AN EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN THE ZIMBABWEAN FUEL RETAILING SECTOR: THE CASE OF PETROTRADE

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

2015

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE

SUPERVISOR: DR. D. MARAVANYIKA
DECLARATION

I, ………………………………… do hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigation and research, except to the extent indicated in the Acknowledgements, References and by comments included in the body of the report, and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree to any other university.

………………………….                              ……………………..

Student signature                      Date

………………………….                              ……………………..

Supervisor Signature                   Date
Acknowledgements

I am grateful to God for the blessings, grace and protection throughout my academic life and beyond. In addition, the unwavering support from the family kept me strong throughout the study.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my Supervisor, Dr D Maravanyika, who gave me expert guidance throughout the compilation of this study. I acknowledge the diligence and time invested when assisting me especially when I changed the topic.

Special thanks also go to the Petrotrade management who awarded me the opportunity to undertake a study of the company under their guidance.

Last but not least, I extend my gratitude to the Graduate School of Management (GSM) for imparting and sharing of knowledge
Abstract

From prior literature it was generalised that digital marketing can improve business operations through customer acquisition, retention and satisfaction. However, the available literature is based on studies conducted mainly focusing in Europe and North America; hence this attempt to fill the research gap by evaluating the effectiveness of digital marketing from a Zimbabwean petroleum industry perspective. This study was based on a single case design of Petrotrade.

The research study adopted an interpretivist research philosophy using qualitative research approach. The researcher administered personal interviews using semi-structured questionnaires. Purposive sampling was used to draw up respondents from the organisation’s staff and customers. Analytical tables were used to display gathered data and all responses from questions were analysed to determine co-themes, relationships and patterns.

It was established that Petrotrade was not realising the full benefits on the use of digital marketing channels as brand awareness was noted to be very low. Petrotrade brand was not viewed as a household brand. Furthermore, it was discovered that the macro environment was pushing Petrotrade in the implementation of smart payment system. Despite Petrotrade’s use of Digital Marketing tools, it was established that the management lacked appreciation and commitment to integrate and coordinate the effective utilisation of the tools. Budgetary constraints were also cited as another hindrance to the exploration of digital footprints.

In line with these findings, the study recommends that Petrotrade fully integrates DM channels that are in use to redeem lost market share. It is also recommended that the company embrace the use of social media and the engagement of backward integration.
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<thead>
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<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACEO</td>
<td>Acting Chief Executive Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHM</td>
<td>Acting Head of Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHRAM</td>
<td>Acting Human Resources and Administration Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMA</td>
<td>American Marketing Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMI</td>
<td>Content Marketing Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COCO</td>
<td>Company Owned Company Operated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CODO</td>
<td>Company Owned Dealer Operated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DM</td>
<td>Digital Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DODO</td>
<td>Dealer Owned Dealer Operated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eCCI</td>
<td>electronic Consumer to Consumer Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMA</td>
<td>Environmental Management Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPG</td>
<td>International Petroleum Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOCZIM</td>
<td>Nation oil Company of Zimbabwe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOIC</td>
<td>National Oil Infrastructure Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRZ</td>
<td>National Railways of Zimbabwe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Public Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SADC</td>
<td>Southern African Development Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBS</td>
<td>Salford Business School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEO</td>
<td>Search Engine optimization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOE</td>
<td>State Owned Enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPB</td>
<td>State Procurement Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Television</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USD</td>
<td>United States of America Dollar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VBS</td>
<td>Virtual Brand Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZERA</td>
<td>Zimbabwe Energy Regulatory authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZIMRA</td>
<td>Zimbabwe Revenue Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZMDC</td>
<td>Zimbabwe Mines Development Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZPC</td>
<td>Zimbabwe Power Company</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1 INTRODUCTION

According to literature, digital marketing communication is an important vehicle through which businesses can acquire a bigger market share (Mintel Academic, 2014). The benefits of an effective digital marketing communication orientation include increased awareness and profitability (Headington, 2008). Companies such as Petrotrade were formed to maximize shareholders’ wealth through various ways which include sales growth, cost containment and investments. The company’s commercial success is linked to the provision of quality and high valued products to consumers, (Sasikala, 2013). Literature stipulates that a positive and well-known brand is an asset to the company as it is a powerful tool in influencing the consumer’s decision to purchase. Companies can now leverage on digital marketing techniques as a marketing strategy which goes a long way in influencing customer purchasing behaviour.

The benefits resulting from the implementation of digital marketing include a decline in marketing expenses and a long-term customer relationship (Juttner and Wehrli, 1994). The continued interaction with customers through the use of digital marketing techniques allows data collection, thus enabling the organisation to track carry customer buying behaviour. Evans and Laskin (1994) argued that such relationship marketing oriented benefits the organisation through high brand awareness and customer loyalty.

However, the existing literature on digital marketing refers to experiences mainly in European and Asian countries mainly. There is no literature that relates to the digital marketing communication within the fuel industry in the Zimbabwean context hence the existing weakness, the existing does not address the research objectives cited below; therefore the study aims at closing the research gap by evaluating the effectiveness of digital marketing, focusing on Petrotrade.
1.1 Background to the study

1.1.1 Deregulation of the oil industry

The de-regulation of the oil industry in 2003 resulted in the mushrooming of oil companies thus paving way to an increased number of ‘backyard’ oil companies. Prior to de-regulation, Petrotrade’s mother company, National Oil Company of Zimbabwe (NOCZIM), used to enjoy the monopoly of importing fuel for the entire Zimbabwean market. Other oil companies such as Total Zimbabwe, Engen and Redan would then buy from Noczim. It is because of such setup that made Noczim’s payoff line to read “Procuring for the nation”

However, the government, through the Ministry of Energy restructured Noczim in 2010 under the Companies Act 20:03 to form two independent companies, namely, National Oil Company of Zimbabwe (NOIC) (Pvt) Ltd and Petrotrade (Pvt) Ltd. Noczim’s main duties were split between the two companies with Noic focusing on the upstream and Petrotrade concentrating on the downstream activities of Noczim. Noic was mandated to provide fuel logistic for all registered oil companies thus assuming fuel logistics infrastructure for Noczim. Petrotrade on the other hand being responsible for fuel retailing thus representing government interests in the fuel market to avoid market distortion and formation of cartails by private players. The new practice means that Petrotrade had to compete with other fuel companies for survival since its inception in 2011.

1.1.2 Distribution Network

From the Noczim era, the company owned only 12 service stations, with none of them being in Harare. The company engaged different business models to reach out to the customers, given that monopolistic behavior for market dominance was no longer a factor to rely on as oil companies could import on their own.

At first, Petrotrade engaged two business models which were Company Owned and Company Operated (COCO) and Dealer Owned and Dealer Operated (DODO) in a way to increase its limited service station distribution network. With the passage of time, other two models were added on board, which are Company Owned and Dealer Operated (CODO) and Dealer
Owned and Company Operated (DOCO). According to management report dated January 18 2015, Petrotrade had a distribution Network of 87 Service station with only 14 service stations being the company’s own branded sites, thus the COCOs with one site visible in Harare along Harare-Bulawayo highway. On the other hand, whereas dealer sites account for 84% of Petrotrade’s operating fuel stations, only 5% of them are branded by Petrotrade and the rest operate using their private brands, thus aiding to poor visibility of Petrotrade. The poor distribution network leads to invisibility of the Petrotrade brand in the market.

During the Noczim era, there was little thrust on marketing communication as the customer especially corporate clients would look for Noczim. With the change in policy, Petrotrade had to be market oriented for its survival.

1.1.3 Petrotrade SWOT analysis

1.1.3.1 Strengths
Petrotrade is a state owned oil company that inherited valuable assets, including customers from its mother company NOCZIM. To start running the business, Petrotrade was given all the company owned service stations and also recoverable debtor schedule. In addition, the company was awarded with fuel worth USD14 million through its parent ministry (management minutes 2011). This gave the company a good start.

1.1.3.2 Weakness
Petrotrade brand is either not known or the company inherited a negative identity from its predecessor, NOCZIM. Although the company is new but the business operations have not been changed from the Noczim way of doing business, thus making the culture difficulty to erode. From the distribution network section, it is evident that the company suffered a lot from the poor retail network distribution. Most of the company’s service stations are not in strategically located places. In Chinhoyi, for example, Petrotrade owns two service stations which are in the residential area of Mzari and Chikonohono. Petrotrade’s fuel procurement system is regulated by the state procurement body (SPB) which mandates the company to buy fuel from SPB registered oil companies and yet competitors in the same sector are not tied down by SPB regulations. This is despite the fact that the company’s mandate is that of regulating the fuel price in the market. The company had an old fuel tanker fleet of 18 trucks
which are now very expensive to maintain thus forcing the company to rely on hired vehicles for delivery of products to customers. Product contamination and variance due to old vehicles is a rife in the company, resulting in huge losses and a negative image. While the company is the only player servicing the niche market of coupon customers who are mainly the government institutions, Petrotrade is losing a lot through the coupon business mainly through duplication. In 2014 alone Petrotrade lost not less about 41 000 liters through coupon the business according to the strategic report of November (2014) produced by management

1.1.3.3 Opportunities
Through the economic blue print, ZIMASSET, the company stands at an advantageous position of having all government institutions buying fuel from Petrotrade. The Zimbabwe government has signed some lateral agreement for project investment, such as the Kariba Hydro Power project, with fuel requirement estimated to 1,8 million litres per month, which gives Petrotrade a guaranteed market. In addition, Petrotrade can also represent the government and trade in the SADC region and Africa as a whole. Through backward integration the company can form strategic alliances with fuel wholesalers like Trafigura and Independent Petroleum Group (IPG) and NOIC. According to strategic report of November 2014, Petrotrade applied for a blending license thus making the company the only fuel blender, buying ethanol from Triangle, which is cheaper as compared to Chisumbanje green fuels.

1.1.3.4 Threats
While the government abolished the NOCZIM’s combined function of wholesaling and retailing, it is now being done by an indigenous company called Sakunda, partnered with Trafigura. The oil company was once NOCZIM’s customer but now it is supplying fuel to Petrotrade. According to Noic uplift report Sakunda account for 30% of the fuel consumed in Zimbabwe. The liberalized fuel sector has led to the industry recording 96 registered oil companies, according to Zimbabwe Energy Regulation Authority (ZERA), and this includes other backyard oil companies.

1.1.4 Zimbabwean fuel sector according Porter’s Forces Model
Michael Porter postulates that there are five forces which shape the outlook of the market. These forces are:
Bargaining power of suppliers,
Customer bargaining power,
Threats on new entry,
Threats of substitutes
Intensity of rivalry.

