

**THE SOUTH AFRICAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION IN THE AGE OF  
SOCIAL MEDIA**

**by**

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## DECLARATION

Student number: 47027487

I declare that **'THE SABC TELEVISION IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA'** is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature

Date: 28 July 2016

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'L Lefowa', written in a cursive style.

(Miss L Lefowa)

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my partner Mavhungu Mathelemusa and my sweet children, Vhuhone and Luande; my wonderful parents Peter and Suzan Lefowa, as well as my brothers, Ramukosi and Nkhumeleni Lefowa.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## **Abstract**

This is an exploratory study conducted to assess the way in which social media could enhance the experience for audiences of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) television drama. This study focused on Facebook and Twitter since they are two of the top five social media networks that are popular in the country and which have the potential to offer television more mileage in terms of communicating with its audience and extending its reach.

The guiding theory for this study was uses and gratifications theory. This theory was employed to assist in assessing the opportunities that exist for SABC television drama, as well as to assess the ways in which the audience believe social media could be helpful in interacting with SABC television drama.

The results for this study are interesting in that the majority of respondents believed that having a hashtag on screen during a drama broadcast would help to increase interactivity with the programme, as it could help direct audiences to the correct interactive space for that programme and they would be able to share their ideas and comments on the drama directly with the producers, making feedback immediate. It was interesting to note that the respondents believed that they could interact with SABC television drama for information relating to the story.

The findings suggest that SABC television drama needs to actively adopt social media in its programmes for maximum interaction. There is also the need for an understanding of how they Facebook and Twitter could be embedded in SABC drama.

**KEY TERMS:**

new media,

social media,

social television,

Facebook,

Twitter,

television drama,

interactive television,

backchannel,

audience segmentation,

now generation,

global citizen,

broadcasting,

convergence,

digital terrestrial television

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BCCSA	Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa
BDM	Broadcasting digital migration
COO	Chief operating officer
DTT	Digital terrestrial television (or digital terrestrial transmission)
EDTV	Enhanced definition television
GCEO	Group chief executive officer
HDTV	High definition television
IBA	Independent Broadcasting Authority
ICASA	Independent Communications Authority of South Africa
ICT	Information and communications technology
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
Itv	Interactive television
LSM	Living Standard Measure
NBC	Namibian Broadcasting Corporation
NFC	Near-field communication
PSB	Public Service Broadcasting
SA	South Africa

SAARF	South African Audience Research Foundation
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SATRA	South African Telecommunications Authority
SCA	Supreme Court of Appeal
SDTV	Standard-definition television
SNS	Social network services
SOS	Save our SABC
STB	Set-top box
TDRWG	The Digital Rights Working Group
TV	Television
UGC	User -generated content
UGT	Uses and gratifications theory
UHF	Ultra high frequency
VHF	Very high frequency
WWW	World Wide Web

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# **1. CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

## **1.1. INTRODUCTION**

The broadcasting industry in South Africa has undergone major changes since the political transition to democracy in 1994. Throughout the apartheid era, the government had exclusive control of the airwaves, regulating and governing the provision of broadcasting services (Wasserman & De Beer 2005:36). The primary reason for the apartheid government maintaining control over broadcasting services was that radio and television are noted as being very persuasive communication media, and collectively have the potential to influence society (ibid).

After the 1994 elections, the broadcasting industry in South Africa experienced a transition away from the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) as a government controlled broadcaster towards being a public service broadcaster (PSB), which communicates stories to the public through programmes that are broadcast with an editorial mandate to inform, educate and entertain audiences (s 7.64 of the South African Broadcasting Act 1999 [South Africa 1999]). The Broadcasting Acts of 1993 and 1999 sought to clarify the powers of the minister of Communications, who is a government representative, positioning the minister to represent the public of South Africa, that is, the SABC is owned and controlled by the people of South Africa and it should broadcast in their interests (South Africa 1999:s 3.2). The SABC broadcasts in the interests of the South African people; this is a massive responsibility and the SABC often finds itself being challenged in terms of this responsibility, especially during election time.

In early 2000, the shift from analogue to digital technologies not only resulted in the emergence and growing popularity of new media, but also of social media, which is the central focus of this research. However, in South Africa, broadcasting digital migration (BDM) has not yet taken place although testing has begun at the SABC. In June 2015, during a three-day information and communication technology (ICT) summit in Bloemfontein, the Minister of Communications, Faith Muthambi, announced that BDM would take place in 2015. However by the end 2015, the BDM had still not happened. It is not certain when this will indeed happen, as every successive Minister sets a new target date, which have to date

not been met. Indeed, South Africa missed the global deadline of 15 June 2015, which had been extended from 2013, during former Communications Minister, Dina Pule's, term in office.

Broadcasting corporations have to adapt to new technology advances. Redinger (2009:2) states that "it is important to provide PSBs with the opportunity to make full use of all the possibilities offered by the new information technology devices", such as the internet, tablets, cell phones and video games. Social media are associated with the internet and may be categorised into social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter and blogs, on the one hand, and video-sharing sites such as YouTube on the other (Melanson 2003). Social media have continued to challenge mainstream television with content innovations that break all the rules of television formats.

Social media have made it easier for audiences to communicate around the world with time and location no longer being a barrier. This becomes evident when there is a global event or breaking news, with people around the world talking about it on Twitter and/or Facebook. A recent example is the #feesmustfall campaign by higher education students campaigning for free education. This campaign was supported by students at universities in other parts of the world, such as the Sidney University in Sidney Australia, as well as Fort Harcourt in Nigeria and many other international universities. These social media are changing the way audiences interact with content within the global community, with Facebook and Twitter connecting people and ideas irrespective of geography (Boyle & DeMers 2012).

Owing to television and internet synergies that have transformed the way television communicates with its audience, opportunities for audience feedback and engagement with programmes has increased. "Social media audiences view traditional media organisations as collaborators; they expect to be able to access, link to and aggregate broadcast content in ways relevant to their unique interest" (The Digital Rights Working Group 2006:5). Public and commercial broadcasters are developing multi-platform processes that enrich audience participation in ways that were previously not possible.

Social media platforms are proficient in meeting the demands of the ordinary consumer. According to Meier (2013:[sa]), South Africans spend seven hours a week on social networking – the equivalent of about one-third of the time spent viewing television. Facebook has emerged as the most popular site in South Africa, with 9.4 million active users, while Twitter is growing in popularity – moving from 2.4 million active users in 2012 to 5.5 million active users in 2013, and ranked as the 13th most popular site in South Africa (World Wide Worx & Fuseware 2013). This suggests that social media are the future or, at least, they constitute a large percentage of the future media that will complement television and radio. Public broadcasters need to start strategising on how they can exploit social media to promote their content better and create an interactive experience for their various audiences. Melanson (2003) agrees that social media are constantly evolving to connect as many different platforms and people as possible, and one of their most defining characteristics is interactivity.

In view of the way television has changed, it is difficult to consider linear broadcasting in isolation from other modes of content distribution to audiences. The technological changes in the distribution model are affecting media forms and the way content is consumed. A number of television broadcasters such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) have rushed to embrace 360-degree commissioning, which entails producing content for different media platforms from commissioning to broadcast in order to reach all audiences with different technological devices such as Facebook, Twitter, You-Tube, iPad, cell phones, Xbox and many others. The SABC still uses social network devices in its television content merely as an add on, meaning that it creates pages for its television content for interactivity, but is not active in interacting with audiences.

Some SABC television drama series have not yet developed a Web presence, meaning that they do not have a Facebook page, a Twitter account or a website where they can highlight their current and upcoming storylines. However, soap operas have developed a Web presence. For example, *Generations*, *Isidingo*, *7de Laan* and *Muvhango* have their own websites but they do not actively promote Facebook or Twitter links on screen while being broadcast. Audiences end up searching for the drama's Twitter presence using the hashtag handle for the show; often times there is more than one hashtag and it is difficult to identify which is the correct one to use to interact with the producers and other audiences.

Perhaps the reason for this is that it is not yet clear as to whose responsibility it is to drive online interactivity – the independent producer, the channel or the SABC drama department; nor is it clear how this is incorporated in the production budget for small productions of 13 or 26 episodes. Furthermore, it is not clear how audience market share is measured on social media, hence there is little interest in investment in social media. Clarity on this issue is important so that television dramas can take advantage of the opportunities presented by social media to remain relevant and in touch with their audiences in the age of social media.

It is imperative for the SABC to note what society does with the media and for what reason, rather than just taking account of what the digital media are, as it might use international standards only to find that its audience was expecting a different service on those platforms.

This research focuses on social media networks such as Twitter and Facebook in order to explore the way social media can enhance the viewing experience of SABC television drama audiences. For the sake of this research the term “drama” will be used as a plural noun.

## **1.2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Television has traditionally been an important facilitator of social interaction, and a popular source of conversation (Wohn & Na 2011). Given the popularity of social media, it is not surprising that many television programmes have developed an online presence through Facebook and Twitter. This has resulted in social media becoming an essential tool for enabling broadcasting to complement traditional media effectively, thereby changing the way people consume television. People who own smart phones no longer depend on television for information, education and entertainment; they now have the alternative to use their mobile phones, tablets and video games to stay connected to social media in order to be informed, educated and entertained.

Twitter and Facebook are the place of measurable “buzz” phenomena that correspond to a rapid concentration of attention on some content (Beauvisage, Beuscart & Maillard 2011:4). Hence, SABC television drama can use those social networks to create a buzz on their new dramas as well as events around those dramas. For example, episode promos could be downloaded on these social networks to create that buzz and anticipation among the

audience. However, this does need to be done creatively, as they are currently done without giving due consideration to social networking. Twitter and Facebook make it possible for television drama to gain insight into the audience reaction to key moments of the show at a temporal resolution which cannot be matched by any other audience measurement approach (Harrington, Highfield & Bruns 2013). SABC television drama could use Twitter and Facebook when presenting drama that attempts to push boundaries or that challenges the status quo in order to gain clear insight into both their audience's tastes and opinions. Twitter and Facebook could also help with audience rating analysis, as market researchers would then not only have to rely on television audience rating to determine the success or failure of a drama but could also use Twitter to estimate programme followers and opinions.

The media shift from analogue to digital technology has resulted in television broadcasters finding it difficult to consider traditional broadcasting systems as distinct from other modes of content distribution to audiences, such as the internet and mobile devices. However, the SABC has not yet migrated although testing has begun. There have been issues with set-top box (STB) distribution at the government level, as well as with the Regulation Act, which has not yet been finalised. On the SABC's part, the accounting authority, that is, the board, keeps changing if not every year at least every two years, creating instability within the organisation. Issues related to the STB include who will manufacture the 5 million free STBs for government recipients, as well as the digital migration policy. Free-to-air e.tv believes that the free STBs will prohibit it from encryption (Dodds 2015). According to Proulx and Shepatin (2012:10), "social media have become one of the highest corsage media with television". Therefore, the SABC has to keep pace with and start adopting social media if television content (drama) is to remain effective in interacting with the audience.

