communication methods they would prefer, including local newspaper (44%), special events (29%), in store promotions (19%), emails from retailer (4%), local radio station (2%), website (2%), and PR (1%). In terms of consumers' attribute preferences, quality ranked the highest, then the competence of staff, and then value for money.	Small business meat retailers should focus on promoting only one or two key attributes of their brand, especially those that make the firm different from its competitors. They should also partner with non-competitive brands (like Windhoek) in order to benefit from co-branding strategies. Retailers should pursue communication channels which promote WOM like Facebook, and run brand building campaigns to increase WOM. They can partner with non-competing brands to run ads in the local paper and run in-store promotions to

			also conducted with the owner-managers of three branded meat retail outlets.		attract customers. Retailers should leverage secondary associations to help signal quality and credibility.
Lekhanya (2014) Perceived marketing intelligence and marketing communication tools used by rural small, medium and micro enterprises in South Africa.	There is little empirical research about how SMMEs promote themselves.	To understand the marketing intelligence and marketing promotional communication tools used by rural SMMEs in KwaZulu Natal in South Africa, and the limitations they experience.	A descriptive study with 374 SMME owner-managers using a quantitative questionnaire.	Findings indicate that 57 per cent of SMMEs use local advertising, whereas only 10.7 per cent use national advertising. 42 per cent use brochures, 39.8 per cent use personal selling, 42.5 per cent use special offers, 24.9 per cent use public relations, 18.3 per cent use printed materials, and 18.2 per cent make use of other competitions. Only 3.2 per cent make use of sponsorships. SMMEs indicated that there were marketing support services like research agencies, consultants, and advertising agencies in their area. In terms of training, 20.4 per cent had training in marketing, 73.7 per cent had training in HR, 42.6 per cent in business management, and 91.8 per cent in building and construction management.	The South African government should implement SMME support mechanisms like mentorship programmes, workshops, and consulting services in rural areas to assist SMMEs to take advantage of marketing strategies.
Mapheto *et al.* (2014) The utilisation of integrated marketing communication strategies by small retailers in Mankweng, South Africa.	There is limited empirical research on the role of IMC in the SMME retail sector.	To investigate whether small retailers utilise IMC and whether it has a positive effect on the profitability of the firm.	A quantitative study with 26 small retailers in Mankweng, South Africa, using a researcher-administered survey.	Findings indicate that sales promotion, personal selling, and advertising were the most used IMC tools. Digital communication, publicity, sponsorship, and direct marketing were far less popular. Owner-managers indicated that customer response to IMC is mostly moderate (42%) and good (38%). 4 per cent indicated that it was very good whereas 12 per cent indicated it was bad. Respondents indicated IMC contributed to profitability. 30.8 per cent indicated a good impact, 7.7 per cent indicated a very good impact, and 7.7 per cent indicated a moderate impact. Interestingly, 38.5 per cent of owner-managers did not respond to this question.	Implications of the findings show that if small retailers implement elements of IMC they can generate more profit. Stores should make use of marketing plans to help guide their communication efforts. Realistic and measurable goals should be set for marketing communications. Research should be

					done with customers and potential customers to determine which IMC elements would work the best. In addition, SMME retailers should be helped to create customer databases. Business mentors and consultants should assist SMME retailers to structure and implement their marketing strategies.
Lekhanya (2015) The role of integrated marketing communications in enhancement of SMEs growth in South Africa	There are a lack of empirical studies on the use of IMC by SMEs in South Africa.	To examine the influence of integrated marketing communications on the growth of SMEs in South Africa.	A descriptive study with SME owner-managers using a quantitative questionnaire with registered businesses in KwaZulu Natal province.	Findings indicated that 57 per cent of SMEs made use of local advertising, 45 per cent used special offers, 42 per cent used brochures, and 40 per cent made use of personal selling. In terms of the factors that influence their use of IMC, SMEs specified economic factors (75%), competition (75%), limited funds (33%), and technology (12%). In terms of the influence of skills and knowledge on the use of IMC, 67 per cent of SMEs noted that they lacked the knowledge and experience to implement IMC. 94 per cent of respondents never thought about IMC and 93 per cent did not understand why they should use IMC.	SME owner managers need to improve their marketing skills and knowledge, and in particular those relating to marketing communication tools and their benefits for SME business growth. SMEs should also engage the services of marketing consultants and agencies for assistance with marketing.
Mramba (2015) The marketing communication strategies of street vendors in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania	There is a lack of knowledge about how micro businesses facilitate marketing communication.	To explore the marketing communication strategies of street vendors in Dar es Salaam Tanzania.	Qualitative study using interviews and focus group discussions with 39 street vendors and 20 customers from Dar es Salaam.	Street vendors made use of simple forms of MC like WOM, personal selling, point of sale displays, price discounts, and free product promotions. It was found that street vendors did not effectively plan MC, nor did they use effective messaging. In addition, street vendors used unethical forms of MC through misrepresenting their products and services. It seemed as if they were not interested in gaining a loyal customer base. Customers expressed that they purchased from street	Encourages future studies to focus on how to train street vendors in order to strengthen their marketing strategies.

				vendors because of their accessibility and price. They did however explain that the promotional messages of street vendors were deceptive and misrepresentative, which caused mistrust.	
Makhitha (2016) Marketing strategies of small craft producers in South Africa: practices and challenges.	There is a lack of marketing knowledge and expertise and a limited use of marketing strategies among SMEs in South Africa.	To investigate the challenges and practices of marketing strategies of craft producers in Gauteng, South Africa.	Descriptive study using a quantitative questionnaire with 244 craft producers.	Craft producers in South Africa lack a clearly defined target market, lack product differentiation, do not have a formal pricing structure, fail to access formal markets such as selling through retailers, and have not yet appropriately adopted the Internet or cost effective digital/social media marketing communication strategies. They mostly make use of brochures and pamphlets as a cheap form of marketing communication.	Craft producers should brand their products effectively and offer different product ranges. In addition, they should consider differentiating their products more effectively and set fixed prices for them. They should increase Internet usage for marketing communication. Craft producers need access to government-funded support programmes. Government could also assist the craft producers in accessing markets through building a central website on which all craft producers can list their products. The government can also develop a newsletter which targets craft retailers in which products are listed.

Odoom (2016) Brand-building efforts in high and low performing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)	It is unclear how much of SME performance can be attributed to their brand building efforts.	To examine brand-building efforts by high-performing and low-performing SMEs in Ghana.	A quantitative approach using a structured questionnaire with 430 SMEs.	The study confirmed a positive relationship between brand building efforts and SME performance. Low performing SMEs appear to engage in brand-building efforts at moderate levels whereas high performing firms do so to a greater extent. Brand identities/elements were found to be the most clear differentiating factor of firms, while secondary associations were the least clear. A negative relationship was found between low-performing firms and secondary relationships, reinforcing the caution of Krake (2005) that SMEs not broaden their brands with too many additional associations and thereby stretch the resources of the enterprise. Enterprise size and sector had minimal effect on performance.	The author recommends that SMEs move beyond using only brand identities (names, logos, symbols, and colours) to include other facets of brand building like marketing programmes, integrated marketing communication, and in some cases, secondary associations.
Ramasobana (2017) Marketing communication and the performance of small and medium enterprises in Polokwane Local Municipality	There is a limited amount of research in the sphere of marketing communication and SMEs.	To determine the performance differences of SMEs based on the type of marketing communication strategies they adopt.	Quantitative study with 160 SMEs in Limpopo, South Africa, using a structured self-administered questionnaire.	SMMEs engaging in marketing communication were able to increase their sales and profits. However, marketing communication did not result in the growth of the number of employees. Firms that use both traditional and technology-enabled (guerrilla) marketing communication achieved the greatest levels of sales and profits compared to those that only used one.	The author believes that marketing communication can contribute to increased employment in SMMEs if the government can offer marketing subsidies so that SMMEs can employ marketing personnel.
Bocconcelli *et al.* (2017) Social media as a resource in SMEs' sales process.	There is a lack of focused studies on the impact of social media adoption on the sales activities within specific SME contexts.	To explore the impact of social media adoption by Italian SMEs facing complex and rapidly changing market scenarios.	Single longitudinal case study with a firm in Italy using multiple in-depth interviews with firm employees and document analysis of company data.	The findings show that in terms of the SME sales process, social media reduced time and space constraints, enhanced communication processes with contacts in new markets, enabled more effective marketing channel management, reinforced business networking, and helped facilitate a more planned and proactive sales approach. In terms of social media as a resource interacting with the other resources in the SME, the findings indicate that the overall interactions of all the firm's	In order to implement SM in the sales process, a deep and appropriate analysis is required of an SME's internal and external environment. SME-related dimensions such as the entrepreneurial team, the degree of

				resources affect the contribution of SM as a resource. The owner-manager, sales manager, and other organisational units play a key role in exploiting the potential of SM, the nature of the firm's products (simple, easy to use, low price) strongly affects SM adoption and its effectiveness, and business relationships with customers, distributors, and partners are key to the effective use of SM. (Bocconcelli, 2017:22) SM allows small firms to increase their visibility and enter into new markets, which otherwise would have been very difficult to reach. SM provides a variety of tools which support the company in various stages of the sales process. SM makes it easier to access foreign customers, with limited costs, and helps to improve brand reputation in the market. The role and impact of SM is highly dependent on the availability of committed and skilled human resources. These include the strategic and entrepreneurial orientation of the marketing and sales manager.	involvement by collaborators, and the level of structuring of marketing and sales activities, need to be effectively integrated in order to ensure the successful introduction and management of SM. SM could be used to support traditional forms of marketing communication such as trade fairs. Firms should tailor their MC strategy based on their resources and business context. Limitations include the fact that the study was only conducted with one firm.
Henninger and Alevizou (2017) IMC, social media, and UK fashion micro-organisations	There is a lack of research relating to the practical implementation of IMC in micro-organisations (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2015).	To determine the practical implementation of IMC and social media in fashion micro-enterprises in the UK.	An exploratory longitudinal study within an interpretive research design. A number of qualitative methods were used to gain data from five micro-organisations.	Websites and blogs are used as a starting point for MC and are used to establish a relationship with customers by communicating company values, products, contact information, and company news. Traditional media like print advertising are distributed at tradeshows and other events and used to communicate product information, links to the website, and contact information. Social media are used to communicate sales promotions, events, industry trends, company projects, and facilitate dialogue with customers. Owner-managers managed all marketing communication. None of the micro-organisations used online platforms effectively	The authors question whether it is necessary to have a presence on all online platforms. They recommend rather engaging in those that are most relevant to the stakeholders and which can be maintained regularly. They conclude that the micro-organisations lacked basic marketing knowledge to create and IMC strategy. Thus they

				and did not integrate media and channels appropriately. Thus the authors maintain that all the businesses studied do not fully embrace the IMC concept. Instead they engaged in IMC in a mostly short-term, tactical way, which was non-strategic and haphazard and did not take into account the customer's information needs.	recommend that these firms be offered practical skills to increase their marketing proficiency. The authors suggest that further research should be done to determine how micro-organisations can channel IMC into more coherent strategies.
Patricia *et al.* (2017) Influence of marketing communication on micro-enterprise performance in Kericho Country, Kenya	The influence of marketing communication as relating to the non-financial measures of micro-enterprises has not been widely examined.	To determine the relationship between marketing communication and the performance of micro-enterprises in Kenya.	A correlation study with 373 owner/managers of micro-enterprises, using a structured questionnaire.	Micro-enterprises made use of sales promotions and discounts the most, followed by leaflets and outdoor signage. The least used tools included magazine advertisements and web-based advertising. The findings indicated that although micro-enterprises did make use of marketing communication, it was not to a large extent. Findings regarding the management of marketing communication reveal that activities rarely present the same clear and consistent message, marketing communication was not used to identify prospects or encourage new product trials, nor was MC used to provide information about offerings to target audiences. There was, however, expression of a clear need amongst micro-enterprises to outsource some MC to specialists. MC was found to contribute to the performance of micro-enterprises in 12.0 per cent of cases.	The author suggests that micro-enterprises improve their MC activities in order to enhance performance.

Kota (2018) The usage of traditional, digital and social media by micro, small, and medium enterprises in Hyderabad, India	Although new media are readily accessible to SMMEs in India, many do not have an online presence and still predominantly make use of traditional media to promote their businesses.	To understand the usage of traditional, digital and social media among SMMEs in India.	A descriptive study using a quantitative questionnaire with 210 SMME owners.	The vast majority of female SMME owners use traditional media (97%) and social media (87%). Male business owners were using more digital media (88%). More than 80 per cent of the SMME owners in the age group of 25-54 were making use of traditional, digital, and social media. There was a statistically significant relationship between level of education and the use of media for promotional purposes. SMMEs involved in manufacturing used more media than those in the services industry. Micro businesses used more traditional and social media than small and medium businesses. Businesses that had been established for longer (11-15 years) used more media tools for promotion (85%).	Although many SMMEs have social media pages like Facebook, Twitter, and You Tube, these channels are not frequently updated due to a lack of time.
Van Scheers (2018) Which marketing communication methods are Namibian SMEs using?	The quality and frequency of marketing communication methods employed by SMEs can in the long-run determine the success of an SMME (Iorun, 2014).	To determine the marketing communication methods used by SMEs operating in Incubation Centres in Namibia.	A descriptive study with 45 SME owners completing a quantitative questionnaire.	The most regularly used marketing communication methods were personal selling, word-of-mouth, point of sale materials, networking, and newspaper advertisements. The top five least used methods included YouTube, Television, Direct Mail, media publications, and coupons. SMMEs stated that WOM was the most effective (71.1%), followed by networking (64.4%), and trade shows (46.7%). These were preferred due to their low cost and the fact that they enabled interaction with customers. Major challenges to implementing marketing included a lack of manpower (88.9%), high cost (82.2%), and time constraints (28.9%).	The author recommends that SMMEs in Namibia focus on improving the quality of their products and services in order to garner more WOM.
Ahmad *et al*. (2019) Social media adoption and its impact on firm performance: the case of the UAE.	There is a lack of information on the way in which SMMEs use or adopt social media channels.	To explore factors that influence social media adoption by SMEs in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and their impact on performance.	Multi-perspective framework using a quantitative questionnaire to collect data from a random sample of 144 SMMEs.	Most SMMEs in the UAE (61.8%) have started making use of social media for marketing purposes in the last two years. The top six SMTs used were Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube. No significant relationship was found between the use of social media and relative advantage. SMEs were less likely to adopt social media technologies which were more	The authors recommend that SMMEs have a clear plan for how they will use social media and why before making a decision about adoption. This should include measurable goals, objectives, and

				complex. Management involvement was found to be important for adoption of SMTs. The authors found no significant effect of social media on SMME performance.	corresponding metrics.
Odoom & Mensa (2019) Brand orientation and brand performance in SMEs: the moderating effects of social media and innovation capabilities	There is little research about how the relationships with firm capabilities affect enterprise performance, especially among SMMEs in emerging economies.	To investigate the moderating effects of innovation capabilities and social media capabilities on the relationship between brand orientation and brand performance among SMMEs.	Quantitative study using a structured questionnaire with a sample of 826 SMMEs in Ghana.	The authors found a positive relationship between brand performance and brand orientation, especially within the parameters of the organisations' innovation capabilities and social media capabilities.	Based on the findings the authors suggest that SMMEs embrace social media to improve brand performance, especially against larger organisations.
Mosweunyane *et al*. (2019) Use of social media in Free State tourism small, medium and micro enterprises to widen business networks for competitiveness.	The benefit of social media for increasing corporate business networking and competitiveness has not been sufficiently tested in tourism SMMEs in African emerging economies.	To investigate the use of social media in tourism SMMEs to widen their business networks and increase competitiveness.	Descriptive quantitative study using a closed-ended structured questionnaire with 123 tourism SMMEs in the Free State of South Africa.	Most respondents (82.9%) made use of SMTs. Although almost half of the SMMEs (46.7%) used SMTs to attract new customers, only 15.4 per cent used to them communicate with stakeholders. 67.5 per cent of SMMEs responded to questions and comments from customers and potential customers posted on SMTs, 62.6 per cent declared that SMTs were significantly broadening customers' awareness of their products, and 57 per cent of SMMEs used SMTs to retain existing customers. SMMEs used Facebook (49.6%), WhatsApp (44.3%), Google+ (41.5%), LinkedIn (25.2%), and Twitter (18.7%). It was found that internal networking via SMTs had a significant impact on competitiveness.	To increase competitiveness, the authors suggest the tourism SMMEs increase the level of internal and external networking via SMTs with employees, customers, suppliers, investors, and so forth.

Findings in general show that IMC is beneficial as a small business marketing tool. For example, Mapheto *et al*. (2014) and Ramasobana (2017) found that South African SMMEs that engaged in marketing communication were able to increase their sales and profits. IMC also contributed to the performance of micro-organisations in Kenya (Patricia *et al.*, 2017:483) and Ghana (Odoom & Mensa, 2019:165). It was exactly such benefits that the BSAC-SL programme sought to secure for participating SMMEs.

Yet despite these benefits experienced by many SMMEs, there is still much to be done to implement IMC in a fully integrated manner. Although most small firms engage in marketing communication in some way or form, most of the research reveals that small businesses do not fully embrace IMC. Instead they engage in marketing communication in a mostly short-term, tactical, non-strategic and haphazard way, which does not consider the information needs of their customers (Henninger & Alevizou, 2017). This was one of the main motivations for starting the BSAC-SL programme; to show local SMMEs the benefits of IMC and teach them how to engage in it in a strategic and sustainable way.

Van Scheers (2018) discovered that although SMMEs engaged in some forms of marketing communication, they generally preferred MC tools that were more affordable and which enabled them to interact with their customers. The use of communication tools was often dependent on the country of origin, firm size, communication goal, product type, and the industry in which the small business operated. Other factors that influenced the use of IMC included economic factors, competition, funds, technology, as well as knowledge and experience (Lekhanya, 2015).

SMMEs in Namibia mostly made use of personal selling, word-of-mouth, trade shows, point-of-sale materials, networking, and newspaper ads (Van Scheers, 2018). Micro enterprises in Kenya made use of sales promotions and discounts the most, followed by leaflets and outdoor signage (Patricia *et al*., 2017). Fashion micro-enterprises in the United Kingdom (UK) made use of technology-enabled media like websites, blogs, and social media, as well as traditional media like print advertising (Henninger & Alevizou, 2017). Street vendors in Tanzania made use of simple forms of marketing communication like word of mouth (WOM), personal selling, point-of-sale displays, price discounts, and free product promotions (premiums) (Mramba, 2015). Craft producers in South Africa mainly made use of brochures and pamphlets as cheap forms of marketing communication (Makhitha, 2016). Other SMMEs in South Africa tended to employ local advertising, special offers, and personal selling (Mapheto *et al.,* 2014; Lekhanya, 2015). SMMEs in the UAE and tourism SMMEs in the Freestate of South Africa made extensive use of SMTs such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, and LinkedIn (Ahmad *et al*., 2019:91; Mosweunyane *et al*., 2019:6)

There were also tools that SMMEs did not use, either because they were too costly to implement or because they lacked the expertise to use them. In Namibia, SMMEs made little to no use of social media, television advertising, direct mail, and coupons (Van Scheers, 2018). The least used tools by micro-enterprises in Kenya were magazine advertising and web-based advertising (Patricia, 2017). South African SMMEs did not often make use of digital communication, publicity, sponsorships, and direct marketing (Mapheto *et al*., 2014). To expose local SMMEs to helpful marketing tools with which they might not be familiar, the BSAC-SL programme instructed students to develop marketing tools for participating SMMEs and train them in their use.

Findings relating to the benefits of IMC tools indicated that social media economised on time and space, enhanced communication processes, enabled more effective marketing channel management, reinforced business networking, and helped facilitate a more strategic and proactive approach to sales (Bocconcelli *et al.,* 2017:22). In addition, SMTs contributed to brand performance and brand orientation, especially within the parameters of the SMMEs' innovation and social media capabilities (Odoom & Mensa, 2019:165). Tourism SMMEs in South Africa made use of SMTs to attract new customers, communicate with stakeholders, increase product awareness, retain existing customers, and engage in internal and external networking (Mosweunyane *et al*., 2019:5-6). It was also found that social media were a low-cost way for SMMEs to increase their visibility and access new foreign markets, which would otherwise have been difficult to reach (Bocconcelli *et al.,* 2017:24-25).

An Australian study by Hopkins (2012) found that Facebook marketing helped SMMEs gain new customers through increased awareness. One business had to employ more staff in order to cope with the increase in orders. Facebook enabled firms to gain new insights into their customers through engaging with them personally. Customers indicated that they preferred to give feedback via a public platform like Facebook, where other customers could see and respond to their comments. SMMEs found this approach to customer engagement saved them time as they could respond to multiple customers at the same time. In addition, it was found that Facebook was an effective channel for sales promotions such as one-day spot sales.

With regard to the management of marketing communication, Henninger & Alevizou (2017) discovered that in the UK this job was often done by the owner-manager. Bocconcelli *et al.* (2017:22) found that the owner-manager, sales manager, and other organisational units played a key role in exploiting the potential of communication tools like social media, an area that is highly dependent on the availability of committed and skilled human resources. In addition, it was found that those organisations that had more strategic and entrepreneurially-oriented managers were able to make better use of innovative communication platforms such as social media (Bocconcelli *et al.*, 2017:24-25). It was also discovered that management involvement was important for the adoption of SMT in SMMEs (Ahmad *et al*., 2019:99). For this reason, students participating in the BSAC-SL programme were instructed to, as far as possible, work with the owner-manager of their partner SMMEs. In this way, their involvement and influence in the business could have wider-reaching and longer-term value. It is also for this reason that this study sought to garner the insights of owner-managers rather than just the staff members of participating SMMEs.

In terms of how effectively SMMEs made use of IMC, the findings generally reveal that they struggled to do so. In Kenya, communication activities rarely presented the same clear and consistent message; marketing communication was not used to identify prospects or encourage new product trials, nor was it used to provide information about offerings to target audiences (Patricia *et al.*, 2017). None of the micro fashion enterprises in the UK surveyed by Henninger & Alevizou (2017) used online platforms effectively, nor did they integrate media and channels appropriately. In Tanzania, it was found by Mramba (2015) that street vendors did not effectively plan IMC nor did they use effective messaging.

Challenges faced by small firms in respect of IMC were the result of a lack of manpower, cost, and time constraints (Van Scheers, 2018). In addition, it was clear that most SMMEs did not have the basic marketing knowledge needed to create and implement IMC strategies (Henninger & Alevizou, 2017). Some firms expressed the need to outsource some IMC elements to specialists (Patricia *et al.*, 2017:483). Makhitha (2016) declared that the reason craft producers in South Africa were unable to engage in IMC effectively was because they lacked a clearly defined target market, had no product differentiation or formal pricing structure, failed to access formal markets (like retailers), and had not yet effectively adopted the Internet or cost-effective digital/social media marketing communication strategies. The BSAC-SL programme tried to help SMMEs overcome all of these challenges by offering them free and knowledgeable manpower to help them with marketing and show them cost-effective and strategic ways to facilitate marketing communication.

As far as recommendations are concerned, authors suggested that SMMEs needed to improve their IMC performance in order to enhance business performance (Patricia *et al*., 2017; Ramasobana, 2017:118; Odoom & Mensa, 2019). For example, to increase competitiveness, Mosweunyane *et al*. (2019:8) suggest that SMMEs increase the level of internal and external networking via SMTs with all stakeholders, including employees, customers, suppliers and investors.

Henninger and Alevizou (2017) argue that instead of trying to use all the IMC tools and platforms available, SMMEs should only use those that are most relevant to their stakeholders and which they can maintain regularly in an integrated way. Many authors recommend that SMMEs be offered training in IMC in order to increase their marketing proficiency (Lekhanya, 2015; Mramba, 2015; Henninger & Alevizou, 2017). This was a key objective of the BSAC: not only to support SMMEs with marketing communication, but to also train them in how to practise it themselves. This study therefore sought to determine how effective this training had been.

In South Africa it was felt that SMMEs should be assisted by the government through support programmes that include funding, mentorship, training, consulting services, and centralised forms of marketing assistance for specific industries like craft producers (Makhitha, 2016). In addition, it was recommended that South African SMMEs consult the services of marketing consultants and agencies for assistance with marketing (Lekhanya 2015, 2014).

In terms of IMC strategy, it was recommended that SMMEs should promote only one or two key attributes of their brand, especially those attributes that will differentiate them from the competition (Groenewald *et al.,* 2014). They should also make use of communication channels which will encourage WOM like social media. It was also suggested that SMMEs leverage secondary brand associations in order to help signal quality and credibility, and partner with non-competing brands to run co-branded sales promotions (Groenewald *et al.,* 2014).

Mapheto *et al*. (2014) and Achmad *et al*. (2019) encourage SMMEs to make use of marketing plans to help guide their communication efforts. They suggest that realistic and measurable goals be set for marketing communications. The authors also propose that SMMEs should be helped to create customer databases and that research should be done with customers and potential customers to determine which IMC elements would work the best. Finally, the authors establish that SMMEs need mentors and consultants to assist them with structuring and implementing their marketing strategies.

In many ways the BSAC-SL programme sought to create relationships between SMMEs and students which would not only benefit SMMEs during the SL programme but which could continue to be beneficial to them even after the programme had ended, as students continued to function as external marketing agencies, mentors, and consultants for the small business sector. Based on the SMME IMC literature overall, it is clear that SMMEs need help when it comes to developing and implementing IMC strategies, but can the assistance of students provide sufficient assistance to ensure IMC success?

4.4 The IMC planning process

In order to develop an IMC strategy to influence the target market, firms combine the various promotional mix elements into an integrated programme. This process is known as IMC planning/management which, according to Belch and Belch (2018:31), "involves the process of planning, executing, evaluating, and controlling the use of various promotional-mix elements to effectively communicate with target audiences." In this process firms need to decide which promotional tools to use, how much of the budget to allocate to each one, and how to integrate them effectively in order to achieve the stated marketing and communication objectives.

The IMC planning process is guided by an IMC plan that provides the framework for developing, implementing, and controlling the organisation's IMC programme (Belch & Belch, 2018:31). The IMC plan follows the IMC Planning Model, shown below in Figure 4.1.

One of the central aspects of the BSAC-SL programme was that students developed an IMC campaign for their client SMMEs. In order to do so, students worked through the entire IMC planning process as laid out in the IMC planning model. This model is broken down into seven different steps and will be discussed at length in the next section.

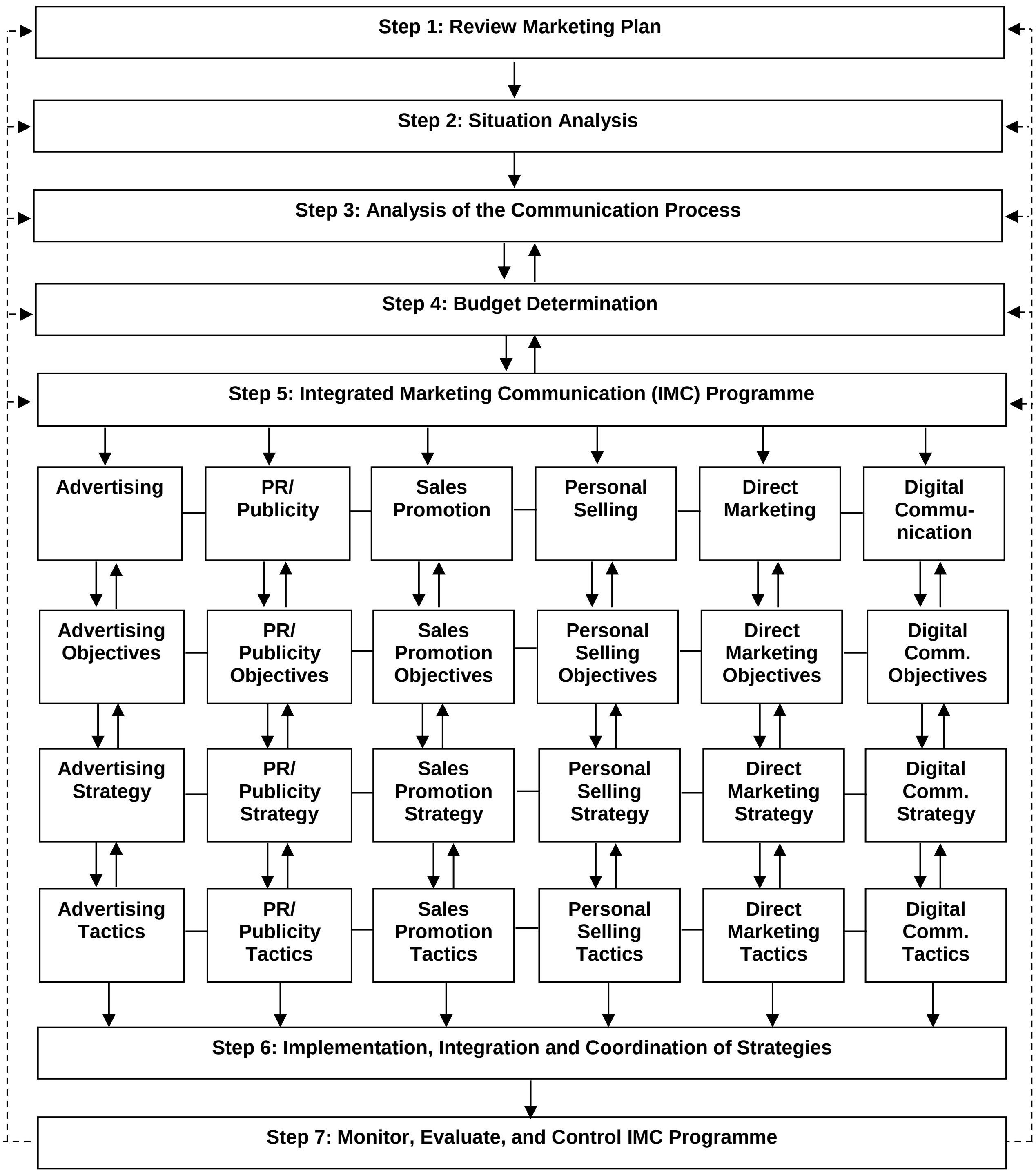

Figure 4.1 An IMC planning model

Source: Adapted from Koekemoer (2004:22); Belch and Belch (2018:32)

4.4.1 Step 1: Review of the marketing plan

The IMC planning process flows from the overall marketing plan (O'Guinn *et al*., 2009:264; Belch & Belch, 2018:32). For this reason, the marketing plan and subsequent marketing objectives needs to be carefully reviewed. Those involved with marketing communication need to have a full grasp of the firm's history, its current position in the market, its marketing-related goals for the future, and its plans to achieve those goals. All such information can usually be found in the firm's marketing plan, which is a written document that outlines the overall marketing strategy for the firm, as well as specific marketing programmes developed for any strategic business units (SBUs), product lines, or brands (Lamb *et al*., 2020:427-431).

In the experience of the BSAC-SL programme, most SMMEs did not have existing marketing plans, strategies, programmes, or people assigned to marketing communications. For this reason, students interviewed SMME owner-managers in order to review their sales and marketing goals and then proceeded to put this onto paper. In this way they began crafting a basic marketing plan to support and inform the IMC plan.

4.4.2 Step 2: Situation analysis

Once the firm's overall marketing strategy has been carefully assessed, the next step is the development of an "IMC Programme Situation Analysis." The situation analysis section considers all the factors that define the firm's business, market, and environmental contexts. It is divided into two main parts, an "internal analysis" and an "external analysis" (Lamb *et al*., 2020:428). The internal analysis considers aspects like the capabilities of the firm, successes and failures of past campaigns, strengths and weaknesses of the firm's brand image, benefits and unique selling points of the firm's products and services (Belch & Belch, 2018:34). The external analysis considers aspects like the characteristics of the firm's customers and their buying behaviour, the attractiveness of different market segments, the nature of the market environment, trends in the market, and the characteristics of direct competitors (O'Guinn *et al.*, 2009:266).

When an agency has had a long-standing relationship with the client, this knowledge is already present in the organisation; however, when the relationship is new (as is often the case in IMC), the agency needs to "do its homework" in order to gain a good grasp of the client's overall business situation. This is important as all new decisions made will be informed by those made previously.

In the BSAC-SL programme, student agencies had not worked with the SMMEs before and therefore needed to do a fair amount of groundwork to gain a thorough perspective of the overall business situation of their client SMMEs. In order to do so, students interviewed owner-managers, spoke to staff members, surveyed customers, investigated competitors, analysed the business sector in which the SMME was operating, and evaluated aspects like the firm's brand image, unique selling points, and market segments.

4.4.3 Step 3: Analysis of the communication process

In this phase of the IMC planning process, firms must first determine with whom they will communicate, how the members of their target market move through the buying process, and how they respond to marketing communication messages. Finally, communication objectives need to be determined in order to achieve the goals set out in the overall marketing plan (Belch & Belch, 2018:36-37).

4.4.3.1 Target audiences

The communication process begins with identifying the audiences that will be the focus of the firm's communication efforts. The target audience may consist of individuals, groups, market segments, niche markets, the general public, or a mass audience (Belch & Belch, 2018:160). Each of these audiences needs to be approached differently.

A firm may target multiple market segments with its various products and services. Within each segment there may also be distinctions between those who purchase the products and services (customers) and those who end up using the products and services (users/consumers). Communication strategies target different groups within a firm's market segments based on the objectives of the overall marketing plan and the subsequent IMC campaign plan (Van Heerden *et al.*, 2019:37).

In the case of the BSAC-SL programme, student agencies helped SMMEs decide on an overall positioning strategy and then developed different messages for each target audience within the firm's target market. They then developed specific strategies for a number of different communication mix tools to ensure that the messages reached each target audience.

4.4.3.2 Level of involvement

The way that consumers respond to communication messages is dependent on the type of product or service purchased and the level of involvement required. For this reason, it is also important to consider this in the communication analysis.

Frequently purchased low-cost goods and services often involve routine response behaviour, and as such are known as low-involvement products because consumers do not spend much time doing research before making the purchase. Consumers can also engage in limited decision making, which requires a moderate level of involvement, and extensive decision making when buying an unfamiliar expensive product or an infrequently bought item, which is associated with high levels of involvement (Lamb *et al*., 2020:95-96).

During the BSAC-SL programme, most of the student agencies worked with retail firms such as hairdressers, corner cafes, and bars or canteens. For this reason, students needed to craft communication messages which could influence consumers purchasing low to moderate involvement products or services. In most cases student agencies needed to exercise simple sales promotion strategies to encourage people to try out the product, thereby exposing new customers to the brand and offerings of their client SMMEs.

4.4.3.3 Brand touch points

The behavioural sequence model and the hierarchy of effects model underscore the need to understand consumer brand decisions as a process involving multiple stages with potentially several people involved, as well as numerous forms of brand interaction and communication engagement (Percy, 2008:274). By applying these models it is possible to determine how brand choices are made and what forms of marketing communication consumers will need to enable them to move through the buying process.

Schultz *et al.* (1993:51) confirm that any experience that a customer or prospective customer has with a firm or brand, including brand advertising, word-of-mouth, and using the product, are considered brand touch points and thus need to be strategically considered in IMC planning. The most successful brand builders evaluate the level of influence of each touch point on consumers, and focus their resources on those that create the strongest brand experiences and can cause consumers to change their behaviour (Dunn & Davis, 2004:300).

The hierarchy of effects model postulates six different levels that marketing communication programmes need to consider in respect of communication mix strategies (Lamb *et al*., 2020:420-422). At each level there are multiple touch points that can be influenced using different IMC tools. These levels are awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction, and purchase. The model assumes that marketing communication propels consumers along each step in the purchase-decision process. These steps consist of:

- **Awareness:** the first step is to ensure that the target market is aware of the brand and its products or services. Mass media advertising is often used to facilitate awareness;
- **Knowledge:** the second step involves informing the target market about the characteristics of the product and how it can satisfy their needs;
- **Liking:** the third step involves developing a favourable attitude towards the product among consumers. Testimonials, sampling, sponsorships, and the like can be used to generate liking;
- **Preference:** the fourth step convinces consumers of the brand’s competitive advantages over competitors in order to get them to prefer the brand over others;
- **Conviction:** the fifth step seeks to build conviction (intention) within the minds of consumers to buy the brand; and
- **Purchase:** the final stage stimulates consumers to purchase the product (Lamb *et al.*, 2020:420-422; Belch & Belch, 2018:162).

In order to ensure that all the potential brand touch points and each level of the hierarchy of effects model was planned and integrated into the IMC programme, student agencies participating in the BSAC-SL programme used a combination of objectives, strategies, and tactics for each of the elements in the IMC mix. Taking the example of a hairdressing salon, students could have developed campaigns using flyers to create awareness, a website to create knowledge, images of hairstyles on Facebook to facilitate liking, a loyalty card to improve preference, testimonials on Facebook to generate conviction, and a free haircut promotion to generate trial.

4.4.3.4 Marketing communication objectives

After a thorough analysis of the firm's internal and external situation and the nature of the target market and purchasing situation, the IMC planners will have enough information to decide on the needed marketing communication objectives. These objectives are very specifically related to what the firm seeks to accomplish with its IMC programme and are therefore often stated in terms of the types of messages to be communicated or the nature of the effect that the communication needs to achieve. Generally, the client will have more than one objective for an IMC campaign (O'Guinn, 2009:268). These are some examples of objectives (Van Heerden *et al.,* 2019:40):

- to increase customer awareness about the brand and its products;
- to change consumers' beliefs about or attitudes towards the brand and its products;
- to influence the customer's intent to purchase;
- to stimulate trial use of a firm's products;
- to convert one-time product users into repeat purchasers;
- to switch consumers from competing brands to its brand; or
- to increase sales.

Each objective should be stated in a way that is considered SMART, which is an acronym for specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timed (Van Heerden *et al*., 2019:40). An example of a SMART objective for a hairdresser would be, "to increase sales of haircuts by 15% among females aged 30-40 years between June and July, 2013."

In this way, student agencies identified SMART objectives for the campaigns they developed for their client SMMEs during the BSAC-SL programme. A key objective that all student agencies were instructed to include was to increase sales. Other objectives included to increase new customers, increase brand awareness, and increase customer loyalty. In order to determine if the campaigns that students developed actually achieved their stated objectives, this study sought to determine the impact that SMME owner-managers perceived to have resulted from the campaigns based on these stated objectives.

4.4.4 Step 4: Budgeting

Budgeting involves forecasting the costs of and allocating funds to the IMC project. In some cases, the firm will request that its communication agency make recommendations regarding the size of the IMC budget (O'Guinn *et al.*, 2009:272). In order to be as accurate and effective as possible in the budgeting process, marketers rely on various methods for setting IMC budgets. These include (O'Guinn *et al.*, 2009:272):

a. **Percentage of sales:** in this method the IMC budget is calculated as a percentage of the previous year's sales or the projected year's sales. This is an easy and simple technique to implement and it is common for firms to allocate between 2 and 12 per cent of sales to advertising when using this method.
b. **Share of market/share of voice:** with this method the firm monitors how much is spent on IMC by various competitors and then allocates an amount that is equal to or greater than this, relative to their market share. This will then ensure that their "share of voice" in the market is also equal to or greater than that of their competitors, relative to market share.
c. **Response models:** this function is a mathematical relationship between funds spent on IMC and sales generated. Marginal analysis is used to determine at which point the rate of return on IMC investment begins to decline. This point is known as the "optimal advertising level," and in theory it is also the point at which optimal sales levels and profits are reached.
d. **Objective and task:** this method focuses on the stated objectives for an IMC campaign. The budget is developed by costing all the various tasks necessary to achieve the desired objectives. If the total amount needed to implement the prescribed IMC tasks is beyond the firm's financial capability, then a review of the tasks needs to take place. In such an event, certain less critical tasks may be removed from the plan or the objectives may be altered to meet the financial capability of the firm.

O'Guinn *et al.* (2009:275) believe that "the objective-and-task approach is the most logical and defensible method for calculating and then allocating an IMC budget." Their reasoning is that in comparison to the other three it is the only method that relates IMC expenditure to the IMC objectives being pursued. The method is widely used among major advertisers.

For this reason, students participating in the BSAC-SL programme developed objective and task budgetary breakdowns for all the costs involved in their IMC campaigns. SMME owners could then choose IMC activities according to their financial capacity and to what was deemed most essential in order to achieve the most important objectives. In this way, the BSAC-SL programme supported SMMEs by providing them with IMC campaign plans to match their financial capacity. To determine just how financially suitable the campaigns were for SMMEs, the current research study specifically assessed this variable in the empirical survey.

4.4.5 Step 5: IMC programme

Developing the IMC programme is usually the most involved and detailed step in the IMC planning process. Each communication tool has different advantages and limitations and therefore decisions need to be made regarding the role of each. As can be seen in Figure 4.1, each IMC mix element has its own set of objectives, strategies, tactics, and budget.

But before each tool can be effectively designed, an overarching communication and creative strategy needs to be developed.

Generally, there are three types of communication strategies, namely, push strategies (for trade and channel intermediaries), pull strategies (for end-user markets), and profile design strategies (to reach all significant stakeholders) (Van Heerden *et al.,* 2019:42). Once the firm has determined what type of communication strategy it would like to design, it can commence with the design that will serve to tie all the communication tools and objectives together into a seamless and integrated whole.

4.4.5.1 Creative strategy

Although creative strategy is usually linked to advertising, Belch and Belch (2018:266-267) report that because it is so crucial to the entire IMC campaign, all the other communication tools should build upon a central creative theme. This central creative theme is also known as the "Big Idea," and is the cornerstone of successful IMC campaigns.

Belch and Belch (2018:267) assert that effective creative strategy and execution can be highly influential in the success of a brand. Conversely, they maintain that poorly conceived marketing communication can have a very negative effect on a brand. Companies may spend lots of time and money developing IMC campaigns, but still struggle to generate truly creative strategies that effectively differentiate them from their competitors (Belch & Belch, 2018:276). Yet while creativity is important, the goal of all IMC campaigns should be to achieve the stated objectives. For this reason, it is important to find a balance in IMC campaigns between strategic creativity and strategic effectiveness.

There are differing perspectives on what constitutes creativity in marketing communications. On the one side there are those who suggest that marketing communication is only truly creative if it results in sales. On the flipside there are those that judge promotional creativity in terms of its originality and aesthetic and artistic value. Blech and Blech (2018:37) suggest that promotional creativity "is probably somewhere between the two extremes."

Considering that the BSAC-SL programme worked mostly with retail SMMEs, student agencies generally developed pull strategies to attract final consumers. In addition, the programme focused specifically on generating sales for participating SMMEs. For this reason, this research survey sought to assess the degree to which the student-designed campaigns affected the sales of SMMEs, based on the perceptions of owner-managers. The originality, aesthetic, and artistic value of the campaigns were assessed by the subject lecturer and fall outside of the scope of this study.

4.4.5.2 IMC mix programmes

The creative strategy then needs to be translated into an IMC programme where each of the communication mix elements is individually incorporated into the IMC programme in such a way as to achieve the greatest creative impact.

In order to determine which marketing mix elements to use, firms consider the strengths and weaknesses of each, the available budget, the type of product or service, the stage in the product life-cycle, the characteristics of the target audiences, their readiness to purchase, their access to media, and their media preferences (Van Heerden *et al.*, 2019:45).

As a part of the BSAC-SL programme, student agencies considered each of the SMME target audiences in order to choose the most effective mix of marketing communication tools. They then crafted a unique set of messages and combination of tools to reach each of the target audiences. After this they developed each IMC mix element by establishing objectives, strategies, and tactics for each. The objectives were the overall goals of using each tool and needed to be SMART. The strategies helped provide direction for each tool to achieve its objectives, and the tactics were the practical steps to be taken in pursuing the strategies (Tennyson & Ray, 2005; Van Heerden *et al.*, 2019:45).

This study therefore sought to determine the degree to which these objectives, strategies and tactics were successful in achieving improved SMME marketing performance in the view of owner-managers.

4.4.6 Step 6: Implementation, integration, and coordination

Decisions also need to be made about how all the tools will be integrated into a streamlined whole that supports the overall plan in a consistent way.

An important part of the implementation, integration and coordination of an IMC campaign is timing and scheduling. This is the process of determining when the range of media placements, communication programmes, and other IMC activities should be implemented within the campaign time frame (Duncan, 2002:223). For example, most clothing brands have seasonal buying patterns. It is thus likely that a summer campaign would be implemented in the weeks leading up to summer and also within the first few weeks of the season. One of the important decisions to make is how far in advance the campaign should begin in terms of building awareness, and how late into the season the campaign should continue in terms of supporting sales.

Duncan (2002:223) states that there are no magic formulas as far as timing and scheduling are concerned. Each product and brand type has its own sales cycle and will therefore also require a distinct campaign schedule.

For this reason, student agencies developed implementation, integration, and coordination strategies as a part of their IMC campaign plans for SMMEs in the BSAC-SL programme. In addition to integrating their campaigns with the unique sales cycles of their client SMMEs, student agencies also considered the integrated nature of the various IMC tools, and scheduled them to run at times when they would have the most favourable impact on the other tools. This was also supported by strategies designed to coordinate the timing between the different parts of the business, such as production, marketing, and sales, to ensure that every aspect of the business had sufficient lead time in order to prepare for the increase in enquiries, sales, and resource commitments.

This study therefore sought to determine the degree to which factors such as a lack of time, planning, and communication affected the success of student-designed campaign plans in terms of their contribution to sales, brand awareness, and new customers.

4.4.7 Step 7: Monitoring, evaluation, and control

This final stage in the IMC planning process is monitoring, evaluating, and controlling the IMC programme. This step is critical as it helps the firm to determine the relative success of the programme in terms of attaining the stated objectives. Besides trying to ascertain the relative success or failure of a campaign, IMC planners also seek to understand why. This type of information can help them change the relevant programme elements in order to solve problems and achieve even greater success. For this reason, Figure 4.1 has arrows flowing back from step seven to each of the preceding steps, to illustrate the fact that this step is designed to provide managers with continual feedback to enable them to make better decisions and improve the effectiveness of the programme while it is running. This information is also used in the planning of future IMC campaigns and strategy development.

According to Belch and Belch (2018:613-614), assessing the effectiveness of IMC tools both before and after they are implemented offers a number of advantages, including avoiding costly mistakes; evaluating alternative strategies; increasing the efficiency of advertising in general; and determining if objectives are achieved. Although it does seem obvious to measure the effectiveness of an IMC campaign, Belch and Belch (2018:615-618) note that in many instances it is simply not done. Among the reasons for this are cost, research problems, disagreement on what to test, the objections of creative departments, and time.

As a part of their BSAC campaign plan, student agencies developed systems designed to help SMMEs monitor, evaluate, and control the IMC campaigns. These measures were mostly designed to determine if objectives had been achieved and included elements like the number of Facebook page likes, the number of vouchers redeemed, and the extent of sales during the campaign period. But to what degree did student agencies actually help SMMEs implement such campaign evaluations and discuss their conclusions once the campaign had ended? And to what extent did factors like a lack of time, knowledge, or money prevent SMMEs from engaging in these activities? These are among the questions that this study sought to answer.

4.5 IMC client-agency relationship

Designing and implementing an IMC programme can be a complex and detailed process that involves the efforts of many different people and organisations. As can be seen in Figure 4.2, the role-players in the sphere of integrated marketing communications can be divided into three categories, namely, Client, Agencies, and Media. In customer-centric IMC programmes, the customers are put in the centre of the process, as depicted below. Duncan (2002:83) believes that such an orientation helps all IMC agencies serve their client organisations better by supporting the client's unique relationship with their customers. He argues that in order for the "Golden Triangle" to work successfully, all of the following aspects need to be in place:

- clients need to be present to initiate, fund, and manage marketing communications;
- agencies need to be present to design and facilitate specialised marketing communications;
- media agencies need to be present to deliver brand messages to the chosen target audience; and
- customers need to be present to purchase the products or services of the organisation.

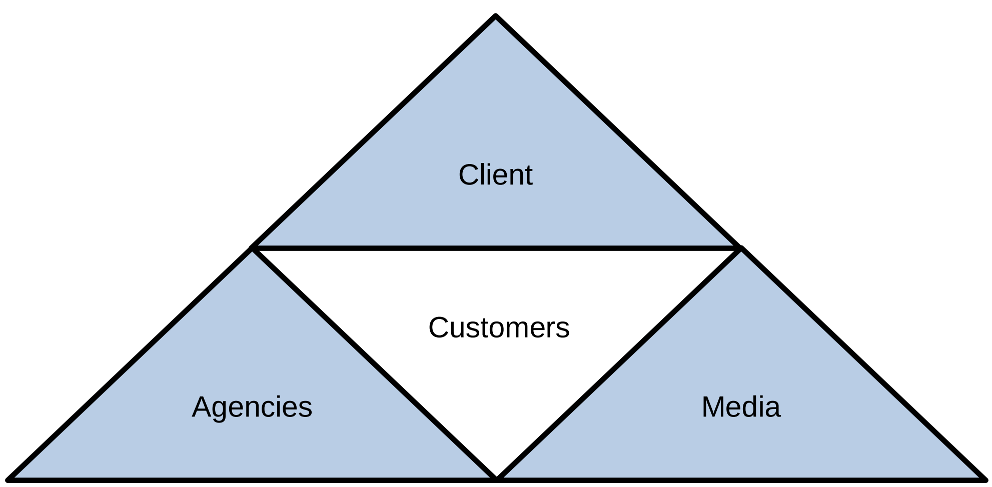

Figure 4.2: The golden triangle of marketing communication players

Source: Duncan (2002:83)

In the following sub-sections, each player in the golden triangle will be discussed.

a. Client

Organisations desiring to advertise (also known as the advertiser or client) are the primary participants in the IMC process. It is the client which has the product, service, or cause to be promoted, as well as the money needed to pay for it. Clients may include manufacturer/service firms, retailers, suppliers, non-profit organisations, or any channel members. Clients also assume the major responsibility for the development of the marketing plan of which the IMC programme forms a part. For this reason, it is usually the client that makes the final decisions regarding any aspect of the IMC campaign (Duncan, 2002). In the case of the BSAC-SL programme, the SMMEs functioned as the “clients,” most of them being either service firms or retailers.

b. Agencies

Agencies are outside firms that specialise in the creation, production, and/or placement of communication messages, as well as the facilitation and evaluation of other specialised marketing and communication processes (Duncan, 2002:70). Advertisers partner with agencies in order to harness their specialised skills and services for their IMC programmes. Some organisations set up their own in-house advertising agencies. The various types of agencies, as discussed by Duncan (2002), include:

- **Full-service agencies:** such agencies offer the client a full range of marketing, communications, and promotional services. The various functions that they perform could include creating, planning, and producing advertising, selecting media, performing research, and facilitating any one or all of the roles of a boutique agency;
- **Boutique/specialist agencies:** not every agency is a large full-service agency. There are also many types of smaller, more specialised agencies that offer services like strategic marketing planning, sales promotions, direct marketing, digital communications, package design, media buying, graphic design, copywriting, and PR and publicity. Sometimes firms will do their advertising planning in-house and then simply outsource some of their specialist needs to a boutique agency. Additionally, large advertising agencies may at times outsource more specialised work to such smaller agencies; and
- **Collateral Services and Suppliers:** these include a wide range of support services used by agencies, and include marketing research companies, consultants and freelancers, suppliers of promotional materials and gifts, videographers and video production houses, printers, event marketing services, and package design firms.

In the BSAC-SL programme, student teams are considered “agencies” in their relationships with participating SMMEs. These temporary student agencies can be regarded as full-service agencies, as they offer their SMME clients a range of services including market research, communication material development, and campaign planning and implementation.

c. Media

Media organisations are a major participant in the IMC process. Their primary function is to provide information and entertainment to their viewers, subscribers, and readers. If a media organisation has content that attracts members of a firm's target audience, the firm may be willing to purchase time or space from them. The firm's media planner would then be able to use the reach of the media in order to communicate with the firm's target audience. Only a handful of student agencies and SMMEs worked with media partners such as local newspapers and radio channels (Duncan, 2002). For the most part, because of a lack of funds, student agencies participating in the BSAC-SL programme developed strategies that did not involve purchasing media space or time. Instead most made use of free media platforms such as Facebook.

4.5.1 Organising for IMC in the firm: the client's role

Whether they realise it or not, almost every business enterprise uses some form of marketing communication. The way that each organisation structures itself internally for marketing communication may differ according to factors such as its size, the role of marketing communications in the marketing mix, the number and types of products it sells, the marketing communications budget, and the internal organisational structure.

While many staff members within the organisation may have an influence on marketing communications, it is usually the members of the marketing department who have direct control over marketing communication decisions (Lamb *et al*., 2020). Some firms have a marketing communications department that reports to the marketing director (centralised system), whereas others may have a marketing communications department for each brand (decentralised system). Still others set up a separate advertising agency that deals only with marketing communications (in-house agency) (Lamb *et al*., 2020).

In many ways, the student agencies in the BSAC-SL programme functioned as outsourced marketing departments for the SMMEs and therefore dealt with all marketing-related functions, while sometimes outsourcing smaller tasks such as graphic design to other students or professionals.

4.5.2 Organising for marketing communication in SMMEs

If any form of marketing communication department does exist in a small business it is bound to take the form of a centralised system. In a centralised system, as can be seen in Figure 4.3, below, marketing functions are divided along functional lines, with marketing communications placed alongside other marketing functions like marketing research and sales. In this configuration the marketing communications manager is responsible for all promotions activities, including IMC planning, budgeting, media planning and scheduling, ad production, as well as the coordination and integration of any other marketing communication tools.

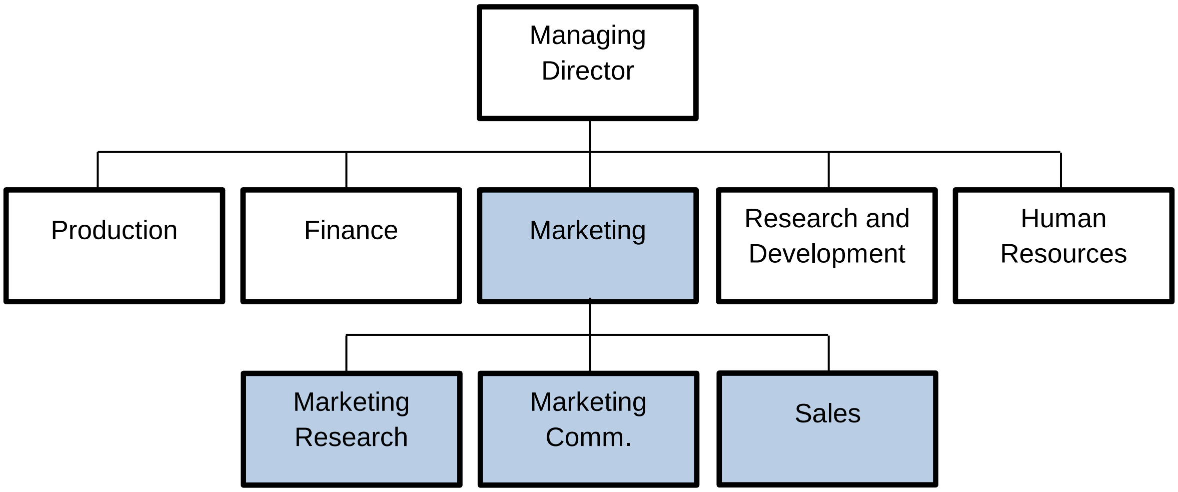

Figure 4.3: The marketing communications department under a centralised system
Source: Adapted from Belch and Belch (2018:73)

The size of the firm as well as the importance placed on promotional activities will determine the specific duties of the marketing communications manager. Belch and Blech (2018) document these duties as planning and budgeting; administration and execution; coordination with other departments; and coordination with outside agencies and services.

Belch and Belch (2018:73) point out that many companies prefer to use a centralised system for marketing communications as it simplifies the process and gives the entire organisation one point of reference for all marketing communication-related needs. This makes it easier for top management and the other departments to work with those in control of marketing communications. This system is also known to ensure a more streamlined and efficient marketing communications function within the business because there are fewer people involved and fewer layers of the organisation to get approval from.

In the case of the BSAC-SL programme, most SMMEs were so small that they did not have a marketing department. As is the case with most small and micro businesses in South Africa, the owner-manager was in charge of marketing and therefore functioned as the marketing manager. In addition to functioning as external agencies, student teams also functioned as internal ad-hoc marketing departments during the BSAC-SL programme. As such, they developed IMC campaign plans to support the overall marketing objectives of the owner-manager, and helped the owner-manager organise, supervise, and control the various marketing-related activities related to the IMC campaign. They also worked with the other departments in the SMME to integrate the marketing activities with operations, while helping the owner-managers to implement and evaluate marketing activities.

A key objective of this research study was to assess the success of the relationship formed between the SMME owner-managers and the student agencies. Could this ad-hoc client-agency relationship actually produce successful marketing results for South African SMMEs?

4.5.3 Agency evaluation

It is advised by Duncan (2002:111) that firms should periodically conduct reviews of all their agency partners. There are two ways in which a firm can do this. For agencies that are paid a fee, Duncan suggests a quantitative audit of an agency's time records to determine if the hours billed for were correct. The alternative option is a qualitative survey, in which the employees of the firm that have the most contact with the agency are asked to rate the agency in various areas. These can include attention to detail, reliability in meeting deadlines, responsiveness, cooperativeness, level of creativity, technical abilities, level of initiative, or generation of new ideas.

Duncan (2002:112) declares that the level of importance of evaluation usually increases as agencies handle more money and responsibility for the firm. Evaluation helps the firm determine if it is getting what it is paying for, while the agencies appreciate constructive feedback in order to improve performance. Duncan (2002:112) notes that evaluation in the area of marketing communications is a "two way street," and that some firms ask the agencies to evaluate them as well. Some of the questions that could be asked in such an evaluation include:

- How are our marketing communications staff performing?
- How clear are the directions given to you by our staff members?
- To what degree is their critique of your work insightful, objective, and helpful?
- How competent are our staff members?
- How would you compare our MC staff members with those of your other clients?

A good portion of this study can be considered to be an agency review by participating SMMEs. Aspects such as their degree of professionalism, effectiveness in communication, quality of work, and so forth, are key variables in the client-agency relationship evaluation section of this study.

4.5.4 IMC client-agency research

The importance of the client-agency relationship has long been recognised (Pollay & Swinth, 1969; Wackman *et al*., 1986). Marketing agencies play a significant role in the development of the marketing strategies of firms (Keegan *et al*., 2017:2).

A client-agency relationship has both relational and contractual elements and involves two parties working together in order to achieve success in creative communication campaign outcomes. Understanding the nature of the mutual roles and power balance is vital in determining whether the relationship is a partnership or a battleground (Zolkiewski *et al.,* 2008). Both clients and agencies face consequences in the event of contract termination or agency switching (Arul, 2010).

The term 'client-agency relationship' or 'agency-client relationship' refers to the relationship between an organisation and its marketing agencies. Traditionally, the agencies involved in these relationships were advertising agencies or smaller desktop publishing houses, but because of the advent of digital technologies, organisations are increasingly contracting specialist digital marketing agencies as well, which often leads to networks of client-agency relationships with multiple actors (Komulainen *et al*., 2013; Rogan, 2014).

The key themes of client-agency relationship research over the last 40 years include conflict, client account management, cultural and international perspectives, contracts and agency theory, and co-creation (Keagan *et al*. 2017:4). These will be discussed at length as each has a bearing on the evaluation of client-agency relationships formed during the BSAC-SL programme. It should be noted that most client-agency research was conducted before 2015, so there is a lack of very recent studies in this field.

4.5.4.1 Conflict

Conflict in client-agency relationships can result in relationship termination or other effects such as defection (Vafeas & Hilton, 2002; Davies & Prince, 2011). Given the large volume of research that has focused on this theme in the literature it is clear that client-agency relationships are problematic. Research in the area of conflict generally focusses on the factors that provoke conflict and the strategies implemented to manage conflict.

The factors that are generally cited as the cause of conflict include agency performance (Yuksel & Sutton-Brady, 2007), policy changes (Tahtinen & Halinen, 2002), communication (Triki *et al*., 2007), lack of mutual understanding (Arul, 2010), decision-making structures/approaches (Grant *et al*., 2012), personnel changes (West & Paliwoda, 1996), role definition (Hill, 2006), attitudes towards risk (Zolkiewski *et al*., 2008), trust/distrust (Davies & Prince, 2005), and creativity (de Waal-Malefyt & Morais, 2010).

Several researchers have proposed ways to manage conflict constructively:

- identification of conflict through vigilance (Doyle *et al*., 1980), regular review meetings (Hotz *et al.*, 1982), and tactical adaptation to change (Zolkiewski *et al.,* 2008);
- better communication through integrated two-way communication (Beard, 1997), collaboration in campaign planning (Johnson & Laczniak, 1991), and transparency in communication with clients (Heo & Sutherland, 2015);
- achieving role clarity through performance reviews and audits (Johnson & Laczniak, 1991), developing mutual understanding of roles and rules for engagement (Devinney & Dowling, 1999), and accepting conflict as the basis for a productive relationship (Yuksel & Sutton-Brady, 2007);

- agency-specific actions that focus on value longevity (Murphy & Maynard, 1997), decentralisation and direct communication (West & Paliwoda, 1996), and clarity of communication of creative capabilities (Davies & Prince, 2011); and
- client-specific actions that focus on reviewing decision making effectiveness (Hotz *et al*., 1982), and provoking competition in agency networks (Grant *et al*., 2012).

Considering the substantial potential for conflict to arise between clients and agencies, this study sought to determine if this was also the case in the context of the BSAC-SL programme. Would SMME clients and student agencies experience the same conflict as normal clients and agencies? Would there be any different forms of conflict considering the unique nature of the BSAC-SL programme? And if conflict did arise, what suggestions would SMME clients have for programme improvements?

4.5.4.2 Client account management

There is a large body of research on relationship building and management between clients and agencies. Much of the literature is based on relationship management theory and suggests that managing relationships with customers or clients with a goal of optimising their satisfaction leads to customer retention and loyalty (Davies & Prince, 2011). Recurring themes in the literature include the factors that affect the development and maintenance of client-agency relationships, relationship lifecycle factors, and the types of relationships that support the client-agency relationship.

Several client-agency relationship lifecycle models have been proposed by various authors. By building on Doyle *et al.* (1980), Wackman *et al.* (1986) put forward a four-stage client-agency relationship lifecycle comprising pre-relationship, development, maintenance, and termination. More recent works by Waller (2004) and Fam and Waller (2008) propose similar stages with slight variations in the initial stage of the relationship. Ojasalo (2001) proposed a Key Account Management Model consisting of the following stages: identifying key accounts, analysing key accounts, selecting suitable account-specific relationship strategies, and continuous development of operational-level capabilities to enhance relationships.

The relationship lifecycle of SMME clients and student agencies in the BSAC-SL programme typically progressed through all four of the stages put forward by Wackman *et al*. (1986) – pre-relationship, development, maintenance, and termination – in a matter of six months. This was necessitated by the fact that the BSAC-SL programme is a semester programme with tight deadlines and goals in step with the academic calendar. But is six months enough time to develop an effective client-agency relationship?

A number of studies pinpoint personal factors that affect relationship building, such as mutual agreement and understanding, quality personnel, interpersonal compatibility, and reputation for integrity (Zolkiewski *et al*., 2008). Wackman *et al*. (1986) list 18 possible causes of relationship dissatisfaction, the top five: relationships with the “creatives” (those responsible for original ideas at the agency), agency leadership, efficient meetings, approval mechanisms, and responsibility assignment. Lichtenthal and Shani (2000) applied organisational buying behaviour theory to propose four groups of factors that influence the development and maintenance of a client-agency relationship: psychological, personnel, environment, and organisational goals.

A key aim of this study is to determine which factors influenced the client-agency relationships between SMMEs and student agencies in the BSAC. Elements such as communication, dedication, and professionalism were important to assess in terms of their impact on the success of client-agency relationships.

Labahn and Kohli (1997) proposed a theoretical model for the client-agency relationship with three key components:

1. client and agency behaviours (including agency assertiveness, agency accessibility, client indecisiveness, and client accessibility);
2. agency performance (including creative quality & implementation, and productive interaction conflict); and
3. client disposition (including client commitment and trust).

A key theme in relationship management literature is the development and maintenance of trust (Fam & Waller, 2008). Various dimensions of trust have been explored, such as the outcomes of a lack of trust (Michell & Sanders, 1995), how to earn trust (Sekeley & Blakney, 1996), trustworthiness as a construct (Haytko, 2004), the negative effects of dishonesty on trust (Pollay & Swinth, 1969), and the various forms of trustworthiness such as cognition-based trust and value-based trust (Davies & Prince, 2005).

Some studies have considered the types of relationship that characterise the client-agency relationship. Haytko (2004) suggests that key relationships be divided into firm-to-firm and interpersonal relationships, while Lian and Laing (2007) discuss the important role that personal relationships play in agency selection, development, and maintenance.

The essential concern in client-agency relationships is the desire to achieve longevity (Keegen *et al.*, 2017). In order to realise this desire, Michell and Sanders (1995) suggest a model for inter-organisational loyalty that includes seven criteria, namely, organisational structures, effective supplier processes, a stable business environment, well-defined policies toward suppliers, compatible interpersonal characteristics, account performance, and a positive attitude towards suppliers. From the agency side, three elements have been seen as essential for ensuring the longevity of client-agency relationships: the level of attention that agencies give their clients (Palihawadana & Barnes, 2005), service quality, and client care (Davies & Palihawadana, 2006).

Although the BSAC-SL programme is designed to form only short-term relationships between SMME clients and student agencies, these findings seem to suggest that longer-term relationships would be more beneficial for both clients and students. This study therefore sought to determine how satisfied SMMEs were with the client-agency relationships and whether they would benefit from longer-term relationships.

A number of articles mention the importance of cooperation within client-agency relationships. Zolkiewski *et al.* (2008) discuss the balance of power between clients and agencies and how the notion of cooperation is more beneficial to client-agency relationships than the idea of power. As far as creative campaigns are concerned, Mitchell (1988) points out the value of cooperation in the creative decision making process, and Halinen (1997) comments on the coproduction of creative ideas. Finally, Beard (1996) mentions that the adoption of IMC increases the demands on the client-agency relationship.

The idea of cooperation is central to SL. For this reason, the nature and level of cooperation between SMME clients and student agencies in the BSAC-SL programme was a key focus in this study.

4.5.4.3 Contracts and agency theory

Agency theory is helpful in any account of the client-agency relationship. Although it is rooted in economics, agency theory has been widely applied to other disciplines like marketing and advertising (Waller, 2004). The negotiation of mutuality, which forms an integral part of agency theory, is considered vital for successful co-creative relationships (Eisenhart, 1989). Agency theory can also be used to assess a number of aspects of contractual client-agency relationships, including risk, goal formation, performance evaluation, and conflict (Bergen *et al.,* 1992). Using agency theory, Ellis and Johnson (1993) evaluated the contractual risks and decision-making process associated with the client-agency relationship. Gould *et al.* (1999) used the theory to assess the level of integration between a client and their agency in the context of IMC. Agency theory has also been invoked in a number of different approaches to compensation, including performance-based agency compensation (Spake *et al*., 1999), the contractual aspects of agency compensation (Zhao, 2005), and the nature of agency compensation, switching costs, and client evaluation (Davies & Prince, 2011).

Although there are many studies informed by agency theory, there are also a number of studies that consider other contractual aspects of the client-agency relationship, including the processes of selecting and contracting agencies, of evaluating and controlling the contractual relationship, and of dissolving this relationship. Harvey and Rupert (1988) propose an agency selection process model which includes five stages, namely, pre-planning, agency visitation, corporate visitation, agency project presentation, selection decision, and control process. In an even earlier work, Wackman *et al*. (1986) point to a number of factors that are important in the client decision-making process, including organisational factors, patterns, and the work product. More recent works have reiterated these factors: for instance, a study by Faisal and Khan (2008) that surveys the decision-making process associated with agency selection and ventures an empirically tested framework for the selection process. The top four elements in the framework are creative strategy, campaign planning, advertising effectiveness, and media planning. Finally, several studies focus on other aspects of the contractual client-agency relationship, such as relationship dissolution (Arul, 2010), risk (Farrelly & Quester, 2003), and relationship maintenance (Katarantinou & Hogg, 2009).

Although this study did not make use of agency theory, it was helpful to consider its implications for the nature of the co-creative relationships formed between SMMEs and student agencies in the BSAC-SL programme. The fact that no contracts were signed between SMMEs and student agencies and that no fees were charged for services made the relationships formed between them very unusual. What is more, clients did not choose the agencies, but themselves were chosen by the student agencies, enacting a client selection process rather than the agency selection process suggested by Harvey and Rupert (1988). How does one assess a client-agency relationship in such a situation? This is one of the questions that this study hoped to answer.

4.5.4.4 Cultural and international perspectives

Before 1989 most studies relating to client-agency relationships were limited to the United States and the United Kingdom (Mitchell, 1987). But with accelerating globalisation, research in this regard has assumed a more international perspective (Delener, 2008). Considering the cultural nature of business relationships it is reasonable to expect that the management and nature of client-agency relationships will differ from country to country.

A number of single country studies were conducted in Europe and Asia. By extending the work of Wackman *et al*. (1986), Verbeke (1989) discovered that Dutch agencies regarded personal relationships as less important than their US counterparts. Kaynak *et al*. (1994) found that Turkish agencies greatly valued the personal element in client-agency relationships. In a study in Portugal, Cardoso (2007) assessed the campaign planning process and discovered five key themes: client research pre-brief, client brief, agency research, consultation, and creative brief. Zolkiewski *et al*. (2008) studied the inter-organisational and inter-personal power relations in the advertising industry in Greece and discovered a number of factors that contribute to conflict.

In China, Predergast and Shi (1999) surveyed 200 advertising agencies in order to determine the client's role in the client-agency relationship. They found that Chinese clients were greatly involved in creative decision-making. In a similar study they conducted in 2001 the authors identified a number of fundamental similarities between the marketing communication industries in the US and China. In South Korea, Oh and Kim (2002) considered the power relations between agencies and clients and discovered that there was a unique relationship between agency size and the level of commitment and communication in client-agency relationships.

In New Zealand, Fam and Waller (1999) considered the selection policies of advertising agencies with large international brands. In a follow-up study in 2008, the authors highlight changes to their earlier findings with regard to the factors that determine success in client-agency relationships, with qualities such as commitment, honesty, and trust becoming more important. They reaffirm the crucial need for trust in the promotion of an agency and recommend that agencies, especially in the initial stages of a new relationship, determine the factors that the client considers most important in a partnership (Fam & Waller, 2008).

A number of comparative studies have also been conducted, using the US as a benchmark. A study by Davies and Prince (1999) compared the longevity of client-agency relationships between the US and UK. They report that agency age and size had a significant positive impact on the longevity of client-agency relationships, and note the different strategies that US and UK agencies use to retain clients. Moon and Franke (2000) considered the different approaches that US and Korean executives' have in ethical decision making, such as giving gifts in order to gain favour with clients. They found that the US advertising industry functioned in a more individualistic way, characterised by many personal favours for clients, whereas the Korean industry displayed a more collective approach. Waller *et al*. (2010) compared client involvement between the US and Korean advertising industries and discovered that in both countries clients offered input in design, creativity, and copywriting services.

The present study offers two unique aspects to add to the cultural perspective on client-agency relationships: that it deals with student-run agencies working with SMME clients, and that these relationships develop in the cultural context of South Africa. Although some of the findings from other cultural contexts may be similar, it was interesting to discover how they differ for the BSAC-SL programme.

4.5.4.5 Co-creation

Many studies have highlighted the need for cooperation and co-production in the context of marketing campaign planning for effective client-agency relationships (Michell, 1988; Halinen, 1997; Beard, 1996; Brennan, 2001).These studies are typically founded on the idea that, as firms offering a professional service, advertising agencies need to understand the needs of their clients in order to provide them with good service, and in so doing, maintain a successful business relationship (Durkin & Lawlor, 2001). One factor in particular that has been highly favoured by clients over the years has been creativity (Sasser *et al*., 2011). Dunhan and Sandvik (2009) report that as the client-agency relationship grows, effective creative work is enhanced through cooperation between the client and the agency.

According to service-dominant logic theory, a key notion affecting the client-agency relationship is that of the co-creation of value (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004:8) describe co-creation as “the joint creation of value by the company and the customer; allowing the customer to co-construct the service experience to suit their context.” Keegan *et al*. (2017) believe that the growing body of research into the co-creation of value within the B2B relational context provides a valuable perspective for further research into the client-agency relationship (Nenonen & Storbacka, 2010; Vargo & Lusch, 2011; Novani, 2012; Piller *et al*., 2012; Komulainen, 2014; Diaz-Mendez & Saren, 2018).

Given that SL is built upon the notion of reciprocal relationships between students and community partners, it has been very interesting to see how SL intersects with the notion of co-creation in marketing communication relationships.

A number of research studies have considered the nature of co-creation in the client-agency relationship. Grant *et al*. (2003) highlight that effective co-creation in communication planning requires early involvement by client representatives with regard to reviewing market research, copy and design work. Sutherland *et al*. (2004) examined how organisational information exchange supports the development of marketing communication campaigns. The authors recommend that in order to ensure effective co-creation, the account manager should function as an information gatekeeper in delivering important information to the rest of the creative team within the agency. Sasser *et al*. (2012) declare that a client’s willingness to be innovative and to explore risky concepts is vital for co-creation in client-agency relationships.

In the BSAC-SL programme, students involved the SMME clients from the very beginning and in most cases each stage of the work was presented to SMME owner-managers for feedback before the student agencies continued with the IMC planning process. As such, early involvement as recommended by Grant *et al*. (2003) was present in the BSAC-SL programme, but was it sufficient and was it managed properly by the students managing the communication between their clients and the other agency teams?

A number of studies have assessed the relationship between co-creation and conflict within the client-agency relationship. Kelly *et al.* (2005) conducted an ethnographic study of creative staff within marketing communication agencies. They discovered that an intrinsic conflict existed between the creatives and the clients, particularly in the online marketing space, which by its nature could limit co-creation. De Waal-Malefyt and Morais (2010) note that even though confrontation and conflict exist within the client-agency relationship, co-creation is beneficial for effective innovation, creativity, and the promotion of the brand’s marketing communication messages. Sasser and Koslow (2008) acknowledge that clients can have both a positive and negative impact on marketing creativity, and thus propose a co-creation interaction model to support effective co-creation in marketing communication planning. Gambetti *et al.* (2016) have proposed a triadic value network that comprises of the brands, their marketing agencies, and consumers.

Considering the unique relationship between SMME clients and student agencies, would these co-creation models work for the BSAC-SL programme, or are other, more SL-oriented models more suited to understanding co-creative relationships in the BSAC-SL programme?

4.5.5.6 Small businesses and small agencies

Considering that this study investigates the relationships between small firms and small agencies, it makes sense to ask whether there is anything unique about such relationships. Very few studies have looked into the nature of small business client-agency relationships and most of them were conducted before the year 2000. These studies are nevertheless discussed below.

As a result of the increasing conflict, cost, and risk associated with working with only large clients, many agencies have begun to look to working with smaller clients. Conversely, large clients are increasingly working with a number of smaller agencies who offer specialised services (Eisenhart, 1990). And because of cost, small clients often have no choice but to work with small agencies.

A study by Michell (1988) suggests that small client/small agency relationships are among the most volatile in the marketing communication industry. Would the relationships between SMME clients and student agencies in the BSAC-SL programme prove to be as volatile as those described by Mitchell (1988)?

A study by Sekely and Blakney (1996) of 127 clients in the Midwest region of America evaluated the perceptions, feelings, attitudes, and opinions of small to medium-sized clients towards their agencies, and the advantages and disadvantages that small local agencies offered their clients. Although the research does not empirically compare the performance of small agencies with large agencies, it does indicate that small agencies performed well. Areas in which small agencies particularly excelled included creativity, personal attention, and account services (like account handling, flexibility, communication, meeting deadlines, following through, and so forth). The results indicate that 35 to 40 per cent of clients rated their agencies as excellent or very good for creativity, adaptability, flexibility, and meeting deadlines. In addition, 30 to 35 per cent of respondents were pleased with the quality of communication, agency personnel, and cost consciousness.

Can student-run agencies in the BSAC-SL programme also provide such personalised, creative, and dedicated marketing communication services? This is a question that this research hoped to answer.

More than 20 per cent of clients rated small local agencies as poor or very poor for quality of research and public relations services. Sekely and Blakney (1996) consider this to be understandable due to the ancillary nature of these services, with small agencies needing to focus their resources and attention on key services. Rice (1991) points out that even large agencies have struggled in these areas due to staff cutbacks to save money and a lack of data received from clients. Sekely and Blakney (1996) suggest that agencies could improve their research performance by developing strong working relationships with small market research firms rather than trying to offer the service in-house. They maintain that less attention should be paid to improving public relations, as this seemed to be less important to clients.

In the case of the BSAC-SL programme, student-agencies functioned as full-house agencies and therefore did the market research, marketing material design and development, campaign development, and public relations for their SMME clients. But how well were they able to perform all these functions? This is something that this study tried to answer.

Local agency performance in the area of comprehending the clients' business received mixed ratings. More than 33 per cent of clients thought that agencies performed excellently or very well, whereas roughly 24 per cent considered agency performance to be poor in this regard (Sekely & Blakney, 1996:25). The authors believe that the poor performance of some small agencies could be related to having only a limited number of specialist staff, perhaps due to a shortage of funds, or having little experience in certain product and market areas. Considering that CPUT students worked in groups of three to five and had under two years of marketing knowledge and experience, this finding could be similar for the BSAC-SL programme.

More than 80 per cent of clients rated design, copy, and marketing strategy as either critical or important services for an agency. Marketing planning, account handling, media planning, and market research were all considered moderately important. Sales promotion, public relations, and collateral services were thought to have limited importance. The functions that were considered to be the least important were TV programming, broadcast creativity, and information brokerage (Sekely & Blakney, 1996). Considering that the respondents were all small to medium-sized businesses, with a large segment functioning in the business to business space, it makes sense that TV and broadcasting services were not deemed important.

In the case of the BSAC-SL programme, student agencies were charged with using free or relatively inexpensive marketing channels to serve the IMC needs of participating SMMEs. In addition, students were encouraged to train their client SMMEs in the various benefits of a number of marketing communication practices such as sales promotion, public relations, and market research.