1.1.4.1 The bargaining Power of Suppliers
According to the ZERA report of 2015, there are 96 registered fuel supply companies with a few being active on the market. These oil companies are disjointed, with each running its business across the country. The major fuel suppliers in Zimbabwe include Trafigura, Independent Petroleum Group (IPG), Glencore and Galana. These suppliers buy fuel in bulk from the refineries and sell to oil companies in small quantities. The Zimbabwean oil companies cannot afford to buy direct from refineries as huge capital is required for such high volumes. This prevailing situation places suppliers at an advantage, the making them determine the fuel prices. Most suppliers use plats for prices but vary widely on premiums.

1.1.4.2 Bargaining Power of customers
Since fuel is a homogeneous product, distinction among competitors is through marketing and communication. Given that there are now many oil companies in Zimbabwe, the situation presents an opportunity for customers to have a wider choice to buy from. The closure of industries, especially in Bulawayo, has resulted in the shrinking of the industrial fuel consumption. The customers are price sensitive and in many cases the switching cost are low. In the fuel retailing industry customers have a high bargaining power.

1.1.4.3 Threats of new entry
There are barriers to entry in the fueling business. These barriers include high start -up cost such as the license fees ranging from $10000 to $25 000 for a calendar year, huge capital requirement for trading stock and for the infrastructure development. Regulators such as the Environmental Agency (EMA) and ZERA regulate the activities of all oil companies. Local authorities as well come in with licensing regulations. The barriers to entry deter the threats of new oil in the market. However, the backyard oil companies are on the rise despite the existence of industry regulators like ZERA.
1.1.4.4 Threats of substitutes

The product has no close commercial substitutes. However, in Zimbabwe, mandatory blending of petrol and ethanol was introduced a few years ago. The blending was in an effort to reduce the fuel import bill. However if further research is done ethanol can totally replace petrol.

1.1.4.5 Intensity of rivalry

Given the number of oil companies that are currently on the market, competition is high the product supplies can only be differentiated in terms of brand image, customer lock-in price. As brand image is the most valuable non-tangible asset of a company, therefore organizations leverage on brands through insulation against substitution and profitability erosion.

Table 1.1 Oil industry market share

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Estimated Market Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Puma( Redan and Sakunda)</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engen</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zuva</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petrotrade</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ZIMRA statistics of all fuel consumed in the country and NOIC statistics of fuel uplifts by Oil companies.

1.2 Statement of the research problem

As cited in the introduction section1.0, literature specifies that the ideal scenario is that a company using effective digital marketing will result in increased brand awareness and customer satisfaction, hence customer loyalty. In the medium to long term, the marketing cost would be reduced thus leading to increased profitability and market share. Positive brand identity also confirm that firm value through high profit margins. The relationship among
differentiation, relevance, esteem and knowledge shows the true picture brand’s health. Thus its intrinsic value and muscular capacity to carry a premium price and brand’s ability to fend off customers (Farries et al 2008)

Despite Petrotrade having adopted some digital marketing channels, the company does not exhibit business growth, instead the company’s company is experiencing shrink in the market share. Petrotrade has been losing key customers, such as Zimbabwe power Company (ZPC), National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ), Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) and Zimbabwe Mines and Development Corporation (ZMDC) amongst others. Reports from the company’s accounting system indicate that these customers contribute 35% of Petrotrade sales revenue.

The possible consequences of the present trend continuing are that Petrotrade may lose its market share and might eventually go out of business. While Petrotrade has invested in digital marketing, it does not seem to be visible on the market as it accounts for only 9% of the petroleum market share. Even though literature points out that if a company invests in digital marketing it should yield high market share, profitability and visibility, thus is not being reflected at Petrotrade. If nothing is done at Petrotrade to reverse the situation, the company eventually will go out of business. This study seeks to understand ways in which fuel retailers can leverage on different strands of digital marketing to enhance business growth. The study therefore intends to evaluate the effectiveness of Petrotrade’s digital marketing communication in increasing brand awareness and make recommendations that will enable the company to regain and increase market share as well as profitability.

1.3 Research objectives

1.3.1 Prime Objective

To evaluate the effectiveness of digital marketing practices in the Zimbabwean fuel retail industry.
1.3.2 Sub Objectives

i) To explore the extent to which Petrotrade have adopted Digital marketing for brand awareness.
ii) To find out how Petrotrade can benefit from the use of Digital Marketing.
iii) To ascertain inhibitors to effective use of Digital Marketing at Petrotrade.
iv) To establish benefits of Social Media in relation to other forms of digital marketing.
v) To recommend and correct the situation.

1.4 Research questions

i) To what extent can Petrotrade leverage on Digital marketing for brand awareness?
ii) How important is digital marketing to Petrotrade?
iii) What are the inhibitors to the effective use of Digital marketing channels at Petrotrade?
iv) What are the benefits of using Social Media in relation to other forms of digital marketing?
v) What digital payment platform can Petrotrade engage?

1.5 Proposition

There is no effective digital marketing communication at Petrotrade due to limited expertise, financial constraints and lack of management commitment.

1.6 Scope of research

The study was confined to Harare as it is the country’s capital with the highest consumption of fuel.

1.7 Research justification

It is essential for organizations to gain competitive advantage in its market through long term relationships with customers (Juttner and Wehrli 1994). Digital marketing can foster long
term relationship with customers. Since this is the first study to be done in the Zimbabwean fuel industry context, this research will examine the ways of leveraging on the use of digital marketing approach in the fuel sector. As a result of the study, the researcher, an employee of Petrotrade will be equipped with the relevant knowledge of digital marketing. Petrotrade will also benefit from the findings of this study through better insight and implementation of digital marketing techniques. Finally the study will benefit the academic community, which would use the findings to build up further research.

1.8 Structure of the research

The project outline is shown below.

Chapter One – Introduction
This chapter covers the introduction of the research the background of the study, statement of the problem. Research objectives, research questions, and justification are covered.

Chapter Two - Literature Review
Chapter two covers literature relevant to the study. The review also provided a framework for the discussion of results in Chapter 4. The work carried out by other researchers has been outlined in this chapter.

Chapter Three – Research Methodology
Chapter three describes the methodology that was used in analytical framework of the research design. The chapter outlines the justification for a single case study approach. The
preparation for data collection, the main sources of data, and the data collection process and
data analysis.

Chapter Four – Results and Discussion
Chapter four focuses on the data analysis collected using primary and secondary sources to
come up with some results. Case findings are discussed in this chapter. The chapter applies
the theoretical framework from chapter two. Research questions posed in chapter one are also
answered here.

Chapter Five – Conclusions and recommendations
The chapter presents conclusions from the research results or findings and provides policy,
management and research related recommendations.

1.9 Chapter summary

Chapter one introduced the study on the evaluation of digital marketing at Petrotrade the
background problem statement, objectives proposition and justification of the research.
Chapter two would focuses on the literature analysis in as far as Digital Marketing is
cconcerned.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2 Introduction

According to Neuman (2003), literature review is conducted to enable the researcher to have an in-depth understanding of the topics using available knowledge. In addition, literature review also helps to bring clarity and focus to one’s research problem. The research problem is conceptualised thus helping the researcher to synthesise and improve on prior research work (Kumar, 2011). This chapter gives a critical review of literature existing on digital marketing in Europe where the technique is prevalent. In this chapter, DM’s phenomena are discussed under the following categories, DM characteristics, social media in relation to other strands of DM and conceptual framework. The summary concludes the chapter.

2.1 Digital Marketing

2.1.1 Definition of digital marketing

Digital marketing is defined by Royle and Laing (2014) as the use of digital technologies to create an integrated, targeted and measurable communication to acquire and retain customers while building deeper relationships with them. Marketing Insights and the Financial Times [accessed 23 January 2015] also share a similar view, defining digital marketing simply as ‘the promotion of products or brands via one or more forms of electronic media. Both the above definitions are considered vital as they emphasise the importance of measurability, integration, communication, as well as product as coined in Strauss et al (2006) defines digital marketing as the use of information technology in the process of creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers, and for managing relationships in ways that benefit the organisation and its stakeholders.

2.1.2 Characteristics of digital marketing

Digital marketing differs from traditional marketing in that it involves the use of channels that enable the marketers to evaluate marketing campaigns in terms of what is working and
what is not (Katherine, 2012). Marketing Insights argue that although the internet is the predominant digital channel, digital marketing encompasses other forms like text messaging, electronic billboard, digital TV and radio amongst other platforms.

Microsoft Advertising used Econometrics model to study the effectiveness of digital marketing on sales, concluded that digital marketing is the second most efficient channel, behind cinema, for driving short-medium sales. Adding digital to the marketing media mix makes spend on other media to work harder; digital’s revenue return on investment [ROI] outperforms Radio, TV, Cinema, Print, and Outdoor media for the Impulse category (Hritzuk and Caras, 2012; Petersen, 2014).

In addition to the above, digital marketing has the following characteristics (Clift 2014):

**Addressability:** This is the ability of the marketer to meet potential customers before they make purchase. This involves getting customer profiles through channels social networks such as web based meetings. Customer relationship is fostered through this and enhance product innovations.

**Interactivity:** since there is a two ways communication, customers are able to express their views and feelings about the product and service the organisation also respond to the customers. In digital marketing, conversation can be real time as opposed to the one way communication of traditional marketing.

**Accessibility:** through the digital marketing, customers are able to get information about a product and the firm in details.

**Connectivity:** through the use of digital networks, the world has become one global village. Social networks are able to reach to a large diverse audience.

**Control:** internet users have the ability to control the information they view as it is a pull medium. The power is now in the hands of customers.

### 2.1.3 Digital Payments

According to Holti (2015,) digital marketing is the use of an electronic system to pay for goods and services as opposed to using cash and cheques. Digital payment system is aimed at transferring money from the payer’s account to the payee’s account in a secure manner. Below are some of the virtual currency and mobile wallets
2.1.3.1 Bitcoin
Bitcoin is a complex scheme which uses cryptography and algorithm. Its main purpose is to transfer values with its own metric value called bitcoin. According to the European Banking Authority July [2014], the security of bitcoin is heavily on the use of digital signature and cryptographic hash function. The bitcoin is mainly used in only gambling. Due to the exchange market problems, the bitcoin cannot be equated to other currencies. Unlike currencies, bitcoin has no legal status and owning it only shows one’s ability to transact in the bitcoin ecosystem.

2.1.3.2 Mobile wallets
According to Clift (2014), mobile wallets use chips on mobile devices to transmit payments information. Below are some of the mobile wallets.

2.1.3.3 Apple pay
Apple mobile devices use the apple pay application. The system used Near Field Communication (NFC) which is more secure than magnetic strips. The application is available on Apple’s iPhone 6 and iPhone 6 plus. The transactions are contactless as they are secured through the use of fingerprint. Passbook for boarding pass and tickets can be uploaded and stored in the phone.

2.1.3.4 Google wallet
The google wallet makes use of the NFC and runs on Android phone. The wallet is widely used in UK shops. One can compile and store information on loyalty cards as well as gift cards

2.1.3.5 Soft card
Soft cards work on phones from T-Mobile’s and Verizon Wireless. The NFC system store data in a scrambled format hence data security.