The current changes in several aspects of the broadcasting landscape have also influenced television structure and functioning, such as the number of channels and distribution platforms, the innovation in formats and business models, as well as the improved relationship between the media and the audience (Napoli 2012:[sa]). Furthermore, these changes have provided a high level of interactivity, which in turn has increased the connection of networks and content programmes with the audience.

Although radio still dominates television in terms of listeners, television remains the medium of choice for many South Africans. Not only is television penetration high but engagement

with television is relatively deep as well (National Association of Broadcasters 2014:10). This is clear from conversations that are often overheard between commuters on public transport in relation to television content, especially the drama.

The interactivity inherent in many social media networks creates a “backchannel” of audience data that provides participants in the audience marketplace with a unique flow of information about a wide range of audience dimensions (Napoli 2012:[sa]). According to Proulx and Shepatin (2012:11), backchannel is “the real-time chat that is happening within social media channels during the time that the episode is broadcast”. Proulx and Shepatin (2012:10) are of the view that “social media can provide real time backchannel which exposes the conversations taking place in our once-isolated living rooms and connects households around the world into a single, opt-in co-viewing event”.

The United Nations Broadband commission report finds that just over a quarter (25.5%) of South African households had internet access in 2014, placing the country fifth in Africa and 44th among developing countries as regards household internet access, and just above the 24 per cent average for the 128 developing countries measured in the report.(Matthew.2013). Regarding fixed broadband penetration, the report ranked South Africa 111th worldwide, with 2.2 out of every 100 people having fixed broadband subscriptions – well below the global average of 9.1. However, for mobile broadband, South Africa ranked 62nd worldwide, with a connection rate of 26 out of every 100 people compared to the global average of 22 (Matthew.2013). This shows that a relatively small number of people in South Africa have access to the internet. According to the African Economic Outlook (2015), South Africa was ranked at number three with Nigeria leading, followed by Mauritius. It is unacceptable for South Africa to be ranked third place in terms of internet penetration in Africa, bearing in mind that it is Africa’s second largest economy after Nigeria. According to the latest projections from the IMF, South Africa’s GDP currently sits at around \$275 billion versus Egypt’s GDP of \$270 billion. Nigeria holds top position with a GDP of \$335 billion (The big three.2016). Whatever the case, SABC television drama has to adapt to cater for this niche market of 47 per cent.

It is thus important not only for the SABC to strive to reach both new and existing audiences in entirely new ways, but also to consider new business models such as online, user-generated content or download-to-own opportunities. This could assist the SABC in revenue generation in the competitive environment in which it finds itself, as the government grant, licence fees and advertisements will eventually be unable to sustain either the SABC's human capital or its business operations.

The Digital Rights Working Group (2006:4) states that social media open opportunities for PSBs' need to interact with their audiences in new ways and to further their mission, while expanding the breadth and depth of their long-term financial sustainability. Opportunities for public broadcasting in the social media space are endless. Therefore, PSBs cannot think of content in isolation from the new ways in which audiences consume it.

Iosifidis (2010:1) states that social media assist PSBs to retain audience share, reach new audiences and develop on-demand services, while enabling them to create a stronger partnership with civil society, serving an extended form of citizenship, and enhancing their online advertising. "Throughout the industrialised world, the deployment of innovative new technologies such as high capacity computer networks, mobile wireless communications with hundreds of channels serve television systems, and increasingly access online services" (Berman & Witzner 1995:1691). Hence, a number of broadcasters around the world such as the Norwegian broadcaster, European public broadcasters and the BBC have moved online, thus allowing for binge viewing of their television series (Evans 2011:34). Multichoice does this through its Explorer on which you can record, pause, rewind and fast-forward, as well as catch up on episodes that one might have missed. This is having both a positive and a negative impact on television show ratings.

The arrival of social media has disrupted the television experience, with both positive and negative effects, resulting in a change to the way content is packaged. In view of the environment that SABC television drama operates in, it has not been exempt from this social media disruption. The SABC is not only regulated by the Broadcasting Regulatory Framework, which is currently under review to include digital broadcasting, but it is also defined by the broader economic context, and the constantly changing broadcast media and ICT environment (SABC 2013 [sa]). The transition to digital terrestrial television (DTT) will have a significant effect on the form and nature of broadcasting services regulation in the future (ICASA 2013:5). The policy review of the communications act is being conducted by ICASA, which is the regulatory body. This review began on 8 December 2011 and is still ongoing.

SABC television drama is currently operating in a media market that is characterised by migration from analogue to digital television, even though this migration has not yet occurred. The establishment of the internet as a global media platform, and the emergence of new technologies and new players, has led to audience and revenue fragmentation. Consequently, the rating of audiences is no longer limited to the television box but includes online viewing as well, and revenue is no longer generated from advertising, licence fees and government grants but from many different funding sources such as online content, sponsorship and trade exchanges.

The kinds of services and products offered by social media provide the audience with a richer entertainment experience, on-demand video, interactive advertising and voting, as well as the possibility of interacting with any type of content available, which is not restricted by remoteness (García-Avilés 2012:430). This enriched viewing experience is exactly what audiences of SABC television drama will appreciate.

The SABC is a public broadcaster, with the highest market share in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region according to the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC), thus it ought to be developing a social media presence in its broadcasting (Sekete 2013). This is further motivated by the need to cultivate a setting for other SADC countries such as Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe which, with the exception of Tanzania, Mauritius and Namibia, have already migrated to

digital terrestrial television (DTT), are other SADC countries looking at the June 2016 deadline.

As much as it seems like every broadcaster in the world has adapted to digital media in their television content, the SABC has been slow in embracing the digital era. However, Berger (2010:7) mentions that there is no rush for African countries to undertake the very costly and highly complex move from the traditional model to digital model.

This statement does not help the Republic of South Africa, because we have since been left behind and have missed so many deadlines, even the ones that we set for ourselves. Despite the fact that Berger considers it to be costly, it has to be done as it is in the interests of the people of South Africa. DTT is here to stay and the sooner South Africa migrates the better if it wants to be compatible with other broadcasters around the world and on the continent.

The integration of social media into television content could be one of the crucial motivators for the SABC being able to interact with and retain its audience, especially the Global Citizen and Now Generation. The future of PBS is uncertain and the greatest single threat could be the risk of inactivity by being slow or too late to engage audiences online (Iosifidis 2010:15). It not only applies to the online context but to DTT as well that by the time the SABC finally implements BDM, the broadcaster might find itself playing catch up as every country in Africa will have migrated and the world will be broadcasting digitally.

Social media audiences view traditional media organisations as collaborators; that is, social media complement traditional media, they do not replace it. Television and internet synergies have transformed the way television communicates with its audience as there is increased opportunity for audience feedback and engagement with programmes. Now audiences expect to be able to access, link to and aggregate broadcast content in ways relevant to their unique interests. Public and commercial broadcasters are developing multi-platform processes such as user-generated content, on demand and catch up that enrich audience participation in different ways than used to be the experience for previous generations (Doyle 2010:3). Audiences do not have to make appointments to watch their favourite television drama because of the multi-platform-producing processes.

The relationship between social media and television audiences is a complex one, but there is room for improvement in this relationship, as producers and broadcasters continue to strategise on content and programming. When managed properly, social media can enrich audiences' perception of SABC television drama.

Public broadcasters need to extend their portfolio of platforms and channels if they want to reach out to all generations, including the youth (Bardoel & d'Haenens 2008:351). Therefore, this research explores the way social media can enhance SABC television drama audiences' interactive experience.

The media play a major role in people's life and they have found a way to embed themselves in it. Television, as a cultural tool, can be used in empowering ways that inform, educate and entertain viewers or listeners, and has lodged itself in the public consciousness. Television brings different cultures and beliefs into the viewers' living rooms, and this allows for a constant exchange of changing values, beliefs and identities between the viewers and the stories that are broadcast (Gillespie 2005:138).

It is important to understand that an audience is not static; it continually evolves as media offerings evolve. Garcia-Aviles (2012:429) states that "the social networks provide a wide range of initiatives so that the public might engage by sharing, commenting, promoting or criticizing programs as well as elaborating their own material or getting involved in the design, production or distribution content". Because Twitter and Facebook allow for interaction between the audience and the fictional characters, the characters in a drama must have a Twitter and Facebook account in order to exploit this opportunity.

### **1.3. RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

The growing use of the internet and new media devices and the increased content that is now available on different platforms can only mean that convergence has arrived (Jenkins 2006:2). According to Doyle (2010:4), new media distribution opens up a number of possibilities for public broadcasters to offer a new kind of service and output to the audience. New media have the potential to offer audiences on-demand content, user-generated content, interactivity and flexible television viewing, ownership of content, intercontinental content sharing and lots of entertainment.

It is imperative to understand that in order to obtain the full impact of new media, a rollout of DTT needs to take place by the SABC. This could ensure that the digital divide that currently exists does not widen. As things stand currently, the dissemination of information, education and entertainment will be happening on different platforms, with those who are previously disadvantaged having access to only basic digital communication.

This does not, however, mean that research on the future of new media and the impact it will have on both the SABC and its audiences cannot be done. Nowadays, audiences do not have to rely on mainstream television to be entertained and they do not have to make appointments to view. This will pose a challenge to television programmers, as audiences will not binge view their favourite drama series, as these will be online for viewing at any time.

#### **1.4. RELEVANCE OF THE TOPIC TO COMMUNICATION SCIENCE**

Television is a mass communication channel which, with the advent of social media, has to realign itself in order to remain relevant in respect of the drama it offers its audience. Social media have influenced the way people communicate and the ease with which information can be disseminated through digital devices such as tablets, computers, cellular phones and video games (Doyle 2010:7). In this case, 'social media' is a suitable term for media communications that will be used to explore the way the interactive opportunities offered by social media could enhance the SABC television drama audience. This study intends to encourage other researchers in the field of Communication Science to conduct further research into the area of social media, with specific reference to South African public service broadcasting.

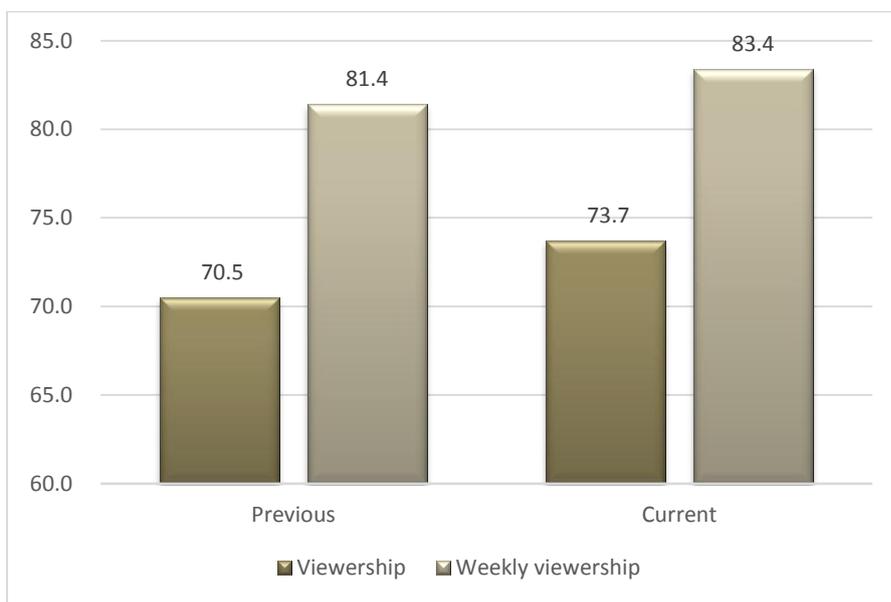
#### **1.5. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to explore the way in which social media could enhance the interactive experience of the SABC television drama audience.