In terms of the role that agencies play, the majority of respondents (54.53%) felt that when it comes to marketing communication, agencies should play a leadership role (Sekely & Blakney, 1996). This is not surprising as agencies are primarily hired for their expertise in this area. In addition, small firms generally have very limited in-house marketing communication staff and therefore need agencies to take charge of this function for them (Sekely & Blakney, 1996). In terms of market research, marketing strategy, and sales promotion, clients felt that agencies should play the role of partner and counsellor. In the area of new product planning, clients preferred that agencies did not get involved, or if they did, that they perform only a counselling role. Sekely and Blakney (1996) speculate that this could be due to the reluctance of firms to share internal information with agencies. The role that firms wanted agencies to play in the area of public relations was inconclusive, as results were evenly distributed across responses.

In the BSAC-SL programme, student agencies were instructed to work with SMMEs that had little or no marketing communication, and they therefore took on a leadership role in this regard. The student agencies also played the roles of educators and counsellors by transferring marketing knowledge to SMMEs and guiding their thinking and decision-making relating to IMC.

4.6 SMME training, mentorship, and knowledge transfer

A secondary benefit of the BSAC-SL programme is that students impart skills and knowledge to participating SMMEs. Such training and knowledge transfer is not specifically curriculated into the programme, but it does take place spontaneously as the students and SMMEs work together. For this reason, it seemed prudent also to investigate this aspect of the programme. Some key training literature is therefore discussed below, especially that which relates to SMMEs.

All businesses, including SMMEs, need skills, knowledge, and resources in order to improve efficiency, performance, and operational effectiveness, and to ultimately grow (Jones *et al*., 2013; Abdul, 2018). In 1995 Dollinger developed a business resources typology that included social capital, human capital, financial capital, reputational capital, organisational resources, and technological resources. One of the key resources is that of human capital, which, according to Barney (2001), Minbaeva (2017), and Hsu & Chen (2019) represents a significant source of competitive advantage in any firm. For this reason, the training of human resources within an organisation is essential for increasing competitive advantage through the benefits that accrue from prepared, flexible, motivated, and qualified employees (Raghuram, 1994; Macduffie & Kochan, 1995; Minbaeva, 2017; Hsu & Chen, 2019). As has been reported by numerous authors (Hallier & Butts, 1999; Gtzmann, 2017; Martinelli, 2018; Osborn, 2018; Amo, 2019), neglecting training constrains business performance.

Training within an organisation has been identified as important for the purpose of developing a sustainable competitive advantage (Aargon-Sanchez *et al.,* 2003; Minbaeva, 2017; Hsu & Chen, 2019), providing tactical solutions to business problems (Cassell *et al.,* 2002; Ertan & Sesen, 2019), and improving business operations through improved efficiency, reduced costs, and improved knowledge about business protocols (Patton & Marlow, 2002; De Mel *et al*., 2014; Higuchi *et al*., 2019; Rose & Gallivan, 2019). As a result, training is a generally accepted measure for improving SMME business performance through greater productivity and profitability (Chandler & McEvoy, 2000; Litz & Stewart, 2000; Reid & Harris, 2002; Minbaeva, 2017; De Mel *et al*., 2014; Bruhn *et al*., 2018; Ertan & Sesen, 2019; Higuchi *et al*., 2019); enhanced organisational performance and organisational capability (DeSimone & Harris, 1998; Chandler & McEvoy, 2000; Kotey & Folker, 2007; Shiryan *et al*., 2012; Higuchi *et al*., 2015; Frese *et al*., 2016; McKenzie & Puerto, 2017; Bruhn *et al*., 2018; Higuchi *et al*., 2019; Hsu & Chen, 2019); business survival (Ibrahim & Ellis, 2003; Marshal *et al*., 1995; McKenzie & Puerto, 2017; Rose & Gallivan, 2019); and growth (Cosh *et al.,* 1998; CEDEFOP, 2011; Frese *et al*., 2016; Caloghirou *et al*., 2017; Bruhn *et al*., 2018).

Kroon and Moolman (1992) observe that training can assist SMMEs with problem solving, which could result in increased profitability, reduced costs, and increased knowledge of relevant legislation. The result should be an overall improvement in operational efficiency. Chandler and McEvoy (2000) found that firms that invested in training their employees and conducted regular performance appraisals were likely to benefit from lower employee turnover. More recent studies have found numerous additional benefits resulting from SMME training, such as new product and service development (De Saá-Pérez *et al*., 2012), increased business knowledge (Yusoff, 2019), greater levels of marketing and accounting productivity (Bruhn *et al*., 2018), better mental health and standard of living for the owner (McKenzie & Puerto, 2017), and a greater level of owner confidence and control (Bruhn *et al*., 2018).

As can be seen, there is a wide body of literature which argues that training positively influences business performance and overall business health. But this evidence is not unequivocal. Foreman-Peck *et al*. (2006) conducted a study of over 1600 enterprises and found no significant relationship between training, business growth and profitability. Tharenou *et al*. (2007) found that although training positively impacted human resource-related outcomes, it had a very weak impact on financial performance measures. Cosh *et al.* (2003) also found no relationship between training intensity and productivity growth. Finally, a number of recent studies also show mixed results in terms of the impact of training on business performance (Karlan *et al*., 2015; Valdivia, 2015; Higuchi *et al*., 2017; McKenzie & Puerto, 2017; Bruhn *et al*., 2018).

Allowing that training and knowledge-transfer was a secondary benefit of the BSAC-SL programme, it was still valuable to assess how and to what degree it benefitted participating SMMEs. Could student-imparted knowledge and training actually help SMMEs improve performance and efficiency, save costs, increase competitive advantage, and facilitate business growth?

4.6.1 SMME training

There have been several reports of a general underutilisation of training in the SMME sector globally (Westhead & Storey, 1997; Matlay, 1999; Holden *et al*., 2003; Shiryan *et al*., 2012; Higuchi *et al.*, 2015; Kunaka & Moos; 2019; Suseno *et al.*, 2019). For example, a study by Kitching and Blackburn (2002) found that 52 per cent of SMMEs declared that they had no need for training and 48 per cent reported supply-side reasons for not engaging in training. And a study by Shiryan *et al*. (2012) reports SMME employees conceding that they had received no training in the preceding five years of working at an SMME.

In contrast to larger organisations, SMMEs have inferior levels of work-based training provision (Hoque & Bacon, 2006; Jayawarna *et al*., 2007; Kitching, 2008; O & Bing, 2019), fewer dedicated training departments and budgets (Kitching & Blackburn, 2002, O & Bing, 2019), and fewer qualified employees (Kitson & Wilinson, 2003; Matt *et al*., 2018). Aargon-Sanchez *et al*. (2003) also record that SMMEs often do not understand or appreciate the potential value that training offers for productivity and profitability. Or if they do purport to understand the value of training, most adopt an ambivalent position towards it (Aargon-Sanchez *et al*., 2003; Shiryan *et al*., 2012; Higuchi *et al.*, 2015; Kunaka & Moos; 2019; Suseno *et al.*, 2019).

Davidove and Schroeder (1992) as well as Carrier (1999) note that unless training evaluation takes place, the experience and value of training are not properly recognised and are probably underestimated. This is confirmed by Higuchi *et al*. (2015), who suggest that SMMEs often do not make effective use of training because they do not understand the value of it.

When SMMEs do engage in training, Walker *et al.* (2007) reveal that owner managers seek training programmes that, amongst many other things, are readily accessible, affordable, and relevant. This is confirmed by Dewhurst *et al.,* (2006), Jones *et al*. (2013), and Suseno *et al.*, (2019), who report that SMMEs prefer short, inexpensive, convenient, and relevant training methods. As such, SMME training must relate to the actual needs of firms (Jones *et al*., 2013; Suseno *et al.,* 2019). For example, Perren *et al.* (1999), Ladzani & Van Vuuren (2002), and Suseno *et al.* (2019) found that in order for training to be seen as valuable, it had to be aligned with the immediate and specific requirements of the SMMEs, as well as provide practical and relevant solutions. The training requirements can thus be determined by considering the nature of the SMME's operations (Jayawarna *et al*., 2007; Suseno *et al.,* 2019).

With regard to the type of training that SMMEs prefer, a number of authors have found that SMMEs generally prefer informal and reactive forms of training provision to address immediate operational issues, as opposed to strategically planned formal training programmes (Hill & Stewart, 2000; Anderson *et al*., 2001; Dewhurst *et al.,* 2006; Jayawarna *et al.*, 2007; Jones *et al*., 2013; Suseno *et al.*, 2019). Informal training can be defined as ad hoc, fragmented, and flexible (Jayawarna *et al*. 2007:324), as well as unplanned, reactive, and short-term focused (Kotey & Folker, 2007). By comparison, formal training can be defined as "initiatives which can be identified by both recipients and deliverers as an intervention which has a structured mode of delivery, where the aim is to impart new awareness or knowledge of a workplace process or activity" (Patton & Marlow, 2002:261). Anderson *et al.* (2001) disclose that SMMEs appreciate the feedback, social interaction, and practical approach of informal training. This makes sense because informal training is more consistent with the typical short-term, tactical, informal, and flexible orientation of SMMEs (Hill & Stewart, 2000; Barry & Milner, 2002; Dewhurst *et al.,* 2006; Kotey & Folker, 2007; Jones *et al*., 2013; Suseno *et al.*, 2019).

Although SMME training is often conducted in an informal workplace environment with minimal provision for employee development (Marlow & Patton, 1993; Storey, 1994), Jayawarna *et al*. (2007) found that formal training has a greater impact in terms of improving business performance than informal training. This finding is however contested by Fuller *et al.* (2003), Evans *et al.* (2006), and Felstead *et al*. (2009), who all found that informal training impacts positively on business performance. Considering that students provided SMMEs with informal training in the BSAC-SL programme, this is a positive preliminary finding in the literature on SMME training.

Table 4.3, below, highlights 11 different training methods and indicates whether they are formal or informal, whether the training is done in the workplace or outside, and whether the training is provided by an in-house or external provider. Although the students came from a local university, the training that they provided was more like mentorship in nature. They came alongside the SMME owner-managers and shared their practical marketing-related insights with them as these pertained to the unique business context. This form of training can be seen at T9 below, namely, "mentorship inside the workplace," which is informal training in the workplace by an external provider in the form of mentorship.

Table 4.3: Provision of different types of training methods

Training methods	**Training provision type: formal or informal**	**Training done in workplace or outside**	**Training provided by in-house or by external provider**
Learning at a local college (T1)	formal	outside	external
Through a government programme (T2)	formal	outside	external
Learning provided by local college but within the workplace (T3)	formal	workplace	external
Employee providing workplace training (T4)	informal/ formal	workplace	in-house
Learning by doing (T5)	informal	workplace	in-house
Private training provider in the workplace (T6)	formal	outside	external
Private training provider outside the workplace (T7)	formal	outside	external
Mentorship outside the workplace (T8)	formal	outside	external
Mentorship inside the workplace (T9)	informal	workplace	external
Distance learning (T10)	formal	workplace/outside	external
E-learning (T11)	formal	workplace/outside	external

Source: Adapted from Jones *et al*. (2013:61)

Informal workplace training and mentorship is beneficial for business performance for multiple reasons. Kotey and Folker (2007) and Beaver and Hutchings (2005) found that because of its low cost and flexibility, SMMEs overwhelmingly make use of workplace (or on-the-job) training, and thus are familiar with it. Beaver and Hutchings (2005) also argue for the use of external training providers in the workplace as such training can be more effectively assessed. For this reason, they recommend that SMMEs use external trainers to do their in-house training as this will improve training assessment and be less cost-intensive than outside (or off-the-job) training. More recent studies also stress the benefits of informal forms of training and mentorship for SMMEs (Jones *et al*., 2013; De Mel *et al*., 2014; Higuchi *et al.*, 2015; Kunaka & Moos, 2019; Suseno *et al.*, 2019).

4.6.2 SMME training and organisational performance

One of the key benefits of SMME training that has been noted is that it helps owners/managers learn how to approach problems that crop up from the ever-changing external environment, and in this way saves time and money (Kroon & Moolman, 1992; De Mel *et al*., 2014; Higuchi *et al*., 2019; Yusoff, 2019).

Some helpful areas of training include business, management, motivation, and entrepreneurship (De Mel *et al*., 2014; Higuchi *et al*., 2019). Although there are numerous categories of training that SMMEs require, most training institutions only conduct training in one area (Ladzani & Van Vuuren, 2002). Ladzani and Van Vuuren (2002) believe that institutions that do not offer SMMEs holistic training in multiple areas do a disservice to the SMME sector.

Van Vuuren and Nieman (1999) developed a SMME performance improvement training model.

Entrepreneurial performance = motivation x (entrepreneurial skills + business skills).

The model indicates that entrepreneurial business performance is the result of the motivation of the entrepreneur (or entrepreneurial team) multiplied by the entrepreneurial skills and business skills of the entrepreneur (or entrepreneurial team).

These factors can be classified as follows (Van Vuuren & Nieman, 1999):

- **Entrepreneurial performance:** increased financial performance and growth of a business based on a unique entrepreneurial opportunity;
- **Motivation:** the level of the entrepreneur’s desire for and pursuit of success;
- **Entrepreneurial skills:** creativity, risk-taking, innovation, the ability to learn from successful entrepreneurial role models, and the identification of opportunities; and
- **Business skills:** being able to formulate a business plan, marketing, financial, and human resources; as well as operational, legal, management, and communication skills.

It follows that if the level of entrepreneurial skills and business skills can be improved through training programmes, the entrepreneurial performance of SMMEs can be significantly improved.

In the case of the BSAC-SL programme, students mostly imparted business skills to participating SMMEs through mentorship and informal on-the-job training. According to the performance improvement model of Van Vuuren and Nieman (1999), if the business skills of an entrepreneurial team are improved even slightly, this will have a direct impact on the entrepreneurial performance of the business. It will therefore be interesting to see whether the marketing skills imparted to SMMEs by students during the BSAC-SL programme resulted in increased business performance.

There are some studies which suggest that one of the key ways to improve the success rate of SMMEs is through training. For example, Gupta (1989) cites a study conducted in Gujarat in India which found that the closure rate of trained entrepreneurs was 10-15 per cent less than those who had not been trained. In addition, the study found that trained entrepreneurs were 10-20 per cent more likely to turn a profit than those who had not been trained.

Hansson (2007) conducted research with an international dataset made up of 26 countries to assess the extent to which investment in training enhanced company performance. He found that the amount invested in training was directly proportionate to improved company performance, thus suggesting that the benefits of training outweigh the loss of training investments in staff due to staff turnover. This is echoed in a study by Zeffane and Al Zarooni (2008), who found that training influenced organisational culture, which contributed to job satisfaction and ultimately led to greater levels of organisational commitment from staff. The positive effects of training on SMMEs have been confirmed by numerous recent studies as well (Karlan & Valdivia, 2011; De Saá-Pérez *et al*., 2012; Shiryan *et al*., 2012; De Mel *et al*., 2014; Higuchi *et al*., 2015; Frese *et al*., 2016; McKenzie & Puerto, 2017; Bruhn *et al*., 2018; Barrios *et al.,* 2019; Higuchi *et al*., 2019; Yusoff, 2019).

Considering the numerous benefits that training has for SMMEs, it was important to investigate whether the BSAC-SL programme helped in this regard. Could the training provided by students during the BSAC-SL programme actually lead to improved entrepreneurial performance? What about improved employee motivation? And, did the training from students outweigh the loss of time invested in the SL programme? These are all questions which this research study attempted to answer empirically.

4.6.3 SMME training and business effectiveness

It has been established that management education is consistently found to enable small businesses to become more effective and successful (Reid, 1987; Shiryan *et al*., 2012; Higuchi *et al*., 2015; Frese *et al*., 2016; McKenzie & Puerto, 2017; Bruhn *et al*., 2018; Higuchi *et al*., 2019). This pertains not only to once-off forms of training, but consistent training that can assist owners to manage the constantly changing market environment and respond to it in a way that is innovative and profitable (Ladzani & Van Vuuren, 2002; De Saá-Pérez *et al*., 2012; De Mel *et al*., 2014; Higuchi *et al*., 2019). Training assists small business owners to manage their problems more successfully, which often reduces costs and unnecessary mistakes. In addition, the higher the level of education of a small firm, the higher the likelihood of the firm becoming established (Lekhanya, 2015; McKenzie & Puerto, 2017). Education also improves the firm's ability to grow and produce more jobs (Frese *et al*., 2016; Bruhn *et al*., 2018). For this reason, Lekhanya (2015) believes that small business owners should view management training as a business investment.

In order to manage all the functional areas of the business, SMME owners need a variety of skills like operations, finance, marketing, human resources, planning, and knowledge management (Monk, 2002). Yet according to the findings of the World Bank (2001), SMME owners have very little formal skills training. In South Africa, for example, studies have found that more than 50 per cent of rural and township entrepreneurs are in need of training, especially in areas like marketing, communication skills, law and contracts, and financial record keeping (Kent *et al*., 2003). It has been suggested that more than 66 per cent of SMMEs do not keep formal records (Haan, 2001).

To be successful, the employees of small businesses also need to have the correct mix of skills. Some of these skills can be obtained through formal education at a business school, or through other forms of formal training (Dacko, 2006). However, it has been found that small businesses are less likely to provide formal training for their managers and employees than large firms are (Dewhurst *et al.,* 2006; Storey, 2004; Jones *et al*., 2013; Suseno *et al.*, 2019). Interestingly, Khumalo (1994) and Shiryan *et al*. (2012) discovered that many SMME employees have had little or no formal training whatsoever. Some therefore believe that awareness needs to be raised amongst owners/managers about the benefits of formal training. Nieman (2001) asserts that the emphasis of training in South Africa should focus on entrepreneurship training rather than conventional forms of business training.

Considering the many benefits of training for SMMEs, as well as its positive effects on rates of establishment, growth, and job creation, it is clear that programmes such as the BSAC have an important role to play. This is especially important considering the general lack of skills and training from which SMMEs suffer in areas like marketing. The question remains, though, of whether student-facilitated training in the context of the BSAC-SL programme can actually improve the knowledge and skills of SMMEs? This is a key question which this study sought to answer.

In order to better understand the training needs of SMMEs, the unique skills requirements of SMMEs will be discussed in more detail below.

4.6.3.1 The complexity of SMME management

A small business is generally owner-driven, which means that owners are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the business (Ng & Kee, 2018). For this reason, they have little time for planning and strategic management. Other problems which amplify the complexity of SMME management include a lack of capital, legal barriers, bureaucratic licensing procedures, marketing and transport problems, a lack of technical and management skills, as well as less frequently mentioned challenges such as the business location, equipment, customers, and competitors (Frese, 2000; Tirmizi *et al*., 2018). Often, SMME owners have a specific competence, such as finance or operations, but lack skills in the other functional areas of the business (Baumback, 1985; Van Scheers, 2018). With all these challenges combined, SMMEs ultimately lack the ability to effectively respond to market pressures. Thus, as we have noted, there is a strong correlation between education and the success of a firm (Hubbard, 2019).

4.6.3.2 Managerial skills

More than 80 per cent of South African small businesses fail because of a lack of management skills (Labuschagne & Van Niekerk, 2006; Mamabolo *et al*., 2017; Kirsten, 2018). The managerial shortcomings of SMMEs include ineffectual planning, a lack of managerial information, unsatisfactory financial management, and insufficient control (Stentoft *et al*., 2019). When doing research in South Africa with small black-owned building entrepreneurs, Khumalo (1994) found that most of them lacked simple management skills like record keeping, planning, and financial control. Ryan *et al*. (1999) disclose that results in cash flow problems affect the business's ability to pay employees and finish projects, which often causes owners to participate in unhealthy or unethical business practices in order to "save the sinking ship." The lack of managerial capacity among SMMEs is confirmed by other recent studies (Bloom *et al*., 2012; McKenzie & Woodruff, 2014; Stentoft *et al*., 2019). Although the BSAC-SL programme could not train SMMEs in all the areas in which they require management skills, the programme was able to impart knowledge and skills pertaining to marketing management.

4.6.3.3 Employee skills

In addition to having an educated management team, small business success also depends on the skills, knowledge, motivation, and creativity of its personnel (Bhatia, 2003; Thanki & Thakkar, 2018). For this reason, it is vital that SMMEs make provision for service, quality, and trade-related training for their staff (O & Bing, 2019). Kroon (1998) stresses that a trained, professional, and productive workforce is necessary for SMMEs to be successful. But finding well-trained staff is often a challenge for SMMEs (especially those in rural areas), because they are unable to offer employees the same benefits as larger businesses in urban areas (Uvarova & Vitola, 2019). In the BSAC-SL programme, students did not only work with the owner-managers of their SMME clients but also worked with the employees of the businesses. They were thus able to impart some marketing knowledge and insights to employees as well.

4.6.3.4 Marketing skills

It has been found that a lack of marketing skills can cause SMMEs to struggle to survive and grow (Murphy, 2006; Lekhanya & Mason, 2013). In fact, it has been argued that the absence of the requisite marketing knowledge or skills can lead to the demise of the business (Stokes, 2000; Cant, 2012; Van Scheers, 2018). Cant (2012:1109) argues that although all the functions of a business are important, the marketing function is the one that is focused on sales and income generation, and for this reason the success of a business largely depends on the application of marketing skills. Brink *et al*. (2003) found that effective marketing strategies enhanced a SMME's potential for growth. In South Africa, it was found that marketing strategies that support customer satisfaction were almost "non-existent" amongst SMMEs, and therefore negatively affected small business growth (Van Scheers, 2018).The importance of marketing for SMME sustainability is one of the main reasons that the BSAC-SL programme was initiated. It was the hope of the course co-ordinators that the programme would enhance the potential for SMME growth in South Africa. But did the programme actually achieve this goal?

4.6.3.5 Marketing skills challenges of SMMEs

Cant (2012) provides a list of all the marketing functions that SMMEs find challenging to facilitate:

- macro environmental analysis;
- market segmentation;
- market needs analysis;
- access to finance for marketing purposes;
- competitive advantage stemming from education and training; and
- marketing of products and services.

In order to fulfil these functions, entrepreneurs need a range of marketing skills. These include an understanding of marketing activities, of how to increase market share, introduce new products, sales, and how to build relationships with new customers (van Scheers, 2018). A study conducted by Cant (2012:1109) reports that SMME owners felt that a proper understanding of business and marketing skills was critical (30%) or somewhat important (59%) for SMME growth and success. Respondents also believed that staff training (in areas like marketing) was critical (70%). In addition to once-off forms of training, 75 per cent of respondents felt that continuous learning (in areas like marketing) was vital for SMME survival and growth. Respondents declared that the resources to hire professional advisors (24%), additional staff training (17%), and a culture of continuous learning (25%) were all critical to ensure business success.

In South Africa, Perks and Smith (2008) found that SMMEs needed marketing training in acquiring new customers, getting tenders, and expanding into new markets. They therefore recommend the following training programmes for SMMEs: networking for customers, networking for employees, advertising business and products, and customer relations management.

Because business success is based on growing a body of satisfied customers, Cant (2012) strongly recommends that SMME owners learn how to design and develop marketing strategies in order to ensure the growth and success of their firm. The author suggests that SMMEs build their businesses around the “marketing concept”, which will ensure that managers focus their efforts on identifying and satisfying customer needs in a way that results in profits for the business. This is important evidence for the necessity of marketing training of the kind provided by the BSAC-SL programme.

In order to reduce the marketing skills challenges faced by entrepreneurs, Cant (2012) recommends that entrepreneurs be trained in certain skills deemed crucial for the success of their businesses:

- marketing concept (market orientation);
- market research;
- market strategy;
- segmentation and target marketing; and
- marketing mix strategies.

In addition the author suggests that businesses be taught how to constantly monitor the external environment in order to adapt their marketing strategies to the changing needs of customers (Cant, 2012:1115). In this regard, the question that this study asks is “what affect does student-led training in the context of SL have on SMMEs, and what types of skills and knowledge are imparted?”

4.6.4 SMME training research

In order to gain some insight into the types of research that has been conducted in the area of SMME training, an 18-year literature review was conducted and is presented in the form of a table (see Table 4.4, below). Recent literature relating to SMME training is unfortunately limited, so some older studies have also been included.

Table 4.4: Eighteen years of SMME training and mentorship research (2002 – 2019)

Author, date, title	Problem	Purpose	Methodology	Findings	Recommendations/ Noteworthy details
Ladzani and Van Vuuren (2002) Entrepreneurship training for emerging SMEs in South Africa	Even though there are numerous training programmes and organisations serving the needs of SMEs, the business failure rate of SMEs in South Africa remains high.	To analyse the content, training methods, and profiles of training providers for SMEs in the Northern Province of South Africa.	Case study approach with three SME training providers in the Northern Province of South Africa.	Most of the training focused on business skills such as general management, pricing and costing, legal skills, marketing, finance, and production management. Most of the trainers had taken a business course at some level (degree, diploma, or certificate level).	Governments should support and strengthen training initiatives. Entrepreneurship training should be seen as a basic requirement for starting and running a business. Training providers in an area should pool their resources in order to better serve the needs of potential and existing entrepreneurs. The authors list a number of actions that can be taken to help curb the failure rates of SMEs, namely, for training providers to revise their training materials to be more relevant, for training providers to benchmark their services with other successful training organisations, educational institutions should introduce and strengthen entrepreneurship education, and emerging and potential entrepreneurs should be encouraged to take courses in entrepreneurship.

Kent *et al*. (2003) An evaluation of mentoring for SME retailers	There are limited studies empirically evaluating mentoring programmes, especially amongst SMEs.	To assess the role of mentoring-based training and development among SME retailers in London, UK.	A semi-structured interview combined with an in-depth interview with 30 participants of a mentor programme in the UK.	64 per cent of SMEs desired mentors to have specific skills such as paperwork and accounting, and required them to have owned their own shop. SMEs had a range of business development needs including marketing (30%), visual merchandising and display (26.7%), business management (13.3%), IT (13.3%), store design (13.3%), and accounting (6.7%). With regard to specific objectives and their fulfilment rating, SMEs noted that mentors helped them maximise sales (83% / 70%), develop new ideas (77% / 73%), produce an action plan (57% / 72%), adapt to changes (47%/ 75%), become more entrepreneurial (43% / 58%), develop contacts network (37% / 75%), and other (20% / 67%). Their overall satisfaction with the mentorship was 81.9 per cent.	A mentoring programme proved to be a successful method of enabling SME retailers to meet their objectives. The greater diversity of respondents, education level, and working conditions influence the study of SME mentorship programmes. The potential for SME growth through mentorship provides grounds for further research that supports small-scale retailer-oriented mentorship training solutions.
Johnston and Loader (2003) Encouraging SME participation in training: identifying practical approaches	The small business sector is crucial to the UK economy. However, employees of SMEs are less likely to participate in training than those in larger organisations.	To gain insights into practical design and delivery methods that would encourage participation in SME training programmes.	An exploratory study making use of a case study approach using both qualitative and quantitative methods with 10 local SMEs participating in SME training programmes at the University of Teesside between the years of 1998 and 2000.	Successful training resulted from conducting a training needs analysis before the programme, cooperation with SMEs during the design of training programmes, tailoring content to the needs of SMEs and making it practical and immediately relevant to the workplace, feedback from SMEs throughout the duration of the programme, offering the programme free of charge, and offering it as half-day workshops rather than full-day sessions to limit the loss of opportunity cost due to lost productive time. In addition, offering the workshops as flexible, short, stand-alone sessions in repeating cycles (like a menu) in computer laboratories	SME training programme designers should consider the practical aspects of design and delivery of training to encourage participation. Designers should may attention to training relevance, cost, operational impact, and flexibility.

				with the assistance of trained tutors and course manuals enabled participants to engage in the learning at their own pace and gave SMEs the flexibility to choose which sessions to attend and which staff to send. Participants also appreciated the ability to interact with participants from other SMEs.	
Dewhurst *et al.* (2006) Tourism and hospitality SME training needs and provision: A sub-regional analysis	In order for tourism SMEs to offer high quality services they require well-educated and trained employees, but there is little to no research into the training needs of SMEs in the UK.	To identify the recruitment, training, and skills needs of the Shropshire tourism industry in the UK.	A quantitative study using a self-administered questionnaire with 141 SMEs in Telford and Shropshire in the UK, and a telephone survey with 21 training providers in the same area.	SME owners highlighted a lack of marketing knowledge for which they needed training. SMEs believed that training should be short, inexpensive, convenient, and relevant. The cost of releasing employees for training was considered the greatest inhibitor, followed by the cost of the actual training, and the time required for the training.	The authors suggest that training providers need to better understand the requirements and goals of SMEs so that they can tailor their training appropriately. They also recommend establishing training that limits barriers like cost, location, and time.
Karlan and Valdivia (2011) Teaching entrepreneurship: impact of business training on microfinance clients and institutions	There is a belief that micro-entrepreneur interventions should solely focus on credit with no attention given to skills training.	To assess the marginal impact of incorporating entrepreneurial training into a microcredit programme.	A two-year randomised control trial with 338 micro-entrepreneurs in Ayacucho and Lima in Peru. A total of 4591 surveys were completed over the research period.	The authors found no statistically significant effects of entrepreneurship training on business results like profit, sales or employment. Training only had an impact on the record keeping of owner withdrawals from their business and the implementation of innovations in the business. There was no impact on tracking household bills or separating business funds from their own or from their spouse or partner. SMEs were more likely to repay their microloans and there were higher levels of client retention by microfinance institutions.	Much of the micro-finance sector focuses on the infusion of financial capital into micro-enterprises rather than human capital, assuming that entrepreneurs already have the needed human capital

De Saá-Pérez *et al*. (2012) The role of training to innovate in SMEs	There is a lack of SME-related research on how training can assist SMEs in attaining higher levels of innovation.	To analyse the role of training to improve the knowledge required to innovate in SMEs.	An empirical study using self-administered surveys with 139 SMEs in the Canary Islands	61.8 per cent of firms applied their knowledge to generate new products or services. The existence of planned training increased the development of new products to the extent that it interacts with the firm's knowledge assets.	Training is only beneficial for SME innovation when it is aimed at developing knowledge assets in the firm. Managers should plan training based on the knowledge assets of the firm.
Shiryan *et al*. (2012) Employee training effectiveness in Saudi Arabian SME performance	To determine how SMEs can achieve greater profitability, return, higher-quality outcomes, and enhanced performance through education and training.	To understand employees' engagement with the organisation as evidenced through training policies.	A quantitative survey with 268 SMEs in Saudi Arabia.	Nearly 75 per cent of the employees at SMEs reported that they had received no training in the last five years. Management involvement in training as well as management motivation regarding training were found to positively correlate to the desired outcomes of training. Also, training outcomes were found to contribute significantly to firm performance (52).	The authors suggest that the research methodology be replicated to measure change in management skills on larger samples of SMEs in Arab countries in order to understand the process of change in the SME sector.
Jones *et al*. (2013) Evaluating the impact of different training methods on SME business performance	There is a need for more evidence on the relationship between SME training methods and business performance.	To examine the link between training methods used and SME performance.	A self-administered survey with 3521 UK SMEs	Those training methods which impacted performance the most positively include somebody in the workplace providing training, in-house training or learning by doing, external private training, and e-learning. Those training methods which did not contribute to performance include government programmes, local college learning within the workplace, and distance learning.	The most beneficial form of training was private informal training provided in-house by an external training provider. In contrast, Jayawarna *et al*. (2007) found that formal training was more significantly associated with enhanced business performance than informal training.

De Mel *et al*. (2014) Business training and female enterprise start-up, growth, and dynamics: experimental evidence from Sri Lanka	Most female-owned enterprises are very small with low earning levels.	To determine if business training, combined with grant funding, can raise the income of women in self-employment.	Five rounds of follow-up surveys using a randomised design with 624 women operating a business and earning less than $2 per day.	Findings indicate that training led to an improvement in business practices, but not profits, sales, capital stock, employment, or number of hours owners spend working in their business. Combining training with grant funding did have a positive impact on capital stock and profits in the short term only.	Training and grant funding are not enough to generate business growth in subsistence businesses run by women. The authors recommend using one-on-one personalised mentoring and consulting, and addressing the constraints to female participation in wage work.
Higuchi *et al*. (2015) Sustained impacts of Kazien training	There is a lack of evidence that management training improves business performance.	To determine the short, medium, and long-term impact of short-term Kazien management training on Vietnamese SMMEs.	A randomised study with 316 enterprises using treatment groups and control groups.	The training programmes had a favourable medium-term impact on production management, on reducing dead stock and other performance improvements.	The authors suggest that the reason SMME owners do not make use of management training is because they do not understand the value of it.
Frese *et al*. (2016) Psychological training for entrepreneurs to take action: contributing to poverty reduction in developing countries.	Psychology is often not considered to serve the challenge of poverty reduction.	To determine the effects of a psychologically oriented training intervention for entrepreneurship in Uganda.	A one-year study based on a randomised pretest-posttest control group design.	The training increased the personal initiative of SMME owners which resulted in higher business success. Firm sales of those who participated in the training rose 27% and the number of employees per firm increased 35%.	N/A

McKenzie & Puerto (2017) Growing markets through business training for female entrepreneurs: a market-level randomised experiment in Kenya.	N/A	To determine how business training affects the profitability, growth, and survival of female-owned businesses and to evaluate whether any gains in profitability come at the expense of other business owners.	Randomised two-stage experiment in 157 rural markets in Kenya with 3537 firms, with four rounds of follow-up surveys to measure impacts at one and three years after the training.	Firms that received training are 3 per cent more likely to survive after three years, earn 18 per cent higher sales, and make 15 per cent higher profits. Their owners also have better mental health and a higher subjective standard of living. These gains do not negatively affect competitors; instead the total sales and total number of customers is higher in treated markets suggesting market growth stemming from better customer service, better business practices, and the introduction of new products as a result of the training.	The authors conclude that in underdeveloped markets, microenterprise growth does not need to come at the expense of competitors, and business training can help the overall market grow. Mentoring does not deliver additional gains compared to training alone.
Bruhn *et al.* (2018) The impact of consulting services on small and medium enterprises: evidence from a randomised trial in Mexico.	A lack of managerial skills constitutes an important constraint to a firm's growth and ability to withstand economic shocks.	To determine if alleviating the constraints on managerial capital affects the performance and growth of SMMEs in emerging markets.	Randomised controlled trial in Mexico with 432 SMMEs receiving the treatment and 282 functioning as a control group. The treatment helped to expand the managerial skills of owner-managers by giving them access to subsidised consulting and mentoring services.	With the help of consultants, SMMEs defined clear goals and strategies. The consulting intervention had a positive short-term impact on productivity, return on assets, and profits, and a long-term impact on employment. The three management practices which were most influenced were marketing efforts, accounting practices, and long-term planning. The consultation also improved the overall confidence and control that SMME owners had in their businesses.	N/A

Barrios *et al*. (2019) Training effects on subsistence entrepreneurs' hope and goal attainment	Calls have been made for further research on the effects of various types of SMME training on the capability of business owners in developing countries.	To explore the degree to which hope and perceived goal attainment can be developed in SMMEs through training in Central America.	A longitudinal study following a quasi-experimental design. Data was collected in three stages over 24 months.	Participants exposed to training mentioned significant increases in perceived goal attainment and hope levels.	N/A
Higuchi *et al*. (2019) Short- and medium-run impacts of management training: an experiment in Tanzania	Although entrepreneurs play a key role in industrial development, the managerial capacity of SMMEs in developing countries seems limited.	To determine if a less expensive training programme featuring Kaizen or lean production for smaller-scale firms can be effective if the follow-up observation period is extended.	A baseline survey with 113 small-scale garment production firms which participated in randomised control trials where SMME owners/managers randomly participated in classroom training programmes to learn about good management practices for +/- 40 hours.	The authors found that management training had a significant impact on management practices in the short run and on business performance in the medium term. They also found that the degree of assimilation varied between SMMEs as each one identified and assimilated those practices which were most useful and relevant to their unique business context. They concluded that the favourable impact of management training on business performance was dependent on the degree of assimilation.	The authors recommend that the effects of training on business performance should not be evaluated too soon as these only become visible in the medium term since it takes time for participants to assimilate the knowledge.

Kunaka & Moos (2019) Evaluating mentoring outcomes from the perspective of entrepreneurs and small business owners	SMME mentoring outcomes have not been effectively illustrated in the South African context.	To evaluate different mentoring outcomes to establish what is being gained from mentoring relationships amongst SMMEs in South Africa.	A quantitative research method with 209 entrepreneurs and small business owners. Data was collected with an online questionnaire.	A significant relationship was found between different mentoring outcomes such as skills transfer outcomes, business outcomes, entrepreneur resilience outcomes, and knowledge transfer outcomes. Most respondents (73.7%) had one or two mentoring relationships.	Understanding the benefits of mentoring will encourage more participation in the field of SMME mentoring in South Africa for mentors, entrepreneurs and small business owners. The authors recommend that mentors create honest relationships with mentees and encourage the development of mentorship programmes which promote the four outcomes listed.
Suseno *et al.* (2019) Informal training in Chinese small- and medium-sized enterprises.	There is a lack of research which examines informal training in SMMEs in non-Western countries with different competitive and institutional environments.	To determine the extent of informal training in SMMEs in a developing country.	A multiple case-study method, using a holistic-inductive qualitative approach, employing open-ended interviews with two Chinese manufacturing SMMEs.	Managers in Chinese SMMEs often possess poor educational backgrounds and low managerial skills. The firms placed more emphasis on informal training than formal. Investment in formal training did not necessarily lead to an improved organisational performance. Most SMMEs adopted informal training due to the constraints they faced (like a lack of time and money), the perceived outcomes of informal training activities, and the attitudinal aspects of managers and employees.	Managers in Chinese SMMEs need more guidance, leadership, and support from the government and private sector. Training initiatives should cater to the specific needs of SMMEs and funding needs to be made available for them to access formal training in addition to tax incentives to ease their financial burdens.
Yusoff *et al*. (2019) Entrepreneurship competency enhancement training: a study among the managers of internet centres.	N/A	To determine the effectiveness of business training for managers of internet centres in Malaysia.	Cross-sectional quantitative research study with 26 SMME managers.	Findings reveal that participants' level of knowledge on selected business topics (such as self-competency, business opportunity, venture formation, business management) increased after participating in training.	N/A

What follows is a detailed summary of the 18-year literature review presented in Table 4.4. The summary is divided up into a discussion of the research problem, purpose, methodology, findings, and recommendations/noteworthy details.

a. Problem

Considering that one of the key challenges faced by SMMEs is their rate of survival and growth, research in the field of SMME training has often considered how training can support this goal (Ladzani & Van Vuuren, 2002; De Mel *et al*., 2014; McKenzie & Puerto, 2017; Bruhn *et al*., 2018). There are various factors that SMMEs need to strengthen in their pursuit of success, and several studies explore how these factors can be strengthened through effective training (Karlan & Valdivia, 2011; Barrios *et al*., 2019; Higuchi *et al*., 2019). Such factors have included innovation (De Saá-Pérez *et al*. 2012), performance (Shiryan *et al.*, 2012; Jones *et al*., 2013; Higuchi *et al*., 2015), owner psyche (Frese *et al.*, 2016), and customer service (Dewhurst *et al.*, 2006). Some studies consider the effectiveness of different types of training and mentorship programmes (Kent *et al*., 2003; Kunaka & Moos, 2019; Suseno *et al*., 2019; Yusiff *et al*., 2019) and the likelihood of SMMEs participating in such training programmes (Johnston & Loader, 2003).

The present study also sought to address the problem of low SMME survival and growth, by focusing on how student-led training and mentorship can benefit SMMEs in the context of SL.

b. Purpose

The intention of the SMME training studies has been to analyse the effect that training can have on performance (Jones *et al*., 2013; Bruhn *et al*., 2018), profitability, growth, and survival (McKenzie & Puerto, 2017; Bruhn *et al*., 2018) hope and goal attainment (Barrios *et al*., 2019), and innovation (De Saá-Pérez *et al*., 2012). In addition, studies examined the level of employee training (Shiryan *et al*., 2012), considered the degree to which SMMEs make use of training (Suseno *et al*., 2019), assessed the skills and training needs of SMMEs (Dewhurst *et al*., 2006), evaluated the role and impact of existing training and mentoring programmes (Ladzani & Van Vuuren, 2002; Kent *et al*., 2003; Karlan & Valdivia, 2011; Higuchi *et al*., 2015; Kunaka & Moos, 2019; Yusoff *et al*., 2019), and suggested new approaches to programme delivery that could be more effective for SMMEs (Johnston & Loader, 2003; De Mell *et al*., 2014; Frese *et al*., 2016; Higuchi *et al*., 2019).

Although the present study did assess the perceived impact of training on performance indicators such as sales, it also considered other aspects such as how student-led training can support employee motivation, branding, customer acquisition, customer loyalty, and business efficiency.

c. Methodology

Many of the SMME training-related studies were quantitative in nature and made use of self-administered and telephone surveys with SMMEs. De Saá-Pérez *et al*. (2012) did so with 139 SMMEs in the Canary Islands; Jones *et al*., (2013) with 3521 SMMEs in the UK; Shiryan *et al*. (2012) with 268 SMMEs in Saudi Arabia; Dewhurst *et al*. (2006) with 141 SMMEs and 21 training providers in Telford and Shropshire in the UK; Higuchi *et al.* (2019) with 113 small-scale garment production firms in

Tanzania; Kunaka and Moos (2019) with 209 SMMEs in South Africa; and Yusoff *et al*. (2019) with managers of 26 Internet Centres in Malaysia. The present study also had recourse to a quantitative methodology, but made use of fieldworkers to administer the surveys in order to improve data collection.

Another method used by many of the more recent studies was randomised control trials. Karlan & Valdivia (2011), for instance, conducted a two-year trial with 338 micro-entrepreneurs in Ayacucho and Lima in Peru; De Mel *et al*. (2014) led a randomised trial with 624 female-operated businesses in Sri Lanka; Higuchi *et al*. (2015) conducted a trial making use of the Kazien management training system with 316 Vietnamese SMMEs; Frese *et al*. (2016) completed a one-year trial in Uganda; McKenzie and Puerto (2017) conducted an extensive randomised two-stage experiment in 157 rural markets with 3537 SMMEs and four rounds of follow-up surveys, at one- and three-year intervals in Kenya; and Bruhn *et al.* (2018), whose trial in Mexico saw 432 SMMEs receiving the treatment and 282 functioning as the control group. Considering the way that randomised controlled trials can reveal clear empirical evidence of programme impact, it would be beneficial to use this methodology for future research on the BSAC-SL programme.

Other methodologies employed include an exploratory case study of 10 SMEs at the University of Teesside in England (Johnston & Loader, 2003), a multiple case study of two Chinese manufacturing firms (Suseno *et al*., 2019), a range of structured interviews with 30 participants in a SMME mentor programme in the UK (Kent *et al.,* 2003), a case study of three training providers in the Northern Province of South Africa (Ladzani & Van Vuuren 2002), and a quasi-experimental longitudinal study of SMMEs in Central America (Barrios *et al*., 2019).

d. Findings

Findings from studies vary. Some studies suggest that training had a positive effect on SMMEs (De Saá-Pérez *et al*. 2012; Shiryan *et al*., 2012; Jones *et al*., 2013; De Mel *et al*., 2014; Higuchi *et al*., 2015; Frese *et al*., 2016; McKenzie & Puerto, 2017; Bruhn *et al*., 2018; Burrios *et al*., 2019; Higuchi *et al*., 2019; Yusoff *et al*., 2019); whereas others maintain that training had little to no impact on businesses in terms of growth or performance (Patton *et al*., 2000; Huang, 2001; Karlan & Valdivia, 2011).

Firms noted a positive impact on their chances of survival (McKenzie & Puerto, 2017), on new product and service development (De Saá-Pérez *et al*., 2012), firm performance (Shiryan *et al*., 2012; Higuchi *et al*., 2015; Frese *et al*., 2016; McKenzie & Puerto, 2017; Bruhn *et al*., 2018; Higuchi *et al*., 2019), general business and management practices (De Mel *et al*., 2014; Higuchi *et al*., 2019), business knowledge (Yusoff, 2019), marketing and accounting (Bruhn *et al*., 2018) productivity (Bruhn *et al*., 2018), firm growth (Frese *et al*., 2016; Bruhn *et al*., 2018); owner mental health and standard of living (McKenzie & Puerto, 2017), owner confidence and control (Bruhn *et al*., 2018), goal attainment and hope (Barrios *et al.,* 2019), production management (Higuchi *et al*., 2015), personal initiative of owners (Frese *et al*., 2016), and record keeping of owner withdrawals from their business, and the implementation of innovations in the business (Karlan & Valdivia, 2011). Also, SMMEs were more likely to repay their microloans and there were higher levels of client retention by microfinance institutions due to training (Karlan & Valdivia, 2011). It was found that combining training with grant funding had a positive impact on capital stock and profits in the short term only (De Mel *et al*., 2014). Interestingly, McKenzie and Puerto (2017) discovered that SMME gains from training did not negatively affect competitors; instead the total sales and total number of customers grew in treated markets, suggesting that market growth was the result of better customer service, better business practices, and the introduction of new products as a result of the training. As has been mentioned before, the present study investigated the effect of training on performance measures like sales, but also introduced new marketing-related measures such as branding and customer loyalty, additional performance measures such as new customer acquisition, and other variables such as business efficiency and employee motivation.

Although many SMMEs reported various significant developments as a result of the training, Higuchi *et al*. (2019) found that the degree of assimilation of knowledge varied between SMMEs, as each identified and assimilated those practices which were most useful and relevant to their unique business context. They concluded that the favourable impact of management training on business performance was dependent on the degree of assimilation.

Most SMME owner respondents in a South African study by Kunaka and Moos (2019) revealed that they had at least one or two mentoring relationships. As regards the extent to which and frequency with which SMMEs facilitated training and mentorship for their employees, some SMME employees reported that they had received no training in the last five years of working at an SMME (Shiryan *et al*., 2012). The elements that were consistently mentioned as inhibiting factors were the cost of releasing employees for training, the cost of the actual training, and the time required for the training (Dewhurst *et al*., 2006; Suseno *et al.*, 2019). The BSAC-SL programme helped overcome these problems by facilitating informal on-the-job training where students went to the premises of the SMMEs and trained and mentored SMME owners and staff there.

SMMEs clearly preferred short, inexpensive, convenient, and relevant training methods like workplace training, in-house training, external private training, and e-learning (Dewhurst *et al.,* 2006; Jones *et al*., 2013; Suseno *et al.*, 2019). For example, in China, most SMMEs adopted informal training due to the constraints they faced (like a lack of time and money), the perceived outcomes of informal training activities, and the attitudes of managers and employees. Training methods which SMMEs found to be less beneficial included government programmes, local college learning, and distance learning (Jones *et al*., 2013; Suseno *et al*., 2019).

Johnston and Loader (2003) found a number of elements present in successful training programmes, including a needs analysis conducted before the programme, cooperation with SMMEs during the design of the programme, tailoring its content to the needs of SMMEs, making it practical and immediately relevant to the workplace, receipt of feedback from SMMEs throughout the duration of the programme, offering the programme free of charge, and offering it as half-day workshops rather than full-day sessions, to limit the opportunity cost due to lost productive time. In addition, offering the workshops as flexible, short, stand-alone sessions in repeating cycles (like a menu) in computer laboratories, with the assistance of trained tutors and course manuals, enabled participants to engage in the learning at their own pace and gave SMMEs the flexibility to choose which sessions to attend and which staff to send. Shiryan *et al*. (2012) report that management involvement in training, as well as management motivation regarding training, were positively correlated with the desired outcomes of training.

Areas in which SMMEs desired training and mentorship included marketing, visual merchandising and display, business management, ICT, store design, and accounting (Kent *et al*., 2003). What gave training mentors more credibility in the eyes of SMMEs is that they had owned their own business before (Kent *et al*., 2003).

e. Recommendations / noteworthy details

A range of noteworthy conclusions and recommendations have emerged from SMME training research over the 18-year period.

De Saá-Pérez *et al.* (2012) conclude that training is only beneficial for SMME innovation when it is aimed at developing existing knowledge assets in the firm. In contrast to Jayawarna *et al*. (2007), who found that formal training was more beneficial for enhanced business performance, Jones *et al.* (2013) discovered that the most beneficial training method for SMMEs is private informal training, provided in-house by an external training provider. Interestingly, this was the very type of training provided by students during the BSAC-SL programme.

Kent *et al*. (2003) report that mentoring programmes are a successful method of training SMME retailers, further entrenching the idea of using outside mentors and trainers to help SMMEs. In contrast to McKenzie and Puerto (2017), who claim that mentoring does not deliver additional gains compared to training alone, De Mel *et al*. (2014) stress the importance of mentorship by noting that training and grant funding is not enough to generate business growth in certain businesses. They therefore recommend that one-on-one personalised mentoring and consulting be included in SMME support and development programmes. In cases where SMME owners did not take advantage of management training, Higuchi *et al.* (2015) suggest that it is because they do not understand the value of it. For this reason, Kunaka & Moos (2019) venture that understanding the benefits of mentoring will encourage more participation in the field of SMME mentoring in South Africa for mentors, entrepreneurs, and small business owners.

In order to develop successful training programmes, Dewhurst *et al*. (2006) suggest that training providers need to fully understand the needs and goals of SMMEs so that they can tailor their training appropriately. They should also establish training that limits barriers like cost, location, and time. Johnston and Loader (2003) recommend that operational impact, flexibility, and training relevance should be taken into consideration when designing training programmes.

Kent *et al.* (2003) recommend that the initial success of SMME growth through mentorship training provides grounds for further research to support small-scale retailer-oriented mentorship training solutions, while Shiryan *et al.* (2012) recommend that further research be conducted to measure change in management skills on larger samples in order to more precisely understand the process of change in the SMME sector as a result of training programmes. In terms of how to conduct SMME training research, Higuchi *et al.* (2019) recommend that the effects of training on business performance should not be evaluated too soon as these only become visible in the medium term as participants assimilate the knowledge acquired. Fortunately, the present study gathered data from organisations that had participated in the programme from one to five years prior to the research, thereby offering a short, medium, and long-term view of the effects of the training.

Ladzani and Van Vuuren (2002) and Suseno *et al.* (2019) make a number of recommendations regarding SMME training:

- governments should support and strengthen training initiatives (Ladzani & Van Vuuren, 2002; Suseno *et al.,* 2019);
- the private sector should help provide guidance, leadership and support (Suseno *et al.,* 2019);
- training initiatives should cater for the specific needs of SMMEs (Suseno *et al.,* 2019);
- funding needs to be made available for SMMEs to access formal training (Suseno *et al.,* 2019);
- entrepreneurship training should be seen as a basic requirement for starting and running a business (Ladzani & Van Vuuren, 2002); and
- training providers in an area should pool their resources in order to better serve the needs of potential and existing entrepreneurs (Ladzani & Van Vuuren, 2002);

The authors also list a number of training-related actions that can be taken to help curb the failure rates of SMMEs, namely:

- for training providers to revise their training materials to be more relevant (Ladzani & Van Vuuren, 2002; Suseno *et al.,* 2019);
- for training providers to benchmark their services with other successful training organisations (Ladzani & Van Vuuren, 2002);
- for educational institutions to introduce and strengthen entrepreneurship education (Ladzani & Van Vuuren, 2002); and
- for emerging and potential entrepreneurs to be encouraged to take courses in entrepreneurship (Ladzani & Van Vuuren, 2002).

In light of the recommendations made by these authors, one of the key goals of the present study was to analyse the effect of the training element of the BSAC-SL programme so that improvements can be made to better serve SMMEs in the future.

4.7 Summary

This chapter started by taking an in-depth look at IMC by considering the development of definitions over the years and finding that IMC in the 21st century enables firms to deliver and effectively manage vast and highly complex forms of communication between brands and their stakeholders. Some of the key benefits of IMC were then noted, including brand consolidation, competitive advantage, customer-centric communications, shortening the consumer decision-making process, facilitating dialogue with customers, customer loyalty, savings, increased credibility, and increased profits. Some of the barriers to IMC were also considered, such as a lack of senior level support, the misperceptions of marketing practitioners, the specialisation of agencies, and staff resistance.

The chapter investigated SMME IMC. Although there are numerous barriers for SMMEs regarding IMC, such as a lack of resources and expertise, approaching it in ad-hoc and non-strategic ways, poor management, and a lack of understanding of the importance of IMC, a number of authors consider IMC to be critical for success. Some believe that the solution to these problems is to provide marketing training and expertise to SMMEs to enable them effectively and efficiently to implement marketing communications. This is something that the BSAC SL programme set out to do.

A table covering eight years of SMME IMC research between 2012 and 2019 was then developed, covering such research as understanding how SMMEs use different mediums of communication in IMC, and investigating how SMMEs use IMC and what impact it has on their businesses.

The next section considered the IMC planning process as comprising seven steps, as follows: step 1: a review of the marketing plan, step 2: a situation analysis, step 3: an analysis of the communication process, step 4: budgeting, step 5: developing the IMC programme, step 6: implementation, integration, and coordination, and step 7: monitoring, evaluation, and control. The IMC client-agency relationship was the topic of Section 4.5, which focused on the nature of the relationships among all the communication players such as clients, agencies, media, and customers. The way in which SMMEs organise themselves for marketing communication was also considered, with most opting for a centralised system. The fact that firms should periodically conduct reviews of their agency partners was also discussed. The last part of Section 4.5 reviewed IMC client-agency research literature over the last few decades, with a special emphasis on topics such as conflict, client account management, contracts and agency theory, cultural and international perspectives, co-creation, and small business and small agencies.

The final section of this chapter considered the nature of SMME training, mentorship, and knowledge transfer. It revealed that SMME training does in fact have numerous benefits for SMMEs but that SMMEs often do not engage in training programmes because of a lack of time and resources, as well as because they fail to understand the value of training. The section ends with an in-depth review of SMME training research conducted between 2002 and 2019, drawing out some of the key findings to help inform the present study. The findings include the benefits of SMME training, the barriers SMMEs face, the degree to which SMMEs participate in training, the type of training that SMMEs prefer, the elements that should be present in effective SMME training, and the types of skills and knowledge that SMMEs desire to learn.

The next chapter considers the methodology which was used to conduct the research study, and is followed by presentation of the research findings in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

5.1 Introduction

There is an institutional directive to continue evaluating and improving Service Learning (SL) at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT, 2011). For this reason, one of the key objectives of this research was to contribute to a comprehensive evaluation of the Brand Shepherd Advertising Challenge (BSAC)-SL programme in the Marketing Department. In order to do this, the study assessed the value of the marketing communication SL programme for participating small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) in the Cape Peninsula.

This chapter provides an overview of the research design and methodology used to conduct the research. It starts off by briefly discussing the positivist research position of the researcher and continues with a detailed explanation of the quantitative descriptive research design (a programme evaluation). The research plan is unpacked with a key focus on inputs, outputs, and outcomes of the programme, followed by a brief summary of the types of literature consulted for the project. The nature of the empirical survey is then discussed as well as the details of the survey method used. After briefly discussing the ethical implications of the research, the questionnaire design is described in detail, including its structure, types of questions, and additional aspects of the questionnaire like conditional branching and composing instruction. A discussion of the data collection then follows, indicating all the steps taken including the sample frame development (step 1), telephone screening (step 2), interviewer recruitment and selection (step 3), interviewer training (step 4), managing the interview process (step 5), and data processing (step 6). Finally, the data analysis process is unpacked, with an emphasis on the types of statistical techniques used. These included descriptive statistics, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and Bonferroni post-hoc test.

5.2 Scientific research position

The study was based on a positivist research orientation. A central tenant of positivism is that the researcher can observe social behaviour scientifically (Bhattacherjee, 2012:75). Although the BSAC-SL programme had produced a quantity of qualitative data through informal feedback forms, the themes within the data needed to be tested empirically in order to verify them scientifically. For this reason, the researcher used deductive reasoning in order to generate a number of propositions for testing. Empirical verification of the propositions was then sought using quantitative means.

5.3 Research design

Cooper and Schindler (2006:192) describe the research design as “the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data.” It is the plan that allows the researcher to structure the investigation in a way that can serve to secure empirical evidence for the purpose of answering the research questions.

The BSAC-SL programme was designed to contribute to the socio-economic development agenda of the local and national government. In one sense it can be considered what Singh (2007:49) calls a “socio-economic development intervention project,” because it is an intervention designed to help develop society in some way or form. Singh (2007:49) reports that research plays a very important role at every stage of an intervention; all the way from its initial design to the evaluation of its eventual outcomes. He suggests that it is useful to monitor and evaluate a programme by tracking the impact of the intervention.

The research conducted in this study can be considered evaluation research. Evaluation research is concerned with evaluating the performance of a project or programme that has already been implemented (Bhattacharyya, 2006:15). Although the study did not attempt to engage in a comprehensive programme evaluation (which would necessarily include evaluating every aspect of the programme and analyse its impact on all the parties involved), it did attempt to contribute to such an evaluation by exploring the value the programme had for participating organisations.

This research project is therefore a summative programme evaluation involving participating SMMEs, which, according to Singh (2007:58-60), analyses the effects of a programme as a whole by determining whether the programme's activities have been successful in achieving its desired goals, through finding statistically significant relationships. A summative programme evaluation usually examines the degree to which a programme affected the problem, and involves:

1. Identifying the relationship between the inputs and the outputs of the programme;
2. Assessing how the problem was influenced and what aspects of the programme could have influenced it; and
3. Identifying which variables could have affected change and if the change can be statistically proven to have come about as a result of the programme intervention.

Fundamentally, the purpose of this evaluative research study is threefold: to assess accountability by studying whether the BSAC-SL programme has met the expectations of those involved; to improve the programme by collecting data that will offer answers about the effectiveness of the programme; and to enlighten the SL research community with insights about the programme for the sake of learning and growth (Lapan & Quartaroli, 2009:185).

5.3.1 Quantitative descriptive research design

The complexity of the topic under inquiry and the need to appreciate the context of the phenomenon necessitated the use of a quantitative descriptive research design (Cohen *et al*., 2007:205). The design was used to enable description of the value experienced by participating SMMEs as a result of the BSAC-SL programme. It should be noted that the study did not assess the programme's impact on the performance of SMMEs in the form of a randomised control trial using pre- and post-tests. Instead, the study set out to assess the impact that participating SMMEs perceived to have resulted from the BSAC-SL programme, and thus sought to describe factors (or variables) that contributed to the value of the programme for participating SMMEs – according to their memory of the programme and their own assessment of its effects on their businesses. In addition, the study sought to describe the value of the programme in the short term, medium term, and long term, by gathering data from SMMEs which had participated in the programme between one and five years before the study (2010-2014).

Sample research was chosen to collect the data. This approach enabled the researcher to measure participant perceptions, make comparisons between groups, and provided estimates from the population that could be generalised to the entire population (Bhattacherjee, 2012:73). The reason a sample method was used was because not all participating SMMEs were actively involved in providing programme evaluation through providing written feedback. As such, only those that had provided written feedback (294 SMMEs) were considered eligible to participate in the research initially. Of this group, all were included in the sample frame because a complete coverage of the group would generate more accurate data.

5.3.2 Programme evaluation research plan

Lapan and Quartaroli (2009:182) highlight that programme evaluations are organised around four key steps, namely, criteria, standards, measures, and synthesis. The research purpose, design, and plan of this research study are graphically summarised in Figure 5.1, below, by linking them to the four steps of programme evaluation proposed by Lapan and Quartaroli (2009:182).

As can be seen in Figure 5.1, the research design endeavoured to determine the value of the BSAC-SL programme for participating SMMEs by conducting a quantitative descriptive client-side programme evaluation, describing the perceptions of respondents in terms of the various criteria. It must be noted that the study did not evaluate the perceptions of students, academic staff, or service partners. This would have gone beyond the scope of the study.

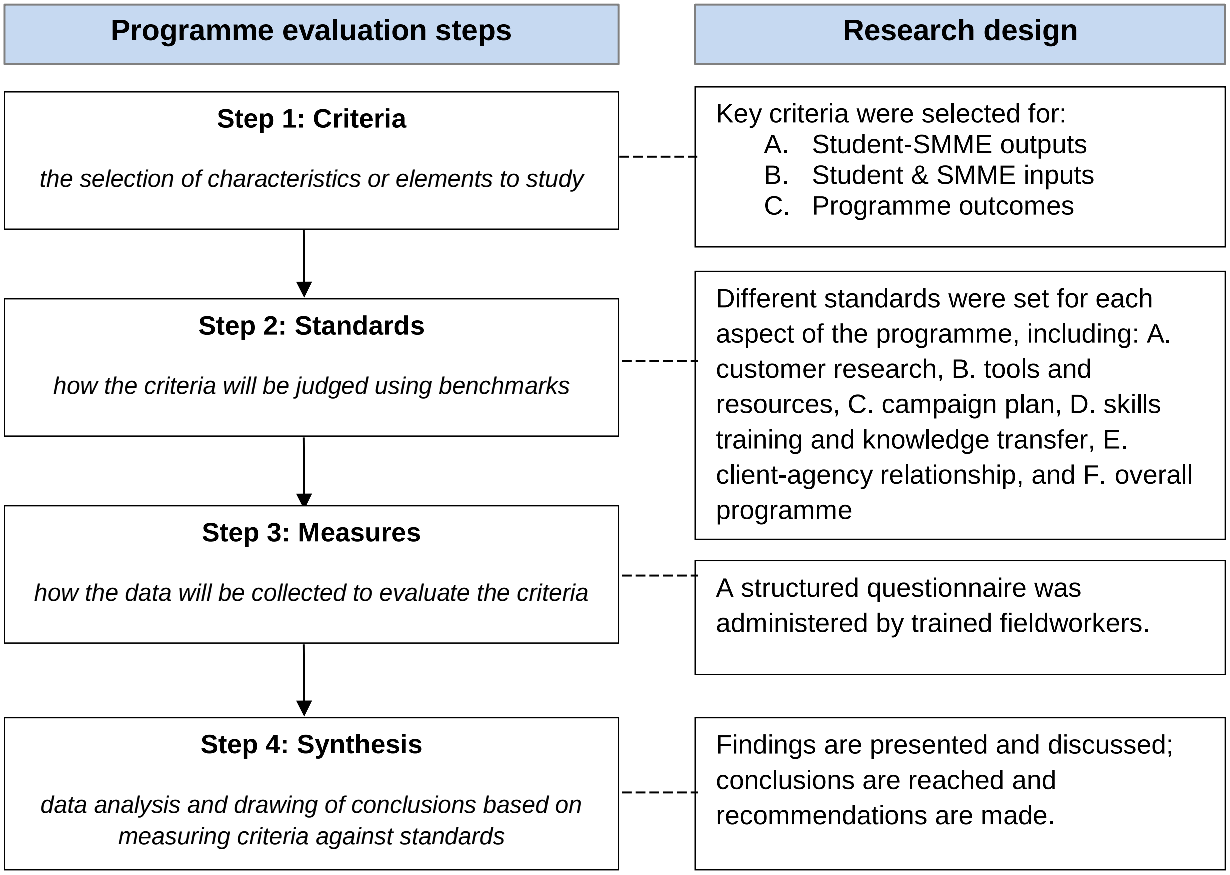

Figure 5.1: Four steps of programme evaluation and research design

Source: Adapted from Lapan and Quartaroli (2009:182)

What follows is a detailed development of each of the programme evaluation steps combined with the research design set out in Figure 5.1.

5.3.2.1 Step 1: Identifying criteria

Identifying which criteria to study is naturally a very important step in the process, as all the other steps follow on from it. If the criteria to study are not identified correctly, then the standards used, measures implemented, data collection process, and eventual data analysis will be of little value. For this reason, the researcher considered it appropriate to explore thoroughly which criteria required examination in the community-focused evaluation of the BSAC-SL programme.

One of the key criteria for evaluation research is the outcomes, or what Babbie (2013:363) also refers to as the “response variables”. The author stresses that researchers must take measurement seriously in evaluation research and meticulously determine all the criteria that need to be measured. The author also documents that such decisions are not always purely scientific and therefore evaluation researchers often need to work with the coordinators of the interventions in question in order to determine the correct criteria to measure. Some evaluation research studies are also designed to test for the unintended consequences and outcomes of interventions.

In order to understand what the intended and possible unintended outcomes of the BSAC-SL programme were, the researcher engaged with the programme coordinators and also examined programme documentation given to students and participating SMMEs. Using this approach, the researcher determined the following potential intended and unintended outcomes of the BSAC-SL programme: student-SMME outputs, student and SMME inputs, and SMME programme outcomes.

Note: This research study focused specifically on the inputs, outputs, and outcomes that relate to the participating organisations as well as the inputs and outputs of students. Those outcomes that relate to the students (like increased experiential knowledge, increased employability, and so forth) were outside the scope of this study.

A. Student-SMME outputs

Outputs are direct results of an implementation process that arise only during the implementation period. The student-SMME outputs mirror the tasks that students were given by the programme coordinators. They are those aspects of the programme that resulted from inputs into the SMMEs. However, because of the relational dynamic of the BSAC-SL programme, the outputs are a result not only of the inputs from students, but also the inputs of the SMMEs. Although the inputs may have differed in nature, both the students and the SMMEs needed to invest in order to produce outputs for the business. For this reason, the outputs are a result of the combined inputs of the students and SMMEs, and their degree of efficacy is a reflection of the relationship between the two parties. The outputs are:

- **Findings from customer research:** customer research conducted by the students at the premises of the businesses resulted in a set of findings about the attitudes and preferences of the customers regarding the business and its products or services;
- **Tools and Resources:** students developed business and marketing tools and resources that could be used by the businesses for the facilitation of marketing and advertising;
- **Campaign plan:** an IMC campaign plan was developed by students to help the businesses increase sales;
- **Skills training and knowledge transfer:** students imparted skills and shared their business and marketing knowledge with the staff of the SMMEs in an informal and ad hoc way; and
- **Client-agency relationship:** the relationship formed between the student-agencies and the SMMEs would have had to grow in such a way that they could work together in order to produce the needed SMME outcomes, both during and potentially after the SL programme.
- **Overall programme:** the nature of the entire programme with all the stages and all the elements including the programme design, coordination, and relationships with students and university staff.

The study was framed by the five output criteria. The usefulness of each output to the business was determined as well as the business's overall satisfaction with the output. The inputs and outcomes relating to each kind of output were determined separately.

B. Student and SMME inputs

The researcher felt that in addition to gathering data relating to the outputs and outcomes of the BSAC-SL programme, it would be helpful to investigate the inputs (or lack thereof) on the part of the community partners and university role-players. Inputs are any human, financial, or physical resources that are used to undertake a project or initiative. In order to determine which inputs to analyse, the researcher explored informal qualitative feedback given by the SMMEs as well as literature relating to SL, SMME support services, and SMME training programmes.

The inputs studied are those that the businesses and university role-players needed to invest in order to help produce and make effective use of the outputs resulting from the efforts of the students. Businesses would have needed to identify which of the following barriers contributed to their not being able to invest in the production and use of each output:

- output not appropriate for the business;
- lack of time;
- lack of staff;
- lack of finances;
- lack of knowledge;
- lack of other resources (like office space); and
- lack of communication.

Additional inputs (or absence thereof) potentially affecting the outcomes of the programme from the university's point of view were also included in some sections of the research. These included:

- lack of student communication;
- lack of student involvement;
- lack of student experience or knowledge; and
- lack of lecturer involvement.

C. SMME programme outcomes

In order to determine which outcomes to analyse, the researcher again explored the informal qualitative feedback given by the SMMEs. A number of performance benefits were mentioned by participating firms which the researcher identified as key programme outcomes. In addition, literature describing the outcomes of other SL programmes and SMME support programmes was also surveyed to determine other potential outcomes not mentioned by participating firms in their informal written feedback.

The outcomes are the results produced by the outputs. If the businesses were able to invest the needed inputs, lacked no important inputs from university role-players, engaged in the inputs presented by students, were not hindered from engaging in the inputs by students, and made use of the outputs produced through the relationship, then one or more of the following outcomes were identified as potentially resulting from each of the outputs:

- increased sales;
- new customers;
- increased brand awareness;
- increased customer loyalty;
- increased business efficiency (capability);
- increased competitive advantage (competitive performance); and
- increased employee motivation.

5.3.2.2 Step 2: Setting standards

The second step in a programme evaluation involves setting the standards by which the criteria will be measured. These standards were determined through conversations with the programme coordinators as well as through surveying relevant SL and SMME support programme literature. Each programme output involved different tasks and therefore had different standards for measurement.

A. Customer research:

- means by which customer research was conducted;
- usefulness of customer research;
- reasons for not making use of research;
- perception of the impact of the findings from the customer research; and
- satisfaction with customer research conducted.

B. Tools and resources:

- tools and resources developed or acquired by students;
- usefulness of tools and resources;
- reasons for not making use of tools and resources;
- perceived impact of tools and resources; and
- satisfaction with tools and resources.

C. Campaign plan:

- presentation of campaign plan;
- usefulness of campaign plan;
- reasons for not implementing campaign plan;
- means of campaign plan implementation;
- challenges experienced when implementing campaign plan;
- perceived impact of campaign plan; and
- satisfaction with campaign plan.

D. Skills training and knowledge transfer:

- skills imparted to business;
- business-related knowledge transferred to business;
- usefulness of skills training and knowledge transfer;
- reasons for lack of usefulness of skills and knowledge;
- perceived impact of skills and knowledge transfer; and
- satisfaction with skills training and knowledge transfer.

E. Client-agency relationship:

- characteristics of agency "staff;"
- usefulness of client-agency relationship;
- reasons for lack of usefulness of client-agency relationship;
- perceived impact of client-agency relationship; and
- satisfaction with client-agency relationship.

F. Overall programme:

- usefulness of overall programme;
- reasons for lack of usefulness;
- perceived impact of overall programme;
- satisfaction and lasting impact of overall programme;
- intention for future participation; and
- suggestions for programme improvement.

5.3.2.3 Step 3: Measuring performance

Various data collection tools or instruments such as questionnaires, interview guides, performance tests, paper-and-pencil devices (such as attitude scales), and observation protocols, can all be used in programme evaluation (Lapan & Quartaroli, 2009:190). For this study, the researcher chose to use a structured questionnaire that was administered by trained fieldworkers. The questionnaire is discussed in more detail in Section 5.7.

5.3.2.4 Step 4: Synthesising and reporting results

After the fieldwork has been conducted, evaluation research involves synthesising and discussing the findings, drawing conclusions, and providing recommendations for programme improvement (Lapan & Quartaroli, 2009:193). This step is covered in detail in Chapter 6 (findings), Chapter 7 (discussion) and Chapter 8 (conclusions and recommendations).

5.4 Literature search

The methodology that was followed to conduct the research began with consulting a range of relevant secondary sources including academic journal articles, textbooks, institutional policies, academic papers, conference proceedings, government gazettes and policies, previous published and unpublished research, and the Internet. In addition to providing knowledge about SL in education and its value to participating organisations, as well as the use of marketing communications by SMMEs, the literature search provided the researcher with normative criteria from which to extract relevant standards against which current SL practices and their value to the community could be measured.

5.5 Empirical survey

Once the initial literature review had been completed, an empirical survey followed. Given that the study aimed to group and quantify organisations according to the impact they perceived as resulting from the SL programme, a quantitative descriptive approach was used. This serves to describe the characteristics of a particular individual, situation, or group (Kothari, 2004:19); and according to Churchill and Iacobucci (2010:84), can be used to measure the number of people who share similar behaviours.

An interviewer-administered survey (also known as a person-administered survey, or a structured interview) was designed using the normative criteria found in the literature search mentioned above. The survey involved fieldworkers asking each respondent a list of pre-determined questions designed to measure the value to participating SMMEs of a marketing communication SL programme (Methsi, 2017:1).

A structured questionnaire was used as the data collection tool for multiple reasons. First, it was simple to administer and fairly inexpensive to analyse (Kothari, 2004:102). Secondly, it enabled the researcher to gather a large amount of complex information that was easy to quantify (Kardes *et al*., 2008:25). Thirdly, a structured questionnaire ensured that all questions were presented with the same wording and in the same order to all respondents (Kothari, 2004:101).

5.5.1 Survey method

The current research project followed a survey method because not all the members of the research population were eligible for inclusion. A total of 294 SMMEs were initially eligible for inclusion in the research as they had all submitted informal written feedback about the programme and were therefore considered active participants in the programme and more likely to participate in further research.

The factors that were taken into consideration in determining the research population, sample frame, and final sample are discussed below:

- **Research population:** The target population in this study were all SMMEs that had participated in the BSAC-SL programme since its inception in 2010 to 2014, a total of 331 SMMEs.
- **Sampling technique:** Judgement sampling was used to select a sample frame from the research population. A total of 294 businesses had given written feedback regarding their experience in the BSAC-SL programme since its inception in 2010 and were thus eligible to participate in the study.

- **Sample frame:** The list of 294 businesses was cleaned by the researcher before the research commenced in order to obtain a more accurate sample frame. There were a total of 14 businesses for which contact details were not listed, and so these were excluded from the list. The final sample frame thus comprised 280 businesses.
- **Sample:** Considering the small size of the research population, all members of the sample frame were considered eligible for inclusion in the study and therefore all formed part of the sample (280 SMMEs).
- **Sample unit:** The sample units included the SMME business organisations.
- **Sample element:** Bhattacherjee (2012:73) declares that when the unit of analysis is a business organisation it is advisable to use a specific person as a "key informant" or "proxy" for that unit when conducting survey research. Considering that the study involved the completion of a questionnaire on behalf of the business by one of its employees, only SMME staff members between the age of 18 and 66 years who had worked with BSAC-SL programme student teams during the course of the SL programme between 2010 and 2014 were eligible to be respondents.

  When each business was contacted telephonically, they were asked if such a person was available to complete the questionnaire on behalf of the business. In order to confirm each respondent, each fieldworker asked one screening question (as suggested by Cooper & Schindler, 2006:443) immediately before the interview commenced to ensure that the respondent had in fact worked with the student team during the SL programme. In most cases the person who represented the SMME was the owner.

5.6 Permission to conduct the study (ethical considerations)

A total of 294 business representatives gave written feedback on the programme immediately after its completion. This material can be regarded as data for preliminary qualitative research. As mentioned above, permission to conduct further research on the programme was obtained from participating client organisations by contacting each one telephonically. A total of 107 business owners gave permission for further research to be conducted with the employees of their businesses as well as on their premises.

In order to ensure that participants in the quantitative phase of the research understood the nature of the survey, a respondent information leaflet and consent form was given to them by the fieldworker before the interview commenced (Appendix A). This briefing informed them of the ethical considerations involved in the study. For example, each respondent was given the right to privacy and confidentiality as well as the right to withdraw from the survey at any time. This consent form was read and signed by each respondent before the fieldworker commenced with the research. Ethical clearance for the research was received before commencement of the present study, from the Faculty of Business and Management Sciences' Research Ethics Committee at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (Appendix B).

5.7 Questionnaire design

5.7.1 Introduction to the questionnaire

The researcher made use of a structured questionnaire (Appendix C) as the primary tool for gathering information from the respondents. The questionnaire followed the traditional structure as described by Alreck and Settle (2004:146), in which the first section introduced the survey to the respondents; the internal (body) section contained the scales and items relating to the survey topic; and the final section contained questions to measure the characteristics of the organisations for grouping and comparison purposes.

The structured questionnaire was titled *Brand Shepherd Advertising Challenge – Client Survey Questionnaire* and was designed to determine the value of the SL programme for participating SMMEs. It included multiple closed-ended questions, some of which allowed for further written clarification.

Although only a few questions gave the option for further clarification, these were included for flexibility and clarity. The questionnaire was primarily designed to determine the perceptions of the SMMEs regarding the experiences they had with students during the SL programme and the value that this had had for their businesses. Attitudinal data was important to gather as it would help the researcher determine which aspects of the programme were beneficial to SMMEs and why they were. Such data would enable the researcher to formulate recommendations for improving the SL programme (Singh, 2007).

5.7.2 Questionnaire structure

The advice of Alreck and Settle (2004:156) to divide the questionnaire into smaller sections than simply the introduction, body, and conclusion was followed, in order to simplify the task for the respondents. The body section of the questionnaire was primarily grouped by "student-SMME outputs." In this construction all the items relating to a specific output of the BSAC-SL programme were grouped together. For example, all the questions relating to the campaign plan were asked together. Within each section the question topics and scaling techniques used followed a similar order, making the response task simpler and easier for respondents to follow throughout the questionnaire. Alreck and Settle (2004:157) refer to this as "grouping by multiple criteria."

The questionnaire comprised seven sections and had a similar (although more detailed) structure to that of Schachter and Schwartz (2009:459-460). Permission was gained from the authors to use their questionnaires as the basis for the research (See Appendix D for the email correspondence with David Schachter). Key questions were extracted from their questionnaire and adapted to suit the unique nature of the BSAC-SL programme. The first six sections were devoted to answering the six research questions and the last section generated demographic data for cross analysis. The sections were grouped into the following categories:

i. **Customer research:** This section considered the affect that student-conducted research had on the business. It related to the surveys done with the customers of the business.

ii. **Tools and resources:** This section looked at student-developed tools and resources like logos, Facebook pages, and so forth.

iii. **Campaign plan:** This was one of the bigger sections as it covered the creation and implementation of the IMC campaign developed by students.

iv. **Skills training and knowledge transfer:** This section considered any skills (like using Microsoft Excel, Word or Facebook) or knowledge (like understanding strategy, competition or sales promotions) imparted to the business by students.

v. **Working relationship:** Here the questionnaire covered the relationship that was formed between the students and the client, and considered things like professionalism, communication, and so forth.

vi. **Overall satisfaction:** This section asked for the respondents' overall impression of the programme as well as their perception of its lasting impact on their businesses.

vii. **Demographic data:** The last section asked for demographic data like the age of the business, number of employees, and yearly turnover. Alreck and Settle (2004:155) suggest that these questions be asked last because they cover some sensitive information (like the yearly income of the business).

The first six sections relate directly to the six research questions as well as the various aspects that make up the BSAC-SL programme in question. Thus, to determine the value of the programme, each aspect of the programme was covered in the questionnaire.

5.7.3 Types of questions

Each section followed a similar structure and consisted of four primary structured questions that were adapted from the work of Schachter and Schwartz (2009:459-460). These four questions can be categorised as follows:

a. Usefulness of programme element;
b. Non-usefulness of programme element;
c. Perceived impact of the programme element; and
d. Overall satisfaction with programme element.

Each section asked the four primary structured questions in a similar way for the purpose of statistical analysis. For the sake of reliability, which is the degree to which research measures are free from error (Zikmund *et al.,* 2012:303), each of the four primary structured questions had been pre-established with a limited set of response options that were recorded according to a coding scheme. Therefore, all respondents received the same set of questions in the same sequence, which helped produce reliable data that could be directly compared (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003:68). Depending on the question, the question structure took on a multiple choice or multiple answer format.