2.1.3.6 PayPal
The PayPal application is available for PayPal account holders and thus has restricted use. A red flag is raised for high amount transactions and such transactions may not be authenticated.
2.2 Digital marketing versus Traditional marketing

A number of researchers have reported a declining influence and rising costs of traditional marketing (Browning, 2013). Evolving marketing techniques have proved to have a high success rate in helping retail businesses adopt and adapt to the time dependent preference of customers (Hanley and Leahy, 2008). Digital marketing is viewed as one of the emerging opportunities that can provide a positive contribution to business profitability. Unlike traditional marketing, digital marketing provides retailers with a two way communication which is useful in tailoring products to specific customer requirements.

According to Hritzuk and Caras (2012) and Petersen (2014), comparing the digital platform performance, mobile leads online video/pre-roll, display ads, and social for the Impulse category and finally, digital marketing also provides scalable increases in ROI. It also boosts the duration of campaign impact Internet sales in the UK are expected to be £52.25 billion in 2015, a 16.2% jump from 2014. Increasing online sales and declining offline sales is a trend even witnessed in the recent Christmas trading results from the UK’s major department stores (Moth, 2015).

The traditional marketing strategy used by firms is too broad to effectively target salespeople, mavens, and connectors. Alternatively, firms must establish mutually satisfying long-term digital relationships with salespeople or customers using promotional strategies that utilize content co-creation, allow customers to respond, and facilitate interaction between buyers and sellers (Tiago and Verissimo, 2014). Tiago and Verissimo (2014) contend that marketing managers evaluate digital marketing effectiveness by measuring brand awareness, word-of-mouth buzz, customer satisfaction, user-generated content and web analytics. Many marketing managers are planning to increase investments in digital presence significantly, especially social media (87%), email (65%), display ads (50%), viral campaigns (46%), mobile (38%), SEO (32%), and games (7%).

Kaplan and Haenlein, (2010 p63) define Social media as “a group of Internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and allow the creation and exchange of user generated content”. Its popularity has revolutionized marketing practices such as advertising and promotion (Hannah et al., 2011). It influences consumer behaviour from product search to post-purchase behaviour like feedback (Mangold and Faulds, 2009) and patterns of Internet usage (Ross et al., 2009). It helps connect
businesses to consumers and develop and maintain relationships in a timely manner and at a low cost (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

Consumer technology readiness is defined as “people’s propensity to embrace and use new technologies for accomplishing goals in the home and work” (Mady 2011, p.195). Consumer technology readiness is important for retailers to remember when marketing on social networks because if their intended target market does not use social media, is not familiar with it, or perceives it negatively, then their social media marketing will be unrewarding.

The concept of shopper marketing is creating a new touch point for the interactions between businesses and consumers. It is “the planning and execution of all marketing activities that influence a shopper along, and beyond, the entire path of purchase, from the point at which the motivation to shop first emerges through purchase, consumption, repurchase, and recommendation” (Shankar et al. 2011, 29). Technology related developments such as the rise of powerful search engines, advanced mobile devices and interfaces, peer-to-peer communication vehicles, and online social networks have extended marketers’ ability to reach shoppers through new touch points” (Shankar et al. 2011, 30). According to Shankar et al. (2011), shopper marketing can join forces with shoppers to improve products, create clear messages, identify promoters, and serve as a connection to in-store activities, thus demonstrating the importance of Social media within a retailer’s marketing plan. “Virtual Brand Communities (VBC) can be described as aggregations of consumers that occur on the internet because of their interest in some brand or product” and they promote Electronic Consumer to Consumer Interaction - eCCT (George and Moritz, 2012: 3).

“While Social media provides never ending avenues for communicating, it is the individuals who serve as the influencers not the technology” (Gonzalez, 2010, 23). User generated content (UGC) is “the sum of all ways in which people make use of Social media, usually applied to describe the various forms of media content that are publicly available and created by end users” (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, 61). Social currency is produced when individuals share a brand or information about a brand (Zinnbauer and Honer, 2011). It greatly affects brand performance and can be linked to Bourdieu’s (1992) idea of social capital. An individual’s social capital depends on the size of the network of connections that the user can successfully. Cox (2010) investigated the correlation between age and attitude of social network users towards online advertising. She found that the 18-28 age groups had strong positive attitudes towards blogs, video, and brand channel ad formats. The 35-54 age
groups preferred video and brand channels. Overall, online advertising is welcomed by users but ads that are intrusive, floating, such as pop ups were disliked by network users (Cox 2010).

Traditional forms of marketing have been on the decline in the retail business for over 20 years (Constantinides, 2013). By definition, traditional marketing includes marketing in the form of print, billboards, analogue TV and radio. It is characterised by ‘one way communication’ and a significant lag in getting any form of customer feedback. This form of marketing is perceived to be diminishing in its value as customers perceive such advertisement as irrelevant or overwhelming in quantity (Pescher et al., 2014). The footfall on the high street has been on a steady decline due to rising costs (of which marketing is a significant component) and corresponding poor economic returns (Constantinides, 2013; Headington, 2008; Euromonitor, 2014a. Retailers are now faced with the opportunities of a virtual digital future and/or the threat of real demise in the face of stiff competition and declining margins (Nielsen, 2014).

In the UK, retail markets have experienced slow growth, partly due to the global downturn and partly due to the general diminishing returns associated with traditional marketing, which for a long time has been the primary marketing tool in the retail sector (Gamble et al 2005)The effectiveness of traditional marketing has been on the decline for at least 20 years as customers perceive advertisement irrelevant or overwhelming in quantity (Sethuraman et al., 2011; Mangold and Faulds, 2009; Pescher et al., 2014). Anecdotal evidence suggests that Traditional marketing is no longer effective in making businesses differentiate themselves; New ways of differentiation, attracting new customers and retaining them is now required (Sethuraman et al., 2011). Hanley and Leahy (2008) suggest that the problem with traditional marketing is its focus on transactional marketing, with no attention on relationship marketing. The importance of relationship marketing was explored by Gamble et al. (2005) whose research found out that a 5 % increase in customer loyalty in the credit card industry lead to a profit improvement of 125%. According to Berry and Parasuraman (1991), customers will stay loyal to a retailer for financial benefits, a personalised service and trust; the absence of which will result in customer defection. Dijkmans et al. (2015) found that 46 % of people surveyed trusted traditional marketing, 92% preferred a word-of-mouth from friends and family and 70% trusted online reviews. It is argued that digital marketing provides a new way of understanding and focusing on customer behaviour and has potential for building customer relationships (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). Its ability to be quickly deployed, provide instant
feedback, and vast analytical tools available provides an impetus to focus on digital marketing and not on traditional marketing as the future of marketing in fuel retailing.

2.3 Different Strands of Digital marketing

Salford Business School (SBS) views digital marketing as ‘the process of integrating platforms and customers’ experiences through a digital channel (SBS, 2014). Digital marketing has a number of elements and there is a general consensus on what constitutes digital marketing channels. Cam (2015) summarized the most prominent strands of digital marketing as encompassing the elements, shown in Figure 2.1. Along with social media, there are many other forms of digital marketing such as those listed in Table 2.1.

Figure 2.1 Digital marketing map

Source: Doyle (2013)
Table 2.1 Strands of Digital marketing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRANDS OF DIGITAL MARKETING</th>
<th>DEFINITION AND DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email marketing</td>
<td>One of the most powerful and personal ways to connect with customers. There are three times as many email accounts as Facebook and Twitter combined. It has high conversion rate compared to SMS and Direct Mail marketing campaigns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEO (search engine optimization)</td>
<td>Focuses on increasing a website’s visibility in the search engines. This can be done by increasing the ranking of a particular keyword, or increasing the volume of keywords that a site ranks for.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPC (pay per click)</td>
<td>Paid adverts in search results and web pages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SM (Social media)</td>
<td>Management of a brand’s image and engagement with customers on social media networks like Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, LinkedIn etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website Marketing</td>
<td>Many department stores have their own e-commerce website selling goods online along with their bricks and mortar stores. Websites enable businesses to promote their products and services in the internet, help consumers find online businesses, gives a very convenient way to shop from anywhere, anytime and provide special offers, improve customer service giving useful feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Marketing</td>
<td>Retailers are increasingly using mobile sites and apps in getting their content out to customers in unique ways to make customers’ lives easier, make their shopping more effective, and build lasting customer loyalty (Hendryx, 2014).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRANDS OF DIGITAL MARKETING</td>
<td>DEFINITION AND DESCRIPTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Viral marketing</strong></td>
<td>Distribution of content messages (videos, text messages, blogs and emails) that propagate naturally through online communities (Pescher <em>et al.</em>, 2014; Gao <em>et al.</em>, 2013). Viral Marketing is a subset of social media but is considered prominent and features as a separate strand of DM.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Search Marketing</strong></td>
<td>Search marketing encompasses both organic/unpaid and sponsored/paid efforts to drive visibility and traffic from search engines to websites based on relevance (Third Door Media, 2015). It comprises of different techniques like SEO, PPC, ad keywords, display ads and affiliate marketing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content Marketing</strong></td>
<td>Content marketing deals with creating and distributing relevant, valuable and consistent content to attract, acquire and retain the target audience that results in profitable customer behaviour. It is non-interruption marketing and is an art of communicating with prospects and customers without selling. It involves transforming the visitors into customers into evangelists of the business (Content Marketing Institute [CMI], no date; Steimle, 2014).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location Based and Digital Reward Marketing</strong></td>
<td>Location based marketing offers real-time social tracking of customers using geo-location services to detect where a consumer is and target them with nearby offers and deals, sending out push notifications to shoppers with brand’s mobile apps (Johnson, 2014). Digital coupons and vouchers are also driving the m-commerce boom particularly among shoppers in the U.K (Randazzo, 2014). Loyalty reward schemes provide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Social media vs. Other Strands of Digital marketing

Digital marketing comprises many strands as alluded to in the previous sections. Research by Ascend2 2012 found out that the four top most important objectives of digital marketing are to increase customer engagement, revenue, increase lead and increase brand awareness (Balegno, 2015). The same research also found out that among the different strands of digital marketing, email is the most effective tool, followed by websites, SEO and social media. The Ascend2 research also found out that Social media is one of the top most difficult strand of digital marketing partly due to lack of skills and experience on social media application within the business community and also difficult to measure ROI and potential conflict with the need to respect the privacy of individuals.