The findings of this study could benefit the SABC and other African public broadcasters in the development of strategies to adopt social media into their television drama experience, as that is where the future of television seems to be headed. This is not to suggest that new media have the potential to replace mainstream television, but rather that they complement television because there is still a large number of people who prefer traditional media to online media (Doyle 2010:4). This could be as a result of the cost of data, which is expensive, as well as the cost of smart phone devices.

According to the South African Audience Research Foundation (SAARF), in the 2013/2014 period, television viewership climbed from 70 per cent to 73.7 per cent, with growth being recorded in KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Gauteng. Across any given week, television viewing is up significantly, from 81.4 per cent to 83.4 per cent, especially in Mpumalanga, Limpopo and Gauteng.

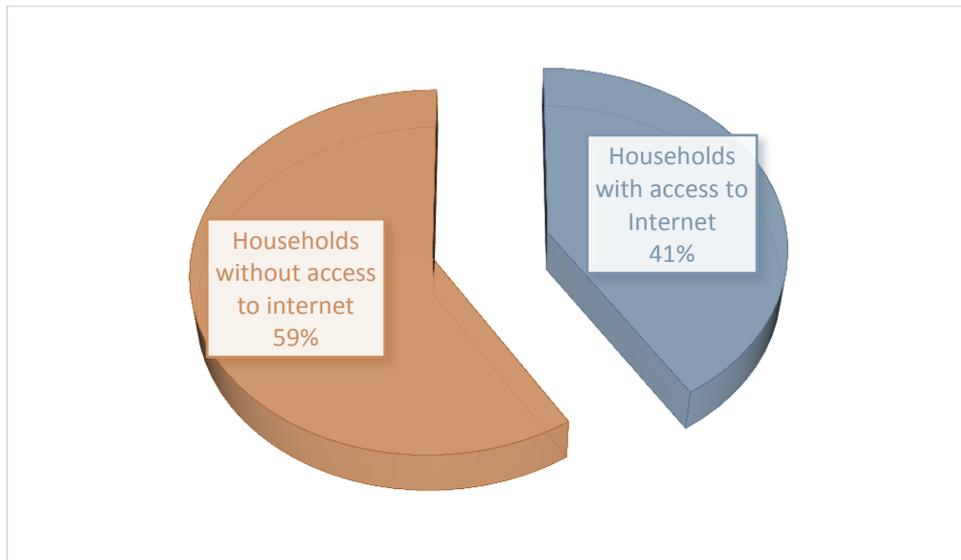
**Figure 1.1: South African television viewership growth – 2013/2014**



Source: Extracted from SAARF 2013/2014

Duff (2014:[sa]) states that 40.9 per cent of South African households have at least one member who either uses the internet at home or is able to access it elsewhere.

**Figure 1.2: Internet penetration per household in South Africa**



Source: Extracted from SA Goodnews (2013)

## 1.6. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This is an exploratory and descriptive study that aims to explore the way social media would enhance the viewing experience of the SABC television drama audiences. The aims of the research are the following:

- To assess the interactive opportunities offered by Twitter and Facebook with regard to the SABC television drama audience.
- To examine the way in which SABC television drama could improve interaction with the audience through the use of Twitter and Facebook.
- To explore the way in which social media could enhance the viewing experience of SABC television drama audiences.
- To determine the reasons why audiences would interact with SABC television drama on Twitter or/and Facebook.

The research approach used is applied communication research, because it is intended to explore the way social media could enhance the audience's viewing experience of television drama through the use of a survey questionnaire.

### **1.7. RESEARCH PROBLEM**

The research problem for the study is that the SABC is not taking advantage of the opportunities that social media offer to enhance the viewing experience of television drama audiences. This research problem came about after the researcher noticed how popular social media have become in creating conversations and as a marketing tool for both local and international television drama. She then embarked on a journey to explore how and why SABC television drama is not taking advantage of this medium.

### **1.8. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The research questions the study intends to answer are the following:

- What are the interactive opportunities offered by social media to enhance the SABC television drama audience? That is, those dramas that do not yet use social media.
- How can SABC television drama improve its interaction with the audience on Twitter?
- How can social media enhance the viewing experience of the SABC television drama audience?
- Why would people interact with SABC television drama on Twitter or/and Facebook?

## **1.9. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF THE STUDY**

In research, theories are often used from which to develop assumptions to guide the researcher. Such theory serves as a rationale for the research work. The examination of these research questions is founded on uses and gratifications theory (Du Plooy 2006:282). The examination of the research questions stated in section 1.8 is therefore founded on uses and gratifications theory and its application to SABC television dramas.

Uses and gratifications theory (UGT) provides a framework for assessing SABC television drama, and this theoretical framework is employed to explore and provide an explanation for *the way social media would enhance the viewing experience of the SABC television drama audience.*

UGT states that diverse needs, or reasons, motivate audiences to select different media and media content that will best suit their personal needs (Wimmer & Dominick 2003:403). With the advent of new media and the excessive choice provided for audiences in terms of content, television could find itself fighting for survival.

The theory comprises five basic tenets and assumptions: audiences are active in their media choices; audiences' choices are goal-driven; media choices fulfil multiple needs; audiences are aware of their needs when choosing a particular medium; and the needs are exclusively related to specific media (McLeod & Becker 1981:7). Audiences are not passive viewers or listeners; as the number of media to choose from has increased they have become more active, and they can easily decide what to do with any medium. For example, with many television channels available, audiences have made it hard for producers to sustain their interest in a 24-minute show, as they switch from channel to channel at any given point.

## **1.10. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study draws on a quantitative research approach through the use of a self-administered questionnaire (Du Plooy 2006:189). Such a survey is useful in describing the characteristics of a population and makes large samples feasible. In addition, it reduces the bias that might result from the personal characteristics of interviewers and their interviewing skills (Du Plooy 2006:189). Furthermore, the questions are straightforward enough to be comprehended solely

based on printed instructions and definitions. However, in order to ensure this, a pilot study was conducted to test the questionnaire. This is largely because independent variables cannot be manipulated the way they are in laboratory experiments (Wimmer & Dominick 2003:168). It is also a fact that inappropriate wording, spelling or arrangement of questions within a questionnaire could produce biased results. This was something that the researcher ensured was not the case with the questionnaire used in this study – hence the pilot study.

The self-administered questionnaire was used to collect specific data from respondents who provided answers to the research questions posed in section 1.3.3. Surveys are used for descriptive, explanatory and exploratory purposes (Babbie 1992), hence this study is applied to describe how the SABC viewers explain their viewing patterns.

A convenience sample of 50 key respondents was selected from Northriding, a suburb of Randburg, Gauteng; because this is where the researcher resides and it was convenient and inexpensive for the researcher to administer the questionnaires. This accessible population was selected because of its unique diversity in having both ‘now generation’ and ‘global citizen’ audiences whom the researcher believed would be able to answer the research questions posed in the questionnaire. These concepts are further defined in Chapter 2.

Since this was not sponsored research, it was more feasible for the researcher to conduct it in a place that did not accrue travelling expenses.

## **1.11. SUMMARY AND OUTLINE OF CHAPTER 2**

This chapter has outlined the research problem and has given the background to the study. It further described the theory-forming foundation for the study, which is based on the fact that social media are becoming embedded in our daily lives and the way we consume television programmes, as well as the way the SABC can take advantage of social media. This chapter also presented the significance of the study, the theoretical framework and the objectives of the study. The chapter has acknowledged the gaps, which will be addressed throughout the study.

Chapter 2 provides the operational definitions of the main concepts used in this dissertation

## **1.12. OVERVIEW OF OTHER CHAPTERS**

Chapter 3 engages with the theoretical framework and the literature review concerning the subject of the research. The chapter reviews the literature available relating to the interactive experience offered by social media, the SABC television drama audience, UGT in relation to social media and television, the laws governing South African broadcasting and the SABC in the face of competition.

In Chapter 4 a more detailed account of the quantitative research approach that was used will be provided in order to better evaluate and analyse the data collected.

Chapter 5 presents the findings of the research study, while Chapter 6 concludes the research and provides suggestions and recommendations for further research into communication, social media and television drama.

## **2. CHAPTER 2: DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the main concepts used in the study are defined. The purpose is to clarify the concepts, especially concerning their use and application in South Africa. The concepts defined have been chosen because of their relevance to the process of using social media to enhance the television experience.

### **2.2. NEW MEDIA**

The SABC operates in a media market which is characterised by the migration from analogue to digital TV. The establishment of the internet as a global media platform and the emergence of new technologies and new players have led to audience and revenue fragmentation.

The SABC still finds itself in a position where it cannot compete effectively in this space. Reasons for this include

- a policy and regulations framework which is under review
- the digital terrestrial television (DTT) rollout
- the funding model
- value chain implications and
- human resources issues.

According to Lievrouw and Livingstone (2006:2), “New Media are the artefacts or devices used to communicate”. While the production of content on the internet raises new questions for public broadcasting, it also offers unusual opportunities to develop the public broadcaster’s brand, extend its reach and improve its impact with its audience. Iosifidis (2010:1) states that new media help public broadcasters to retain audience share, reach new audiences and develop on-demand services, while enabling them to create a stronger partnership with civil society and serve an extended form of citizenship. “Throughout the industrialised world, the deployment of innovative new technologies such as high capacity computer networks and mobile wireless communications serve television systems with

hundreds of channels, and increasingly access online services” (Berman & Witzner 1995:1691). Instead of the SABC having only three channels on each frequency, it will be able to have multiple ones but those channels should have content and the SABC does not currently seem to have content that will sit on these channels. The reason for this is that the archived content is being broadcast on the Encore channel, which is currently on DSTV; although the tender book was released in October 2014, it is still not clear what the holdup is, with some speculating that this is a procurement process gone wrong. Encore channel is an SABC channel that broadcast from channel 156 on DSTV and it broadcast the best television content from the 1980s and 1990s., launched on the 11 May 2015 (SABC News. 2015).