Two types of scaling questions were used, a verbal frequency scale and a verbal rating scale. The verbal frequency scale determines the frequency of some action or behaviour on the part of the respondents and allows for making comparisons among respondents within the research cohort (Alreck & Settle, 2004:122-123). The first primary question (usefulness of programme element) determined how often the businesses made use of each programme element.

The verbal rating scale is used to measure a single item on a single dimension, with extremes on each side and equal intervals of options between them. This rating scale provides data that is unrestrictive and can be used to make comparisons among the respondents in the research cohort (Alreck & Settle, 2004:131). The fourth primary question (overall satisfaction of programme element) determined how satisfied the participant was with each programme element on a four point scale that included the following options: very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, satisfied, and very satisfied. A verbal rating scale was also used in the sixth section, which covered the business's overall satisfaction with the SL programme. The scale considered the lasting impact of the programme on the business and included the following options: negative impact, no lasting impact, minimal lasting impact, some lasting impact, and significant lasting impact.

A forced ranking scale was also included in the sixth section of the questionnaire (question number 6.1), but not all the respondents answered the question correctly. This caused a nonsampling error and disqualified all the responses for that question because of unreliability (Alreck & Settle 2004:60).

Both the second and the third primary questions in each section (non-usefulness, and perceived impact of programme element) offered the respondent multiple options to choose from.

Additional secondary structured questions were added to some sections in order to extract information for potential cross-referencing purposes or for the sake of clarity. Some questions, like those that cover the perceived impact, also provided an opportunity for qualitative feedback through an open-ended question. By following the lead of Sprague and Hu (2015:13), two other open-ended questions relating to course design were included in order to give respondents an opportunity to offer suggestions for programme improvement.

The last section of the questionnaire sought to garner demographic information about the business for cross-referencing purposes, and included questions adapted from the 2010 FinScope South Africa Small Business Survey (FinScope, 2010):

i. Business industry;
ii. Nature of business;
iii. Nature of customer;
iv. Business age;
v. Amount of employees;
vi. Business location;
vii. Electronic facilities;
viii. Physical facilities;
ix. Business registration;
x. Yearly turnover; and
xi. Business owner demographics.

It was expected that obtaining demographic information about the businesses would be useful, even essential, in determining whether there was a relationship between a business's demographic details and the level and type of value or challenges each experienced.

As Alreck and Settle (2004:155) suggest, "sensitive" information was not asked of respondents early on in the questionnaire, but rather in the final section among the demographic questions. A question about the yearly turnover of the business is a case in point, business of owners and staff sometimes being reluctant to provide such information. This strategy is deemed optimal because by the end of the questionnaire, respondents have become familiar with the inquiry and rapport is likely to be at a maximum. If respondents choose to terminate the interview at this point or refuse to answer some of the items, at least the bulk of the data has already been provided and may still be useful for analysis.

Considering that the official language of business in South Africa is English (South African Embassy in The Netherlands, 2012), the questionnaire was only available in English and interviewers were only required to ask questions in English. The questionnaire can be found at Appendix C.

5.7.4 Additional aspects of the questionnaire

Considering that the questionnaires were administered by interviewers, a cover letter did not accompany the questionnaire. However, fieldworkers were given a generic "interview greeting" script as a form of introduction. They were also encouraged to give respondents a short overview of the questionnaire before commencing the survey.

A short paragraph explaining the nature of the survey was included at the top of the questionnaire.

"Thank you for voluntarily participating in this study, which deals with the impact of the Brand Shepherd Advertising Challenge (BSAC). The survey will not take longer than twenty minutes to complete. Responses are completely confidential and will provide valuable data that will be used for academic purposes."

The reason that not much time was spent introducing the survey was because most of this was done during the telephone conversation between the principal researcher and the participating respondents. The respondents thus already knew what the research was about and why they had been asked to participate.

5.7.4.1 Conditional branching

Conditional branching is necessary when there are questions that apply to some participants but not to others, depending on their answers to previous questions (Norman & Pleskac, 2002:1). The questionnaire must make provision for such a case with a "branch" (or "go to") statement that can direct the respondents away from questions that do not apply to them (Alreck & Settle, 2004:159).

In the research conducted the fieldworkers were expressly trained to facilitate all conditional branching. For this reason, branching statements were indicated very briefly at the end of certain questions. Not too many branching statements were used because they add considerably to the complexity of the interviewing process and can introduce bias and error, thereby reducing the reliability and validity of the results (Alreck & Settle, 2004:161).

5.7.4.2 Composing instruction

Instructions were also used to give the interviewer and respondent more information regarding the completion of the questionnaire. These instructions were indicated on the questionnaire and related to the following aspects of the questionnaire:

- **Multiple response questions:** interviewers and respondents were informed to "Check all the boxes that apply;"
- **Branching (routing) instructions:** notes were indicated with an asterisk (*). For example, one read, *"NOTE: If "None" is selected for both skills and knowledge proceed to Q5.1;"*
- **Section instructions:** interviewers and respondents were given more information about a specific section. As an example, interviewers and respondents were reminded about the nature of the customer research at the beginning of the section in the questionnaire with the following note, "NOTE: This was the research that students conducted with your customers using a questionnaire;"
- **Rank order instructions:** notes were given to the interviewer and respondent regarding the completion of the one rank order question, *(Rank from 1-5, with **1** being <u>least</u> beneficial and **5** being the <u>most</u> beneficial)*; and
- **Please specify instructions (probing):** notes were given in relation to "other" options for which respondents were asked to "please specify." In such cases a space was given to write in the specification.

All instructions were clearly indicated by being placed in brackets, italicized, prefixed by the word "NOTE," in bold face, and/or accompanied by an asterisk. This made it easy for both the respondents and the interviewers to identify instructions in the midst of actual questionnaire items.

a. Key learning

Because the fieldworkers were trained regarding the interview process and the unique nature of the questionnaire, the researcher felt that it was not necessary to provide detailed instructions in the questionnaire. Most of the questions were straightforward multiple choice, verbal frequency scales, or verbal rating scales. However, there was one question that required respondents to rank items from most to least beneficial. The process of rank order was thoroughly explained to the fieldworkers before they did the interviews, but the completed questionnaires revealed that not all the interviewers understood this correctly. In many cases the items were rated instead of ranked. For this reason, the entire question needed to be discarded.

What the principal researcher learned from this (the "key learning") was that instructions to questions of a more complex nature should be explicit, explaining exactly what needs to be done. Alreck and Settle (2004:164) state that the degree to which a question's instructions are simple or elaborate depends on the sophistication of the respondents, the presence of an interviewer, and the complexity of the scales used. In such a case the authors suggest that the instructions meet the requirements of the least sophisticated respondent and therefore include:

- what items should be rated;
- what criteria should be used for judgement;
- how the scale is to be used; and
- exactly where and how the responses should be recorded.

Taking this advice into consideration, the researcher should have included the following phrase in the instructions explaining how to use the scale and how to record the responses:

Only rank each item once. Place a 1 next to the item that was the most beneficial, and then a 2 next to the one that was the 2^nd^ most beneficial, and so forth.

Such an instruction would have ensured more correctly completed items as far as the rank order question was concerned. For this reason, the researcher has certainly learnt the truth of the following statement by Alreck and Settle (2004:165): "Extensive experience demonstrates all too well that a surprisingly large proportion of respondents will provide very bizarre responses if the instructions are not crystal clear."

The researcher has found that such a sentiment is not only applicable to respondents, but also to trained interviewers. He has found the following statement by the authors to be just as true:

While interviewers receive training and instruction before going into the field and can examine the questionnaire thoroughly before using it, it is advisable to assume they are no more sophisticated than are the responding sample.

In future the researcher has determined to rather err on the side of being too thorough than too brief with regard to instructions. With the addition of more elaborate instructions, the more sophisticated respondents (and interviewers) can skip the unnecessary detail, while others will have complete direction if they need it (Alreck & Settle, 2004:165).

5.8 Data collection

Although personal interviewing has certain disadvantages (like cost), because of the nature of the study, the flexibility of personal interviewing made it the only choice. The study demanded direct contact with a special, qualified selection of respondents at special locations (their places of work). What follows is the process that was followed to collect the data using the structured interview method.

5.8.1 Sample development (step 1)

A sample frame was developed using a combination of client and student details as well as copies of the feedback letters given by the businesses. The client and student databases were provided by the programme coordinator, who had meticulously recorded the details of each business and student group that had participated in the BSAC-SL programme since its inception in 2010. Copies of the feedback letters were gained from the projects that students had submitted each year, and which the programme coordinator had kept for research purposes. The researcher then reconciled the client and student databases with the feedback letters by cleaning the data and ensuring that the information on the databases matched that on the feedback letters. Additionally, because the research in question was intended to be a follow-up to the initial qualitative feedback, the researcher used judgement sampling to discard from the list all organisations that had not provided written feedback. In addition, there was a total of 14 businesses for which contact details were not listed, and these were also excluded from the list. What resulted was a list of 280 organisations and matching student groups that included the following information for each:

- **Area:** the area in which the business was situated;
- **Year:** year in which the business participated in the programme;
- **Agency:** the advertising “agency” name of the student group;
- **Students:** each student that made up the group/agency;
- **Client:** the name of each business;
- **Business type:** a description of each business;
- **Tel:** all telephone and mobile phone numbers for the business;
- **Address:** the physical address of the business;
- **Email:** all email addresses for the business; and
- **Feedback person:** the person who gave feedback on the SL programme.

Considering the small number of potential participants in the sample frame, all were included in the final sample.

5.8.2 Telephone screening (step 2)

The securing of respondents was done by the principle researcher. Instead of sending potential respondents a bulk email or text message, each was telephonically contacted in order to increase the response rate through a more personalised approach (Alreck & Settle, 2004:205-209).

5.8.2.1 Telephone screening details

- **Location:** The telephonic screening took place from the researcher's office at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, room 3.27B in the Engineering building of the Cape Town campus, at the corner of Hanover and Tennant Streets, Cape Town, South Africa.
- **Equipment:** All telephone calls to landline numbers were made using the researcher's work telephone. All calls to mobile numbers were made using the principle researcher's own mobile telephone.
- **Order:** Considering that all the potential respondents in the sample frame qualified for the survey, the sample frame was covered from top to bottom multiple times following no particular order.
- **Timing:** Most calls were made between 10:00-12:00 and 16:00-18:00 each day because it was found that these times yielded the best response rates. No calls were made before 09:00 in the morning or after 19:00 in the evening in order not to inconvenience potential respondents.
- **Telephone conversation:** Considering that the telephone calls were simply made to gain consent for a personal interview, the telephone calls did not last very long (roughly 3-5 minutes each). The interviewer introduced himself and the research project. He reminded the respondent of the BSAC-SL programme and asked if they would be willing to participate in a follow-up research study. If consent was given the potential respondent was informed that they would be contacted by a fieldworker in order to set up the interview.
- **Research information (cover letter):** Given that all the respondents were contacted telephonically first, no cover letter accompanied the eventual interview. For this reason, all the questions that would usually be answered in a cover letter or by an interviewer were covered by the principal researcher in the initial telephone conversation. Alreck and Settle (2004:203) highlight the questions that need to be answered in such a cover letter; all of which were covered in the telephonic screening:
    - What is this about?
    - Who wants to know?
    - Why was I picked?
    - How important is this?
    - Will this be difficult?
    - How long will this take?
    - Will it cost me anything?
    - Will I be identified?
    - How will this be used?
    - What is in it for me?
    - When should I do it?

5.8.2.2 Telephone screening process

The researcher conducted these telephonic requests in the following order:

- Each potential respondent was called;
- Those who answered were reminded of the programme and an interview was requested;
- Those who consented were added to the respondent list and told that they would be contacted by a fieldworker in the next few weeks to set up the interview;
- Those who did not consent were thanked and removed from the list; and
- Those who did not answer were sent a text message and/or emailed with a request for them to make contact with the researcher.

The researcher then continued to attempt to contact potential respondents who had not yet been reached. As potential respondents either consented to or rejected participation in the research, they were either added to the respondent list or removed.

Alreck and Settle (2004:238-240) list a wide range of possible results of a telephone call, each of which was encountered by the researcher during the telephone screening process:

- Call answered by a qualified respondent;
- Call answered by an unqualified person;
- Number proves to be wrong location or subscriber;
- Call is not answered after 5 to 10 rings;
- Busy signal is received for the number called;
- Call answered by an answering service or device;
- Number has been changed and new number is listed; and
- Number not in service and no new number is listed.

When potential respondents did not respond to telephone calls, a SMS (text message) was sent to request a telephonic conversation regarding the research. Those with email addresses were also emailed if telephonic contact could not be made. The remaining sample elements were contacted up to five times in the sequence stated above (telephone-SMS-email) in order to request participation in the study. If they were not reachable after the 5th attempt, they were considered unreachable and were removed from the respondent list.

5.8.3 Interviewer recruitment and selection (step 3)

Because the research project could not be extended over a long period of time, several interviewers were needed. For this reason, Dr Norbert Haydam, an experienced local researcher, was approached. His company (Datavision) has had many years of experience in research. Dr Haydam also teaches a research class to third-year marketing students at CPUT. Because of the number of interviewers needed and the absence of a large budget, it was decided to train his third-year Marketing Research students to complete the interviews as a part of their curriculum. The students would be awarded academic credit for conducting an interview and submitting a completed questionnaire.

Alreck and Settle (2004:224-225) point out that students are often used as fieldworkers because of their availability. Additionally, students are reasonably educated and articulate. Students also look for contract or project-based work opportunities in order to earn some extra money while studying. The authors note that having considerable research experience is not always an indication of research excellence, as bad research habits could have been adopted because of poor or inadequate training. They believe that although inexperienced researchers require more training, it is often easier to “start from scratch” than to change inaccurate or inappropriate research beliefs or fieldwork habits (Alreck & Settle, 2004:225).

Although the interviewers were students, they were not new to research, or to the SL programme under enquiry. All of them had received six months of theoretical training in research before this fieldwork project. Additionally, all had engaged with marketing research in the field during their second year of study as a part of the BSAC-SL programme. All of them were familiar with the various aspects of the SL programme because all of them had completed the programme themselves. Owing to this combination of research knowledge and experience, as well as familiarity with the SL programme, the principle researcher felt confident to use these students as fieldworkers for the project (see Section 4.8.5.3, below, for how response bias was minimised).

The students were informed by Dr Haydam that they would get the opportunity to participate in a live research study as a part of their course and would receive credit for their efforts. A list of all the students and their contact details was sent to the principle researcher.

In order to make sure that the data collection was valid, the students were told that follow-up calls would be made with the interview respondents. If it was found that the interview had not occurred or that any cheating had taken place, the student involved would receive no credit for the project and would have to face disciplinary action at the university. This was felt to be an effective incentive to ensure that students would eschew any temptation to cheat, cut corners, or take a route that would negatively affect the validity of the data (see Section 4.8.6, below, for an explanation of verification process).

A total of 120 students were provided by Dr Norbert Haydam to conduct the fieldwork. Although all the students were trained, only 107 conducted the research.

5.8.4 Interviewer training (step 4)

5.8.4.1 Interview briefing

The researcher spent time training all the fieldworkers in order to brief them about the research project and teach them how to go about conducting the interviews. The following process (adapted from Alreck & Settle, 2004:221-222) was used to train and prepare the fieldworkers for the interviewing process:

- The trainees were given a general introduction to the project and its purpose, as well as an instruction manual explaining every detail of the project;
- The trainees were given a copy of materials to be used in the research, which included two sets of the questionnaire, a consent form, and a typed copy of the interview instructions;
- Trainees were given training as to how to introduce and conduct the interview using the questionnaire, as well as on how to administer the consent form; and
- The respondent-specific materials that each interviewer needed were distributed to the interviewers via an online database.

5.8.4.2 Assigning respondents to fieldworkers

During the training session fieldworkers were asked to indicate the area in which they lived. This was the primary criterion for assigning them to respondents: as far as possible, fieldworkers were assigned to respondents located close to where they lived or studied. It was felt that this would make the fieldwork process more convenient for both the fieldworkers and respondents. In a majority of cases, maximum proximity was achieved, with interviewers not having to travel further than a suburb or two away from where they lived or studied in order to conduct the interview.

After each respondent was assigned a fieldworker, a list of the relevant contact details was sent to each fieldworker. It was then their responsibility to make contact with their respective respondents in order to set up a convenient time and place for the interview.

During training, each fieldworker was given two copies of the questionnaire and a consent form. One copy of the questionnaire was to be given to the respondent and the other was for the fieldworker to complete according to the answers given by the respondent. The consent form was to be signed by both the fieldworker and the respondent before the interview commenced.

Fieldworkers were also given a copy of the Power Point presentation that their respondent's corresponding student group had used to present their campaign to the programme coordinator.* Considering that some businesses had taken part in the programme more than two years before the interview it was likely that their memory of student efforts would have waned (Alreck & Settle, 2004). For this reason, each fieldworker took a printed or electronic copy (on a laptop or tablet) of the corresponding student group’s presentation in order to help jog the respondent’s memory.

*****_As a part of the BSAC-SL programme, student groups need to present their campaign plan to the subject lecturer (programme coordinator). This is done using a Power Point presentation that is emailed to the project coordinator before the presentation date. The presentation document includes a summarised version of the work that was done by each student group for their respective SMME. It generally includes customer research findings, campaign plans and strategies, graphic design work, and examples of tools and resources developed for the businesses._

5.8.5 Managing the interview process (step 5)

5.8.5.1 The personal interviewing process

- **Qualifying respondents:** no criteria were needed by interviewers to qualify respondents as this process had already been completed by the principle researcher. Therefore, each interviewer was given the contact details of an already-qualified respondent who had given consent to participate in the study. This ensured that the qualification of respondents was consistent and accurate and therefore more likely to produce reliable results (Alreck & Settle, 2004:232-233).
- **Timing:** the time of day and week affects the response rate of interviews, especially with people who work 9-5 jobs or who run businesses. For this reason, interviewers contacted respondents to ask each one for a time that would be convenient for them.
- **Interview location:** the location in which an interview takes place can have a dramatic effect on the respondent. For this reason, each respondent was asked to choose a location that was most comfortable and convenient for them. The interviewers travelled to meet them at their specified locations.
- **The interview greeting:** Alreck and Settle (2004) suggest that the interview greeting should be very short, as much speaking will take place during the actual interview, unlike in a mail survey. Fieldworkers were given a short piece at the top of the questionnaire as a guideline for their interview greeting:

  Thank you for voluntarily participating in this study, which deals with the impact of the Brand Shepherd Advertising Challenge (BSAC). The survey will not take longer than twenty minutes to complete. Responses are completely confidential and will provide valuable data that will be used for academic purposes.
- **Visual aids:** materials relating to the work done for the business during the SL programme were shown to the respondents. The intent was to refresh their memory on what the students had developed for their business. Fieldworkers either printed these materials and gave it to the respondents or showed it to them digitally on a laptop or tablet.
- **Recording responses:** the questionnaire was developed in such a way that would make it easy for the interviewers to record responses. Most questions only required a simple tick in the relevant boxes. A few open-ended questions were inserted for the sake of clarity and in such cases the interviewers were asked to write down as much information as possible as well as probe for deeper understanding and insight.
- **Interviewer instructions:** Interviewers were given exactly the same questionnaire as the respondents, but with a set of additional instructions to guide them during the interview process. Interviewers were also allowed to make notes on their questionnaire during the fieldwork training for use during the interview.

5.8.5.2 Supervising the interviews

Alreck and Settle (2004:213) advise that although the questionnaire is important, it is the interviewer that plays the key role during an interview. They stress that the researcher needs to supervise the interviewers in order to ensure consistency and control during the interview process, so as to obtain valid, reliable results. The principle researcher monitored the entire research process from start to finish in the following ways.

- **Communication:** The email address and mobile number of the principal researcher was given to each of the interviewers. They were given permission to contact the researcher at any time during the research process in order to discuss problems or queries. Additionally, a contact database of all the interviewers was compiled by the researcher. This enabled the researcher to continue to communicate with the fieldworkers throughout the period during which the research was conducted.
- **Solving problems:** Any problems or queries were solved by the principle researcher. The problem that occurred most often was that respondents did not respond to telephone contact by the interviewers for the purpose of setting up the interview. In such cases the principle researcher called the respondent to try to arrange the interview. In cases where the respondent did not respond multiple times, the interviewer was given a new respondent to contact and interview.
- **Completed questionnaires:** All completed questionnaires were given to the principle researcher upon completion. Upon receiving the questionnaire, the principle researcher sight-checked each one to ensure that it had been completed correctly. Correctly completed questionnaires were numbered and stored in a safe place. In cases where questionnaires were incomplete or incorrectly completed, the interviewers were contacted and given an opportunity to go back to the respondent to gather any missing data or to redo the interview.
- **Updating sample:** The sample was also updated every time a correctly completed questionnaire was received. In this way the principle researcher could determine which questionnaires were still outstanding and follow up with the interviewers periodically via text message, email, or telephone. Any challenges affecting the completion of interviews could then also be addressed with each interviewer individually.
- **Completed questionnaires:** After all the completed questionnaires had been collected the principal researcher checked that they had been recorded properly. Any questionnaires that were not usable were then separated and the reason for this clearly noted. The complete, usable questionnaires were then numbered, counted, and prepared for data entry.

5.8.5.3 Minimising interviewing error

Alreck and Settle (2004:229-231) note that there are various forms of error that can introduce bias into the research results.

- **Instruction error:** this is when interviewers do not present the questionnaire instructions exactly the way they are listed in the questionnaire. This could be due to thinking that they have memorised the instructions after having presented them a few times. This error was minimised by giving the interviewers an extra copy of the questionnaire to give to the respondents. The respondents could therefore read the question instructions themselves as well. Additionally, each interviewer only did one interview and therefore had no time to "memorise" the questionnaire.
- **Interrogation error:** this is introduced when questions are expressed differently from one respondent to the next. Again, this problem was solved with each respondent receiving a copy of the questionnaire with which to follow the interview. Response option error, and scale interpretation error were also minimised with this strategy.
- **Recording error:** this is introduced when the interviewer needs to write down too many words in an effort to record responses verbatim. In such cases the interviewer cannot keep up with the pace at which the respondent is talking and therefore abbreviates or summarises what is being said. Fortunately there were not many open-ended questions and those that did require verbatim response recording did not require much more than 25 words each.
- **Response bias:** the presence of an interviewer can increase the likelihood of response bias. In such a case the respondent's answers are indirectly influenced by the presence of the interviewer. In order to limit such bias the principle researcher made certain that the interviewers assigned to each respondent had never met or worked with the respondent before. This was done by comparing those businesses with which each interviewer had worked during their SL programme in their 2nd year of study with those that were taking part in the research study. This enabled the principle researcher to ensure that no interviewers were assigned to businesses that they themselves had worked with during their SL programme, and this minimised a major form of potential response bias.
- **Threat bias:** this is bias which influences the answers of the respondents when they feel threatened. This bias was minimised by giving the respondents the opportunity to decide where and when they wanted to have the interview conducted. This ensured that they could choose a place in which they felt safe and comfortable.
- **Additional bias:** no gift or premium was included in the interview survey as a means of soliciting a higher response rate. The organisations had already received much assistance from the university during the SL programme. Additionally, the researcher did not want to encourage good responses through promising an incentive. As stressed by Alreck and Settle (2004:206), an inducement can introduce a serious source of bias as it is likely to influence the way in which people respond. They caution that except in highly specialised cases, "inducement should not be contingent on response," and should an inducement be given, it should be done so before the interview commences.

5.8.6 Data processing (step 6)

Once all the interviews had been completed the questionnaires and corresponding consent forms were collected, sorted and checked. What follows is a detailed account of the ensuing data processing procedure.

- **Sight-editing documents:** Once the questionnaires were received, each was coded manually at the top of each questionnaire using the surname and initial of the interviewer. Because each interviewer only did one interview, this seemed to be a good way to sort the data. It ensured that if any errors were noticed during the sight-edit, the interviewer responsible for the questionnaire could quickly be identified and contacted. Such a systematic record using a unique code value on each questionnaire is recommended as a means of effectively managing source documents (Alreck & Settle, 2004:242-244). The source documents (questionnaires) were then recorded on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and sorted alphabetically according to interviewer surname.
- **Judging completeness:** Alreck and Settle (2004:244-246) state that “each document must be examined to ascertain if it is acceptable for processing and to make any corrections or notations that might be required.” Therefore, each questionnaire was checked thoroughly by the principle researcher for completeness. Each question was examined to determine that the interviewer had followed the instructions and recorded the respondent’s answers in the correct place. Questionnaires that had a substantial amount of missing data were noted and the respective interviewers were contacted.
- **Verifying data:** As is suggested by Alreck and Settle (2004:222), a sample of the completed questionnaires was used for verification of response. A verification process was done with a judgement sample of roughly 18% of the completed 107 questionnaires and included a telephone conversation with the relevant respondents (20 in total). A nonprobability sampling method was used to choose respondents from different areas where interviews were conducted at different times during the research period. This ensured a widely representative mixture of respondents and also guaranteed a widely representative sample of interviewers and interviews for the validation process (Cooper & Schindler, 2006:456). The respondents were asked a brief set of questions to verify that the interview took place and were also asked to rate the interviewer’s appearance, communication, punctuality, and professionalism. Finally they were thanked for participating and ensured that the information they provided would help improve the programme.

  All 20 follow-up calls yielded a positive response, with interviewer ratings ranging from 3-5 overall for each of the criteria mentioned. It was therefore accepted that no “cheating” or “arm-chairing” had been committed by interviewers and that all completed questionnaires could be accepted.

- **Post-coding and transferring the data:** Most of the questions in the questionnaire were structured and therefore the majority of the responses fell within predetermined categories. For this reason, codes were assigned to each potential answer for each question item. Although post-coding can take place separately to the transferring of data, it was decided that to save time, this would be done simultaneously (Alreck & Settle, 2004:246-253). The data from each questionnaire was transferred into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The data from each questionnaire was keyed into a spreadsheet row and identified by the interviewer's surname in the first column.

  Each potential answer was given its own category code and spreadsheet column. All other responses were given a new category. This ensured that the post-coded data reflected all the “narrower” aspects of the research sample. It was felt that it would be better to ensure that the “finer” details of the survey be reflected in the post-coded data, even if there was only one such response in the entire cohort (such as only one person identifying themselves as “Chinese,” for example). Although this at times meant the addition of many new categories for some questions, it was felt that having such detailed postcoded data could be useful for the data analysis if needed. If such data was not needed, the researcher could always combine multiple categories during the data processing stage (including the “Chinese” category into a larger “Asian” category, for instance).

5.9 Analysis of the results

Alreck and Settle (2004:258) observe that “the objective of data processing and analysis is to ‘suppress’ the detail and to reveal the important and meaningful patterns and relationships contained in the data.” The collected data was thus subjected to a process of analysis. It was captured on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and then fed into SPSS (version 23), a programme designed to perform statistical analysis.

5.9.1 Statistical techniques used

Alreck and Settle (2004:258) emphasise that “the type of scale and data dictate, in part, which statistical techniques are appropriate and which are inappropriate.” In this case, the nature of the data lent itself to being analysed using descriptive analysis as well as one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and a Bonferroni post-hoc test.

5.9.1.1 Descriptive statistics

The first statistics calculated in the quantitative analysis was a set of descriptive statistics that included response frequencies, means (measure of central tendency), and standard deviations (used to measure variability). Each question was analysed separately and the results of each were used to develop frequency graphs.

5.9.1.2 ANOVA

The questions relating to the value of the programme for participating SMMEs (represented by three scales, namely, usefulness, satisfaction, and lasting impact) were evaluated using a one-way ANOVA, as it has the flexibility of being able to accommodate more than two means at once (Kulas, 2009:126), and provides a measure of significance by comparing the means between the groups (Leard Statistics, 2013).

5.9.1.3 Bonferroni post-hoc test

Because the one-way ANOVA is an omnibus test it cannot determine which and how groups differed from one another. For this reason, Leard Statistics (2013) recommends a post-hoc test. Although there are different forms of post-hoc tests, the Bonferroni was chosen to determine the pair-wise comparisons of estimated marginal means. Newsom (2006) notes that the Bonferroni is the most commonly used post-hoc test because of its flexibility, simplicity to compute, and the versatility it provides in being useful with any type of statistical test.

Pair-wise comparisons enabled the researcher to compare one variable with another in order to find the significant differences between them. For example, the difference can be found between smaller variables (like the difference between those businesses for which the students developed a Facebook page and those for whom they did not) within a larger variable (like “tools and resources”) (Hinton *et al*., 2004:156).

5.9.2 Statistical analysis

The one-way ANOVA coupled with the Bonferroni pair-wise comparisons was used to determine any significant differences between the value gained or challenges faced by the businesses through the SL programme. The analysis strategy was to determine the value of each of the five sections of the SL programme individually, as well as the overall value of the SL programme.

5.9.2.1 Value gained based on each programme element

Both the question pertaining to usefulness (verbal frequency scale) and the one pertaining to satisfaction (verbal rating scale) were used within each of the first five categorical sections of the questionnaire. For this reason, each could be separately compared to the other questions within each section, one section at a time. For example: the degree to which businesses were satisfied with the campaign plan was compared to all the other questions within the campaign plan section (like usefulness of campaign plan, perceived impact of campaign plan, etc.). This revealed the significant contributors to the value experienced by the businesses for each aspect of the SL programme.

5.9.2.2 Value gained based on overall programme

In the sixth section of the questionnaire (see Appendix C), two scale questions were asked to garner data relating to the business's overall experience of the programme. These included a verbal frequency scale relating to the lasting impact of the programme as well as a forced ranking scale relating to how beneficial each programme element was in comparison to the rest. Although the intention was to use the forced ranking scale as a dependent variable in relation to the independent variables in each of the first five categorical sections (as mentioned above), the results of the question could not be used due to response error. For this reason, only the verbal frequency scale relating to lasting impact was used as a measure of the value gained from each programme element as compared to the business's overall experience of the programme. For example: the degree of lasting impact experienced by the businesses from the overall programme (dependent variable) was compared to the variables within each categorical section (like usefulness of campaign plan, satisfaction with campaign plan, perceived impact of campaign plan, etc.). This enabled the researcher to determine which variables within each section had a significant influence on the degree to which businesses experienced a positive or negative lasting impact from the SL programme.

For analysis, a significant level of $p < 0.001$, as well as $p < 0.05$ was used.

5.9.2.3 Cross analysis with demographics

The demographic variables were also used as independent variables within the analysis of each of the three scales (dependent variables) for each of the six questionnaire sections (see Appendix C). This enabled the researcher to determine if any demographic variables influenced the degree to which businesses experienced value from each of the programme elements as well as from the programme overall.

5.10 Summary

The research conducted was a quantitative descriptive account of the value of a SL programme for participating client organisations that took part in the BSAC-SL programme between 2010 and 2014. The SL programme falls within the field of marketing communications and was run by CPUT in conjunction with Brand Shepherd Marketing.

In order to improve SL at the university, CPUT encourages departments to engage in processes of programme evaluation. The aim of such evaluation is to provide feedback to a variety of stakeholders including donors, client groups, sponsors, administrators, programme staff, and other beneficiaries, in order to support future decision making. This study sought to provide insights that might contribute to a comprehensive evaluation of the BSAC-SL programme in the Marketing department at CPUT. It did so by seeking to determine which outcomes experienced by the participating SMMEs could be linked to programme efforts, which factors hindered the effectiveness of the outcomes, and which aspects need to be changed in order to improve outcomes.

Although much SL research has been done with students, this research study sought to empower participating community members by collecting data from them and engaging them in the evaluation process. Additionally, it sought to contribute to more informed decision-making and to precipitate whatever changes appeared to be necessary. For this reason, a quantitative-descriptive methodology was used to enable the researcher to gain an accurate understanding of the characteristics of the programme by describing and documenting the perceptions and views of the programmes' primary beneficiaries.

The research methodology consisted of four components. The first and second stages involved a literature survey which covered a range of secondary data, from which relevant standards were extracted for the purposes of comparison. In addition, course coordinators were approached to gain insights into the programme that could be used to inform evaluation criteria and measurement standards. The third step was an empirical survey which followed a descriptive approach. Although the total research population was three hundred and thirty-one (331) organisations, only one hundred and seven (107) participated in the survey. Therefore, 32.3% of the research population participated in the study, and on this basis the researcher could generalise the findings from the target research sample to the total research population. The final step involved synthesising and discussing the findings, drawing conclusions, and presenting recommendations for programme improvement (covered in Chapter 6-8).

The target research sample completed a post-programme questionnaire in June 2015. The data from the questionnaire was coded before undergoing professional statistical analysis in collaboration with a registered statistician. The data was analysed descriptively and frequency tables were compiled for each section of the questionnaire, namely *Customer research, Tools and resources, Campaign plan, Training and education, Client-agency relationship, Overall satisfaction*, and *Demographic variables*. The data also underwent further statistical scrutiny in order to determine the presence of significance. One-way ANOVA tests revealed numerous significant differences and differences in mean and standard deviation for the measurement data. Additional *Bonferroni correction* pairwise comparisons of estimated marginal means further disclosed specific significant differences between the variables in the data.

The researcher aimed to investigate what value the SMMEs received from the SL programme. For this reason, the analysis sought to determine different levels of value experienced by the SMMEs based on various criteria. The findings of the statistical analysis are presented in Chapter 6, which is followed by an interpretation and articulation of the findings.

CHAPTER SIX

RESEARCH FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

The main objective of the research was to determine the value of a marketing communication service learning (SL) programme for participating small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs). The questionnaire consisted of seven main sections. The first five sections covered the key elements that make up the SL programme, namely *customer research*, *tools and resources*, *campaign plan*, *skills training and knowledge transfer*, and *client-agency relationship*. The value of each aspect to the organisation was therefore determined separately. The sixth section of the questionnaire determined the value of the overall programme for participating SMMEs, and the seventh section covered a range of demographic variables.

This chapter begins by describing the size and characteristics of the respondent sample. This is followed by a number of figures highlighting the descriptive findings of the demographic variables. Thereafter, the remaining six main sections of the questionnaire are covered separately. Each section begins by reporting on the questionnaire data descriptively using bar graphs. In each case, this is followed by a detailed report on the significance (using ANOVA) of the relevant questions.

6.2 Year of participation

Of the 107 BSAC-SL programme respondents (as seen in Figure 6.1, below), 13 participated in 2010/2011, 27 participated in 2012, 22 participated in 2013, and 45 participated in 2014.

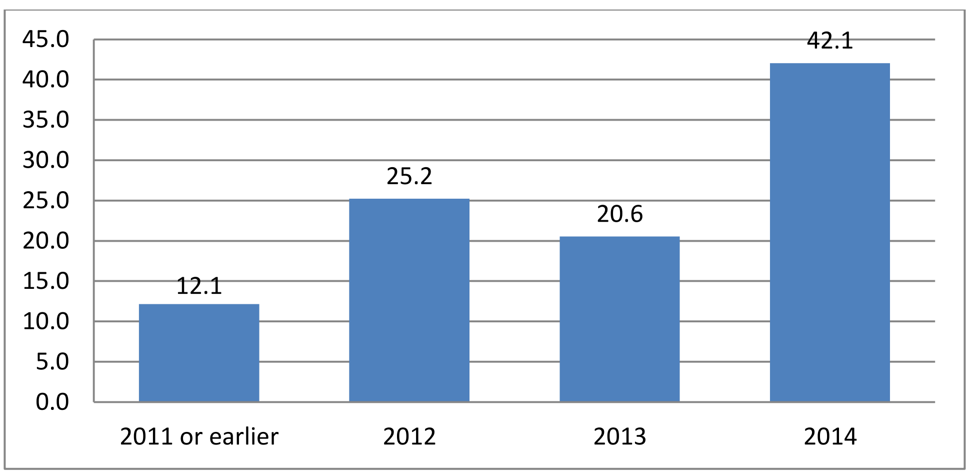

Figure 6.1: Year of participation rate

The most respondents participated in the programme in 2014 (42.1%), with the second and third most participating in 2012 (25.2%) and 2013 (20.6%) respectively. The smallest group of respondents participated in 2010/2011 (12.1%).

6.3 Demographic characteristics

6.3.1 Demographic characteristics of businesses

The findings pertaining to each of the businesses' demographic characteristics follow in this section. A figure highlighting the descriptive aspects of the most prevalent demographic variables is presented and elaborated upon.

6.3.1.1 Business industry (major division)

For the purpose of cross examination with various dependent variables, it was important to determine the industry in which each business operates.

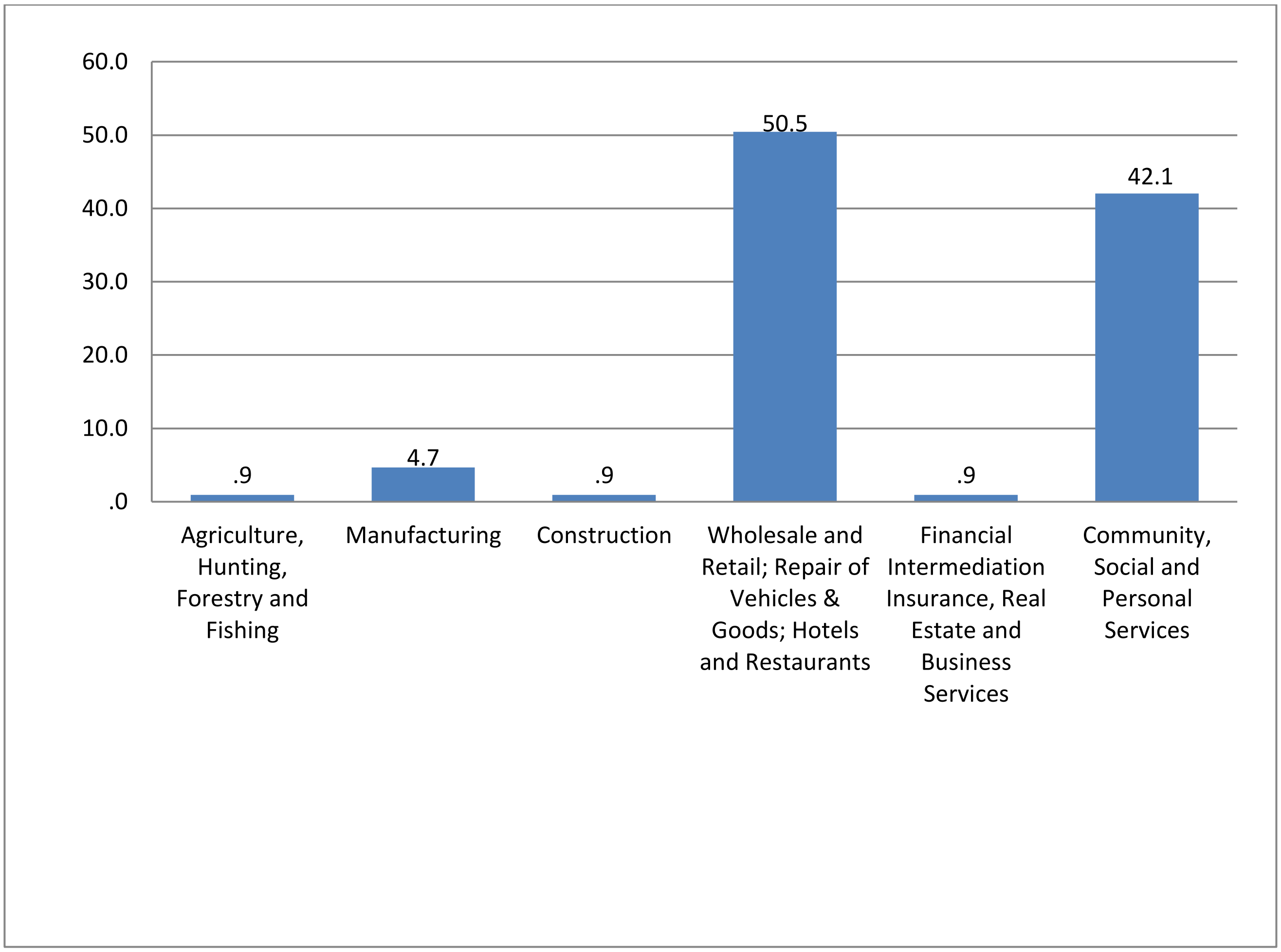

Figure 6.2: Business industry (major division) rate by percentage

The majority of participating businesses operate in the wholesale and retail industry (50.5%) or in the community, social and personal services industry (42.1%).

6.3.1.2 Business industry (minor division)

It was also important to determine the sub industry (minor division) within which each business operated, for cross-analysis purposes.

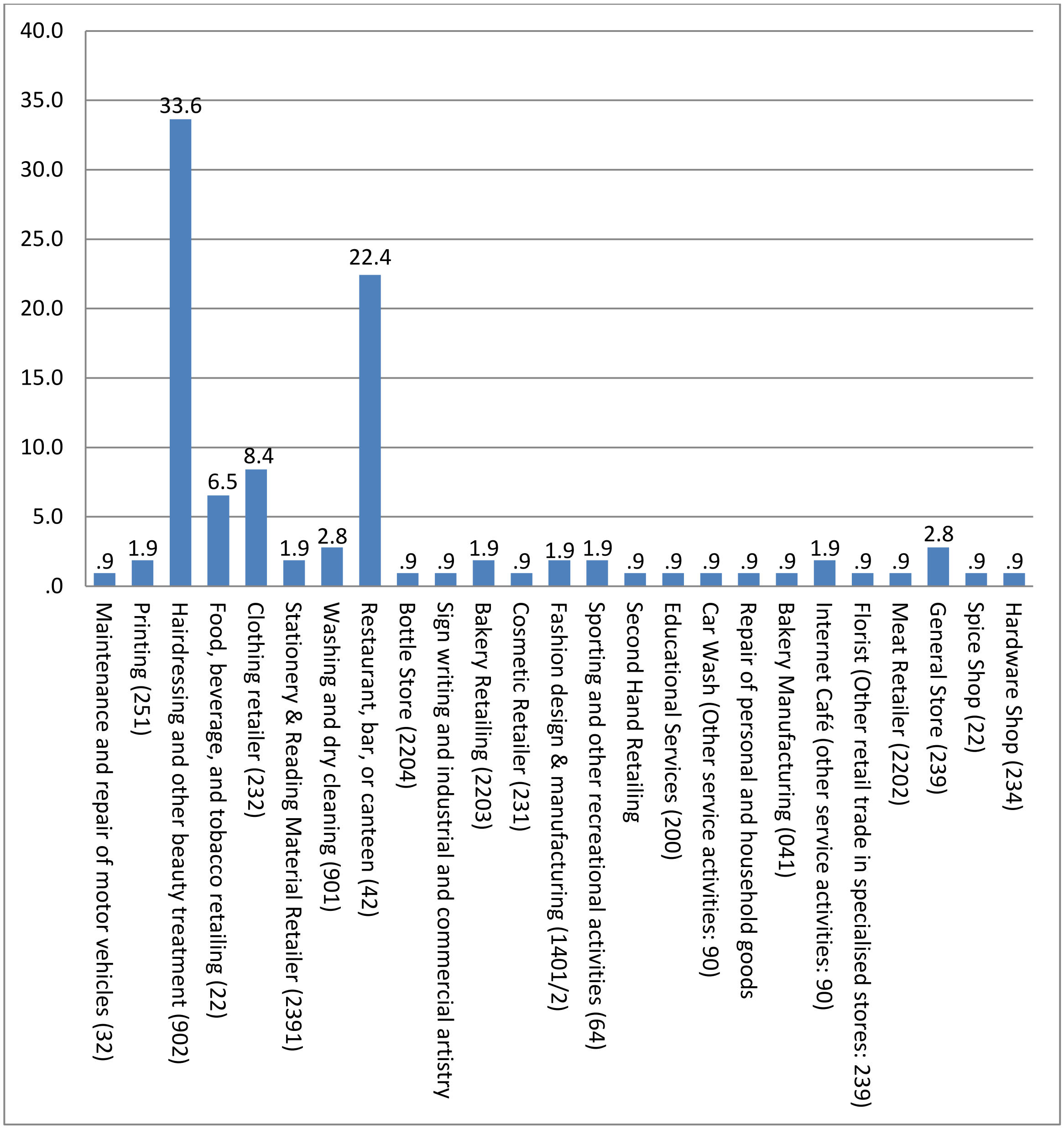

Figure 6.3: Business industry (minor division) by percentage

A large percentage of SMMEs operated in the *hairdressing and other beauty treatment* sub-industry (33.6%), as well as in the *restaurant, bar, or canteen pub* industry (22.4%). Smaller groups of participating organisations operate in the *clothing retailer* sub-industry (8.4%), *food, beverage, and tobacco retailer* sub-industry (6.5%), *washing and dry cleaning* sub-industry (2.8%), and *general store* sub-industry (2.8%).

6.3.1.3 Nature of business

In order to distinguish between businesses based on the types of products they sell and services they render, the nature of each SMME in the service learning programme was determined.

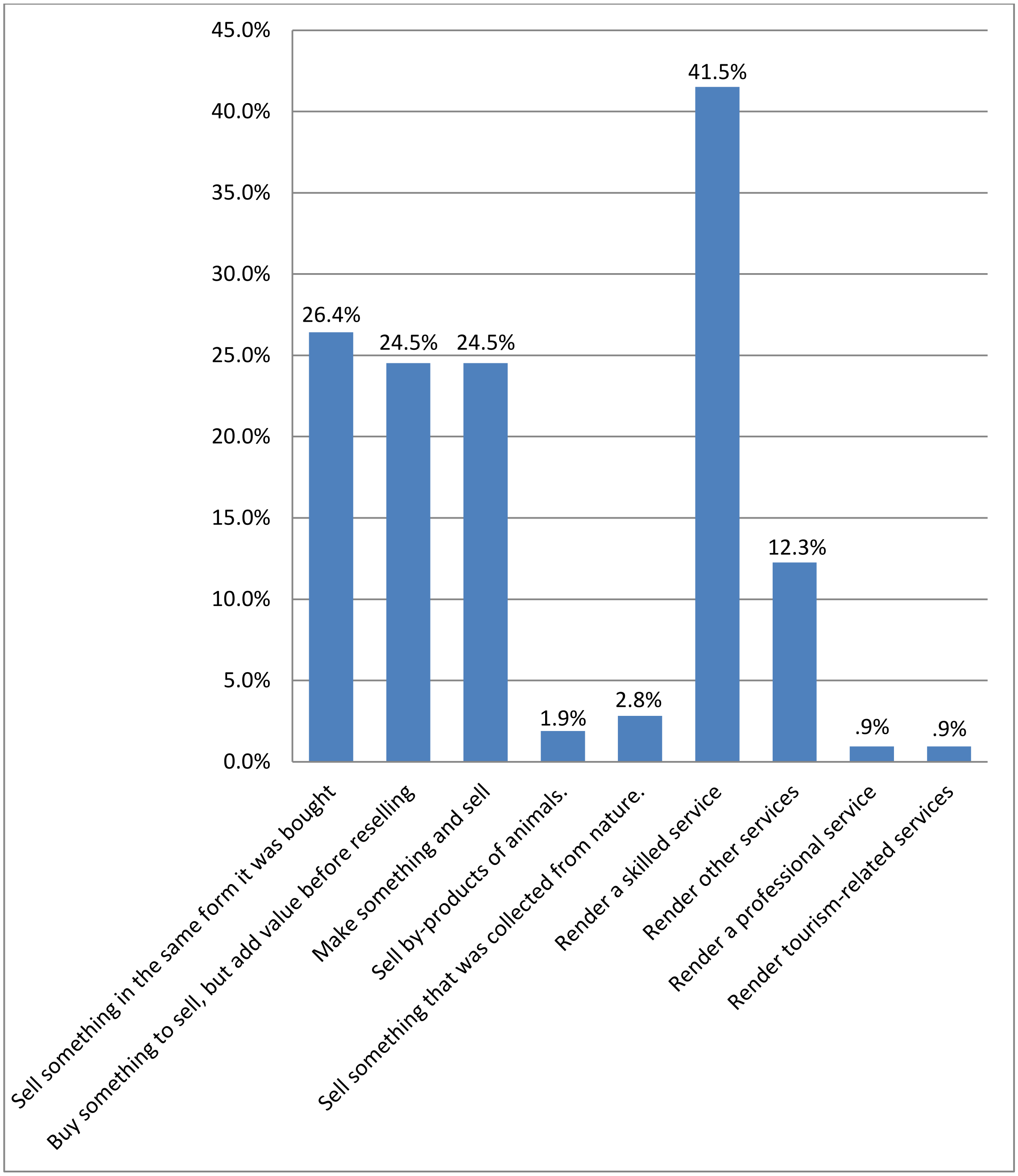

Figure 6.4: Nature of business frequency

A large percentage of the businesses render a skilled service (41.5%). There were smaller groups of firms that sell something in the same form that it was bought (26.4%), buy something and add value to it before selling it (24.5%), and make something to sell (24.5%).

6.3.1.4 Nature of the business customer

Considering that the type of customer served could have an impact on the research results, this was also determined for each business.

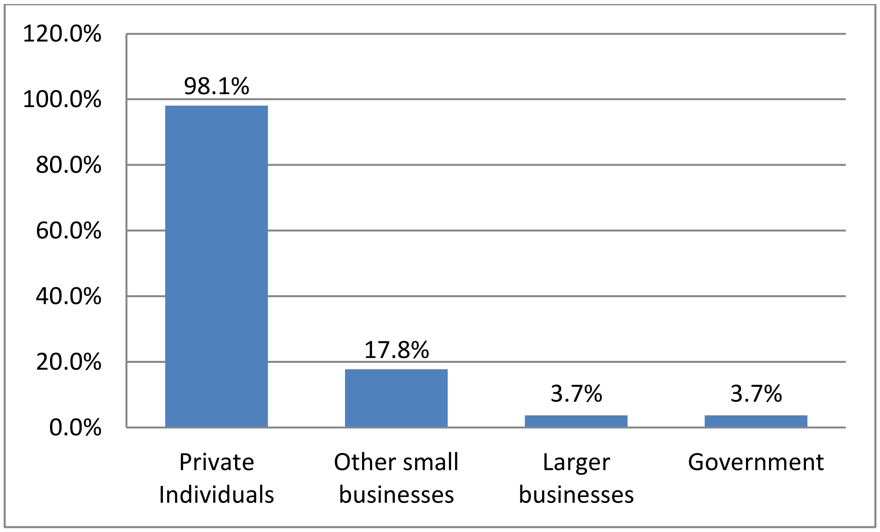

Figure 6.5: Nature of businesses' customers

Almost all of the businesses (98.1%) stated that they served private individuals. A small group also served other small businesses (17.8%), with very few serving larger businesses (3.7%) and the government (3.7%).

6.3.1.5 Business age

The age of a business influences a number of variables including its sales, staff complement, experience levels, and so forth. For this reason, the age of each business was determined.

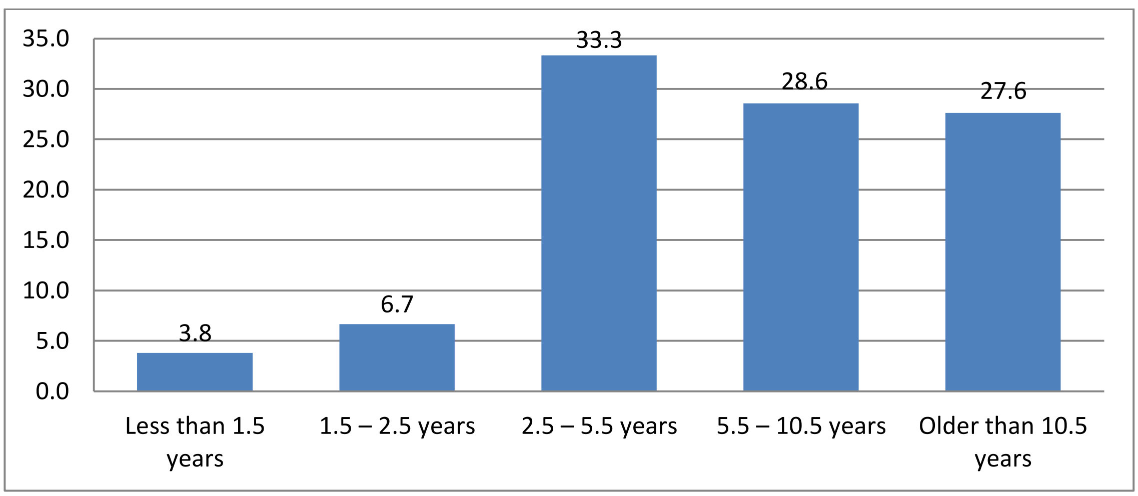

Figure 6.6: Age of business occurrence

The largest group of businesses (33.3%) fell into the 2.5-5.5 years age bracket. Substantial segments fell into the 5.5-10.5 years age bracket (28.6%) and the older than 10.5 years age bracket (27.6%). A small group was to be found in the 1.5-2.5 years age bracket (6.7%) and an even smaller group was fewer than 1.5 years old (3.8%).

6.3.1.6 Number of permanent employees

The number of permanent employees often has a bearing on the capacity of an SMME and this variable was therefore considered for each firm.

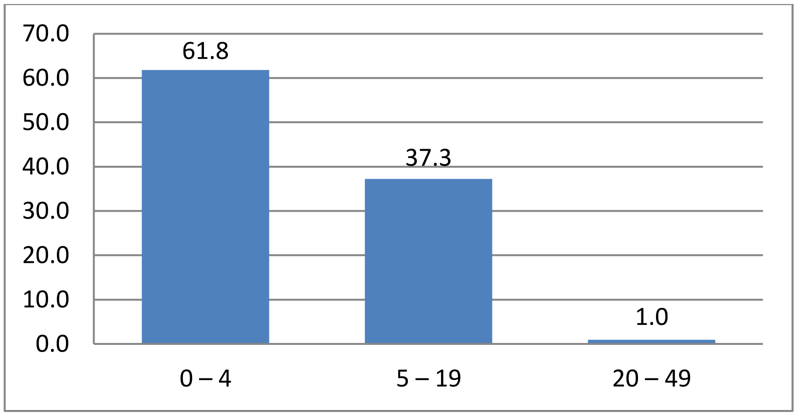

Figure 6.7: Number of permanent employees' frequency

Most of the businesses (61.8%) employed between 0 and 4 people permanently. Some employed between 5 and 19 people permanently (37.3%), and very few employed between 20 and 49 people (1%).

6.3.1.7 Number of permanent employees (20 and less employees)

In order to gain a clearer sense of the employee numbers of small, very small, and micro business (which were by far the majority in the cohort), the number of employees in firms with 20 and fewer employees were analysed.

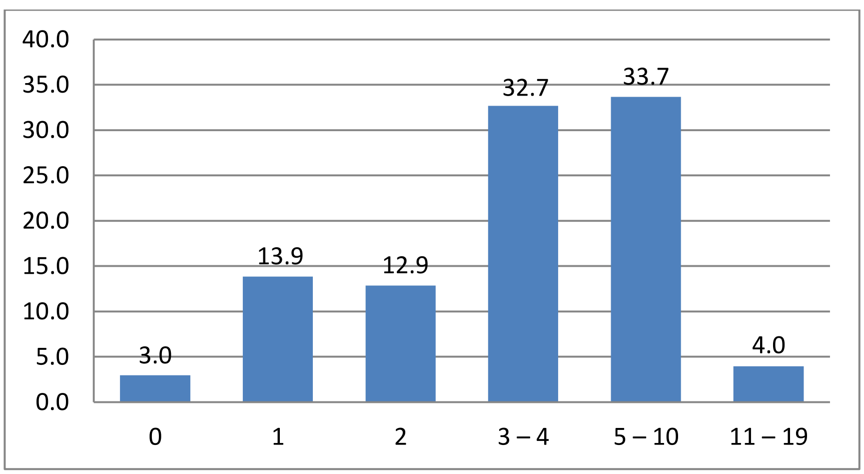

Figure 6.8: Number of permanent employees (20 and less employees) rate

The largest group of businesses employ between 5 and 10 people (33.7%). Others employ 3-4 people (32.7%), one person (13.9%), or two people (12.9%).

6.3.1.8 Business location

Considering that where a business is located can have a significant impact on its access to suppliers and customers, the business location was determined for each business.

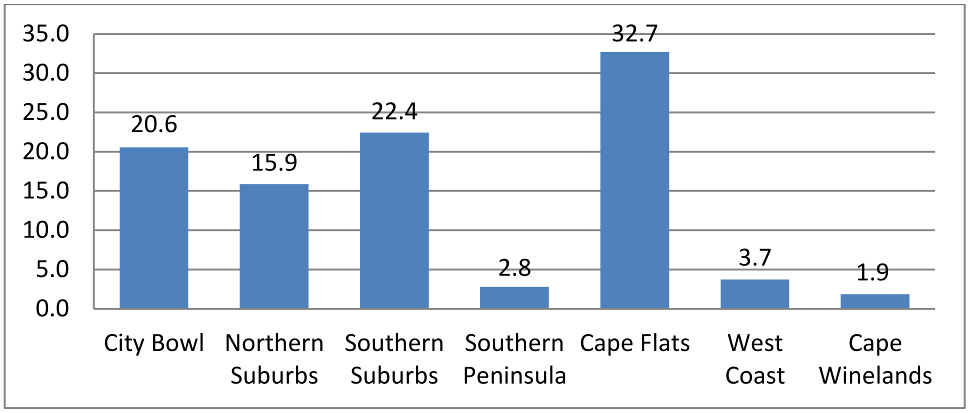

Figure 6.9: Business location rate

A large portion of the businesses were located in an area known as the Cape Flats (32.7%). Other areas in which businesses were located include the Southern Suburbs (22.4%), the City Bowl (20.6%), and the Northern Suburbs (15.9%).

6.3.1.9 Business premises

The business premises that a business functions from can reveal a lot about the nature of the business, its level of sophistication, and access to capital. As such, this variable was assessed.

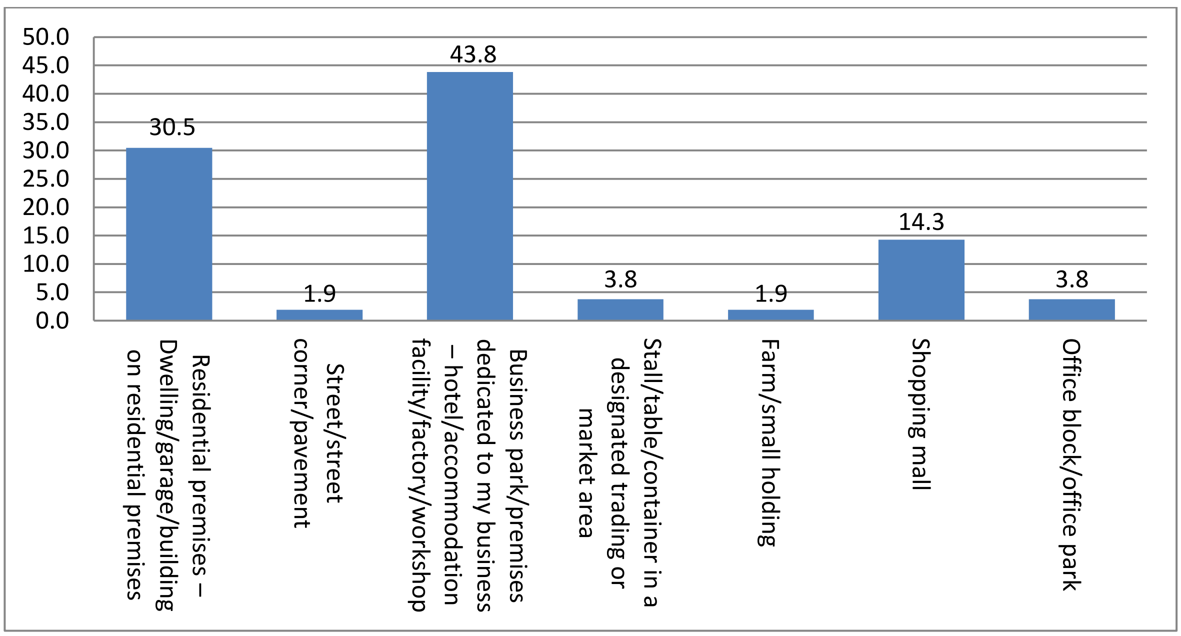

Figure 6.10: Business premises occurrence

The largest percentage of businesses (43.8%) operate out of a space dedicated to their business either within a business park or business district. Others operate out of residential premises (30.5%), a shopping mall (14.3%), office block (3.8%), or out of a container or table stall on the side of the road (3.8%).

6.3.1.10 Electronic facilities of business

It was important to determine the range of electronic facilities that the businesses use to operate in order to determine their level of technological advancement.

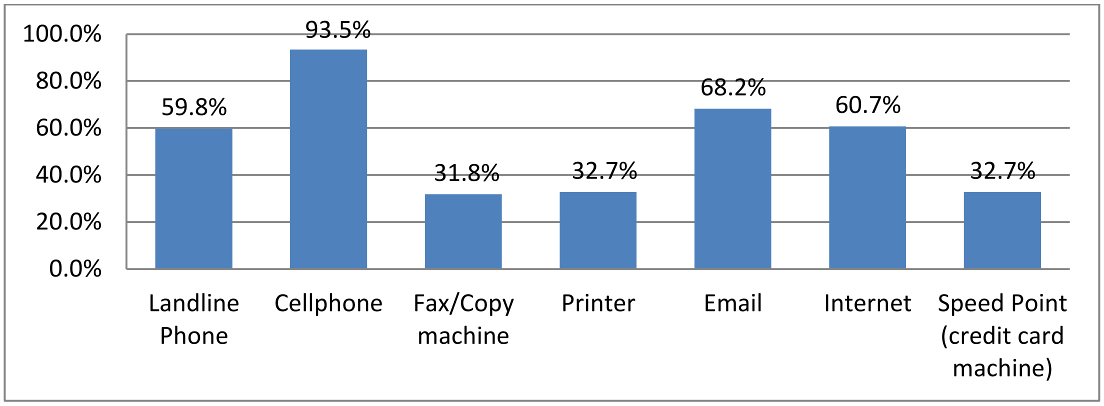

Figure 6.11: Electronic facilities of businesses frequency

Almost all of the businesses make use of a cell phone for business purposes (93.5%). Other electronic facilities that businesses use include email (68.2%), the Internet (60.7%), and a landline telephone (59.8%). Electronic facilities used by fewer businesses include a speed point (32.7%), a printer (32.7%), and a fax/copy machine (31.8%).

6.3.1.11 Physical facilities of business premises

The physical facilities that each business had revealed a lot about their financial position and the resources to which they had access to facilitate SL.

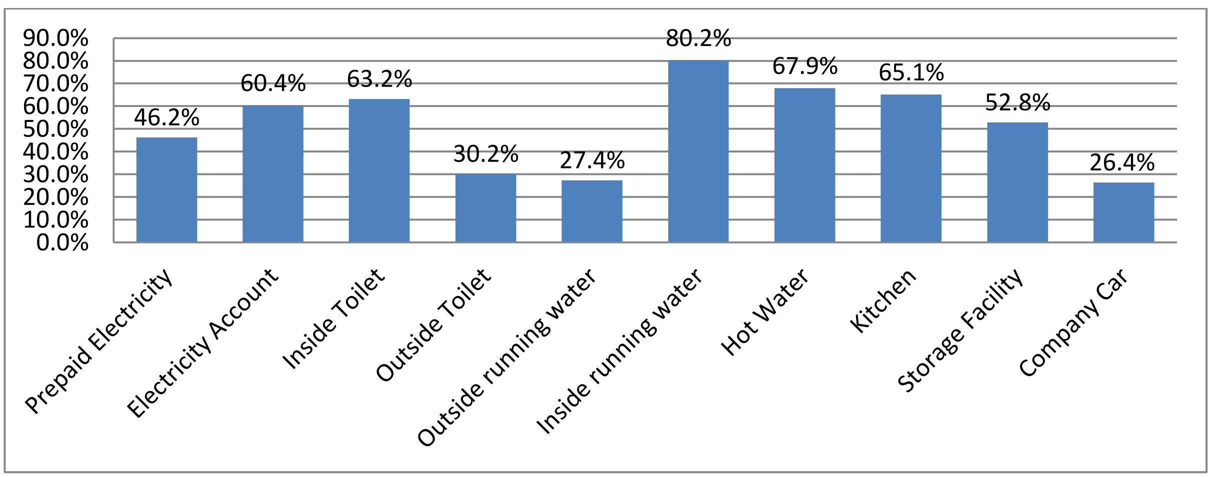

Figure 6.12: Physical facilities of business premises rate

A large portion of respondents reported that the premises in which they operate have inside running water (80.2%). Other physical facilities possessed were hot water (67.9%), a kitchen (65.1%), an inside toilet (63.2%), and an electricity account (60.4%). Physical facilities that were less frequently noted include an outside toilet (30.2%), outside running water (27.4%), and a company car (26.4%).

6.3.1.12 CIPC registration

In order to determine whether firms operated formally or informally, their registration with the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC) was analysed.

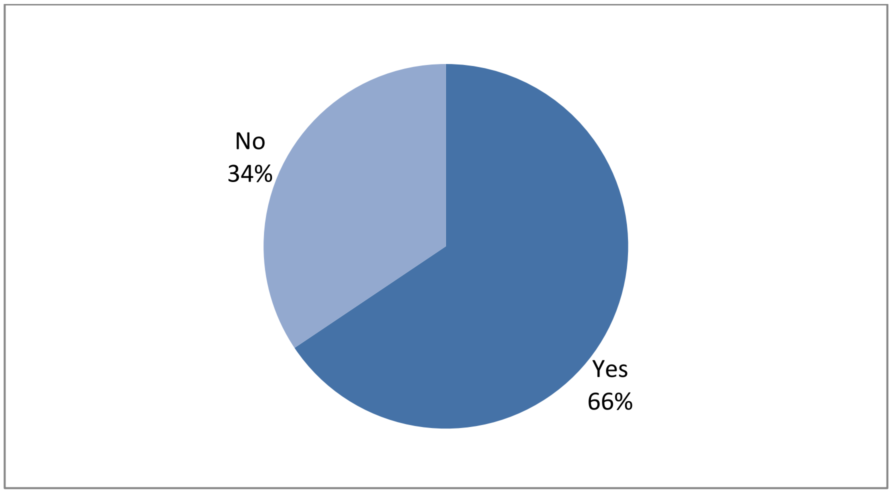

Figure 6.13: CIPC registration rate

It was found that roughly two thirds of the businesses (66%) were registered and the other third (34%) were not.

6.3.1.13 Legal form of ownership of businesses

In order to subject the legal standing of the participating SMMEs to further scrutiny, the form of ownership of each firm was also considered.

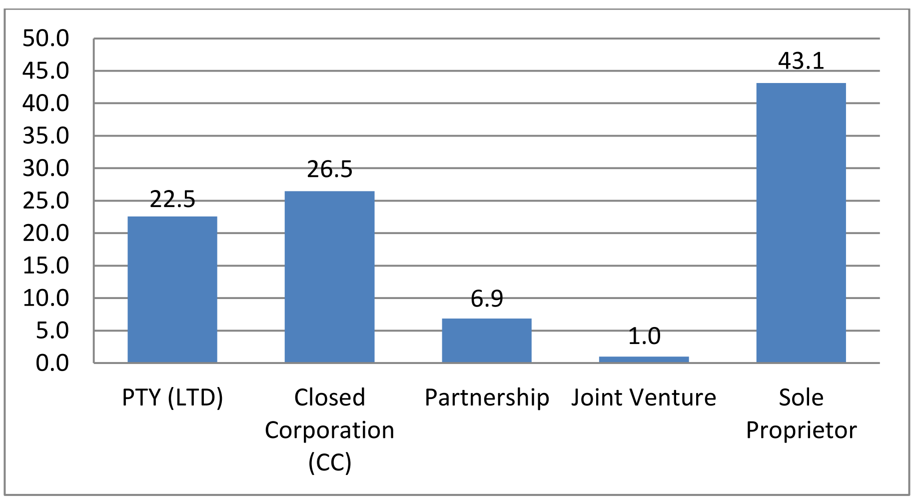

Figure 6.14: Legal form of business ownership rate

A large portion of the businesses were legally constituted as a Sole Proprietor (43.1%). Other less frequent forms of legal ownership include a Closed Corporation (26.5%), a Pty (Ltd) (22.5%), and a Partnership (6.9%). A mere 1% of organisations were established as Joint Ventures.

6.3.1.14 Registrations with commercial bodies

The corporate bodies with which the SMMEs were registered gave a good snapshot of the degree to which they were active in the formal economy rather than functioning informally.

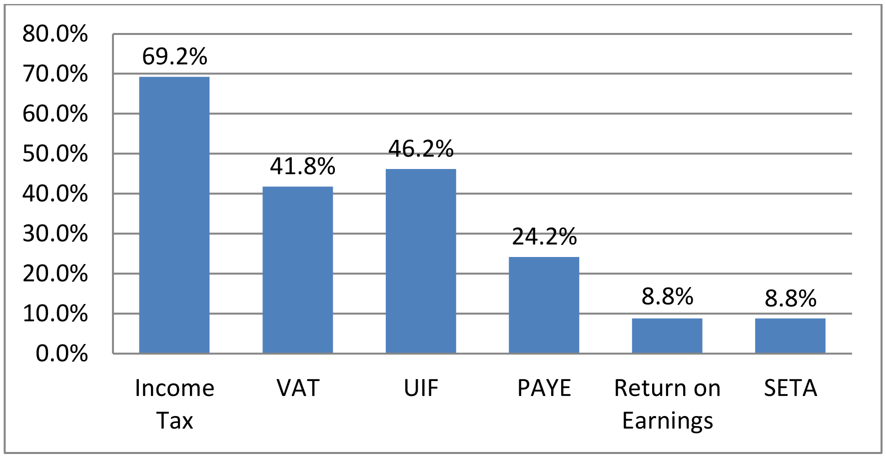

Figure 6.15: Registration with professional bodies' rate

A large portion of the businesses (69.2%) were registered for income tax with the South African Revenue Service (SARS). Other less widespread registrations included UIF (46.2%), Value Added Tax (41.8%), and Pay As You Earn (24.2%). Only a handful of businesses were registered for Return on Earnings (8.8%), or registered with their relevant Skills Education and Training Authority (8.8%).

6.3.1.15 Business turnover

It was important to determine the yearly turnover of each business, as this is a key indicator of the size of the business.

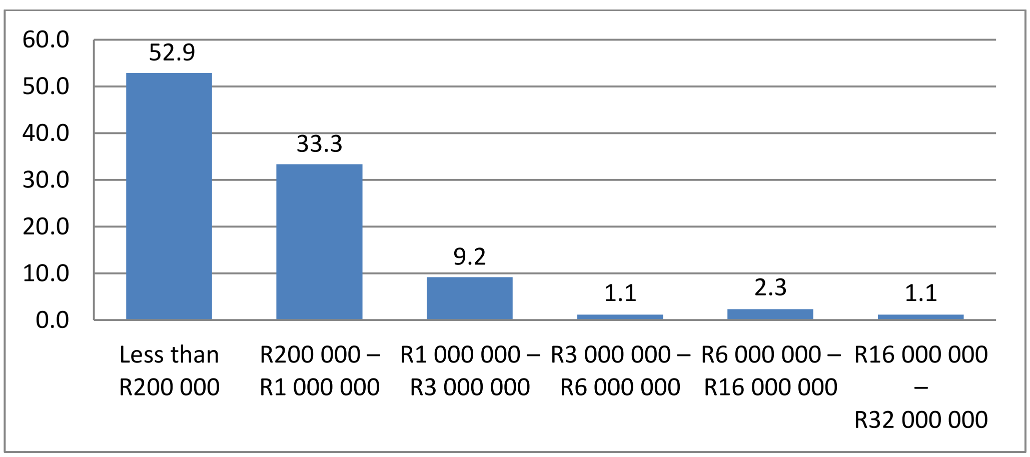

Figure 6.16: Business turnover rate

More than half of the businesses (52.9%) generate less than R200 000 in sales each year. 33.3 per cent earn between R200 000 and R1 000 000, and 9.2 per cent earn between R1 000 000 and R3 000 000. Only a small handful of businesses were found to generate between R3 000 000 and R6 000 000 (1.1%), between R6 000 000 and 16 000 000 (2.3%), and between R16 000 000 and R32 000 000 (1.1%) in sales per year.

6.3.1.16 Age of business owner

The age of business owners provided insight into the level of experience that each had.

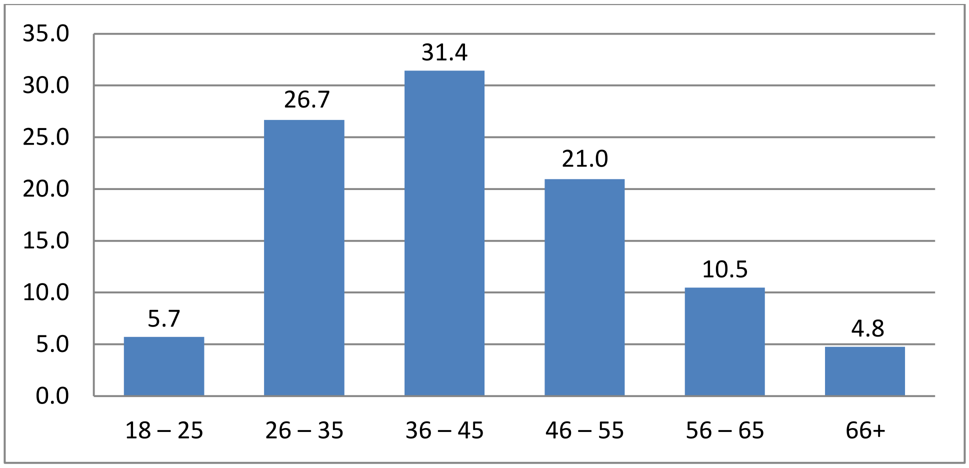

Figure 6.17: Age of business owner rate

The largest portion of businesses owners (31.4%) were aged between 36 and 45 years. Others were aged between 26 and 35 years (26.7%), between 46 and 55 years (21%), and between 56 and 65 years (10.5%). A small portion of business owners were aged between 18 and 25 years (5.7%), and above the age of 66 years (4.8%).

6.3.1.17 Gender of business owner

In order to consider if there were any significant differences between the value and challenges experienced by organisations run by men or women, the gender of the business owner was determined.

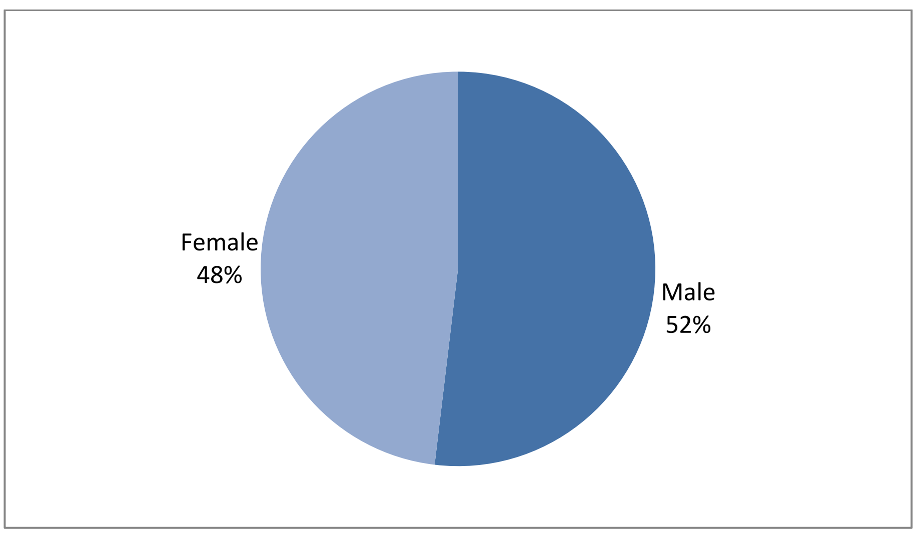

Figure 6.18: Gender of business owner rate

It was found that slightly more businesses were owned by men (52%) than by women (48%).

6.3.1.18 Level of education of business owner

The level of education of business owners can have a large impact on their profitability, long-term success and approach. This variable was therefore analysed for each business.

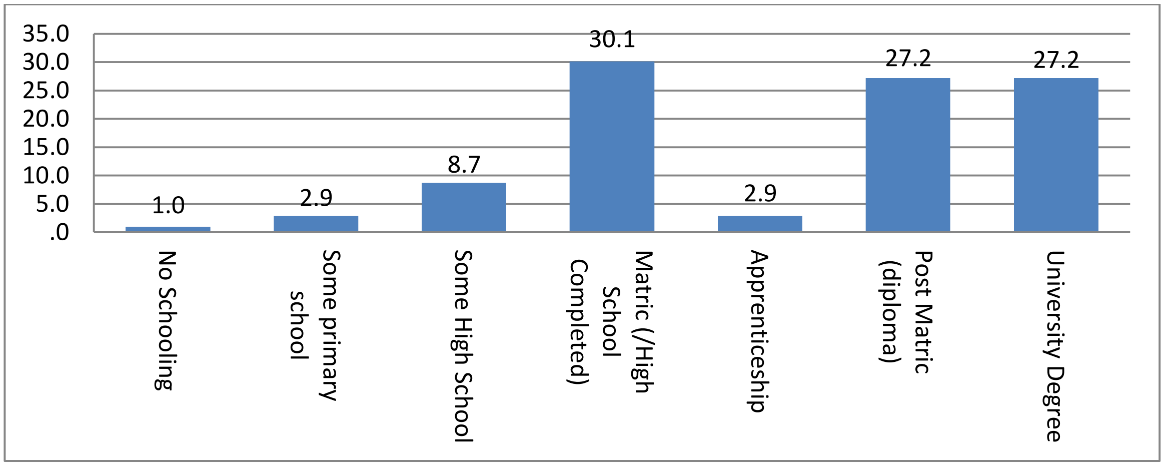

Figure 6.19: Level of education of business owner

The largest portion of respondents reported that the business owner had completed high school (30.1%). A moderate portion of business owners had either a university degree (27.2%) or a diploma (27.2%). Smaller proportions of business owners had completed some high school (8.7%), undergone an apprenticeship (2.9%), or completed some primary school (2.9%).

6.3.1.19 Skills of business owner to run business

It was important to determine how each business owner gained the skills needed to run the business as a necessary reflection of their knowledge and experience.