Despite these negatives, Social media has been deemed to be the future of developing customer loyalty as suggested in Dijkmans et al, (2015) research work. Genuinely loyal customers spend more money in their favourite stores and businesses. Businesses have for a long time, engaged in cultivating and growing customer loyalty and/or retention through some traditional loyalty schemes like store cards and frequent shopper vouchers (Dijkmans et al., 2015, Knox and Denison, 2000). Such traditional approaches to customer retention/loyalty no longer influence customer shopping behaviour as these schemes are near or have reached saturation. Customer loyalty and new customer acquisition can now be achieved through effective market segmentation and specific value proposition to drive businesses profitability (Lennon et al., 2015). Social media among all digital marketing strands has the most potential to produce detailed market segmentation which can enable personalisation and tailoring of offerings by businesses (Verain et al., 2012, Lennon et al., 2015). Research by McKinsey(2012) concluded that social media enables the targeting of customer segments down to individuals unlike other digital marketing strands (Davey, 2015). Social media also encompasses to some degree, most of the elements of digital marketing like
SEO, PPC. It is argued that social media offers more transparency, personalised marketing and has the capacity to amplify marketing efforts (by content sharing) at low costs (Balegno, 2015, Mangold and Faulds, 2009).

2.5 Product and market knowledge

Europe and UK internet penetration and adoption has now reached 70.5% and 89.8% respectively shown in Figure 2.1 below, echoing the increasing usage and demand for networked information and connectivity (Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2014).

![Internet Penetration in Europe June 30, 2014](image)

**Figure 2.2 Internet penetration rate (%p population)**

UK is in the top fifteen digital economies in the world in terms of the country’s e-business readiness and flexibility of its market to internet-based opportunities (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2010; Baines, Fill and Kelly, 2011). This penetration has led to the development and adoption of digital resources, from internet to mobile technologies to social web resources like wikis, blogs, networking sites, and multimedia sharing services. These developments have created an array of opportunities as these resources provide platforms for digital marketing. From the map it is evident that Africa is on the least of penetration with the rest of the world, as it is not part of European market.

In 2012, show rooming – consumers browsing products in-store and purchasing online – received greater attention in the press, and media. However, now the tide has turned. Consumers are increasingly web rooming – consumers browsing products online and purchasing in-store – than show rooming (L2 Inc., 2014). The percentage of in-store sales
influenced by digital channels has more than doubled since 2012 (14%) to 2013 (36%) and especially the influence of mobile, on in-store purchases increased nearly four-fold and accounts for 50% of digitally influenced sales (L2 Inc, 2014; Deloitte Digital, 2014a). In addition, consumers say that product information found on social channels influences their shopping behaviour and enhances brand loyalty.

As alluded to in the previous section, one of the key drivers behind the decline in traditional marketing is also the high costs of traditional marketing to reach a desired target audience compared to digital marketing (Headington, 2008). Browning (2013) pointed out some important statistics and facts of traditional marketing; ‘86% of direct mail is never opened and 86% of people do not watch television ads. Print circulation continues to decline and print advertising revenue is on the decline’. Gupta et al. (2014) also argue that over the past two decades, there has been a real shift in the way in which consumers search for information, consume media, connect with each other and buy products. This change has impacted on marketing practices and the way businesses target customers. Current research by the Euro-monitor International reports that retail businesses are now registering higher growth rates via digital marketing and e-commerce (Euromonitor, 2010) compared to traditional marketing. On this basis, it is considered that digital marketing has the momentum in generating value for retail business in the modern day marketing; research in this area therefore represents more economic value.

2.6 Social media marketing

This is the era of digital Natives and Master Multitaskers (those who tune to multiple media platforms most of the time and at the same time). Marketers are using a huge set of new Social media tools and platforms as part of their communication mix to reach out to these digital natives (Constantinides, 2013). Social media is about Horizontal Revolution, that is about more than new technology and is about the new business model that puts consumers in the driver’s seat of the marketing process (Tuten and Solomon, 2014). Social media produces exposure for businesses, increases subscribers/traffic, enhances search ratings, leads to new business opportunities, reduces overall marketing expense, and boosts sales (Stelzner, 2011). Figure 2.2 shows the comparison of the capabilities of the well known social media networks.
Miles and Huberman (as cited in Baxter and Jack 2008) stated that a conceptual framework helps to identify people to be included in the study and the relationship among them. Baxter and Jack (2008) also added that the conceptual framework guide in the study for premise data referred to at the presentation stage. Figure 2.3 shows a framework that would guide this study.

Figure 2.3 reveals the adapted conceptual framework for this research with issues and their solutions.
Figure 2.4 Conceptual Framework

From the figure 2.4 the use of digital marketing can be triggered by the independent variable such as the change in customer preference, high internet accessibility and the enabled online transactions. An organisation cannot control the independent variables.

On the other hand the dependant variables are the benefits that an organisation can enjoy after the effective implantation of digital marketing. Knox and Denison, (2000) postulated that an organisation can use effective digital marketing in its communication mix to achieve a competitive advantage. The extraneous variables can inhibit the organisation from enjoying the benefits of digital marketing. For the organisation to enjoy the benefits derived from digital marketing implementation there is need for highly interactive communication mix.

Source: Adapted from Kumar (2011)
2.7 Chapter summary

This chapter has discussed the usage of digital marketing in the first world economies such as UK. The reviewed literature indicates that DM was studied in the context of developed countries as shown by the ascribed benefits which accrue to the first world countries. However, the available literature is weak in that it does not address research objectives as well as answer the research questions. With Petrotrade being a Zimbabwean oil company, the available literature does not cover on the benefits on the effective use of digital marketing.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3 Introduction

This chapter covers the research methodology and will cover essential elements, philosophies, research approaches and strategies and data collection methods. Research methodology as defined by Fischer (2010) is the philosophical base through which research is founded. This chapter involves presenting and motivating the choice of collecting and analysing data, both from the theoretical and practical view compared to alternative methods that may be more or less appropriate to the context of the study.

3.1 Research Design

(Yin’s 2003) articulated that research design connects the empirical data to the study’s initial research questions, as well as its conclusions. The research design also guides the researcher in the analysis of observations, and drawing of inferences of the collected data. Furthermore, the design gives the researcher the methodical structure that is logically implemented in order to execute the research. The research design can therefore be identified as the detailed plan of how the research will be carried out. A good research design does not only anticipate and specify the seemingly countless decisions connected with planning and carrying out data collection, processing and analysing it, but it also presents a local basis for these decisions (Yin 2003).

Yin (2003)’s justification on the use of a single case is the representativeness of the case. Based on Yin, the researcher used Petrotrade as single case to represent all companies in the oil industry. Petrotrade is typical of the Zimbabwean fuel retail companies in terms of outlet network, number of employees and size of turnover.

On the other hand using Petrotrade as a case study has some pitfalls which include being government owned and limited retail distribution.

In research, the research paradigm used is of primary prominence than the research methods used Ashley and Boyd (2006) The decisions to use quantitative or qualitative methods are dependent upon assumptions concerning the nature of knowledge and reality, and the process of acquiring knowledge and knowledge about reality (Saunders et al, 2009). Qualitative data
were considered effective in providing detailed insights and/or an in-depth understanding of the problem as suggested by Johnson et al. (2007).

The research design for this study was guided by the Research Onion (Saunders et al., 2009:138) and this is elaborated in Figure 3.1 below

![Figure 3.1 The research Onion](source)

Source: Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009)

### 3.1.1 Positivism

Fisher (2007) defines positivism as a philosophy that holds that an accurate and value-free knowledge of things is possible. Positivism advocates the application of methods of natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond. Fisher also noted that it holds out the possibility that human beings, their actions and institutions, can be studied as objectively as the natural world. The positivist position is characterised by the testing of hypothesis developed from existing theory hence, deductive or theory testing through measurement of observable social realities (Greener, 2008).
Positivism involves the use of a highly structured questionnaire to facilitate replication of questions measured empirically using quantitative methods such as surveys, experiments and statistical analysis. It therefore follows that this research takes more of the positivist approach (Greener, 2008) The qualitative philosophy enabled the collection of rich data on the use of digital marketing in the fuel industry.

3.1.2 Interpretivism / phenomenology

Interpretivism aims to see the world through the eyes of the people being studied thus exhibiting patients and health professionals, therefore, allowing multiple perspectives of reality (Greener, 2008). Saunders et al, 2009) argued that in Interpretivism, it is essential for the researcher to appreciate the differences between humans in their role as social actors.

3.2 Research Approaches

Saunders et.al, (2009) argue that labelling research approaches and philosophies is potentially misleading and of no real practical value. This is supported by Fischer (2010) who asserts that in practice one can use any of the research methods in any approaches. The two main research approaches, deductive and inductive are discussed below.

3.2.1 Deductive versus Inductive approach

Greener (2008) states that deductive approach is associated with the quantitative approach to data. The approach looks at theory and produces hypothesis from the theory and then proceeds to test the theory (Saunders et al, 2009).

Greener (2008) suggests that the inductive research approach is associated with qualitative research aspects. In inductive research, the theory should be the result of research, thus generalizable conclusions are drawn from the researcher’s observations (Bryman and Bell, 2011). In this study, the researcher employed inductive approach to draw theory based on observations made.
3.2.2 Selection of Approach

The main difference between qualitative and quantitative research is that qualitative research generates rich, detailed and valid data that contributes to in-depth understanding of the context while quantitative research generates reliable population based data that explains cause and effect relationships (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

The researcher selected the qualitative research as the study is non-mathematical but qualitative judgements and the investigation may require data unknown to the researcher. Due to this phenomena using qualitative approach, the respondents provide rich data which may be beyond the researcher’s scope (Wood and Welch 2010:65). In addition to this, Wood and Welch (2010) elucidates that assumption and ambiguity is minimised in qualitative approach unlike in quantitative approach.Qualitative research is therefore described as a paradigm in which the objective is to determine meanings, and trace the way in which they are created, negotiated, and interpreted.

The researcher chose the qualitative approach because the methods are flexible as compared to the quantitative methods. The qualitative approach also allowed the researcher to respond immediately to what the respondents said and subsequently follow up questions to the information they provided (Mark et al, 2005). Therefore, the use of the qualitative approach gives depth to the data collected.

This researcher engaged the qualitative approach because the case study methodology is qualitative in nature as suggested by Silverman (2000). Personal interviews were used to gather information required to answer the research questions thus enabling the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the digital marketing as it applies at Petrotrade (Silverman, 2000). The use of the qualitative approach is also motivated by the study objectives which influenced the type of data to be collected from the target group.

3.3 Research Strategy

After having identified the research approach, the researcher is required to identify suitable research strategies. Saunders et al., (2005) define a research strategy as a general plan of how one goes about answering the proposed questions. There are several ways of doing research which comprise the use of case studies, experiments, surveys, histories and the analysis of archival information (Yin 2003). Yin also added that each of these strategies has peculiar benefits and drawbacks, depending on the following three conditions.
• The type of research question
• The control the investigator has over actual behavioural events
• The focus on contemporary as opposed to historical phenomena

The study research involved ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions about a contemporary set of events. The researcher had little or no control over (Yin, 2003), hence the application of a case study. The table 3.1 below shows three situations and how each of them is related to the five major strategies used in research.