This definition demonstrates that new media broadcasting platforms are proficient in meeting the demands of the ordinary consumer. South Africans spend seven hours a week on social networking, about one-third of the time spent viewing television. This indicates that the internet is the future, or at least it will constitute a large percentage of future media; thus public broadcasters should start strategising on how they will exploit their content on these mediums. This is not, however, to suggest that the process will plain sailing as it will not; but it is a move in the right direction to be able to promote SABC television content while meeting the citizens’ need of economic upliftment by providing information, education and entertainment.

According to The Digital Rights Working Group (TDRWG 2006:4), new media open opportunities for public broadcasters to be able to interact with their audiences in new ways and enable public broadcasters to further their mission by expanding the breadth and depth of their long-term financial sustainability. Not only can public broadcasters strive to reach both new and existing audiences in entirely new ways but will also be able to introduce new business models, such as online or download-to-own opportunities. Hence, the opportunities for public broadcasting in new media space are endless. For public broadcasters to embrace new media fully in their content, a shift from analogue to digital is vital, hence public broadcasters cannot continue to request the television industry for new content in isolation from the new ways the audience consume content.

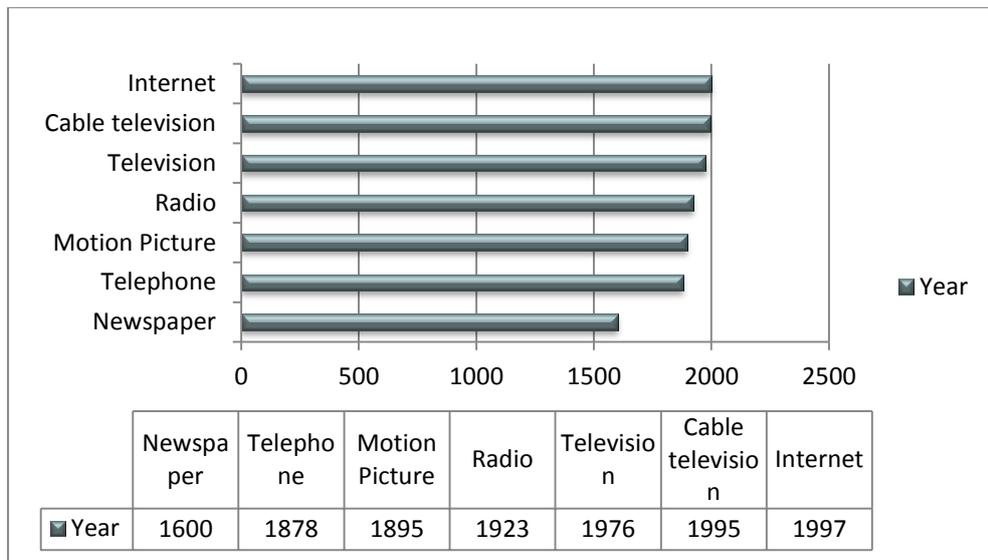
The advent of new media has disrupted the television experience both positively and negatively, resulting in a change to the way content is packaged. SABC television content is not exempt from new media disruption, as the environment it operates in is not only determined by the Broadcasting Regulatory Framework but also defined by the broader economic context and the constantly changing broadcast media.

SABC television content needs to re-launch itself for a new young and techno-savvy generation that sees everything from a technology perspective. To keep the young audience, SABC television needs to introduce interesting programming that fits into its audiences' daily lives and newly acquired habits. Murdock (2004:20) argue that the advent of the new media digital space will threaten the existence of the public broadcaster and result in it closing down in the future. This is if the implementation of BDM continues to take a back seat and is does not happen on time.

The more the SABC as an institution depends on sponsorship and advertising for its funding, the more it will be under pressure to achieve high audience ratings, which will result in it abandoning the mandate of informing, educating and entertaining all South Africans of all ages, races, cultures and demographics. New media can provide on-demand, user-generated content, interactive and flexible television, ownership of content, intercontinental content sharing and lots of entertainment while informing and educating. According to Doyle (2010:4), new media distribution opens up a number of possibilities for public broadcasters to offer a new kind of service and output to the audience.

SABC television content needs to take advantage of the new media devices such as cell phones, tablets and computers to distribute television content in order to retain audience share, reach new audiences of different demographics, and develop on-demand services while strengthening its dominance in the public domain.

**Figure 2.1: Media evolution in South Africa**



Source: Fourie (2007:6)

The graph (fig. 2.1) indicates that the term ‘new media’ is not static. What used to be new media has now become old; the internet in years to come will be considered old media and there will be new media that are considered new. However, this graph does not suggest the end of any medium but rather the evolution of each medium.

### **2.3. SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media are defined as primarily internet or cellular phone-based applications and tools to share information among people, or as a website that does not just provide one with information, but interacts with one while providing that information (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010:60). Safko and Brake (2009:6) observe that social media “are platforms or channels of mass communications where communities of people gather online to share information, knowledge, and opinions using conversational media”. Weinberg (2009:1) notes that social media “relate to the sharing of information, experiences, and perspectives throughout community-oriented Web sites”. Comm (2009:3) defines social media as “content that has been created by its audience”.

One example of this is the SABC, which had an entertainment programme called *Zone'd* where audiences used to send out content, mostly singing and dancing videos, and the best performance was broadcast during the show.

Social media include popular networking websites such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram and others. These involve blogging and forums as well as any aspect of an interactive presence which allows individuals to engage in conversations with one another, often as a discussion over a particular blog post, news article, or event.

Social media have compressed the distance between people, as they are not only able to communicate with people in their living rooms while watching television or listening to the radio or other things, but also with people in different towns, cities, countries and continents. It is particularly interesting to note how easy it is to join in as well as withdraw from these social media networks.

Unlike some traditional media (with the exception of radio) that offer a one-way experience in which media outlets broadcast information for public use, social media offer a two-way immediate interactive experience allowing viewers to interact directly with the originators of the shared information (Comm 2009:2). In this case it would be the SABC or the producers that the consumer/viewer interacts with directly. Social media foster the exchange of word-of-mouth messages by creating a virtual community in which consumers may interact with each other (Goldenburg, Libai & Muller 2001). When SABC television dramas finally embrace social media in their content there will be interaction between viewers about the programme, thereby strengthening the programme as well as helping the content creators determine whether or not they have achieved their intended goal.

Undoubtedly, social media have dynamically changed the way audiences share ideas and interact with television. Chayko (2008) states that social media have enabled people around the world to meet and connect with others. The evolution of social networks allows for personalised interactions between the producers of content and viewers.

Although social networks were first adopted by teenagers, a growing population of 25 to 34 year-olds and white-collar professionals now also use them, which demonstrates the applicability of social networks to everyday life (Kim 2008). This growing trend continues to

have immense repercussions for content producers and broadcasters. Because social media networks are not regulated and do not require operating licences, anyone can be a content producer. This is visible in the number of videos that people take on a daily basis using their cell phones and other mobile devices. The biggest threat, however, is that posed for news reporting, as everyone has become a journalist and the code of conduct and ethics of journalism are compromised every day as video sharing is no longer limited to mainstream television or broadcasting.

Social media allow people to keep in touch with friends, communities and even relatives, changing the way people interact with others (Dewing 2012:3). Moreover, social media continue to have an impact on how content is produced and consumed as they challenge traditional content-producing formats.

### **2.3.1. Facebook**

One of the most prevalent social network sites is Facebook, which enjoys 11.8 million active users in South Africa (World Wide Worx 2015). Of those Facebook users whose gender is identifiable, 5.6million males and 5.6 females use the platform (World Wide Worx 2015). Facebook is a social networking site that allows people to post significant amounts of personal information and, unlike most social networking communities; it allows that information to be posted publicly (Gross & Acquisti 2006). The user can control who they want to be ‘friends’ with, what information can be seen and by whom, what their status is and much more. Facebook was officially launched in August 2005 in the United States by Mark Zuckerberg and Dustin Moskovitz, but was originally incepted in 2004 as ‘thefacebook’ by Mark Zuckerberg to help Harvard University students get to know each other and in 2006 it became available to everyone (Croft. 2007).

Facebook is a social media network which provides its members with a simple inexpensive way to share news, ideas and issues related to their work and to interact with their supporters (Mergel 2013:16). Facebook allows one to ‘befriend’ people by searching for their name or email address, which makes it imperative for people to use their real names so it can be easy for them to be found on the network, especially when attempting to make contact with someone you have not seen in a long time.

This personal information plays a vital role in enhancing interaction with other people on Facebook, as people are looking for people who might share the same values as them and create a sense of belonging; however, sometimes it is people who don't share same ideas and ideologies.

Many celebrities have fought on Facebook because of what other celebrities like them have posted. (This is not to say that it is only celebrities that fight on this platform – so do people in general.) For example, when Vinette Ebrahim who plays Charmaine on the popular SABC 2 soap *7de Laan* was called racist by fans of singer Sunette Bridges, when Sunette posted on her Facebook page about the murder statistic for white South Africans in 2014:

*Sunette wrote: "While the whole world is celebrating the start of a brand new year*

*I would like you to spare a thought for the families of the 217 White South Africans who were butchered by Black Savages in 2014...*

*[and] 3 hours into 2015 they claimed another victim..."*

*An angry Vinette then replied: "Well, how does it feel Sunette Bridges to be wearing the shoe that my people wore for so long?*

*"How does it feel to be the downtrodden minority?  
How does it feel to be in fear for your life on a daily basis?*

*"How does it feel to be a second class citizen in the land of your birth ...*

(Adams 2015:5)

Facebook facilitates interpersonal communication by providing channels for public and private communication, feedback and peer acceptance. For example, there are three types of messaging service available through Facebook – the inbox, which works much like a private email system; the 'wall', which is a public area in a user's profile where friends can leave comments; and the 'live chat' function that operates much like an instant messaging system. Also, a basic form of feedback on Facebook is whether or not a user accepts or rejects a 'friend' invitation (Park, Kee & Valenzuela 2009). Often people accept invites from strangers just to have a large number of friends with whom they subsequently hardly if ever communicate with.

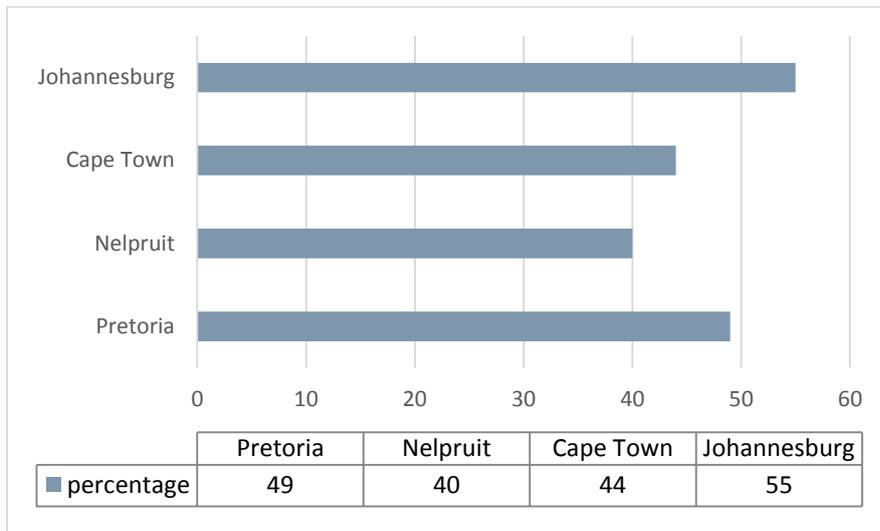
The wall on Facebook is a service used by all users. On this wall users update their status and a user's friends can also leave messages there. The message or status update on the wall is seen by all friends and sometimes by friends of friends, but only if the option to give access to only one's friends is not activated.