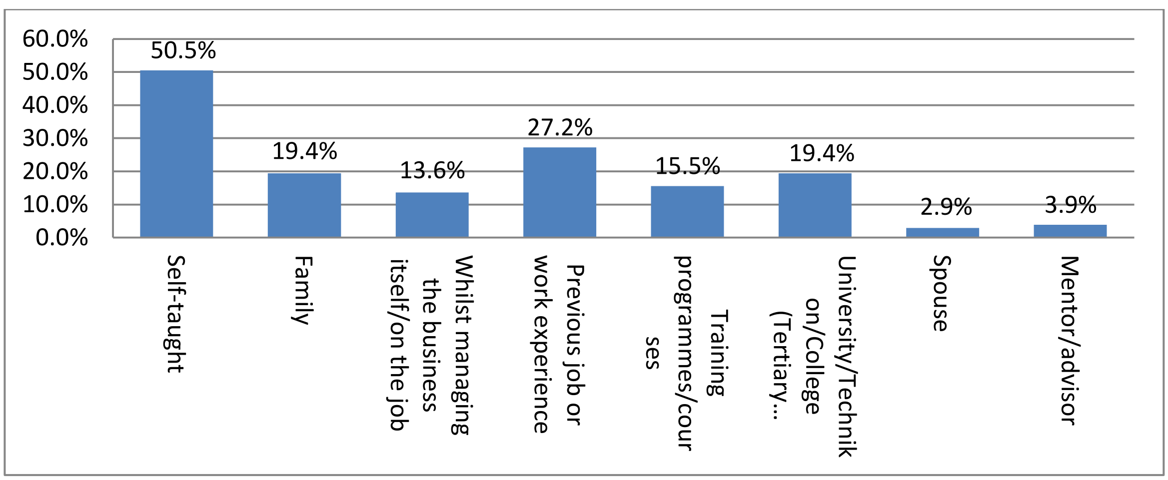

Figure 6.20: Skills of business owner frequency

More than half the respondents documented that the business owners were self-taught (50.5%). Moderate groups of business owners gained their skills through previous work experience (27.2%), through their family (19.4%), or through tertiary education (19.4%). Smaller groups gained their skills through training programmes (15.5%) or whilst managing the business itself (13.6%). Only a handful of business owners gained their skills from a mentor/advisor (3.9%), or from their spouse (2.9%).

6.3.1.20 Ethnic classification of business owner

Considering the advent of Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) in South Africa, it was important to determine the ethnic classification of business owners. In South Africa, ethnicity is closely linked to skin colour and for this reason respondents were asked to identify the race of business owner.

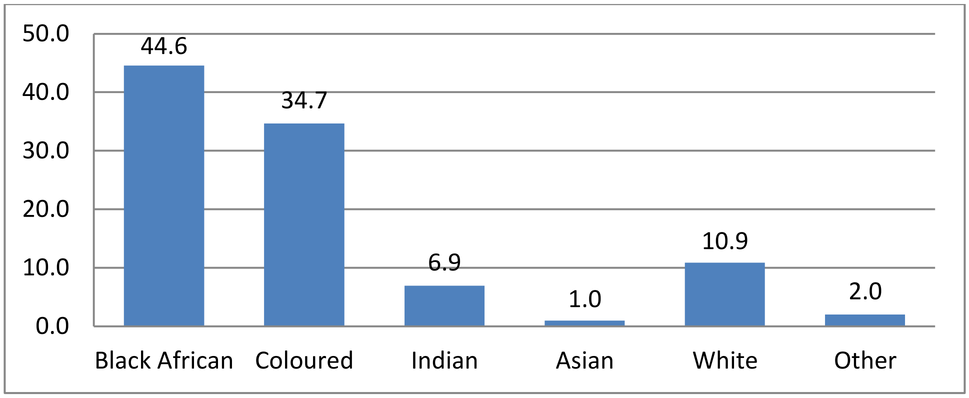

Figure 6.21: Ethnic classification of business owner occurrence

The largest segment of business owners was classified as Black African (44.6%). A moderate percentage was classified as Coloured (34.7%). Only small proportions of owners were classified as White (10.9%), Indian (6.9%), and Asian (1%).

6.3.1.21 Country of origin of business owner

Considering that there are many foreign nationals living in South Africa, it was important to determine the country of origin of each business owner.

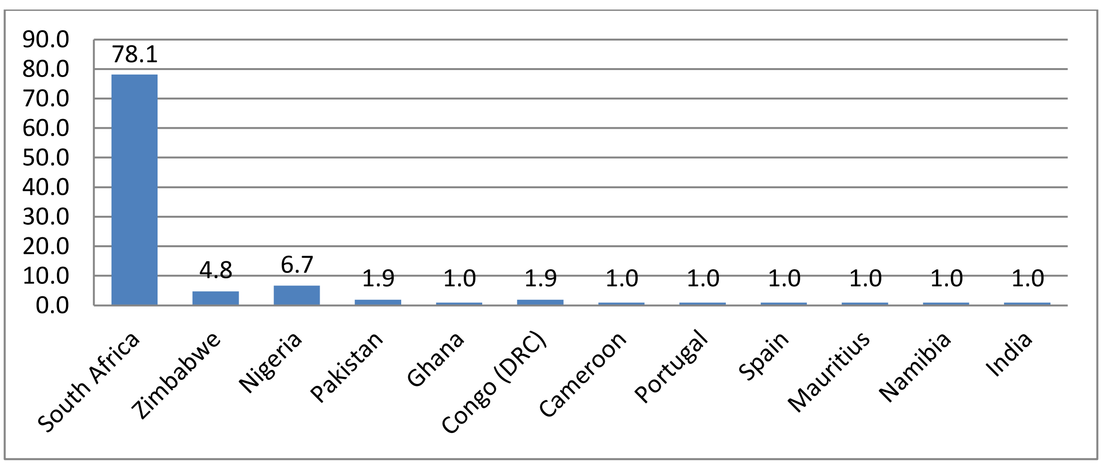

Figure 6.22: Country of origin of business owner rate

The vast majority of respondents indicated that the owner of the business is originally from South Africa (78.1%). Smaller groups of business owners originated from Nigeria (6.7%), Zimbabwe (4.8%), Pakistan (1.9%), and the Congo (1.9%).

6.3.2 Demographic characteristics of student teams

The findings pertaining to each demographic characteristic of the student groups that worked with each business that participated in the study follows in this section. A figure highlighting the descriptive aspects of two demographic variables is presented and elaborated upon.

6.3.2.1 Mark of student project evaluation

Because student grades reveal the quality of the work they produced, it was important to determine the mark given by the lecturer to the final project handed in by each student team. The marks are only representative of those student groups that worked with the businesses that participated in the study.

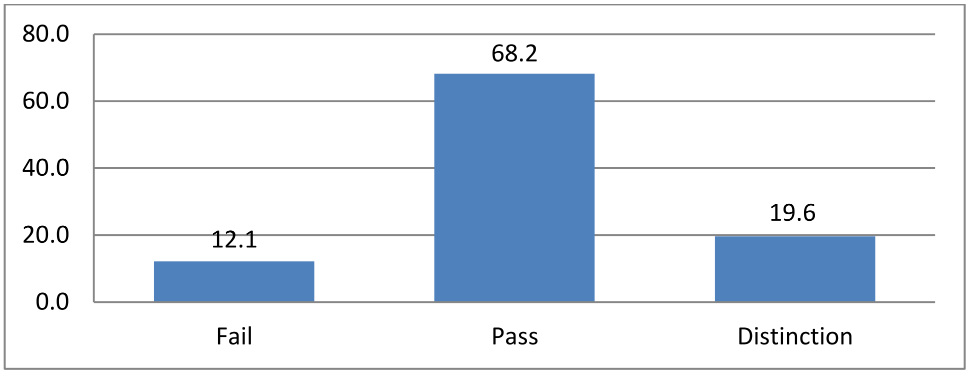

Figure 6.23: Mark of student project evaluation rate

The largest grouping of students achieved a pass mark between 50 and 74 per cent (68.2%). A smaller group achieved a distinction mark of over 75 per cent (19.6%), while 12.1 per cent of students failed (0-49%).

6.3.2.2 Study classification of student group

The nature of students' academic registration (whether part-time or full-time) can provide insight into the amount of time they have and often whether they have work experience or not. For this reason, the registration classification of each student group was assessed. This classification is only of those student groups that worked with businesses that participated in the research study.

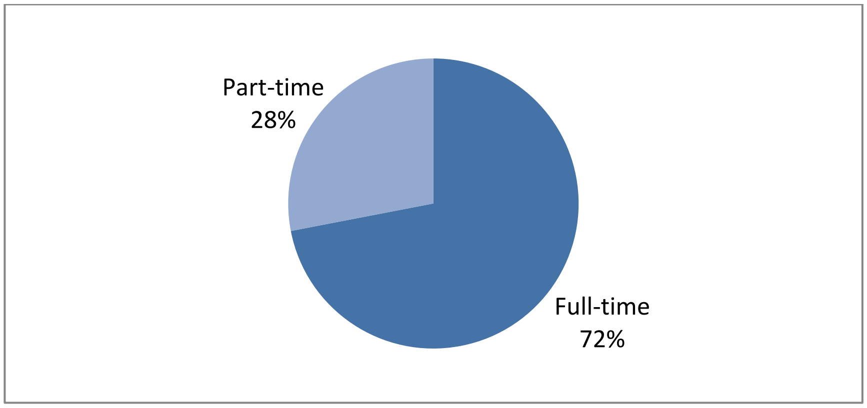

Figure 6.24: Study classification of student team frequency

The majority of students (72%) were studying on a full-time basis while being part of the programme. The rest (28%) were completing the course on a part-time basis.

6.4 Customer research findings

The customer research section was the first section of the questionnaire. This section sought to determine the value added by the research that student teams conducted with the customers of each business. What follows is a report on the descriptive variables of each question as well as a report on the significance data.

6.4.1 Customer research descriptive statistics

6.4.1.1 Means by which customer research was conducted

It was useful to determine how customer research was conducted, considering that in some cases students conducted the research for the businesses, whereas at other times businesses simply conducted it themselves.

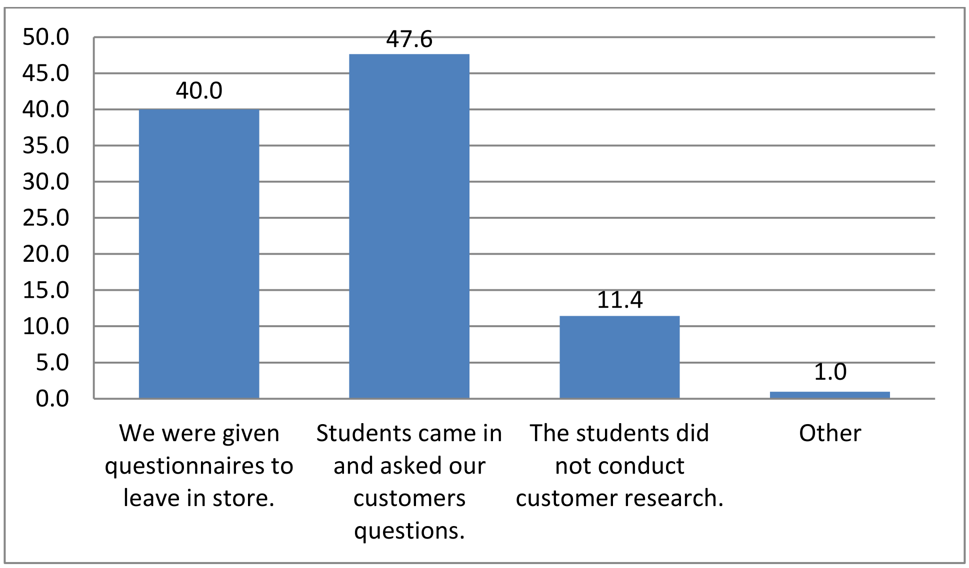

Figure 6.25: Means by which customer research was conducted rate

The figure shows that 40 per cent of the respondents indicated that they were simply given questionnaires to be left in the store, whereas in 47.6 per cent of cases students used questionnaires to conduct research with the customers. In 11.4 per cent of cases students did no customer research.

6.4.1.2 Usefulness of customer research

The reported usefulness to participating organisations of the customer research conducted should help to identify the degree to which the findings were actually used by the organisations.

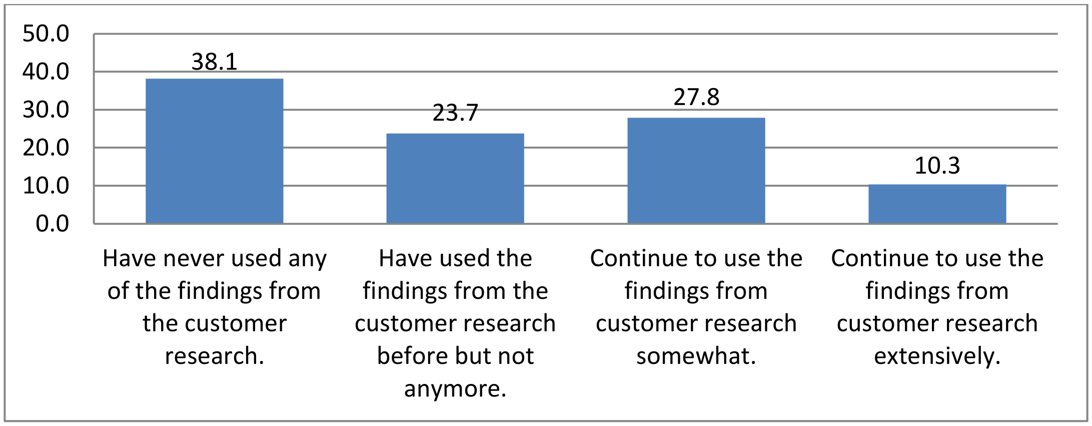

Figure 6.26: Usefulness of customer research findings rate

The graph above clearly shows that the majority of respondents thought that the findings from customer research were useful (62.9%). This percentage is divided into those who found the information useful in the past (23.7%), those who continue to find the findings somewhat useful (27.8%), and those who still make extensive use of the findings (10.3%). The rest of the respondents (38.1%) have never used the findings from customer research.

6.4.1.3 Reason for not making use of the findings from customer research

In order to determine why organisations struggled to make effective use of the findings from customer research, they were given a range of options to choose from. It was hoped that this would help pinpoint what the major reasons were for organisations not making full use of the customer research.

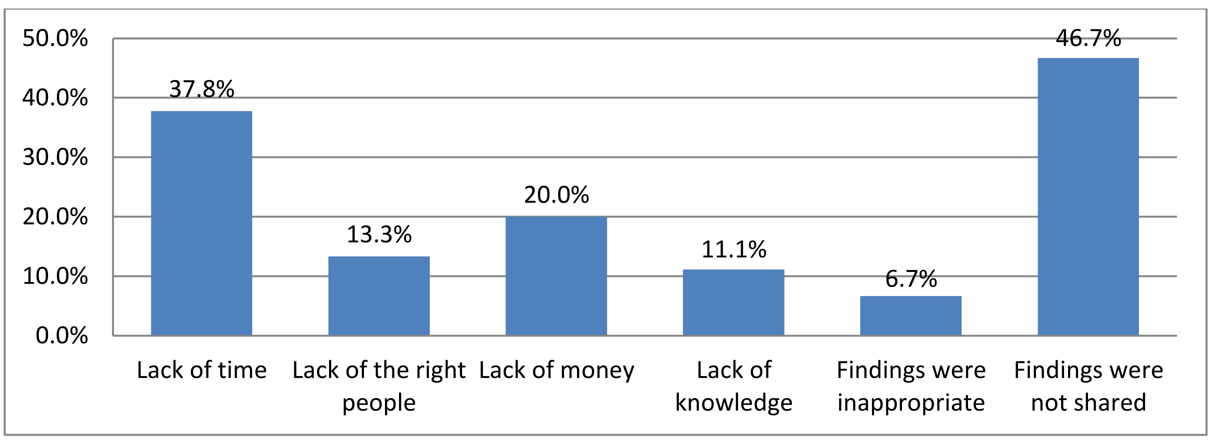

Figure 6.27: Reasons for not making use of customer research findings rate

A large percentage of organisations (46.7%) admitted that the reason they did not make use of the findings is because the students did not share the results after the research was conducted. Other elements cited as stumbling blocks to more effective use were a lack of time (37.8%), a lack of money (20%), and a lack of the right employees in the organisation to implement strategies based on what the findings reveal (13.3%). A small percentage (6.7%) revealed that the findings made were not appropriate to their business.

6.4.1.4 Perception of the impact of the findings from customer research

It was important to determine the participants' perceptions of the impact on their organisation of the findings from customer research, in order to understand how such insights potentially influence business performance.

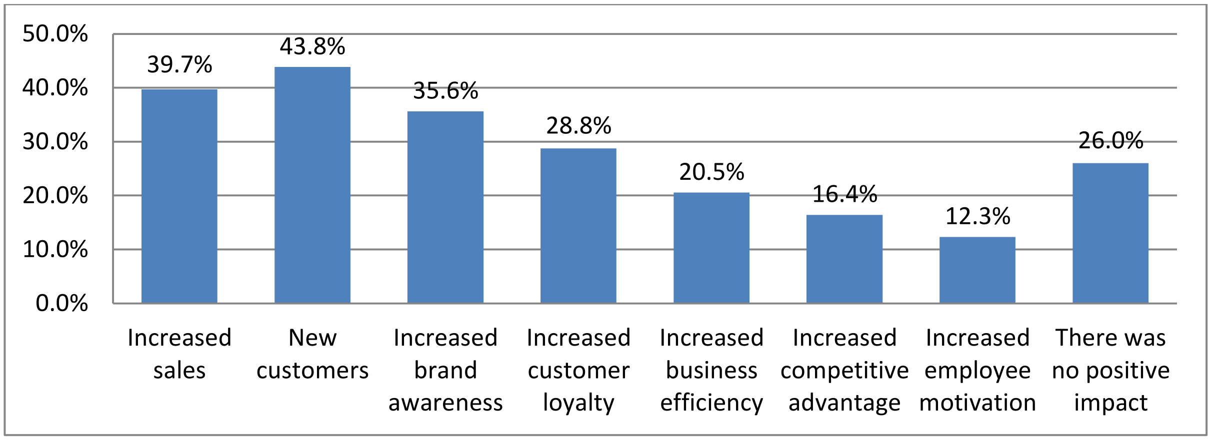

Figure 6.28: Perception of impact of customer research findings rate

The majority of respondents (74%) confirmed that the insights gained from customer research had a positive impact on their business. Those elements of the business on which participants perceived the findings to have had the greatest impact included an increase in new customers (43.8%), an increase in sales (39.7%), and an increase in brand awareness (35.6%). Just more than a quarter (26%) of respondents said that the findings had had no positive impact on their business.

6.4.1.5 Satisfaction with customer research conducted

The overall satisfaction experienced by the organisations with the customer research was determined. This measure included all the aspects that made up the customer research phase of the programme, including the way the research was conducted, the findings, and the usefulness of the insights gained.

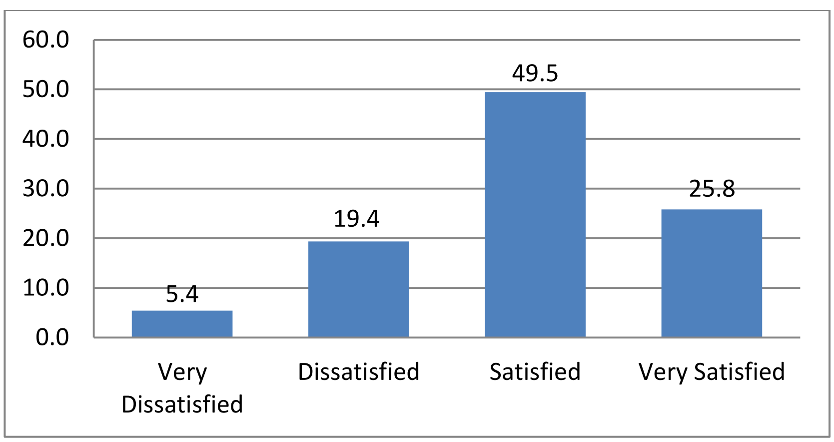

Figure 6.29: Overall satisfaction of customer research rate

The majority of respondents declared themselves satisfied (75.3%), with 49.5 per cent being satisfied and 25.8 per cent being very satisfied. About a quarter (24.7%) of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction, with 19.4 per cent being dissatisfied and 5.4 per cent being very dissatisfied.

6.4.2 Customer research significance statistics

In the following section three sets of significance statistics will be discussed: the satisfaction that businesses experienced as a result of the customer research, the use that SMMEs gained from the customer research, and the lasting impact that the customer research had on the firms.

6.4.2.1 Satisfaction of businesses resulting from customer research

At the end of the customer research section in the questionnaire, the satisfaction level of each business was determined. This variable has been compared to all the other independent variables considered in the customer research section in order to reveal significant relationships.

Table 6.1: Effect of customer research variables and demographics on satisfaction

Independent variables	***P***
General	
Year	0.389
Research method	0.000*
Usefulness	0.000*
Overall satisfaction	0.000*
Future participation	0.006**
Challenges	
Lack of time	0.135
Lack of people	0.373
Lack of money	0.536
Lack of knowledge	0.257
Inappropriate	0.927
Not shared	0.000*
Perceived impact	
Increased sales	0.000*
New customers	0.000*
Increased brand awareness	0.000*
Increased customer loyalty	0.006**
Increased business efficiency	0.006*
Increased competitive advantage	0.004**
Increased employee motivation	0.060
No positive impact	0.000*
Demographics	
Major industry	0.066
Minor industry	0.019**
Business age	0.984
Amount of employees	0.904

CIPC registration	0.989
Legal form of ownership	0.682
Business turnover	0.183
Age of owner	0.899
Gender of owner	0.219
Education of owner	0.176
Ethnicity of owner	0.443
Country of origin of owner	0.529
Student team	
Project mark	0.159
Study programme	0.149

*Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.001$
**Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.050$

In terms of customer research satisfaction, Anova revealed that there was a significant difference at $p < 0.001$ for satisfaction (M = 2.96, SD = 0.820) because of customer research conducted. No significant differences were found for year, lack of time, lack of people, lack of money, lack of knowledge, inappropriateness, increased employee motivation, major industry, business age, number of employees, CPIC registration, legal form of ownership, business turnover, age of owner, gender of owner, education of owner, ethnicity of owner, country of origin of owner, project mark, or study programme.

Bonferroni correction pairwise comparisons of estimated marginal means disclosed significant difference between the following variables:

a. General

Research method (p < 0.001): Organisations that were given questionnaires to leave in the store (M = 3.05, SD = 0.695), as well as those for which students conducted the research in person (M = 3.10, SD = 0.722), experienced a higher level of satisfaction than those organisations for which no research was conducted (M = 1.43, SD = 0.535).

Usefulness (p < 0.001): Organisations that have never used the findings from the research conducted (M = 2.41, SD = 0.665) experienced lower satisfaction than those that have used the findings before (M = 3.22, SD = 0.518), continue to use the findings somewhat (M = 3.48, SD = 0.510), and continue to use the findings extensively (M = 3.56, SD = 0.527).

Overall satisfaction (p < 0.001): Organisations that were dissatisfied with the overall programme (M = 2.17, SD = 0.778) experienced a lower degree of satisfaction with the customer research than those that were satisfied (M = 3.05, SD = 0.429) and very satisfied (M = 3.85, SD = 0.366) with the overall programme. Organisations that were very dissatisfied with the overall programme (M = 0.240, SD = 1.140) experienced a lower level of satisfaction with the customer research than those which were very satisfied with the overall programme (M = 3.85, SD = 0.366).

Lasting impact ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that found that the overall programme had a significant lasting impact on their organisation (M = 3.67, SD = 0.488) experienced a higher level of satisfaction with the customer research than those organisations that found that the overall programme had minimal lasting impact (M = 2.88, SD = 0.653), no lasting impact (M = 2.22, SD = 0.878), and a negative lasting impact (M = 2.25, SD = 0.500). Additionally, organisations that found that the overall programme had some lasting impact on their organisation (M = 3.19, SD = 0.622), as well as minimal lasting impact (M = 2.88, SD = 0.653), experienced a higher level of satisfaction with the customer research than those organisations that found that the overall programme had no lasting impact (M = 2.22, SD = 0.878).

b. Challenges

Not shared ($p < 0.001$): Organisations with which the students did not share the findings from the customer research (M = 2.20, SD = 0.616) experienced a lower level of satisfaction than those with which the findings were shared (M = 3.16, SD = 0.746 x).

c. Perceived Impact

Increased sales ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in sales resulting from customer research (M = 3.54, SD = 0.576) experienced a higher level of satisfaction than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.71, SD = 0.785).

New customers ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in new customers resulting from customer research (M = 3.55, SD = 0.568) experienced a higher level of satisfaction than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.66, SD = 0.767).

Increased brand awareness ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in brand awareness resulting from customer research (M = 3.44, SD = 0.583) experienced a higher level of satisfaction than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.78, SD = 0.826).

Increased customer loyalty ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in customer loyalty resulting from customer research (M = 3.40, SD = 0.598) experienced a higher level of satisfaction than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.84, SD = 0.834).

Increased business efficiency ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in business efficiency resulting from customer research (M = 3.50, SD = 0.650) experienced greater satisfaction than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.86, SD = 0.812).

Increased competitive advantage ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in competitive advantage resulting from customer research (M = 3.58, SD = 0.515) experienced a higher level of satisfaction than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.86, SD = 0.818).

No positive impact ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived no positive impact resulting from customer research (M = 2.33, SD = 0.594) experienced lower levels of satisfaction than those that did perceive a positive impact (M = 3.11, SD = 0.798).

d. Demographics

Minor industry ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that operate in the hairdressing and other beauty treatment industry (M = 3.21, SD = 0.729) experienced a higher level of satisfaction with the customer research than those that operate in the restaurant, bar, or canteen industry (M = 2.57, SD = 0.746).

6.4.2.2 Usefulness of customer research to businesses

The degree of usefulness that SMMEs attributed to the customer research was also determined. In order to establish what bearing this variable had on the rest, significant relationships were investigated.

Table 6.2: Effect of customer research variables and demographics on usefulness

Independent variables	***P***
General	
Year	0.095
Research method	0.045**
Satisfaction	0.000*
Overall satisfaction	0.000*
Lasting impact	0.000*
Future participation	0.004**
Challenges	
Lack of time	0.000*
Lack of people	0.142
Lack of money	0.096
Lack of knowledge	0.045**
Inappropriate	0.461
Not shared	0.000*
Perceived impact	
Increased sales	0.000*
New customers	0.000*
Increased brand awareness	0.000*
Increased customer loyalty	0.000*
Increased business efficiency	0.080
Increased competitive advantage	0.000*
Increased employee motivation	0.087
No positive impact	0.000*
Demographics	
Major industry	0.521
Minor industry	0.252
Business age	0.327

Amount of employees	0.193
CIPC registration	0.863
Legal form of ownership	0.516
Business turnover	0.173
Age of owner	0.584
Gender of owner	0.400
Education of owner	0.144
Ethnicity of owner	0.067
Country of origin of owner	0.198
Student team	
Project mark	0.602
Study programme	0.006**

*Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.001$
**Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.050$

In terms of customer research usefulness, Anova revealed that there was a significant difference at $p < 0.001$ for usefulness (M = 2.10, SD = 1.036) as a result of customer research conducted. No significant differences were found for year, lack of people, lack of money, inappropriateness, increased business efficiency, increased employee motivation, major industry, minor industry, business age, number of employees, CPIC registration, legal form of ownership, business turnover, age of owner, gender of owner, education of owner, ethnicity of owner, country of origin of owner, or project mark.

Bonferroni correction pairwise comparisons of estimated marginal means disclosed significant difference between the following variables:

a. General

Research method ($p < 0.050$): Organisations for which no research was conducted (M = 1.00, SD = 0.000) found the (findings from) customer research less useful than those which were given questionnaires to leave in the store (M = 2.12, SD = 0.993), and those for which the students conducted the research in person (M = 2.20, SD = 1.069).

Satisfaction ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that were very dissatisfied with the customer research (M = 1.00, SD = 0.000) found it less useful than those that were very satisfied (M = 2.88, SD = 0.797). Organisations that were dissatisfied with the customer research (M = 1.06, SD = 0.243) found it less useful than organisations that were satisfied (M = 2.17, SD = 0.950) and very satisfied (M = 2.88, SD = 0.797). Organisations that were very satisfied (M = 2.88, SD = 0.797) found the customer research more useful than those that were satisfied (M = 2.17, SD = 0.950).

Overall satisfaction ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that were dissatisfied with the overall programme (M = 1.37, SD = 0.684) found the customer research less useful than those that were satisfied (M = 2.17, SD = 0.975) and very satisfied (M = 2.74, SD = 0.946) with the overall programme.

Lasting impact ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that found the overall programme had a significant lasting impact on their organisation (M = 2.85, SD = 1.040) found the customer research more useful than those organisations that found that the overall programme had minimal lasting impact (M = 1.84, SD = 0.746), no lasting impact (M = 1.38, SD = 0.885), and a negative lasting impact (M = 1.25, SD = 0.500). Additionally, organisations that found that the overall programme had some lasting impact on their organisation (M = 2.31, SD = 1.004) found the customer research more useful than those organisations that found that the overall programme had no lasting impact (M = 1.38, SD = 0.885).

Future participation ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that stated that they would participate in the programme again in the future (M = 2.28, SD = 1.066) found the customer research more useful than those that did not (M = 1.50, SD = 0.618).

b. Challenges

Lack of time ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that stated that they lacked the time to make use of the findings from the customer research (M = 1.29, SD = 0.686) found the customer research less useful than those that did not note this lack (M = 2.28, SD = 1.018).

Lack of knowledge ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that posited a lack of knowledge with regard to how to make use of the findings from customer research (M = 1.20, SD = 0.447) found the customer research less useful than those that did not note this lack (M = 2.15, SD = 1.037).

Not shared ($p < 0.001$): Organisations with which the students did not share the findings from the customer research (M = 1.14, SD = 0.478) found the customer research less useful than those with whom the students did share the findings (M = 2.37, SD = 0.991).

c. Perceived Impact

Increased sales ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in sales resulting from customer research (M = 2.97, SD = 0.906) found the customer research more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 1.74, SD = 0.857).

New customers ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in new customers resulting from customer research (M = 2.91, SD = 0.818) found the customer research more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 1.71, SD = 0.897).

Increased brand awareness ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in brand awareness resulting from customer research (M = 2.85, SD = 0.834) found the customer research more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 1.83, SD = 0.971).

Increased customer loyalty ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in customer loyalty resulting from customer research (M = 2.86, SD = 0.910) found the customer research more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 1.89, SD = 0.974).

Increased competitive advantage ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in competitive advantage resulting from customer research (M = 3.08, SD = 0.793) found the customer research more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 1.96, SD = 0.993).

No positive impact ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived no positive impact resulting from customer research (M = 1.11, SD = 0.315) found the customer research less useful than those that reported some positive impact (M = 2.35, SD = 1.004).

d. Student Team

Study programme ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that worked with part-time students (M = 2.58, 0.987) found the customer research more useful than those that worked with full-time students (M = 1.93, SD = 1.005).

6.4.2.3 Lasting impact of customer research on businesses

At the end of the overall programme section of the survey the SMMEs were asked to what degree the programme had a lasting impact had on their organisations. These variables were compared to the usefulness and satisfaction statistics in the customer research section to determine significant relationships.

Table 6.3: Effect of customer research usefulness and satisfaction on lasting impact

Independent variables	***P***
Usefulness	0.000*
Satisfaction	0.000*

*Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.001$
**Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.050$

In terms of the customer research in relation to lasting impact, Anova revealed that there was a significant difference at $p < 0.001$ for lasting impact (M = 3.48, SD = 1.133) because of customer research conducted.

Bonferroni correction pairwise comparisons of estimated marginal means disclosed significant difference between the following variables:

Usefulness ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that had never used the findings from the customer research (M = 2.86, SD = 1.125) found the overall programme to have had a smaller lasting impact than those organisations that continued to use the findings from the customer research somewhat (M = 4.04, SD = 0.841), and those that continued to use the findings extensively (M = 4.40, SD = 0.966).

Satisfaction ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that were very satisfied with the customer research (M = 4.23, SD = 0.869) found the overall programme had a greater lasting impact on their organisation than those organisations that were very dissatisfied (M = 2.20, SD = 0.447), dissatisfied (M = 2.41, SD = 1.004), and satisfied (M = 3.39, SD = 0.930) with the customer research. Additionally, those organisations that were satisfied with the customer research (M = 3.39, SD = 0.930) found the overall programme had a greater lasting impact on their organisation than those organisations that were very dissatisfied (M = 2.20, SD = 0.447) or dissatisfied (M = 2.41, SD = 1.004) with the customer research.

6.5 Tools and resources findings

The tools and resources section was the second section of the questionnaire. This section sought to determine the value added by the tools and resources developed or acquired by the student teams for each business. What follows is a report on the descriptive variables of each question in the section as well as a report on the significance data.

6.5.1 Tools and resources descriptive statistics

6.5.1.1 Tools and resources developed or acquired by students

The various tools and resources developed or acquired by students for the businesses were identified by each participating organisation. This would serve to indicate which tools or resources were most prevalent.

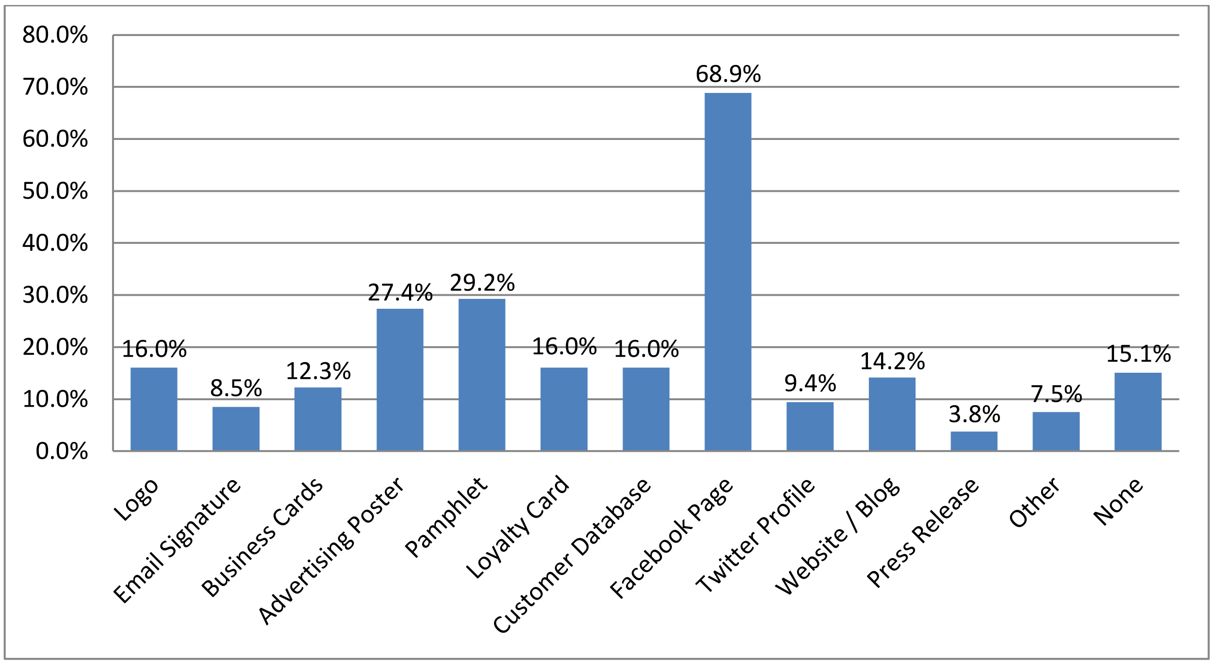

Figure 6.30 Tools and resources developed or acquired occurrence

A large majority of businesses (84.9%) had one or more tools or resources developed or acquired for them. The tools or resources that featured most prominently was the development of a business Facebook page (68.9%), the design and/or printing of a pamphlet (29.2%) and poster (27.4%), as well as the design of a logo (16%), and the development of a loyalty card (16%) and customer database (16%). A small percentage of businesses (15.1%) claimed that no tool or resource was developed or acquired for them.

6.5.1.2 Usefulness of tools and resources

The degree of usefulness of the tools and resources to participating businesses was determined. This is particularly important considering that tools and resources are intended to be used over the long term.

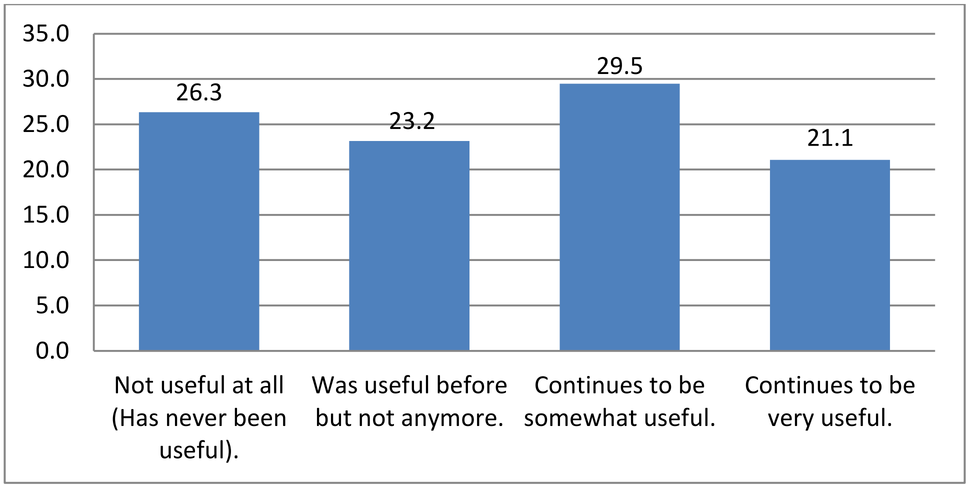

Figure 6.31: Usefulness of tools and resources rating

Just more than half of the businesses (50.6%) still used the tools and resources developed or acquired by students, with 29.5 per cent of respondents noting that the tools and resources continued to be somewhat useful and 21.1 per cent noting that they were still very useful. A proportion of 23.2 per cent of respondents claimed that the tools were useful before but were not anymore, while 26.3 per cent stated that the tools and resources were not useful at all and had never been used.

6.5.1.3 Reason for not making use of tools and resources

In order to determine why some organisations were not able to make effective use of the tools and resources developed or acquired by students, they were asked to identify the things that kept them from doing so.

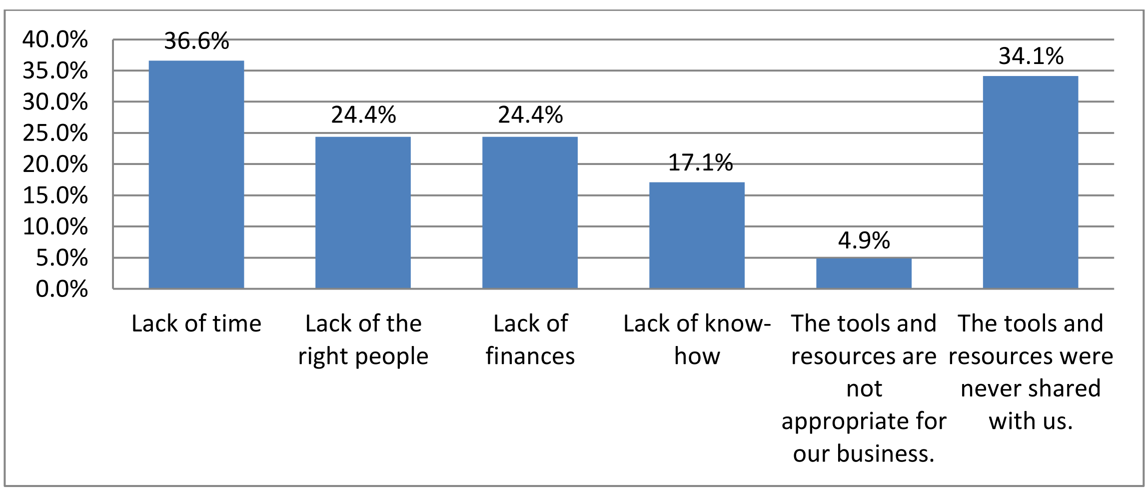

Figure 6.32: Reasons for not making use of tools and resources rate

More than a third of participants (34.1%) stated that the reason they were not able to make use of the tools and resources developed or acquired by students was because such tools and resources were not shared with them. Other reasons identified for not being able to use the tools and resources effectively were a lack of time (36.6%), a lack of the right staff (24.4%), a lack of the knowledge needed (24.4%), and a lack of the finances needed (24.4%).

6.5.1.4 Perceived impact of tools and resources

The participants' perceptions of the degree to which the tools and resources developed or acquired by students affected the performance of their organisation were determined.

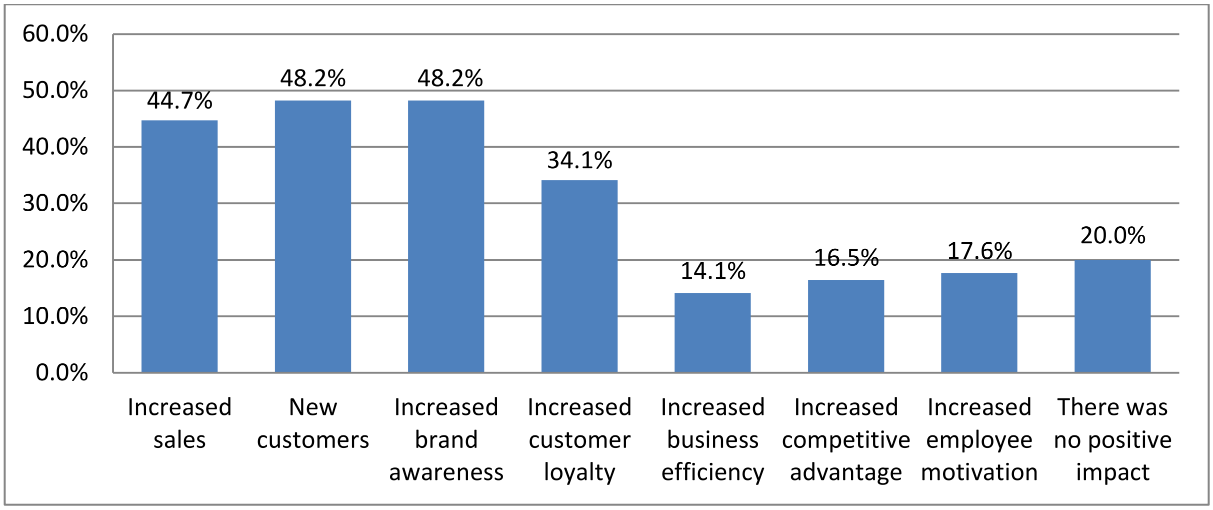

Figure 6.33: Perceived impact of tools and resources incidence

The majority of respondents (80%) felt that the tools and resources developed or acquired by students had some form of positive impact on their organisation. Almost half the respondents (48.2%) believed that the tools and resources helped to add new customers and increase brand awareness. Another 44.7 per cent believed that the tools and resources helped increase sales, while 34.1 per cent felt that they also helped to raise customer loyalty. A fifth of respondents (20%) felt that the tools and resources developed had no positive impact on their organisation.

6.5.1.5 Satisfaction of tools and resources

The overall satisfaction of participants with the tools and resources developed or acquired by students was determined.

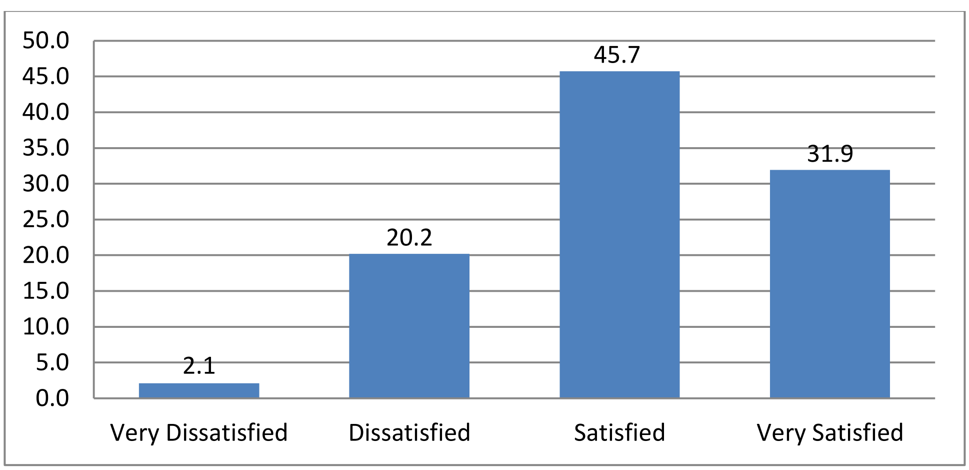

Figure 6.34: Satisfaction of tools and resources rating

More than two-thirds of respondents (77.6%) indicated a positive overall level of satisfaction with the tools and resources developed or acquired by students, with 45.7 per cent stating that they were satisfied and 31.9 per cent stating that they were very satisfied. The remaining 22.3 per cent of respondents reported negative satisfaction overall with the tools and resources aspect of the programme: 20.2 per cent of respondents stated that overall they were dissatisfied with the tools and resources and 2.1 per cent stated that they were very dissatisfied.

6.5.2 Tools and resources significance statistics

In order to investigate significant relationships between variables, three scales were compared with all the other variables in the tools and resources section: the satisfaction that businesses experienced from the tools and resources, the usefulness that they attributed to the tools and resources, and the degree to which they perceived that the tools and resources had had a lasting impact.

6.5.2.1 Satisfaction of businesses resulting from tools and resources

The level of satisfaction that organisations experienced from the tools and resources was compared with the other variables in the section in order to determine significant relationships. These are discussed below in detail.

Table 6.4: Effect of tools and resources variables and demographics satisfaction

Independent variables	***P***
General	
Year	0.437
Usefulness	0.000*
Overall satisfaction	0.000*
Lasting impact	0.000*
Future participation	0.025**
Tools and resources	
Logo	0.048**
Email	0.016**
Business card	0.123
Poster	0.156
Pamphlet	0.109
Loyalty Card	0.201
Customer database	0.104
Facebook page	0.037**
Twitter page	0.593
Website	0.077
Press release	0.846
Other	0.036**
None	0.000*

Challenges	
Lack of time	0.752
Lack of people	0.913
Lack of money	0.336
Lack of knowledge	0.022**
Inappropriate	0.294
Not shared	0.000*
Perceived impact	
Increased sales	0.000*
New customers	0.000*
Increased brand awareness	0.001**
Increased customer loyalty	0.000*
Increased business efficiency	0.015**
Increased competitive advantage	0.006**
Increased employee motivation	0.077
No positive impact	0.000*
Demographics	
Major industry	0.095
Minor industry	0.135
Business age	0.636
Amount of employees	0.871
CIPC registration	0.538
Legal form of ownership	0.300
Business turnover	0.517
Age of owner	0.758
Gender of owner	0.686
Education of owner	0.458
Ethnicity of owner	0.474
Country of origin of owner	0.898
Student team	
Project mark	0.050**
Study programme	0.145

*Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.001$
**Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.050$

In terms of tools and resources satisfaction, Anova revealed that there was a significant difference at $p < 0.001$ for satisfaction (M = 3.07, SD = 0.779) because of tools and resources developed or acquired. No significant differences were found for year, business card, poster, pamphlet, loyalty card, customer database, twitter page, website, press release, lack of time, lack of people, lack of money, inappropriateness, increased employee motivation, all demographic variables, or study programme.

Bonferroni correction pairwise comparisons of estimated marginal means disclosed significant difference between the following variables:

a. General

Usefulness ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that did not find the tools and resources useful (M = 2.17, SD = 0.491) experienced less satisfaction than those that had found them useful before but not anymore (M = 3.23, SD = 0.528), those that continued to find them somewhat useful (M = 3.36, SD = 0.488), and those that continued to find them very useful (M = 3.74, SD = 0.452). Additionally, those organisations that continued to find the tools and resources very useful (M = 3.74, SD = 0.452) experienced a greater degree of satisfaction than those that had found the tools useful before but did not find them useful anymore (M = 3.23, SD = 0.528).

Lasting impact ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that claimed that the overall programme had had a significant lasting impact on their organisation (M = 3.67, SD = 0.483) experienced a higher level of satisfaction with the tools and resources than those organisations that found that the overall programme had had minimal lasting impact (M = 2.96, SD = 0.611), no lasting impact (M = 2.25, SD = 0.754), and a negative lasting impact (M = 1.67, SD = 0.577). Additionally, organisations that found that the overall programme had some lasting impact on their organisation (M = 3.20, SD = 0.610), as well as minimal lasting impact (M = 2.96, SD = 0.611), experienced a higher level of satisfaction with the tools and resources than those organisations that found that the overall programme had no lasting impact (M = 2.25, SD = 0.754), or a negative impact (M = 1.67, SD = 0.577).

b. Tools and resources

Logo ($p < 0.050$): Organisations for which students developed a logo (M = 3.41, SD = 0.618) experienced a higher level of satisfaction with the tools and resources than those for which a logo was not developed (M = 3.00, SD = 0.795).

Email ($p < 0.050$): Organisations for which students set up a business email address (M = 3.67, SD = 0.500) experienced more satisfaction from the tools and resources than those for which an email address was not set up (M = 3.01, SD = 0.779).

Facebook page ($p < 0.050$): Organisations for which the students created a Facebook page (M = 3.17, SD = 0.732) experienced a greater level of satisfaction from the tools and resources than those for which a Facebook page was not created (M = 2.77, SD = 0.869).

Other ($p < 0.050$): Organisations for which students developed or designed other tools and resources (banner, t-shirt design, Gumtree advert, suggestion box, newspaper advert, LinkedIn profile, branded items, Whatsapp group, etc.) (M = 3.63, SD = 0.518) experienced higher levels of satisfaction than those which did not receive such tools and resources (M = 3.02, SD = 0.782).

None ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that did not receive any tools or resources from students (M = 1.50, SD = 0.577) experienced less satisfaction from the tools and resources than those that did receive tools or resources (M = 3.14, SD = 0.712).

c. Challenges

Lack of knowledge ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that lacked knowledge regarding the operation and management of tools and resources (M = 2.43, SD = 0.535) experienced lower levels of satisfaction than those that did not lack this knowledge (M = 3.13, SD = 0.775).

Not shared ($p < 0.001$): Organisations with which the developed tools and resources were not shared (M = 2.17, SD =3.21) experienced lower levels of satisfaction that those with which they were shared (M = 3.21, SD = 0.698).

d. Perceived impact

Increased sales ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in sales resulting from the tools and resources (M = 3.54, SD = 0.505) experienced greater satisfaction with the tools and resources than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.77, SD = 0.780).

New customers ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in new customers resulting from the tools and resources (M = 3.49, SD = 0.506) experienced a higher level of satisfaction than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.75, SD = 0.806).

Increased brand awareness ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in brand awareness resulting from the tools and resources (M = 3.37, SD = 0.488) experienced a higher level of satisfaction than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.85, SD = 0.886).

Increased customer loyalty ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in customer loyalty resulting from the tools and resources (M = 3.61, SD = 0.497) experienced greater satisfaction than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.85, SD = 0.769).

Increased business efficiency ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in business efficiency resulting from tools and resources (M = 3.58, SD = 0.515) experienced a higher level of satisfaction than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 3.00, SD = 0.786).

Increased competitive advantage ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in competitive advantage resulting from tools and resources (M = 3.62, SD = 0.506) experienced greater satisfaction than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.99, SD = 0.783).

No positive impact ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived no positive impact resulting from tools and resources (M = 2.19, SD = 0.655) experienced a lower level of satisfaction than those that did perceive a positive impact (M = 3.26, SD = 0.673).

e. Student team

Project mark (*p* = 0.050): Organisations that worked with student groups that achieved a distinction (75%-100%) for their project (M = 3.40, SD = 0.821) experienced higher levels of satisfaction than those that worked with student groups that failed (0%-49%) their project (M = 2.73, SD = 1.009).

6.5.2.2 Usefulness of tools and resources to businesses

The results pertaining to the usefulness of the tools and resources for participating SMMEs were compared with the other variables in the section in order to determine significant relationships. These are discussed at length below.

Table 6.5: Effect of tools and resources variables and demographics on usefulness

Independent variables	***P***
General	
Year	0.200
Satisfaction	0.000*
Overall Satisfaction	0.000*
Lasting impact	0.000*
Future participation	0.013**
Tools and resources	
Logo	0.125
Email	0.117
Business card	0.400
Poster	0.821
Pamphlet	0.432
Loyalty Card	0.682
Customer database	0.042**
Facebook page	0.007**
Twitter page	0.175
Website	0.112
Press release	0.930
Other	0.142
None	0.006**
Challenges	
Lack of time	0.046**
Lack of people	0.093
Lack of money	0.286
Lack of knowledge	0.010**
Inappropriate	0.479
Not shared	0.000*
Perceived impact	
Increased sales	0.000*
New customers	0.000*
Increased brand awareness	0.000*
Increased customer loyalty	0.001**

Increased business efficiency	0.118
Increased competitive advantage	0.002**
Increased employee motivation	0.018**
No positive impact	0.000*
Demographics	
Major industry	0.098
Minor industry	0.180
Business age	0.707
Amount of employees	0.282
CIPC registration	0.382
Legal form of ownership	0.058
Business turnover	0.147
Age of owner	0.593
Gender of owner	0.232
Education of owner	0.488
Ethnicity of owner	0.071
Country of origin of owner	0.410
Student team	
Project mark	0.396
Study programme	0.011**

*Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.001$
**Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.050$

In terms of the usefulness of the tools and resources, Anova revealed that there was a significant difference at $p < 0.001$ for usefulness (M = 2.45, SD = 1.099) because of tools and resources developed or acquired by students. No significant differences were found for year, logo, email, business card, poster, pamphlet, loyalty card, twitter page, website, press release, other, lack of people, lack of money, inappropriateness, increased business efficiency, all demographic variables, or project mark.

Bonferroni correction pairwise comparisons of estimated marginal means disclosed significant difference between the following variables:

a. General

Satisfaction ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that were dissatisfied with the tools and resources (M = 1.06, SD = 0.236) found them less useful than those that were satisfied (M = 2.53, SD = 0.855), and very satisfied (M = 3.27, SD = 0.785). Organisations that were very satisfied (M = 3.27, SD = 0.785) found the tools and resources more useful than those that were satisfied (M = 2.53, SD = 0.855).

Overall satisfaction ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that were very dissatisfied with the overall programme (M = 1.33, SD = 0.577) found the tools and resources less useful than those that were very satisfied with the overall programme (M = 3.24, SD = 0.779). Organisations that were dissatisfied with the overall programme (M = 1.43, SD = 0.746) found the tools and resources less useful than those that were satisfied (M = 2.60, SD = 0.986) and very satisfied (M = 3.24, SD = 0.779) with the overall programme. Organisations that were very satisfied with the overall programme (M = 3.24, SD = 0.779) found the tools and resources more useful than those that were just satisfied with the overall programme (M = 2.60, SD = 0.986).

Lasting impact ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that found that the overall programme had a significant lasting impact on their organisation (M = 3.50, SD = 0.673) found the tools and resources more useful than those organisations that found that the overall programme had some lasting impact (M = 2.69, SD = 0.967), minimal lasting impact (M = 2.08, SD = 0.812), no lasting impact (M = 1.21, SD = 0.579), and a negative lasting impact (M = 1.00, SD = 0.000). Additionally, organisations that found that the overall programme had some lasting impact on their organisation (M = 2.69, SD = 0.967) found the tools and resources more useful than those organisations that found that the overall programme had no lasting impact (M = 1.21, SD = 0.579), and a negative impact (M = 1.00, SD = 0.000). Lastly, organisations that found that the overall programme had minimal lasting impact on their organisation (M = 2.08, SD = 0.812) found the tools and resources more useful than those organisations that found that the overall programme had no lasting impact (M = 1.21, SD = 0.579).

Future participation ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that stated that they would participate in the programme again in the future (M = 2.58, SD = 1.123) found the tools and resources more useful than those that indicated they would not (M = 1.79, SD = 0.699).

b. Tools and resources

Customer database ($p < 0.050$): Organisations for which students developed a customer database (M = 2.94, SD = 0.966) found the tools and resources more useful than those that did not receive this tool (M = 2.35, SD = 1.103).

Facebook page ($p < 0.050$): Organisations for which the students created a Facebook page (M = 2.62, SD = 1.075) found the tools and resources more useful than those for which they did not create one (M = 1.91, SD = 1.019).

None ($p < 0.050$): Organisations for which no tools and resources were developed (M = 1.00, SD = 0.000) found the tools and resources less useful than those organisations that did receive tools and resources (M = 2.52, SD = 1.079)

c. Challenges

Lack of time ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that stated that they lacked the time to make use of the tools and resources developed by students (M = 1.93, SD = 1.100) found the tools and resources less useful than those that did not lack time (M = 2.55, SD = 1.078).

Lack of knowledge ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that posited a lack of knowledge with regard to how to make use of the tools and resources (M = 1.43, SD = 1.134) found the tools and resources less useful than those that did not lack knowledge (M = 2.53, SD = 1.061).

Not shared ($p < 0.001$): Organisations with which the students did not share the tools and resources they developed (M = 1.21, SD = 0.579) found the tools and resources less useful than those with whom the students did share them (M = 2.67, SD = 1.025).

d. Perceived impact

Increased sales ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in sales resulting from the tools and resources (M = 3.05, SD = 0.868) found the tools and resources more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.05, SD = 1.059).

New customers ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in new customers resulting from the tools and resources (M = 2.95, SD = 0.893) found the tools and resources more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.07, SD = 1.096).

Increased brand awareness ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in brand awareness resulting from the tools and resources (M = 3.00, SD = 0.837) found the tools and resources more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.04, SD = 1.098).

Increased customer loyalty ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in customer loyalty resulting from the tools and resources (M = 3.00, SD = 0.802) found the tools and resources more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.21, SD = 1.130).

Increased competitive advantage ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in competitive advantage resulting from the tools and resources (M = 3.29, SD = 0.726) found the tools and resources more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.31, SD = 1.091).

Increased employee motivation ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in employee motivation resulting from the tools and resources (M = 3.07, SD = 0.799) found the tools and resources more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.34, SD = 1.113).

No positive impact ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived no positive impact resulting from the tools and resources (M = 1.12, SD = 0.332) found the tools and resources less useful than those that did perceive a positive impact (M = 2.74, SD = 0.986).

e. Student team

Study programme ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that worked with part-time students (M = 2.89, 1.031) found the tools and resources more useful than those that worked with full-time students (M = 2.27, SD = 1.081).

6.5.2.3 Lasting impact of tools and resources on businesses

The final question in the overall programme section asked organisations what lasting impact the programme had had on their businesses. These results were compared with the usefulness and satisfaction variables in the tools and resources section in order to determine significant relationships.

Table 6.6: Effect of tools and resources usefulness and satisfaction on lasting impact

Independent variables	***P***
Usefulness	0.000*
Satisfaction	0.000*

*Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.001$
**Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.050$

In terms of the tools and resources in relation to lasting impact, Anova revealed that there was a significant difference at $p < 0.001$ for lasting impact (M = 3.60, SD = 1.080) as a result of the tools and resources developed or acquired by students.

Bonferroni correction pairwise comparisons of estimated marginal means disclosed significant difference between the following variables:

Usefulness ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that continued to use the tools and resources extensively (M = 4.60, SD = 0.598) found the overall programme to have had a greater lasting impact on their organisation than those organisations that continued to use the tools and resources somewhat (M = 3.96, SD = 0.824), that had used the tools and resources before but not anymore (M = 3.45, SD = 0.739), and that had never found the tools and resources useful at all (M = 2.50, SD = 0.885). Additionally, organisations that continued to use the tools and resources somewhat (M = 3.96, SD = 0.824) found the overall programme to have had a greater lasting impact on their organisation than those organisations that had used the tools and resources before but not anymore (M = 3.45, SD = 0.739), and those that had never found them useful at all (M = 2.50, SD = 0.885). Finally, organisations that had used the tools and resources before but not anymore (M = 3.45, SD = 0.739) found the overall programme to have a greater lasting impact on their organisation than those that had never found the tools and resources useful at all (M = 2.50, SD = 0.885).

Satisfaction ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that were very satisfied with the tools and resources (M = 4.23, SD = 0.869) found the overall programme to have had a greater lasting impact on their organisation than those organisations that were very dissatisfied (M = 2.20, SD = 0.447), dissatisfied (M = 2.41, SD = 1.004), and satisfied (M = 3.39, SD = 0.930) with the tools and resources. Additionally, those organisations that were satisfied with the tools and resources (M = 3.39, SD = 0.930) found the overall programme had had a greater lasting impact on their organisation than those organisations that were very dissatisfied (M = 2.20, SD = 0.447) and dissatisfied (M = 2.41, SD = 1.004) with the tools and resources.

6.6 Campaign plan findings

The campaign plan section was the third section of the questionnaire. This section sought to determine the value added by the campaign plan developed for each business. What follows is a report on the descriptive variables of each question in the section as well as a report on the significance data.

6.6.1 Campaign plan descriptive statistics

6.6.1.1 Presentation of campaign plan

Students had the freedom to present their campaign plans to their partner SMMEs in a number of ways. For this reason, the different ways in which they did so were assessed.

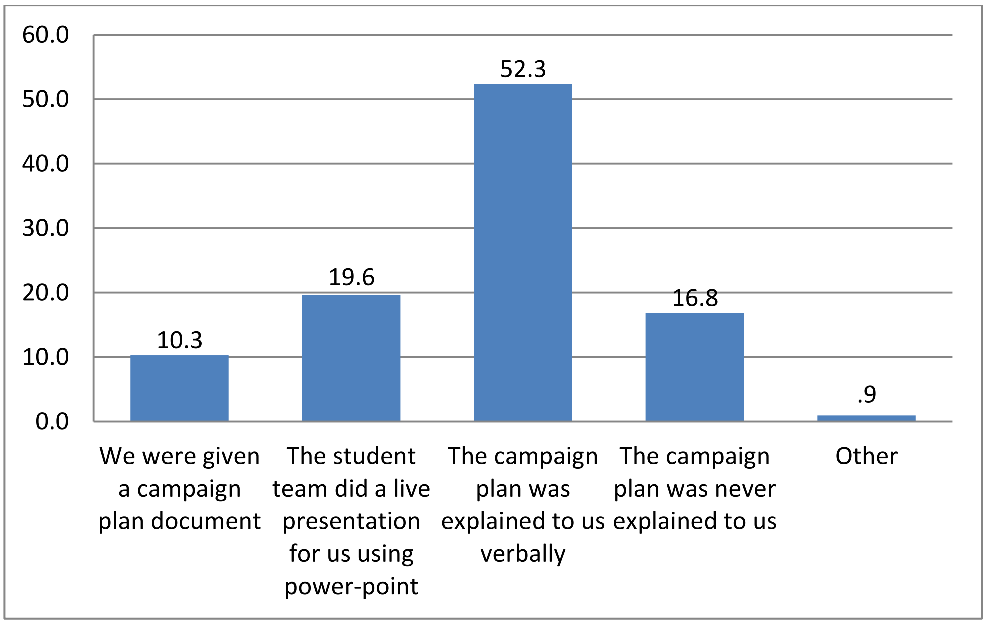

Figure 6.35: Campaign plan presentation rate

More than half of the respondents (52.3%) revealed that the campaign plan was explained to them verbally by their student team. In 19.6 per cent of cases the campaign plan was presented to the business using a Power Point presentation, and in 10.3 per cent of cases the business was given a campaign plan document. The remaining 16.8 per cent of participants reported that the campaign plan was never conveyed to them.

6.6.1.2 Usefulness of campaign plan

The usefulness of the campaign plans to the businesses was determined, including the question of whether the campaign plan was actually implemented at all.

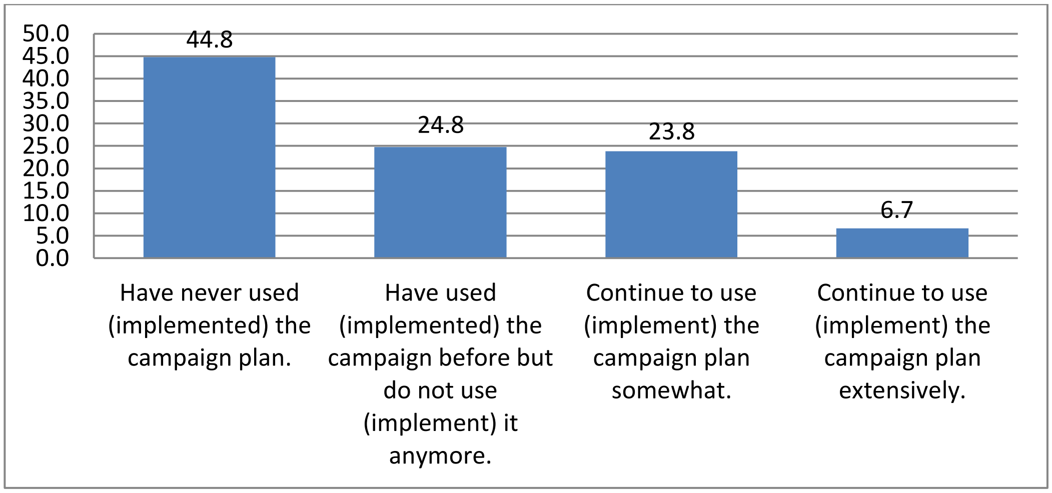

Figure 6.36: Usefulness of campaign plan percentage

More than half (55.2%) of the respondents claimed that they had implemented the campaign plan. Of these, 24.8 per cent recounted that they had implemented it before but did not do so any more, 23.8 per cent stated that they still implemented the campaign plan somewhat, and 6.7 per cent stated that they continued to implement the campaign plan extensively. The rest of the respondents (44.8%) conceded that they had never implemented the campaign plan.

6.6.1.3 Reasons for not implementing the campaign plan

In order to determine why businesses were not able to make effective use of the campaign plans, they were asked to identify their reasons for not implementing it.

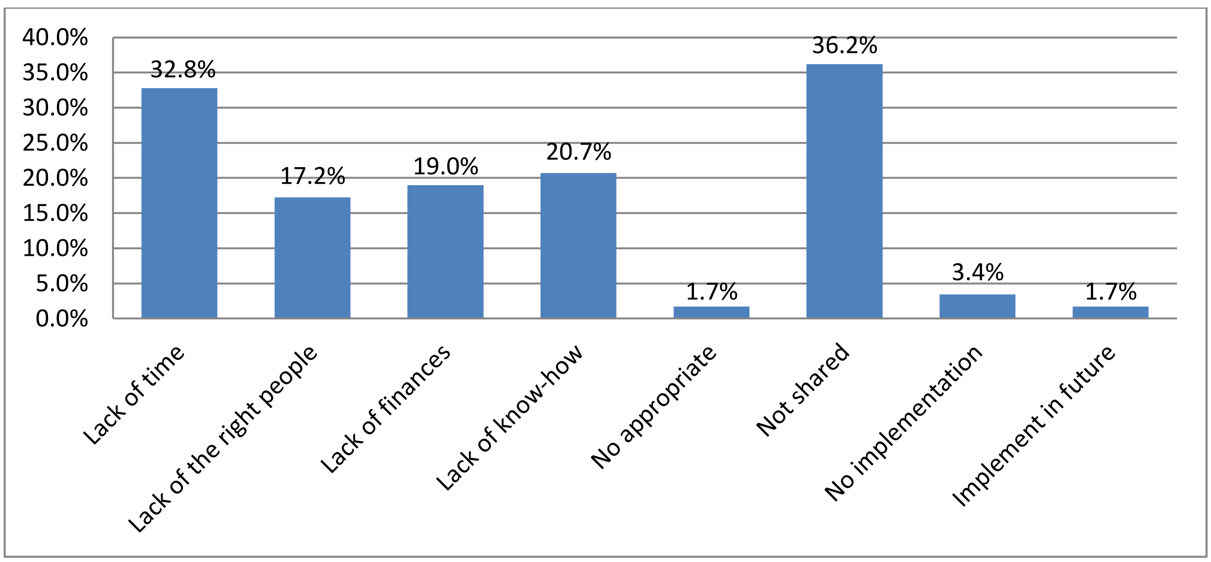

Figure 6.37: Reasons for not implementing campaign plan frequency

More than a third of respondents (36.2%) identified as the reason for not implementing the campaign plan the fact that it was not shared with them. Others reported a lack of time (32.8%), a lack of know-how (20.7%), and a lack of finances (19%) as their reasons. A small percentage of respondents (1.7%) stated that they planned to implement the campaign in the future.

6.6.1.4 Means of campaign plan implementation

The way that the businesses went about implementing the campaign plan was determined. This measure only considered three variables.

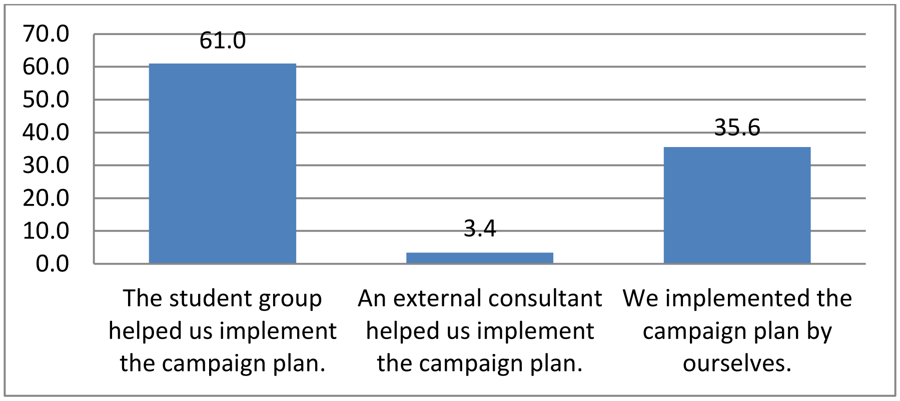

Figure 6.38: Means of campaign plan implementation proportion

In the majority of cases (61%) the students helped the business implement the campaign plan. In 35.6 per cent of cases the businesses implemented it themselves, and in 3.4 per cent of cases the businesses hired an external consultant to implement the campaign plan.

6.6.1.5 Challenges experienced when implementing campaign plan

The challenges that participating businesses experienced in the course of implementing the campaign plan were determined. A range of hindrances was noted.

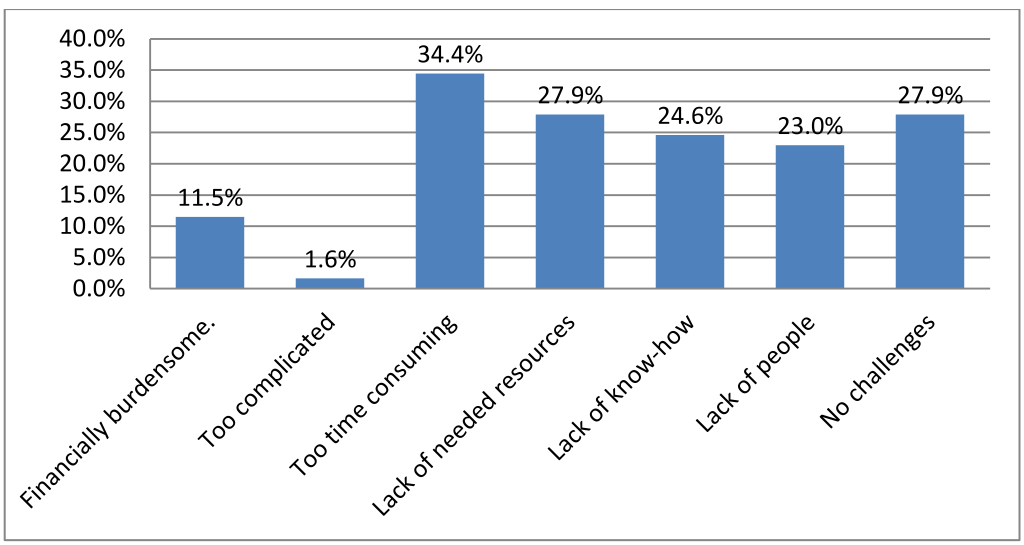

Figure 6.39: Challenges to implementing campaign incidence

More than a third of respondents (34.4%) stated that implementing the campaign plan took too much of their time. Other challenges cited were a lack of the needed resources (27.9%), a lack of know-how (24.6%), and a lack of people (23%), while 27.9 per cent stated that they experienced no challenges in implementing the campaign plan.

6.6.1.6 Perceived impact of campaign plan

The respondents' perceptions of the impact on their organisation was determined. Variables relating to business performance, growth and success were considered.

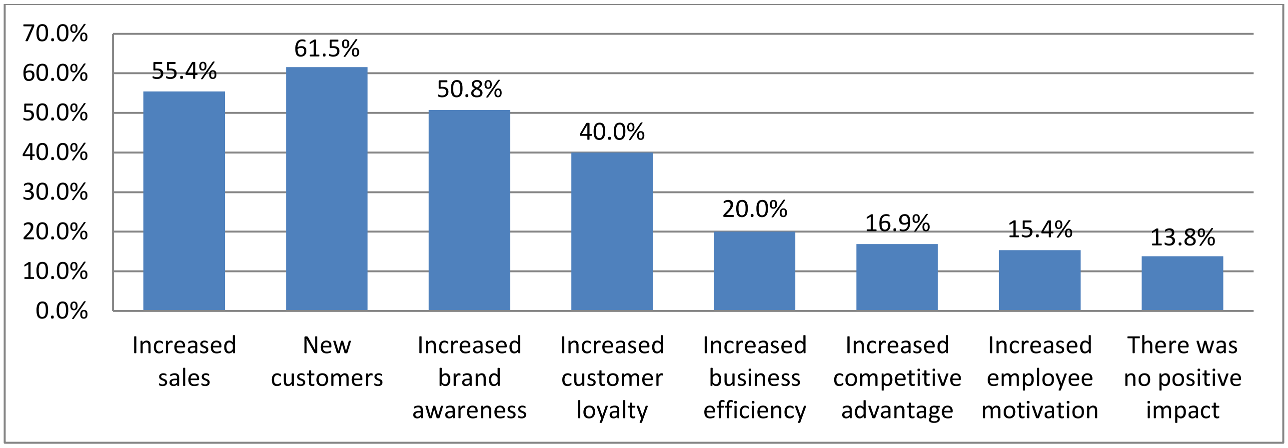

Figure 6.40: Perceived impact on business percentage

A large majority of respondents (86.2%) felt that the campaign plan had a positive impact on their business. Of these, 61 per cent believed that the implemented campaign plan brought new customers into the business, 55.4 per cent believed that the implemented campaign plan helped increase sales, and 50.8 per cent stated that they believed it aided in increasing brand awareness. A further 40 per cent felt that it helped increase customer loyalty. A small minority of respondents (13.8%) felt that the campaign plan had had no positive impact on their organisation.

6.6.1.7 Satisfaction with campaign plan

The overall satisfaction experienced by respondents with regard to the campaign plan aspect of the programme was determined. This measure covered all elements of the campaign plan aspect of the programme including the conceptualisation, development, presentation, and implementation of the campaign plan.

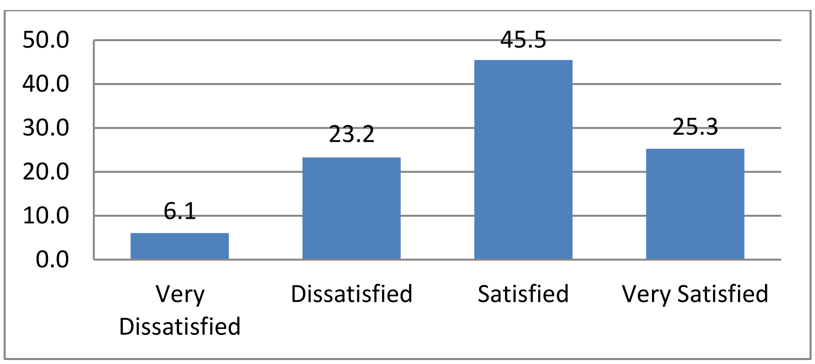

Figure 6.41: Satisfaction of campaign plan occurrence

A large portion of respondents (70.8%) were satisfied with the campaign plan section of the programme. Of these, 45.5 per cent felt satisfied and 25.3 per cent felt very satisfied. 23.2 per cent of respondents felt dissatisfied with the campaign planning phase of the programme, and 6.1 per cent were very dissatisfied.

6.6.2 Campaign plan significance statistics

In order to determine if there were any significant relationships, the variables of the campaign plan section of the survey were compared to three scales: the satisfaction that SMMEs experienced as a result of the campaign plan, the usefulness of the campaign plan to SMMEs, and the perceived lasting impact of the campaign plan on the SMMEs.

6.6.2.1 Satisfaction of businesses with campaign plan

The level of satisfaction that businesses experienced as a result of the campaign plan was compared to the other variables in the section in order to determine significant relationships.

Table 6.7: Effect of campaign plan variables and demographics on satisfaction

Independent variables	***P***
General	
Year	0.330
Presentation method	0.000*
Implementation method	0.003*
Usefulness	0.000*
Overall satisfaction	0.000*
Lasting impact	0.000*
Future participation	0.006*
Challenges	
Lack of time	0.478
Lack of people	0.436
Lack of money	0.117
Lack of knowledge	0.280
Inappropriate	0.906
Not shared	0.000*
No implementation by students	0.291
Future implementation	0.195
Implementation challenges	
Financially burdensome	0.214
Too complicated	0291
Too time consuming	0.236
Lack of resources	0.073
Lack of know-how	0.421
Lack of staff	0.029*
No challenges	0.000*
Perceived impact	
Increased sales	0.000*
New customers	0.000*
Increased brand Awareness	0.000*
Increased customer loyalty	0.000*
Increased business efficiency	0.027*

Increased competitive advantage	0.007*
Increased employee motivation	0.001*
No positive impact	0.000*
Demographics	
Major industry	0.069
Minor industry	0.556
Business age	0.949
Amount of employees	0.278
CIPC registration	0.048*
Legal form of ownership	0.034*
Business turnover	0.233
Age of owner	0.611
Gender of owner	0.323
Education of owner	0.494
Ethnicity of owner	0.699
Country of origin of owner	0.507
Student team	
Project mark	0.042*
Study programme	0.074

*Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.001$
**Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.050$

In terms of the campaign plan, Anova revealed that there was a significant difference at $p < 0.001$ for satisfaction (M = 2.90, SD = 0.851) because of the campaign planning and implementation. No significant differences were found for year, lack of time, lack of people, lack of money, lack of knowledge, inappropriateness, no implementation by students, future implementation, financially burdensome, too complicated, too time consuming, lack of resources, lack of know-how, major industry, minor industry, business age, number of employees, business turnover, age of owner, gender of owner, education of owner, ethnicity of owner, country of origin, or study programme.