**Table 3.1 Relevant situations for different research strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Form of research question</th>
<th>Requires control of behavioural events</th>
<th>Focuses on contemporary events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiment</td>
<td>how, why?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Who, what, where, how many, how much?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival analysis</td>
<td>Who, what, where, how many, how much?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes/no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>how, why?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>how, why?</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Yin (2003)

The three conditions indicated in Table 3.1 consist of the type of research question posed, the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioural events and the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events (Yin, 2003). From this table the case study was the most appropriate research strategy to employ because “how” and “why” questions were being asked about a contemporary set of events. The case study method was chosen because it allowed the researcher to explore, in a historical, holistic and current way on the key research questions of the study.
3.3.1.1 Case Study Strategy

The case study strategy was chosen as the most suitable strategy for this research. Yin (2003) advocates that the case study answers “how” and “why” questions about a present set of events, over which the investigator has limited control. The focus of this study was to answer “how” and “why” questions about the issue under study. Yin also accentuates that a case study is a realistic inquiry that explores a current phenomenon within its real-life context, particularly when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not visibly evident. The case study research can be used in either qualitative or quantitative type of research which adopts an interpretive approach to data, considers the subjective meanings that people bring to their situation and studies things within the context (ibid). The researcher wanted to find out ‘how’ and ‘why’ the fuel retail sector employed digital marketing. Also, the study took place in the ‘real-life context’ of the fuel retail sector.

3.3.1.2 Prejudices against the case study strategy

Yin (2003) emphasised the greatest drawback on the use of the case study as the strategy’s lack of objectivity. Yin (2003) also adds that the lack of rigor is unlikely to be present when using other strategies which may a result of the existence of several methodological texts that afford researchers with explicit measures to follow. However, White (2000) defends the use of case studies by pointing out that people fail to separate a case study research from case studying teaching. Case study teaching may involve making alterations to the research material in order to demonstrate a concept more effectively, which however is not permissible in case study research. The Case studies have also been criticised due to lack of scientific generalisation. As opposed to experiments, case studies generalise theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes (Yin, 2003).

3.3.1.3 Justification for the of case study

According to Yin (2003), case studies are the preferred strategy when focusing on contemporary phenomena within a real life setup. in this study the focus is on the current incidents prevailing in Petrotrade. The digital marketing is being implemented for communication to the market and it is ongoing. This makes the choice of using case study desirable.
Baxter and Jack (2008) argued that the research should be guided by the prime objective of the study to determine the type of case study to use. The purpose of this study is explanatory as the researcher seeks to explain the extent of effective digital marketing communication to brand awareness.

The researcher sought to carry out the study in view of Petrotrade as a company that can be viewed as a typical representation of other fuel companies. Considering Petrotrade’s operation the company can represent other players in the oil industry. Petrotrade’s core function is fuel retailing to motoring individuals and corporate customers in both public and private sector. The market is not only peculiar to Petrotrade but to other fuel distributors. in line with this Yin (2003) argued that the use of a case study for drawing conclusions in tied on the extent to which the case exhibits commonality in traits.

3.4 Data Collection

3.4.1 Population

The population is the group upon which the researcher is interested in making inferences (Baker, 1998). In addition, Saunders et al, (2009) added on to define population as a full set from which samples are taken. Also, the study results will be generalized on this group (the population). The population includes all individuals whom the researcher is interested in obtaining information and making inferences on. In this study the population was made up of the Petrotrade staff, and all its customers and potential customers mainly because they are the key informants of the study.

3.4.2 Sampling procedure

Sampling procedures can be either probability or non-probability sampling (Hycener as cited in Groenewald, 2013) as shown in table 3.2. In qualitative, research a sample which is a subset of a population is selected for any given study (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). The size and diversity determine the number and nature of people to be selected. (Bernard, 1995). In
qualitative research methods non-probability sampling methods are used. These sampling methods include convenience sampling, judgmental sampling and quota sampling. This mandates the researcher to select suitable units of analysis based on a defined criteria. (Salant and Dillman, 1994).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.2 Sampling procedures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non probability procedures</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Convenience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Judgemental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Quota</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


3.4.2.1 Judgement or purposive sampling

(Denzin and Lincoln, 2005) contended that judgemental or purposive sampling was the most common sampling strategy which encompasses grouping participants according to preselected conditions pertinent to a particular research question. In this research, staff and customers of Petrotrade were selected because of their vital role in the use of digital marketing and other related systems and procedures within the organisation.

3.4.2.2 Sampling frame

A list of units available for selection during sampling is known as the sampling frame (Denzin and Lincon, 2005). In this study the samples were drawn from Petrotrade staff and customers.

3.4.3 Data source

Data can be collected using primary and secondary sources. Primary data is the data collected directly from population elements while secondary is gathered from records which have primary data (Salant and Dilman, 1994). In this research both primary and secondary data were used. Primary data was collected using the face-to-face interviews while secondary data was drawn from annual reports.
3.4.4 Research Instruments

The research instruments are the tools used to collect primary data and a questionnaire is a list of questions that can be used to collect primary data (Salant and Dillman, 1994). The questions asked can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured. In this study a semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect data from Petrotrade staff and customers.

3.4.4.1 Semi structured questionnaires

An interview guide was drafted using both unstructured and open-ended questions. The interview guide was pre-tested before use in order to establish if it is useable and the questions can be easily answered by the respondents.

A well-designed semi-structured questionnaire can be used to gather information on both general and specific components of the system, as well as overall performance of the test system (Miller and Salkind, 2001). Another advantage of using semi-structured questionnaires is its high validity of the results which is more dependent on the honesty of the respondents since the researcher has limited control over the environment (Miller and Salkind, 2001).

3.4.4.2 Personal interviews

Personal interviews is a method of collecting primary data using an interview guide through a semi-structured questionnaire. This interview guide contained a list of relevant questions investigative query (Salant and Dillman, 1994). Interviews can take on many forms and structures thus ranging from structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. In this study personal interviews were used to collect data on digital marketing from the key informants. Personal interviews have room for probing, hence, enabling the researcher to get in depth information. During the interview, nonverbal responses were noted and this enabled the researcher to make conclusions. Since the responses were immediate, the researcher was able to immediately conclude the research questions.

3.5 Data Analysis

According to Neumann (2006), qualitative research has no standard data analysis format. Data from this study was therefore analysed using the data displays (Miles and Huber, 1994).
All the information gathered was analysed using data displays and common themes were identified for data presentation.

### 3.5.1 Research Validity

Validity is concerned with whether the findings are really about what they appear to be and whether the relationship between two variables is a causal relationship (Saunders et al 2009). However, threats to validity include history, testing, instrumentation, mortality, maturation, as well as ambiguity about causal direction (Robson, 2002). Saunders et al(2009) added on that qualitative research has in high validity but low in reliability since the same results cannot be obtained.

### 3.6 Research Ethics

Research ethics refers to the appropriateness of the researcher’s behaviour in relation to the rights of those who become subjects of the research work or those that are affected by it, Saunders et al (2009). Research ethics deal primarily with the interaction between researchers and the people they study. The following ethical considerations were taken into account for this research as guided by Fischer (2010) and Saunders et.al (2009):

- **Negotiating access:** - the researcher negotiated access with the public relation officer of Petrotrade. The researcher wrote emails to authorities at the workplace requesting for permission to administer interviews with the target group.
- **Behaviour and objectivity of the researcher:** - The researcher undertook all possible efforts to manage the project in an objective, professional and ethical manner to avoid any unnecessary work disruptions, discomfort or harm to participants during and after the research.
- **Researcher’s identity:** - The researcher’s identity was clearly discussed during the interview sessions.
- **Confidentiality:** - The participants were advised that all information provided for the research would be managed in strictest confidence and would be used solely for
academic purposes with no reference made to respondents. The research was done using the ethical codes required by health professional bodies.

3.7 Research Limitations

The author encountered the following challenges during the course of conducting this research;

Limited time available to conduct interviews to all of the organisation.

3.8 Chapter Conclusion

The methodology covered the research design, philosophy and approaches of the study. The study findings and discussions are analysed in chapter 4.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4 Introduction
This chapter provides an analysis of the face-to-face interviews which were conducted. The researcher presents data collected from the in-depth interview on the effectiveness of digital marketing implementation on Petrotrade brand awareness. The researcher summarised the gathered data in three main categories namely Petrotrade management, non-managerial staff and dealers. The discussion of the findings were done in relation to the literature which was reviewed in chapter two of this study.

4.1 Key respondents

As mentioned in the introduction, the researcher considered three groups of the respondent namely Petrotrade management, non-managerial staff and corporate clients. The corporate clients are non as bulk customers. The sample of these groups were three members for each group.

Under the management group, the researcher conducted research with the Acting Chief Executive Officer ACEO, Acting Human Resources and Administration Manager (AHRAM) and Acting head of Marketing (AHM). Although the interviewed candidates are all in their acting position, they have been with Petrotrade since Noczi era. The AHRM and AHM have been in acting positions from June 2013. The ACEO, who doubles as the Finance Manager has been in the position since 2012. For non-managerial staff, the researcher interviewed the public relations and two sales and marketing clerks. The non-managerial team has been in their current positions since Petrotrade’s inception. The bulk customers who participated comprised of huge sales volumes. The bulk customers’ tenure with Petrotrade ranges from one year to 5 years.

The response rate from Petrotrade staff was 100%. This could be due to an accessible location and the sample size which was small. For the bulk customers the researcher interviewed them from their workplace and also at Petrotrade Head office. The response rate was 75%.
4.2 Research Findings

The research findings from the in-depth interviews of the three groups were presented in the tables as shown below.

4.2.1 Section A: Digital marketing Adoption

**Question 1.** Describe and explain how Petrotrade uses Digital marketing in the marketing and communication mix?

**Table 4.1 Digital Marketing at Petrotrade**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ACEO        | - Petrotrade uses a combination of email communications and a website to interact with customers and other stakeholders.  
- Digital marketing is a cheap mode of communication due to the prevailing digital era. |
| AHM         | - Petrotrade is using digital marketing to reach out to the mass market which is available through digital media.  
- We try to use online brand visibility as a driver for brand awareness and brand equity. |
| AHRAM       | - Petrotrade uses digital marketing for awareness and customer information such as new sites releasing fuel coupons.  
- Both customers and staff have channels available to them to communicate, for example, via general broadcast email. |

The management team’s response in Table 4.1 shows that the organisation is mainly using DM for interaction with its various customers. The response shows evidence that DM channels such as websites and email do exist. The ACEO appreciated the cost effectiveness of the DM channels. From the management, team they use of DM channels is advantageous in the sense of reaching to the mass market and brand visibility.
Question 2. Describe and explain the digital marketing channels being used at Petrotrade to communicate with the customers if any.