Once people are friends on Facebook they are free to send messages, view one another's photo albums, and see their profile in full, including information on who they are friends with. This service could be utilised considerably by SABC television dramas, as they could update their status with an episodic synopsis, up to a maximum of three lines, to promote the episode being broadcast on that day.

Facebook has been optimised for businesses' need to share information, interact with their fans and capture new audiences (Facebook Help Centre 2011). Facebook has the ability to expand the user's network, because it enables the user not only to search for people easily but also request friendship, which can be confirmed, declined or accepted later with the 'not now' tab (Park et al 2009). SABC television dramas would need dedicated social media personnel to monitor the account because, as a public broadcaster, they would have to accept every invite so as to strengthen their public ties. The SABC continues to miss the opportunities presented by Facebook at no cost for use but the personnel required. As a 24-hour, 7-days a week broadcaster, it might only need two dedicated personnel per channel working on a day/night shift. When a user is online her friends are able to see that they are logged on to Facebook.

The highest user growth is seen in the three key economic hubs, namely, Johannesburg with 55 per cent, Pretoria with 49 per cent and Cape Town with 44 per cent. Interestingly, Nelspruit continues to show high growth at 40 per cent.

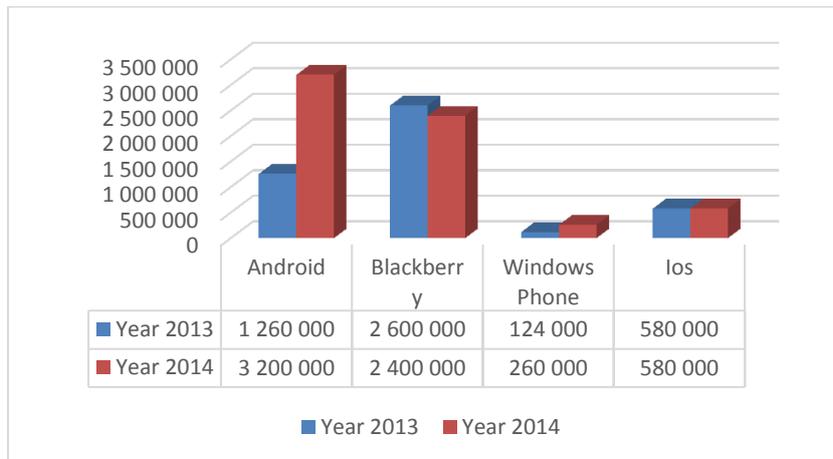
**Figure 2.2: Facebook growth in South Africa**



Source: World Wide Worx & Fuseware (2015)

The cell phone applications that Facebook accesses are popular. The single biggest platform for Facebook from a phone operating system point of view is Android, growing from 1.26 million in 2013 to 3.2 million in 2014. BlackBerry has fallen from the top position to second, but dropping only marginally in user numbers, from 2.6 million to 2.4 million. Windows Phone is beginning to emerge from below the radar, rising from 124 000 to 260 000 users, while iOS remains in third place, remaining relatively stable at 580 000 users.

**Figure 2.3: Phone application growth in South Africa 2013/2014**



Source: World Wide Worx & Fuseware (2015)

### 2.3.2. Twitter

Twitter is a social network that developed as a result of the popularity of Facebook, and is a site that allows a person to post small status updates of up to 140 characters, called ‘tweets’, using smartphones, computers, tablets or any other hand-held device (Thompson 2011:2). Twitter is one of the latest social media networks to have successfully penetrated society and it has challenged the way people communicate around the world, with 5.5 million active users in South Africa (World Wide Worx 2015). Twitter was launched in July 2006, two years after Facebook’s official launch and was founded by Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams and Biz Stone (Doyle 2011; Comm. 2009:18). The Twitter service was first used by Odeo employees as a form of internal communication and only in October 2006 did it go global (Comm & Burge 2009:19).

Twitter allows users to ‘follow’ other people’s feeds – a function similar to the ‘friend’ function on Facebook. Twitter and Facebook are where the young audience spend the majority of their time, and SABC television drama has to engage these two social media networks because they have the ability to encourage viewers to watch on-air programmes.

Twitter has grown in South Africa from 5.5 million to 6.6 million active users who use it in a variety of ways beyond what the investors anticipated (World Wide Worx & Fuseware 2013). Twitter can be accessed through smartphones, desktops or laptops that are internet enabled.

As with so many social media networks (SNSs), Twitter essentially combines three existing technologies, namely, real-time delivery notification dispatch software invented by Dorsey, instant messaging and text messaging (Mergel 2013:15). Twitter allows users to acquire and disseminate information instantly on its network while limiting all communication messages known as “tweets” to a meagre 140 characters/letters including spacing (Moody 2010). Twitter allows its users to contribute to the market of free ideas and to share their ideas, opinions and perspectives about anything from life, politics, societal events or even economics. This makes it more difficult for television programme producers to compete, as they are no longer the only source of information or entertainment. This has also challenged journalists, as well as the state, as they can no longer control the information that is disseminated to people.

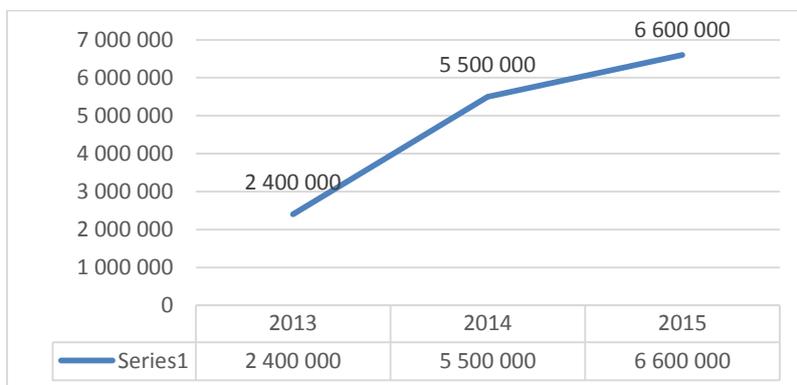
For example, the video of the police shooting a business robbery suspect ‘execution’ style in Krugersdorp, west of Johannesburg that went viral and now the state is questioning the authenticity of the video as it does not show what happened before this incident. The video shows the suspect shooting at police which means that some of the public sees the police action as self-defence. This comes at a time when the police are being shot and killed on a daily basis if not weekly (Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union 2015:7).

Twitter messages have a 140-character limit because this is the length limit for text messages sent between mobile phones. By limiting a tweet to 140 characters, Twitter ensures that someone who is reading tweets on their mobile phone gets the entire message. However, this has created a spelling issue as users try to abbreviate words in order to fit within the 140 characters and still make sense. On their website, Twitter accepts messages longer than 140 characters, but the only way to view these is on the website itself and not on cell phones as they will be abbreviated (Todd 2010:184). Also, some mobile devices can send messages of up to 160 characters, but standards vary from country to country and device to device, and 140 seems to be the magic number (Todd 2010:184).

Twitter is used for many different purposes, for example to connect, to record, to share or to stay in touch. Twitter can be a great way for companies or brands to connect with large numbers of people quickly and personally. Hence, SABC television drama needs to establish a Twitter presence to be able to connect to the public they serve as well as promote their own brand as the SABC Drama Content Hub.

Although Twitter has managed to embed itself deeply in the lives of its daily users, it does not necessarily replace the existing media channels such as broadcasting or online mainstream media (Harrington et al 2013:405). It often complements those media channels while providing its users with alternative opportunities to contribute more actively to the wider media circle. Twitter continues to have 6.6 million users in South Africa according to the World Wide Worx & Fuseware stats released in 2015. This shows that the medium is growing year on year.

**Figure 2.4: Twitter user growth in South Africa, 2013–2015**



Source: World Wide Worx & Fuseware (2015)

## **2.4.SOAP OPERA**

The local soap opera can be defined as a form of serial drama which is characterised by clichéd plots, themes and situations (Berman 2011:71). In addition, a soap opera has a continuous narrative and a large, complex cast of characters; most episodes end with a promise that the drama will be continued in the next episode (Brown 1992). They are called soap operas because they were originally sponsored in the United States of America by soap manufacturers (Brown 1992). Therefore, the soap opera, otherwise known as the telenovela, is a genre that originated in the American radio serials of the 1930s (Brown 1992). In South Africa, the telenovela seem to be defined according to the number of episodes, which range from 156 to 260 with a clear beginning, middle and end, with the sole intention of changing attitude and behaviour.

For example, the Soul City drama was set in a clinic and its intention was to educate audiences about different types of disease including HIV/AIDS, TB and high blood pressure, as well as how one can cure and/or prevent infection.

## **2.5. BACKCHANNEL**

The term ‘backchannel’ is defined as a line of communication created by people in an audience to connect with others inside or outside the room, with or without the knowledge of the speaker at the front of the room, usually facilitated by internet technologies (Atkinson 2010:17). In this context, it refers to conversations about a certain television programme happening outside or in real time, not only with people sitting and watching but also with others who could be anywhere in the world and who are connected by a single hashtag (#) (Proulx & Shepatin 2012:10). Backchannel communication can apply to a conference or workshop where the member might be tweeting what is being said in the conference, or sharing information with those in the conference room or outside.

Backchannel knows no boundaries; people are allowed to communicate whatever they want whenever they want, especially in respect of television programmes, where there is no confidentiality as is the case in a conference where one can be sworn to secrecy. It is clear though that backchannel is here to stay.

For example, the first episode of the new *Generations: The Legacy* trended for the whole 24 minutes and beyond, as people from different parts of the country were waiting in anticipation to see what would happen. Twitter was abuzz with audience tweeting, raising their likes and dislikes about the show. When Twitter is used as a backchannel, the audience's input can be fully or partly integrated in the show, as the producers leverage those conversations and to some extent incorporate those tweets back into the show (Harrington et al 2013:406). In other words, Twitter becomes not only a backchannel for the show but part of the show itself (Harrington et al 2013:406). This phenomenon is becoming an increasingly common practice in television through the promotion of dedicated programme hashtags on screen.

The SABC still does not promote the programme hashtags on screen during real-time broadcasting, or in repeat broadcasts for that matter. However, this could help to make better programmes and save research funds on focus group or other types of research, which seem not to be aligned to the ever-changing broadcasting landscape – understandably so because how can an organisation spend money researching a digital platform if it has no idea when it will be implemented.