Bonferroni correction pairwise comparisons of estimated marginal means disclosed significant difference between the following variables:

a. General

Presentation method ($p < 0.001$): Organisations to whom the campaign plan was not explained or presented (M = 2.12, SD = 0.857) experienced lower levels of satisfaction than organisations to whom the campaign plan was explained verbally (M = 2.88, SD = 0.746), to whom a campaign plan document was given (M = 3.10, SD = 0.568), and for whom a Power Point presentation was done (M = 3.52, SD = 0.680). Additionally, organisations for which a Power Point presentation was done (M = 3.52, SD = 0.680) experienced higher levels of satisfaction with the campaign than those to whom the campaign plan was only explained verbally (M = 2.88, SD = 0.746).

Usefulness ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that have never used or implemented the campaign plan (M = 2.33, SD = 0.859) experienced lower levels of satisfaction than those that have used or implemented the campaign plan before (M = 3.15, SD = 0.675), those that continue to use or implement the campaign plan somewhat (M = 3.33, SD = 0.482), and those that continue to use or implement the campaign plan extensively (M = 3.57, SD = 0.535).

Implementation method ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that were assisted by students to implement the campaign plan (M = 3.49, SD = 0.507) experienced higher levels of satisfaction than those which implemented it by themselves (M = 2.95, SD = 0.590).

Overall satisfaction ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that were very dissatisfied with the overall programme (M = 1.20, SD = 0.447) experienced a lower level of satisfaction with the campaign plan than those that were dissatisfied (M = 2.22, SD = 0.671), satisfied (M = 2.98, SD = 4.99), and very satisfied (M = 3.76, SD = 0.436) with the overall programme. Additionally, those organisations that were very satisfied with the overall programme (M = 3.76, SD = 0.436) experienced higher levels of satisfaction with the campaign plan than those that were either satisfied (M = 2.98, SD = 4.99) or dissatisfied (M = 2.22, SD = 0.671) with the overall programme. Lastly, those organisations that were satisfied with the overall programme (M = 2.98, SD = 4.99) experienced higher levels of satisfaction with the campaign plan than those that were dissatisfied (M = 2.22, SD = 0.671).

Lasting impact ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that found that the overall programme had a significant lasting impact on their organisation (M = 3.59, SD = 0.503) experienced a higher level of satisfaction with the campaign plan than those organisations that found that the overall programme had some lasting impact (M = 3.94, SD = 0.693), minimal lasting impact (M = 2.72, SD = 0.614), no lasting impact (M = 2.28, SD = 0.895), and a negative lasting impact (M = 1.33, SD = 0.577). Additionally, organisations that found that the overall programme had some lasting impact on their organisation (M = 3.94, SD = 0.693) experienced a higher level of satisfaction with the campaign plan than those organisations that found that the overall programme had no lasting impact (M = 2.28, SD = 0.895), or a negative impact (M = 1.33, SD = 0.577). Lastly, organisations that found that the overall programme had a minimal lasting impact on their organisation (M = 2.72, SD = 0.614) experienced a higher level of satisfaction with the campaign plan than those organisations that found that the overall programme had a negative impact (M = 1.33, SD = 0.577).

Future participation ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that stated that they would participate in the programme again in the future (M = 3.01, SD = 0.803) experienced a higher level of satisfaction with the campaign plan than those that did not state this (M = 2.42, SD = 0.902).

b. Challenges

Not shared ($p < 0.001$): Organisations with which the students did not share the campaign plan (M = 2.05, SD = 0.759) experienced lower levels of satisfaction than those with which the campaign plan was shared (M = 3.11, SD = 0.734).

c. Implementation challenges

Lack of staff ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that indicated that they lacked the human resources (people) needed to implement the campaign plan (M = 3.36, SD = 0.633) experienced higher levels of satisfaction than those that did not indicate this lack (M = 2.82, SD = 0.862).

No challenges ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that had no challenges with implementing the campaign plan (M = 3.59, SD = 0.507) experienced higher levels of satisfaction than those that experienced challenges (M = 2.76, SD = 0.840).

d. Perceived Impact

Increased sales ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in sales resulting from the campaign plan (M = 3.44, SD = 0.607) experienced higher levels of satisfaction than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.59, SD = 0.816).

New customers ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in new customers resulting from the campaign plan (M = 3.41, SD = 0.498) experienced higher levels of satisfaction than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.57, SD = 0.871).

Increased brand awareness ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in brand awareness resulting from the campaign plan (M = 3.42, SD = 0.502) experienced higher levels of satisfaction than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.64, SD = 0.871).

Increased customer loyalty ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in customer loyalty resulting from the campaign plan (M = 3.52, SD = 0.510) experienced higher levels of satisfaction than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.69, SD = 0.843).

Increased business efficiency ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in business efficiency resulting from the campaign plan (M = 3.38, SD = 0.506) experienced higher levels of satisfaction than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.83, SD = 0.870).

Increased competitive advantage ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in competitive advantage resulting from the campaign plan (M = 3.55, SD = 0.522) experienced higher levels of satisfaction than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.82, SD = 0.852).

Increased employee motivation ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in employee motivation resulting from the campaign plan (M = 3.70, SD = 0.483) experienced higher levels of satisfaction than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.81, SD = 0.838).

No positive impact ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived no positive impact resulting from the campaign plan (M = 1.89, SD = 0.601) experienced lower levels of satisfaction than those that perceived some positive impact (M = 3.00, SD = 0.807).

e. Demographics

CIPC registration (*p* < 0.050): Organisations that indicated that they were registered with the Companies and Intellectual Properties Council (CIPC) (M = 3.05, SD = 0.883) experienced a higher level of satisfaction with the campaign plan than those that did not indicate this registration (M = 2.68, SD = 0.748).

Legal form of ownership (*p* < 0.050): Sole Proprietors (M = 2.60, SD = 0.903) experienced lower levels of satisfaction with the campaign plan than Closed Corporations (M = 3.17, SD = 0.816), and Pty Limited companies (M = 3.10, SD = 0.641).

f. Student team

Project mark (*p* < 0.050): Organisations that worked with students that achieved a distinction (75%-100%) for their project (M = 3.30, SD = 0.733) experienced higher levels of satisfaction with the campaign plan than those organisations that worked with student teams that managed a pass mark (50% - 74%) (M = 2.83, SD = 0.815) or that failed the project (0% - 49% (M = 2.62, SD = 1.044). Additionally, those organisations that worked with students who failed the project (M = 2.62, SD = 1.044) experienced lower levels of satisfaction with the campaign plan than those organisations that worked with students who managed to pass the project (M = 2.83, SD = 0.815).

6.6.2.2 Usefulness of campaign plan to businesses

The usefulness to SMMEs of the campaign plan was compared with the other variables in this section of the survey in order to determine significant relationships. Although certain variables did not show any significant differences, definite trends and noticeable differences were revealed by Anova.

Table 6.8: Effect of campaign plan variables and demographics on usefulness

Independent variables	***P***
General	
Year	0.097
Presentation method	0.001**
Implementation method	0.881
Satisfaction	0.000*
Overall Satisfaction	0.000*
Lasting impact	0.000*
Future participation	0.081
Challenges	
Lack of time	0.001**
Lack of people	0.150
Lack of money	0.176
Lack of knowledge	0.001**
Inappropriate	0.345
Not shared	0.000*

No implementation by students	0.178
Future implementation	0.345
Implementation challenges	
Financially burdensome	0.069
Too complicated	0.938
Too time consuming	0.003**
Lack of resources	0.005*
Lack of know-how	0.370
Lack of staff	0.017**
No challenges	0.000*
Perceived impact	
Increased sales	0.000*
New customers	0.000*
Increased brand awareness	0.000*
Increased customer loyalty	0.000*
Increased business efficiency	0.005**
Increased competitive advantage	0.000*
Increased employee motivation	0.000*
No positive impact	0.058
Demographics	
Major industry	0.557
Minor industry	0.460
Business age	0.713
Amount of employees	0.058
CIPC registration	0.892
Legal form of ownership	0.107
Business turnover	0.114
Age of owner	0.740
Gender of owner	0.658
Education of owner	0.762
Ethnicity of owner	0.358
Country of origin of owner	0.213
Student team	
Project mark	0.609
Study programme	0.108

*Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.001$
**Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.050$

In terms of the usefulness of the campaign plan, Anova revealed that there was a significant difference at $p < 0.001$ for usefulness (M = 1.92, SD = 0.978) as a result of the campaign plan developed by students. No significant differences were found for year, implementation method, future participation, lack of people, lack of money, inappropriateness, no implementation by students, future implementation, financially burdensome, too complicated, lack of know-how, no positive impact, all demographic variables, project mark, or study programme.

Bonferroni correction pairwise comparisons of estimated marginal means disclosed significant difference between the following variables:

a. General

Presentation method (p < 0.050): Organisations to which the students did not explain the campaign plan (M = 1.22, SD = 0.548) found it less useful than those to which the campaign plan was explained verbally (M = 2.00, SD = 0.953) and those for which the students did a live presentation (M = 2.45, SD = 1.099).

Satisfaction (p < 0.001): Organisations that were satisfied (M = 2.25, SD = 0.918) and very satisfied with the campaign plan (M = 2.50, SD = 0.978) found it more useful than those which were dissatisfied (M = 1.17, SD = 0.388) and very dissatisfied with it (M = 1.00 SD = 0.000).

Overall satisfaction (p < 0.001): Organisations that were very satisfied with the overall programme (M = 2.58, SD = 1.027) found the campaign plan more useful than those that were satisfied (M = 2.00, SD = 0.913), dissatisfied (M = 1.26, SD = 0.541), and very dissatisfied (M = 1.17, SD = 0.408) with the overall programme. Additionally, organisations that were satisfied with the overall programme (M = 2.00, SD = 0.913) found the campaign plan more useful than those that were dissatisfied with the overall programme (M = 1.26, SD = 0.541).

Lasting Impact (p < 0.001): Organisations that found that the overall programme had a significant lasting impact (M = 2.76, SD = 1.044), as well as some lasting impact on their organisation (M = 2.25, SD = 0.916) found the campaign plan more useful than those organisations that found that the overall programme had minimal lasting impact (M = 1.62, SD = 0.637), no lasting impact (M = 1.05, SD = 0.229), and a negative lasting impact (M = 1.00, SD = 0.000).

b. Challenges

Lack of time (p < 0.050): Organisations that stated that they lacked the time to make use of the campaign plan developed by students (M = 1.26, SD = 0.452) found the campaign plan less useful than those that did not state this lack (M = 2.07, SD = 1.003).

Lack of knowledge (p < 0.050): Organisations that highlighted a lack of knowledge regarding how to make use of the campaign plan (M = 1.08, SD = 0.289) found the campaign plan less useful than those that did not highlight this lack (M = 2.03, SD = 0.983).

Not shared (p < 0.001): Organisations with which the students did not share the campaign plan (M = 1.00, SD = 0.000) found the campaign plan less useful than those with whom the students did share it (M = 2.15, SD = 0.963).

c. Implementation challenges

Too much time ($p < 0.050$): Those that stated that the campaign implementation took too much time (M = 2.50, SD = 0.688) found the campaign more useful than those that did not state this challenge (M = 1.79, SD = 0.989).

Lack of resources ($p < 0.050$): Those SMMEs that found that a lack of resources was a challenge while implementing the campaign (M = 2.53, SD = 0.800) found the campaign plan more useful than those that did not find this lack (M = 1.81, SD = 9.69).

Lack of staff ($p < 0.050$): Those SMMEs that stated that a lack of people was a challenge while implementing the campaign (M = 2.50, SD = 0.650) found the campaign plan more useful than those that did not mention this lack (M = 1.84, SD = 0.992).

No challenges ($p < 0.001$): Those SMMEs that stated that they experienced no challenges while implementing the campaign (M = 3.13, SD = 0.619) found the campaign plan more useful than those that did experience challenges (M = 1.71, SD = 0.869).

d. Perceived impact

Increased sales ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in sales resulting from the campaign (M = 2.77, SD = 0.731) found the campaign plan more useful than those that did not perceive this benefit (M = 1.50, SD = 0.794).

New customers ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in new customers resulting from the campaign plan (M = 2.82, SD = 0.683) found the campaign plan more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 1.39, SD = 0.699).

Increased brand awareness ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in brand awareness resulting from the campaign (M = 2.77, SD = 0.669) found the campaign plan more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 1.57, SD = 0.861).

Increased customer loyalty ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in customer loyalty resulting from the campaign (M = 2.88, SD = 0.726) found the campaign plan more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 1.63, SD = 0.848).

Increased competitive advantage ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in employee motivation resulting from the campaign (M = 3.10, SD = 0.568) found the campaign plan more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 1.80, SD = 0.929).

Increased employee motivation ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in competitive advantage resulting from the campaign (M = 3.11, SD = 0.782) found the campaign plan more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 1.81, SD = 0.921).

6.6.2.3 Lasting impact of campaign plan on businesses

SMMEs were asked to what degree they felt the overall programme had a lasting impact on their firms. These scales were compared with the level of usefulness they associated with the campaigns as well as the degree of satisfaction they experienced in order to investigate significant relationships.

Table 6.9: Effect of campaign plan usefulness and satisfaction on lasting impact

Independent variables	***P***
Usefulness	0.000*
Satisfaction	0.000*

*Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.001$
**Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.050$

In terms of the relation between the campaign plan and lasting impact, Anova revealed that there was a significant difference at $p < 0.001$ for lasting impact (M = 3.46, SD = 1.132) because of the campaign plan that was developed.

Bonferroni correction pairwise comparisons of estimated marginal means disclosed significant difference between the following variables:

Usefulness ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that continued to use the campaign plan extensively (M = 4.71, SD = 0.488), and those that continued to use the campaign plan somewhat (M = 4.33, SD = 0.637), found the overall programme to have had a greater lasting impact on their organisation than those organisations that had used the campaign plan before but not anymore (M = 3.52, SD = 0.714), and that had never used it at all (M = 2.78, SD = 1.114). Additionally, organisations that had used the campaign plan before but not anymore (M = 3.52, SD = 0.714) found the overall programme to have had a greater lasting impact on their organisation than those that had never used it at all (M = 2.78, SD = 1.114).

Satisfaction ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that were satisfied (M = 3.71, SD = 0.895), and very satisfied (M = 4.30, SD = 0.974) with the campaign plan found the overall programme to have a greater lasting impact on their organisation than those organisations that were dissatisfied (M = 2.64, SD = 0.790) and very dissatisfied (M = 2.00, SD = 1.095) with the campaign plan.

6.7 Skills training and knowledge transfer findings

The skills training and knowledge transfer section was the fourth section of the questionnaire. This section sought to determine the value added by the skills training and knowledge transfer that students shared with each business. What follows is a report on the descriptive variables of each question in the section as well as a report on the significance data.

6.7.1 Skills training and knowledge transfer descriptive statistics

6.7.1.1 Skills training imparted to business

Research participants were asked what skills training the student teams gave to their organisations. A range of technical skills was recorded as having been imparted.

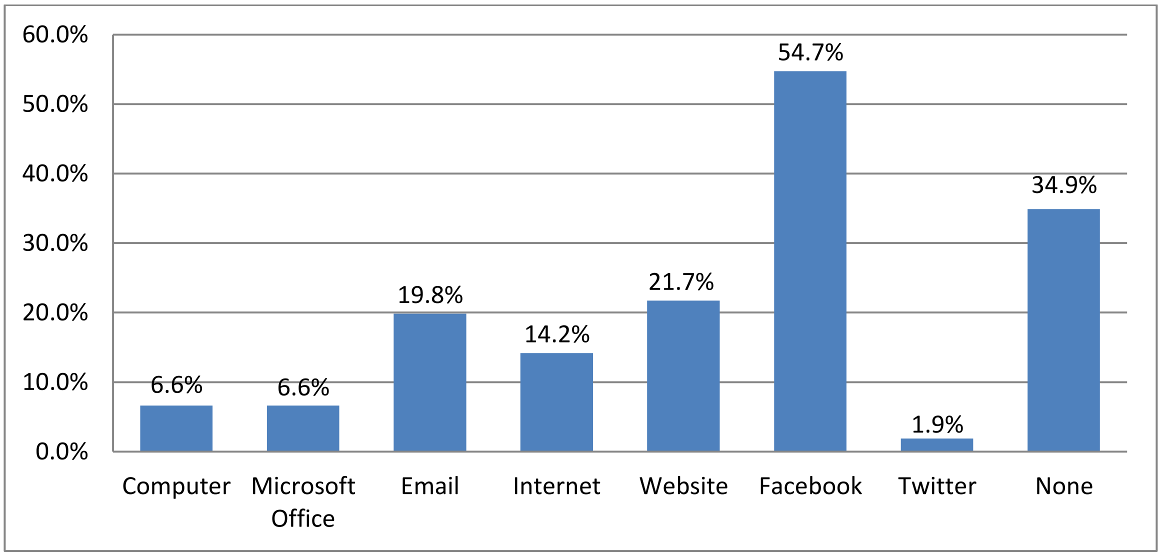

Figure 6.42: Skills training imparted rate

More than half of the respondents (54.7%) stated that students had imparted Facebook-related skills to their business. Other technical skills shared by student teams included those associated with managing a website (21.7%), managing business email (19.8%), and using the Internet (14.2%). Just more than a third of respondents (34.9%) stated that no skills training had been given to their business by student teams.

6.7.1.2 Business-related knowledge transferred to businesses

Considering the educational nature of the service-learning programme, it stands to reason that students shared business-related knowledge with their client organisations. Research was done to determine which types of knowledge were shared most frequently.

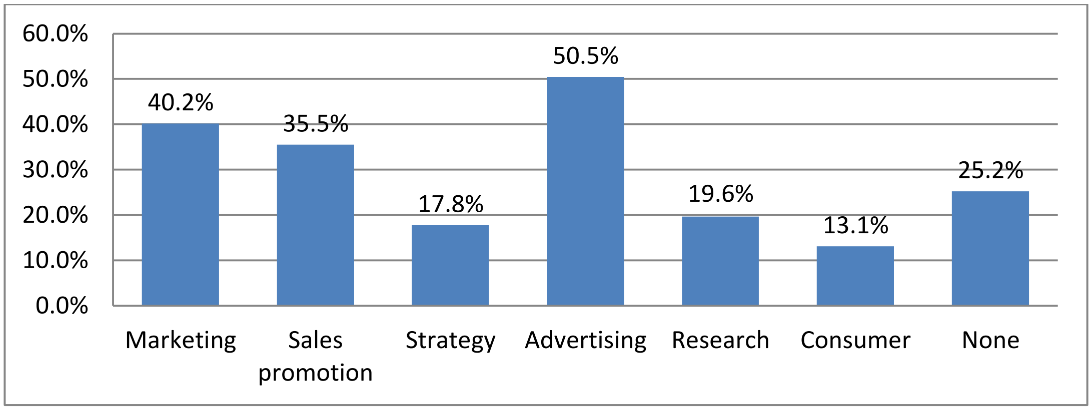

Figure 6.43: Business-related knowledge transfer rate

A large majority of respondents (74.8%) indicated that some form of business-related knowledge was shared with their organisation. The largest proportion of new knowledge shared with organisations was in the area of Advertising (50.5%). Other forms of knowledge reported to have been shared included Marketing (40.2%), Sales Promotion (35.5%), and Research (19.6%). Just more than a quarter of respondents (25.2%) stated that no new knowledge was shared with their organisation.

6.7.1.3 Usefulness of skills training and knowledge transfer

The usefulness of the skills training and business-related knowledge imparted to the business was determined.

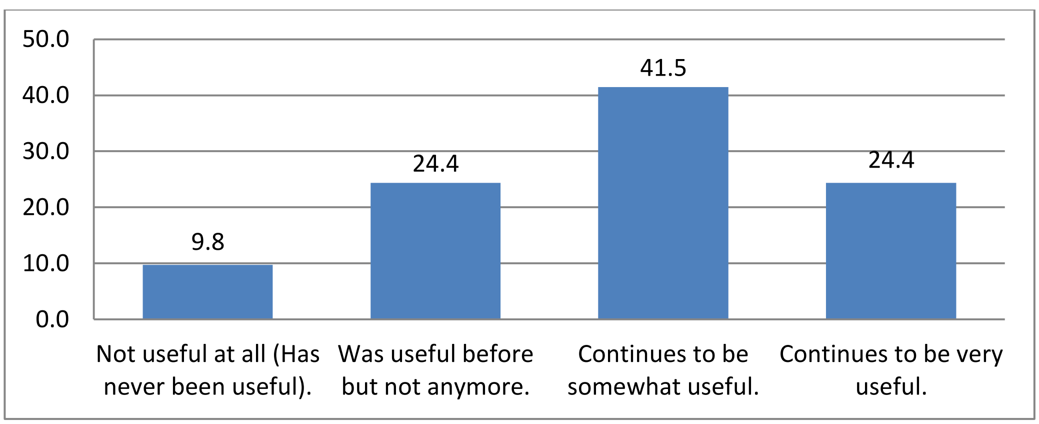

Figure 6.44: Usefulness of skills training and knowledge transfer rate

An overwhelming majority of respondents (90.2%) confirmed the usefulness of the skills training and knowledge imparted to their organisation. For some (24.4%) the skills and knowledge were useful in the past, for others (41.5%) the skills training and knowledge transfer continued to be somewhat useful, and for yet others (24.4%) the skills training and knowledge transfer continued to be very useful. The remaining 9.8 per cent of respondents claimed that the skills training and knowledge transfer had never been useful to their organisation.

6.7.1.4 Reasons for lack of usefulness of skills training and knowledge transfer

In order to determine why businesses were unable to make effective use of the skills training given and business-related knowledge shared by students, possible limitations were identified.

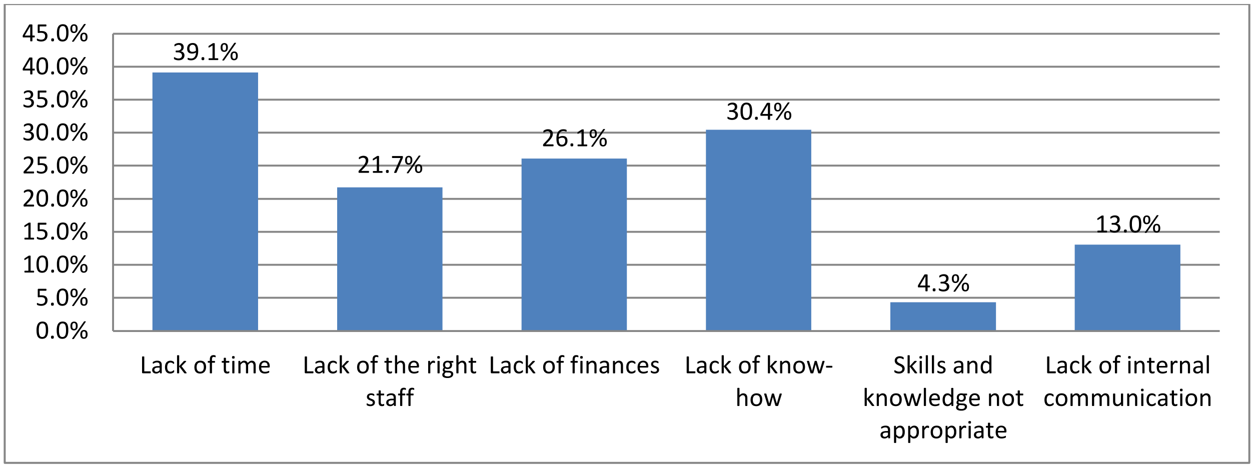

Figure 6.45: Reasons for lack of usefulness of skills training and knowledge transfer rate

Of the various reasons advanced for being unable to effectively make use of the skills training and knowledge transferred, respondents cited a lack of time the most often (39.1%). Other reasons noted were a lack of know-how (30.4%), a lack of finances (26.1%), and a lack of the right staff members (21.7%). Other reasons cited less frequently were a lack of internal communication (13%), and finally, the fact that the skills training and knowledge shared were not appropriate for the business (4.3%).

6.7.1.5 Perceived impact of skills training and knowledge transfer

In order to determine the perceived impact of the skills training and knowledge transfer on the SMMEs, a number of variables were considered.

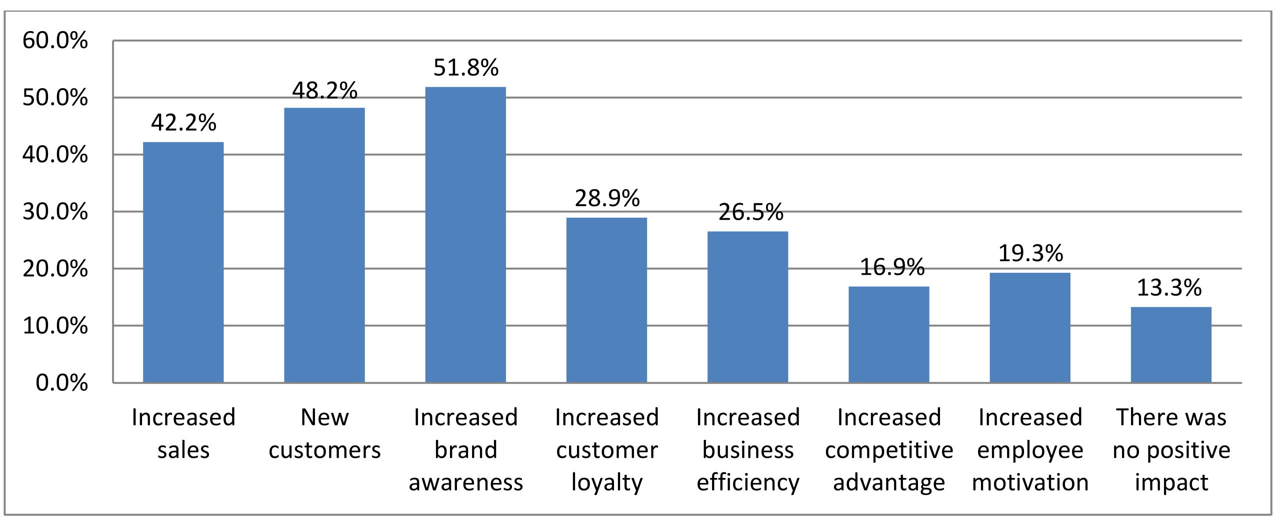

Figure 6.46: Perceived impact of skills training and knowledge transfer rate

A large majority of respondents (86.7%) felt that the skills training and knowledge transfer imparted by students had had a positive impact on their organisations. More than half of them (51.8%) believed that the skills training and knowledge transfer helped to increase brand awareness. Additionally, 48.2 per cent felt that it helped increase sales, 42.2 per cent believed it aided the business in gaining new customers, and 28.9 per cent felt that it helped increase customer loyalty. A small portion of respondents (13.3%) maintained that it had had no positive impact on the business.

6.7.1.6 Satisfaction with skills training and knowledge transfer

The overall satisfaction of participants with the skills training and knowledge shared with their organisation was measured in order to determine the effectiveness of SL as a training and knowledge transfer method.

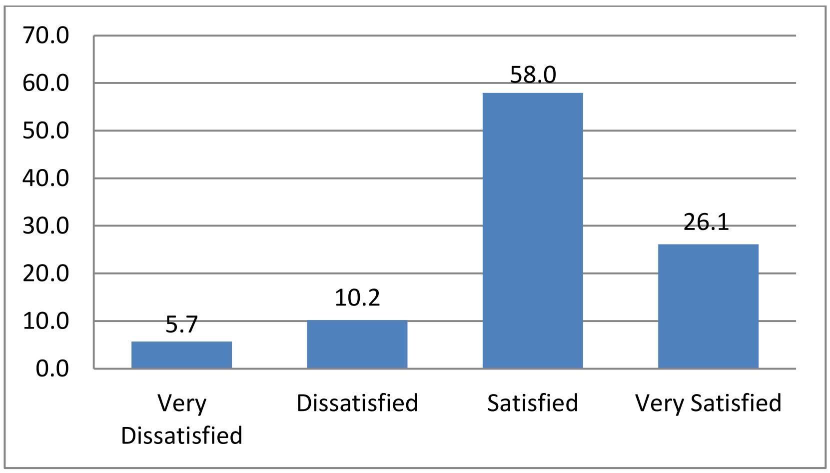

Figure 6.47: Satisfaction with skills training and knowledge transfer

A large proportion of respondents (84.1%) expressed a positive overall satisfaction with the skills training and knowledge imparted to their organisations. More than half of them (58%) were satisfied with the skills training and knowledge transfer and 26.1 per cent were very satisfied. A small segment of respondents were negative about satisfaction, with 10.2 per cent being dissatisfied and 5.7 per cent being very dissatisfied.

6.7.2 Skills training and knowledge transfer significance statistics

In order to determine any significant relationships between variables in the skills training and knowledge transfer section of the survey, the variables in the section were compared to a number of scales, including the satisfaction of the businesses with the skills training and knowledge transfer, the utility that that the SMME gained from the skills training and knowledge transfer, and the lasting impact of the programme as a result of the training and knowledge received from students.

6.7.2.1 Satisfaction of business with skills training and knowledge transfer

The degree to which SMMEs were satisfied with the skills training and knowledge transfer was compared to the rest of the variables in this section in order to identify areas of significance. These are discussed in detail below.

Table 6.10: Effect of demographics on satisfaction with skills training and knowledge transfer variables

Independent variables	***P***
General	
Year	0.437
Usefulness	0.000*
Overall satisfaction	0.000*
Lasting impact	0.000*
Future participation	0.025**
Challenges	
Lack of time	0.553
Lack of people	0.713
Lack of money	0.766
Lack of knowledge	0.446
Inappropriate	0.167
Lack of communication	0.294
Skills training and knowledge transfer	
Computer	0.079
Microsoft Office	0.459
Email	0.002**
Internet	0.162
Website	0.000*
Facebook	0.000*
Twitter	0.438
No training	0.000*
Marketing	0.001**
Sales promotion	0.001**
Strategy	0.118
Advertising	0.003**
Research	0.131
Consumer	0.123
No education	0.000*
Perceived impact	
Increased sales	0.000*
New customers	0.000*
Increased brand awareness	0.001*
Increased customer loyalty	0.046**
Increased business efficiency	0.160
Increased competitive advantage	0.003**

Increased employee motivation	0.012**
No positive impact	0.003**
Demographics	
Major industry	0.095
Minor industry	0.135
Business age	0.636
Amount of employees	0.871
CIPC registration	0.538
Legal form of ownership	0.300
Business turnover	0.517
Age of owner	0.758
Gender of owner	0.686
Education of owner	0.458
Ethnicity of owner	0.474
Country of origin of owner	0.898
Student team	
Project mark	0.050**
Study programme	0.145

*Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.001$
**Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.050$

In terms of the skills training and knowledge transfer, Anova revealed that there was a significant difference at $p < 0.001$ for satisfaction (M = 3.05, SD = 0.772) because of the skills training and knowledge education given by students. No significant differences were found for year, all variables in the challenges category, computer, Microsoft Office, Internet, Twitter, strategy, research, consumer, increased business efficiency, all demographic variables, or all student team variables.

Bonferroni correction pairwise comparisons of estimated marginal means disclosed significant difference between the following variables:

a. General

Usefulness ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that had never used the skills training and/or knowledge transferred by students (M = 2.43, SD = 0.535) evinced lower levels of satisfaction than those that had used the skills and/or knowledge before (M = 3.24, SD = 0.562), those that continued to use the skills and/or knowledge somewhat (M = 3.24, SD = 0.561), and those that continued to use the skills and/or knowledge extensively (M = 3.70, SD = 0.571). Additionally, those organisations that continued to use the skills and/or knowledge extensively (M = 3.70, SD = 0.571) experienced higher levels of satisfaction with the skills training and knowledge transfer from students than those that continued to use the skills and/or knowledge somewhat (M = 3.24, SD = 0.561).

Overall satisfaction ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that were very dissatisfied with the overall programme (M = 1.33, SD = 0.577) experienced a lower level of satisfaction with the skills training and knowledge transfer than those that were dissatisfied (M = 2.40, SD = 0.681), satisfied (M = 3.16, SD = 0.520), and very satisfied (M = 3.72, SD = 0.458) with the overall programme. Additionally, those organisations that were very satisfied with the overall programme (M = 3.72, SD = 0.458) experienced higher levels of satisfaction with the skills training and knowledge transfer than those that were either satisfied (M = 3.16, SD = 5.20) or dissatisfied (M = 2.40, SD = 0.681) with the overall programme. Lastly, those organisations that were satisfied with the overall programme (M = 3.16, SD = 5.20) experienced higher levels of satisfaction with the skills training and knowledge transfer than those that were dissatisfied with the overall programme (M = 2.40, SD = 0.681).

Lasting impact (*p* < 0.001): Organisations that found that the overall programme had a significant lasting impact (M = 3.52, SD = 0.512), some lasting impact (M = 3.11, SD = 0.424), and minimal lasting impact (M = 3.00, SD = 0.707) on their organisation experienced a higher level of satisfaction with the skills training and knowledge transfer than those organisations that found that the overall programme had no lasting impact (M = 2.22, SD = 1.093), and a negative lasting impact (M = 1.67, SD = 0.577).

Future participation (*p* < 0.050): Organisations that indicated they would participate in the programme again in the future (M = 3.16, SD = 0.694) experienced a higher level of satisfaction with the skills training and knowledge transfer than those that did not (M = 2.67, SD = 1.047).

b. *Skills training and knowledge transfer*

Email (*p* < 0.050): Organisations that were given email training by the students (M = 3.55, SD = 0.510) experienced greater satisfaction with the skills training than those that did not receive such training (M = 2.95, SD = 0.792).

Website (*p* < 0.001): Organisations that were given website training by students (M = 3.65, SD = 0.487) experienced greater satisfaction with the skills training than those that did not receive such training (M = 2.89, SD = 0.766).

Facebook (*p* < 0.001): Organisations that were given Facebook training by students (M = 3.30, SD = 0.626) experienced greater satisfaction with the skills training than those that did not receive such training (M = 2.73, SD = 0.871).

No training (*p* < 0.001): Organisations that were not given any skills training by students (M = 2.36, SD = 0.757) experienced lower satisfaction with the skills training than those that did receive training (M = 3.33, SD = 0.610).

Marketing (*p* < 0.050): Organisations that were educated in the area of marketing by students (M = 3.35, SD = 0.650) experienced a higher level of satisfaction with the knowledge transfer than those that did not receive such knowledge (M = 2.84, SD = 0.809).

Sales promotion (*p* < 0.050): Organisations that were educated in the area of sales promotion by students (M = 3.42, SD = 0.649) experienced a higher level of satisfaction with the knowledge transfer than those that did not receive such knowledge (M = 2.86, SD = 0.782).

Advertising ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that were educated in the area of advertising by students (M = 3.29, SD = 0.605) experienced greater satisfaction with the knowledge transfer than those that did not receive such knowledge (M = 2.81, SD = 0.890).

No education ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that were not educated in any area by students (M = 2.26, SD = 0.806) experienced a lower level of satisfaction with the knowledge transfer than those that did receive such education (M = 3.28, SD = 0.627).

c. Perceived Impact

Increased sales ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in sales resulting from the skills training and knowledge transfer (M = 3.56, SD = 0.504) experienced a higher level of satisfaction than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.80, SD = 0.777).

New customers ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in new customers resulting from the skills training and knowledge transfer (M = 3.44, SD = 0.552) experienced greater satisfaction than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.82, SD = 0.819).

Increased brand awareness ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in brand awareness resulting from the skills training and knowledge transfer (M = 3.37, SD = 0.536) experienced a higher level of satisfaction that those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.85, SD = 0.864).

Increased customer loyalty ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in customer loyalty resulting from the skills training and knowledge transfer (M = 3.36, SD = 0.492) experienced greater satisfaction than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.99, SD = 0.831).

Increased competitive advantage ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in competitive advantage resulting from the skills training and knowledge transfer (M = 3.64, SD = 0.497) experienced greater satisfaction than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.98, SD = 0.779).

Increased employee motivation ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in employee motivation resulting from the skills training and knowledge transfer (M = 3.53, SD = 0.561) experienced a higher level of satisfaction than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.99, SD = 0.792).

No positive impact ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived no positive impact resulting from the skills training and knowledge transfer (M = 2.40, SD = 0.843) experienced a lower level of satisfaction than those that did perceive a positive impact (M = 3.15, SD = 0.736).

6.7.2.2 Usefulness of skills training and knowledge transfer for businesses

The degree of usefulness to SMMEs of the skills training and knowledge transfer from students was compared to all the other variables in this section of the survey in order to investigate any potential significant relationships. These are discussed at length below.

Table 6.11: Usefulness in relation to skills training and knowledge transfer variables and demographics

Independent variables	***P***
General	
Year	0.366
Satisfaction	0.000*
Overall satisfaction	0.000*
Lasting impact	0.000*
Future participation	0.095
Challenges	
Lack of time	0.016**
Lack of people	0.043**
Lack of money	0.404
Lack of knowledge	0.000*
Inappropriate	0.048**
Lack of communication	0.639
Skills training and knowledge transfer	
Computer	0.877
Microsoft Office	0.877
Email	0.422
Internet	0.982
Website	0.002**
Facebook	0.345
Twitter	0.639
No training	0.059
Marketing	0.000*
Sales promotion	0.026**
Strategy	0.446
Advertising	0.086
Research	0.399
Consumer	0.388
No education	0.078
Perceived impact	
Increased sales	0.008**
New customers	0.002**
Increased brand awareness	0.014**
Increased customer loyalty	0.377
Increased business efficiency	0.765
Increased competitive advantage	0.068
Increased employee motivation	0.066
No positive impact	0.001**
Demographics	
Major industry	0.945
Minor industry	0.841
Business age	0.866

Amount of employees	0.599
CIPC registration	0.683
Legal form of ownership	0.886
Business turnover	0.965
Age of owner	0.479
Gender of owner	0.794
Education of owner	0.230
Ethnicity of owner	0.295
Country of origin of owner	0.258
Student team	
Project mark	0.775
Study programme	0.040**

*Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.001$
**Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.050$

In terms of skills training and knowledge transfer usefulness, Anova revealed that there was a significant difference at $p < 0.001$ for usefulness (M = 2.80, SD = 0.922) as a result of skills training and knowledge transfer by students. No significant differences were found for year, future participation, lack of money, lack of communication, computer, Microsoft Office, Email, Internet, Facebook, Twitter, no training, strategy, advertising, research, consumer, no education, increased customer loyalty, increased business efficiency, increased competitive advantage, increased employee motivation, all demographic variables, or project mark.

Bonferroni correction pairwise comparisons of estimated marginal means disclosed significant difference between the following variables:

a. General

Satisfaction ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that were dissatisfied with the skills training and knowledge transfer (M = 1.40, SD = 0.894) found the skills training and knowledge transfer less useful than those that were satisfied (M = 2.82, SD = 0.782) and very satisfied with the skills training and knowledge transfer (M = 3.17, SD = 0.887).

Overall satisfaction ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that were dissatisfied with the overall programme (M = 2.08, SD = 0.996) found the skills training and knowledge transfer less useful than those that were satisfied (M = 2.72, SD = 0.766) and very satisfied with the overall programme (M = 3.35, SD = 0.797). Additionally, those organisations that were very satisfied with the overall programme (M = 3.35, SD = 0.797), found the skills training and knowledge transfer more useful than those that were satisfied (M = 2.72, SD = 0.766) with the overall programme.

Lasting Impact ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that found that the overall programme had a significant lasting impact (M = 3.45, SD = 0.739) or some lasting impact on their organisation (M = 3.00, SD = 0.720) found the skills training and knowledge transfer more useful than those organisations reporting that the overall programme had minimal lasting impact (M = 2.33, SD = 0.658), no lasting impact (M = 1.86, SD = 1.069), and a negative lasting impact (M = 1.00, SD = 0.000).

b. Challenges

Lack of time ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that stated that they lacked the time to receive the skills training and knowledge transfer provided by students (M = 2.11, SD = 0.928) found the skills training and knowledge transfer less useful than those that did not raise this issue (M = 2.89, SD = 0.891).

Lack of people ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that stated that they lacked the people needed to receive the skills training and knowledge transfer from students (M = 2.00, SD = 0.707) found the skills training and knowledge transfer less useful than those that did not note this problem (M = 2.86, SD = 0. 914).

Lack of knowledge ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that claimed a lack of knowledge prevented them from receiving and using the skills training and knowledge transfer provided by students (M = 1.57, SD = 0.787) found the skills training and knowledge transfer less useful than those that did not make this claim (M = 2.92, SD = 0.850).

Inappropriate ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that stated that the skills training and knowledge transfer provided by students was inappropriate for their business (M = 1.00, SD = 0.000) found the skills training and knowledge transfer less useful than those that did not state this problem (M = 2.83, SD = 0. 905).

c. Skills training and knowledge transfer

Website ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that were given website training by students (M = 3.30, SD = 0.822) found the skills training and knowledge transfer more useful than those that did not receive such training (M = 2.61, SD = 0.891).

Marketing ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that were educated in the area of marketing by students (M = 3.20, SD = 0.813) found the skills training and knowledge transfer more useful than those that did not receive such education (M = 2.41, SD = 0.865).

Sales promotion ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that were educated in the area of sales promotion by students (M = 3.05, SD = 0.880) found the skills training and knowledge transfer more useful than those that did not receive such education (M = 2.60, SD = 0.915).

d. Perceived impact

Increased sales ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in sales resulting from the skills training and knowledge transfer provided by students (M = 3.11, SD = 0.796) found the skills training and knowledge transfer more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.57, SD = 0.950).

New customers ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in new customers resulting from the skills training and knowledge transfer provided by students (M = 3.13, SD = 0.833) found the skills training and knowledge transfer more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.51, SD = 0.910).

Increased brand awareness ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in brand awareness resulting from the skills training and knowledge transfer from students (M = 3.05, SD = 0.795) found the skills training and knowledge transfer more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.55, SD = 0.986).

No positive impact ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived no positive impact resulting from the skills training and knowledge transfer provided by students (M = 1.89, SD = 0.928) found the skills training and knowledge transfer less useful than those that did perceive a positive impact (M = 2.92, SD = 0.862).

e. Student Teams

Study programme ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that worked with students who studied on a part-time basis (M = 3.12, SD = 0.927) found the skills training and knowledge transfer more useful than those that worked with students studying on a full-time basis (M = 2.67, SD = 0.893).

6.7.2.3 Lasting impact of skills training and knowledge transfer on businesses

At the end of the survey, SMMEs were asked to what degree they experienced a lasting impact as a result of the SL programme. In order to investigate relationships of significance, the findings of this question are compared with the degree to which the SMMEs found the skills training and knowledge transfer useful as well as the level of satisfaction they experienced as a result of the skills training and knowledge transfer.

Table 6.12: Effect of skills training and knowledge transfer usefulness and satisfaction on lasting impact

Independent variables	***P***
Usefulness	0.000*
Satisfaction	0.000*

*Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.001$
**Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.050$

In terms of the skills training and knowledge transfer in relation to lasting impact, Anova revealed that there was a significant difference at p < 0.001 for lasting impact (M = 3.76, SD = 1.134) because of skills training and knowledge transfer provided by students.

Bonferroni correction: pairwise comparisons of estimated marginal means disclosed significant difference between the following variables:

Usefulness ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that continued to use the skills and business knowledge extensively (M = 4.55, SD = 0.759), and those that continue to use the skills and business knowledge somewhat (M = 3.91, SD = 0.689), found the overall programme to have a greater lasting impact on their organisation than those organisations that had used the skills and business knowledge before but not anymore (M = 3.35, SD = 0.933), and that had never used the skills and business knowledge at all (M = 2.25, SD = 1.035). Additionally, organisations that continued to use the skills and business knowledge somewhat (M = 3.91, SD = 0.689), and those that had used it before but not anymore (M = 3.35, SD = 0.933) found the overall programme to have had a greater lasting impact on their organisation than those that had not used the skills training and knowledge transfer at all (M = 2.25, SD = 1.035).

Satisfaction ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that were very satisfied (M = 4.19, SD = 0.981), and satisfied (M = 3.76, SD = 0.839) with the skills training and knowledge transfer found the overall programme to have had a greater lasting impact on their organisation than those organisations that were dissatisfied (M = 2.38, SD = 1.061) and very dissatisfied (M = 2.00, SD = 0.707) with the skills training and knowledge transfer.

6.8 Client-agency relationship findings

The client-agency relationship section was the fifth section of the questionnaire. This section sought to determine the value added by the client-agency relationship between the student teams and each participating business. What follows is a report on the descriptive variables of each question in the section as well as a report on the significance data.

6.8.1 Client-agency relationship descriptive statistics

6.8.1.1 Nature of client-agency relationship

It was important to determine the nature of the client-agency relationship that was formed between the student teams and the organisations. Several variables were considered.

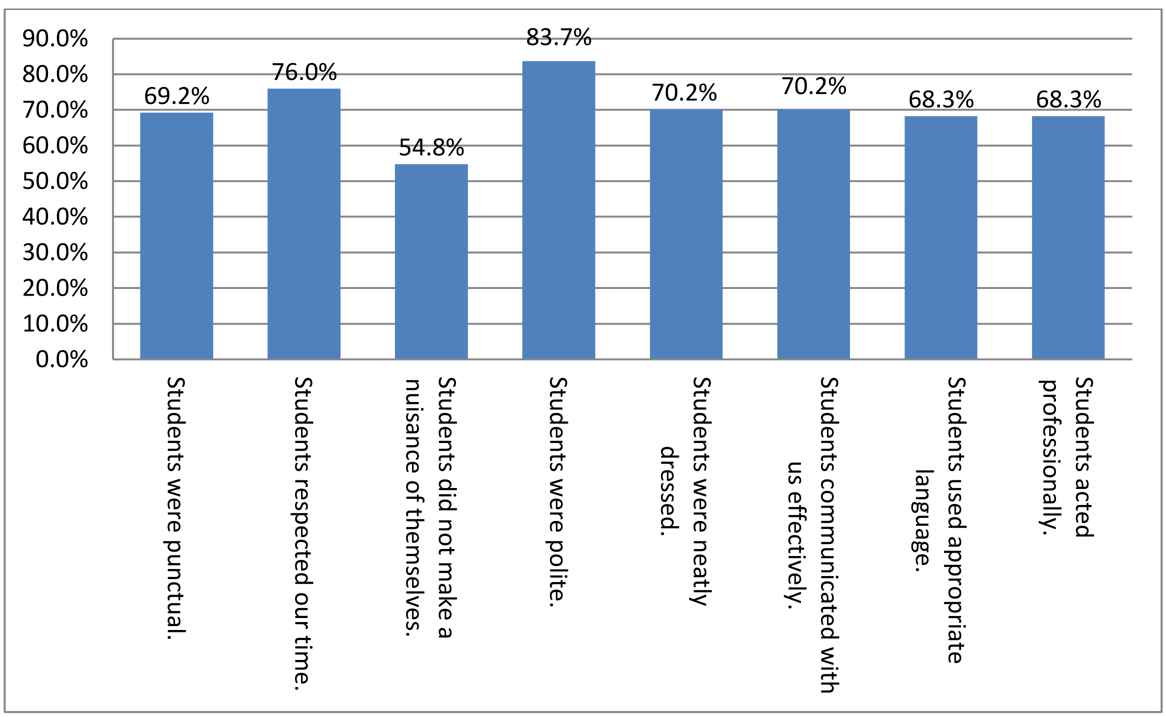

Figure 6.48: Nature of client-agency relationship occurrence

Overall the respondents had positive thoughts regarding the nature of their working relationship with students. Upon evaluation of the student teams, a large proportion of respondents recorded that students were polite (83.7%), respected the times of the business (76%), were neatly dressed (70.2%), and communicated with employees effectively (70.2%). Additionally, respondents felt that student were punctual for engagements (69.2%), used appropriate language when interacting (68.3%), and acted professionally (68.3%). On the negative side, 45.2 per cent of respondents could not state that students did not bombard them constantly or make a nuisance of themselves, suggesting that this may have been the case.

6.8.1.2 Usefulness of client-agency relationship

The usefulness of the client-agency relationship between student teams and their client organisations was determined.

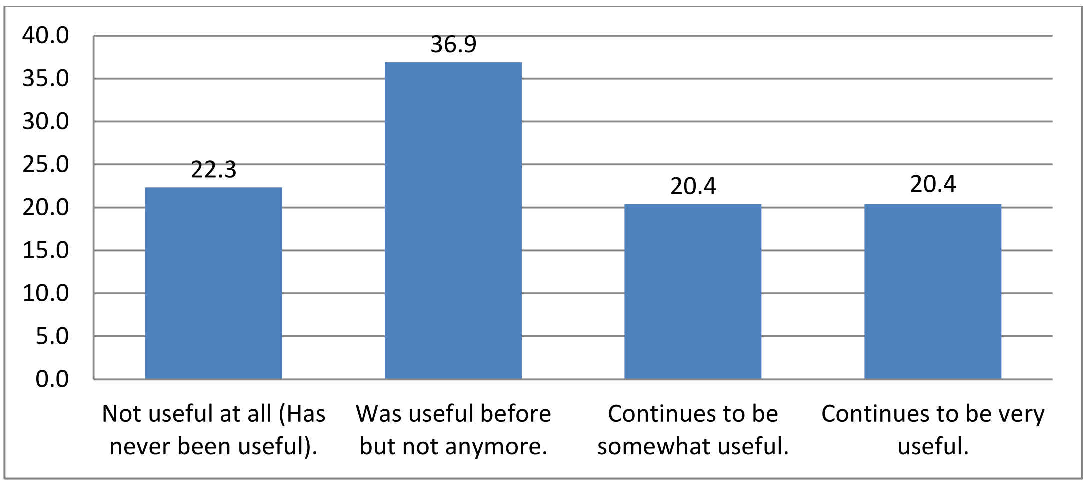

Figure 6.49: Usefulness of client-agency relationship percentage

More than three quarters (77.7%) of the respondents confirmed the usefulness of the client-agency relationship between the student team and their organisation. The biggest group of respondents (36.9%) reported that the client-agency relationship had been useful before but was not anymore. Other groups responded that the relationship continued to be somewhat useful (20.4%), or continued to be very useful (20.4%). The remaining group declared that the client-agency relationship was not useful and had never been useful (22.3%).

6.8.1.3 Reasons for lack of usefulness of client-agency relationship

Reasons for the lack of utility of the client-agency relationships were determined in order to assess areas that might be improved. A range of limiting variables was considered.

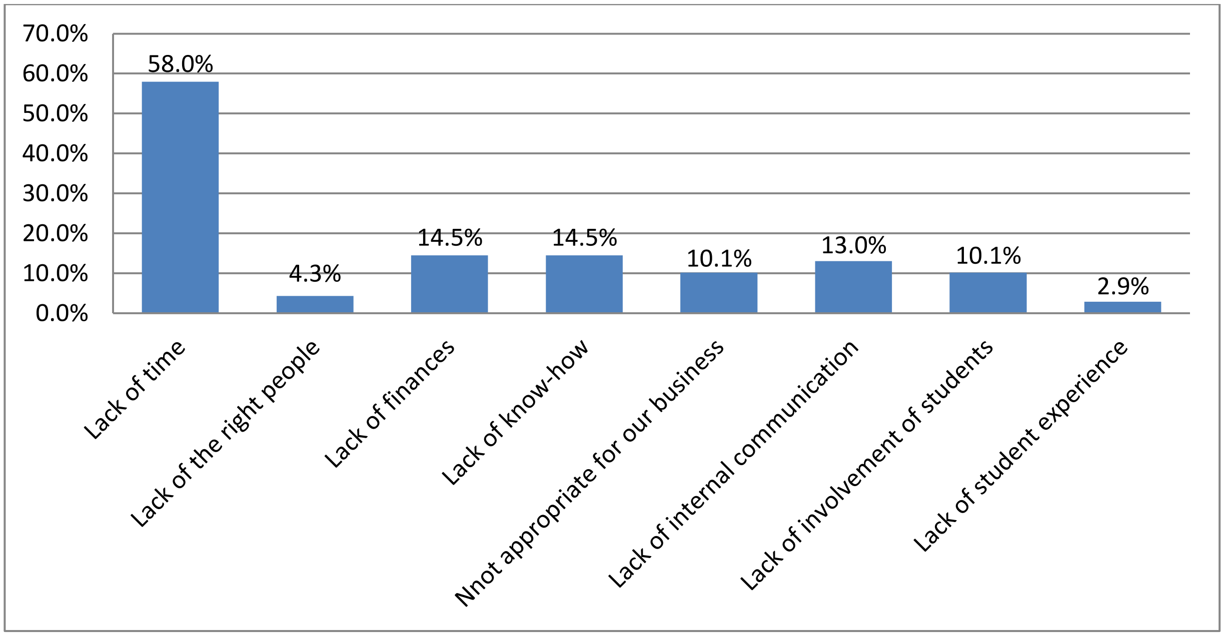

Figure 6.50: Reasons for lack of usefulness of client-agency relationship rate

More than half of the respondents (58%) identified a lack of time as the reason why their working relationship with students was not as useful as it could have been. Other factors noted as contributing to a lack of usefulness included a lack of finances (14.5%), a lack of know-how (14.5%), and a lack of internal communication (10.1%). Those factors that saw the least mention were a lack of the right people (4.3%) and a lack of student experience (2.9%).

6.8.1.4 Perceived impact of client-agency relationship

The perceived impacts that the client-agency relationship had on the performance of the organisation were numerous. In order to determine the benefits of the relationship, these variables were assessed.

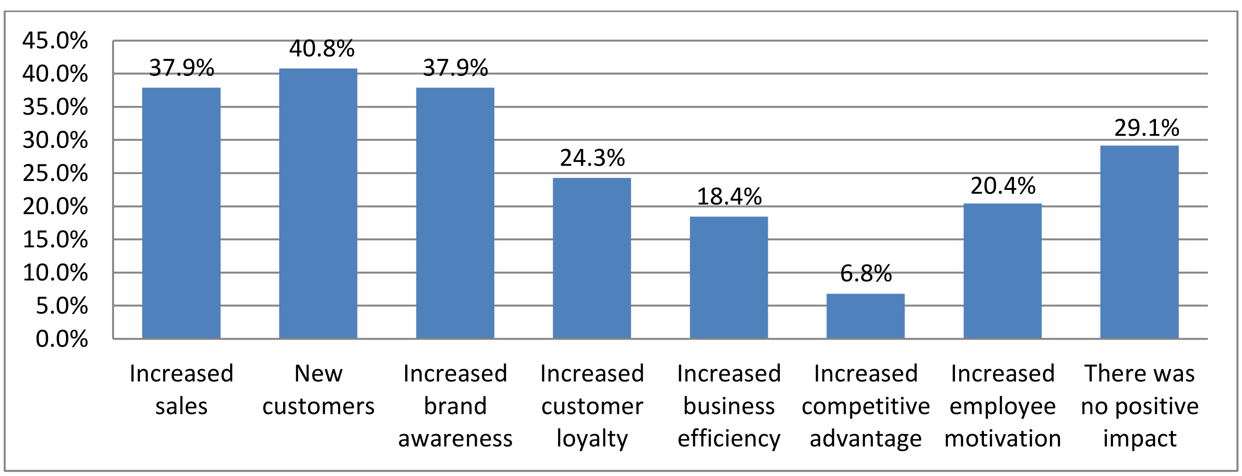

Figure 6.51: Perceived impact of client-agency relationship occurrence

The majority of respondents (70.9%) felt that the client-agency relationships with student groups had a positive impact on the organisation. A substantial group (40.8%) believed that their working relationships with students helped the organisation gain new customers. Additionally, 37.9 per cent of respondents felt that the working relationship played a hand in increasing sales, 37.9 per cent believed that it contributed to an increase in brand awareness, and 24.3 per cent felt that it helped increase customer loyalty. A total of 29.1 per cent of respondents felt that the working relationships with students had no positive impact on the business.

6.8.1.5. Satisfaction with client-agency relationship

The overall satisfaction that respondents experienced from the client-agency relationship between the business and the student teams was determined to gauge the success of the relationships.

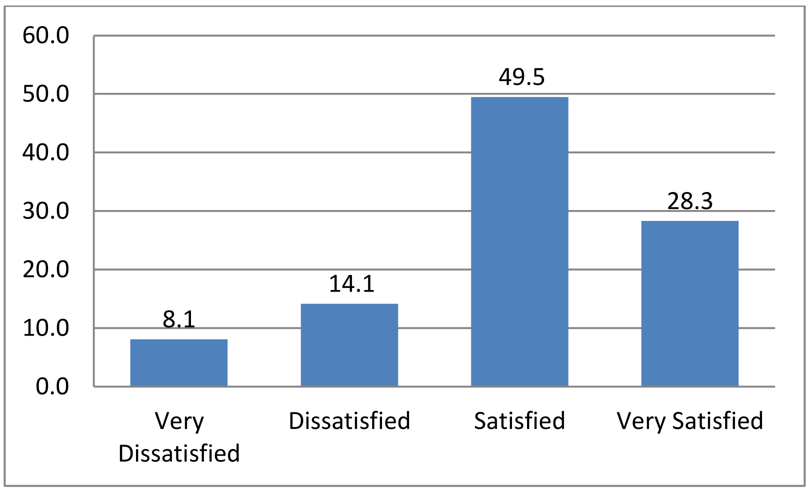

Figure 6.52: Satisfaction of client-agency relationship frequency

A large proportion of respondents (77.8%) declared their satisfaction with the client-agency relationship between the student team and the business. Just under half (49.5%) the respondents felt satisfied with the client-agency relationship, and 28.3 per cent were very satisfied. The remainder of the respondents (22.2%) registered a negative satisfaction rating of the client-agency relationship between the student team and the business: 14.1 per cent were dissatisfied with the client-agency relationship, while 8.1 per cent felt very dissatisfied.

6.8.2 Client-agency relationship significance statistics

In order to identify relationships of significance, variables in the client-agency relationship section of the survey were compared to three key variables, namely, the level of satisfaction that SMMEs experienced as a result of the relationships, the degree of usefulness that firms attributed to the relationships, and the degree of lasting impact that the SMMEs sustained from the programme as a result of the client-agency relationship.

6.8.2.1 Satisfaction of businesses with client-agency relationship

The level of satisfaction that organisations experienced as a result of the working relationships with students was compared to the rest of the variables in this section of the survey in order to determine relationships of significance. These are discussed in full below.

Table 6.13: Effect of client-agency relationship variables and demographics on satisfaction

Independent variables	***P***
General	
Year	0.510
Usefulness	0.000*
Overall satisfaction	0.000*
Lasting impact	0.000*
Future participation	0.000*
Challenges	
Lack of time	0.680
Lack of people	0.529
Lack of money	0.181
Lack of knowledge	0.467
Inappropriate	0.199
Lack of communication	0.000*
Lack of student involvement	0.000*
Lack of student experience	0.107
Client-agency relationship	
Punctuality	0.002**
Respect	0.000*
Sensitivity (did not bombard)	0.158
Politeness	0.004**
Neatness	0.112
Effective communication	0.000*
Appropriate language	0.001**
Professional	0.000*
Perceived impact	
Increased sales	0.000*
New customers	0.000*
Increased brand awareness	0.000*
Increased customer loyalty	0.004**
Increased business efficiency	0.013**
Increased competitive advantage	0.020**
Increased employee motivation	0.032**
No positive impact	0.000*
Demographics	
Major industry	0.132
Minor industry	0.354
Business age	0.821

Amount of employees	0.469
CIPC registration	0.491
Legal form of ownership	0.272
Business turnover	0.162
Age of owner	0.947
Gender of owner	0.493
Education of owner	0.839
Ethnicity of owner	0.099
Country of origin of owner	0.717
Student team	
Project mark	0.001**
Study programme	0.097

*Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.001$
**Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.050$

In terms of the campaign plan, Anova revealed that there was a significant difference at $p < 0.001$ for satisfaction (M = 2.98, SD = 0.869) because of the client-agency relationship between students and participating organisations. No significant differences were found for year, lack of time, lack of people, lack of money, lack of knowledge, inappropriateness, and lack of student experience, sensitivity, neatness, all demographic variables, or study programme.

Bonferroni correction pairwise comparisons of estimated marginal means disclosed significant difference between the following variables:

a. General

Usefulness ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that stated that their client-agency relationship had not been useful to them at all (M = 1.77, SD = 0.752) experienced lower levels of satisfaction with their client-agency relationship than those organisations that claimed their client-agency relationship had been useful before but not anymore (M = 3.11, SD = 0.471), those that claimed that their client-agency relationship continued to be somewhat useful (M = 3.33, SD = 0.485), and those that stated that their client-agency relationship continued to be very useful (M = 3.70, SD = 0.470). Additionally, those organisations that stated that their client-agency relationship continued to be very useful (M = 3.70, SD = 0.470) reported higher levels of satisfaction with their client-agency relationship than those that stated that their client-agency relationship had been useful before but was not anymore (M = 3.11, SD = 0.471).

Overall satisfaction ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that were very dissatisfied with the overall programme (M = 1.33, SD = 0.816) experienced a lower level of satisfaction with their client-agency relationship than those that were dissatisfied (M = 2.18, SD = 0.733), satisfied (M = 3.17, SD = 0.433), and very satisfied (M = 3.74, SD = 0.449) with the overall programme. Additionally, those organisations that were very satisfied with the overall programme (M = 3.74, SD = 0.449) experienced higher levels of satisfaction with their client-agency relationship than those that were either satisfied (M = 3.17, SD = 0.433) or dissatisfied (M = 2.18, SD = 0.733) with the overall programme. Lastly, those organisations that were satisfied with the overall programme ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 0.433$) experienced higher levels of satisfaction with their client-agency relationship than those that were dissatisfied ($M = 2.18$, $SD = 0.733$).

Lasting impact ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that found that the overall programme had had a significant lasting impact ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 0.489$) on their organisation reported a higher level of satisfaction with the client-agency relationship than those organisations that found that the overall programme had had minimal lasting impact ($M = 2.88$, $SD = 0.726$), no lasting impact ($M = 2.35$, $SD = 0.862$), and a negative lasting impact ($M = 1.25$, $SD = 0.500$). Additionally, organisations that found that the overall programme had some lasting impact ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 0.670$) on their organisation evinced a higher level of satisfaction with the client-agency relationship than those organisations that found that the overall programme had no lasting impact ($M = 2.35$, $SD = 0.862$), and a negative lasting impact ($M = 1.25$, $SD = 0.500$). Lastly, organisations that found that the overall programme had had minimal lasting impact ($M = 2.88$, $SD = 0.726$) as well as no lasting impact ($M = 2.35$, $SD = 0.862$) on their organisation reported a higher level of satisfaction with the client-agency relationship than those organisations that found that the overall programme was having a negative lasting impact ($M = 1.25$, $SD = 0.500$).

Future participation ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that stated that they would participate in the programme again in the future ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 0.743$) had experienced a higher level of satisfaction with their client-agency relationship than those that did not state this ($M = 2.32$, $SD = 1.057$).

b. Challenges

Lack of communication ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that claimed they had encountered challenges in their client-agency relationship because of a lack of communication ($M = 1.88$, $SD = 0.835$) experienced a lower level of satisfaction with their client-agency relationship than those organisations that did not claim this challenge ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 0.806$).

Lack of student involvement ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that stated that they had experienced challenges in their client-agency relationship because of a lack of involvement on the part of the students ($M = 1.86$, $SD = 0.900$) experienced a lower level of satisfaction with their client-agency relationship than those organisations that did not state this challenge ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 0.809$).

c. Student agency characteristics

Punctuality ($p < 0.050$): Organisations reporting that students were punctual for planned meetings and engagements ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 0.813$) experienced a higher level of satisfaction with their client-agency relationship than organisations that did not report this ($M = 2.58$, $SD = 1.089$).

Respect ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that stated that students respected them and their time ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 0.628$) experienced a higher level of satisfaction with their client-agency relationship than organisations that did not state this ($M = 2.22$, $SD = 0.974$).

Politeness ($p < 0.050$): Organisations claiming that students were polite (M = 3.10, SD = 0.739) experienced a higher level of satisfaction with their client-agency relationship than organisations that did not make this claim (M = 2.47, SD = 1.172).

Effective communication ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that stated that students communicated with them effectively (M = 3.21, SD = 0.691) experienced a higher level of satisfaction with their client-agency relationship than those organisations that did not state this (M = 2.52, SD = 1.004).

Appropriate language ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that stated that students communicated with them in the appropriate language (M = 3.19, SD = 0.710) experienced a higher level of satisfaction with their client-agency relationship than those organisations that did not state this (M = 2.60, SD = 1.006).

Professional ($p < 0.001$): Organisations reporting that students engaged with them in a professional manner (M = 3.21, SD = 0.783) experienced a higher level of satisfaction with their client-agency relationship than those that did not report this (M = 2.48, SD = 0.851).

d. Perceived Impact

Increased sales ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in sales resulting from their client-agency relationship (M = 3.54, SD = 0.505) experienced greater satisfaction with the client-agency relationship than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.67, SD = 0.874).

New customers ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in new customers resulting from their client-agency relationship (M = 3.54, SD = 0.505) experienced a higher level of satisfaction with the client-agency relationship than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.59, SD = 0.859).

Increased brand awareness ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in brand awareness resulting from their client-agency relationship (M = 3.49, SD = 0.506) experienced greater satisfaction with the client-agency relationship than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.65, SD = 0.899).

Increased customer loyalty ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in customer loyalty resulting from their client-agency relationship (M = 3.42, SD = 0.504) experienced greater satisfaction with the client-agency relationship than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.84, SD = 0.916).

Increased competitive advantage ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in competitive advantage resulting from their client-agency relationship (M = 3.71, SD = 0.488) experienced a higher level of satisfaction with the client-agency relationship than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.92, SD = 0.867).

Increased business efficiency ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in business efficiency resulting from their client-agency relationship (M = 3.42, SD = 0.507) experienced a higher level of satisfaction with the client-agency relationship than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.88, SD = 0.905).

Increased employee motivation ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in employee motivation resulting from their client-agency relationship (M = 3.35, SD = 0.489) experienced a higher level of satisfaction with the client-agency relationship than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.89, SD = 0.920).

No positive impact ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived no positive impact resulting from their client-agency relationship (M = 2.07, SD = 0.884) experienced a lower level of satisfaction with the client-agency relationship than those that perceived a positive impact (M = 3.36, SD = 0.512).

e. Student team

Project mark ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that worked with students who achieved a distinction (75%-100%) for their project (M = 3.57, SD = 0.598) experienced a higher degree of satisfaction with their client-agency relationship than those who worked with students that passed (50% - 74%) their project (M = 2.83, SD = 0.821) or failed (0%-49%) their project (M = 2.77, SD = 1.092).

6.8.2.2 Usefulness of client-agency relationship for businesses

The degree to which SMMEs found the client-agency relationship useful was compared with all the other variables within the client-agency relationship section of the survey in order to uncover relationships of significance. These are unpacked in the following section.

Table 6.14: Effect of client-agency relationship variables and demographics on usefulness

Independent variables	***P***
General	
Year	0.070
Satisfaction	0.000*
Overall satisfaction	0.000*
Lasting impact	0.000*
Future participation	0.000*
Challenges	
Lack of time	0.978
Lack of people	0.644
Lack of money	0.408
Lack of knowledge	0.122
Inappropriate	0.078
Lack of communication	0.012**
Lack of student involvement	0.004**
Lack of student experience	0.229
Client-agency relationship	
Punctuality	0.020**
Respect	0.000*
Sensitivity (did not bombard)	0.673
Politeness	0.463
Neatness	0.194

Effective communication	0.001
Appropriate language	0.172
Professional	0.001**
Perceived impact	
Increased sales	0.000*
New customers	0.000*
Increased brand awareness	0.000*
Increased customer loyalty	0.002**
Increased business efficiency	0.001**
Increased competitive advantage	0.002**
Increased employee motivation	0.003**
No positive impact	0.000*
Demographics	
Major industry	0.095
Minor industry	0.146
Business age	0.910
Amount of employees	0.223
CIPC registration	0.725
Legal form of ownership	0.385
Business turnover	0.523
Age of owner	0.894
Gender of owner	0.789
Education of owner	0.696
Ethnicity of owner	0.564
Country of origin of owner	0.882
Student team	
Project mark	0.183
Study programme	0.087

*Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.001$
**Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.050$

In terms of the usefulness of the client-agency relationship between students and participating organisations, Anova revealed that there was a significant difference at $p < 0.001$ for usefulness (M = 2.39, SD = 1.050) because of the client-agency relationship. No significant differences were found for year, lack of time, lack of people, lack of money, lack of knowledge, inappropriateness, lack of student experience, sensitivity, politeness, neatness, effective communication, appropriate language, all demographic variables, and all student team variables.

Bonferroni correction pairwise comparisons of estimated marginal means disclosed significant difference between the following variables:

a. General

Satisfaction ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that were very satisfied with their client-agency relationship (M = 3.22, SD = 0.934) found the client-agency relationship more useful than those organisations that were very dissatisfied (M = 1.00, SD = 0.000), dissatisfied (M = 1.14, SD = 0.363), and satisfied (M =

2.50, SD = 0.753) with their client-agency relationship. Additionally, organisations that were satisfied with their client-agency relationship (M = 2.50, SD = 0.753) found the client-agency relationship more useful than those organisations that were very dissatisfied (M = 1.00, SD = 0.000) and dissatisfied (M = 1.14, SD = 0.363) with their client-agency relationship.

Overall satisfaction ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that were very satisfied with the overall programme (M = 3.31, SD = 0.838) found their client-agency relationship more useful than those that were satisfied (M = 2.57, SD = 0.807), dissatisfied (M = 1.42, SD = 0.584), or very dissatisfied (M = 1.00, SD = 0.000) with the overall programme. Additionally, organisations that were satisfied with the overall programme (M = 2.57, SD = 0.807) found their client-agency relationship more useful than those that were dissatisfied (M = 1.42, SD = 0.584) or very dissatisfied (M = 1.00, SD = 0.000) with the overall programme.

Lasting Impact ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that found that the overall programme had a significant lasting impact (M = 3.52, SD = 0.750) found the client-agency relationship more useful than those organisations for which the overall programme had some lasting impact (M = 2.69, SD = 0.891), minimal lasting impact (M = 2.07, SD = 0.616), no lasting impact (M = 1.26, SD = 0.452), and a negative lasting impact (M = 1.25, SD = 0.500). Additionally, organisations for which the overall programme had some lasting impact on their organisation (M = 2.69, SD = 0.891) found the client-agency relationship more useful than those organisations for which the overall programme had minimal lasting impact (M = 2.07, SD = 0.616), no lasting impact (M = 1.26, SD = 0.452), and a negative impact (M = 1.25, SD = 0.500). Finally, organisations that reported that the overall programme had a minimal lasting impact on their organisation (M = 2.07, SD = 0.616) found the client-agency relationship more useful than those organisations for which the overall programme had no lasting impact (M = 1.26, SD = 0.452).

Future participation ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that stated that they would participate in the programme again in the future (M = 2.55, SD = 1.018) found their client-agency relationship more useful than those that did not state this (M = 1.65, SD = 0.875).

b. Challenges

Lack of communication ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that stated that their client-agency relationship lacked communication (M = 1.56, SD = 1.014) found the client-agency relationship less useful than those that did not state this challenge (M = 2.47, SD = 1.023).

Lack of student involvement ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that stated that their client-agency relationship lacked involvement from the students (M = 1.29, SD = 0.488) found the client-agency relationship less useful than those that did not state this challenge (M = 2.47, SD = 1.036).

c. Student agency characteristics

Punctuality ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that stated that students were punctual for planned meetings and engagements (M = 2.55, SD = 1.025) found the client-agency relationship more useful than those organisations that did not state this (M = 2.03, SD = 1.031).

Respect ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that stated that students respected their time (M = 2.65, SD = 0.970) found their client-agency relationship more useful than those organisations that did not state this (M = 1.62, SD = 0.898).

Effective communication ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that stated that students communicated with them effectively (M = 2.61, SD = 1.026) found their client-agency relationship more useful than those organisations that did not state this (M = 1.91, SD = 0.947).

Professional ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that stated that students engaged with them in a professional manner (M = 2.61, SD = 1.054) found their client-agency relationship more useful than those that did not state this (M = 1.91, SD = 0.879).

d. Perceived impact

Increased sales ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in sales resulting from the client-agency relationship (M = 3.18, SD = 0.823) found the client-agency relationship more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 1.91, SD = 0.868).

New customers ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in new customers resulting from the client-agency relationship (M = 3.05, SD = 0.865) found the client-agency relationship more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 1.95, SD = 0.931).

Increased brand awareness ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in brand awareness resulting from the client-agency relationship (M = 3.22, SD = 0.787) found the client-agency relationship more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 1.92, SD = 0.882).

Increased customer loyalty ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in customer loyalty resulting from the client-agency relationship (M = 2.96, SD = 0.908) found the client-agency relationship more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.22, SD = 1.034).

Increased business efficiency ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in business efficiency resulting from the client-agency relationship (M = 3.11, SD = 0.900) found the client-agency relationship more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.24, SD = 1.019).

Increased competitive advantage ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in competitive advantage resulting from the client-agency relationship (M = 3.57, SD = 0.787) found the client-agency relationship more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.30, SD = 1.017).

Increased employee motivation ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in employee motivation resulting from the client-agency relationship (M = 3.00, SD = 0.973) found the client-agency relationship more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.24, SD = 1.019).

No positive impact ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived no positive impact resulting from the client-agency relationship (M = 1.37, SD = 0.615) found the client-agency relationship less useful than those that did perceive a positive impact (M = 2.81, SD = 0.892).

6.8.2.3 Lasting impact of client-agency relationship on businesses

In order to investigate potential significant relationships, the degree to which SMMEs perceived there to be a lasting impact on their firms as a result of the overall programme was compared to the usefulness that SMMEs associated with the client-agency relationship, as well as to the level of satisfaction they experienced from the client-agency relationship.

Table 6.15: Effect of lasting impact on client-agency relationship usefulness and satisfaction

Independent variables	***P***
Usefulness	0.000*
Satisfaction	0.000*

*Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.001$
**Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.050$

In terms of the relation between client-agency relationships between students and participating organisations and lasting impact, Anova revealed that there was a significant difference at p < 0.001 for lasting impact (M = 3.76, SD = 1.134) because of the client-agency relationship.

Bonferroni correction pairwise comparisons of estimated marginal means disclosed significant difference between the following variables:

Usefulness ($p < 0.001$): Organisations reporting that the client-agency relationship continued to be very useful (M = 4.70, SD = 0.470, found the overall programme to have had a greater lasting impact on their organisation than those organisations that found that the client-agency relationship continued to be somewhat useful (M = 3.90, SD = 0.718), those that found the client-agency relationship had been useful before but was not anymore (M = 3.27, SD = 0.902), and those that had never found the client-agency relationship to be useful at all (M = 2.22, SD = 0.795). Organisations that found that the client-agency relationship continued to be somewhat useful (M = 3.90, SD = 0.718) found the overall programme to have had a greater lasting impact on their organisation than those organisations that found that the client-agency relationship had been useful before but was not anymore (M = 3.27, SD = 0.902), and those that had never found the client-agency relationship to be useful at all (M = 2.22, SD = 0.795). Organisations that found that the client-agency relationship had been useful before but was not anymore (M = 3.27, SD = 0.902) found the overall programme to have had a greater lasting impact on their organisation than those organisations that had never found the client-agency relationship to be useful at all (M = 2.22, SD = 0.795).

Satisfaction ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that were very satisfied (M = 4.23, SD = 0.951), and satisfied (M = 3. 461, SD = 0.837) with the client-agency relationship found the overall programme to have had a greater lasting impact on their organisation than those organisations that were dissatisfied (M = 2.36, SD = 0.842), and very dissatisfied (M = 2.13, SD = 1.126) with the client-agency relationship. Additionally, organisations that were very satisfied (M = 4.23, SD = 0.951) with the client-agency relationship found the overall programme to have had a greater lasting impact on their organisation than those organisations that were satisfied (M = 3.461, SD = 0.837) with the client-agency relationship.

6.9 Overall programme findings

The overall programme section was the sixth section of the questionnaire. This section sought to determine the value added by the overall programme for each business. What follows is a report on the descriptive variables of each question in the section as well as a report on the significance data.

6.9.1 Overall programme descriptive statistics

6.9.1.1 Usefulness of overall programme

The usefulness of the overall programme for the participating businesses was determined, as well as whether the programme continued to be useful.

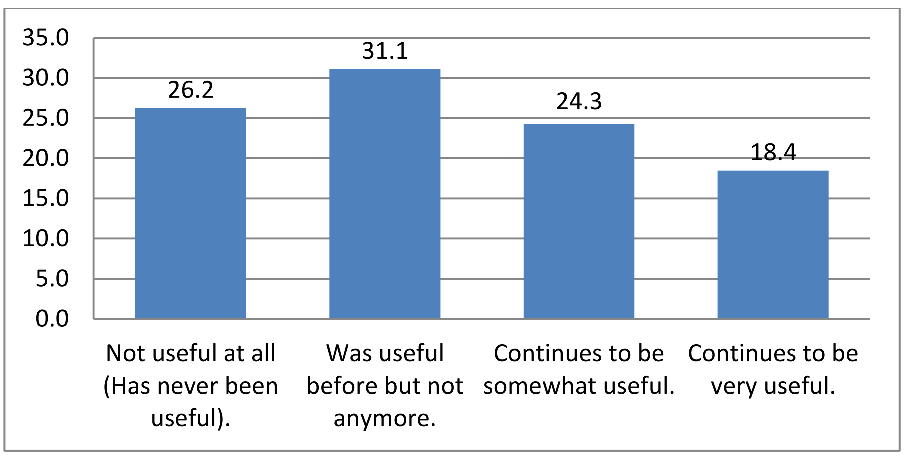

Figure 6.53: Usefulness of overall programme incidence

A large proportion of the respondents (74.8%) found the overall programme to have been positively useful to the business. The biggest group (31.1%) found the programme to have been useful before but not anymore. Others reported that the overall programme continued to be somewhat useful (24.3%) or continued to be very useful (18.4%). A small group of 26.2 per cent declared that overall the project had not been useful at all.

6.9.1.2 Reasons for lack of usefulness of overall programme

In order to improve the programme, it was important to determine the reasons why businesses did not find the programme useful overall.