Table 4.2 Petrotrade digital marketing channels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ACEO        | · Given the uptake of internet usage in Zimbabwe, Petrotrade has adopted an aggressive strategy to utilise the internet by setting up a website from which one can get information about the company. This was Petrotrade’s first initiative because during the Noczim era there was no website  
· All our staff have access to internet and email in order to get and send customer statements, quotation and orders.  
· The company subscribed to historic Platts which indicate global price movement. This helps in following the global fuel price movement. When procuring fuel we agreed with supplier to use plats based prices. |
| AHM         | · As a market oriented company, we have set up structures to benefit from the digital media that is available to us. As a result we use a combination of email, Facebook, Twitter and website-based marketing campaigns.  
· The department has also proposed the use of social media for viral marketing. |
| AHRAM       | · The channels that Petrotrade utilises include email communications where we have dedicated customer service emails such as marketing@petrotrade.co.zw and pr@petrotrade.co.zw.  
· In addition, the company can also utilise platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter which are available from our website. These aid to keep us in touch with all our stakeholders. |

The management concurred on the use of e-mail. The AHRAM indicated the availability of customer service e-mails to open up communication. On the other hand social media has been
dominant in the AHM and AHRAM’s interviews. From the responses even internal staff gets access to internet and e-mail. This shows that the organisation has enabled digital marketing channels

**Question 3.** Explain how digital marketing impact on Petrotrade brand awareness?

**Table 4.3 The impact of digital marketing on brand awareness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ACEO        | • Petrotrade descended from NOCZIM and since then we have worked very hard to establish Petrotrade as a brand on its own.  
• Digital marketing enables us to reach a wider variety and larger number of customers never before possible. Therefore, digital marketing greatly enhances Petrotrade’s brand awareness at a lower cost in comparison to non-digital channels |
| AHM         | • Digital media has greatly enhanced our ability to reach the so-called “Y-generation”. These are young adults who have become the bulk of our retail customers and hence digital media has facilitated an increase in our brand awareness. |
| AHRAM       | • The majority of our customers have access to digital media platforms such as email, internet and social media. Because as a company we have actively used these digital media, our brand is getting more and better known, hence brand awareness is increasing.  
• However, the presence of DM seems to have no bearing on sales performance in the short run |

The response as shown in Table 4.3 above, the management team acknowledged the role played by digital marketing to increase brand awareness. From the responses, it was apparent that the availability of internet on portable devices is a gateway to inform customers about the brand.
4.2.2 Section B: Benefits associated with the use of Digital marketing

**Question 1** Explain how effective the digital marketing is in attracting new customers in comparison to traditional marketing?

**Table 4.4 Digital marketing versus traditional marketing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ACEO       | • The reason for being in business is to sell lots of products, reach to our clients and maintain our old customers, the goal is the same with the engagement of DM. The other goal is cost effective approach, the use of print media such as newspapers reach to a limited number of people.  
• Emails are very effective, as compared to hard copy memos they are easy to communicate with a large group of people faster and effectively. It is easy to go back and check the paper trail. You can easily refer back to them if need arises.  
• Therefore the digital method is fast enough and reaches out to a bigger market. |
| AHM        | • The benefit is that of reaching out to a bigger market easily and cheaply  
• When making payments, the traditional method involves so many documents for one transaction. Therefore, the digital method is fast enough and more efficient.  
• Increase the company visibility, sales performance, perceived quality, information technology is a very important tool if a company wishes to build its brand equity  
• I think that DM is a lot more effective than the traditional methods |
| AHRAM      | • The traditional method involves volume print outs hence not as cost effective as DM.  
• The advantage of DM is that it can catch the market which does not buy print media advertisements such as newspapers.  
• DM is more effective, high cell phone penetration in Zimbabwe now close to 100% and this population does not buy newspapers. |
Some billboards may take time to be read by many people.
- Targeted content or service for reaching customers even beyond the borders.
- Reduce the number of marketing people to be hired for example the free-lance marketers

The response from the management team focuses on cost effectiveness of the digital channel. It is highlighted by ACEO that products are meant to be sold to customers hence the need to keep them abreast of any changes. Another factor of paramount importance raised in the interview is the high level of internet penetration and use of digital devices. The response shows that the cost effectiveness is not only realised by the organisation but by customers too. The table above revealed that the management team generally concurred that there are some benefits accruing from the use of digital marketing as compared to the use of traditional method. However, they do mention some challenges here and there which are associated with the use of these technologies. The AHM argued that the traditional method is not fast and there are so many documents for one transaction. Apart from being costly, the traditional marketing has limited outreach capacity as compared to the digital method. The process was very cumbersome, which implies digital marketing is not very involving as compared to the traditional method. It was highlighted that that the advantage of DM is that it can capture the market which traditional marketing could to reach. These respondents argued that if digital marketing is managed well, it would become a useful tool to people who do not know about the company.

Question 2. With search engine optimisation being the use of high ranking placements when using search engines like Google, Bing and Yahoo. On the other hand, bulk emails also entails the broadcasting of emails to all the population on emails platform. Explain the benefits of using platforms such as bulk emails and SEO?
Table 4.5 Petrotrade’s use of bulk email and SEO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ACEO        | • The search engine optimising may make stakeholders such as the suppliers of fuels coming to know about Petrotrade.  
• Not so sure if the SEO is being used.  
• Some key decision makers individuals do not have time to read broadcasted mails as they regard it as spam |
| AHM         | • Bulk emails will reach more customers at low cost.  
• Bulk emails at times are not desirable as they do not have specific information target.  
• Generally people prefer catch communication channels which motivates them to read.  
• Instead of broadcasting bulk emailing across the market the bulk emails can be targeted to different categories of the market that customers get the relevance for example dealers and general motorists have different fuelling needs. |
| AHRAM       | • Some will read broadcast e-mails and others choose not to.  
• Petrotrade should learn from organisations like Coca-Cola who invest more in their marketing and communication than in the product as fuel is a homogenous product.  
• The majority of people in Zimbabwe now have access to emails which can be forwarded to others.  
• When people are bombarded with information which can come through emails they end up wanting to know more and develop and interest. |

From the responses in table 4.5 above it is apparent that Petrotrade is not using channels such SEO as one of their digital marketing strand. The AHM mentioned about content-specific when using emails and he concurred with literature on content marketing (Steiml, 2014). There was a general consensus of bulk emails being not read by many people.
However the AHRAM had a different view all together as he pointed to bulk email being a source of new traffic after creating the desire to know more about the company through mailing. On this aspect Steilmle (2014) stated that content marketing is interruptive marketing and an art of communication which has the power to transform visitors into customers then into evangelists of the business.

**Question 3.** Describe and explain how customer’s feedback is obtained?

**Table 4.6 Channels used for getting customer feedback**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ACEO       | • Customer feedback is obtained through a number of ways including email communications and the use of feedback from our sales people who interact daily with our customers.  
• Some phone calls are used where instant responses are required.  
• There is a suggestion box at the entrance of the building and at all service stations which is available for use by both staff and customers. |
| AHM        | • Petrotrade has established platforms such as email for example pr@petrotrade.co.zw and marketing@petrotrade.co.zw and Facebook where customers are expected to give us feedback which may be both complaints and compliments.  
• Feedback forms are issued though the customers may not send them back |
| AHRAM      | • We have suggestion boxes at our head office, as well as all our stations where we encourage people to inform us of any concerns and how we can improve our service to them.  
• These suggestion boxes are used in addition to online avenues such as email where customers and other stakeholders can provide us feedback.  
• Customers use emails and phone for complaints and tip offs. |

The responses from the interviews in table 4.6 show that the organisation relies heavily on the
use of emails for obtaining customer feedback. The customer service emails addresses are at the disposal of customers. These emails address are available on most of the communication tools that Petrotrade uses, such as websites and calendars. However, the use of suggestion boxes to get feed is an indication of the lengthy period spent in customer feed being acted upon.

4.2.3 Section C: The inhibitors to effective use of digital marketing

Question1. Describe and explain the how the digital marketing channels are being chosen and budgeted for?

Table 4.7 Determinants of digital marketing channels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ACEO       | • The budget of the company is being controlled by the parent ministry.  
• The availability of funds is very critical to the implementation of digital marketing.  
• The budgeted amount varies from year to year as it is based on forecasted revenue.  
• The PR advises the company on the channels to be used. |
| AHM        | • As a marketing-oriented company, there is a budget for the marketing portfolio.  
• Usually budget amount is barely enough to cover all the marketing portfolio.  
• Priority is given to the branding and developments of service stations for visibility.  
• Some avenues of digital marketing have not yet been explored which may result in the organisation not benefiting from better digital marketing channels.  
• Channels are chosen based on the targeted group of customers. |
| AHRAM      | • The investment in online presence has not been given the much attention as the company is investing in the printing media for publicity. |
The responses from the management team indicate that there is a budget for marketing and communication. The ACEO indicated that the amount is determined by the company’s parent ministry which is the Ministry of Energy and Power Development. The ACEO indicated that even though the marketing and communication have a budget, the availability of funds was critical as the revenue to cover the budget items may not tally. The AHM indicated that even though the department comes up with a proposed budget, in most cases the approved budget would be half of what the department would have proposed. Priority is given to service station infrastructure development ahead of the marketing communication. When making budgetary approval, the company’s parent ministry does not take into account the need to invest in digital marketing. The ACEO concurred with Kotler and Keller (2009) who stated that companies should set aside funds for marketing and communication based on the availability of funds. The AHM stated that promotional activities should be carried on priority bases.

**Question 2.** Describe and explain the adequacy of the non-financial resources to carry out intensive Digital marketing?

**Table 4.8 Non-financial resources for digital marketing implementation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ACEO       | - Shortage of funds is the major drawback on the effective implementation of DM tools as demonstrated but the company’s inability to subscribe to real time Platts for global market prices  
- Nature of our business and the operating environment does not require full implementation of DM unlike in other industries like telecoms and retail |
| AHM        | - There is an in-house IT team, however their team comprises of only the administrator and the assistant administrator. This may not be enough manpower to drive the fully utilisation of DM.  
- Being a parastatal, all the procurement process have to be adhere to |
strictly.

- The PR focus more on the implementation of new marketing channels for publicity.

| AHRAM | The red tape in the procurement system of the company plays a major role as this would lead to the funds availed for marketing.
|       | There is need for market scanning.
|       | Knowledge of some tools may be limited.
|       | PR and marketing department who are the driving engine on the area are not prioritising the digital marketing. |

The responses from the table 4.8 above postulates that the resources are there. It is a question of efficient utilisation of such resources. AHM indicated the need to widen the scope of the in-house IT team. The AHRAM’s response points that the Marketing Department and PR are not doing enough to gain digital marketing coverage. AHM suggested that there was supposed to be dedicated a person to focus at the online modalities working together with Public Relations (PR) and marketing department.