With effect from January 2016, Sony discontinued the production of beta tapes which the SABC and other broadcasters on analogue use to package content and this has been a huge set-back for SABC both financially and otherwise, as it will have budget implications for the programmes already contracted for broadcast in 2016, as even the equipment used to broadcast is digital.

Some television programmes offer a hashtag or Facebook page to open conversations about the programme while broadcasting, or even after broadcasts.

A backchannel also allows for audiences to find out what happened in their favourite programme should they have missed its broadcast time, although this is only possible if there were people interacting with the programme while being broadcast. However, the experience would definitely differ from watching the programme live or during scheduled broadcasts.

It is important that the SABC channel on air should come to the party if the SABC wants to remain relevant and in touch with its audience. This would help the SABC understand what its audience wants and the content will no longer be decided by programme managers only, but rather by the audience. This would in turn help to achieve high viewership figures as the audience would have decided on the content they want to watch.

## **2.6. TELEVISION DRAMA**

Television is a story machine. Every day, thousands of hours of narrative zip through the airwaves and cables and into our sets and minds (Newman 2006:16). On this level of storytelling most television narratives look quite similar. Situation comedies and episodic and serial dramas all organise their stories into relatively short segments, often less than two minutes in length (Newman 2006:17). Such short scenes are meant to drive the narrative to a climax, and each scene is carefully structured with the right dialogue that must sound realistic.

Television assumes that we don't watch everything and can always use a bit of reminding when it comes to the most important things to know (Newman 2006:17). This includes the recap of the previous episode at the beginning of an episode to remind viewers where the story ended previously.

Television dramas can vary in length, ranging from 24 minutes to 48 minutes per episode, and could be on television during prime time or watershed hours, depending on the content of the narrative.

The one-hour television dramas tend to build around a three-act structure— the first act being the introduction lasting the first fifteen minutes; the second act being a series of trials, with a high-point in the middle and a low point at the end, lasting the middle thirty minutes; and the third act being the conclusion, lasting the final fifteen minutes (Appelcline 2001). This may be seen in the SABC television drama *Sokhulu and Partners*, as well as *End Game* on Thursdays on SABC 1, from 20h30 to 21h30, to name just a couple.

## 2.7. INTERACTIVE TELEVISION (ITV)

The television landscape has changed dramatically over the past few years and television can now be distributed and consumed in numerous ways, ranging from the internet through to mobile. The television industry is beginning to recognise this changing landscape by acknowledging that new forms of distribution and consumption need to be catered for with new ways of content creation (Hand & Varan 2007:57). In the South African television industry content creators are starting to propose new ways that incorporate social media in their content creation; however, for the SABC as a public broadcaster this remains a challenge as the corporation is not yet fully embracing social media in its content offering.

The introduction of interactive television (iTV) creates a new paradigm for the way television is watched; it functions as a bidirectional communication channel, where television can send information to the viewer and vice versa (Simon, Comunello & Von Wangenheim 2013:58). This entire paradigm will be brought to the SABC by the BDM.

SABC television drama needs to capitalise on the new interactive, personalising and content-sharing capabilities of Facebook and Twitter. iTV would allow SABC to revisit the genre of interactive drama as it holds many exciting possibilities for enhancing the audience's enjoyment of storytelling. For the SABC television drama to embrace iTV it has to conceptualise its drama content with the intention of it being interactive from scratch, for example the way *End Game* was conceptualised to 'live' online on Facebook and Twitter beyond its television space.

When a character is tweeting or engaging on Facebook, for example, the audience could see what is being tweeted on the *End Game's* Twitter timeline and Facebook page, adding the 'liveness' element. However, this is not to suggest that the programme already produced without the digital interactive objective cannot be successful; it can be successful through the use of social networks but without the live element to it.

iTV can be defined as the result of the convergence process between television and the new interactive digital technologies (Pagani 2000). According to Reimers (2006:173), interactive digital TV is a service that is traditionally offered via digital broadcast networks such as DVBM, but which has more recently also become widely available through IP networks. Interactive television is basically traditional television boosted by interactive functions that are usually supplied through a 'backchannel' and/or a modem terminal (Pagani 2003). This kind of interactivity is usually offered by smart televisions that are digital not analogue, and which are on the rise internationally.

These smart televisions offer the user the opportunity to interact with the content in ways never before imaginable. However, at the same time smart TV involves risk to television schedules as it has the ability to disrupt the scheduled broadcast. For example, many modern cell phones have a functionality called near field communication (NFC) that allows the user to throw videos to television (smart television) in the middle of any programme, thereby disrupting that particular programme.

Thus, if the user is bored of the programme he or she has the option to opt for a 'throw'. Interactive television allows for more active viewing. This is in contrast with the passive viewing that is associated with traditional mainstream television.

Interactivity is generally acknowledged to be a natural attribute of face-to-face conversation, but it has been suggested to also occur in mediated communication settings (Rafaeli 1988:110). The sending of letters to the editor, talk shows on radio and television, viewers' participation in programmes and in programming are all characterised by interactivity. Owing to social media networks, the kind of interactivity that involved sending letters has changed – or rather been challenged – since the response nowadays is immediate on Twitter or via Facebook or any other social networks that the sender could be participating on.

According to McMillan (2006), interactivity can be seen as two-way communication, where time and place no longer have a big impact. McMillan (2006) distinguishes three forms of interactivity:

1. user-to-user (email, chat, message boards)
2. user-to-document (the World Wide Web)
3. user-to system interactivity (games, search engines and educational software).

Social interaction, that is, interactivity between users, can be seen as user-to-user interactivity (McMillan 2006). New media, as well as social networking sites, bridge geographical distances. For instance on Facebook, commenting on each other's status updates or writing a comment on each other's walls can be done without people being in the same place. People around the globe can thus communicate with each other easily (McMillan 2006).

User-to-document interactivity refers to interactivity between users, documents and the creators of these documents. This interactivity arises in the way users actively use media products or interpret these products. Applying this to social networking sites (SNSs), it means that without their users, Facebook, Twitter and many other SNSs would not exist.

When users create their own content this is also called user-to-document interaction (McMillan 2006). According to Chan (2006), this kind of interaction can be a way for users to satisfy their "social interaction needs" that seems to be popular around the world as everyone can be a content producer anywhere and at any time. For example, news is no longer reported by journalists only; an average person can take a video of any events that are newsworthy and download it on YouTube for the world to see, thus making it difficult for journalists to break stories.

User-to-system interactivity refers to interaction between the user and the computer. This is often the kind of user who uses new media applications. Users can sometimes change something within the system so that the system is able to fulfil their wishes, for instance open source software (McMillan 2006). Spurgeon (2007) offers a clear distinction between interactivity and participation. "Where interactivity is a property of non-human actors, participation is a characteristic of human actors.

Interactivity describes the technological possibilities of communication in closed systems, while participation denotes the will to communicate in cultural and social contexts” (Spurgeon 2007:7). Spurgeon (2007) suggests that the constraints to interactivity are caused by technology (Jenkins 2006).

Cover (2006:140) argues that interactivity is often connected to a media technology, for instance the three forms of interactivity that are introduced by McMillan (2006). Cover (2006:140) states that interactivity is much broader than merely technology. Interactivity can be seen as not static but rather an ongoing process. The new media ‘push’ the users to interact at the same time the user is ‘pulled’ to interact because of their own will to participate (Cover 2006:141). As mentioned before, interactivity changes the media text, and users can receive feedback on these changes (Cover 2006:141). For instance, friends often comment on status updates on SNSs or pictures are tagged or de-tagged, and on Twitter a user tweet can be replied to, re-tweeted or even quoted.

The user is an integral part of this research; hence this critical observation on the previous descriptions of interactivity is important. While interacting with the media text, people can be creative (Cover 2006:140). Audiences can easily create hashtags within the drama’s main hashtag about something that was in the dialogue for example, or if someone is shot at the end of the episode a hashtag could read #whogotshot and audiences could respond by tagging that hashtag.

Livingstone (1990:3) explains the process of viewers engaging in para-social interaction with the characters as if these characters were real, thereby “distorting the boundaries between viewing and living”. For example, back in the days of *Generations*, there was a character called Ntsiki whom people hated so much that when they met the actress who played the role, Pamela Nomvete, they would call her names and some even went as far as slapping her (Pokwana 2001). Viewers make this experience part of their everyday life by conversing about the plot and the characters, referring back to their own real-life experiences to interpret what they view on screen.

Levy (1978:19) refers to para-social interaction as “intimacy at a distance” and concludes from his research that audience members experience the fictitious relationship with newsreaders as very real. A correlation has also been made between the frequency of exposure to news bulletins and respondents who viewed the newsreader as a ‘friend’. To make iTV services a reality, there will be a need for an *open service infrastructure* that enables third parties to seamlessly add their services to an iTV service.

This will also be critical as the country moves to DTT, because there will be a high demand for content that the SABC will not be able to supply, as it currently produces content for four channels only.

Interactive television will further enhance the SABC audiences' viewing experience. The introduction of iTV will create a new paradigm for the way SABC audiences watch television dramas; these will start to function as a bidirectional communication channel, where television can send information to the viewer and vice versa through Twitter and Facebook.

Interactivity is generally considered to be the central characteristic of new media (Mahmoud & Auter 2009:1) because it allows for immediate interaction between television programme producer and the audience. Unlike in past, where a viewer would have to mail a letter to a producer and only get the response months later if they are lucky, other people are now able to see your comments if you put them on the programme Facebook page or tweet using the Twitter hashtag.

## **2.8. SOCIAL TELEVISION (SOCIAL TV)**

Television has always been social and it was originally designed with that intention to be social. These days, however, the social aspect of television is not limited to the number of people sitting in a room watching a particular programme but can take place globally using Twitter and Facebook.

Television is now being redefined from a unidirectional flow of content from an operator to a device to a much richer combination of real-time, on-demand, Web and user-generated content complementing traditional programming (Martinez-Bonastre, Cesar, Crowcroft, Matijasevic, Montpetit & Liu 2012).

Social TV is the union of television and social media. It refers to the phenomenon of people communicating with each other while watching a TV show or discussing television content with each other using the internet as a medium of communication. It is basically like watching television with your family and friends – only in this case, you are connecting virtually with people from different parts of the world or maybe your next door neighbour, all with the help of the internet. According to Harboe (2009:1), the term ‘social TV’ refers to a variety of experimental systems that claim to support social experiences for television viewers, and the research into such experiences. Proulx and Shepatin (2012: 9) define the term as the convergence of television and social media, which is a suitable definition that is appropriate in this research. Social TV is not new, as television has always been social in nature but the emergence of advanced technologies has managed to enhance television as a social tool.

Social TV experiences differ from person to person or from generation to generation. Social TV allows for socialising to happen on a greater scale than before as it cuts the geography limitation related to traditional television. Now television conversations can happen in an international arena and not only in the living room, allowing for content to be shared.