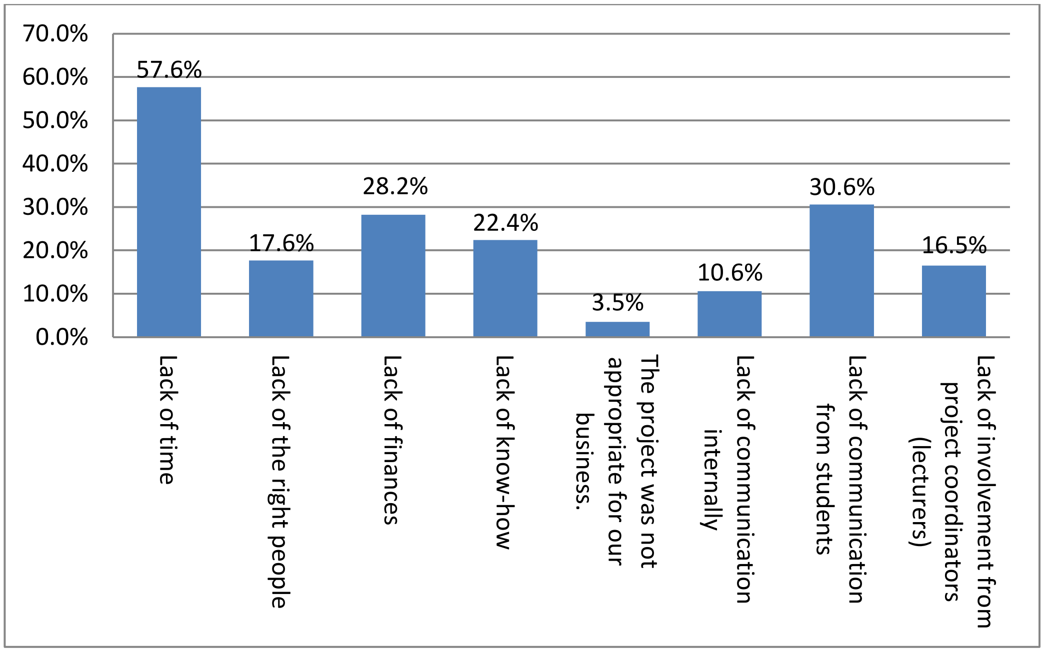

Figure 6.54: Reasons for lack of usefulness of overall programme rate

A large portion of respondents (57.6%) reported a lack of time as a reason for not experiencing optimal utility from the overall programme. Other variables highlighted include a lack of communication from students (30.6%), a lack of finances (28.2%), and a lack of know-how (22.4%). A reasonable percentage of respondents (16.5%) also noted a lack of involvement by the project coordinators as a factor contributing to the programme's not being useful to participating organisations.

6.9.1.3 Perceived impact of the overall programme

In order to gain insight into the benefits of the programme, it was important to determine the participants' perceptions of the impact of the overall programme on their organisations.

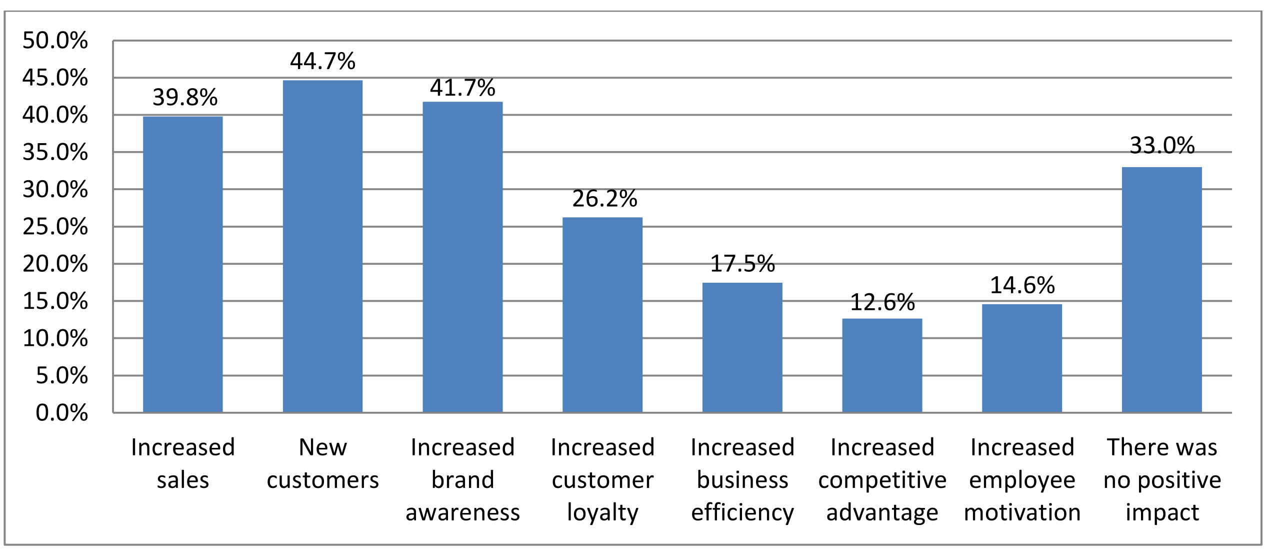

Figure 6.55: Perceived impact of overall programme on organisation percentage

The majority of respondents (67%) declared that the overall programme had a positive impact on the business. A large group of respondents (44.7%) mentioned the gaining of new customers as a positive impact of the overall programme. Additionally, respondents noted that the overall programme helped increase sales (39.8%), increase brand awareness (41.7%), and increase customer loyalty (26.2%). Roughly a third of participants (33%) felt that the overall programme had no positive impact on the business.

6.9.1.4 Satisfaction with overall programme

It was important to determine the satisfaction of participants with the overall programme in order to gain a general perspective on the impact of the programme on SMMEs.

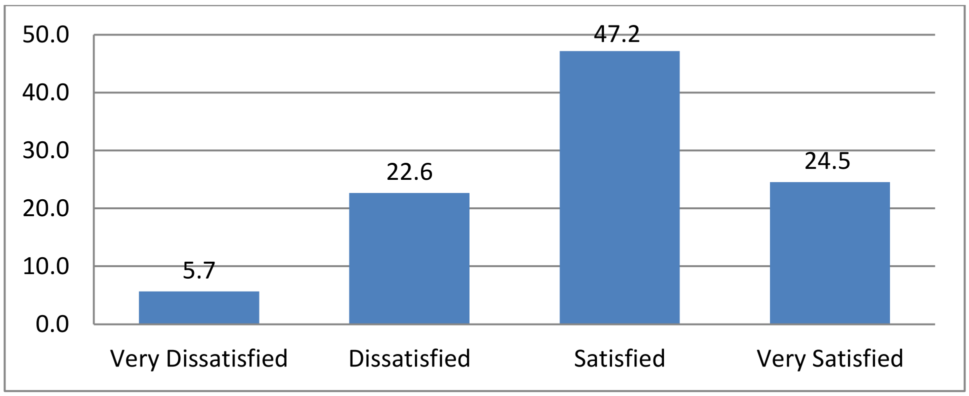

Figure 6.56: Satisfaction of overall programme rate

A large majority of respondents (71.7%) had a positive satisfaction rating for the overall programme, with 47.2 per cent being satisfied and 24.5 per cent being very satisfied. A smaller group of respondents (29.3%) experienced negative satisfaction in respect of the overall programme, with 22.6 per cent feeling dissatisfied and 5.7 per cent feeling very dissatisfied.

6.9.1.5 Lasting impact of the programme

To determine whether the programme is worthwhile to run, it was important to determine to what extent the programme had a lasting impact on the participating businesses.

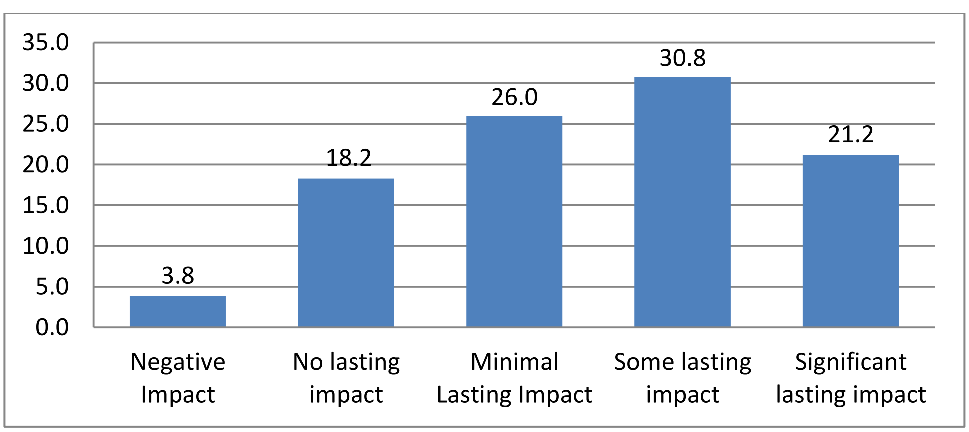

Figure 6.57: Lasting impact of programme percentage

A large majority of respondents (77.9%) signalled that the programme had had a degree of lasting impact on their organisation. The largest group (30.8%) stated that the programme had had some lasting impact on their organisation. Others confirmed a minimal lasting impact (26%) or a significant lasting impact (21.2%). One group of respondents (18.4%) noted that the programme had had no lasting impact on their businesses. A small group of respondents (3.8%) claimed that the programme had had a negative impact on their businesses.

6.9.1.6 Suggestions for improvement of the programme

In order to improve the programme going forward it was important to gather suggestions from participants.

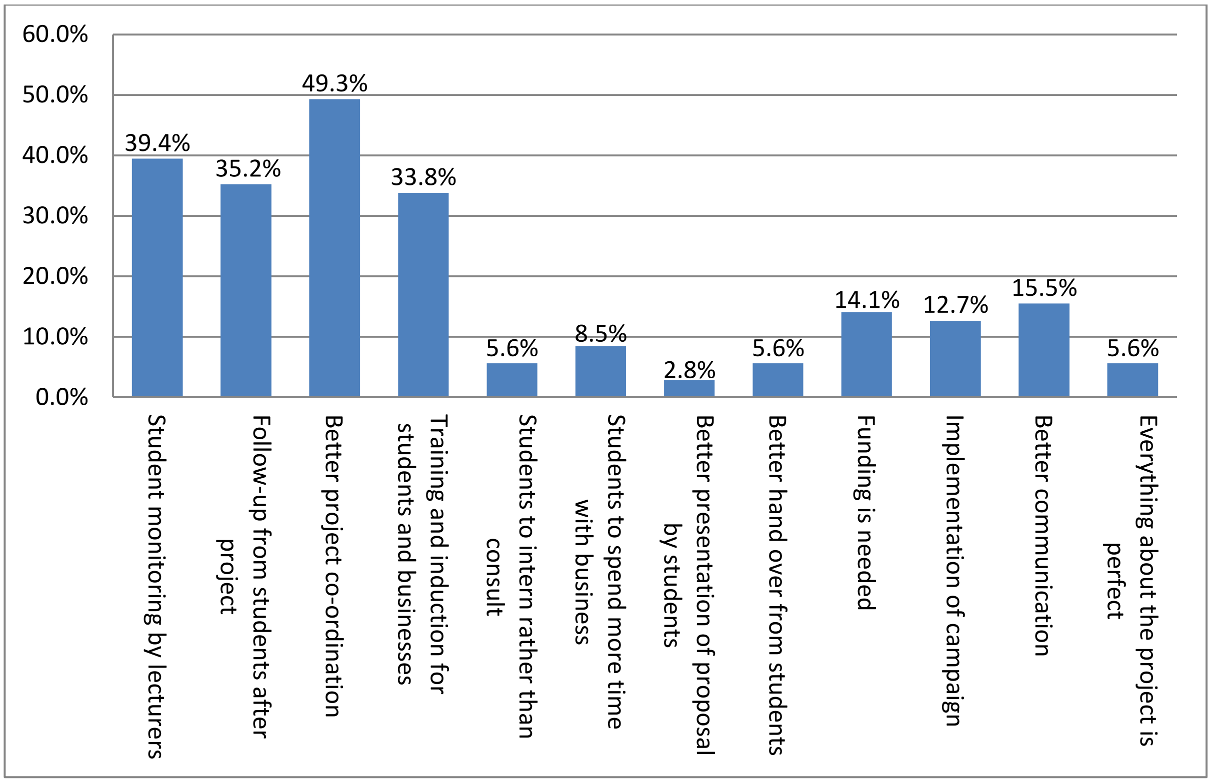

Figure 6.58: Suggestions for improvement of project frequency

Of the suggestions made by organisations, nearly half (49.3%) suggested that the programme needs better coordination. Additionally, respondents suggested that students should be monitored better (39.4%); that students should follow up with the businesses after the programme has been completed (35.2%); and that both the students and the participating organisations need better training and induction to the project (33.8%). Other important suggestions included better communication overall (15.5%), the need for funding (14.1%), and the need for students to implement the campaign once it has been developed (12.7%). A small group (5.6%) believed that the programme was perfect as it was and that nothing needed to change or improve.

6.9.1.7 Participation in future

In order to determine whether businesses would be interested in participating in the programme again, this variable was assessed. It would not make sense to continue running the programme if most businesses were not willing to participate again.

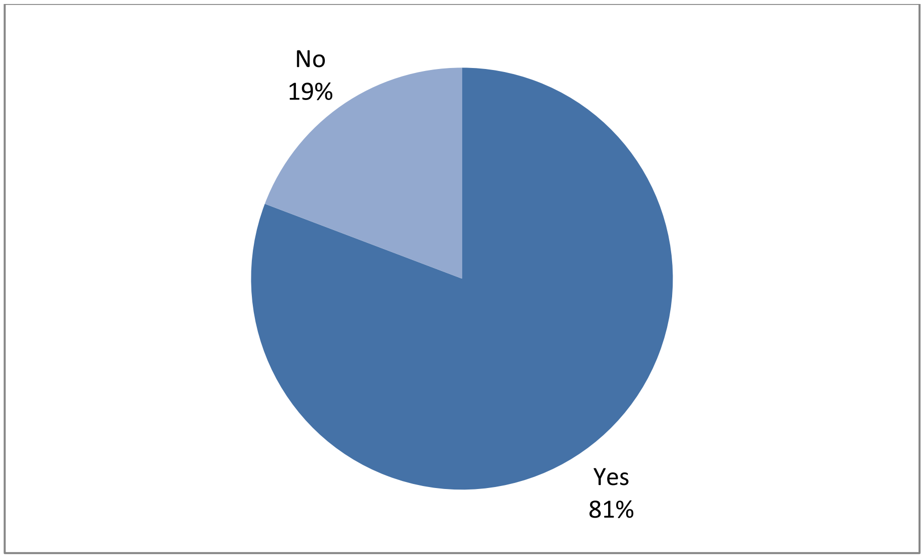

Figure 6.59: Participation in future rate

The majority of respondents (81%) stated that they would participate in the programme again in future. A small group (19%) indicated that they would not be interested in participating again in the future.

6.9.2 Overall programme significance statistics

In order to assess relationships of significance, the overall programme variables were compared to the level of satisfaction that businesses experienced from the overall programme, the degree of usefulness that SMMEs gained from the overall programme, and the level of lasting impact that firms perceived to have gained from the overall programme.

6.9.2.1 Satisfaction of businesses with overall programme

The variables of the overall programme section of the survey were compared to the level of satisfaction that SMMEs experienced from the overall programme in order to discern relationships of significance. These are developed in the following section.

Table 6.16: Effect of overall programme variables and demographics on satisfaction

Independent variables	***P***
General	
Year	0.389
Usefulness	0.000*
Lasting impact	0.000*
Future participation	0.000*
Challenges	
Lack of time	0.190
Lack of people	0.390
Lack of money	0.144
Lack of knowledge	0.716
Inappropriate	0.617
Lack of internal communication	0.083
Lack of student communication	0.000*
Lack of lecturer involvement	0.002**
Suggestions	
Monitoring	0.000*
Follow up	0.711
Coordination	0.000*
Training	0.001**
Intern	0.701
More time	0.197
Better presentation	0.490
Handover	0.819
Funding	0.243
Campaign implementation	0.031**
Communication	0.022**
Perfect	0.038**
Perceived impact	
Increased sales	0.000*
New customers	0.000*
Increased brand awareness	0.000*
Increased customer loyalty	0.001**
Increased business efficiency	0.001**
Increased competitive advantage	0.000**
Increased employee motivation	0.001**
No positive impact	0.000*
Demographics	
Major industry	0.196
Minor industry	0.248
Business age	0.475
Amount of employees	0.323
CIPC registration	0.061
Legal form of ownership	0.137

Business turnover	0.661
Age of owner	0.608
Gender of owner	0.774
Education of owner	0.533
Ethnicity of owner	0.887
Country of origin of owner	0.577
Student team	
Project mark	0.076
Study programme	0.332

*Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.001$
**Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.050$

In terms of the overall programme, Anova revealed that there was a significant difference at $p < 0.001$ for the satisfaction (M = 2.91, SD = 0.834) experienced by participating organisations because of the overall programme. No significant differences were found for year, lack of time, lack of people, lack of money, lack of knowledge, inappropriateness, lack of internal communication, follow up, intern, more time, better presentation, handover, funding, all demographic variables, or all student team variables.

Bonferroni correction pairwise comparisons of estimated marginal means disclosed significant difference between the following variables:

a. General

Usefulness ($p < 0.001$): Organisations claiming that the overall programme was not useful to them at all (M = 2.00, SD = 0.734) experienced a lower level of satisfaction with the overall programme than those organisations for which the overall programme had been useful before but not anymore (M = 2.97, SD = 0.605), the overall programme continued to be somewhat useful (M = 3.24, SD = 0.523), and the overall programme continued to be very useful (M = 3.68, SD = 0.478). Additionally, those organisations that stated the overall programme continued to be very useful (M = 3.68, SD = 0.478) experienced a higher level of satisfaction with the overall programme than those that stated that the overall programme had been useful before but not anymore (M = 2.97, SD = 0.605).

Lasting impact ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that reported a significant lasting impact as a result of the overall programme (M = 3.64, SD = 0.492) experienced a higher level of satisfaction with the overall programme than those organisations that experienced some lasting impact (M = 3.13, SD = 0.554), minimal lasting impact (M = 2.74, SD = 0.712), no lasting impact (M = 2.11, SD = 0.658), and a negative impact (M = 1.50, SD = 0.577) as a result of the overall programme. Additionally, organisations that had experienced some lasting impact (M = 3.13, SD = 0.554) as well as minimal lasting impact (M = 2.74, SD = 0.712) experienced a higher level of satisfaction with the overall programme that those organisations that had experienced no lasting impact (M = 2.11, SD = 0.658) and a negative impact (M = 1.50, SD = 0.577) as a result of the overall programme.

Future participation ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that stated that they would participate in the programme again in the future (M = 3.10, SD = 0.705) experienced a higher level of satisfaction with the overall programme than those that did not state this (M = 2.05, SD = 0.826).

b. Challenges

Lack of student communication ($p < 0.001$): Organisations claiming to have experienced challenges in the overall programme because of a lack of communication from students (M = 2.08, SD = 0.845) experienced a lower level of satisfaction with the overall programme than those organisations that did not claim this challenge (M = 3.18, SD = 0.632).

Lack of lecturer involvement ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that stated they had experienced challenges in the overall programme because of a lack of involvement from lecturers/ programme coordinators (M = 2.29, SD = 0.726) experienced a lower level of satisfaction with the overall programme than those organisations that did not state this challenge (M = 3.00, SD = 0.812).

c. Suggestions

Monitoring ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that stated that the project/students need better monitoring by project coordinators (M = 2.21, SD = 0.876) experienced lower levels of satisfaction with the overall programme than organisations that did not state this (M = 3.15, SD = 0.666).

Coordination ($p < 0.001$): Organisations believing that the project needs better coordination by project coordinators (M = 2.40, SD = 0.812) experienced lower levels of satisfaction with the overall programme than organisations that do not share this belief (M = 3.15, SD = 0.730).

Training ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that mentioned that the students and participating organisations need better training and induction (M = 2.42, SD = 0.881) experienced lower levels of satisfaction with the overall programme than those organisations that did not mention this (M = 3.05, SD = 0.768).

Campaign implementation ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that noted that the campaign aspect of the project needs better implementation (M = 2.33, SD = 1.000) experienced lower levels of satisfaction with the overall programme than those organisations that did not note this (M = 2.96, SD = 0.803).

Communication ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that claimed that there needs to be better communication between the different project role players (M = 2.36, SD = 0.809) experienced lower levels of satisfaction with the overall programme than those organisations that did not claim this (M = 2.97, SD = 0.818).

Perfect ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that stated that the overall programme is perfect as it is and does not need to change at all (M = 3.75, SD = 0.500) experienced higher levels of satisfaction with the overall programme than those organisations that did not state this (M = 2.87, SD = 0.829).

d. Perceived Impact

Increased sales ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in sales resulting from the overall programme (M = 3.44, SD = 0.550) experienced higher levels of satisfaction with the overall programme than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.57, SD = 0.809).

New customers ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in new customers resulting from the overall programme (M = 3.39, SD = 0.537) experienced higher levels of satisfaction with the overall programme than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.53, SD = 0.833).

Increased brand awareness ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in brand awareness resulting from the overall programme (M = 3.37, SD = 0.489) experienced higher levels of satisfaction with the overall programme than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.59, SD = 0.873).

Increased customer loyalty ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in customer loyalty resulting from the overall programme (M = 3.37, SD = 0.565) experienced higher levels of satisfaction with the overall programme than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.75, SD = 0.854).

Increased competitive advantage ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in competitive advantage resulting from the overall programme (M = 3.69, SD = 0.480) experienced higher levels of satisfaction with the overall programme than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.80, SD = 0.815).

Increased business efficiency ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in business efficiency resulting from the overall programme (M = 3.50, SD = 0.514) experienced higher levels of satisfaction with the overall programme than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.78, SD = 0.837).

Increased employee motivation ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in employee motivation resulting from the overall programme (M = 3.53, SD = 0.516) experienced higher levels of satisfaction with the overall programme than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.80, SD = 0.833).

No positive impact ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived no positive impact resulting from the overall programme (M = 2.03, SD = 0.674) experienced lower levels of satisfaction with the overall programme than those that did perceive a positive impact (M = 3.32, SD = 0.526).

6.9.2.2 Usefulness of overall programme for businesses

The usefulness that SMMEs attributed to the overall programme was compared to the other variables within this section of the survey in order to gain insight into potential relationships of significance. These are discussed in depth below.

Table 6.17: Effect of overall programme variables and demographics on usefulness

Independent variables	***P***
General	
Year	0.191
Satisfaction	0.000*
Lasting Impact	0.000*
Future participation	0.000*
Challenges	
Lack of time	0.792
Lack of people	0.437
Lack of money	0.148
Lack of knowledge	0.387
Inappropriate	0.025**
Lack of internal communication	0.043**
Lack of student communication	0.000*
Lack of lecturer involvement	0.007**
Suggestions	
Monitoring	0.000*
Follow up	0.360
Coordination	0.000*
Training	0.001**
Intern	0.505
More time	0.123
Better presentation	0.743
Handover	0.850
Funding	0.054
Campaign implementation	0.336
Communication	0.018**
Perfect	0.027**
Perceived impact	
Increased sales	0.000*
New customers	0.000*
Increased brand awareness	0.000*
Increased customer loyalty	0.001**
Increased business efficiency	0.002**
Increased competitive advantage	0.000*
Increased employee motivation	0.002**
No positive impact	0.000*
Demographics	
Major Industry	0.021**
Minor Industry	0.114
Business age	0.940
Amount of employees	0.092
CIPC registration	0.393
Legal form of ownership	0.061
Business turnover	0.527

Age of owner	0.990
Gender of owner	0.640
Education of owner	0.419
Ethnicity of owner	0.368
Country of origin of owner	0.352
Student team	
Project mark	0.316
Study programme	0.019**

*Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.001$
**Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.050$

In terms of the usefulness of the overall programme, Anova revealed that there was a significant difference at $p < 0.001$ for usefulness (M = 2.35, SD = 1.064) because of the overall programme. No significant differences were found for year, lack of time, lack of people, lack of money, lack of knowledge, follow-up, intern, more time, better presentation, handover, funding, campaign implementation, minor industry, business age, amount of employees, CIPC registration, legal form of ownership, business turnover, age of owner, gender of owner, education of owner, ethnicity of owner, country of origin of owner, or project mark.

Bonferroni correction pairwise comparisons of estimated marginal means disclosed significant difference between the following variables:

a. General

Satisfaction ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that were very satisfied with the overall programme (M = 3.23, SD = 0.908) found the overall programme more useful than those organisations that were very dissatisfied (M = 1.00, SD = 0.000), dissatisfied (M = 1.35, SD = 0.573), and satisfied (M = 2.53, SD = 0.830) with overall programme. Additionally, organisations that were satisfied with the overall programme (M = 2.53, SD = 0.830) found it more useful than organisations that were very dissatisfied (M = 1.00, SD = 0.000) and dissatisfied (M = 1.35, SD = 0.573) with the overall programme.

Lasting impact ($p < 0.001$): Organisations reporting that the overall programme had had a significant lasting impact (M = 3.52, SD = 0.750) found the overall programme more useful than those organisations that had experienced some lasting impact (M = 2.67, SD = 0.884), minimal lasting impact (M = 2.04, SD = 0.662), no lasting impact (M = 1.16, SD = 0.375), and a negative impact (M = 1.25, SD = 0.500) as a result of the overall programme (no impact found the project less useful than negative impact). Additionally, organisations that had experienced some lasting impact (M = 2.67, SD = 0.884) found the overall programme more useful than those organisations that had experienced minimal lasting impact (M = 2.04, SD = 0.662), no lasting impact (M = 1.16, SD = 0.375) and a negative impact (M = 1.25, SD = 0.500) as a result of the overall programme. Lastly, those organisations that had experienced a minimal lasting impact as a result of the overall programme (M = 2.04, SD = 0.662) found the overall programme more useful than those that experienced no lasting impact (M = 1.16, SD = 0.375).

Future participation ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that stated that they would participate in the programme again in the future (M = 2.51, SD = 1.055) found the overall programme more useful than those that did not state this (M = 1.60, SD = 0.754).

b. Challenges

Inappropriateness ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that stated that they experienced challenges in the overall programme because the project was inappropriate for their business (M = 1.00, SD = 0.000) found the overall programme less useful than those organisations that did not state this (M = 2.39, SD = 1.053).

Lack of internal communication ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that noted that they experienced challenges in the overall programme because of a lack of communication internally (M = 1.67, SD = 0.707) found the overall programme less useful than those organisations that did not note this (M = 2.41, SD = 1.072).

Lack of student communication ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that mentioned that they experienced challenges in the overall programme because of a lack of communication from students (M = 1.31, SD = 0.679) found the overall programme less useful than those organisations that did not mention this (M = 2.70, SD = 0.933).

Lack of lecturer involvement ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that claimed that they experienced challenges in the overall programme because of a lack of involvement from lecturers/ programme facilitators (M = 1.64, SD = 0.745) found the overall programme less useful than those organisations that did not make this claim (M = 2.46, SD = 1.067).

c. Suggestions

Monitoring ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that stated that the programme and/or students need better monitoring by programme coordinators (M = 1.59, SD = 0.888) found the overall programme less useful than those organisations that did not state this (M = 2.62, SD = 0.993).

Coordination ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that noted that the programme needs better coordination by programme coordinators (M = 1.79, SD = 0.946) found the overall programme less useful than those organisations that did not note this (M = 2.62, SD = 1.016).

Training ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that mentioned that the students and participating organisations need better training and induction (M = 1.74, SD = 0.752) found the overall programme less useful than those organisations that did not mention this (M = 2.53, SD = 1.079).

Communication ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that claimed that there needs to be better communication between the different programme role players (M = 1.56, SD = 0.527) found the overall programme less useful than those organisations that did not make this claim (M = 2.43, SD = 1.073).

Perfect ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that stated that the overall programme is perfect as it is and does not need to change at all (M = 3.50, SD = 0.577) found the overall programme more useful than those organisations that did not state this (M = 2.30, SD = 1.054).

d. Perceived impact

Increased sales ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in sales resulting from the overall programme (M = 3.17, SD = 0.803) found overall programme more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 1.81, SD = 0.846).

New customers ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in new customers resulting from the overall programme (M = 3.09, SD = 0.830) found overall programme more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 1.80, SD = 0.867).

Increased brand awareness ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in brand awareness resulting from the overall programme (M = 3.05, SD = 0.785) found overall programme more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 1.85, SD = 0.954).

Increased customer loyalty ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in customer loyalty resulting from the overall programme (M = 2.93, SD = 0.874) found overall programme more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.14, SD = 1.055).

Increased business efficiency ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in business efficiency resulting from the overall programme (M = 3.06, SD = 0.827) found overall programme more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.21, SD = 1.053).

Increased competitive advantage ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in competitive advantage resulting from the overall programme (M = 3.33, SD = 0.888) found overall programme more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.22, SD = 1.020).

Increased employee motivation ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in employee motivation resulting from their overall programme (M = 3.13, SD = 0.915) found overall programme more useful than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 2.22, SD = 1.033).

No positive impact ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived no positive impact resulting from the overall programme (M = 1.32, SD = 0.535) found overall programme less useful than those that did perceive a positive impact (M = 2.86, SD = 0.879).

e. Demographics

Major industry ($p < 0.050$): Organisations in the “Community, Social, and Personal Services” industry (M = 2.64, SD = 1.163) found the overall programme more useful than those organisations in the “Wholesale and Retail; Repair of Vehicles & Goods; Hotels and Restaurants” industry (M = 2.06, SD = 0.968).

f. Student Teams

Study programme ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that worked with students who studied on a part-time basis (M = 2.75, SD = 1.005) found the overall programme more useful than those that worked with students who studied on a full-time basis (M = 2.20, SD = 1.053).

6.9.2.3 Lasting impact of overall programme on businesses

The degree to which SMMEs felt that the programme had a lasting impact on their firms was compared to all the other overall programme variables in order to determine relationships of significance. These are discussed at length below.

Table 6.18: Effect of overall programme variables and demographics on lasting impact

Independent variables	***P***
General	
Year	0.486
Satisfaction	0.000*
Usefulness	0.000*
Future participation	0.004**
Challenges	
Lack of time	0.780
Lack of people	0.213
Lack of money	0.337
Lack of knowledge	0.378
Inappropriate	0.077
Lack of internal communication	0.107
Lack of student communication	0.000*
Lack of lecturer involvement	0.028**
Suggestions	
Monitoring	0.003**
Follow up	0.096
Coordination	0.002**
Training	0.001**
Intern	0.692
More time	0.422
Better presentation	0.971
Handover	0.618
Funding	0.064
Campaign implementation	0.320
Communication	0.372
Perfect	0.063
Perceived impact	
Increased sales	0.000*
New customers	0.000*
Increased brand awareness	0.000*
Increased customer loyalty	0.001**

Increased business efficiency	0.029**
Increased competitive advantage	0.000*
Increased employee motivation	0.000*
No positive impact	0.000*
Demographics	
Major industry	0.259
Minor industry	0.432
Business age	0.799
Amount of employees	0.173
CIPC registration	0.693
Legal form of ownership	0.607
Business turnover	0.795
Age of owner	0.586
Gender of owner	0.690
Education of owner	0.408
Ethnicity of owner	0.680
Country of origin of owner	0.539
Student team	
Project mark	0.101
Study programme	0.108

*Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.001$
**Anova showed a significant difference at $p < 0.050$

In terms of the lasting impact of the overall programme, Anova revealed that there was a significant difference at $p < 0.001$ for lasting impact (M = 3.47, SD = 1.132) because of the overall programme. No significant differences were found for year, lack of time, lack of people, lack of money, lack of knowledge, inappropriate, lack of internal communication, follow up, intern, more time, better presentation, handover, funding campaign implementation, communication, perfect, all demographic variables, or all student team variables.

Bonferroni correction pairwise comparisons of estimated marginal means disclosed the significant difference between the following variables:

a. General

Usefulness ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that found that the overall programme continues to be very useful (M = 4.74, SD = 0.452) experienced a greater degree of lasting impact resulting from the project than those that found that the overall programme continues to be somewhat useful (M = 3.91, SD = 0.668), was useful before but not anymore (M = 3.32, SD = 0.909), or has never been useful at all (M = 2.30, SD = 0.823). Additionally, organisations that found that the overall programme continues to be somewhat useful (M = 3.91, SD = 0.668) experienced a greater degree of lasting impact resulting from the project than those that found that the overall programme was useful before but not anymore (M = 3.32, SD = 0.909), or has never been useful at all (M = 2.30, SD = 0.823). Lastly, organisations that found that the overall programme was useful before but not anymore (M = 3.32, SD = 0.909) experienced a greater degree of lasting impact from the project than those that found that the overall programme has never been useful at all (M = 2.30, SD = 0.823).

Satisfaction ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that were very satisfied with the overall programme (M = 4.46, SD = 0.721) experienced a higher degree of lasting impact as a result of the overall programme than those organisations that were very dissatisfied (M = 1.83, SD = 0.753), dissatisfied (M = 2.50, SD = 0.834), and satisfied (M = 3.66, SD = 0.872) with the overall programme. Additionally, organisations that were satisfied with the overall programme (M = 3.66, SD = 0.872) experienced a higher degree of lasting impact as a result of the overall programme than those organisations that were very dissatisfied (M = 1.83, SD = 0.753) and dissatisfied (M = 2.50, SD = 0.834) with the overall programme.

Future participation ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that indicated they would participate in the programme again in the future (M = 3.61, SD = 1.097) experienced higher degrees of lasting impact as a result of the overall programme than those that did not indicate thus (M = 2.80, SD = 1.056).

b. Challenges

Lack of student communication ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that claimed they experienced challenges in the overall programme because of a lack of communication from students (M = 2.42, SD = 1.102) experienced lower degrees of lasting impact resulting from the overall programme compared to those organisations that did not claim this (M = 3.82, SD = 0.908).

Lack of lecturer involvement ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that stated that they experienced challenges in the overall programme because of a lack of involvement from the lecturers/ programme coordinators (M = 2.86, SD = 1.099) experienced lower degrees of lasting impact resulting from the overall programme compared to those organisations that did not state this (M = 3.57, SD = 1.112).

c. Suggestions

Monitoring ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that noted that the programme/students need better monitoring by programme coordinators (M = 2.93, SD = 1.184) experienced lower degrees of lasting impact as a result of the overall programme than those organisations that did not note this (M = 3.67, SD = 1.051).

Coordination ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that mentioned that the programme needs better coordination by programme coordinators (M = 3.00, SD = 1.163) experienced lower degrees of lasting impact as a result of the overall programme than those organisations that did not make mention of this (M = 3.741, SD = 1.045).

Training ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that stated that the students and participating organisations need better training and induction (M = 2.78, SD = 1.085) experienced lower degrees of lasting impact as a result of the overall programme than those organisations that did not state this (M = 3.67, SD = 1.072).

d. Perceived impact

Increased sales ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in sales resulting from the overall programme (M = 4.23, SD = 0.733) experienced higher degrees of lasting impact as a result of the overall programme than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 3.00, SD = 1.084).

New customers ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in new customers resulting from the overall programme (M = 4.09, SD = 0.793) experienced higher degrees of lasting impact as a result of the overall programme than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 3.00, SD = 1.130).

Increased brand awareness ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in brand awareness resulting from the overall programme (M = 4.17, SD = 0.762) experienced higher degrees of lasting impact as a result of the overall programme than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 3.00, SD = 1.101).

Increased customer loyalty ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in customer loyalty resulting from the overall programme (M = 4.12, SD = 0.816) experienced higher degrees of lasting impact as a result of the overall programme than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 3.26, SD = 1.145).

Increased business efficiency ($p < 0.050$): Organisations that perceived an increase in business efficiency resulting from the overall programme (M = 4.00, SD = 0.767) experienced higher degrees of lasting impact as a result of the overall programme than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 3.36, SD = 1.167).

Increased competitive advantage ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in competitive advantage resulting from the overall programme (M = 4.54, SD = 0.660) experienced higher degrees of lasting impact as a result of the overall programme than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 3.32, SD = 1.104).

Increased employee motivation ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived an increase in employee motivation resulting from the overall programme (M = 4.60, SD = 0.507) experienced higher degrees of lasting impact as a result of the overall programme than those that did not perceive this increase (M = 3.28, SD = 1.097).

No positive impact ($p < 0.001$): Organisations that perceived no positive impact resulting from the overall programme (M = 2.41, SD = 0.892) experienced lower degrees of lasting impact as a result of the overall programme than those that perceived a positive impact (M = 3.99, SD = 0.843).

6.10 Summary

The research conducted was a quantitative measure of the value of a SL programme for participating SMMEs. The SL programme was completed by second-year Marketing students between 2010 and 2014 within the field of marketing communications, and was run by CPUT in conjunction with Brand Shepherd. The results of the research reveal that although the BSAC-SL programme had significant value for participating SMMEs, there is also much room for improvement.

The first section of the findings reveals all the demographic data in the survey, which included such things as the major business industry (of which the wholesale, retail, repairs, and hospitality industry comprised the majority), the nature of businesses and their customers, the business age (with most businesses being between 2.5 and 10.5 years), the number of employees, the legal form of ownership, the business turnover (with most businesses achieving a turnover of less than R200 000 per year), and the demographic characteristics of students teams, such as the mark they got for their projects, and whether they studied on a full-time or part-time basis.

The next section covered the customer research findings, which considered how students conducted market research for partner SMMEs, how useful the research was for the businesses, and the reasons firms were not able to make use of the research. The major reason for the last mentioned is the fact that the findings were not shared with them. SMMEs were also asked what impact they perceived as resulting from the research. The factors that were impacted the most were sales, new customers, and brand awareness. Despite some of the challenges, most of the businesses were satisfied with the research conducted. A range of significant relationships was also discussed. One noteworthy relationship was found between minor industry and satisfaction, with SMMEs that operate in the hairdressing and other beauty industry experiencing higher levels of satisfaction with the research than those that operate in the restaurant, bar, or canteen industry.

The tools and resources developed or acquired for SMMEs were discussed next. SMMEs recounted a number of tools that students developed for them, but the tool that most businesses reported receiving from students was a Facebook page. Although more than 50 per cent of respondents still find the student-developed tools and resources useful, many described a number of barriers to making effective use of them, including a lack of time, and the fact that the tools were never shared with them. Some key benefits which SMMEs described as accruing from the tools and resources include increased sales, new customers, and increased brand awareness. As a result, a large percentage of firms experienced high levels of satisfaction from the tools and resources. In addition, significant positive relationships were found between a number of digital tools and resources (like email, Facebook page, and customer database) and the level of satisfaction that firms experienced from these tools, and the degree of usefulness associated with them.

The fourth section of the findings discussed the results of the campaign plan section of the survey. A large number of firms reported that the reason they could not make use of the campaign plan was either because they lacked the time or because it was never shared with them by the students. In cases where the campaign plan was shared, most SMMEs reported that it was only explained to them verbally, and as a result many note that they have never used the campaign plan. Most of those who did implement the campaign plan report that students helped them to do so, but they experienced some challenges with its implementation such as the fact that it was too time consuming and that they lacked sufficient people, knowledge, and resources to do so effectively. Despite these challenges, those who did implement the campaign experienced significant benefits from it such as increased sales, new customers, increased brand awareness, and increased customer loyalty, and as a result experienced high levels of satisfaction with the campaign plan. Some noteworthy significant relationships were found between the formality of businesses and satisfaction. Those organisations that were formally registered with CIPC and which were registered as either a Closed Corporation or Pty Limited company experienced higher levels of satisfaction than those which were not formally registered with CIPC and functioned on a smaller scale with sole proprietors.

The skills training and knowledge transfer element of the programme was discussed next. Most SMMEs reported having been trained in Facebook, with smaller numbers reporting training in websites, the Internet, and email. In terms of knowledge transfer, more than 50 per cent reported having gained advertising knowledge from students, and large numbers of firms also acknowledged having gained marketing and sales promotion knowledge. Despite reporting a number of barriers preventing them from being able to make effective use of the training and knowledge transfer, such as a lack of time, finances and staff, the majority of firms that received such training reported that the skills and knowledge continue to be useful. Many of those that did make use of the training and knowledge transfer noted a number of benefits resulting from it, including increased sales, new customers, and increased brand awareness. As a result, most firms experienced high levels of satisfaction with the skills training and knowledge transfer. In addition, noteworthy positive significant relationships were found between Internet-related training (such as email, website, and Facebook) and satisfaction, as well as between awareness and sales-related knowledge transfer (such as advertising and sales promotion), and satisfaction.

The sixth section of the findings chapter considered the results relating to the client-agency relationships formed between SMMEs and student teams. SMMEs highlighted a number of positive student-agency characteristics such as punctuality, professionalism, friendliness, and mutual respect. Although most of the businesses recounted that since the end of the programme, the relationship with students was no longer useful, there were some that indicated that the relationship continued to be useful. Although the majority of SMMEs noted a lack of time as the major barrier that kept them from being able to make effective use of the relationship, many reported numerous continuing benefits resulting from the relationship such as increased sales, new customers, and increased brand awareness, also resulting in high levels of satisfaction. In addition, notable negative significant relationships were found between student involvement and communication, and satisfaction and usefulness, with those organisations that noted a lack of student involvement and a lack of communication from students experiencing much lower levels of satisfaction and of usefulness in respect of the client-agency relationship.

Finally, findings relating to the overall programme were discussed, with most firms noting that the programme was useful for a time, but because they were not participating in it anymore, it was no longer useful to them. Although most firms experienced high levels of satisfaction resulting from the programme as a result of such benefits as increased sales, new customers, and increased brand awareness, most of them felt that the chief factor inhibiting them from being able to make effective use of the programme was a lack of time. Most firms noted some lasting impact resulting from the programme, with the majority of firms confirming that they would participate in the programme again in the future if given the option to do so. Firms also provided a number of suggestions to improve the programme, the most notable being better programme coordination, better student monitoring by lecturers, the need for follow-up from students after the programme, and the need for training and induction for students and SMMEs before the programme commences. In addition, a number of noteworthy significant relationships were discovered between the major suggestions (monitoring, coordination, training, and communication) and programme satisfaction and usefulness. All the organisations that made these suggestions also experienced lower levels of satisfaction, usefulness, and lasting impact resulting from the programme. Interestingly, organisations from the Community, Social, and Personal services sector, and those who worked with part-time students, found the programme more useful than others.

This report on the findings is followed by a discussion of the results in Chapter 7. In this chapter the researcher will comment on the main and sub-problems and provide answers to the research questions.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter makes sense of the findings within the context of the research questions, and considers how the findings compare to those of other authors. The chapter starts by considering the customer research findings, and then moves on to the tools and resources developed or acquired by students. This section is followed by findings relating to the campaign plan aspect of the programme and progresses to discuss the skills training and knowledge transfer-related findings. Findings relating to the working relationship between SMMEs and student agencies are then developed, and the chapter ends by considering the findings concerning the overall programme.

Each of these sections starts off by considering introductory data, then moves on to the usefulness of that particular programme element for participating SMMEs, considers the reasons that SMMEs were unable to make effective use of the programme element, reports on the SMMEs' perceptions of the impact of the programme element, and finally ends off by noting the levels of satisfaction which SMMEs experienced with regard to each programme element.

7.2 Customer research

7.2.1 Means by which customer research conducted

Although conducting regular customer research is very important for the success of a business (Cant & Van Heerden, 2013; Boshoff, 2014), some SMMEs confirmed that a number of student groups did not conduct customer research. Hagenbuch (2006) observes that students do not always follow the instructions given to them during a SL programme.

A significant relationship was found between research method, usefulness of customer research, and level of satisfaction with the customer research. Organisations that were given questionnaires to leave in the store as well as those for whom the students conducted the research in person found the customer research more useful and experienced higher levels of satisfaction than firms for which no research was conducted. A number of authors reveal the significance of SL programmes in which students conduct research for participating firms (Levenburg, 2003; Schwartz, 2010:6; Kincade & Gibson, 2012:8; Joonas, 2015; Niehm *et al*., 2015; Rosenberg *et al*., 2016; Vizenor *et al.*, 2017:8).

A large number of businesses stated that the findings of the customer research conducted were never shared with them. A significant relationship was found between this variable and satisfaction. Those organisations with which the students did not share the findings from the customer research experienced lower levels of satisfaction than those with which the findings were shared. This situation is at odds with that reported by Neese *et al.* (2013), who found that all participating organisations received the research that student teams had collected. Not only did the student teams provide clients with the raw data, they also discussed the findings with them in great depth.

Some SMMEs complained that the findings were inappropriate for their business or had no positive impact on the firm at all. As a result, some SMMEs were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the customer research conducted by student teams, the primary reason being their never having received the research findings. This also explains the significant relationship between research method, overall satisfaction, and lasting impact. Those organisations for which research was not conducted or which found the research to be inappropriate experienced lower levels of satisfaction with the overall programme, and lower levels of lasting impact from the SL programme.

Boughton *et al*. (1996:66) observe that to be in a position to facilitate market research for firms, research suppliers must understand the unique culture of the firm and have set in place effective systems, procedures, and programming in order to serve the research needs of their clients. Working with a new student-led research agency that is unfamiliar with the business of the firm may well have less than desirable results in the initial stages of the relationship, as can be seen from the above.

7.2.2 Usefulness of customer research

7.2.2.1 Overall usefulness

Berndt and Tait (2014) found that for customer research to be useful to the firm it needs to be gathered regularly, and the information gathered, interpreted, and incorporated into the strategic planning and action of firms. Although many SMMEs stated that they continued to use the student-gathered research findings and student-designed customer research survey tools, a fair number stated that they had used it once and not again, or not used it at all. This is somewhat different from the findings of Kincade and Gibson (2012:8) as well as Schwartz (2010:6), who found that most of the SMME retailers for whom their student teams did customer research stated that they found the results from student surveys to be very beneficial and useful.

It is uncertain whether firms that did not continue to make use of student-designed surveys and student-gathered research have continued gathering customer research using alternative methods. This is possible, as Fourie (2015) found that 86.9 per cent of South African SMME owner/managers do in fact ask for, analyse, and respond to feedback and comments from their customers, mostly verbally. What is certain is that the significant relationship between usefulness, perceived impact, lasting impact, and satisfaction reveals that those businesses that did not make use of the research findings and tools perceived no positive impact from the research nor any lasting impact from the entire SL programme. They experienced lower levels of satisfaction than those organisations that continued to use the findings and gain positive results from them.

7.2.2.2 Minor industry

An interesting finding is the presence of a significant relationship between two minor industries and satisfaction with customer research. Organisations that operate in hairdressing and other services in the beauty industry experienced higher levels of satisfaction with the customer research than those that operate in the restaurant, bar, or canteen industry. These two industries were by far the largest in the research sample, with the hairdressing and beauty cohort making up a third and the restaurant, bar and canteen cohort making up a little under a quarter.

As living standards increase and the patterns of people's lives change, women in particular spend more money on improving their looks in order to fulfil their roles successfully in various socio-economic categories (Wei *et al*., 2013). As such, there is an ever greater demand by consumers for hair and beauty products, treatments, and services. This industry is characterised by low barriers to entry and high levels of competition, which dramatically affect profit margins and have caused industry saturation (Services SETA, 2016:19). As such, hair and beauty businesses need to constantly engage in customer research in order to remain competitive, through determining what clients really want from their visits, what they love about the salon, and why they experience dissatisfaction (Lockhart-Meyer, 2013).

Although restaurants, bars and canteens also require customer research, Regaudie (2018) suggests that such research is only required roughly once a year to ensure that the establishment is still satisfying customer needs. Once an appealing menu and physical environment have been established, restaurants, bars and canteens do not need to change much about themselves very often. In order to remain competitive, though, Regaudie (2018) recommends their gaining regular feedback from customers by using a customer survey, comment cards on tables, feedback on meals, or reading online reviews.

The primary difference between a restaurant and a hair salon is that restaurants broadly cater for the needs of their target audiences through a menu of various meals, one that does not need to be changed very often. A salon, on the other hand, needs to cater for the unique needs of every single client, and has to stay abreast of the ever-changing beauty trends and styles as well. In addition, hair and beauty salons provide services that have a much higher social risk attached to them (Leonard, 2019). For this reason, it makes sense that firms in the hair and beauty industry experienced higher levels of satisfaction with customer research than those in the restaurant, bar, and canteen industry, because their need for customer research is that much higher. In addition, it is easier to collect data from customers in a hair salon than in a restaurant because a hair salon is a very social environment, where customers are used to constantly engaging with a number of people while participating in the service, whereas those attending restaurants, bars, or canteens are more likely to want to eat without being disturbed.

7.2.2.3 Study programme

Another interesting finding reveals a significant relationship between the specific study programme and the usefulness of customer research. Organisations that worked with part-time (PT) students found the customer research to be more useful than those that worked with full-time (FT) students. This could be due to the fact that PT students are often older and have work experience that FT students do not have (Anderson, 2019). As such, PT students bring more experience, maturity, and knowledge to the SL programme and can therefore produce work that is more useful to SMMEs.

7.2.3 Reasons for not making use of the findings from customer research

Those firms that did not make use of the research findings volunteered a number of reasons for not doing so, including a lack of time, a lack of the right people, a lack of money, and a lack of knowledge. This is an interesting finding, considering that Fourie (2015) found that the majority of SMMEs measure customer satisfaction on a regular basis and use the data to improve their services, albeit mostly verbally.

Only 20.2 per cent of Fourie's (2015) sample indicated that they made use of questionnaires. Student teams primarily employed a survey questionnaire to conduct customer research and presented the findings in the form of a written document. Considering that almost half of the owners/managers surveyed only have a matric or lower level of education, with most being self-taught, it may be possible that SMMEs did not have the expertise required to make use of findings in their written form, nor the time, knowledge or human resources to facilitate self-administered or people-administered questionnaire-based customer research on a continual basis. This is confirmed by the significant relationship found between lack of time, lack of knowledge, and the usefulness of customer research. Organisations that found the customer research less useful also cited a lack of time and a lack of knowledge as key reasons for not making use of the customer research.

This is confirmed by Allard and Straussman (2003:698), who stress that participating organisations struggle to engage with research-related SL programmes because of limited resources, insufficient time, and inadequate staff. The authors state that these challenges also result in community organisations being unable to provide students with the needed information, or give them sufficient access to their customers, thus negatively influencing the research process.

What is also clear from the stated lack of people, time, and knowledge is that a number of student teams did not assist these firms by interpreting the data for them, or applying it to their firm, nor did they explain to them how to facilitate customer research using the questionnaire that they designed. Lekhanya (2015) discovered that a number of small businesses in South Africa are limited by a lack of funds for marketing, which could explain why a fifth of SMMEs cited a lack of money as the reason for not making use of the customer research findings.

Although Andreasen (1985) suggests that poor communication between firms and researchers is often at the root of disappointing research results, this factor did not feature in the results. In order to overcome this, Chisnall (1995:121) believes that clients and researchers should spend enough time initially defining the precise terms that will guide the research project.

7.2.4 Perception of the impact of the findings from customer research

In terms of the benefits that flow from student-led customer research, Woodruff (1997:148), as well as Bowen and Chen (2001) and Fourie (2015), reveal that discovering new ways to meet customers' needs through analysing customer research is vital for competitive advantage, customer retention, and customer loyalty. This research study found this to be true, as a significant relationship was found between both customer loyalty and competitive advantage, and satisfaction with the customer research. Organisations that perceived an increase in customer loyalty and competitive advantage experienced higher levels of satisfaction. SMMEs thus reported a positive influence on customer loyalty and competitive advantage from student-facilitated research. These findings are confirmed by Turquoise (2018), who argues that customer research can assist firms to strengthen their market position and help businesses stay ahead of their competition.

In addition to customer retention and loyalty, which result from effectively responding to complaints and implementing customer suggestions, Joonas (2015) found that customer research helps increase sales, new customers, brand awareness, and business efficiency, and to a lesser degree, increases employee motivation. In addition, research-oriented SL has been found to provide these benefits (Clark *et al*., 2012:278). A positive significant relationship was also found between customer research satisfaction and new customers, increased sales, increased business efficiency and brand awareness. Organisations that found customer research to be useful perceived an increase in new customers, sales, brand awareness, customer loyalty, and competitive advantage.

Customersure (2017) highlights that customer feedback can help businesses by improving positive word of mouth (WOM) through increased customer satisfaction, increase sales through promoting positive feedback or upselling to those customers who give the most positive feedback, build the firm's reputation and brand awareness through positive referrals, increase employee morale and motivation through sharing positive affirmation from customers internally, and increase business efficiency through the knowledge gained. Zairi (2006), Hopkins (2012), and Joonas (2015) emphasise the benefit of customer research for business efficiency as it enables managers and staff to evaluate and benchmark their performance, and identify performance gaps that can then be closed through implementing new best-practice processes.

These findings also confirm those of Levenburg (2003:55), who incorporated SL into a marketing research course in which students conducted research studies for local SMMEs in the USA. The SMMEs disclosed that they benefitted from the student-conducted research studies through better understanding their customers, improving their promotional methods, enhancing the success of new product launches, increasing internal effectiveness and efficiencies, and enhancing their profitability and competitiveness in the marketplace. Other authors also emphasise the benefit of SL-related research to community partners (Levenburg, 2003; Schwartz, 2010:6; Kincade & Gibson, 2012:8; Joonas, 2015; Rosenberg *et al*., 2016:56; Vizenor *et al.*, 2017:8).

7.2.5 Satisfaction with customer research conducted

A significant relationship was discovered between customer research and overall satisfaction, lasting impact, and future participation. Organisations that found the customer research to be useful and experienced higher levels of satisfaction with customer research also recorded higher levels of overall satisfaction with the SL programme and reported a greater lasting impact resulting from the programme. They also expressed a desire to participate again in the future. Similarly, Levenburg (2003), Joonas (2015), Rosenberg *et al*. (2016) and Vizenor *et al.* (2017) found that market research-related SL has a beneficial lasting impact on businesses, resulting in high levels of satisfaction with such programmes.

7.3 Marketing communication tools and resources

7.3.1 Tools and resources developed or acquired by students

Student teams assisted businesses by developing or acquiring marketing tools or resources for them. Such tools included Facebook pages, advertising posters, pamphlets/leaflets/flyers, logos, and websites, to name a few. Barr (2010b), Plaut (2013:4), Rosenberg *et al*. (2016), and Hardin-Ramanan *et al.* (2018) all affirm the benefit of SL for the development of small business tools and resources. A study by Hagenbuch (2006) of a personal selling-oriented SL programme in support of local NPOs in America also presented positive feedback from participating organisations which had received assistance from student teams with the development of new promotional materials. Goertzen *et al.* (2016:41) reveal that students developed promotional items like brochures and press releases in order to increase awareness of participating organisations, and Rosenberg *et al*. (2016) highlight a number of promotional items that student teams developed for community partners including logos, Facebook pages, websites, videos, posters, and other online interactive content. Steimel (2013:245) also describes students developing promotional materials for participating organisations such as Facebook groups, stakeholder databases, marketing literature, and website upgrades.

A significant relationship was found between logo, email, Facebook page, other promotional tools, and level of satisfaction. Organisations that had these tools developed for them experienced higher levels of satisfaction than those which did not have these tools developed for them. In addition, organisations for which a customer database and Facebook page were developed found the category of tools and resources more useful than those for whom they were not developed.

Besides the logo, which is a once-off requirement, what is similar about all the tools for which significant relationships were found is the fact that they are all free or low-cost methods of marketing communication. Most of them simply require some time and effort, without the need for financial investment. This is different from those tools for which no significant relationships were found (like loyalty cards, posters, flyers, pamphlets, and brochures), which all require a continual financial investment in order to implement. This finding is echoed by numerous authors who all confirm that SMMEs lack funds for marketing, and therefore must inevitably make use of low-budget tools for marketing purposes (McIntyre *et al.,* 2005; Longenecker *et al.,* 2006; Lekhanya & Mason, 2013; Mpofu & Chigwende, 2013; Lekhanya, 2015; Vitor *et al*., 2018).

7.3.1.1 Logo

A logo plays an important role in the marketing activities of SMMEs in that it is specifically designed to remind customers of the brand as well as help them identify the firm (Grobert *et al*., 2016). Generally speaking, small businesses have crude logos that are not very effective branding tools (Antonelli, 2016). For this reason, it is often necessary for their logos to be redesigned in order to improve brand recognition and brand equity (Keller, 2003; Chan & Subinas, 2019). Studies by Bethron *et al.* (2008) and Odoom (2016) affirm the importance of an effective logo in the brand building efforts of SMMEs, and both Walsh *et al*. (2010) and Khudeira (2015) demonstrate the benefits of updating or redesigning brand logos. Considering that a logo is the first and most important brand identifier of a business (Chrysalis, 2014), and that competition is increasing in South Africa (IOL, 2019), it is plausible to think that organisations for whom new updated logos were developed experienced significantly high levels of satisfaction.

7.3.1.2 Email

Email marketing is considered the most cost-effective direct marketing channel (Schiff, 2012), almost 40 times more effective at acquiring new customers than both Facebook and Twitter combined (Aufreiter *et al*., 2014). Pinkham (2013) found that SMMEs consider email marketing useful to build brand credibility and visibility, facilitate general in-bound sales calls, strengthen relationships, improve communication, increase sales, increase website traffic, get immediate results, generate leads, promote services, attract new customers, and save time. The benefits of email marketing for SMMEs are also extolled by other authors (Sanders, 2018; Yuldinawati *et al*., 2018; Hanley, 2019). Given the numerous benefits of email marketing and its cost effectiveness, it is understandable that small businesses in this study found the development of a professional email address and email signature a highly useful tool for marketing, leading to higher levels of satisfaction.

7.3.1.3 Customer database

Customer databases have been found to assist SMMEs with customer relationship management, acquiring new customers, sustaining competitive advantage, customer retention, improving customer service, customer and product analysis, effective stock management, more effective selling, and reducing costs through efficient transaction processing (Ozgener & Iraz, 2006; Vitor *et al*., 2018). Considering the numerous benefits of customer databases it makes sense that SMMEs would find them very useful. Ozgener and Iraz (2006) found that 46.6 per cent of SMMEs invested in customer relationship management in Turkey, and Fazlzadeh *et al*. (2011:6166) confirm that SMMEs find the use of a customer database to be a very useful yet affordable marketing tool. Finally, Vitor *et al*. (2018) verify that if well designed, SMMEs can use customer databases to analyse their potential markets, facilitate market segmentation, and use the data for planning and projection purposes.

7.3.1.4 Facebook page

Facebook was the only tool for which a significant relationship was found for both satisfaction and usefulness. Facebook pages have multiple benefits for small businesses, including increased brand exposure, lead generation, decreased marketing expenses, access to existing, new, and foreign target markets, market research, increased brand loyalty, increased web traffic, increased SEO, mobile engagement, and customer relationship management (Ayres, 2014; Danoy, 2017). Khan and Karodia (2013) report that South African SMMEs consider Facebook a very useful marketing channel.

The fact that a significant relationship was found for both satisfaction and usefulness suggests that their introduction to Facebook as a marketing tool has had a tremendous impact on the participating SMMEs. A 2018 study by SA Social Media Landscape found that almost 30 per cent of all South Africans (16 million people) have a Facebook account, and Arthur Goldstuck from World Wide Worx has said that Facebook is third only to television and radio as a medium for advertisers to reach across the entire South African population (Rawlins, 2017). The wide use of social media in South Africa and its affordability as a marketing tool explains why SMMEs surveyed in this study found it to be such a beneficial medium.

7.3.1.5 Other

There are numerous other marketing tools and resources which could have been developed for SMMEs, including banners, branded items (like t-shirts), online classified ads (like Gumtree), suggestion boxes, promotional videos, a YouTube channel, newspaper ads, community radio, various social media profiles (like Instagram or Pinterest), mobile platforms (like SMS or Whatsapp), and so forth. Small businesses often spend a significant amount of time testing new marketing tools and services in order to discover affordable and effective tools for their businesses (Alford & Page, 2015). Fortunately, the advent of numerous free and affordable digital marketing tools has levelled the playing field for small businesses by offering them high return on investment for their small marketing budgets. In addition, many of the tools actually increase business efficiency by streamlining certain processes, which is very valuable to small businesses as they do not usually have the resources to employ a team of marketers in-house, nor the budget to outsource the work to external agencies (Brenner, 2018). Considering that student teams developed a range of additional marketing tools and resources for SMMEs, many of which were value-adding, affordable, and easy to use digital tools, it makes sense that the SMMEs experienced high levels of satisfaction as a result.

7.3.2 Usefulness of tools and resources

More than half of the SMMEs indicated that they still use the promotional tools developed by the students. A study by Kallier (2017) gives some insight into this finding by recording that South African SMMEs often made use of business cards, websites, emails, Facebook, social media, mobile media, and pamphlets. Groenewald *et al.* (2014); Lekhanya (2014); Mapila *et al.* (2014); Lekhanya (2015); Makhitha (2016); Oji *et al.* (2017a); and Patricia *et al.* (2017) all confirm this wide usage of promotional materials by South African SMMEs, adding other media such as magazine advertisements, outdoor signage, brochures, local advertising, Whatsapp, and flyers. Kota (2018) found a statistically significant relationship between level of education and the use of social media for promotional purposes. Considering that over half of SMME owners in this study had a tertiary qualification it is understandable that such a large percentage of them continue to make use of the promotional tools developed for them, although no statistically significant relationship was found between level of education and usefulness of tools and resources.

Some SMMEs did however say that the tools were useful before but not anymore, or were not useful at all, and had never been useful. This could be as a result of Kallier's (2017) finding that some tools such as twitter, blogs, and posters were very rarely used by South African SMMEs. Almost half of the firms reported that no tools had been developed for them or that the tools and resources were never shared with them, which could also account for much of this negative feedback. This is somewhat similar to Schachter and Schwartz's (2009:450) discovery that a small number of student teams did not develop any tools or resources for their partner organisations during SL; the findings in this regard in the present study are unfortunately much higher.

7.3.3 Reasons for not making use of tools and resources

7.3.3.1 Lack of time

A large number of firms declared that a lack of time was the main reason for not making use of the tools and resources developed for them. In addition, a significant relationship was found between a lack of time and usefulness. Organisations that experienced a lack of time found the tools and resources less useful than those that did not note this limitation. This finding is confirmed by Cant (2012) and Bean (2017), who observe that SMMEs are inhibited from effectively engaging in marketing communications because they struggle to manage their time effectively.

7.3.3.2 Lack of knowledge

Some firms blamed a lack of know-how for why they were not able to make effective use of the tools and resources developed for them. A significant relationship was found between lack of knowledge regarding the operation of marketing tools and resources, the usefulness of such tools, and satisfaction with the tools and resources. Firms that cited a lack of knowledge experienced lower levels of satisfaction with the tools and resources compared to those that did not cite this. They also found the tools and resources less useful than other firms.

Rambe (2017) indicated that more than 75 per cent of South African SMMEs signalled either a novice or intermediary knowledge of social media technologies, which could account for why some respondents in this study were not able to make full use of some of the e-marketing tools developed for them. Oji *et al.* (2017b) found that a lack of Internet facilities, a lack of understanding of the capabilities of social media platforms, a lack of knowledge of social media marketing strategies, and a lack of interest in social media, all hindered the use of social media for marketing purposes by SMMEs in South Africa. Considering that many of the tools developed for SMMEs were digital, the lack of capacity reported makes sense.

7.3.3.3 Lack of the right people

Almost a quarter of firms complained of a lack of the right people to explain why they did not make use of the marketing tools developed for them. Soke and Wild (2016) discovered that firms with 10 or fewer employees were 50 per cent less likely to make use of Internet marketing than those with over 10 employees. Considering that 96 per cent of firms surveyed in this study had 10 or fewer employees, it makes sense for them to point out that they did not have the right people to make use of the marketing tools developed for them. Maduku *et al.* (2016) shows that a key driver of mobile marketing adoption by SMMEs is perceived employee ICT capability, and Bocconcelli *et al.* (2017:24-25) confirm that the impact of social media marketing is highly dependent on the availability of committed and skilled human resources.

7.3.3.4 Lack of finances

Lekhanya (2015) posits that a third of South African SMMEs do not have the funds to engage in marketing, which could indicate why almost a quarter of SMMEs in this study mentioned a lack of finances as their reason for not making use of the tools developed for them.

7.3.3.5 Not shared

A significant relationship was found between level of satisfaction, usefulness, and the fact that some student teams did not share the tools and resources they created with the SMMEs. Those businesses which claimed that the tools and resources were not shared with them experienced lower levels of satisfaction than those with whom the tools and resources were shared. Naturally, these businesses also found the tools and resources less useful than those with whom they were shared. One example of this is a case in which a student team developed a Facebook page for the SMME brand, but when the relationship came to an end they did not share the log-in details with the business. This then meant that the business could not gain access to their own brand's Facebook page, which caused the owner-manager extreme frustration and led to very high levels of dissatisfaction. Although this significant finding makes sense, it is at odds with other SL studies which denote that all the work done by students was given to participating organisations, resulting in high levels of satisfaction (Levenburg, 2003:55; Neese *et al*., 2013).

7.3.3.6 General

Kota (2018) found that businesses that have been established for longer (11-15 years) used more social media tools for promotion than those which had been established for a shorter period. Considering that only 27.6 per cent of businesses surveyed in this study were older than 10 years, this could be another factor to help explain why they did not make use of some of the tools developed for them.

7.3.4 Perceived impact of tools and resources

Those businesses that did make use of the tools developed for them testified to a number of positive benefits stemming from the use of these tools. Almost half of the SMMEs mentioned increased sales, new customers, and increased brand awareness stemming from the tools and resources, with smaller numbers citing increased customer loyalty and increased competitive advantage. In addition, a positive significant relationship was found between satisfaction, usefulness, and increased sales, new customers, increased brand awareness, increased customer loyalty, and increased competitive advantage. The SMMEs that perceived an increase in sales, new customers, brand awareness, customer loyalty, and competitive advantage also experienced higher levels of satisfaction and found the tools and resources more useful.

These findings echo those of Rambe (2017), who found that SMMEs that make use of promotional tools such as Facebook are able to attract new customers, and Hopkins (2012), who reported that SMMEs are able to use Facebook to facilitate sales promotions like one-day spot sales in order to clear old stock quickly. Oji *et al.* (2017a) discovered a link between the use of promotional tools such as social media and customer loyalty, and Hove and Masocha (2014) confirm that marketing technologies increase business performance such as sales, growth, and profitability. Mishra (2015) asserts that promotional tools can increase brand awareness, customer traffic, sales and profits, and Dukart (2016) highlights brand awareness, customer loyalty, and new customers as benefits of using promotional tools. Rosenberg *et al*. (2016) specifically mention the benefits of student-developed promotional material, including increased awareness and corporate sponsorship. Although the findings of this study confirm the potential of marketing materials to increase competitive advantage, Hove and Masocha (2014) caution that technology-enabled marketing tools do not necessarily increase a firm's competitive edge against other firms in the market.

Additional, less noteworthy positive benefits that flowed from the tools and resources include increased business efficiency and increased employee motivation. Interestingly, a significant relationship was found between business efficiency and satisfaction, and between employee motivation and usefulness. Organisations that perceived an increase in business efficiency experienced higher levels of satisfaction and those that noticed an increase in employee motivation found the tools and resources more useful than other firms. Hopkins (2012) argues that promotional tools such as social media can promote effective communication between businesses and their customers, which leads to increased business efficiency. Rajhans (2012) highlights that increased levels of communication leads to employees experiencing greater levels of motivation and performance.

7.3.5 Satisfaction with the tools and resources

7.3.5.1 Overall satisfaction

With regard to student-developed tools and resources, a significant relationship was found between usefulness, satisfaction, overall satisfaction, lasting impact, and future participation. Organisations that found the tools useful also experienced higher levels of satisfaction with the tools, as well as greater levels of overall satisfaction with the SL programme. In addition, these organisations experienced a more substantial lasting impact on their businesses and were desirous to participate in the programme again in the future.

Furlow (2010) found that participating organisations experienced high levels of satisfaction with the tools and resources developed for them by students during SL. As a result of the development of tools and resources, Schachter and Schwartz (2009:451) record partner organisations rating the usefulness of the entire SL project very highly, leading to higher levels of overall satisfaction as well as a higher lasting impact for the programme. One organisation surveyed by Schachter and Schwartz (2009:450) states, "The tools provided will probably be a better measure of our program impact. It has helped us create a rationale and a plan for more formal program evaluation." This is in line with the current study, which reports more than 75 per cent of SMMEs experiencing high levels of satisfaction for marketing tools and resources developed for them by students.

Interestingly, Wiese and Sherman (2011) observe that although students developed marketing materials for local retail stores, some SL projects were not as successful as others due to a lack of interest and effort on the part of the organisations concerned. This could account for why a number of businesses did not find the tools useful, and thought the project had little to no lasting impact on their businesses.

7.3.5.2 Student teams

A positive significant relationship was found between project mark and satisfaction. Organisations that worked with student teams that achieved a distinction from their lecturer for their final project experienced higher levels of satisfaction than those who worked with groups that failed their project. Hagenbuch (2006) postulates that students do not always follow the instructions set out for them in the SL programme, and that is what they get marked on. The greater the degree to which students followed the programme instructions, the greater the likelihood they had of receiving a distinction for their work. And therefore the higher their mark, the more likely they were to have implemented all the needed tools and resources for their participating SMME. In addition, obviously, higher marks indicate a higher level of quality of student work (Larmer, 2018). Therefore, it is very likely that student teams that achieved higher marks also delivered higher quality work to the SMMEs, which thus resulted in higher levels of satisfaction.

Another significant relationship was found between study programme and usefulness. Organisations that worked with PT students found the tools and resources more useful than those that worked with FT students. As mentioned above, PT students are often older and have some work experience (Anderson, 2019), and can offer participating organisations more experience and knowledge than FT students. Considering that PT students often already work in marketing positions and have more experience with marketing tools and resources, it is understandable that they would have been able to provide SMMEs with tools and resources that were more useful than those conveyed by FT students, who had little to no experience with using marketing tools for promotional purposes.

7.4 IMC campaign plan

7.4.1 Presentation of campaign plan

Student teams presented their final campaign to businesses in different ways. SMMEs reported that only a small number did so via printed document, a fifth via live presentation using Power Point, and more than half via a verbal informal explanation. In a SL programme studied by Bock and Randal (2014), students presented their marketing plan to clients by handing them a final document. Schoenherr (2015) and Sprague and Hu (2015) document that SL students made formal presentations to participating organisations, either at their place of work or at the university, while other authors note that students handed written reports to participating organisations (Levenburg, 2003; Klink & Athaide, 2004; Holtzman *et al.*, 2008; Geringer *et al.*, 2009, Gonzalez-Pardon & Ferguson, 2015; Hardin-Ramanan *et al.*, 2018; Bonaparte, 2019).

In the present study, a significant relationship was found between presentation method and satisfaction. SMMEs that were presented to and to whom documents were given experienced higher levels of satisfaction than those to whom the campaign was just explained verbally. Paradi (2017) stresses that the reason presentations invite higher levels of engagement is because they are visual, can simplify complex concepts, and can facilitate demonstrations, discussion, and input. As far as documents are concerned, Paradi (2017) points out that they convey more detail, are accessible later, and can also use visuals.

In addition to a formal presentation and written document, Neese *et al.* (2013:17) describe how, in the presence of an academic staff member, students had roundtable discussions with key personnel from participating organisations to explain at length the findings of their SL research and reasoning behind their suggestions and plans. Paradi (2017) commends this practice, suggesting the use of a combination of documents, presentations, and verbal engagement to achieve the most effective communication results in business.

7.4.2 Usefulness of campaign plan

Although more than half of the SMMEs made use of the campaign plans developed by students, 44.8 per cent of them signalled that they had never used nor implemented the campaign plan. Some firms indicated that they implemented the campaign before but were not doing so anymore, while more than a quarter stated that they continued to use the campaign plan to some degree or extensively. These findings are somewhat at odds with other SL studies, which record greater usefulness and a much higher rate of implementation of student plans (Whitaker & Berner, 2004). Vizenor *et al.* (2017) found that 84 per cent of SMMEs used some of the strategies suggested by students, with 64 per cent using a moderate to large amount of student suggestions. Calvert (2009) found that 90 per cent of participating SMMEs made use of the strategic insights given by students, and Bushouse (2005) saw almost 100 per cent of client organisations implement at least half of the recommendations made by student teams. Sprague and Hu (2015) also found a high rate of implementation, with 80 per cent of organisations indicating that they had implemented some of the student projects, and Schachter and Schwartz (2009:451) disclose that 71 per cent of participating firms implemented student recommendations.

A SL study by Akpabio (2012) seems to be more congruent with the findings of the present study. He found that roughly half of the community partners were willing to use marketing communication campaign plans developed by student teams, with the rest suggesting that the students' work needed to be developed further before being ready for implementation. Similarly, Krasynska *et al*. (2013:13) narrate that less than a third (28%) of participating organisations in their SL study fully implemented student projects, whereas 47 per cent only partially implemented them, and 25 per cent did not implement them at all.

It is clear that one of the key reasons for the lower implementation rate in the present study is because more than a third of SMMEs revealed that the campaign plan had never been shared with them. This also explains the significant relationship between these two variables, with organisations claiming to have never received the campaign plan specifying lower levels of usefulness and satisfaction. Again, this finding is at odds with Neese *et al.* (2013), who report that all participating organisations received the work that students did for them. Organisations in this study that never implemented the campaign plan not only experienced lower levels of satisfaction compared to those who did, but reported minimal lasting impact for their firms and less likelihood of future participation. Although Schachter and Schwartz (2009:451) found that more than a third of participating organisations felt that student projects were not helpful, they did not discover a significant relationship between satisfaction, usefulness, lasting impact, and future participation.

7.4.3 Means of campaign plan implementation

Interestingly, more than a quarter of respondents had no challenges when implementing the marketing strategies developed by students. What is more, a significant relationship was found between this variable and their estimate of the usefulness of and satisfaction with the campaign plan, with those having no challenges with implementation citing higher levels of usefulness and satisfaction. This could be because 60 per cent of SMMEs indicated that the student teams assisted them with implementing the campaign, which is a common practice in SL programmes (Hagenbuch, 2006; Furlow, 2010; Metcalf, 2010; Wiese & Sherman, 2011; Hettche & Clayton, 2013; Hardin-Ramanan *et al.*, 2018). In addition, given that Patricia *et al*. (2017:483) emphasise that many SMMEs feel they need to outsource some marketing communication to specialists, it makes sense that many participating firms opted to have the students implement the campaigns for them. This also explains why such organisations experienced higher levels of satisfaction than those who implemented it by themselves, and as a result found the overall programme to have a more significant lasting impact on their firm, and expressed a greater desire to participate in future SL programmes.

The many struggles experienced by SMMEs when implementing campaigns (as can be seen below) could have resulted from the fact that more than a third of them indicated that they implemented the campaign without any outside assistance. Considering the low level of marketing skills and experience of South African SMMEs cited by numerous authors (Thrassou & Vrontis, 2006; Lekhanya, 2015; Oji *et al.,* 2017b; Rambe, 2017, van Scheers, 2018), it is understandable that the SMMEs would have struggled.

Only a very small number of respondents indicated that they made use of additional external consultants to help them implement the campaign plan. This finding is in line with that of Krasynska *et al*. (2013:14), who also found some organisations making use of additional non-student external consultants to implement student plans developed during SL.

7.4.4 Reasons for not implementing the campaign plan & challenges experienced when implementing the campaign plan

7.4.4.1 Lack of time

A large number of SMMEs noted a lack of time as a pivotal reason for not implementing the marketing campaign, or said they experienced time-related challenges when trying to implement it; a finding which is confirmed by Bushouse (2005); Thrassou and Vrontis (2006); Bean (2017), and Van Scheers (2018).

A significant relationship was found between a lack of time and the usefulness of the campaign plan. Those organisations that did not implement their campaign plan due to a lack of time found the campaign plan less useful. Bushouse (2005) notes that the amount of time and resources needed to engage in a SL programme can become burdensome to participating organisations, and in such cases the usefulness of student work can be limited. Research by Cant (2012) found that SMMEs struggle with managing their time effectively and tend to lack the time to implement marketing strategies.

Interestingly, another finding reveals that, of those organisations that implemented the campaign plan, those which felt that the implementation took too much of their time actually found the campaign more useful than other firms. This might be because these organisations actively participated in the implementation process, and therefore found the experience useful, albeit time-consuming.

7.4.4.2 Lack of the right people

In confirmation of the findings of Bocconcelli *et al.* (2017), who show that the impact of IMC is highly dependent on the availability of committed and skilled human resources, a lack of the right people was also cited by approximately a fifth of SMMEs as a reason for not implementing student-developed campaign strategies, or for struggling when implementing them. Although significantly lower in percentage terms, this finding echoes that of Van Scheers (2018), who reported that 88.9 per cent of surveyed businesses stressed a lack of manpower as a barrier to implementing marketing campaigns.

The fact that the SMMEs had access to the student teams to assist them with implementing the campaign plans could explain why fewer of them cited a lack of manpower as a barrier to implementation than was the case with Van Scheers (2018). This could also explain why a significant positive relationship was found between a lack of staff and higher levels of satisfaction. It is possible that those businesses which generally lack the right people to implement IMC campaigns experienced higher levels of satisfaction from the campaign plan because they had access to the student teams to assist them. This finding affirms the human resource benefit of SL programmes for SMMEs, something that has been proposed by a number of SL authors (Gelmon *et al.* 1998; Vernon & Ward 1999; Sandy & Holland 2006; Blouin & Perry 2009; Campbell & Lambright 2011; Gazley *et al*., 2013).

A significant relationship was also found between a lack of staff and the perceived usefulness of and satisfaction with the campaign plan. Interestingly, of those organisations which implemented the campaign plan, those which cited a lack of staff felt the campaign plan was more useful and more satisfactory than those which did not. As mentioned previously, this could stem from the fact that these organisations actively participated in the implementation process, and therefore found the experience useful, even though they may have felt understaffed while doing so.

7.4.4.3 Lack of funds

A number of SMMEs highlighted a lack of finances as a major reason for not implementing the campaign plans developed by students, and some of those who did try to implement the campaign plans alleged they were hampered by a shortage of finance. These findings align with those of McIntyre *et al*. (2005); Longenecker *et al*. (2006); Lekhanya and Mason (2013); Mpofu and Chigwende (2013), and Lekhanya (2015). For example, Lekhanya and Mason (2013) similarly found that a third of SMMEs interviewed admitted that they did not implement marketing strategies because of a lack of finances. Van Scheers (2018) found a lack of funds to be an even greater barrier to marketing implementation, with 88.9 per cent of SMMEs identifying this as a key inhibitor. The fact that Van Scheers' study took place in Namibia could explain the large discrepancy between its findings and those of the present study and that of Lekhanya and Mason, which both took place in South Africa. Schachter and Schwartz (2009:451) and Krasynska *et al.* (2013:13) also found a number of participating organisations pointing to a lack of funds as a key reason for not being able to implement student SL recommendations.