### 4.2.4 Section D: Social Media

**Question 1.** Explain how Petrotrade can take advantage of social media to reach out to its customers?

**Table 4.9 The use of social media**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ACEO       | - Social media marketing may not be the right media to use given the nature of the business.  
- Social media is mainly used in industries such as grocery retailing. |
| AHM        | - The use of platforms such as WhatsApp and twitter can help us in reaching potential customers.  
- Social media usually helps when we launch a new products or have running promotions at our sites as it speeds the communication process.  
- We have created a Facebook page where we keep our customers informed of Petrotrade current affairs. |
There is instant feedback
Therefore digital method is fast enough and reaches out to a bigger market.

Creating our own application that will also run in the famous APP Store that runs on most mobile devices, this will help customers with locating fuelling sites and the current fuel prices.
Visual aid helps in creating the desire to make the market follow the brand.
In the case of Hellen cakes, orders and enquiries are on the Facebook, the response instant.
Platforms such as Twitter help in creating followers hence more digital footprint

The response from the ACEO shows that the respondent does not fully appreciate the power of social media in doing business as he contradicts with literature which stipulates that social media was rated as one of the most effective tool used (Balegno 2015). It is apparent that social media the response are instant like in the case of Helen cakes that the AHM mentioned. There was evidence for the use of social media from the two members of management.

**Question 2.** In your opinion, should the company invest more in social media and other digital marketing strands? Explain why or why not

**Table 4.10 Social media scope**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACEO</td>
<td>The company may not necessarily invest in social media exactly as it may not add value. Investing in other digital marketing channels that we are not using may be more appropriate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Optimizing the available digital tools to get the best out of them.

**AHM**
- Definitely it should be along with other DM channels such as online advertising and frequently visited websites.
- Believed the world is evolving towards social media and it’s a great future tool for marketing and hence should be given more resources.

**AHRAM**
- Believed in maximum utilisation of the current marketing personnel before investing more in social media. However it can be harmonised to fit into the setup without much financial outflow.
- Can take advantage of high internet penetration used for referrals.

Dijkmans et al, (2015) alluded to the point that despite social media’s negatives it is being deemed to be the future of developing customers. According to Pescher et al (2014) viral marketing is a subset of social media. The same author alluded to the use of referrals which support viral marketing. From the ACEO and AHRAM it is evident that the digital marketing not being efficiently used to realise the maximum benefits. In addition, the AHM and AHRAM concurred on the organisation investing more social media for brand awareness.

### 4.2.5 Finding related to adoption from the non-managerial perspective

**Question 1.** Describe and explain the digital communication mostly used channels at Petrotrade?

**Table 4.11 Digital communication channels**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Petrotrade use mostly emails and calling to communicate with the internal and external customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk 1</td>
<td>Emails are often used but some customers prefer calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk 2</td>
<td>E-mails and WhatsApp</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the response in table 4.11 above it is evident that email is the dominant tool used. In addition to email, some customers advocate for WhatsApp. The literature also supports email as the most effective digital tool (Balegno, 2015)

*Question 2.* Explain in your opinion management’s attitude towards the effective use of digital marketing tools?

**Table 4.12 Management attitude on digital marketing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| PR         | • Management is not in full support of DM hence limiting the company’s capacity to explore more services that can enhance brand awareness.  
• The management have the “follow others” mentality |
| Clerk 1    | • Management does not appreciate Digital Marketing as they still advocate for traditional marketing.  
• The management does not fully support social media use in doing business as this may force them to buy smart phones for staff. |
| Clerk 2    | • Management’s attitude is not bad as they have enable the social media and website.  
• The key issue may be the management’s use of digital tools in their day.  
• Some managers still prefer printed copies of reports that can be sent through mails. |

The general view of PR and clerk 1 shows that Petrotrade management has slacken attitude towards the effective implementation and use of digital marketing tools. However, response from clerk 2 expressed a different view. Clark 2 indicated that the management are not fully digital marketing tools.
Question 3. Describe and explain customers’ attitudes towards the use of Digital marketing channels such as email and website?

Table 4.13 Customers’ attitudes on the use of digital marketing tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| PR         | • Customers are ahead of Petrotrade in terms of DM as they ask for online purchases and digital payments which we are currently not offering.  
• Customers want updates on new price, products and sites to be posted on sites. |
| Clerk 1    | • Customers advocate for the use of twitter, Facebook and website.  
• Customers complain about the outdated website and the non-response in Facebook enquires |
| Clerk 2    | • Since the company does not have a corporate WhatsApp numbers there are many complaints from customers.  
• Customers ask for our WhatsApp numbers for them to communicate. |

The response in table 4.13 shows that customers have the right attitude towards the use of digital marketing. It was quite clear that the customers felt that the organisation is the one lagging behind. The response above shows that the customers are ahead of the organisation in the use of social marketing. Another important point from clerk 2 is the non-interactive nature of the websites. Since Petrotrade does not have a corporate WhatsApp number, customers are taking it upon themselves to use the platform using staff’s personal WhatsApp number. Response agreed that customers were moving towards digital footprint since some requests were done on email.

Question 4. Explain how Petrotrade differ in the use of DM tools in relation to competition

Table 4.14 Petrotrade digital marketing versus competition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>• Petrotrade is still behind as it is still using coupons instead of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
smartcards
- Unlike Total Zimbabwe, which makes use of digital billboards, only one site out of fourteen has a digital billboard, the rest use traditional billboards written using paint which, does not add to the ambience of the service station.

| Clerk 1 | Not yet fully using DM.  
| Clerk 2 | Market giants like Total and Puma are leaders in the use of DM tools  
| Clerk 2 | Ram and even Track Petroleum are more visible than Petrotrade.  
| Clerk 2 | Customer complaints show the need for Petrotrade to match competition on the use of smart cards |

From the table 4.13 Sakunda Energy and Total Zimbabwe and Puma are leading Petrotrade in the use of digital marketing channels. The gathered response demonstrates that generally Petrotrade lags behind on the full utilisation of digital marketing.

**Question 5.** Describe and explain whether Petrotrade’s use of DM tools can increase brand awareness. Table 4.15 The digital marketing on brand awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| PR         | There is still room to increase brand awareness through the use of DM tools such as bulk e-mail, Sms, Yokoos and LinkedIn  
| Clerk 1    | Through the use of skype for business  
| Clerk 1    | The implementation of smart cards and mobile money like ecocash,telecash and Nettcash  
| Clerk 1    | Use of smart card technology |
| Clerk 2    | Running promotions through channels as sponsored.  
| Clerk 2    | Use internet banking  
| Clerk 2    | Petrotrade can integrate with Zimswitch to open more payment channels. |
The response in table 4.15 shows that Petrotrade can efficiently make use of channels such as the smart cards and mobile money wallets. The discussions revealed that there are opportunities for digital marketing for the organisation. Both junior and senior managers clearly highlighted a number of opportunities which Petrotrade can tap into. The analysis is clear that we are in a global market which eradicated distance among the various stakeholders of the organisation.

4.2.6 Findings related to brand awareness based on customer perspective

Question 1. How did you get to know about Petrotrade?

**Table 4.16 Brand awareness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer 1</td>
<td>Petrotrade was born out of Noczim from which I was a customer and have continued doing business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer 2</td>
<td>Through a business friend who has been dealing with the company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Herald and fliers adverts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer 3</td>
<td>Through fuelling at one of their service stations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the customers’ views, there is no evidence on the use of digital marketing for brand awareness. The response rather points to the use of traditional marketing, such as fliers.

**Question 2.** Describe the digital marketing tools that you have used to interact with Petrotrade?
Table 4.17 Petrotrade digital marketing tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dealer 1</td>
<td>• E-mails especially during working hours but after that, phone calls would be the only available option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dealer 2</td>
<td>• E-mails and WhatsApp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dealer 3</td>
<td>• Text messages, e-mails and even phone calls for immediate response.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results from the table 4.17 Shows that there is use of emails and WhatsApp and texting of messages.

**Question 3.** Explain how you receive updates from Petrotrade?

Table 4.18 Petrotrade customer updates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dealer1</td>
<td>• At times no updates are communicated prior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealer 2</td>
<td>• Emails especially of account balance verification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealer 3</td>
<td>• WhatsApp. Email and text messages.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Response from table 4.18 demonstrates the use of emails for customer updates. However Dealer 1 indicated there is limited update from the organisation. From the interviewed respondents no one makes use of the suggestion boxes and customer feedback forms.

**Question 4** Explain how digital marketing helps Petrotrade to be a household brand?

Table 4.19 Petrotrade as household brand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dealer 1</td>
<td>• Petrotrade is not visible in the critical areas, hence lower brand image.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The company is mainly known to parastatals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There is need for intensive advertising to register presence especially</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
in the private sector

**Dealer 2**
- People hardly know Petrotrade so the company can embark on advertising on the websites on such organizations as Stock exchange.
- Rebranding, for people are still mistaking it as Noczim.
- The need to embark on aggressive digital marketing as many people are available on the internet.

**Dealer 3**
- Rebranding of the Noczim house, as the company is still know in the market as Noczim because of the Noczim house
- To copy what Total and Puma are doing
- Digital signage to increase the ambience of their sites.

The response above shows that Petrotrade is not yet a household brand. Brand awareness and brand loyalty are key elements of brand equity. Unknown brands have low market share hence low profitability (Sasikala, 2013). Keller (2011) also postulated that brand awareness and association are important constructs of brand equity. Petrotrade can also work on digital signs and rebranding of the company’s head office which is still branded Noczim house with Noczim logos and colours. Aaker as (cited in Subhani and Osman, 2011) also argued that the process of brand awareness starts with customers being familiar with colours associated with the brand.

**Question 5.** In your opinion how do you compare Petrotrade’s use of DM to its competitors?

**Table 4.20 Digital marketing at Petrotrade versus competition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dealer 1</td>
<td>• It does not fall into the top five which I think are Total, Puma, Zuva, Engen and Ram are the main players.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Dealer 2   | • I only know the use of corporate e-mails so am sure they are on the low end of the list  
• It is still small but they are slowly gaining momentum to compete that the company is still using flyers. |
| Dealer 3   | • Petrotrade should move with technology. |
• The company’s competitors are well ahead of it.

There is a general consensus of Petrotrade lagging being in competition in the use of digital marketing tools. The use of printed media demonstrates the inclination of the organisation towards traditional marketing. According to Hanley and Leahy (2008), traditional marketing does not provide two way communication. Rowing (2013) added on that traditional marketing has a declining influence and higher costs compared to digital marketing.

4.3 Summary of the findings

Effectiveness of digital marketing

The analysis shows that the use of digital marketing enables the company to be cost effective as compared to the use of printed media such as newspapers which reaches out to a limited number of people. In addition, the social media reaches out to almost everyone with a cell phone. In line with this, literature from a number of researchers has reported a declining influence and rising cost of traditional marketing (Browning, 2013). Evolving marketing techniques have proved to have a high success rate in helping retail businesses adopt to the time dependent preference of customers (Hanley and Leahy, 2008). Digital marketing is viewed as one of the emerging opportunities that can provide a positive contribution to business profitability. Unlike traditional marketing, digital marketing provides retailers with a two-way communication which is useful in tailoring products to specific customer requirements.