As television continues to transform in form and function, its core function will remain social. Television is moving from old-style broadcasting and multicasting to a more personal video device phenomenon as a result of the high number of platforms allowed for by digital migration. These include different modes of content distribution through devices such as tablets, Web-enabled TV sets, smartphones, traditional set-top boxes, and many others.

## **2.9. AUDIENCE SEGMENTATION**

Audience segmentation involves dividing the population into groups with the goal of identifying groups whose members are similar to each other and distinct from other groups along dimensions that are meaningful in the context of the programme (Siegel & Lotenberg 2007). The SABC also has segmented audiences as some viewers as well as radio listeners watch and listen to the different SABC TV channels and radio stations, depending on viewership and listenership needs. The segmentation of audiences is dependent on race, language, gender and age, as well as the living standard measure (LSM).

### **2.9.1. Now Generation**

The ‘Now Generation’ audience refers to “those audiences who are the young fibre of South Africa” (SABC 2008:9). Fashion and entertainment are high on their priority list, they enjoy a fast-paced lifestyle and are greatly influenced by advertising; they love the variety and choice presented by the new media (SABC 2008:9).

These audiences are constantly on the go and they do not have time to sit in front of the television set. However, they still want to be able to access and interact with their favourite television programmes anywhere and at any time. The Now Generation includes audiences between the ages of 16 and 24 within the LSM 5 to 8. (SABC 2008:9).

Young people are constantly looking for new things to do. They are the ‘thumb’ generation, spending most of their time interacting with each other through their cell phones, whether it is through SMS, MMS or the wide range of interactive mobile applications. TV needs to re-launch itself for a new young and techno-savvy generation. To keep the young audience, it should introduce interesting programming that fits into the daily lives and newly acquired habits of this market segment.

The Now Generation demands content that is real and immediate with an interactive component over which they can exercise urgency. Integrating TV, Web and mobile applications is necessary for future entertainment solutions, ushering in a new era in mass television.

### **2.9.2. Global Citizen**

The 'Global Citizen' refers to those audiences who represent innovation, wealth and technology; they live busy lives, they seem to thrive on the next challenge and they are well travelled (SABC 2008:12). These audiences represent innovation, wealth and technology, they have a broad outlook on life and this becomes clear in the type of content that is broadcast on SABC 3, which is about people who are well travelled and are up to date with what is happening globally in terms of socioeconomic issues, finance and suchlike.

Global Citizens include audiences between the ages of 16 and 34 within the LSM 8 to 10. (SABC 2008:12). Money is not a problem for this audience although how to spend it is. These audience segments help to understand the rapid technological advancements that are taking place in broadcasting.

### **2.10. MEDIA CONVERGENCE**

There have been rapid technological developments that have resulted in the media becoming dominant in almost all parts of our daily life. With that said, digital media still gets more activity than television. Digitisation has allowed and promoted the convergence between media, telecommunications and computing (Candel 2012:5). This has affected not only the content services of those sectors, which are currently experiencing a strong wave of innovation, but also their regulation, operational logics, market structures and business model, as there is still no clear policy on digital media and DTT. Hence this could be a factor that is hindering the full rollout of digital media for the SABC television content. The internet has not changed people but it has reinforced existing habits that instead of converging, tend to diverge. In other words, everything social, educating, entertaining and informing that people did in the past, they still do in the digital media world but now they just do it faster, cheaper and more easily.

The implementation of digital media by the SABC will force television to become more than a viewing experience, something that totally engages people so that they become more than just viewers but also users, challenging the notion of television viewers as passive. The viewers could enjoy the interactivity which is brought by the digital media platforms as they would be able to interact with their friends and families about specific content. Moreover, this would force the SABC to redefine its services to promote social integration and social cohesion, and go beyond the collective experience to cater to groups and individual interests. For example, it would do this by providing thematic and online services. At the moment SABC television content offers entertainment, education and information; digital media will offer more by including conversations and company.

Digital media helps PSB to promote national and societal cultural identity in the face of globalisation (Iosifidis 2010:11). However, government, parliament and other policy makers seem to be engaged in a waiting game not sure where to go next, even though it is clear that digital media is where the future of television is headed.

Convergence of media technologies can take place at three levels. Each level is related to one of the technical dimensions of convergence:

- Convergence in content production is related to service convergence.
- Convergence in distribution is related to network convergence.
- Convergence in equipment production is related to terminal convergence (World Dialogue on Regulation (2002:16).

The SABC plans to start broadcasting on HD from 2016 and its studios are now equipped for HD transmissions, which will give the audience better picture quality.

At a roundtable of Save Our SABC (SOS), it was noted that convergence potentially presents the SABC with a completely new way of conceptualising PSB (Duncan 2009). Accordingly, it will help the broadcaster to deliver its language mandate as it currently still falls short on those official languages that have now been categorised as ‘marginalised languages’, namely Xitsonga, IsiNdebele, IsiSwati, Xu and Xwe.

## **2.11. DIGITAL TERRESTRIAL TELEVISION**

Digital terrestrial television (DTT) refers to the implementation of digital technology to provide a greater number of channels, especially when using standard definition television (SDTV), and/or better picture quality when using enhanced definition television (EDTV) or high definition television (HDTV), as well as sound when using Dolby digital through a conventional aerial instead of a satellite dish or cable connection (Digital Migration Working Group Report 2006:8). Currently, broadcasting in South Africa takes place in an analogue format. The country is in the process of planning and implementing BDM from analogue to digital broadcasting as a result of an International Telecommunications Union (ITU) resolution that countries in region 1 (including Europe, Russia, Africa, the Middle East and the Islamic Republic of Iran) should migrate their broadcasting services from analogue to digital by 2015 (Berger 2010:4).

The SABC has started with the testing phase but it is not clear how long it will be before the actual BDM takes place. Political interference seems to be at the centre of the delay of BDM for the SABC.

The digital migration was announced in 2006 (Brand 2011:23). Since then, the SABC has changed its Board three times, the same number as the Ministers of Communication that have presided during that time. On 18 November 2015, the SABC board suspended the group chief executive officer, Frans Matlala, pending investigation (Shange 2015). This came barely a month after the Supreme Court of Appeal (SCA) in Bloemfontein ruled in favour of the Public Protector Advocate Thuli Madonsela's recommendation to have the SABC chief operating officer (COO), Mr Motsoeneng, suspended and disciplined for maladministration.. These are indications of corporate governance challenges at the SABC.

In analogue television, one channel (such as SABC 1) uses a dedicated frequency to broadcast. This is because of the large amount of bandwidth the analogue signal requires. Berger (2010:12) confirms this by stating that TV uses UHF and VHF frequencies: one station, one frequency with the consequence that the number of stations is limited.

In digital television, however, the signals can be compressed – this will therefore allow for more channels to be broadcast on the same frequency. Berger (2010:4) states that DTT encourages an increase in the number of programmes available, improves quality and accessibility and creates new media services. This just goes to show the benefit of digital and, by not migrating to digital, the way the SABC is depriving its audience. Such a migration would give the audience far more choice in terms of content and information as the SABC could start customising channels and not have just one channel catering for four different audience segments.

The various benefits offered by DTT make it imperative for broadcasters to migrate from analogue to digital. What digital also makes technically possible is the flexible use of the airwaves, for example a TV broadcaster can decide to increase the compression (and quality) of its TV channels for a particular event, so as to make some extra space available for a bandwidth-hungry high definition (HD) broadcast on that specific occasion (Berger 2010:14). This is evident when Multichoice broadcasts in HD: when SABC programmes are broadcast by DSTV the picture quality is affected because the SABC does not broadcast on HD nor is its content packaged for HD, even though some programmes are shot in HD. This has led to complaints from many producers who have shot programmes in HD.

It is important to note, however, that the process of digital migration does not happen overnight; digital and analogue will overlap until the entire process is fully implemented. The government will decide on which province to start the rollout. Accordingly, the process has begun with Kai Garib municipality in the Northern Cape, which will be the first community to receive the set-top box (STB) (Mzekandaba 2015). As far as the issue of STBs in concerned, one cannot help wondering what will happen, as one household might end up with four STBs, one for Multichoice, the other for the SABC, ETV and/or Starsat subscriber. Pressure continues to mount for the SABC, as readiness is not only dependent on infrastructure but also on the content that will go onto those channels. The broadcaster does not currently have any local or international content on the shelves for this rollout and this might be a result of encore which is a ‘content parasite’ of the three channels, because a lot of content that’s 3 years old or more is broadcast on this channel..

## **2.12. BROADCASTING**

The South African television broadcasting landscape is going through major changes which are interesting and challenging in all spheres of broadcasting. A number of 'new' commercial players (e.tv, Multichoice, MNet, Starsat and Showmax) have entered the market (National Association of Broadcasters 2014: 2). This is posing a challenge for the SABC as it scrambles for audience share with those newcomers. It is currently unable to compete at its maximum potential due to internal processes such as the procurement of regular content (which could result in an increased audience share), the regulatory framework and the funding model. In South Africa, television broadcasting is categorised as public television, free-to-air, commercial and community television.

Broadcasting' refers to any form of unidirectional electronic communications intended for the public, sections of the public or subscribers to any broadcasting service having appropriate receiving facilities, whether carried by means of the radio frequency spectrum or any other electronic communications network or any combination of the aforementioned, and 'broadcast' is construed accordingly (Broadcasting Act 1999: s 97.36). Currently, broadcasting is undergoing a major shift in the way information is disseminated across all platforms, challenging broadcasters around the world to rethink broadcasting as a whole. Fourie (2003:2) states that the new media environment has affected PSB and its future, as this environment is constantly changing and the SABC will consequently have to catch up to the rest of the world.

Broadcasting in South Africa is regulated by ICASA, which is responsible for frequency planning and allocation, as well as the issuing of licences for digital services (Broadcasting Act 1999: s 4.6). This means that as soon as BDM has been rolled out, the licence conditions of the SABC will be amended as well.

### **2.13. SUMMARY AND OUTLINE OF CHAPTER 3**

This chapter has explained the significance of defining terms in order to create a common understanding and agreement on the terms used. Further, definitions provide a clear sense of what the topic is about, providing context for the chapters that follow. The terms defined do not only relate to the topic investigated; for example social media is not just related to television but also to marketing and branding, to name but a few areas. Moreover, there are other terms which also relate to the practices and tendencies observed within the social media space.

The next chapter, Chapter 3, engages the theoretical framework and the literature review concerning the subject of this research. This chapter reviews the available literature relating to the interactive experience offered by social media, the SABC television drama audience, UGT in relation to social media and television, and the laws governing South African broadcasting and the SABC in particular in the face of competition.

### **3. CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW.**

#### **3.1.. INTRODUCTION**

In research, existing theories are used to develop assumptions that guide the researcher. These theories serve as a motivation for the realisation of the research work. For that reason, certain theories guided this research; namely, uses and gratifications theory (UGT), media system dependency theory, and social penetration theory. In this chapter, these theories are discussed by briefly outlining their importance in the way SABC television dramas could enhance audiences' viewing experience.