7.4.4.4 Lack of know-how

A fair-sized percentage of the participating SMMEs expressed a lack of knowledge as one of the key reasons they were unable to implement the campaign plans developed by students, or were hindered when attempting to implement them. In a study of rural South African SMMEs, Lekhanya and Mason (2013) found that the majority of respondents admitted to a lack of knowledge and experience as a key reason they did not implement marketing campaigns. Considering that the present study was conducted in an urban area it makes sense for a smaller number of SMMEs to have mentioned a lack of knowledge as their reason for not implementing the campaigns, as urban SMMEs have greater access to business-related knowledge (Lekhanya & Mason, 2013). A number of other authors also confirm a lack of knowledge as a key limitation for the implementation of marketing campaigns by SMMEs (Thrassou & Vrontis, 2006; Van Scheers, 2011; Cant, 2012; Lekhanya & Mason, 2013; Lekhanya, 2015; Luxton *et al.,* 2017; Oji *et al.,* 2017b; Rambe, 2017).

A significant relationship was discovered between a lack of knowledge and SMME satisfaction. Organisations that reported a lack of knowledge experienced lower levels of satisfaction with the student-developed campaign plans. This is understandable as a certain level of understanding is required in order to conduct effective marketing communications (Soke & Wild, 2016; Kallier, 2017). Considering that it has been routinely discovered that South African SMMEs lack such knowledge and as a result are not able to implement marketing strategies (Van Scheers, 2011; Cant, 2012; Lekhanya, 2015; Oji *et al.*, 2017b; Rambe, 2017), it would make sense for participating SMMEs to have experienced lower levels of satisfaction as a consequence of their lack of knowledge, as this prevented them from being able fully to implement the campaign plans.

7.4.4.5 Lack of the needed resources

A lack of the resources needed was also cited as a barrier to implementing the marketing strategies developed by students, a finding affirmed by Bushouse (2005); Schachter and Schwartz (2009:451); Esposito (2013); Krasynska *et al.* (2013:13); Mapila *et al.* (2014:123), and Sprague and Hu (2015). For example, Mapila *et al*. (2014:123) disclose that up to 65 per cent of the SMMEs surveyed in South Africa acknowledged a resource limitation when trying to implement marketing strategies.

A significant relationship was found between a lack of resources and the usefulness of the campaign plan. Among the organisations that implemented the campaigns, those which cited a lack of resources as a challenge to implementation found the campaign more useful. Again, this could reflect the active participation of these organisations in the implementation process, a commitment that made the experience useful to them, even though it may have required resources which they did not have.

7.4.4.6 General

A very small number of firms gave a few other reasons for not implementing the campaign plan or experiencing difficulties when implementing it, including the fact that the campaign was not appropriate for their business; the fact that it was too complicated to implement effectively; and the fact that they planned to implement it in the future. Schachter and Schwartz (2009:451) also found that a small number of client firms claimed that student projects were not appropriate for their firms, while Rosenberg *et al.* (2016) reported that some organisations had opted to implement student projects in the future.

7.4.5 Perceived impact of campaign plan

A significant positive relationship was found between SMMEs’ satisfaction with the campaign plan and new customer acquisition, increased sales, increased brand awareness, increased customer loyalty, increased business efficiency, increased competitive advantage, and increased employee motivation. Considering that SMMEs seek these benefits (Zimuto, 2013; Lekhanya, 2014; Kareh, 2017; Luxton *et al.,* 2017; Linton & Shoenberger, 2019), and IMC campaigns often have these as campaign objectives (Yeboah & Atakora, 2013; Sharma, 2015; Woodland, 2015; Felstead, 2016; Khizar *et al.*, 2016; Lawrence, 2016; Oluwafemi & Adebiyi, 2018), the positive relationship makes sense.

7.4.5.1 New customers

The majority of respondents recognised new customers as a benefit of the student-developed campaign plan and experienced higher levels of satisfaction as a result. In addition, a significant relationship was found between new customers, campaign usefulness, and SMME satisfaction with the campaign plan. Those organisations that perceived an increase in customers resulting from campaign plans found them to be more useful and experienced higher levels of satisfaction.

There are numerous studies that attest to the fact that IMC campaigns do in fact help small businesses gain new customers (Hopkins, 2012; Hove & Masocha, 2014; Bocconcelli, *et al*., 2017; Mosweunyane *et al*., 2019). For example, Lekhanya and Mason (2013) affirm that marketing campaigns encourage referrals which lead to new business; Bocconcelli *et al.* (2017) observe that social media can help SMMEs cost-effectively access new and foreign markets, which would otherwise have been very difficult to reach; and both Rambe (2017) and Mosweunyane *et al*. (2019) highlight the use of social media to attract new customers.

7.4.5.2 Increase in sales

More than half the SMMEs highlighted an increase in sales as a consequence of the marketing campaigns developed by the students. A significant relationship was found between sales, campaign usefulness, and SMME satisfaction with the campaign plan. Those organisations that perceived an increase in sales resulting from the campaign plan found it more useful and experienced higher levels of satisfaction.

Furlow (2010) analysed the benefits of a US-based marketing communication SL programme and also found an increase in sales combined with high levels of client satisfaction. Metcalf (2010) chronicles an increase in revenue and client satisfaction thanks to SL work done by students in Peru. Gabrielli and Balboni (2010:287); Esposito (2013:90); Lekhanya and Mason (2013); Mapheto *et al.* (2014); Odoom (2016:14); Ramasobana (2017), and Mosweunyane *et al*. (2019) all testify that IMC leads to increased sales and profits for SMMEs, especially those that use a combination of traditional and technology-enabled marketing communication tools and strategies. Interestingly, Soke and Wild (2016) discovered that SMMEs that had been in operation for one year or more were more likely to experience increased sales stemming from sales promotions campaigns. Considering that 96.2 per cent of the SMMEs that participated in this study were older than 1.5 years, it makes sense for such a large proportion of them to have experienced an increase in sales resulting from IMC campaigns.

7.4.5.3 Increased brand awareness

Just over half the participating firms indicated an increase in brand awareness stemming from the implementation of the student communication campaigns, and a significant relationship was found between increased brand awareness, campaign usefulness, and SMME satisfaction with the campaign plan. Those organisations that perceived an increase in brand awareness resulting from campaign plans found them to be more useful and experienced higher levels of satisfaction.

SL studies by Hagenbuch (2006) and Goertzen *et al*. (2016:41) also found participating organisations declaring an increase in brand awareness in their community, likewise leading to high levels of client satisfaction. Studies by Hopkins (2012); Esposito (2013:90); Odoom (2016); Bocconcelli *et al.* (2017:24); Oji *et al.* (2017a) and Odoom and Mensa (2019) all highlight the fact that IMC can increase the visibility of SMME brands in the marketplace, leading to improved overall business performance.

7.4.5.4 Increased customer loyalty

Four out of ten SMMEs noticed an increase in customer loyalty due to the IMC campaign, and a significant relationship was found between increased customer loyalty, campaign usefulness, and SMME satisfaction with the campaign plan. Those organisations that perceived an increase in customer loyalty resulting from their campaign plan found it to be more useful and experienced higher levels of satisfaction.

Lekhanya and Mason (2013) found that 74.3 per cent of SMMEs surveyed revealed that marketing campaigns helped increase customer loyalty. The fairly large discrepancy could stem from the fact that Lekhanya and Mason (2013) surveyed SMMEs in rural areas which generally experience much lower levels of competition and therefore much higher levels of customer loyalty in comparison to the urban SMMEs that took part in this study. Findings by Oji *et al*. (2017a) are somewhat closer to those of the present study, with 65.2 per cent of SMMEs in the Cape Metropole noting that marketing communication activities such as the use of social media resulted in greater customer loyalty. It is possible that the reason for the residual discrepancy in findings relates to the fact that Oji *et al.* (2017a) surveyed only the use of social media whereas the present study surveyed the implementation of an entire IMC campaign. Numbers of authors have found that marketing communication activities such as the use of social media can help businesses stay in contact with existing customers more effectively, which often leads to higher levels of customer loyalty (Salimbe, 2013:64; Joonas, 2015; Odoom, 2016:14; Rambe, 2017; Oji *et al.,* 2017a; Van Sheers, 2018).

7.4.5.5 Increased business efficiency

A fifth of organisations specified an increase in business efficiency thanks to the marketing communication plans designed by students. This finding is shared by a number of authors (Hettche & Clayton, 2013; Salimbe, 2013:64; Joonas, 2015; Odoom, 2016:14; Bocconcelli *et al.,* 2017; Oji *et al.,* 2017a; Rambe, 2017; Van Sheers, 2018), some of whom record time saving as a result of using Facebook to respond to customer queries, a reduction of space constraints, enhanced communication processes, more effective market channel management, reinforced business networking, and a more planned and proactive sales approach due to the use of social media. Plaut (2013:7) reflects on a SL programme that so improved the efficiencies of an organisation that its owners were able to move the organisation "into compliance and in position to meet its obligations, survive, and become eligible for external funding." Krasynska *et al*. (2013:16) also reveal significant improvement to organisational capacity due to SL projects, in areas like leadership, management, governance, communications, community outreach, development, fundraising, and human resources.

7.4.5.6 Increased competitive advantage

A significant relationship was found between increased competitive advantage, campaign usefulness, and SMME satisfaction with the campaign plan. Those organisations that perceived an increase in competitive advantage resulting from campaign plans found them to be more useful and experienced higher levels of satisfaction. Although Hove and Masocha (2014) state that SMMEs do not believe that marketing communication technologies can increase a firm's competitive advantage, as a result of implementing student marketing plans that prominently featured new marketing technologies such as Facebook, some businesses confirmed a perceived increase in their competitive advantage. This is in line with a number of more recent sources, which all emphasise the value of IMC for competitive advantage (Sharma, 2015; Hughes, 2016; Kareh, 2017; Luxton *et al.*, 2017).

7.4.5.7 Increased employee motivation

Some enterprises indicated an increase in employee motivation flowing from the implementation of IMC campaigns. A significant relationship was found between increased employee motivation, campaign usefulness, and SMME satisfaction with the campaign plan. Those organisations that perceived an increase in employee motivation resulting from campaign plans found them to be more useful and experienced higher levels of satisfaction. This is in line with a number of SL-related studies, which all declare a positive impact on employee morale due to student projects, combined with high levels of satisfaction (Bernstein *et al*., 2003; Killian, 2004; Worrall, 2007; Blouin & Perry, 2009; Gazley *et al*., 2013). In addition, there are a number of sources that link various IMC benefits (like increased sales) to employee motivation, especially the morale of the sales and marketing team (Levin *et al.,* 2012; Allen *et al*., 2013; Mishra & Sinha, 2014; Jacoby, 2016; McFarlane, 2016).

7.4.5.8 No positive impact

There were some respondents that claimed to have experienced no positive impact stemming from the campaign plan. There was a significant relationship between no positive impact and satisfaction, with organisations that perceived no positive impact resulting from the campaign plan experiencing lower levels of satisfaction. This finding is aligned with that of Krasynska *et al.* (2013:15), who note that some organisations surveyed found student plans to have had no impact on their organisation. Mapheto *et al.* (2014) even found that some of the SMMEs surveyed indicated that customers responded negatively to IMC campaigns. Henninger and Alevizou (2017), as well as Patricia *et al.* (2017:438), admit that the SMMEs they studied engaged in IMC in a mostly short-term, haphazard, and tactical way that was non-strategic and did not gain or consider customers' information needs.

Considering that a fair portion of the SMMEs facilitated the IMC campaigns themselves without the assistance of the student teams, it is very possible that the lack of positive impact can be associated with a haphazard approach to IMC as highlighted by Henninger and Alevizou (2017).

It is also possible that student teams did not design effective strategies or failed to implement them effectively because they were unprepared or uninterested (Vernon & Ward, 1999; Worrall, 2007; Blouin & Perry, 2009; Mokoena & Spencer, 2017:304-305). The latter might be attributed to a lack of engagement between academic staff and participating SMMEs to ensure that their needs were being met (Gelmon *et al.,* 1998; Vernon & Ward, 1999; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Worrall, 2007; Blouin & Perry, 2009; Campbell & Lambright, 2011; Gazley *et al.* 2013), or to a lack of engagement by the SMMEs themselves, resulting from a lack of time or interest (Vernon & Ward 1999; Bushouse, 2005; Blouin & Perry, 2009).

7.4.6 Satisfaction with campaign plan

7.4.6.1 Overall satisfaction with campaign plan

The satisfaction levels experienced by SMMEs as a result of the campaign plan developed by students were fairly high, with an overall positive satisfaction level of 70.8 per cent. This finding is very similar to that of Sprague & Hu (2015:268), who report that 85 per cent of participating organisations experienced high levels of satisfaction with student projects, and of Schachter and Schwartz (2009:451), whose research indicates that 74 per cent of participating firms found student recommendations very satisfactory. Numbers of other authors also found high levels of satisfaction among participating organisations as a result of SL projects completed by students (Bernstein *et al.,* 2003; Killian, 2004; Whitaker & Berner, 2004; Bushouse, 2005; Worrall, 2007; Boulin & Perry, 2009; Schachter & Schwartz, 2009; Campbell & Lambright, 2011; Gazley *et al*., 2013; Krasynska *et al.*, 2013; Niehm *et al*., 2015:150; Vasbinder & Koehler, 2015:89; Mokoena & Spencer, 2017:302-303; Mitchell, 2018:39-40).

Significant relationships were found between the usefulness of the campaign plans, the satisfaction of firms with the campaign plans, the lasting impact of the campaign plans, and future participation. Organisations that used the campaign plans once or continued to use them, as well as those that were satisfied with the campaign plans, found the project to have had a greater lasting impact on their firm and were more likely to participate in the programme again in the future. Numbers of authors highlight that high levels of usefulness are associated with SL programmes overall because of students' projects (Driscoll *et al*., 1996; Bernstein *et al.,* 2003; Killian, 2004; Whitaker & Berner, 2004; Bushouse, 2005; Worrall, 2007; Boulin & Perry, 2009; Schachter & Swartz, 2009; Campbell & Lambright, 2011; Gazley *et al*., 2013; Krasynska *et al.*, 2013; Niehm *et al*., 2015:150; Mokoena & Spencer, 2017:302-303; Mitchell, 2018:39-40).

Vizenor *et al*. (2017:8) claim that student SL projects can have a considerable lasting impact, and both Barrientos (2010:1) and Plaut (2013:12) document participating organisations stating that they would participate in SL programmes again as a result of the quality and usefulness of student projects.

7.4.6.2 Legal form of ownership

Interestingly, there was a significant relationship between satisfaction levels, CIPC registration, and legal form of ownership. Those SMMEs that were registered with CIPC and registered as Closed Corporation or Pty Limited firms experienced higher levels of satisfaction than those that were not registered with CIPC and which simply operated as sole proprietors. In South Africa, businesses more likely to be registered are those which are classified as very small (employing 5-10 people) and small (employing 10-50 people), suggesting that those unregistered businesses that experienced lower levels of satisfaction were either micro businesses (employing 1-5 people) or survivalist businesses (0 employees), which are generally found to be unregistered and operating in the informal economy (Ntsika, 2001:13). As such, micro and survivalist businesses often lack capital, human resources, and basic technical and business skills. Their owners are generally engaging in business because they are unable to find formal employment, which causes them to be less strategic and more haphazard in their approach to business (Tustin, 2001:10). Such survivalist-oriented businesses are much less likely to benefit from support given to them (SBP 2011:5), which is exactly what has been found in this study.

7.4.6.3 Project mark

A significant relationship was discovered between the project mark given to students and the level of satisfaction experienced by SMMEs. The higher the mark achieved by the student teams, the greater the level of satisfaction experienced by the respective SMME they worked with. This phenomenon can be explained by the findings of Hagenbuch (2006), who discovered that students did not always follow instructions in the SL programme. Considering that students are marked on the degree to which they completed their projects according to the instructions given, it makes sense that those who followed the instructions more closely produced higher quality work, which led to higher levels of satisfaction among the SMMEs they worked with.

7.5 Skills training and knowledge transfer

7.5.1 Skills imparted to business

Students trained SMMEs in a range of technical skills, including computer applications, Microsoft Office, email, the Internet, websites, Facebook, and Twitter. A third of businesses responded that they had received no skills training from students. Some studies confirm the skills training of SMMEs by students, such as do Amaral (2019:132) who describes community partners learning website-related project management skills, and Kincade and Gibson (2012:11), who disclose that students trained SMMEs in the use of social media (like Facebook) and other technologies (such as computers, websites, email and so forth). Other authors also testify to the inculcation of technical skills in participating organisations by SL students (Barr, 2010b; Schwartz, 2010:6; Steimel, 2013:244).

A significant relationship was found between usefulness, satisfaction, and website training. Organisations that were trained in dealing with websites experienced higher levels of satisfaction with the student training and also found the training more useful. Additional significant relationships were found between satisfaction, email, Facebook, and no training. SMMEs that were trained in email and Facebook experienced higher levels of satisfaction with the skills training from students, and those who received no training experienced lower levels of satisfaction with the training.

7.5.1.1 Website, Email, and Facebook

Oji *et al.* (2017a) posit that online marketing technologies can boost the capability and strategic sustainability of small businesses in South Africa. Although it has been found that South African SMMEs do make use of technologies like websites, email, and Facebook to facilitate marketing (Kallier, 2017), studies indicate that numbers of South African SMMEs lack knowledge of online marketing technologies, of their usefulness, and of how to implement them for marketing purposes (Oji *et al*., 2017b; Rambe, 2017). It has therefore been recommended that SMMEs increase their knowledge and skill levels with marketing technologies in order to develop better marketing strategies (Rambe, 2017). Considering that websites, email, and Facebook are three of the most powerful yet affordable SMME marketing tools today (Jackson, 2012; Schiff, 2012; Khan & Karodia, 2013; Aufreiter *et al*., 2014; Ayres, 2014; Bussing, 2017; Danoy, 2017), it makes sense that participating SMMEs associated high levels of usefulness and satisfaction with the skills training they received from students in this regard.

7.5.1.2 No training

Considering that most organisations that participate in SL have certain expectations of the programme and students, it makes sense for them to experience dissatisfaction if the students do not fulfil those expectations (Blouin & Perry, 2009:128; Darby *et al*., 2013:127; Plaut, 2013:8; Steimel, 2013:248-249; Sprague & Hu, 2015; Goertzen *et al*., 2016:42).

7.5.2 Business-related knowledge transferred to businesses

Most SMMEs confirmed their receipt of extensive marketing-related knowledge, including information pertaining to marketing, sales promotion, strategy, advertising, research and consumers; about a quarter of the firms, however, claimed they had received no knowledge transfer from students. A significant relationship was found between usefulness, satisfaction, marketing, and sales promotion. Organisations to whom marketing and sales promotion knowledge was transferred found the skills and knowledge sharing from students to be more useful and also experienced higher levels of satisfaction.

Significant relationships were also found between satisfaction, advertising, and no knowledge. Organisations that gained advertising knowledge from students experienced higher levels of satisfaction, while those who gained no knowledge from students experienced lower levels of satisfaction.

Barr (2010b) and Schwartz (2010:6) confirm the training and knowledge transfer benefits of marketing-related SL programmes. Kingcade and Gibson (2012:11) describe SMME retailers reporting that SL students explained business concepts to them that they had never before completely understood. Sprague and Hu (2015) cite organisations as having been greatly informed about important issues affecting their industry thanks to student knowledge transfer, leading to important changes to their policies and programmes. Schachter and Schwartz (2009:449) highlight increased knowledge in strategic planning for participating organisations resulting from SL. Schoenherr (2015) also reports that organisations emphasised the valuable contribution of student knowledge, which included such things as management consulting, strategy, and research. Plaut (2013:4) lists knowledge transfer from SL programmes to participating firms as including marketing, management, ICT, advertising, PR, retail, and graphic design, and do Amaral (2019:132) records that community partners gained project management knowledge thanks to their interaction with SL students.

7.5.2.1 Marketing, sales promotion, and advertising

In South Africa, it has been found that small businesses think highly of marketing, sales promotion, and advertising (Soke & Wild, 2016), and make use of them in discounting prices (Patricia *et al*., 2017), advertising in local newspapers (Van Scheers, 2018), distributing flyers (Makhitha, 2016), and setting up point-of-sale displays (Mramba, 2015), to name a few. Yet at the same time, small businesses claim to lack the knowledge and experience to design and implement marketing strategies, sales promotions, and advertising campaigns (Cant, 2012; Lekhanya & Mason, 2013; Lekhanya, 2015). This is especially true for new forms of marketing, sales promotion, and advertising, like web-based advertising (Patricia *et al*., 2017) and social media marketing (Rambe, 2017), as well as the implementation of more advanced tactics such as targeting new markets (Bocconcelli *et al.,* 2017:24-25), identifying prospects, and encouraging product trials (Patricia *et al*., 2017). Studies have also found that although SMMEs do implement marketing strategies, these are often ineffective due to problems like inferior messaging (Mramba, 2015). For this reason, Henninger and Alevizou (2017) recommend that SMMEs in South Africa be offered training in order to increase their marketing proficiency. Considering that Jones *et al.* (2013) and Suseno *et al.* (2019) found that SMMEs prefer informal workplace-based training by an external training provider, it makes sense that participating SMMEs experienced a significant level of usefulness and satisfaction from knowledge transfer by student teams relating to marketing, sales promotion, and advertising.

7.5.2.2 No knowledge

Considering the many benefits of marketing-related training and knowledge transfer (Henninger & Alevizou, 2017), as well as the high expectations that community partners have regarding SL programmes (Blouin & Perry, 2009:128; Darby *et al*., 2013:127; Plaut, 2013:8; Steimel, 2013:248-249; Sprague & Hu, 2015; Goertzen *et al*., 2016:42), it makes sense that SMMEs experienced lower levels of satisfaction in situations where no new knowledge was imparted to them by students.

7.5.3 Usefulness of skills training and knowledge transfer

A large majority of SMMEs found the skills training and knowledge transfer to have been useful, with a considerable number of firms continuing to find it somewhat useful or very useful.

Schachter and Schwartz (2009:449) and Barrientos (2010:12) note that community partners highlighted the usefulness of skills and knowledge shared with them during SL programmes. A number of South African SMMEs surveyed by Ferreira *et al.* (2010) said that they generally sought the help of external consultants with regard to training in marketing knowledge, and Ladzani and Van Vuuren (2002) record South African SMMEs as citing the usefulness of marketing-related knowledge transfer gained from SMME training.

Interestingly, a significant relationship was found between study programme and usefulness. SMMEs that worked with PT students found the skills and knowledge more useful than those that worked with FT students.

As mentioned above, in comparison to FT students, PT students are often older and have more work experience (Anderson, 2019). As such, PT students can have more to offer participating organisations. Considering that PT students often already work in marketing positions and have more experience with marketing tools, theories, and practices, it is understandable that they would have been able to provide SMMEs with skills training and knowledge transfer that was more useful than offered by FT students, who have little to no practical experience with marketing tools, theories, and practices.

7.5.4 Reasons for lack of usefulness of skills and knowledge

7.5.4.1 Lack of time

A number of firms pointed to a lack of time as the key barrier to being able to use the skills and knowledge imparted to them by students. In addition, a significant relationship was found between lack of time and usefulness. Organisations that mentioned a lack of time found the skills training and knowledge transfer less useful than other organisations. Studies by both Ladzini and Netswera (2009) and Dewhurst *et al*. (2006:139) confirm this with their findings that South African SMMEs struggle to access training programmes because of a lack of time. In addition, Cant (2012) attests that SMMEs are unable to effectively implement marketing skills and knowledge due to a lack of time. These findings are also confirmed by studies of SMMEs in other countries (Jones *et al*., 2013; Suseno *et al.*, 2019).

7.5.4.2 Lack of the right staff

Over a fifth of SMMEs acknowledged a lack of the right employees as a reason for not being able to use the skills and knowledge shared with them. A significant relationship was also found between lack of people and usefulness. Those organisations that lacked appropriate staff also found the training less useful. Interestingly, Dewhurst *et al.* (2006) and Suseno *et al.* (2019) found that SMMEs often lack the staff needed to implement knowledge from training because they cannot afford to release employees for them to attend training. Allard and Straussman (2003:698) and Tyron *et al.* (2008:20) also confirm that community organisations generally struggle to engage in SL because of a shortage of appropriate staff.

7.5.4.3 Lack of finances

More than a quarter of firms described lack of finances as a factor that contributed to their inability to make use of the skills and knowledge transferred to them by student teams. Considering that Lekhanya (2015) argues that a third of South African SMMEs do not have the funds to engage in marketing, it makes sense that SMMEs blamed a lack of finances, because the skills and knowledge imparted by students were marketing-related. Allard and Straussman (2003:698) also maintain that organisations are often inhibited from effectively participating in SL due to a lack of finances.

7.5.4.4 Lack of know-how

Interestingly, a number of firms suggested that they were unable to make use of the skills and knowledge shared with them because of a lack of knowledge. A significant relationship was also found between lack of knowledge and usefulness. Organisations that documented a lack of knowledge attributed lower levels of usefulness to student training and knowledge transfer. This suggests that although students did impart skills and knowledge to them, it was somehow incomplete. A number of authors have suggested that students do not always effectively engage with SL due to a lack of commitment (Blouin & Perry, 2009:128); a lack of effort (Goertzen *et al.* 2016:42); a lack of follow-through (Darby *et al.*, 2013:127); a lack of motivation (Steimel, 2013:248-249); a lack of consistency (Budhai, 2013:6), and a lack of responsiveness to client feedback (Sprague & Hu, 2015). It is very possible that although students did spend time with the SMMEs, they did not spend enough (engaged) time in order to effectively pass on skills and knowledge to them.

In addition, it may be possible that the knowledge that students tried to impart to organisations was simply not correct. This is in line with Sprague and Hu (2015) and Vizenor *et al*. (2017:10), who mention community partners citing a lack of industry experience and knowledge as a key weakness of SL students.

7.5.4.5 Inappropriateness

Although only a handful of firms stated that the skills and knowledge transferred to them was inappropriate, a significant relationship was found between this factor and usefulness. Organisations that recorded that the skills training and knowledge transfer was inappropriate also noted a lack of usefulness. This finding is anticipated by Briere *et al.* (2015), who found that SMMEs in South Africa preferred training that was tailored to their actual needs and level of development. Organisations surveyed by Gazley *et al.* (2012:12) mentioned that there were times when SL activities were not entirely congruent with their internal organisational needs.

7.5.4.6 Lack of communication

Finally, a small number of firms emphasised a lack of communication as the key reason for not being able to make effective use of the skills and knowledge transferred to them. In this case it is possible that students attempted to share skills and knowledge with participating firms but did not communicate with them effectively. The fact that students do not always communicate effectively with community partners is confirmed by a number of SL authors (Gelmon *et al*., 1998; Vernon & Ward, 1999; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Worrall, 2007; Tyron & Stoecker, 2008:55; Blouin & Perry, 2009:127; Campbell & Lambright, 2011; Budhai, 2013:6; Gazley *et al*., 2013; McReynolds, 2014; Vizenor *et al*., 2017:10).

7.5.5 Perceived impact of skills and knowledge

Participating organisations perceived a number of positives flowing from skills training and knowledge transfer by students, including increased sales, new customers, and enhanced brand awareness; and to a lesser degree, customer loyalty, business efficiency, competitive advantage, and employee motivation. Shiryan *et al.* (2012:52), Jones *et al.* (2013), and Miller *et al*. (2017) found that SMMEs experienced a positive impact on their performance (including sales, profits, new customers, etc.) from workplace training. Kent *et al*. (2003) discovered that SMMEs found workplace training and mentorship helped to maximise sales, develop new ideas, produce an action plan, adapt to changes, become more entrepreneurial, develop contact networks, and confer other benefits. De Saá-Pérez *et al*. (2012) also found that SMMEs applied the knowledge they received from training in order to improve performance and develop new products.

7.5.5.1 Sales, new customers, and brand awareness

A significant relationship was found between usefulness, satisfaction, sales, new customers, and brand awareness. Organisations that perceived an increase in sales, new customers, and brand awareness found the skills and knowledge provided by students to be more useful and also expressed higher levels of satisfaction with them.

These results differ from those of Karlan and Valdivia (2011), who found no statistically significant relationship between SMME training and business performance such as profits and sales. But they did find that training had an impact on processes relating to business efficiency such as record keeping. A study by Van Vuuren and Botha (2010) of a South African SMME training programme did find a statistically significant relationship between knowledge transfer and new customers, business performance, sales, and profitability for the participating SMMEs. In addition, Kunaka and Moos (2019) and Higuchi *et al*. (2019) also found significant relationships between SMME mentoring and training and a number of business outcomes.

7.5.5.2 Customer loyalty, competitive advantage, and employee motivation

Additional significant relationships were found between satisfaction, customer loyalty, competitive advantage, and employee motivation. SMMEs that perceived an increase in customer loyalty, competitive advantage, and employee motivation resulting from the skills and knowledge transfer, experienced higher levels of satisfaction with that transfer.

Van Vuuren and Botha (2010) also reported a statistically significant relationship between SMME training and staff motivation, and Chiloane-Tsoka and Boya (2014) stress the importance of training to improve competitive advantage in South African SMMEs. Lees (2006) affirms that training in effective customer retention strategies results in increased customer loyalty, and Galbriath (2018) shows that staff training can result in customer loyalty as a result of improved employee performance. These findings suggest that participating SMMEs which received marketing-related training found that their employees were more motivated due to learning strategies that they could use to retain customers as well as to improve their competitive advantage in the marketplace.

7.5.5.3 No Impact

A small number of firms sustained no positive impact from the skills training and knowledge transfer. These firms found the training and knowledge transfer from students to be less useful than other firms and also experienced lower levels of satisfaction.

It has been found that certain forms of training do not actually result in benefits for participating SMMEs (Jones *et al*., 2013). For example, Karlan and Valdivia (2011) found no statistically significant effects produced by entrepreneurship training on business results like profit, sales, or employment. In addition, numerous studies reveal that students do not all devote the same amount of time and effort to SL programmes (Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000; Cress *et al*., 2001; Blouin & Perry, 2009:128; Gazley *et al.*, 2012:10; Budhai, 2013:6; Darby *et al*., 2013:127; Steimel, 2013:248-249; Sprague & Hu, 2015; Goertzen *et al*., 2016:42). Similarly, not all students have the same amount of knowledge and expertise to share (Spraque & Hu, 2015; Vizenor *et al.,* 2017:10). SMMEs cite other reasons for the lack of usefulness of the training and knowledge received, including ineffectual training delivery by students. Therefore the form of training, the effort of students, participation of SMME staff, training delivery, and knowledge of students could have all contributed to the lack of positive impact from training and knowledge transfer experienced by SMMEs, resulting in lower levels of satisfaction with the training.

7.5.6 Satisfaction with skills and knowledge

A large majority of firms were satisfied with the skills training and knowledge transfer from students during the SL programme. A significant relationship was found between usefulness, satisfaction, overall satisfaction, lasting impact, and future participation. SMMEs that found the skills and knowledge to be useful for their organisations also stated that the skills and knowledge had a significant lasting impact on their firm. This led to greater satisfaction with the skills and knowledge as well as greater overall satisfaction with the programme as a whole. In addition, these firms were more likely to participate in the programme again in future.

Jorge (2003:31) narrated many instances of knowledge exchange through the reciprocal relationships formed between students and community members with whom they engaged with through service learning. Other studies affirm the satisfaction that local communities experience because of training provided by students (Clark *et al.,* 2003; Simpson & Long, 2007; Batra *et al*., 2009; Meah *et al*., 2009). Sprague and Hu (2015) cite organisations participating in SL programmes claiming an ongoing benefit from the knowledge imparted by students long after the students had left.

7.6 Client-agency relationship

7.6.1 Characteristics of agency "staff"

Participating SMMEs specify a number of characteristics of the working relationship between themselves and the student teams, including that the students were punctual, respected their time, did not make a nuisance of themselves, were polite and neatly dressed, communicated effectively, used appropriate language, and acted professionally.

These findings are echoed by a number of authors who assert that in general, students are prepared, reliable, professional, and interested (Vernon & Ward, 1999; Worrall, 2007; Boulin & Perry, 2009; Krasynska *et al*., 2013:17; Spraque & Percy, 2014; Vasbinder & Koehler, 2015:89; Mokoena & Spencer, 2017:302-303; Mitchell, 2018:39-40); students communicate effectively with participating organisations (Sandy & Holland, 2006; Worrall, 2007; Blouin & Perry, 2009; Campbell & Lambright, 2011; Gazley *et al.,* 2013; Krasynska *et al*., 2013:17); students are honest, creative, innovative, organised, serious, and well prepared (Simola, 2009:578; Niehm *et al*., 2015:150; Mitchell, 2018:39-40); students are punctual, respectful, properly dressed, dependable, and deliver good quality work (Ferrari & Worrall, 2000); students are interested, engaged, excellent, dedicated, attentive, competent, extremely professional, enthusiastic, intelligent, flexible, well-organised, and sensitive to the uniqueness of the organisation (Schachter & Schwartz, 2009:453). Simola (2009:578) also confirms that students did not make a nuisance of themselves and used the organisation's time well.

Similar client-agency relationships are described in a study by Sekely and Blakney (1996), who note that according to clients, small agencies outperform larger agencies in areas like creativity, personal attention, and account services (like account handling, flexibility, communication, meeting deadlines, following through, and so forth).

Significant relationships were found between satisfaction, usefulness, punctuality, respect, politeness, effective communication, appropriate language, and professionalism. Organisations that found students to be punctual, respectful, effective communicators, professional, and using appropriate language also found the client-agency relationships to be useful and experienced higher levels of satisfaction. Organisations that found students polite also experienced higher levels of satisfaction with the working relationship.

Fam and Waller (2008) emphasise that factors such as commitment, honesty, and trust are extremely important for successful client-agency relationships. Barrientos (2010:9) describes community partners stressing the importance of trust in SL relationships. In a survey conducted by the author, more than half the community partners indicated high levels of trust with the students and academic staff members. Schachter and Schwartz (2009:453) cite one community partner as saying, "We had a great team: very professional, well-organised and flexible. Also, they conveyed a respect for our organisation which was appreciated and also helped us approach the work enthusiastically and made us open to the recommendations forwarded. Smart group who I bet have since gone on to great things."

Sprague and Hu (2015) document that participating organisations described student groups as very knowledgeable, enthusiastic, creative, responsive, focused, hardworking, talented, insightful, productive, professional, smart, and compassionate. Vizenor *et al.* (2017:9-10) records that 71 per cent of community partners said that they found working with students "very enjoyable" because of their innovative and out-of-the-box thinking, their fresh insights, valuable strategic recommendations, as well as their enthusiasm, optimism, commitment, and energy. Niehm *et al*. (2015:150); Mokoena and Spencer (2017:302-303); and Mitchell (2018:39-40) similarly describe SMMEs' appreciation for the fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, energy, and creativity of students. Plaut (2013:12) records that partner organisations were grateful for the respect they received from students.

7.6.2 Usefulness of client-agency relationship

A large majority of respondents found the client-agency relationship with students to be useful. This finding is very similar to that of Sprague and Hu (2015), who found that a large majority of the participating organisations surveyed reported the relationship with students to have been useful to their organisation. Schoenerr (2015) reports a number of useful benefits stemming from mutually beneficial and synergistic partnerships between organisations and students, including cost saving, new insights, and enhanced operations. A number of other authors also affirm the usefulness of SL relationships between organisations and students (Bernstein *et al*., 2003; Whitaker & Berner, 2004; Campbell & Lambright, 2011; Krasynska *et al*., 2013; Volschok, 2017; Mitchell, 2018). Plaut (2013:7) quotes one participating organisation as saying the following about their relationship with students: "This is one of the rare instances in working with the university where the organisation benefited more than the students. We did things with the student teams this semester that have been on my to-do list forever, and I never am able to get to because of the next event or the next grant or funding proposal, and I'm grateful for that."

A considerable number of SMMEs participating in this study have continued to find their relationship with students useful, with the students continuing to volunteer at the SMME. This finding is confirmed by Gazley *et al*. (2012:11), who notes that a large percentage of participating organisations mentioned that students continued to work with them even after the SL programme had ended, and some even hired the students because of their good working relationship. Plaut (2013:12) also noticed that the commitment of some students to their community partners extended beyond the SL programme, with some even becoming board members, interns, employees, and volunteer consultants.

A fair number of SMMEs found the relationship useful at one stage ("before") but not anymore. This is predominantly the case in the SL literature: useful SMME-student relationships are formed for the duration of the SL programme, but then come to an end when the programme does (Bernstein *et al*., 2003; Whitaker & Berner, 2004; Campbell & Lambright, 2011; Krasynska *et al*., 2013; Plaut, 2013; Volschok, 2017).

Just over a fifth of SMMEs never found the relationship useful. This finding is matched by Gazley *et al.* (2012:11), who found that roughly 20 per cent of student involvement had absolutely no useful benefit for participating organisations.

7.6.3 Reasons for lack of usefulness of client-agency relationship

By a large margin, the greatest barrier to the utility of client-agency relationships was a lack of time on the part of the SMMEs. Other inhibitors included a lack of the right people, a lack of finances, a lack of know-how, the relationship not being appropriate for the business, a lack of communication, a lack of student involvement, and a lack of student working experience.

A significant relationship was found between satisfaction, usefulness, lack of communication, and lack of student involvement. SMMEs that pinpointed a lack of communication and a lack student involvement also found the working relationships less useful and experienced lower levels of satisfaction with the relationship.

7.6.3.1 Lack of time

Labahn and Kholi (1997) postulate that client accessibility is a critical component for effective client-agency relationships. Gazley *et al.* (2012:8) found that organisations participating in student community engagement devote much less time to SL teams than they do to internships. Other studies similarly recount that organisations admit to a lack of time for engaging with student teams (Vernon & Ward, 1999; Bushouse, 2005; Blouin & Perry, 2009; Mitchell, 2018:39-40).

7.6.3.2 Lack of finances

In all the SL studies and SMME marketing studies surveyed, there is no mention of a lack of finances as being a limiting factor for building effective client-agency relationships. But there is mention of a lack of specific resources which relates to a lack of finances. For example, Gazley *et al.* (2012) note a lack of space as a key limiting factor participating organisations face with regard to working with students in the context of SL. It can be deduced that due to a lack of finances, many firms did not have large enough premises to host students, nor the money to pay for student transport, offer student stipends, or pay for the implementation of students' ideas.

7.6.3.3 Lack of knowledge

A number of authors note that a lack of knowledge is often mentioned as a key reason for not engaging in marketing activities in South Africa (Thrassou & Vrontis, 2006; Van Scheers, 2011; Cant, 2012; Lekhanya & Mason, 2013; Lekhanya, 2015; Luxton *et al.,* 2017; Oji *et al.,* 2017b; Rambe, 2017). Considering that this was an intensely marketing-related SL programme which involved constant engagement with marketing theories and tactics, it is understandable that participating SMMEs would report a lack of knowledge as a reason for not finding the programme useful.

7.6.3.4 Lack of student experience or knowledge

Participating organisations surveyed by Sprague and Hu (2015) claimed that gaps in student knowledge proved to be somewhat of a limitation to forming exceptional working relationships. Vizenor *et al*. (2017:10) also cite community partners as indicating a lack of industry experience and knowledge as a key weakness among students. As a result, some owner-managers needed to spend time training and managing students throughout the duration of the programme.

7.6.3.5 Inappropriate relationship

Zoliewski *et al*. (2008) characterises interpersonal compatibility as a key factor for effective relationship building between clients and agencies. Boulin and Perry (2009:128) specify that when SL goals do not complement the needs of participating organisations, their investment of time and energy is less likely to pay off. They describe situations in which SL programme objectives do not correspond with the organisation's form or needs. Darby *et al.* (2013:127) document some partnering organisations mentioning that student teams were not a good fit with their organisation.

This is confirmed by Gazley *et al*. (2012:12), who found that because of the nature of their organisational priorities and resistance from staff, participating firms were unable to engage with the students, which rendered the relationship inappropriate for their firm. In addition, some firms surveyed by Gazley *et al.* (2012) mentioned that there were times when the SL activities were not entirely congruent with their internal organisational needs, which compromised the relationship.

7.6.3.6 Lack of people

It has been found that SL can impose additional responsibilities on participating organisations. More than half the participating organisations surveyed by Gazley *et al.* (2012:12) indicated a shortage of the kind of staff needed to engage effectively with students, especially the absence of a volunteer manager. Plaut (2013:8) also reports that an organisation's staff are not always able to supervise SL students when they are overwhelmed by their work responsibilities.

7.6.3.7 Lack of student involvement

It has been found that not all student teams devote the same amount of time and effort to SL programmes (Gazley *et al*., 2012:10; Mokoena & Spencer, 2017:304-305). Sprague and Hu (2015) posit that the most common reason cited by participating organisations for experiencing lower levels of satisfaction was a lack of responsiveness to client feedback by students, apparently due to a lack of involvement. Difficulties also arise as a result of full academic calendars, busy student schedules, and other short-term commitments or part-time work (Vernon & Ward, 1999; Worral, 2007; Mitchell, 2018:39-40). It has also been shown that student involvement is driven in part by the staffing capacity of participating organisations (Gazley *et al.,* 2012:12).

Plaut (2013:8) reveals that participating organisations which said that students came to their offices more than ten times experienced higher levels of impact than those which were visited by students only four to ten times. This is consistent with other studies which have also found a significant correlation between service time and outcomes (Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000; Cress *et al*., 2001). For example, Blouin and Perry (2009:128) record instances of unreliable, uncommitted, and unaccountable students who do not show up for meetings, miss appointments or fail to follow through on tasks or projects. Goertzen *et al*. (2016:42) also cites community partners as saying that students waste their time and resources because of a lack of effort. Darby *et al*. (2013:127) reveal that some students did not follow through on the commitments they made to the community organisations, causing dissatisfaction. Students were not dependable, did not communicate effectively, and did not conduct themselves professionally. Steimel (2013:248-249) also recounts community partners' concerns about the lack of motivation and interest of some students, who seemed to be engaging with the SL project just to get the marks.

A number of client-agency relationship studies also comment on this factor. Yuksel and Sutton-Brady (2007) identify agency performance as a key reason for conflict between clients and agencies, while de Waal-Malefyt and Morais (2010) cite creativity as a key conflict area. Zolkiewski *et al.* (2008) suggest quality personnel as a key factor affecting relationship building between clients and agencies, and two of Wackman *et al.*'s (1986) top five relationship dissatisfaction factors include agency leadership and creative ability. Labahn and Kholi (1996) declare agency performance (including creative quality & implementation, and productive interaction) as key factors affecting client-agency relationships.

From the agency side, three key elements have been seen to be critical in ensuring the longevity of client-agency relationships: the level of attention that agencies give their clients (Palihawadana & Barnes, 2005), as well as service quality, and client care (Davies & Palihawadana, 2006). In terms of the role that agencies play, the majority of respondents surveyed by Sekely and Blakney (1996) felt that when it comes to marketing communication, agencies should play a leadership role. This is not surprising as agencies are primarily hired for their expertise in this area.

7.6.3.8 Lack of communication

A lack of communication has been identified among all the parties involved in SL, including students, participating organisations, and especially academic personnel (Gelmon *et al*., 1998; Vernon & Ward, 1999; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Worrall, 2007; Campbell & Lambright, 2011; Blouin & Perry, 2009; Gazley *et al*., 2013; McReynolds, 2014). Community partners surveyed by Vizenor *et al*. (2017:10) highlighted communication, scheduling, and planning as key challenges, as well as not always being clear on the different roles that each student played. A focus group of community partners conducted by Barrientos (2010:6) found 80 per cent of respondents highlighting communication as the primary challenge associated with SL programmes, especially with academic staff members.

Budhai (2013:6) mentions community partners complaining about being contacted by too many different students too often, especially being contacted by anxious students in a last minute rush to complete their assignments. Tyron and Stoecker (2008:55) concur that dissatisfaction results from confusion and unclarified expectations in respect of the roles and responsibilities of the organisation, the students, and the academic staff.

Several client-agency relationship studies also make mention of communication-related factors as vital to relationship performance, such as communication (Triki *et al*., 2007; Sanford, 2018), mutual understanding (Arul, 2010), decision-making approaches (Grant *et al*., 2012), role definition (Hill, 2006) and trust/distrust (Davies & Prince, 2005). Zolkiewski *et al.* (2008) note that mutual agreement and understanding, and the agency having a reputation for integrity, play a major role in relationship building between clients and agencies.

As far as creative campaigns are concerned, Mitchell (1988) demonstrates the value of cooperation in the creative decision-making process, and Halinen (1997) comments on the co-production of creative ideas. Interestingly, Oh and Kim (2002) found a significant relationship between agency size, level of commitment, and communication in client-agency relationships. Considering that the student-run agencies were very small (2-5 people), this could also have been a contributing factor.

7.6.3.9 General

A number of client-agency relationship studies make mention of other factors that can contribute to the lack of usefulness of working relationships between SMMEs and student teams.

Davies and Prince (1999) found a significant positive relationship between agency size, age, and client-agency relationship success. Agencies that were older and bigger were more likely to develop successful relationships with clients. Considering that the student-led agencies were very small and had only been in operation for a few months, it is understandable that their knowledge and capacity, as far as working with clients was concerned, was still very limited.

Another factor that is mentioned is the ability of agencies to 'comprehend the clients' business.' Almost a quarter of clients surveyed by Sekely and Blakney (1996:35) considered agency performance to be poor in this regard. The authors believe that the poor performance of some small agencies could be related to their only being able to afford a limited number of specialist staff, and having a lack of experience in certain product and market areas. Considering that student agencies had no specialists and virtually no experience, it is very likely that that many struggled to comprehend the clients' business, which inevitably affected the client-agency relationship.

7.6.4 Perceived impact of client-agency relationship

Notable benefits of the working relationship between SMMEs and student teams included increased sales, new customers, and increased brand awareness. Other fairly notable benefits included increased customer loyalty, increased business efficiency, competitive advantage, and increased employee motivation.

These findings are confirmed by numerous authors like Gazley *et al.* (2012:10), who reveal that working relationships with student teams have led to increased brand awareness as well as an improvement in customer relations, client services, and business capacity; Gelmon *et al*. (1998), Vernon and Ward (1999), and Worral (2007) who found that the relationships increased staff motivation; Schoenherr (2015:52-54), who cites significant cost savings, enhanced operations, product and service improvements, fresh business insight, management consulting, new supplier identification, and optimised procurement; Sprague and Hu (2015), who cite increased brand awareness; Vizenor *et al*. (2017:9) who highlight marketing campaign planning, target market identification, new product development, competitor analysis, advertising strategy, streamlined internal operations, and increased brand visibility; Plaut (2013:3), who highlights access to funding, microfinancing, networking, and increased capacity; and a number of other SL authors identifying numerous benefits (Bernstein *et al.,* 2003; Whitaker & Berner, 2004; Blouin & Perry, 2009:125; Schachter & Schwartz, 2009:449; Barrientos, 2010; Campbell & Lambright, 2011; Budhai, 2013:5; Krasynska *et al*., 2013:16; Steimel, 2013; Goertzen *et al.*, 2016:44-46; Volschok, 2017:6; do Amaral, 2019:133).

Competitive advantage was not highly impacted and almost a third of SMMEs recounted no positive impact. This is confirmed by Gazley *et al.* (2012:11) who found that roughly 20 per cent of student involvement had absolutely no useful benefit for the participating organisations in the context of SL.

A significant relationship was found between usefulness, satisfaction, sales, new customers, brand awareness, customer loyalty, business efficiency, competitive advantage, employee motivation, and no positive impact. That is, SMMEs that perceived an increase in sales, new customers, increased brand awareness, increased customer loyalty, increased competitive advantage, increased business efficiency, and increased employee motivation, all found the client-agency relationship to be more useful and also experienced higher levels of satisfaction with the relationship.

Goertzen *et al*. (2016:41) observe that SL students developed and implemented strategies to increase awareness among participating organisations, while Jorge (2003:32) found that knowledge exchange and interaction between community members and students resulted in increased self-esteem and motivation on the part of the community members. Jorge (2003:34) noticed a deepening of relationships between community members and students as a result of their involvement in SL. Budhai (2013:7) cites community partners as saying that the relationship with students and the university led to opportunities becoming more visible in the larger community, thus increasing brand awareness. Sprague and Hu (2015) found an increase in understanding leading to increased business efficiency, and Seal and Drew (2012:11) chronicle a change in organisational internal and external systems, decreased costs and increased sales.

Maglof (2011) and Sanford (2018) also specify a range of performance benefits resulting from client-agency relationships, including increased sales, increased brand performance, as well as increased competitive advantage. Noland (2017) found that one of the key performance benefits that agencies provide is increasing business efficiency, saving firms' time and enabling them to work on other aspects of the business such as operations. Joseph (2017) adds such things as creative expertise, market research, and money saving as key performance benefits of client-agency relationships. A number of other authors mention a variety of performance benefits as flowing from client-agency relationships (Davies & Prince, 2005:1; Horton, 2011; Holmes, 2014; Wessel, 2014; Jaideep, 2015; Patel, 2018).

7.6.5 Satisfaction with client-agency relationship

Most of the participating SMMEs were either satisfied or very satisfied with the working relationships with student teams, resulting in an overall satisfaction rating of 77.8 per cent. Only a little more than a fifth of SMMEs experienced dissatisfaction with the client-agency relationships. Sprague and Hu (2015) also describe participating organisations as experiencing positive satisfaction with the working relationships, with many other SL studies reporting similar results (Smith, 2005:200; Blouin & Percy, 2009:126; Simola, 2009:578; Barr, 2010b; Barrientos, 2010:7; Plaut, 2013:6; Vizenor *et al*., 2017:9).

Client-agency relationship literature also confirms client satisfaction with the performance of small agencies. For example, Sekely and Blakney (1996) found that 35 to 40 per cent of clients rated their small agencies as excellent or very good for creativity, adaptability, flexibility, and meeting deadlines.

In addition, 30 per cent to 35 per cent of respondents were pleased with the quality of communication, agency personnel, and cost consciousness.

A significant relationship was found between usefulness, satisfaction, overall satisfaction, future participation, and lasting impact. Organisations that found the client-agency relationship to be useful also felt that the relationship had a significant lasting impact on the firm and therefore also experienced higher levels of satisfaction with the relationships as well as with the overall programme. These firms were consequently more willing to participate in the programme again in the future.

Sprague and Hu (2015) claim that most of the clients surveyed reported a lasting impact resulting from the student projects in the SL programme, and 80 per cent of community partners surveyed by Vizenor *et al*. (2017:9) said that they would recommend SL programmes to other organisations. In some cases cited by Plaut (2013:6), students continued with the organisations and some functioned as volunteer managers or SL interns by recruiting new groups of students to serve the mission of the organisation, as volunteers or service learners. Barr (2010b) notes that marketing students continued to serve community partners even after the SL programme had ended. So do Blouin and Percy (2009:126), saying that the students come back as service learners, volunteers, interns, or staff.

Barrientos (2010:7) chronicles a 61 per cent overall satisfaction rating by community partners for the level and quality of the working relationships with students, as well as a 67 per cent satisfaction rating with the quality of student work. In some cases community partners have been so satisfied with student work that they have offered some students part-time or permanent work, thus enhancing the long-term impact of the initial SL programme (Smith, 2005:200).

Sprague and Hu (2015) conclude that only 10 per cent of clients surveyed were not interested in participating in the SL programme again because of a breakdown in their relationship with the students, while Simola (2009:578) observes that, generally speaking, small businesses are willing to participate in SL again in the future, which is in line with the findings of this study.

7.7 Overall programme

7.7.1 Usefulness of programme overall

The majority of respondents found the SL programme to be useful, with many continuing to find it somewhat useful or very useful.

A number of studies confirm the usefulness of SL for participating organisations, noting the quality and usefulness of SL projects (Whitaker & Berner, 2004); the fact that they achieved the goals they set out to achieve (Campbell & Lambright, 2011); were beneficial (Bernstein *et al.,* 2003; Volschok, 2017:6); improved the services of the participating organisations and saved money (do Amaral, 2019:133);

provided additional resources, increased financial leverage, accessed university technology and resources, and identified additional volunteers (Barrientos, 2010); helped access funding, facilitated networking, and increased capacity (Plaut, 2013:3); helped organisations gain insights about industry best practice, gave organisations a new sense of confidence, functioned as a reality check, and helped improve budgeting, PR messaging, and strategic planning (Schachter & Schwartz, 2009:449); imparted keen skills and knowledge to the organisations, helped the organisations cut costs, improve operations, and engage more strategically (Schoenherr, 2015); functioned as mentors, provided manual labour, helped advance the mission of participating organisations (Budhai, 2013:5); freed up staff time and organisational resources, provided access to university resources (like connections to academic staff, technical expertise, library, printing, and computer resources) (Blouin & Perry, 2009:125); helped create a centralised purchasing structure, achieved economies of scale, increased bargaining power, and optimised fuel purchases (Schoenherr, 2015:52-54); increased awareness, community engagement and mobilisation, achieved organisational impact, initiated new organisational partnerships, facilitated improvements to physical environments (Goertzen *et al.*, 2016:44-46), made improvements to organisational leadership, governance, communications, community outreach, development, fundraising, and human resources (Krasynska *et al*., 2013:16); helped marketing campaign planning, created new target markets, gathered insightful research data, developed new products, facilitated benchmarking against competitors, improved advertising reach, streamlined internal operations, updated curricula, improved training and recruitment practices, increased brand outreach, and facilitated better decision making for improving practice and effectively utilising products (Vizenor *et al.*, 2017:8). A number of these benefits are cited by other authors as well (Darby *et al*., 2013:125-126; Krasynska *et al*., 2013; Steimel, 2013). Steimel (2013:245) also cites community members saying that a key benefit of student involvement is that they were able to take on projects which the members of the organisation had desired to complete but had not had the time, money, or expertise to do so.

A quarter of the organisations participating in this study announced that SL had not been useful at all. This is very similar to Schachter and Schwartz (2009:451), who found that a third of participating organisations felt that student projects were not helpful, as well as the findings of Gazley *et al.* (2012:11), who report that approximately 20 per cent of student involvement had absolutely no benefit for the participating organisations.

A significant relationship was found between usefulness, major industry, and study programme. Organisations that worked with PT students found the overall programme to be more useful than those that worked with FT students. In addition, organisations in the Community, Social, and Personal Services industry, found the overall project more useful than those in other industries.

7.7.1.1 Study programme

As mentioned above, in comparison to FT students, PT students are often older and have work experience (Anderson, 2019). As such, PT students offer participating organisations more experience and knowledge than FT students. Considering that PT students often already work in marketing positions and have more experience in marketing and service, it is understandable that they would have been able to provide SMMEs with service that was more useful to them than FT students who have little to no experience with marketing or working.

7.7.1.2 Major industry

A fairly large group of respondents formed part of the Community, Social, and Personal Services industry. Of this group, a large majority belonged to the Hairdressing and Other Beauty Treatments sector. Considering the competitive nature of the Community, Social, and Personal Services industry, and especially sectors like hairdressing (Services SETA, 2016:19), SMMEs are often desperate to gain competitive advantage over their numerous rivals (Lockhart-Meyer, 2013). Considering the large number of participants from this industry (by far the largest cohort in the survey) as well as the competitive nature of the industry, it makes sense that these firms found the programme more useful than the others.

7.7.2 Reasons for lack of usefulness of the overall programme

7.7.2.1 Lack of time

Most of the respondents mentioned a lack of time as the key reason for the lack of usefulness of the programme. Barrientos (2010:1) mentions factors such as minimal staff time (to supervise students), but Gazley *et al*. (2013) record community partners as saying that although participating in SL was somewhat burdensome, it was worth the time and effort. Harrington (2014:51) also notes the increased workload that SL places on already overburdened community partners. Darby *et al.* (2013:127-128) even disclose that some organisations cautioned other organisations in the community regarding the extra time it took to engage with students.

7.7.2.2 Lack of finances

Some firms also specified a lack of finance as a key reason for not being able to make effective use of the programme. Barrientos (2010:1) and Gazley *et al.* (2012) cite challenges such as a lack of resources (like space and money) as being a limiting factor with regard to engaging in SL programmes effectively. Schachter and Schwartz (2009:451) and Krasynska *et al.* (2013:13) also found a number of participating organisations highlighting a lack of funds as a key reason for not being able to implement student recommendations. In addition, a number of authors report a lack of funds as a significant limitation keeping SMMEs from effectively implementing marketing strategies (McIntyre *et al*., 2005; Longenecker *et al*., 2006; Lekhanya & Mason, 2013; Mpofu & Chigwende, 2013; Lekhanya, 2015; Van Scheers, 2018).

7.7.2.3 Lack of knowledge

Interestingly, participating firms also described a lack of knowledge as a programme challenge. A number of authors have documented a lack of knowledge as a key reason for not engaging in marketing activities in South Africa (Thrassou & Vrontis, 2006; Van Scheers, 2011; Cant, 2012; Lekhanya & Mason, 2013; Lekhanya, 2015; Luxton *et al.,* 2017; Oji *et al.,* 2017b; Rambe, 2017). Considering that this was an intensely marketing-related SL programme which involved constant engagement with marketing theories and tactics, it is understandable that participating SMMEs cited a lack of knowledge as a reason for not finding the programme useful. It is possible that participating SMMEs also thought of a lack of knowledge as relating to a lack of information from students and programme coordinators, which other authors have also noted as a challenge associated with SL (Schwartz, 2010:6; Steimel, 2013:249).

7.7.2.4 Lack of people

Participating SMMEs also cite a lack of the right people as a factor restricting the usefulness of the SL programme. Tyron *et al*. (2008:20) confirm a lack of people as a key challenge for partner organisations in short-term SL programmes. If students were only going to spend a short period of time serving the organisation, many felt that it was not worth the time and effort to train and supervise them. In addition, they declared that they were short of staff due to budget constraints. These organisations therefore preferred the long-term internship model, “because it provides both longer-term service and a greater probability of hosting a committed and skilled student.” This finding is confirmed by Gazley *et al.* (2012:12), who showed that more than half the organisations surveyed reported a lack of staff needed to engage effectively with students, especially the lack of a volunteer manager. Plaut (2013:8) also mentions that organisation staff are not always able to supervise students when they are overwhelmed by their own work responsibilities.

7.7.2.5 Lack of communication

Some organisations complained about a lack of communication in general, including a lack of internal communication and a lack of communication with programme instructors. A significant relationship was found between usefulness and lack of communication. Those organisations that reported a lack of communication found the overall programme to be less useful.

McReynolds (2014) records community partners as highlighting the importance of communication to the success of SL programmes. Schwartz (2010:6) found a lack of communication between organisations and students, and between organisations and academic staff, as major drawbacks for SL programmes. Steimel (2013:249) found that community partners mentioned a lack of communication with course instructors as a key problem with SL.

7.7.2.6 Lack of student communication

Almost a third of firms expressed a lack of communication from students as an inhibitor to the usefulness of the programme. Significant relationships were discovered for satisfaction, usefulness, lasting impact, and lack of student communication. Those SMMEs that reported a lack of student communication as a programme challenge felt that the programme was less useful, found the programme to have a lower degree of lasting impact, and experienced lower levels of satisfaction with the overall programme.

A lack of communication among all the parties involved in SL has been identified as a problem. This includes students, course coordinators, participating firms, and service partners (Gelmon *et al*., 1998; Vernon & Ward, 1999; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Worrall, 2007; Blouin & Perry, 2009; Campbell & Lambright, 2011; Gazley *et al*., 2013; McReynolds, 2014). Community partners surveyed by Vizenor *et al*., (2017:10) and those studied by Barrientos (2010:6) all pointed to communication as a key challenge in SL programmes. Some authors venture opinions as to why there is a lack of communication from students towards their community partners, including a lack of responsiveness (Sprague & Hu, 2015), full academic calendars, busy student schedules, other short-term commitments or part-time work (Vernon & Ward, 1999; Worral, 2007), as well as a sheer lack of interest (Steimel, 2013:249).

7.7.2.7 Lack of lecturer involvement

A number of respondents mentioned a lack of involvement on the part of programme coordinators as a barrier to the efficacy of the SL programme. Significant relationships were discovered for satisfaction, usefulness, lasting impact, lack of student communication, and lack of lecturer involvement. Those SMMEs that identified a lack of lecturer involvement as a programme challenge felt that the programme was less useful, found the programme to have a lower degree of lasting impact, and experienced lower levels of satisfaction with the overall programme.

A number of authors also point to a lack of involvement and communication from academic staff as one of the key challenges of SL programmes (Gelmon *et al*., 1998; Vernon & Ward, 1999; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Worrall, 2007; Blouin & Perry, 2009; Campbell & Lambright, 2011; Darby *et al.,* 2013:127-128; Gazley *et al*., 2013; Steimel, 2013:249; McReynolds, 2014). For example, a focus group with community partners conducted by Barrientos (2010:6) resulted in 80 per cent of respondents highlighting communication as the primary challenge in SL programmes, especially with academic staff members. Community partners also mentioned confusion about their role in the SL programme, which is something that can only be clarified by effective communication from academic staff members in charge of running the programme.

7.7.2.8 Inappropriateness

Even though only a handful of respondents mentioned that the reason the programme was not useful for them was because it was inappropriate for their businesses, a significant relationship was found between usefulness and inappropriateness. Those organisations that felt that the programme was inappropriate found the overall programme less useful.

Blouin and Perry (2009:128) stress that when SL goals do not complement the needs of participating organisations, their investment of time and energy is less likely to pay off. They point out situations where SL programme objectives do not correspond with the organisation’s form or needs. Darby *et al.* (2013:127) also note some partnering organisations mentioning that student teams were not a good fit with their organisation.

Gazley *et al*. (2012:12) also found that because of the nature of their organisational priorities and resistance from staff, participating firms were unable to engage with the students and this made the programme inappropriate for their firm. Some firms surveyed by Gazley *et al.* (2012) mentioned that there were times when the SL activities were not entirely congruent with their internal organisational needs, which made the programme unhelpful.

7.7.3 Perceived impact of the overall programme

In the literature participating organisations report a number of benefits flowing from SL programmes (Gelmon *et al*., 1998; Vernon & Ward, 1999; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Blouin & Perry, 2009; Campbell & Lambright, 2011; Krasynska *et al*., 2013:14). In this study, SMMEs testified to numerous benefits, including increased sales, new customers, brand awareness, customer loyalty, business efficiency, competitive advantage, and employee motivation.

Several authors confirm these results with findings that show that SL programmes serve to increase sales (Furlow, 2010; Metcalf, 2010), gain new customers (Vizenor *et al.*, 2017:8), increase brand awareness (Hagenbuch, 2006; Sprague and Hu, 2015; Goertzen *et al*., 2016:41), improve business efficiency (Tyron *et al.,* 2008:20), and increase motivation and the energy of staff, thanks to student enthusiasm (Tyron *et al*., 2008:22).

A third of firms mentioned no positive impact resulting from the SL programme. Although Krasynska *et al.* (2013:14) also record community organisations as having experienced no positive impact from SL, they report a much lower percentage.

7.7.4 Satisfaction, lasting impact, and future participation

A large majority of respondents were satisfied with the overall SL programme, revealing that the project had had a lasting impact on their businesses and that they would participate in the programme again in the future.

A significant relationship was found between satisfaction, usefulness, lasting impact, and future participation. Organisations that found the programme useful also experienced higher levels of satisfaction than those which did not find it useful. As such, they found the programme to have had a longer lasting impact on their businesses, and were thus more willing to participate in the programme again in the future.

Numbers of authors record that high levels of satisfaction have been experienced by organisations participating in SL (Driscoll *et al*., 1996; Bernstein *et al.,* 2003; Killian, 2004; Whitaker & Berner, 2004; Bushouse, 2005; Worrall, 2007; Boulin & Perry, 2009; Schachter & Swartz, 2009; Campbell & Lambright, 2011; Krasynska *et al.*, 2013; Gazley *et al*., 2013). For example, Krasynska *et al.* (2013:17) specify that 79 per cent of respondents were satisfied with the overall SL programme they participated in, and Vizenor *et al*. (2017:8) claim that nearly all their participating organisations were satisfied with the overall SL programme, with many mentioning the considerable impact that the programmes had had on their organisations.

Barrientos (2010:1) showed that 92 per cent of community partners interviewed derived a great deal of satisfaction from, attributed much usefulness to, and reported a significant lasting long-term impact from SL. The latter included an increase in the quality and quantity of products and services as well as clients served, increased funding, improved business survival, and better and stronger linkages with the community and university. In addition, these organisations all indicated that they would participate in the programme again.

In a study of a public management SL programme, Schachter and Schwartz (2009:449) report that participating organisations experienced high levels of satisfaction with the overall programme and also found it very helpful. A large number of the firms also indicated that the programme had had a lasting impact on their organisation. All three variables had a significant relationship with one another.

Similar to this study, Plaut (2013:12) also found that almost all community partners expressed a desire to participate in SL programmes again, with one partner saying: “the possible positive ripple effect from the students is immeasurable.”

7.7.5 Suggestions for programme improvement

Respondents made a number of suggestions for improvements to the programme.

7.7.5.1 Student monitoring by lecturers

More than a third of respondents felt that students should be monitored by lecturers more effectively. Tyron and Stoecker (2008:55) report participating organisations noting that instructors rarely check in during the SL programme for ongoing management or problem solving. Darby *et al*. (2013:127) also found that community partners desired more interaction from course instructors, both face-to-face and via email, in order to increase communication about the progress of the relationship.

7.7.5.2 Follow-up from students after project

Many organisations desired students to actually follow up with them after the programme was complete. This finding is shared by Rosenberg *et al.* (2016), who also describe community partners desiring such follow up; Harrington (2014), who argues that SL projects need more continuity by developing and maintaining ongoing relationships; and Tyron and Stoecker (2008:54), who mention that students do not complete projects and instructors do not follow up.

7.7.5.3 Better programme coordination

Just under half the participating organisations felt that the SL programme needed better coordination. This supports Harrington's (2014:49) finding that academic staff have a very important role to play in terms of programme coordination.

Barrientos (2010:11) reports community partners indicating that insufficient programme time was a challenge as well as insufficient communication from academic staff. As such they felt "disconnected" from the university and desired a more "formal" relationship. Interestingly, they also expressed a desire to work with students demographically similar to them and their clients.

7.7.5.4 Training and induction for students and SMMEs

Over a third of participants mentioned the need for training and induction for students and SMMEs. In addition to better programme coordination and communication by course coordinators, Blouin and Perry (2009:130) cite community partners as stressing the need for better induction for all parties involved. Some emphasise the need for students to be adequately prepared for service and to be clear on the goals of the programme.

Schachter and Schwartz (2009:453) also highlight a participating organisation suggesting that more time should be spent with clients in order for stakeholders to think through the programme requirements together, thus ensuring that all parties are effectively prepared and committed.

7.7.5.5 Students to intern rather than consult

A small group of SMMEs felt it would be better if students interned with them rather than engaged in short-term consulting. Schachter and Schwartz (2009:453) disclose that many clients would actually prefer for students to be placed with them and work from their premises like interns, rather than function as short-term consultants. They quote one client as saying: "It would be great if they could actually be on-site more – like a placement."

7.7.5.6 Students to spend more time with the business

A handful of community partners felt that students should spend more time with the businesses in order to achieve the best result. Tyron and Stoecker (2008:53), Blouin and Perry (2009), and Darby *et al.* (2013:128) all revealed that community partners were dissatisfied with the short-term nature of SL and would prefer longer-term relationships such as internships. Barrientos (2010:11) also reports that organisations wanted students to engage with them for longer periods and for students to spend more (intern-type) time at their premises.

7.7.5.7 Funding is needed

A fair number of community partners expressed the need for funding for the SL programme. Considering that many South African SMMEs do not have the finance to implement marketing programmes, this suggestion makes sense as it would enable SMMEs to actually implement the strategies that students develop. In addition, Tyron *et al*. (2008:23) note that organisations participating in SL highlighted the need for funding to appoint a person (maybe another student) specifically to manage SL for the participating organisation.

7.7.5.8 Better communication

A number of firms felt that better communication was needed to improve the SL programme. This is supported by numerous authors reporting that community partners stress the need for better communication from academic staff and students (Tyron & Stoecker, 2008:55; Desmond & Stahl, 2011; Harrington, 2014:55).

Tyron and Stoecker (2008:56) cite one SL partner as saying, “We cannot overstress the importance of good communication between academic staff, community organisation staff, and students. Memorandums of understanding or service-learning contracts are helpful in clarifying expectations, but they do not substitute for on-going communication through projects. Interviewees also really want the instructors to visit their agencies.”

7.7.5.9 Better presentation of proposals by students, better handover from students, and better campaign implementation.

A few firms desired students to do a better job of presenting their final proposals to them, as well as improve the handover of project materials at the end of the programme. A fair amount of SMMEs also desired more effective campaign implementation by students. A significant relationship was found between satisfaction and campaign implementation. Those SMMEs that felt that the campaigns needed better implementation experienced lower levels of satisfaction than the others. All three of these variables relate to the actual work of the students rather than their relationship with the SMMEs. A number of SL authors also cite a desire on the part of community partners for more committed service from students as well as higher quality work (Stoecker, 2008:54; Sprague & Hu, 2015; Rosenberg *et al.*, 2016; Vizenor *et al.*, 2017:10)

7.7.5.10 Everything about the project is perfect

Only a handful of clients felt that everything about the project was perfect. In this case, a significant relationship was found between satisfaction, usefulness, and perfect. Those organisations that felt that the programme was perfect found the overall programme more useful and experienced higher levels of satisfaction. Interestingly, Harrington (2014) also found community members who claimed that the SL programme was perfect as it was.

7.7.5.11 Noteworthy significance levels

Noteworthy significance levels were found between satisfaction, lasting impact, usefulness, monitoring, coordination, and training. Participants who felt that the students needed better monitoring by lecturers, that the programme needed better coordination by programme coordinators, and that better programme training and induction for all parties was required, all felt that the overall programme had less of a lasting impact on their businesses, was less useful, and engendered lower levels of satisfaction. A significant relationship was found between satisfaction, usefulness, and communication. Those organisations that felt that there should be more communication between the various players in the programme found the overall programme less useful and experienced lower levels of satisfaction.

Interestingly, all four of these factors, namely student monitoring, programme coordination, project induction, and communication are highlighted as the key programme success factors by numerous SL authors (Tyron & Stoecker, 2008:55; Blouin & Perry, 2009:130; Schachter & Schwartz, 2009:453; Barrientos, 2010:11; Darby *et al*., 2013:127; Harrington, 2014:49).

Mouton and Wildchut (2005:134) make a noteworthy comment in this regard: "Delivery fails when there is insufficient planning and preparation, when there are inadequate resources (human resources, funding, materials, infrastructure and time), when the course components and activities (courses, materials, work sessions, community visits) are of poor quality, when there is a mismatch between course content and community service activities."

7.8 Summary

This chapter started off by considering the findings relating to the customer research aspect of the BSAC-SL programme. Overall, SMMEs found the customer research conducted by students beneficial, especially those firms operating in the hairdressing sector and other divisions of the beauty industry, which need to stay abreast of ever-changing beauty trends and to cater for the unique needs of each customer. Those organisations which did not make use of the research findings mentioned a lack of time and money as they key reasons for not doing so. Organisations that benefitted from the customer research reported a positive effect on a number of performance criteria such as sales, new customer acquisition, brand awareness, customer loyalty, and business efficiency. Those SMMEs which found the customer research more useful also experienced higher levels of satisfaction with the SL programme, and noticed a greater lasting impact of the programme as a result.

The next part of the chapter looked at the marketing tools and resources developed or acquired by students for SMMEs. Such tools included Facebook pages, advertising posters, pamphlets, logos, and websites to name a few. Interestingly, all the tools for which significant relationships were found with satisfaction and usefulness were all free or low-cost methods of marketing communication. This finding is explained by the fact that SMMEs lack funds for marketing and therefore prefer to make use of low-budget tools for marketing purposes. Most of the SMMEs in the study stated that they continued to use the promotional tools developed for them by students, and those that did not make use of the tools admitted to a lack of time, money, and staff as among the reasons for not doing so. Those that did make use of the tools pointed out a number of positive benefits including increased sales, new customers, increased brand awareness and increased customer loyalty, to name a few, and also found the tools and resources to be very useful, experiencing high levels of satisfaction with the overall programme as a result of the tools and resources received from students.

The third section of the chapter covered the IMC campaign plan which student teams developed and implemented for participating SMMEs. More than half the firms implemented the campaign plans, which was somewhat at odds with other studies that reported a much higher rate of implementation of SL plans. The fact that many SMMEs reported that the campaign plans were never shared with them could account for this discrepancy. Most of those that did implement the campaign plans did so with the help of student teams, a common practice in SL programmes, and experienced higher levels of satisfaction with the campaign plans than those that implemented it themselves. The main reasons cited by SMMEs for not implementing the campaign plan or for experiencing challenges when implementing it were a lack of time, a lack of know-how, and a lack of resources. A number of benefits accrued from the implementation of the campaign plan including increased sales, new customers, increased brand awareness, increased customer loyalty, increased business efficiency, increased competitive advantage, and increased employee motivation. SMMEs experienced fairly high levels of overall satisfaction as a result of the campaign plans developed by students, and also found the programme to be very useful. Many also found the programme to have had a long-lasting impact on their firms and were more likely to participate in the programme again in the future.

The next section considered the skills and knowledge imparted to businesses by students. Skills in which SMMEs were trained included such things as email, Microsoft office, websites and Facebook. Business-related knowledge transferred to firms included knowledge about marketing, sales promotion, strategy, advertising and research, to name a few. Most SMMEs found the skills training and knowledge transfer to be useful, with quite a number of firms continuing to find it useful long after the programme ended. Those who struggled to make effective use of the skills and knowledge expressed a lack of time, a lack of the right staff, and a lack of finances as key inhibiting factors. Interestingly, a fair number of firms suggested that they were unable to make use of the skills and knowledge shared with them because of a (further) lack of knowledge, suggesting that although students did impart skills and knowledge, these were incomplete, or the students themselves were not effectively educated in the sort of knowledge that was needed. Those who did gain from the skills and knowledge described a number of performance benefits stemming from them including increased sales, new customers, brand awareness, customer loyalty, and business efficiency, to name a few. Most firms were satisfied with the skills training and knowledge transfer from students and those which found them useful to their organisations also maintained that the skills and knowledge had a lasting impact on their firms and resulted in firms being more likely to participate in the programme again in future.

The fifth section of this chapter focused on the working relationship formed between the SMMEs and the student agencies. Firms associated a number of positive characteristics with the client-agency relationship, including that students were punctual, respected their time, did not make a nuisance of themselves, were polite, were neatly dressed, communicated effectively, used appropriate language, and acted professionally. Most of the SMMEs found the client-agency relationship to be useful to their firm, and some continued to find their relationships with students useful as the students kept on volunteering at the SMMEs. By a large margin, the greatest barrier to the usefulness of the client-agency relationship was a lack of time on the part of the SMMEs, but other challenges such as a lack of communication, a lack of student involvement, and a lack of student working experience also inhibited effective working relationships. Those SMMEs which did find the client-agency relationship useful acknowledge a number of benefits attached to this, including increased sales, new customers, increased brand awareness, and increased employee motivation, etc.. Most of the participating SMMEs experienced high levels of satisfaction with the client-agency relationships formed with student teams. In addition, many firms who found the client-agency relationships useful also experienced high levels of satisfaction with the overall programme, noticed a significant lasting impact on their firms, and were willing to participate in the programme again in the future.

The final part of the chapter considered the BSAC-SL programme as a whole and showed that most of the respondents found it to have been useful, with some even continuing to find it useful. Interestingly, those firms that worked with PT students found the programme more useful than those that worked with FT students. Those firms which struggled to make effective use of the programme blamed a lack of time, finance, knowledge, student communication, and lecturer involvement. Those organisations that did find the client-agency relationships useful noted a number of benefits, including increased sales, new customers, increased brand awareness, increased customer loyalty, increased business efficiency, and increased employee motivation. A large majority of respondents were satisfied with the overall SL programme and reported that the project had had a lasting impact on their businesses and that they would participate in the programme again in the future. SMMEs also gave a number of suggestions for programme improvement such as increased student monitoring by lecturers; follow-up from students after the end of the project; better programme coordination, and training and induction for students and SMMEs.

The next chapter reaches conclusions and makes recommendations on the basis of the research findings.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Introduction

This final chapter presents conclusions based on the principal research as a result of analysing the research data and comparing it to relevant literature. Considering the evaluative nature of the study, the researcher also makes recommendations for BSAC-SL programme improvement and SL best practice in South Africa. The chapter begins by detailing conclusions and recommendations concerning the customer research that was conducted by students for SMMEs. This is followed by a section devoted to conclusions and recommendations relating to the tools and resources students developed. The third section considers the campaign plan that was developed and implemented, and the fourth discusses the client-agency relationship between student teams and SMMEs. The following section contains conclusions and recommendations relating to the skills and knowledge students imparted to SMMEs, and the final section discusses conclusions and recommendations relating to the overall programme.

8.2 Customer research

What follows are conclusions and recommendations about the usefulness of the customer research, why SMMEs are not able to make effective use of the research, the perceived impact of the research, and the overall satisfaction of SMMEs with the customer research.

8.2.1 Means by which customer research is conducted

It can be concluded that customer research that is not conducted in person leads to less favourable research results and dissatisfied partner SMMEs (Levenburg, 2003; Kincade & Gibson, 2012:8; Joonas, 2015; Rosenberg *et al*., 2016).

It is therefore proposed that in order to ensure that customer research is maximally effective, student teams conduct research in person with the customers of the participating firms (Schwartz, 2010:6; Niehm *et al*., 2015; Vizenor *et al.*, 2017:8). Although students can supplement this with a printed feedback sheet to leave in store, it is most beneficial if they spend some time interviewing the customers of SMMEs.

8.2.2 Usefulness of customer research

8.2.2.1 Overall usefulness

It has been found that if they are not helped to understand and apply research knowledge; most participating firms will not make use of the findings in any useful way (Berndt & Tait, 2014).

Similarly, to the SL programme discussed by Neese *et al.* (2013), it is suggested that in the presence of their lecturer or programme support tutor, student teams have a round table discussion with their participating organisations in order to discuss the significance of the findings for their businesses. In addition, students should explain to SMMEs how they can continue to make use of the customer feedback questionnaire to gain insights from and about their customers.

8.2.2.2 Minor industry

Organisations that rely heavily on regular customer feedback (like the hairdressing industry) experience higher levels of satisfaction with the customer research than those which do not (like the restaurant industry) (Lockhart-Meyer, 2013).