Social marketing

Cox (2010) investigated the relationship between age and social network users. Results from the research found out that young adults below the ages of 35 had a positive attitude towards the use of channels such as blogs and video and branded channels and are online users. There is no correlation between senior management and other staff members’ social media implementation. The ACEO views the social media as being inappropriate in business. This can be because of the generation gap as confirmed by findings (Cox’s’ 2010). The general finding on taking advantage of viral marketing concurred with literature as Dijkmas (2015), stated that 92% of customers prefer referrals from friend and family while 70% trusted online reviews.
On the other hand, Sethurama et al (2011) postulates that the decline in the effectiveness of traditional marketing as it focuses on transactional marketing. The researcher added that relationship marketing leads to customer loyalty which would translate to 125% increase in profitability. The deployment of information through social media has instant feedback and provides vast tools for analysing customer behaviour (Mangold and Faulds, 2009).

This was evidenced by a sluggish management attitude towards the use of such media as the Facebook. The management also pointed out that the digital uptake by others players. The use of social media was viewed as having a tendency of representing the ideal world not the real world.

Tiago and Verissimo (2014) contend that marketing managers evaluate digital marketing effectiveness by measuring brand awareness, word-of-mouth buzz, customer satisfaction, user-generated content and web analytics. Furthermore, Zinnbauer Honer (2011) postulated that social media allows creation and exchange of user generated content. On the other hand, Gonzalez (2010) supported the notion that digital marketing influences consumer behaviour from product search to post purchase, that is, feedback.

**Brand awareness**

From the findings, it was found out that there is generally a very low level of brand awareness of Petrotrade. With the availability of internet, customers are available on platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp and email. The respondents pointed out that if the company has online presence, visibility will be increased. It was noted from the customer findings that rebranding of the Noczim house to Petrotrade would also help in brand awareness. For relationship marketing to be successful, there is need for strong multi-channel relations between the organisation and its customers. According to research, building trust with customers requires client orientation effort from all members of the organisation.

The analysis from the table above shows that there are mixed feelings towards the level of adoption of digital marketing within the organisation. However, it is concluded that the organisation is lagging behind on this aspect. The analysis from both staff and customers agreed on Petrotrade lagging behind the competition on digital marketing. They pointed out that Petrotrade is lagging behind in the use of smart cards like the ones used by Total Zimbabwe.

The company can introduce smart cards and facilitates the real-time redemption of coupons.
AHM added that internet is the gateway to the world and, as a result, there is need to dominate the digital media hence the company can lose customers who are seeking such benefits. Available literature stipulates that retailers are now faced with the opportunities of a virtual digital future and/or the threat of real demise in the face of stiff competition and declining margins (Nielsen, 2014)

**Communication interactivity**

The findings showed that the departments do not actively work together to promote the digital marketing culture within the organisation. It was also found that the website communication was still a challenge on the promotion of digital marketing since it is not interactive and not up to date. The non-managerial staff argued that effective use of digital marketing was low. According to Baines, Fill and Kelly (2011), the internet penetration has led to the development and adoption of digital resources, from internet to mobile technologies to social web resources like wikis, blogs, networking sites, and multimedia and sharing services which are useful when effectively used. These developments have created an array of opportunities as these resources provide platforms for digital marketing. Browning, (2013) supported the aspect of communication by emphasizing interactivity. Since there is a two-way communication, customers are able to express their views about the products and the organisation also responds to the customers. The digital marketing conversation can be real time as opposed to the one-way communication of traditional marketing. It was found out that the company has disintegrated digital marketing tools as opposed to Royle and Laing’s (2014) definition of digital marketing being integrated and measurable.

**Resources**

The issue of skills was not considered as a challenge as it was pointed out that the people are adequately trained. However, the AHRAM pointed to a training gap. DM was not being prioritisied and the main challenge pointed out was the issue of limited financial resources to further promote the DM.
4.4 Chapter Conclusions

This chapter provides an analysis of the findings and discussions in relation to literature review from chapter two. The discussions also focused on the implication of digital marketing communication on Petrotrade corporate bulk customers as the target market.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5 Introduction

Deductions from research findings conclude the study. This is evidenced by the following conclusions drawn from research objectives. Recommendations and further areas to the study are also presented in this chapter.

5.1 Conclusions
This study concludes that Petrotrade is not benefiting from the implemented digital marketing tools on brand awareness. The digital channels are not integrated and controlled to realise the associated benefits.

5.1.1 Allocation of Marketing Budget
The study also concludes that Petrotrade has not invested enough on the online presence to optimise presence, as it relies on a special guidance from the Ministry of Energy and as a percentage of the gross profit.

5.1.2 Associated Benefits
It is further concluded that the traditional marketing was not effective since it involve many documents for one transaction, is costly and is not fast enough

5.1.3 Attitude of Customers
The conclusion here is that customers were moving towards digital marketing since they preferred social media as compared to other strands of digital methods. It was also study established that customers have embraced digital tools.

5.1.4 Digital payments Adoption and opportunities
It is concluded that Petrotrade was lagging behind competitors on digital marketing in almost all aspects.

5.2 Testing the Proposition
The research proposition is stated in chapter one as follows:

There is no effective digital marketing communication at Petrotrade due to limited expertise, financial resources and management commitment.

The study confirmed the proposition to a large extent in that the lack of management commitment and budgetary constraints inhibit the effective implementation of digital
marketing. However, the expertise was said to be available.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 The use of digital marketing
It is recommended that the organisation must evaluate digital marketing’s effectiveness by measuring brand awareness, word-of-mouth buzz, customer satisfaction, user-generated content and web analyses.

5.3.2 Use of digital payment
Petrotrade should come out of the notion of following the competition and become a pioneer in mobile money payment like Ecocash. The company should implement the fuel smart card. In addition, Petrotrade can partner with companies such as Zimswitch and Visa to enable customers to have a broad payment channel network.

5.3.3 Procurement system
The restrictive SPB procurement regulations should be relaxed to enable the company to engage international suppliers and this will allow Petrotrade to embark on backward integration and realise the economies of scale benefits.

5.3.4 Brand awareness through infrastructure development
Finally, it is recommended that government companies such as NSSA and IDBZ bank be encouraged to invest in the construction of Petrotrade service stations and finishing of projects such as Beitbridge truck inn and the Airport JET A1. The investment could be implemented under build-operate and transfer scheme.

5.4 Study limitations and areas of further study

The major limitation to the study was the issue of time to conduct the research. The time allocated for the research was limited in relation to the diversity of the study. The company is believed to be going through some transitional phases as it is only years old to date, hence the need for a longitudinal study. Lastly, as the research was single case, generalising the results to other oil companies that are not state owned may be debatable. Therefore, a multiple case study may be a more appropriate research design for future research in this area.


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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: FACE TO FACE INTERVIEW GUIDED QUESTION FOR PETROTRADE MANAGEMENT

7.1.1 Background information

Petrotrade embarked on digital marketing communication. This study seek understand how Petrotrade can leverage on the implemented digital marketing channels and come up with amicable recommendation that the management can employ. To attain the goal of the study considered Petrotrade management as the key informants.

**Definition**: Digital Marketing is defined by Royle and Laing (2014) as the use of digital technologies to create an integrated, targeted and measurable communication to acquire and retain customers while building deeper relationships with them. Digital marketing can be used in the form of social media, website advertising, and search engine optimisation to increase sales.

7.1.2 Section A : Digital marketing adoption

1) Describe and explain how Petrotrade uses Digital marketing in the marketing and communication mix?

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2) Describe and explain the digital marketing channels being used at Petrotrade to communicate with the customers if any

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3) Describe and explain the impact of digital marketing on Petrotrade brand awareness?

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Section B: Associated benefits for the use of DM

4) Explain how effective is the digital marketing in attracting new customers in comparison to traditional marketing

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5) With search engine optimisation as the use of high ranking placements when using search engines that include Google, Bing and Yahoo and on the other hand bulk emails also the entails the broadcasting of emails to all the population emails. Explain are the benefits of using platforms such bulk emails and SEO?

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Section C inhibitors to effective use of DM

6) Describe and explain how customer’s feedback is obtained?

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7) Describe and explain the how digital marketing channels are being chosen and budgeted
8) Describe and explain the adequacy of the non-financial resources to carry out intensive Digital marketing?

Section D: Social media and other forms of DM

1) Explain how Petrotrade can take advantage of social media to reach out to its customers?

2) In your opinion, should the company invest more in social media and other digital marketing strands? Explain why or why not
APPENDIX 2: GUIDED INTERVIEW FOR PETROTRADE’S NON-MANAGERIAL STAFF

7.1.3 Digital marketing adoption from the non-managerial Petrotrade staff perspective

7.1.3.1 Background information
Petrotrade embarked on digital marketing communication. This study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of the digital marketing channel used at Petrotrade. To attain the goal of the study, we considered to interview Petrotrade staff who use the digital marketing tool when interacting with the customers.

Digital Marketing is defined by Royle and Laing (2014) as the use of digital technologies to create an integrated, targeted, and measurable communication to acquire and retain customers while building deeper relationships with them. Digital marketing can be used in the form of social media, website, and search engine optimisation thus companies leverage of the use of technology to increase sales.

7.1.3.2 Questions

1) Describe and explain the digital communication mostly used channels at Petrotrade?

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2) Explain in your opinion management’s attitude towards the effective use of digital marketing tools?

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3) Describe and explain customer’s attitude toward the use of Digital marketing channels such as email and website.
4) Describe and explain customer’s attitude toward the use of Digital marketing channels such as email and website?

5) Describe and explain how Petrotrade’s use of DM tools can increase brand awareness.
APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PETROTRADE BULK ORDER CUSTOMERS

7.1.4 Digital marketing adoption from the Petrotrade bulk order customers

7.1.4.1 Background information

Petrotrade has embarked on digital marketing communication. This study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of the digital marketing channel used at Petrotrade. To attain the goal of the study it was considered to interview Petrotrade’s valued dealer customers. Findings from the study would be recommended so as customer relationship.

Digital Marketing is defined by Royle and Laing (2014) as the use of digital technologies to create an integrated, targeted and measurable communication to acquire and retain customers while building deeper relationships with them. Digital marketing can be used in the form of social media, website, and search engine optimisation thus companies leverage of the use of technology to increase sales.

7.1.4.2 Questions

1) How did you get to know about Petrotrade?

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2) Describe the digital marketing tools that you have used to interact with Petrotrade?

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3) Explain how you receive feedback from Petrotrade?
4) Explain how you receive feedback from Petrotrade?

5) Explain how digital marketing help Petrotrade to be a household brand?

6) In your opinion how do you compare Petrotrade’s use of DM to its competitors?