In order to ensure that the SL programme impacts maximally on the SMME community, it is recommended that student teams work with organisations that have an active need for the services provided. Just as with the programmes studied by Schachter and Schwartz (2009), it is recommended that SMMEs apply to participate in the programme, explaining why they need the services rendered.

8.2.2.3 Study programme

In comparison to full-time (FT) students, part-time (PT) students provide better customer research service to participating organisations because of their greater level of experience, maturity, and knowledge (Anderson, 2019).

If possible it will be beneficial to have at least one PT student work with a FT student team in order to strengthen the quality of the customer research service provided to participating SMMEs. This will also provide a better learning opportunity for the students involved.

8.2.3 Reasons for not making use of the findings from customer research

8.2.3.1 Lack of time, staff, and knowledge

Most SMMEs do not have enough time, staff, or knowledge to make effective use of the customer research, because of such things as stressful and busy work schedules, no marketing staff, and a lack of research and marketing expertise (Allard & Straussman, 2003:698).

One of the key purposes of marketing-related SL is that students fill the gaps that SMMEs have in their marketing function. As such, students need to help SMMEs overcome the staffing and knowledge challenges by being available to conduct and interpret market research for them. In order to ensure that this happens, the course coordinator should monitor students and check in with participating SMMEs regularly.

8.2.3.2 Lack of money

SMMEs struggle with low cash flow, and the lack of a marketing budget keeps them from making full use of customer research findings (Lekhanya, 2015).

In order to overcome the finance challenge, participating SMMEs should be required to have a small marketing budget to use during the course of the programme. This could be one of the requirements stated in the application process mentioned above. If SMMEs are identified long before the programme commences, this will also give them time to build up such a budget in preparation for the programme. In addition, funding could be sought to help supplement the financial requirements of the programme.

8.2.3.3 Research not shared

Students who are not properly monitored do not share customer research results with SMMEs (Hagenbuch, 2006).

Harrington (2014:53) stresses the need to ensure that all research is shared with community partners so that they can take action on the findings. In order to guarantee that the results from the research are processed and shared with participating organisations it would be best for the programme coordinators to confirm that students have correctly captured the data, and then to assist them with analysing the results. The programme coordinators should then also ensure that students actually present the findings to the participating organisations and provide them with a summary of the findings in written and electronic format.

8.2.4. Perception of the impact of the findings from customer research

When customer research is conducted properly and the findings of the research are shared and discussed with participating organisations, the result can be a positive impact on sales, customer acquisition, brand awareness, customer loyalty, competitive advantage, business efficiency, and staff motivation (Clark *et al*., 2012:278; Fourie, 2015; Joonas, 2015; Rosenberg *et al*., 2016:56; Customersure, 2017; Vizenor *et al.*, 2017:8; Turquoise, 2018).

When facilitated properly, customer research can have wide-reaching and long lasting benefits for SMMEs (Levenburg, 2003; Schwartz, 2010:6; Kincade & Gibson, 2012:8; Joonas, 2015; Rosenberg *et al*., 2016:56; Vizenor *et al.*, 2017:8). For this reason, it is recommended that this process is effectively facilitated from the initial research design to the final presentation of results. In addition, it is critical that with the assistance of course coordinators and SL tutors, students sit down with SMMEs and explain to them exactly what the findings of the research mean and how it can be applied to their organisations in order to improve performance (Neese *et al.*, 2013).

8.2.5 Satisfaction with customer research conducted

If students conduct customer research effectively, high levels of satisfaction for participating organisations should ensue, not only with the research itself, but also with the overall programme. Such research also has a lasting impact on firms and induces a desire to participate in SL again in the future (Levenburg, 2003; Joonas, 2015; Rosenberg *et al*., 2016; Vizenor *et al.*, 2017).

In order to deliver a successful overall programme and a lasting impact from research, as well as better results in all the subsequent phases of the programme, the rest of the service provided to the SMME partners should be based primarily on the findings from the customer research. To ensure that this takes place it is vital that that student teams present and explain the findings to the SMMEs, and that collaborative strategic planning and decision-making takes place which can govern the rest of the service work (Neese *et al.*, 2013). It would be best if the programme coordinators and programme mentors or tutors also participate in this meeting to ensure effective strategic planning.

8.3 Marketing communication tools and resources

This tools and resources section firstly considers the types of tools and resources which SMMEs favour. It then looks at scenarios which cause SMMEs to find the tools and resources less useful, the impact that SMMEs perceive that they derive from the tools and resources, and the overall satisfaction that SMMEs experience as a result of them. Conclusions are reached and recommendations made in respect of all three.

8.3.1 Tools and resources developed or acquired by students

SMMEs favour tools and resources that can be used either for free or at a very low cost and which they can easily and simply facilitate themselves, such as a Facebook page, a customer database and an email address (McIntyre *et al.,* 2005; Longenecker *et al.,* 2006; Lekhanya & Mason, 2013; Mpofu & Chigwende, 2013; Lekhanya, 2015; Vitor *et al*., 2018).

Considering that small businesses lack funds for marketing, it is recommended that student teams focus their attention on developing marketing tools and resources which are either free or very affordable, and then train the participating firms on how to use them to increase their marketing reach and return on marketing investment.

8.3.2 Usefulness of tools and resources

SMMEs do not find tools and resources useful when students do not share those tools with them, do not create applicable tools, do not effectively train the SMMEs in the use of the tools, do not effectively hand over the tools created, or simply do not develop any tools for the participating firms at all (Schachter and Schwartz, 2009:450). On the other hand, businesses continue to make use of tools which are valuable and which they have been trained to use (Groenewald *et al.*, 2014; Lekhanya, 2014; Mapila *et al.*, 2014; Lekhanya, 2015; Makhitha, 2016; Oji *et al.*, 2017a; Patricia *et al.*, 2017).

It is clear that student teams need to be monitored more carefully by course coordinators to ensure that they actually complete the tool development requirements of the SL programme. In addition, students need to be taught about which tools would be most suitable for different businesses according to their industry type, phase in the product life cycle, budget, resources, and marketing capacity (Kota, 2018). Finally, course coordinators need to facilitate a hand-over process in terms of which students not only pass along all the tools and resources developed, but also specifically train SMME staff in their effective and continued use.

8.3.3 Reasons for not making use of the tools and resources

It is clear that SMMEs suffer from a range of challenges which prevent them from being able to make full use of marketing-related tools and resources to promote their businesses, including a lack of time (Cant, 2012; Bean, 2017), knowledge (Oji *et al.*, 2017b ; Rambe, 2017), people (Soke & Wild, 2016; Bocconcelli *et al.*, 2017:24-25), and money (Lekhanya, 2015).

SL should fundamentally be able to provide participating organisations with capabilities and resources to which they would otherwise not have access. In terms of marketing, SMMEs need to be equipped in ways that will enable them to simply and easily make use of tools and resources to increase their marketing capabilities. For this reason, it may be helpful to choose only one or two affordable tools that are the most relevant to the specific needs of participating SMMEs, and spend as much time as is necessary on developing those tools and training the SMMEs to use them to increase their business performance. It is arguable that if the participating firms can see the performance value of a tool and know how to use it, they will schedule the time needed to use it.

8.3.4 Perceived impact of tools and resources

The research reveals that when the student-developed marketing tools and resources are implemented by SMMEs, the ensuing benefits include increased sales, new customers, brand awareness, increased competitive advantage, increased business efficiency, and employee motivation (Hove & Masocha, 2014; Dukart, 2016; Oji *et al.*, 2017a; Rambe, 2017). These benefits result in participating SMMEs attributing high levels of usefulness to the programme and experiencing great satisfaction from it.

It is therefore recommended that students should focus on implementing tools and resources that are most likely to result in performance benefits for SMMEs.

8.3.5 Satisfaction with tools and resources

8.3.5.1 Satisfaction, lasting impact, and future participation

When the BSAC-SL programme includes the development of useful marketing-related tools and resources, the satisfaction levels of participating SMMEs increase (Furlow, 2010). The lasting impact of the programme and the likelihood of participating firms' future participation are also increased (Schachter & Schwartz, 2009:451).

The BSAC-SL programme should spend time developing the tools and resource aspect of the programme by testing new tools, training students in their effective use, and creating profiles of businesses for which certain tools work the best. It may also be helpful to do further empirical research in this regard.

8.3.5.2 Study programme

Student groups that include higher calibre students and more mature PT students can develop more useful tools and resources and thus produce higher levels of satisfaction among participating firms (Larmer, 2018; Anderson, 2019).

It is recommended that higher calibre students and PT students are evenly mixed with other students in order to improve the overall capability of all participating student groups. This will ensure that all community partners gain useful tools and resources and experience higher levels of satisfaction.

8.4 IMC campaign plan

The IMC campaign plan section deals with the way in which the plan is presented to SMMEs, the way in which the campaign plan is implemented, the challenges faced with regards to campaign implementation, and the impact that SMMEs perceive resulting from the campaign plan. These are all discussed, conclusions are reached and recommendations made. The section ends with a conversation about the conclusions and recommendations in respect of the overall satisfaction that SMMEs experience from the campaign plan, how their legal form of ownership and formally registered status impacts the SL programme, and the impact that the calibre and quality of student work has on the programme.

8.4.1 Presentation of campaign plan

SMMEs experience higher levels of satisfaction when students present project strategies to them in person. They best appreciate being presented with a written project plan document combined with a face-to-face discussion about the contents of the document (Schoenherr, 2015; Sprague & Hu, 2015). This is especially effective when done in the presence of academic staff (Neese *et al.,* 2013:17).

It is recommended that course coordinators arrange a meeting, to which all participating organisations are invited and where student teams can present their campaign plans in the presence of academic staff members and service partners. In this meeting the strategic recommendations can be discussed and their implementation strategy can be planned collaboratively.

8.4.2 Usefulness of campaign plan

When firms do not receive a SL project plan in writing and via presentation, the usefulness of the project plan is negatively affected and firms are prevented from implementing it properly. As a result they experience lower levels of satisfaction with the project, find that the project has less of a lasting impact, and are less likely to participate in SL in the future (Schachter & Schwartz, 2009:451).

In order to ensure that participating firms experience the maximum utility from student projects, SL programmes require better coordination to ensure that all participating firms receive the project plan in a workable medium.

To improve the quality of student plans, Sprague and Hu (2015:275) suggest a number of methods, including having instructors evaluate drafts, incorporating peer review, providing writing guidelines, hosting writing workshops, and having students work with campus writing centres.

8.4.3 Means of campaign plan implementation

When partner organisations are able to implement student marketing strategies without any challenges they experience higher levels of usefulness and satisfaction. This is especially true when student teams assist the businesses to implement the strategies they have developed (Hagenbuch, 2006; Furlow, 2010; Metcalf, 2010; Wiese & Sherman, 2011; Hettche & Clayton, 2013; Hardin-Ramanan *et al.*, 2018). Because of their low level of marketing knowledge and expertise, when South African SMMEs try to implement student marketing strategies without the assistance of students they experience a range of challenges and as a result find the campaign plans less useful and experience lower levels of satisfaction (Thrassou & Vrontis, 2006; Lekhanya, 2015; Luxton *et al.,* 2017; Oji *et al.,* 2017b; Rambe, 2017, van Scheers, 2018).

In order to mitigate these challenges, programme coordinators need to ensure that all student teams work alongside participating SMMEs and assist them in the implementation of the campaign plans. Students need to be supported in this by the course coordinators as well as SL tutors: they need to be trained in campaign implementation, their efforts need constantly to be monitored, and the results of the campaign plan should be analysed and shared with all parties involved (Hagenbuch, 2006; Furlow, 2010; Metcalf, 2010; Wiese & Sherman, 2011; Hettche & Clayton, 2013; Hardin-Ramanan *et al.*, 2018). This phase of the programme will also benefit from input from a marketing service partner.

8.4.4 Reasons for not implementing the campaign plan

There are a number of challenges which inhibit SMMEs from being able to implement student campaign plans, including a lack of time (Bushouse, 2005; Thrassou & Vrontis, 2006; Bean, 2017; Van Scheers, 2018), lack of staff (Bocconcelli *et al.,* 2017; Van Scheers, 2018), lack of funds (Krasynska *et al.*, 2013:13; Lekhanya, 2015), lack of knowledge (Lekhanya & Mason, 2013; Oji *et al.,* 2017b; Rambe, 2017) and a lack of resources (Esposito, 2013; Krasynska *et al.*, 2013:13; Mapila *et al.*, 2014:123; Sprague & Hu, 2015). Some firms also find that campaign plans are too complicated for them to understand and implement, or are not appropriate for their businesses (Schachter & Schwartz, 2009:451).

The literature reveals that it is important that students develop projects that not only enable them to apply their skills, but also address the unique needs of clients (Vernon & Ward, 1999; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Blouin & Perry, 2009; Campbell & Lambright, 2011; Gazley *et* al., 2013; Sprague & Hu, 2015). It is crucial that SL programmes go to the greatest lengths to ensure that students and SMMEs are actually able to implement student-designed marketing strategies. In order to do so, programme coordinators need to check the feasibility of projects by ensuring that all student strategies are relevant to the participating firms, that SMMEs and students have access to the needed funds and resources to implement them, that strategies developed by students are simple enough to implement within the timeframe of the programme, that all the knowledge needed to implement campaign plans is available to student teams and SMMEs, that the demand on the time of students and SMMEs is reasonable, that student teams are available to assist firms to implement the campaign plans, and that SMMEs are able to commit the time needed to run the campaign. In addition, course coordinators need to monitor every aspect of campaign development, implementation, and evaluation.

8.4.5 Challenges experienced while implementing the campaign plan

When SMMEs do get to implement student campaign plans, they experience high levels of usefulness and satisfaction even though they also experience challenges such as a lack of time (Bushouse, 2005; Thrassou & Vrontis, 2006; Bean, 2017; Van Scheers, 2018), lack of staff (Bocconcelli *et al.,* 2017; Van Scheers, 2018), lack of funds (Krasynska *et al.*, 2013:13; Lekhanya, 2015), lack of knowledge (Lekhanya & Mason, 2013; Oji *et al.,* 2017b; Rambe, 2017), and a lack of resources (Esposito, 2013; Krasynska *et al.*, 2013:13; Mapila *et al.*, 2014:123; Sprague & Hu, 2015).

Even though some participating SMMEs may not have all their ducks in row as far as their marketing budget, resources, and staff availability are concerned, the SL programme should ensure that campaign plans are developed and implemented for all partner firms. In order to ensure effective implementation, student teams need to develop campaigns which take the SMME's limitations into account and they should assist SMMEs every step of the way during implementation.

8.4.6 Perceived impact of campaign plan

When SMMEs implement student-developed marketing campaign plans they experience a range of statistically significant benefits, including new customers (Hopkins, 2012; Hove & Masocha, 2014; Bocconcelli *et al*., 2017; Mosweunyane *et al*., 2019); increased sales (Gabrielli & Balboni, 2010:287; Esposito, 2013:90; Lekhanya and Mason, 2013; Mapheto *et al.*, 2014; Odoom, 2016:14; Ramasobana, 2017; Mosweunyane *et al*., 2019); increased brand awareness (Hopkins, 2012; Esposito, 2013:90; Odoom, 2016; Bocconcelli *et al.,* 2017:24; Oji *et al.*, 2017a; Odoom & Mensa, 2019); increased customer loyalty (Salimbe, 2013:64; Joonas, 2015; Odoom, 2016:14; Rambe, 2017; Oji *et al.,* 2017a*;* Van Sheers, 2018); increased business efficiency (Hettche & Clayton, 2013; Salimbe, 2013:64; Joonas, 2015; Odoom, 2016:14; Bocconcelli *et al.,* 2017; Oji *et al.,* 2017a; Rambe, 2017; Van Sheers, 2018); increased competitive advantage (Sharma, 2015; Hughes, 2016; Kareh, 2017; Luxton *et al.*, 2017); and increased employee motivation (Bernstein *et al*., 2003; Killian, 2004; Worrall, 2007; Blouin & Perry, 2009; Gazley *et al*., 2013; Mishra & Sinha, 2014; Jacoby, 2016; McFarlane, 2016). SMMEs that experience these benefits accruing from campaign plans find student strategies much more useful and also experience higher levels of satisfaction. When SMMEs experience no impact flowing from campaign plans, they experience statistically significant levels of dissatisfaction and do not find student strategies useful (Krasynska *et al.,* 2013:15; Mapheto *et al.*, 2014).

It is crucial that students develop campaign plans that have business performance-related objectives in view (such as increased sales and new customers). As campaigns are implemented they need to be constantly monitored to ensure that they are actually achieving the desired objectives. In addition, all campaign results need to be evaluated against these performance-related objectives to determine their level of success and need for improvement.

8.4.7 Satisfaction with campaign plan

8.4.7.1 Overall satisfaction with campaign plan

When SMMEs are able to implement campaign plans that result in performance benefits, they find the campaign plans more useful and notice a lasting impact resulting from the strategic work of students. As a result they experience high levels of satisfaction and are more likely to participate in SL programmes again in the future (Sprague & Hu, 2015:268; Vasbinder & Koehler, 2015:89; Mokoena & Spencer, 2017:302-303; Mitchell, 2018:39-40).

The marketing-related BSAC-SL programme needs to have the long-term success of participating SMMEs in view when doing strategic work for them. In order to ensure this, student teams need to be aware of the long-term goals of SMMEs and develop strategies that can help move them closer to those goals. Students need therefore to be inducted into the nature of community service and the unique challenges and needs of SMMEs in South Africa. This will help to ensure that while engaging in SL students bear in mind not only their own short-term needs (the marks required), but also the long-term needs of the SMMEs concerned.

8.4.7.2 Legal form of ownership

Organisations that are formally registered with legal bodies (like CIPC) or that are bigger (5-49 employees), non-survivalist, and more established (like Pty Ltd firms and Close Corporations) experience higher levels of satisfaction with student-developed strategic campaign plans than those which are not legally registered, are survivalist in nature, smaller (0-5 employees), and less established (like Sole Proprietors).

It is preferable that the SL programme targets organisations that are formally registered with all legal bodies, and that are non-survivalist, operating as a Pty Ltd firm or Closed Corporation with between 10 and 49 employees (Tustin, 2001:10; SBP 2011:5). To facilitate this, the SL programme should include an application procedure whereby SMMEs that want to be involved apply with all the relevant documentation including their company documents and a completed application form. This will ensure that students work with SMMEs that are in a better position to benefit from their efforts.

8.4.7.3 Project mark

SMMEs that work with students who develop high quality work and deliver all elements of the campaign project experience greater levels of satisfaction with the campaign plan.

In order to ensure that students complete all aspects of the campaign plan project in a high quality fashion it is vital that course coordinators monitor every aspect of the process for every group involved (Sprague & Hu, 2015:274). Measures should also be put in place at each phase of the programme to deal with groups which are not completing all the requisite tasks in a high quality fashion.

For example, in each phase of the programme, group members who do not pull their weight or who pull the group down should be liable to be “suspended” or “punished” in some way. Course coordinators can meet with groups to discuss their level of service delivery and reasons for non-performance, and SMMEs can give feedback to ensure that student teams learn from their mistakes and develop better work in the next phase of the programme (Gelmon *et al.,* 1998; Vernon & Ward, 1999; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Blouin & Perry, 2009; Campbell & Lambright, 2011; Gazley *et al.*, 2013; Sprague & Hu, 2015). For example, Sprague and Hu (2015:275) cite one client as stating: “Close collaboration at key moments of the process is necessary to ensure students are on the right path and understand the needs of the organisation.” In addition, students should be given reflective tasks after each phase of the programme to ensure learning and growth.

8.5 Skills training and knowledge transfer

The skills training and knowledge transfer conclusions and recommendations section discusses the types of skills and knowledges imparted to businesses, the usefulness of the skills training and knowledge transfer to businesses, the perceived impact resulting from the skills training and knowledge transfer, and the satisfaction that SMMEs experienced from the training and knowledge transfer. For each aspect conclusions are reached and recommendations made.

8.5.1 Skills imparted to businesses

8.5.1.1 General skills

When SMMEs participate in the marketing-related BSAC-SL programme there is a strong likelihood that they will gain new skills from students relating to Facebook, Twitter, websites, the Internet, email, computer applications, Microsoft Office, and so forth, especially in respect of using them for marketing purposes (Barr, 2010b; Schwartz, 2010:6; Kincade & Gibson, 2012:11; Steimel, 2013:244; do Amaral, 2019:132).

Because of the benefits of marketing-related skills for SMMEs (Oji *et al.*, 2017a), it is imperative that marketing students spend time training SMME staff in those skills which are relevant for their businesses. In order to ensure that this happens effectively, students should be given a basic training workshop to learn how most effectively to transfer their skills to the staff members of participating SMMEs. Finally, course coordinators should check in with SMMEs to ensure that students have actually trained them in the use of relevant marketing tools.

8.5.1.2 Low-cost marketing technologies

SMMEs that are trained in the use of low-cost or free digital marketing technologies find the skills training to be more useful and experience higher levels of satisfaction with marketing-related skills training received from students during SL (Jackson, 2012; Schiff, 2012; Khan & Karodia, 2013; Aufreiter *et al*., 2014; Ayres, 2014; Bussing, 2017; Danoy, 2017). SMMEs that do not receive any skills training from students experience dissatisfaction (Blouin & Perry, 2009:128; Darby *et al*., 2013:127; Plaut, 2013:8; Steimel, 2013:248-249; Sprague & Hu, 2015; Goertzen *et al*., 2016:42).

Considering that most South African SMMEs do not have much of a budget for marketing (Lekhanya, 2015), students should specifically train them in digital marketing tools that are either free or very low-cost. Students should thus themselves be trained and well-versed in the use of a variety of cost-effective digital marketing tools before the SL programme commences.

8.5.2 Business-related knowledge transfer to businesses

SMMEs that engaged in this marketing-related SL programme acquired a deeper understanding of marketing-oriented theories and practices such as marketing, sales promotion, strategy, advertising, research, and consumers (Barr, 2010b; Schwartz, 2010:6; Kingcade & Gibson, 2012:11; Sprague & Hu, 2015; do Amaral, 2019:132). Those organisations that received education in marketing, sales promotion, and advertising specifically found the knowledge transfer from students more useful and thus experienced higher levels of satisfaction with the business education (Soke & Wild, 2016; Patricia *et al*., 2017). SMMEs that did not receive any business education from students experienced dissatisfaction with this aspect of the programme.

Considering that most South African SMMEs have a lack of knowledge and experience when it comes to designing and implementing marketing strategies, sales promotions, and advertising campaigns (Van Scheers, 2011; Cant, 2012; Lekhanya & Mason, 2013; Lekhanya, 2015), and considering that a lack of education and training is a key constraint for entrepreneurship in South Africa (Herrington & Kew, 2015:48), it is imperative that student teams invest time and effort in conveying this knowledge to SMMEs throughout the duration of the SL programme. Students should be given basic theories and practices, possibly in a multi-media format (like a video) on a laptop, which they can easily use to convey to SMME staff the key marketing principles that are relevant to them.

8.5.3 Usefulness of skills training and knowledge transfer

SMMEs that participated in the BSAC-SL programme found the marketing-related skills training and knowledge transfer from students useful (Schachter & Schwartz, 2009:449; Barrientos, 2010:12). Those organisations which found the skills and knowledge particularly useful were those that worked with more experienced and knowledgeable PT students (Anderson, 2019).

In order to ensure that all participating SMMEs gain the highest level of skills training and knowledge transfer it is recommended that more knowledgeable and experienced students (such as those who study PT) are mixed into each of the student teams. In addition, it is recommended that older postgraduate students help student teams by playing a consultative role or by functioning as programme tutors. In this way, student teams will have access to greater levels of experience and knowledge to impart to participating SMMEs.

8.5.4 Reasons for lack of usefulness of skills and knowledge

There are a number of challenges which keep SMMEs from being able to make use of the skills training and knowledge transfer provided by students, including a lack of time (Dewhurst *et al*., 2006:139; Ladzini & Netswera, 2009; Cant, 2012; Jones *et al*., 2013; Suseno *et al*., 2019), a lack of the right staff (Allard & Straussman, 2003:698; Dewhurst *et al*., 2006:139; Tyron *et al.,* 2008:20; Suseno *et al.*, 2019), a lack of finances (Allard & Straussman, 2003:698; Lekhanya, 2015), a lack of knowledge (Sprague & Hu, 2015; Vizenor *et al*., 2017:10), a lack of communication (Campbell & Lambright, 2011; Budhai, 2013:6; Gazley *et al*., 2013; McReynolds, 2014; Vizenor *et al*., 2017:10), and the fact that the training and knowledge is not appropriate for them (Gazley *et al.,* 2012:12; Briere *et al.*, 2015). SMMEs that experience these challenges also find the skills training and knowledge transfer to be less useful and therefore experience lower levels of satisfaction with this aspect of the SL programme.

It is critical that when student teams provide skills training and business education to SMME, they do so in a way which includes effective communication, complete knowledge, correct knowledge, and information that is appropriate to the specific SMME. In order to ensure that this happens, businesses should choose a select few key requirements from a range of possible skills and knowledges that they would like to gain so that students can focus on only these key elements (Johnston & Loader, 2003). Based on their analysis, student teams can also recommend other key areas in which they think the businesses should be trained.

Once this has been decided by the SMMEs and students, the strategy for engaging in the training and knowledge transfer required should be determined and planned collaboratively by the SMMEs and student teams, together with programme tutors/mentors, and/or programme coordinators. This strategy should embrace which staff members need to be trained, which specific marketing skills and knowledge they need to be trained in, when they will be trained, how long the training will be, where the training will take place, who will conduct the training, what equipment the training will require, what costs this training will incur, and if so, where the money will come from (Dewhurst *et al.*, 2006; Suseno *et al.*, 2019; Kunaka & Moos, 2019).

Once the training has taken place, staff members will need to be assessed on their competence in the various tools and knowledges. In addition, SMME staff should be given opportunities to practise the skills they were taught, and the process needs to be monitored to ensure that effective knowledge transfer has taken place and that the skills and knowledges are actually useful to the organisations once implemented. If they are found to be ineffective or unhelpful, the reasons should be identified and a plan should be made to rectify this (such as through additional training) (Johnston & Loader, 2003; Dewhurst *et al.*, 2006; Shiryan *et al*., 2012; Suseno *et al.*, 2019; Kunaka & Moos, 2019).

8.5.5 Perceived impact of skills training and knowledge transfer

SMMEs that received marketing-related skills training and knowledge transfer from student teams during the SL programme perceived a number of performance-related benefits as accruing to themselves, including increased sales, new customers, increased brand awareness, increased customer loyalty, increased business efficiency, increased competitive advantage, and increased employee motivation (Kent *et al*., 2003; Van Vuuren and Botha, 2010; De Saá-Pérez *et al*., 2012; Chiloane-Tsoka & Boya, 2014; Galbriath, 2018; Kunaka & Moos, 2019; Higuchi *et al*., 2019). Those organisations that perceived an increase in sales, customers, and brand awareness all found the training and education to be more useful than other firms, and organisations which perceived a positive impact on customer loyalty, competitive advantage, and employee motivation experienced higher levels of satisfaction as a result of the training and education (Clark *et al.,* 2003; Simpson & Long, 2007; Batra *et al*., 2009; Meah *et al*., 2009; Sprague & Hu, 2015). Organisations that perceived no impact resulting from skills training and knowledge transfer activities by student teams found it less useful and experienced dissatisfaction with this aspect of the programme (Jones *et al*., 2013).

Considering the high failure rate of South African SMMEs, it is vital that the BSAC-SL programme is able to transfer skills and knowledge to them that are relevant to their unique contexts (Harrington, 2014:53). In order to ensure that SMMEs experience long-lasting performance benefits through marketing-related skills training and knowledge transfer from the programme, student teams need to be clear about how various forms of skills and knowledge can translate into specific business performance benefits. With this knowledge, student teams will be able to determine which skills and knowledges SMMEs need in relation to their unique situations. They will then be able to transfer skills and knowledge more effectively to their partner firms in ways that maximise their benefits (Johnston & Loader, 2003; Dewhurst *et al.*, 2006; Shiryan *et al*., 2012; Suseno *et al.*, 2019; Kunaka & Moos, 2019).

In addition, course coordinators need to monitor the training and knowledge transfer activities of students to ensure that they are taking place effectively and actually resulting in increased business performance on the part of the SMMEs.

8.5.6 Satisfaction of skills and knowledge

Those SMMEs that found the skills training and knowledge transfer useful to their organisation also noticed a lasting impact on their firms. As a result they experienced high levels of satisfaction with the training and education as well as with the overall SL programme, and were desirous to participate in the programme again in the future (Clark *et al.,* 2003; Simpson & Long, 2007; Batra *et al*., 2009; Meah *et al*., 2009).

It is imperative that if the BSAC-SL programme includes aspects of skills training and knowledge transfer that programme coordinators ensure that these are actually useful to the participating firms. For this reason, such programmes must have a clear skills training and knowledge transfer strategy, and all parties involved must be equipped to fulfil their responsibilities in order to ensure its success. In addition, course coordinators need to manage and monitor every aspect of the training process and regularly evaluate its impact on participating firms, in order to make the necessary adjustments as the programme progresses (Jorge, 2003:31; Sprague & Hu, 2015). In addition, it is recommended that older, more experienced students be used to assist in this aspect of the programme.

8.6 Client-agency relationship

The following section covers the conclusions and recommendations as related to the client-agency relationships formed between student teams and SMMEs. The section starts off with discussing the nature of the agency, and especially the characteristics of the students' behaviour and professional practice. It then discusses the usefulness or not of the working relationships, reaching conclusions and making recommendations relating to the perceived impact of these. The section concludes with a discussion of the overall satisfaction that SMMEs experienced with the client-agency relationship.

8.6.1 Characteristics of agency "staff"

SMMEs that work with student agencies which exhibit high levels of professionalism, skill, creativity, and enthusiasm register greater levels of usefulness and satisfaction in their working relationships with students (Vernon & Ward, 1999; Worrall, 2007; Boulin & Perry, 2009; Krasynska et *al*., 2013:17; Spraque & Percy, 2014; Vasbinder & Koehler, 2015:89; Mokoena & Spencer, 2017:302-303; Mitchell, 2018:39-40).

In order to ensure that student agencies function at high levels of professionalism and skill, students need to be well trained before SMMEs are brought on board. Students should therefore engage in client-agency relationship etiquette and agency creative strategy workshops within their student teams in the initial stages of the SL programme. The goal of these workshops should be for each student agency to establish its own agency protocols and processes for professional and skilful practice.

In addition, each student agency should be evaluated by participating SMMEs on key points of professionalism and skilful practice after each phase of the programme. Agencies should then participate in ongoing workshops with course coordinators and industry experts to gain insights and improve their professional and creative practice. At the end of each workshop, each agency should develop an action plan with key steps to be implemented in the next phase of the programme.

In order to ensure that student agencies are properly motivated and engage enthusiastically, it is recommended that course coordinators allocate students to industries in the SMME sector which interest them. Sprague and Hu (2015:273) quote a client as saying: “it’s really the quality of the students and their interest in the topic that makes a project worthwhile.”

8.6.2 Usefulness of client-agency relationship

SMMEs that participate in the BSAC-SL programme found SL-initiated working relationships with students to be very useful, especially when students continued working with them after the conclusion of the programme (Bernstein *et al*., 2003; Whitaker & Berner, 2004; Campbell & Lambright, 2011; Krasynska *et al*., 2013; Plaut, 2013:7; Schoenerr; 2015; Volschok, 2017; Mitchell, 2018).

The BSAC-SL programme should facilitate efforts to increase the effectiveness of client-agency relationships and also seek ways to foster ongoing working relationships between students and SMMEs. This could be done by offering the SL programme over a longer period of time or getting funding so that students can be paid to assist SMMEs even after the programme has ended.

8.6.3 Reasons for lack of usefulness of client-agency relationship

A lack of time is the main reason that SMMEs struggle to make effective use of their working relationships with student agencies (Labahn & Kholi, 1997; Vernon & Ward, 1999; Bushouse, 2005; Blouin & Perry, 2009; Mitchell, 2018:39-40). Although other barriers like a lack of staff, a lack of finances, a lack of knowledge, a lack of communication, a lack of student involvement, a lack of student work experience, and the fact that the working relationship is inappropriate for the SMMEs, do also play a part, none of these is as significant a barrier as a lack of time (Gazley *et al*., 2012:10; Sprague & Hu, 2015; Mokoena & Spencer, 2017:304-305; Vizenor *et al*., 2017:10).

8.6.3.1 Lack of time

It is important that SMMEs are made aware of the demands that participating in SL will make on their time before they commit to doing so. Once they have committed, it may also be helpful to provide induction training for them to familiarise them with all the elements they need to take into account when working with student teams. Student agencies and SMMEs need to develop a relationship plan as well as a weekly schedule for their engagement and interaction, so that all parties are clear on the requirements and contact points of their working relationship. Gazley *et al.* (2012:3) recommend that student agencies and client firms sign a formal agreement or memorandum of understanding before commencing with their working relationship.

8.6.3.2 Lack of staff

It may also be helpful to target SMMEs that are a bit bigger and have extra staff members with some related expertise and the time to devote to working with student agencies throughout the programme. In addition, the other members of the participating SMME's staff should be brought on board through a basic induction workshop so that they are all clear on the goals and nature of the programme, as well as their responsibilities for the programme. This can also help their relationship with students can kick off on a positive note through team-building exercises.

8.6.3.3 Lack of student involvement

In order to overcome the problem of a lack of student involvement, Blouin and Perry (2009:128) recommend that engaging in SL must either be a personal choice or somehow tied to their personal goals and interests. As such, it is vital that students be allowed to choose with which SMMEs they work or in which industries they serve. Harrington (2014:68) encourages thorough preparation of students by academic staff members through training and goal setting. Students also need to prepare themselves through understanding the unique culture and needs of community partners. To facilitate more effective communication between the student agency and other players, Schoenerr (2015:60) suggests that a team leader be appointed for each student agency to manage all communication for the team.

8.6.4 Perceived impact of client-agency relationship

SMMEs that worked with student teams in the BSAC-SL programme experienced notable performance benefits for their firms, including increased sales, new customers, increased brand awareness, increased customer loyalty, increased business efficiency, increased competitive advantage, and increased employee motivation (Gelmon *et al*., 1998; Vernon & Ward, 1999; Worral, 2007; Gazley *et al.,* 2012:10; Schoenherr, 2015:52-54; Goertzen *et al*., 2016:41; Vizenor *et al*., 2017:9; Sanford, 2018; Patel, 2018). When SMMEs perceived these benefits they also found the working relationships more useful. When SMMEs perceived no positive impact resulting from working relationships with students they experienced dissatisfaction and did not find the working relationships useful.

SMMEs should be presented with the range of potential benefits they could gain from their working relationship with students and choose the top 3-5 that they would like to see materialise through the BSAC-SL programme. It is important that student teams are made aware of which performance benefits their participating SMMEs desire from their involvement, and then work towards achieving these for them. Prior to the involvement of SMMEs, student teams should be informed of the range of performance benefits that SMMEs could desire and those that are possible to achieve through SL. They should then be trained in how to facilitate those benefits for community partners. Once the benefit goals have been established the entire working relationship with the SMME should be geared towards these goals, and all efforts should be evaluated against these goals throughout the programme.

8.6.5 Satisfaction with client-agency relationship

SMMEs that built effective working relationships with BSAC student marketing agencies found that the relationship was more useful to them and had a longer-lasting impact on their firm, especially when students continued to work with them after the completion of the programme (Smith, 2005:200; Blouin & Percy, 2009:126; Simola, 2009:578; Barr, 2010b; Barrientos, 2010:7; Plaut, 2013:6; Vizenor *et al*., 2017:9). These firms also experienced high levels of satisfaction with the working relationship and with the overall SL programme, and are thus very likely to participate in SL again in the future (Smith, 2005:200; Blouin & Percy, 2009:126; Simola (2009:578; Barrientos, 2010:7; Plaut, 2013:6; Sprague & Hu, 2015; Vizenor *et al*., 2017:9).

Having students form effective relationships with SMMEs is the foundation of a successful SMME-SL programme. For this reason, programme coordinators need to go to great lengths to ensure that effective client-agency relationships are formed and maintained for the duration of the programme.

Considering that most SMMEs do not have the funds to pay for the services of marketing agencies and are therefore unlikely to have much experience of working with them, and considering that most students do not have agency work experience, both students and SMMEs need to be trained in client-agency relationship theory, etiquette, and practice in order to ensure the success of the relationship during the SL programme.

Once the client-agency relationships have been appropriately established they need to be keenly monitored by course coordinators through regular check-ins. In addition, both SMMEs and student agencies need to evaluate their relationship according to specific criteria after each phase of the programme. This evaluation should be shared with all parties involved and pathways for improvement should be discussed in a meeting facilitated by course coordinators.

Finally, this process-oriented approach to SMME-student /client-agency relationships can also ensure that should SMMEs and students desire to continue working together after the conclusion of the programme, they will have the skills to do so.

8.7 Overall programme

In this section there is discussion of conclusions and recommendations pertaining to the programme as a whole. The section begins by considering the usefulness of the overall programme, then goes on to examine the performance-related impact that SMMEs perceived as resulting from the programme, as well as the overall satisfaction with the programme that they experienced. Conclusions are reached and recommendations made relating to the suggestions that SMMEs made for programme improvement.

8.7.1 Usefulness of overall programme

8.7.1.1 Study programme

Most participating SMMEs found the overall SL programme to be useful (Campbell & Lambright, 2011; Budhai, 2013:5; Krasynska *et al*., 2013:16; Plaut, 2013:3; Steimel, 2013:245; Goertzen *et al.*, 2016:44-46; Volschok, 2017:6; do Amaral, 2019:133), with those organisations that worked with more experienced PT students experiencing higher levels of usefulness than others (Anderson, 2019).

In order to ensure that SMMEs find the SL programme as useful as possible it is recommended that at least one more experienced and knowledgeable PT student is included in each student team. It may be even more beneficial to assign a postgraduate student to each team to function as a mentor or programme tutor to the team. This will ensure that students have more ready access to greater levels of knowledge and experience with which to serve their partner firms, and in this way enhance the usefulness of the programme for all participating SMMEs.

8.7.1.2 Major Industry

SMMEs operating in the Community, Social, and Personal Services industry, and particularly those in the hairdressing and other beauty treatments sector, attributed greater levels of usefulness to the overall programme than organisations operating in other industries and sectors. Firms that function in highly competitive sectors (such as the hairdressing and beauty treatment sector) have a greater need for marketing support to remain competitive (Services SETA, 2016:19; Lockhart-Meyer, 2013). Firms in these sectors therefore found the marketing-related BSAC-SL programme more useful than firms operating in less competitive industries.

In order to work with firms that truly need the type of marketing support that students can provide (like those who operate in highly competitive industries), it is recommended that an application process be implemented where potential SMME partners apply to be part of the programme. Programme coordinators could then screen and select those SMMEs that would find the programme most useful. This is supported by Sprague and Hu (2015:273), who quote one client as saying: “I was reminded that this sort of project tends to only work when demand-driven – that is, when a client really needs the service provided by the students. If you try to find a project that more or less works (as I did), it’s not quite as valuable…. I did not structure the project in a way to make it actionable.”

8.7.2 Reasons for lack of usefulness of overall programme

It is clear that a lack of time is the primary barrier inhibiting SMMEs from being able to make effective use of the overall BSAC-SL programme (Gazley *et al*., 2013; Darby *et al.,* 2013:127-128; Harrington, 2014:51). The next most notable barriers are a lack of student communication (Gelmon *et al*., 1998;

Vernon & Ward, 1999; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Worrall, 2007; Blouin & Perry, 2009; Campbell & Lambright, 2011; Gazley *et al*., 2013; McReynolds, 2014) and a lack of finances (Schachter & Schwartz, 2009:451; Krasynska *et al.*, 2013:13). Other less critical challenges include a lack of knowledge (Thrassou & Vrontis, 2006; Van Scheers, 2011; Cant, 2012; Lekhanya & Mason, 2013; Lekhanya, 2015; Luxton *et al.,* 2017; Oji *et al.,* 2017b; Rambe, 2017), a lack of staff (Tyron *et al*., 2008:20; Gazley *et al.,* 2012:12; Plaut, 2013:8), a lack of communication (Steimel, 2013:249; McReynolds, 2014), a lack of lecturer involvement (Gelmon *et al*., 1998; Vernon & Ward, 1999; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Worrall, 2007; Boulin & Perry, 2009; Campbell & Lambright, 2011; Darby *et al.,* 2013:127-128; Gazley *et al*., 2013; Steimel, 2013:249; McReynolds, 2014), and the fact that the programme is inappropriate for the participating firm (Blouin and Perry, 2009:128; Gazley *et al*., 2012:12; Darby *et al.*, 2013:127).

8.7.2.1 Lack of time and staff

In order to ensure the success of the marketing-related SL programme it is crucial that the programme be effectively designed, facilitated, and monitored. One key part of the programme design is the screening and induction process for all parties involved. In order to ensure that participating firms are aware of the time and staff commitments required to engage effectively in SL, these should be made clear from the beginning. Only those organisations that are able to make such commitments should be permitted to participate in the programme. The same applies to the appropriateness of the programme and its financial requirements. Funding could be procured to help overcome the financial barrier.

8.7.2.2 Lack of communication

A lack of communication is a problem cited by most participants in SL programmes. In order to overcome this barrier, clear rules and expectations for communication need to be discussed and agreed upon right at the beginning. In order to facilitate this, students and their partner SMMEs should engage in a team-building workshop in order to get to know one another and establish rules for engagement. Then, after each phase in the programme, SMMEs and student teams should engage in a debriefing session in order to evaluate the effectiveness of their communication and discuss areas of improvement.

8.7.2.3 Lack of knowledge

Gaps in the knowledge and expertise of participating SMMEs need to be identified from the beginning, so that training measures can be put in place to ensure that they are equipped with the knowledge they need for each phase of the programme. This could be facilitated by post-graduate student mentors and tutors in collaboration with programme coordinators.

8.7.2.4 Lack of lecturer involvement

Better programme coordination is the primary solution to the lack of lecturer involvement. Programme coordinators need to take a leading role in the development and coordination of the entire programme. They need to keep SMMEs informed on the progress of the programme and touch base with them often. In addition they need to monitor the work of student teams and facilitate corrective measures if they do not meet expectations. In order to improve programme coordination and communication it is recommended that lecturers procure the assistance of parties such as post-graduate students and representatives of sponsoring firms.

8.7.3 Perceived impact of overall programme

It is clear that the BSAC-SL programme has had statistically significant performance benefits for participating SMMEs, such as increased sales (Furlow, 2010; Metcalf, 2010), new customers (Vizenor *et al.*, 2017:8), increased brand awareness (Hagenbuch, 2006; Sprague and Hu, 2015; Goertzen *et al*., 2016:41), improved business efficiency (Tyron *et al.,* 2008:20), increased customer loyalty and competitive advantage, and increased motivation and staff energy (Tyron *et al*., 2008:22). SMMEs that perceived these benefits accruing from the overall programme found the programme very useful and experienced high levels of satisfaction.

Considering the vital role that SMMEs play in South Africa and the many business performance benefits that the BSAC-SL programme can have on participating firms, it is recommended that programme coordinators evaluate ways to increase the impact of the programme.

8.7.4 Satisfaction, lasting impact, and future participation

Most participating SMMEs found the SL programme very useful and acknowledged that the programme had a significant lasting impact on their businesses. These SMMEs also experienced high levels of satisfaction with the overall programme and were keen to participate in the programme again in the future (Driscoll *et al*., 1996; Bernstein *et al.,* 2003; Killian, 2004; Whitaker & Berner, 2004; Bushouse, 2005; Worrall, 2007; Boulin & Perry, 2009; Schachter & Swartz, 2009; Campbell & Lambright, 2011; Krasynska *et al.*, 2013; Gazley *et al*., 2013).

The benefits of SL for South African SMMEs are far-reaching and long lasting. Considering the great challenges that SMMEs face in South Africa, especially in terms of survival and growth, it is recommended that the programme coordinators of the BSAC-SL programme identify other institutions that can also facilitate the programme. This could be done through partnering with other institutions so that more marketing departments can offer the programme to even more SMMEs in South Africa.

In this way, other universities would also be able to serve the unique needs of South African SMMEs while also offering students relevant, real-world, and discipline-related experience. This would facilitate much-needed small business development and support on a much wider scale, and hopefully result in a higher success rate among SMMEs in South Africa.

8.7.5 Suggestions for programme improvement

Participating SMMEs gave a range of suggestions for improving the programme to better service their needs. These recommendations can be summarised as follows:

a. **Programme design:** Including induction training for all parties involved, funding, students to intern rather than consult, and students to spend more time with businesses.
b. **Programme coordination:** Including better overall programme coordination, better communication by programme coordinators, and more rigorous monitoring of students by programme coordinators.
c. **Student service:** Including better presentation of proposals by students, better hand-over from students, better campaign implementation by students and follow-up from students after project.

8.7.5.1 Programme design

In order to serve the unique needs of South African SMMEs, the BSAC-SL programme should include induction training for all parties involved, including the SMMEs, students, sponsor firms/ service agencies, and programme support staff (like mentors or tutors) (Blouin & Perry, 2009:130). This will ensure that all parties are on the same page as far as the objectives, responsibilities and expectations of the programme are concerned. Considering that most South African SMMEs do not have extra funds for marketing purposes it would be beneficial to obtain funding and allocate some to each student team to be used for things like marketing material development and campaign implementation.

SMMEs do not have much marketing experience nor do they have much extra time (Lekhanya, 2015; Van Scheers, 2018). For this reason, some of them find the sort-term, unstructured, strictly consultative relationships of *"problem-based SL"* to be challenging. Many would prefer longer-term, internship-type relationships that are synonymous with the "*service internships*" model of SL (Schachter & Schwartz, 2009:453). These relationships are more structured, in that at least one student is placed at a firm for an extended period of time, working from their premises, rather than only seeing them for meetings or communicating with them over the phone or via email. In this way, SMME representatives would also be able to monitor students, learn more from them, be able to communicate with them more effectively, and have more opportunities to work with them on various tasks. In order to implement this, the BSAC-SL programme should consider a combination of SL models facilitated through the following programme designs:

- Create smaller student teams (1-3 students) and place them at the firms for an extended period of time (3-12 weeks). Students then work exclusively on accomplishing the objectives of the programme from the premises of the SMME and make use of university resources (like the library) to supplement the lack of SMME resources. SMMEs would then need to help monitor students in collaboration with programme coordinators.

- Place one student intern/volunteer (from a different level of study or from a different academic department) with the firm who can work with the consultative student team for the duration of the programme. This interning student can manage the relationship between the student team and the SMME, and also continue to implement, manage, and monitor the various marketing activities established during the programme once the programme has ended. (This model has been successfully implemented by Mars Hill College in the USA and is discussed by Strand *et al*., 2003; Stoecker *et al*., 2007; and Tyron *et al.*, 2008:22).
- Have the entire student team spend one day each week at the premises of their participating SMME for the duration of the programme. In this way, most of the consultative activities can take place on this day throughout the programme, ensuring that students spend more time with participating SMMEs.
- Place each student at an SMME for an entire year and have them work at the premises of their business for at least one day per week. This could also be broken up into two half-day stints of four hours each. Each student would be responsible for building a relationship with their partner SMME and doing the requisite preliminary work before the SL programme begins. Students then form teams and all help one another implement the various aspects of the SL programme at their respective SMME partners.

To extend the support even further and truly ensure long-term programme success, Plaut (2013:7) suggests that programmes be geared to work with participating firms over a number of years, by having new student teams build on the work of previous teams. This could also be implemented in an integrated way, where teams from different university departments build the capacity and performance of participating firms from one year to the next. For example, accounting students could work with SMMEs in the first year to help them become established in their accounting and money-management practices; and then in the second year, marketing students could work with those same firms to help them increase their sales and customers.

As was discussed in Chapter 2, this type of programme design is discussed by Desplaces *et al.* (2006), who note how the University of Hartford in the USA has “adopted” a specific business area that is in need of support and is located fairly close to the university campus. Both undergraduate and postgraduate students from multiple disciplines (including business, entrepreneurship, communication, graphic arts, etc.) all work with small retail and service businesses in the area from one year to the next. They have found this design to have numerous benefits for the students, the university, and the participating firms, especially in terms of programme longevity and impact. The desire by community organisations for sustainable long-term SL relationships as well as the benefits and importance of such relationships are also mentioned by Shalabi (2013:88) and Tyron *et al*. (2008:22).

8.7.5.2 Programme coordination

The responsibility for the coordination of SL usually falls squarely on the shoulders of course instructors (i.e. lecturers/professors) (Schachter & Schwartz, 2009). Because of their limited time, instructors usually focus their attention on the needs of students during SL programmes and therefore tend to neglect the needs of community partners. For this reason, it is imperative that instructors seriously consider the commitment required to coordinate SL in a way that really benefits participating organisations and ensures ultimate programme success.

Sprague and Hu (2015:278) note that to help supervise programmes, instructors use regular meetings with student teams, in-class discussions, regular assignments, student reflective journals, online forums, client feedback, and peer evaluations.

In addition, it is recommended that in order to achieve better levels of programme coordination, instructors are given greater levels of support. This can be achieved in one or all of the following ways:

- Integrated SL programmes can be run by multiple academic departments working in conjunction. In such cases several instructors can coordinate the programme together.
- Post graduate students can be assigned as programme mentors/tutors to help facilitate student monitoring and communication with partner firms.
- Larger private sector organisations can be partnered with to help sponsor programmes by providing funding, resources, and staff members to help with coordination. This would be especially beneficial if the sponsor firms worked in related sectors (like advertising agencies to help with marketing-related SL).

8.7.5.3 Student service

Students often only engage in SL because they are required to do so to fulfil the requirements of their qualifications. In such cases, students may only put in the amount of effort that is required to pass the course (Gazley *et al*., 2012:3). Students therefore need to be inducted into the importance of SL, to recognise and respect the great needs of the partner organisations, and to recognise the responsibilities of citizenship. This can be done through exposing them to various societal needs and showing them how they can help to meet them. Students must see the broader goal of the programme and understand how their efforts contribute to the greater good. It is also very important that, as far as is possible, students be paired up with SMMEs in sectors or industries that interest them. This should ensure that they are enthusiastic about the programme and engage at levels, going beyond the basic requirements of the course (Gazley *et al*., 2012:3).

Because of a lack of knowledge and work experience, students often do not provide service that is of a high quality (Stoecker, 2008:54; Sprague & Hu, 2015; Rosenberg *et al.*, 2016; Vizenor *et al*., 2017:10). In such cases, the participating firms do not receive effective service and experience high levels of dissatisfaction. In order to rectify this, the BSAC-SL programme needs to put very clear best practice procedures in place that students can follow, as well as holistic support systems to assist students in their service. Student efforts also need to be meticulously monitored by course coordinators to ensure that they are adhering to the best practice procedures. At the same time, SMMEs need to provide the information and feedback necessary to help guide the work, with control mechanisms in place for situations where effective service is not taking place.

SL programme design and management planning should therefore include such aspects as exposure to community development needs and citizenship, best practice procedures, support measures, and systems for effective programme coordination, to ensure that all the elements required for successful service are provided for. The best practice procedures would include facilitating proposal presentation by students with all participating firms, holistic hand-over of student work to all firms, effective campaign implementation for all firms, and sufficient follow-up with firms after the end of the programme.

8.8 Limitations and future research

This study was hindered by a number of limitations, detailed below.

8.8.1 Sampling limitations

8.8.1.1 Sample size

Although the response rate was favourable, it was quite small. Future studies may want to increase the sample size in order to draw conclusions which can be generalised more broadly, and analyse the SMME performance benefits of SL programmes offered by a broader range of undergraduate business courses.

8.8.1.2 Sample location

The research sample was drawn from only one SL programme at one university, with SMMEs in a single city in South Africa. Future research might replicate the study with multiple marketing-related SL programmes operating at universities situated in cities which vary in terms of culture, context, and economics.

8.8.1.3 SMME age

The research surveyed SMMEs that were for the most part already established. In order to test the capacity of SL to support the incubation, start-up, and development of small businesses, it would be helpful to study SL programmes which support business at each stage of the business growth cycle.

8.8.2 Research design limitations

8.8.2.1 Benefits / impact

The study considered only the benefits and challenges which SMME owner-managers perceived the SL programme had for their businesses. Future studies may want to consider surveying the actual impact of SL on SMMEs by doing randomised control trials and using pre- and post-tests to evaluate the impact on performance indicators like sales, new customers, brand awareness, and so forth.

8.8.2.2 Timing

One limitation was the fact that the research was done at one point in time in 2015. Because programmes had been completed between one and four years prior to the research it is very possible that the experience would not have been fresh in the minds of some respondents who had participated in earlier years. Conversely, this enabled insight into the lasting impact of the programmes. Future research should consider conducting research at certain intervals, such as during the programme, immediately after, six months after, and then one, two, three, and even five years after.

8.8.2.3 Programme type

The research only surveyed the benefit of SL on SMME support and performance. Future studies may want to survey the support and performance benefits for SMMEs of a range of different forms of community engagement and work-integrated learning pedagogies.

8.8.3 Methodology limitations

8.8.3.1 Survey instrument

This was a descriptive study which used a quantitative survey questionnaire. Closed-ended responses were for the most part not supported by further elaboration. Using action research or a mixed-method approach with preliminary in-depth interviews combined with a quantitative survey and additional focus groups could yield much richer data.

8.8.3.2 Programme evaluation

This study only considered the client side of a programme evaluation in terms of clients' experiences and perceptions of various inputs, outputs and outcomes relating to the programme. In future, a more holistic programme evaluation could be conducted, including insights from all the stakeholders involved, including university staff, service agency staff, students, and participating client organisations.

8.8.4 Findings limitations

Some important questions remain unanswered by this research. What value did the programme have for organisational growth factors such as increased employee numbers, and other performance and non-performance factors? What impact did the SMMEs have on their local communities, customers, and local economic development as a result of the programme? Such questions could be explored in future research.

8.9 Conclusion

SMMEs are seen as the primary key to economic growth and prosperity in South Africa. However, these firms are inhibited by a number of barriers and challenges which keep them from becoming established and ultimately reaching a point where they can provide employment and contribute to economic growth. One of the major challenges that SMMEs face is a lack of support in areas like marketing and sales because they do not have the funds to employ marketing personnel or procure marketing services from the private sector.

Considering the numerous marketing-related performance benefits that the BSAC-SL programme has for participating SMMEs, it is clear that it is a valuable programme that should not only continue but extend its impact through other universities. But before it can do so, the programme needs to be improved by taking account of a number of factors that have been discussed at length in this study. Relevant recommendations have been put forward.

The next steps should involve implementing the programme improvements and doing further empirical research to assess the impact of the improvements. Then, once an effective working model for the programme has been established, the BSAC-SL team should extend the programme to other universities in South Africa through strategic partnerships. In this way, more South African SMMEs will be able to benefit from the programme and contribute more effectively to the local and national economic imperatives of South Africa.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE CONSENT FORM

Cape Peninsula University of Technology

BRAND SHEPHERD ADVERTISING CHALLENGE – IMPACT STUDY

RESPONDENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

Title of the research project:
The impact of integrated marketing communication service learning projects on participating client organisations

Principal investigator: Dylan Cromhout

Address: Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Keizersgracht Street, Cape Town

Contact numbers and e-mail: (021) 460 3267; 072 625 1010; cromhoutd@cput.ac.za

If unavailable, contact Dr Norbert Haydam: 021 460 3257/8; 082 886 7318; haydamn@cput.ac.za

Dear Respondent,

Thank you once again for your participation in the Brand Shepherd Advertising Challenge and for providing written feedback of your experience. Thank you also for consenting to research being done with your organisation's customers and employees, and on your organisation's premises. As mentioned in the initial invitation letter, we would like to conduct further research with your organisation to gain more insight as to how to improve the project. Therefore, as a follow up to the written feedback you provided we would like to conduct a survey using a questionnaire.

The purpose of this Questionnaire is to evaluate the impact of integrated marketing communication service learning projects on participating organisations in the Cape Peninsula. You will be required to answer questions regarding the impact of the various aspects of the project on the business as well as provide details regarding the business's demographics.
We would like to remind you that as participation to answer this questionnaire is voluntary, you are free to withdraw at any time during the answering of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire will take approximately 20-30 minutes of your time. As the respondent, you will gain no direct benefit from participation, but added generalized knowledge may be obtained. No discomfort, harm, risk or injury is expected to occur as a result of your participation in this research project.

The information that you provide to us will be used as part of our research, while your identity will not be revealed and your responses will remain anonymous. Your participation in this research is appreciated. Please sign below if you are willing to participate.

Declaration by participant

By signing below, I _______________________________________ agree to take part in the research project entitled:

The impact of integrated marketing communication service learning projects on participating client organisations

I declare that:

- I have read or had read to me this information and consent form and it is written in a language in which I am fluent and with, which I am comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this research project is **voluntary** and I have not been pressured into taking part.
- I may choose to discontinue the research project at any time and will not be penalized or prejudiced in any way.

Signed at *(place)* __________________________________ on *(date)* ____________________ 2015.

________________________________ ________________________________

Signature of participant **Signature of witness**

Declaration by field worker

I *(name)* ____________________________________ declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to _________________________________
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research project, as discussed above.
- I did not use an interpreter.

Signed at *(place)* ____________________________________ on *(date)* _____________2015.

_______________________________ _____________________________

Signature of field worker **Signature of witness**

APPENDIX B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

Cape Peninsula
University of Technology

P.O. Box 1906 • Bellville 7535 South Africa •Tel: +27 21 6801680 • Email: saliefa@cput.ac.za
Symphony Road Bellville 7535

Office of the Chairperson **Research Ethics Committee**	**Faculty:** **BUSINESS**

At a meeting of the Research Ethics Committee on 25 March 2015, **Ethics Approval**

was granted to CROMHOUT, Dylan Henry (205151752) **for research activities Related**

to the MTech/DTech: MTech: MARKETING MANAGEMENT

at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology

Title of dissertation/thesis:	The impact of an integrated marketing communication service learning project on participating client organisations Supervisor: Mr R Duffet & Mr P Steenkamp

Comments:

Decision: APPROVED

Signed: Chairperson: Research Ethics Committee	**25 March 2015** **Date**
Signed: Chairperson: Faculty Research Committee	**Date**

Clearance Certificate No | 2015FBREC252

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE

Q1 Brand Shepherd Advertising Challenge – Client Survey Questionnaire

Cape Peninsula University of Technology

Thank you for voluntarily participating in this study, which deals with the Impact of the Brand Shepherd Advertising Challenge (BSAC). The survey should not take longer than thirty minutes to complete. Responses are completely confidential and will provide valuable data that will be used for academic purposes.

Year of participation: ☐ 2010 ☐ 2011 ☐ 2012 ☐ 2013 ☐ 2014

Your name: ______________________________ Name of Organisation: __________________________________

Role in Organisation: _______________________ Years working at organisation: __________________________

What was your role in the project? ☐ I was the primary liaison between the organisation and the team.
☐ I was not the primary liaison, but I worked with the team during the project.

☐ Other (please specify) ____

1. CUSTOMER RESEARCH

NOTE: This was the research that students conducted with your customers using a questionnaire.

1.1 How did the student-team conduct the customer research?
☐ We were given questionnaires to leave in store. ☐ Students came in and asked our customers questions.
☐ The students did not conduct customer research ☐ Other: ____

1.2 How useful has the findings from the customer research conducted by students been?
☐ Have never used any of the findings from the customer research. (→ Q1.3)
☐ Have used the findings from the customer research before but not anymore. (→ Q1.4)
☐ Continue to use the findings from customer research somewhat. (→Q1.4)
☐ Continue to use the findings from customer research extensively. (→Q1.4)

1.3 If you have not used the findings from customer research, which, if any, of the following apply: **(Check all the boxes that apply)**
☐ We do not have the time to use the findings from customer research.
☐ We do not have the people to use the findings from customer research.
☐ We do not have the money to use the findings from customer research.
☐ We are not sure how to use the findings from customer research.
☐ The findings from the customer research are not appropriate for our business.
☐ The findings from the customer research were not shared with the business.

☐ Other (please specify) ____

1.4 What was the impact of the findings from customer research? **(Check all the boxes that apply)**
☐ Increased sales ☐ New customers ☐ Increased brand awareness ☐ Increased customer loyalty

☐ Increased business efficiency ☐ Increased competitive advantage* ☐ Increased employee motivation

☐ There was no positive impact ☐ Other (please specify) ____

1.5 How satisfied are you overall with the customer research conducted by students?
☐ Very Dissatisfied ☐ Dissatisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ Very Satisfied

2. TOOLS & RESOURCES

2.1 What tools and resources did the student team develop or acquire for your business? **(Check all that apply)**

▢ Logo ▢ Email Signature ▢ Business Cards ▢ Advertising Poster ▢ Banner

▢ Pamphlet ▢ T-Shirt Design ▢ Loyalty Card ▢ Customer Database (email/ SMS)

▢ Facebook Page ▢ Twitter Profile ▢ Website / Blog ▢ Press Release ▢ Gumtree Ad

▢ Suggestion Box ▢ Newspaper Ad ▢ Email address ▢ Linked in Profile ▢Branded Items ▢ None (→ Q3.1) ▢ Other (please specify) ____________________

____

____

2.2 How useful have the tools and resources been?

▢ Not useful at all (Has never been useful). (→ Q2.3)
▢ Was useful before but not anymore. (→ Q2.4)
▢ Continues to be somewhat useful. (→ Q2.4)
▢ Continues to be very useful. (→ Q2.4)

2.3 If you have not used the tools and resources, which, if any, of the following apply: **(Check all the boxes that apply)**

▢ Lack of time ▢ Lack of the right people ▢ Lack of finances ▢ Lack of know-how
▢ The tools and resources are not appropriate for our business
▢ The tools and resources were never shared with us.

▢ Other (please specify) ____________________

____

____

2.4 What was the impact of the tools and resources? **(Check all the boxes that apply)**

▢ Increased sales ▢ New customers ▢ Increased brand awareness ▢ Increased customer loyalty

▢ Increased business efficiency ▢ Increased competitive advantage ▢ Increased employee motivation

▢ There was no positive impact ▢ Other (please specify) ____________________

2.5 How satisfied are you overall with the tools and resources developed or acquired by the students?

▢ Very Dissatisfied ▢ Dissatisfied ▢ Satisfied ▢ Very Satisfied

3. CAMPAIGN PLAN

3.1 How did the student-team present the campaign plan to you?

▢ We were given a campaign plan document. ▢ The student team did a live presentation for us using power-point.
▢ The campaign plan was explained to us verbally. ▢ The campaign plan was not fully explained to us.

▢ Other: ____________________

3.2 How useful has the campaign plan been?

▢ Have never used (implemented) the campaign plan. (→ Q3.3)
▢ Have used (implemented) the campaign before, but do not use (implement) it anymore. (→ Q3.4)
▢ Continue to use (implement) the campaign plan somewhat. (→ Q3.4)
▢ Continue to use (implement) the campaign plan extensively. (→ Q3.4)

3.3 If you have not implemented the campaign plan, which, if any, of the following apply: (Check all the boxes that apply)

▢ Lack of time ▢ Lack of the right people ▢ Lack of finances ▢ Lack of know-how
▢ The campaign plan was not appropriate for our business
▢ The campaign plan was never shared with us ▢ Students did not come back to implement
▢ Plan to implement in the future ▢ Other (please specify)

____

____

3.4 How did you go about implementing the campaign plan?

- ☐ The student group helped us implement the campaign plan.
- ☐ An external consultant helped us implement the campaign plan.
- ☐ We implemented the campaign plan by ourselves.
- ☐ Other (please specify) ____

3.5 What were the challenges you experienced while implementing the campaign plan? **(Check all boxes that apply)**

- ☐ It was financially burdensome.
- ☐ It was too complicated to implement properly.
- ☐ It took too much of our time.
- ☐ We did not have all the needed resources.
- ☐ We lacked the knowledge to implement it properly.
- ☐ We did not have enough people.
- ☐ There were no challenges in implementing the campaign plan.
- ☐ Other (please specify) ____

____

____

3.6 What was the impact of the implemented campaign plan? **(Check all the boxes that apply)**

☐ Increased sales ☐ New customers ☐ Increased brand awareness ☐ Increased customer loyalty

☐ Increased business efficiency ☐ Increased competitive advantage ☐ Increased employee motivation

☐ There was no positive impact ☐ Other (please specify) ________________________

3.7 How satisfied are you overall with the campaign plan developed by students?

☐ Very Dissatisfied ☐ Dissatisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ Very Satisfied

4. SKILLS TRAINING AND EDUCATION

4.1 What skills training or business-related knowledge did the student team impart to your business? **(Check all the boxes that apply)**

Skills

☐ Computer ☐ Microsoft Office ☐ Email ☐ Internet ☐ Website ☐ Facebook ☐ Twitter ☐ None* ☐ Other (please specify) ____

____

Knowledge

☐ Marketing ☐ Sales promotion ☐ Strategy ☐ Advertising ☐ Research ☐ Consumer ☐ None*

☐ Other (please specify) ____

____

**NOTE: If “None” is selected for both skills and knowledge proceed to Q5.1.*

4.2 How useful have the skills training and business-related knowledge been?

- ☐ Not useful at all (Has never been useful). (→ Q4.3)
- ☐ Was useful before but not anymore. (→ Q4.4)
- ☐ Continues to be somewhat useful. (→ Q4.4)
- ☐ Continues to be very useful. (→ Q4.4)

4.3 If you have not used the skills or knowledge, which, if any, of the following apply: **(Check all the boxes that apply)**

- ☐ Lack of time
- ☐ Lack of the right people
- ☐ Lack of finances
- ☐ Lack of know-how
- ☐ The skills and knowledge was not appropriate for our business
- ☐ Lack of internal communication
- ☐ Other (please specify) ____

____

____

4.4 What was the impact of the skills and knowledge imparted by students? (Check all the boxes that apply)

- ☐ Increased sales ☐ New customers ☐ Increased brand awareness ☐ Increased customer loyalty
- ☐ Increased business efficiency ☐ Increased competitive advantage ☐ Increased employee motivation
- ☐ There was no positive impact ☐ Other (please specify) ____

4.5 How satisfied are you overall with the skills and knowledge imparted by students?

☐ Very Dissatisfied ☐ Dissatisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ Very Satisfied

5. WORKING RELATIONSHIP

5.1 Which of the following, if any, applied to your working relationship with the students? **(Check all boxes that apply)**

- ☐ Students were generally on time for scheduled meetings.
- ☐ Students respected our time.
- ☐ Students did not bombard us constantly. (Students did not make a nuisance of themselves)
- ☐ Students were polite.
- ☐ Students were neatly dressed.
- ☐ Students communicated with us effectively.
- ☐ Students used appropriate language when communicating with us.
- ☐ Students acted professionally.
- ☐ Other (please specify) ____

____

____

5.2 How useful has the working relationship between the business and the students been?

- ☐ Not useful at all (Has never been useful). **(NB: Do not skip a question. Go to Q5.3)**
- ☐ Was useful before but not anymore. **(NB: Do not skip a question. Go to Q5.3)**
- ☐ Continues to be somewhat useful. **(NB: Do not skip a question. Go to Q5.3)**
- ☐ Continues to be very useful. **(NB: Do not skip a question. Go to Q5.3)**

5.3 If you experienced any challenges with the working relationship with students, which, if any, of the following apply **(Check all the boxes that apply)**

- ☐ Lack of time ☐ Lack of the right staff ☐ Lack of finances ☐ Lack of know-how
- ☐ The working relationship was not appropriate for our business ☐ Lack of internal communication
- ☐ Lack of involvement of students ☐ Lack of student experience
- ☐ Other (please specify) ____

____

____

5.4 What was the impact of the working relationship with students? **(Check all the boxes that apply)**

- ☐ Increased sales ☐ New customers ☐ Increased brand awareness ☐ Increased customer loyalty
- ☐ Increased business efficiency ☐ Increased competitive advantage ☐ Increased employee motivation
- ☐ There was no positive impact ☐ Other (please specify) ____

5.5 How satisfied are you overall with the working relationship between the business and the students?

☐ Very Dissatisfied ☐ Dissatisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ Very Satisfied

6. OVERALL SATISFACTION

6.1 Please rank the preceding project elements from most beneficial to least beneficial.
(Rank from 1-5, with **1** being least beneficial and **5** being the most beneficial).

Customer Research: ____

Tools and Resources: ____

Campaign Plan: ____

Skills and Knowledge: ____

Working Relationship: ____

6.2 How useful has the project been to you and your business overall?
☐ Not useful at all (Has never been useful). **(NB: Do not skip a question. Go to Q6.3)**
☐ Was useful before but not anymore. **(NB: Do not skip a question. Go to Q6.3)**
☐ Continues to be somewhat useful. **(NB: Do not skip a question. Go to Q6.3)**
☐ Continues to be very useful. **(NB: Do not skip a question. Go to Q6.3)**

6.3 If you have found any challenges with the project overall, which, if any, of the following apply: **(Check all the boxes that apply)**
☐ Lack of time ☐ Lack of the right people ☐ Lack of finances ☐ Lack of know-how
☐ The project was not appropriate for our business ☐ Lack of communication internally
☐ Lack of communication from students ☐ Lack of involvement from project coordinators (lectures)
☐ No Follow through from Students ☐ Other (please specify)

____

____

6.4 What was the overall impact of the project? **(Check all the boxes that apply)**
☐ Increased sales ☐ New customers ☐ Increased brand awareness ☐ Increased customer loyalty
☐ Increased business efficiency ☐ Increased competitive advantage ☐ Increased employee motivation
☐ There was no positive impact ☐ Other (please specify) ______________________________

6.5 How satisfied are you with the project overall?
☐ Very Dissatisfied ☐ Dissatisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ Very Satisfied

6.6 Has the Brand Shepherd Advertising Challenge had a lasting impact on your organisation?
☐ No lasting impact ☐ Minimal Lasting Impact ☐ Some lasting impact
☐ Significant lasting impact ☐ Negative Impact

6.7 Do you have any suggestions as to how to improve the Brand Shepherd Advertising Challenge?

____

____

____

6.7B In which areas can the Brand Shepherd Advertising Challenge improve?

☐ Student monitoring by lecturers ☐ Follow-up from students after project ☐ Project coordination
☐ Training and induction for students and businesses ☐ Students to intern rather than consult
☐ Students to spend more time with business ☐ Better presentation of proposal by students
☐ Better hand over from students ☐ Funding is needed ☐ Implementation of campaign
☐ Better communication ☐ Everything about the project is perfect (nothing should change)

6.8 Would you participate in the Brand Shepherd Advertising Challenge again?
☐ Yes ☐ No

7. BUSINESS DEMOGRAPHICS

7.1a What industry is the business in? (Standard Industrial Classification Major Divisions)

☐ Agriculture, Hunting, Forestry and Fishing ☐ Mining and Quarrying ☐ Manufacturing
☐ Electricity, Gas and Water Supply ☐ Construction
☐ Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles, Motor Cycles and Personal and Household Goods; Hotels and Restaurants ☐ Transport, Storage and Communication
☐ Financial Intermediation Insurance, Real Estate and Business Services
☐ Community, Social and Personal Services ☐ Unspecified SIC

7.1b What industry is the business in (Minor Divisions)

☐ Maintenance and repair of motor vehicles (32)
☐ Hairdressing and other beauty treatment (902)
☐ Clothing retailer (232)
☐ Washing and dry cleaning (901)
☐ Bottle Store (2204)
☐ Bakery Retailing (2203)
☐ Fashion design & manufacturing (1401/2)
☐ Second Hand Retailing
☐ Car Wash (Other service activities: 90)
☐ Bakery Manufacturing (041)
☐ Florist (Other retail trade in specialised stores: 239)
☐ General Store (239)
☐ Hardware Shop (234)
☐ Printing (251)
☐ Food, beverage, and tobacco retailing (22)
☐ Stationery & Reading Material Retailer (2391)
☐ Restaurant, bar, or canteen (42)
☐ Sign writing and industrial and commercial artistry
☐ Cosmetic Retailer (231)
☐ Sporting and other recreational activities (64)
☐ Educational Services (200)
☐ Repair of personal and household goods
☐ Internet Café (other service activities: 90)
☐ Meat Retailer (2202)
☐ Spice Shop (22)

7.2 What is the nature of the business?

☐ Sell something in the same form it was bought.
☐ Buy something to sell, but add value before reselling.
☐ Grow something and sell.
☐ Make something and sell.
☐ Sell by-products of animals.
☐ Rear livestock/poultry and sell.
☐ Sell something that was collected from nature.
☐ Sell something obtained for free.
☐ Render a skilled service e.g. mechanic, plumber, hairdresser.
☐ Render other services e.g. car wash, garden services, transport (taxi services) catering.
☐ Render a professional service e.g. doctor, lawyer, accountant.
☐ Render building/construction services.
☐ Render tourism-related services e.g. accommodation/hotel/B&B/guest house, tour operators.

7.3 What is the nature of your customer? **(Check all the boxes that apply)**

☐ Private Individuals ☐ Other small businesses ☐ Larger businesses ☐ Government

7.5 How old is the business? (How long has it been operating?)

☐ Less than 1.5 years ☐ 1.5 – 2.5 years ☐ 2.5 – 5.5 years
☐ 5.5 – 10.5 years ☐ Older than 10.5 years

7.6a How many permanent employees does the business have?

☐ 0 – 4 ☐ 5 – 19 ☐ 20 – 49 ☐ 50 – 199

**If the business is in the agricultural sector please answer below:*

☐ 0 – 4 ☐ 5 – 9 ☐ 20 – 49 ☐ 50 – 199

**If you answered either option 1 or 2 in 7.6a please continue to 7.6b*

7.6b How many permanent employees does the business have?

☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 – 4 ☐ 5 – 10 ☐11-19

7.7 Where is the business situated (geographic location)?

☐ City Bowl ☐ Northern Suburbs ☐ Atlantic Seaboard ☐ Southern Suburbs
☐ Southern Peninsula ☐ Cape Flats ☐ Helderberg ☐ West Coast
☐ Cape Winelands

7.8 In what type of premises does the business operate?
- ▢ Residential premises – Dwelling/garage/building on residential premises
- ▢ Street/street corner/pavement
- ▢ Door to door/go to customers
- ▢ Business park/premises dedicated to my business – hotel/accommodation facility/factory/workshop
- ▢ Stall/table/container in a designated trading or market area
- ▢ Farm/small holding
- ▢ Shopping mall
- ▢ Office block/office park
- ▢ Car/truck/vehicle
- ▢ Online – internet, phone selling

7.9 Which of the following electronic facilities does the business own/ have access to? **(Check all that apply)**
▢ Landline Phone ▢ Cellphone ▢ Fax/ Copy machine ▢ Printer ▢ Email
▢ Internet ▢ Speed Point (credit card machine)

7.10 Which of the following physical facilities does the business have access to? **(Check all that apply)**
▢ Prepaid Electricity ▢ Electricity ▢ Inside Toilet ▢ Outside Toilet ▢ Outside running water ▢ Inside running water ▢ Hot Water ▢ Kitchen ▢ Storage Facility ▢ Company Car

7.11 Is the business registered with the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC/CIPRO)? ▢ Yes ▢No

7.12 What is the business's legal form of ownership?
▢ PTY (LTD) ▢ Closed Corporation (CC) ▢ Partnership ▢ Joint Venture ▢ Sole Proprietor
▢ Cooperative

7.13 For which of the following is the business registered? **(Check all that apply)**
▢ Income Tax ▢VAT ▢ UIF ▢ PAYE ▢ Return on Earnings ▢ SETA

7.14 What is the yearly turnover of the business in Rands?
▢ Less than 200,000 ▢200,000 – 1,000,000 ▢ 1,000 000 – 3,000,000 ▢ 3,000,000 – 6,000,000
▢ 6,000,000 – 16,000,000 ▢ 16,000,000 – 32,000,000 ▢ 32,000,000 – 64,000,000 ▢ 64,000,000+

7.15 What is the business owner's age? ▢ 18 - 25 ▢ 26 - 35 ▢ 36 - 45 ▢ 46 - 55 ▢ 56 - 65 ▢ 66+

7.16 What is the business owner's gender? ▢ Male ▢Female

7.17 What is the business owner's highest level of education? ▢ No Schooling ▢ Some primary school
▢ Primary School completed ▢ Some High School ▢ High School completed ▢ Matric
▢ Apprenticeship ▢ Post Matric (diploma) ▢ University Degree

7.18 How did the business owner gain the skills training needed to run the business?
▢ Self-taught ▢ Family ▢ Whilst managing the business itself/on the job
▢ Previous job or work experience ▢ Training programmes/courses
▢ University/Technikon/College (Tertiary education) ▢ Spouse ▢ Mentor/advisor

7.19 With which population group does the business owner most associate himself/herself?
▢ Black ▢ Coloured ▢ Indian ▢ Asian ▢ White ▢ Other

7.20 What is the owner's country of origin [nationality]?
▢ South Africa ▢ Zimbabwe ▢ Nigeria ▢ Pakistan ▢ Ghana ▢ Congo (DRC)
▢ Cameroon ▢ Portugal ▢ Spain ▢ Mauritius ▢ Namibia ▢ India

Thank you for your time and participation!

APPENDIX D: QUESTIONNAIRE USAGE PERMISSION FROM DAVID SCHACHTER

Re: Requesting Permission to Use Questionnaire

David R Schachter <david.schachter@nyu.edu>

Tue 3/31/2015 5:14 PM

To:Dylan Cromhout <CromhoutD@cput.ac.za>;

Cc:Pieter Steenkamp <SteenkampPi@cput.ac.za>;

Dylan,

Thank you for checking with me on this. You have my full permission to use the any or all of the material in the article and questionnaire for your research.

Best of luck,
David

On Tue, Mar 31, 2015 at 3:57 AM, Dylan Cromhout <CromhoutD@cput.ac.za> wrote:

Dear David

I am a researcher at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology in Cape Town, South Africa. We run a under-graduate service learning programme with 2nd year advertising students in the Marketing department. In order to determine the impact of the programme I plan to survey participating client organisations.

In this regard I have found your article, "*The Value of Capstone Projects on Participating Client Agencies*," which you co-authored with Deena Schwartz to be most insightful. I have also gained much from the questionnaire which was added as an appendix and would very much like to use some of it in my research.

For this reason I would like to ask your permission to use aspects of your questionnaire in my research. Particularly, I would like to adapt some of the questions for use in our unique context here in Cape Town as well as to match the nature of our service-learning programme.

Kind Regards,

Dylan Cromhout

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