Additionally, the theory underpinning this study, namely UGT, is discussed in the literature review in terms of a number of subtopics, including importance, criticisms and relevance to the present study.

#### **3.2. USES AND GRATIFICATIONS THEORY**

This study uses one communication theory as its premise, namely, uses and gratifications theory (UGT). UGT introduced a new phase in mass media study by challenging the traditional focus from what the media do to the audience, to what audiences do with the media (Schrøder 1999:39). This study explores this statement by asking audiences how they think social media would enhance their viewing experience of SABC television dramas. UGT also focuses on why audiences use media and the purposes for which it is used (Chandler 2004). It is crucial that the SABC understands this when using social media in its television dramas. The SABC needs to understand what audiences do with social media so they do not make unfounded assumptions.

##### **3.2.1. The basic tenets and importance of uses and gratifications theory**

UGT is concerned with the way people use certain media. Wimmer and Dominick (1994) maintain that UGT originated in the 1940s when researchers became interested in why

audiences engaged in various forms of media behaviour, such as listening to the radio or reading the newspaper.

The effects of mass media on audiences have been a controversial topic for scholars over the past century. With the rise of film and radio in the early part of the 1900s researchers started to study the effects media have on the audience.

A UGT understanding of the media society dynamic is significant for bringing the concepts of pleasure and gratification into the debate about the media, and it paved the way for more recent research that argues that audience members are not merely passive consumers brainwashed by media products but are active in their choice.

The early inclination of media effects research focused on portraying media as a “hypodermic needle” that sent direct, standardised and deliberate messages with the agenda to influence the mass audience (Hanson 2008; McQuail 2010). UGT challenges the deterministic view of effects theory by recognising a more active audience and focusing on what audiences do with the mass media instead of what the mass media do to the audiences (Pitout 1998:5). It is also important for the SABC to understand what audiences do on social media not what social media does to these audiences.

The original conception of the approach was based on the research for explaining the great appeal of certain media content. The core question of such research is: Why do people use media and what do they use them for? The two basic ideas that exist in this approach are: (a) audience members know media content, and (b) the type of media that can be used to meet their needs (Chandler 1994).

With regard to allowing participants to make their own meaning (Shaughnessy & Stadler 2010:105), the SABC’s use of Facebook and Twitter in conjunction with television drama would empower the audience to make their own meaning of the drama they are watching, as well as draw their own conclusions and form their own opinions.

UGT is an appropriate theory to use when studying social media. The two-way nature of social networking sites requires an audience to actively choose the medium it wants, as well as to decide how it will use that medium (Park et al 2009). Social media varies from traditional media because of the action they require from the audience. Unlike with newspaper and television where the user can only read or watch the programme, a user is now able to connect and interact with other people on SNSs.

UGT is used in mass communication research and focuses on audiences' motives for selecting certain media and media content. This theory holds that diverse needs or reasons motivate audiences to select the media and media content that best fit their personal needs. There are five basic tenets and assumptions of UGT:

1. Audiences are active in their media choice.
2. Audiences' choices are goal-driven.
3. Media choice fulfils multiple needs.
4. Audiences are aware of their needs when choosing a particular medium.
5. The needs are specifically related to a particular media (McLeod & Becker 1981:7).

UGT proposes that audiences have numerous media options to choose from and suggests that the choice will differ from user to user (Blumler & Katz 1974). Several studies have been piloted in order to determine and categorise the needs gratification obtained from media consumption. Since this study is not focusing on television alone but on the interactive component as well, the categories applied in current internet uses and gratifications research are adopted for the purposes of this study. Many scholars such as Lin (2001:79), Bryant and Heath (2000:362) and Hunter (2005) elect to apply the five types of needs as identified by Katz, Gurevitch and Haas (1974), namely, cognitive needs, affective needs, personal integrative needs, social integrative needs and escapist needs.

Cognitive needs involve the reinforcement of information, the gaining of knowledge and the understanding of our environment (Katz et al 1974). Another dimension that is also satisfied in obtaining information is curiosity and exploratory drives (Bryant & Heath 2000:362).

The interactive experience generated by Facebook and Twitter provides various avenues for knowledge acquisition and is certainly able to gratify the cognitive needs of different audiences.

Affective needs refer to emotional experiences and the reinforcement of artistic and pleasurable experiences (Katz et al 1974). The quest for pleasure and entertainment is one of the most basic motivations for media consumption (Hunter 2005). One of the ways in which SABC television dramas can address the need for entertainment is by offering viewers the option of a Twitter hashtag on screen while the drama is on air, as well as the Facebook page reference, without forgetting the on-demand and catch-up functions.

Personal integrative needs are about the validation of credibility, confidence and steadiness as well as the status of the individual (Katz et al 1974). The personal integrative needs originate from the individual's desire for self-esteem (Severin & Tankard 1992:273). Facebook and Twitter have the ability to offer viewers an opportunity to interact with other fans on the website, thereby testing and confirming their opinions about the television drama and strengthening their social ties with that particular drama.

The desire for affiliation and social contact is addressed in the social integrative needs. Individuals continuously search to fortify contact with family, friends and the world (Bryant & Heath 2000:362). One of the ways in which SABC television dramas can address this need is by placing the drama title hashtag and the Facebook page reference of that particular drama on screen during a broadcast. By doing this, SABC television drama will encourage audiences to interact with their favourite actor/actress even while the drama is still on air. They could show some of those interactive messages at the bottom of the screen without interrupting the flow of the show, as subtitling for SABC television drama is done for every audio/dialogue, that is, it is 100 per cent wall to wall, meaning subtitles are done not only for languages other than English but for English as well to accommodate the hearing impaired.

The fifth needs gratification, namely, escapist needs, refers to the desire to escape, to release tension and seek diversion (Severin & Tankard 1992:273). By participating in the various interactive opportunities that could be presented by SABC television dramas through

Facebook and Twitter, viewers would have multiple options to escape from the pressures of everyday life and release tension.

In the case of media, UGT addresses three general areas that audience needs gratification arises from, namely, media content, exposure to media and social context (Katz et al 1974). These three main areas provide the foundation for research conducted in the area UGT. The theory also identifies what the medium offers, recognising however that each medium has a different combination of the following:

- characteristic content (at least stereotypically perceived in that way)
- typical attributes (print vs broadcasting modes of transmission, iconic vs symbolic representation, reading vs audio-visual modes of reception)
- typical exposure situation (at home vs out-of-home, alone vs with others, control over the temporal aspects of exposure vs absence of such control) (Katz et al 1974)

UGT allows for the study to explore the opportunities offered to the SABC television drama audience by social media through interactivity on Twitter and Facebook, as well as identifying the needs that these online audiences are attempting to gratify in these interactions. This theory will further allow for understanding the way SABC television drama can improve its interaction with these audiences on Twitter and Facebook. For this research, UGT has been used for radio, television and now the internet through social media, as each medium has emerged as a popular form of communication.

This discussion of the types of needs gratification provides the basic theory for the motivations for iTV participation. The key assumption is that it is possible to categorise the motivations for interactive participation as cognitive, affective, personal integrative, social integrative and escapist needs.

### **3.2.2. The importance of the uses and gratifications theory**

Concurrent with the industry's determination to provide programming for what appears to be highly unpredictable viewing behaviour, researchers grounded in UGT have been systematically endeavouring to explain what guides viewer choice, viewing patterns and audience interpretations of programme content (Abelman & Atkin 2000). As has been pointed out in the earlier discussion, UGT is founded on three basic tenets:

1. Viewers are goal-directed in their behaviour.
2. They are active media users.
3. They are aware of their needs and select media to gratify these needs (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch 1979; Abelman & Atkin 2000).

The importance of UGT to the television and social media function is that it emphasises an individual's needs and motivations for media use. The theory seems to focus on how needs lead to specific patterns of social media network usage or other activities. For example, it has been recognised that concurrent activities are taking place during media usage by audiences. Such concurrent activities can be conversing, playing, cooking and reading (Schmitt, Woolf & Anderson 2003). For this research such concurrent activities can include chatting with a friend or a group of friends who are or are not in the same country or town as you, chatting to strangers who share the same opinion as you about a specific programme or even commenting on a specific programme to the producers of the show.

It is highly likely that in some cases television viewing may simply be providing a platform where the viewer's needs are served primarily by the simultaneous activities rather than the television viewing itself. However, television viewing in this situation probably serves as a source of entertainment more than any other function, which is why the content needs to be great for maximum interaction on Facebook and Twitter.

### 3.2.3. Weaknesses of uses and gratifications theory

Although UGT holds significant status in communication research, the research relating to the approach has been highly criticised. For example, Ang (1992) commented that the approach has not provided much successful prediction or causal explanation of media choice and use. Another key criticism is that all media consumption is goal-orientated and purpose-driven, leaving little room for coincidental or unplanned viewing, or motivations based on the reputation of a programme, like audiences being loyal to *Generations* irrespective of whether the storyline is good or bad, or the lack of variety, rather than gratifying a specific need (Williams 2003:179).

Ang (1992) criticised UGT for being too individualistic, taking into account only the individual psychological gratification derived from individual media use. The social context of the media use thus tends to be ignored. In addition, this affirms the fact that some media use may have nothing to do with the quest for gratification – it may be forced upon audiences/viewers. This might have been the case with television, where programmers decide on the schedule alone; however, the advent of new media technologies has since challenged this notion, making it difficult for television programmers to dictate the schedule. Indeed, the audience is now the dictator owing to exposure to different content distribution modes.

Additionally, UGT has paid little attention to media content. Researchers may attend to why people use the media, but less to what meanings they actually attribute to their media use. The approach starts from the view that the media are always functional for people and may thus implicitly offer a justification for the way the media are currently organised (Nagel, Hudson & Abowd 2004).

Critics argue that UGT exaggerates active and conscious choice, excluding the possibility that media can be forced on people rather than being a free choice. This is still very much the case, as the broadcasting schedulers are still the ones who decide what viewers watch and at what time – however, this notion is slowly being challenged in the South African broadcasting landscape by the advent of social media networks which present the audience with catch-up TV, binge viewing and on-demand viewing. Free choice is ultimately limited

to the content presented by the mass media. Additionally, the emphasis on active choice leads to the exaggeration of openness of interpretation, which assumes that audiences may obtain any kind of gratification irrespective of the content offered by the mass media (Chandler 2005).

Another criticism is that, since it is difficult to keep a record of exposure patterns through observation, uses and gratifications studies focus heavily on self-reports (Katz 1987). Self-reports are based on personal memory which can be problematic (Nagel et al 2004). As such, the respondents might inaccurately recall how they behave in media use and thus distortion might occur in the study. It should be borne in mind that they will be answering the questions in the questionnaire after they have watched the programme. In other words, self-report is based on memory rather than on the present moment.

The other aspect of this criticism is that the use of retrospective self-reports have several limitations. First of all, audiences may not know why they chose to watch what they did, or may not be able to explain fully. The reasons that can be articulated may also be the least important. Lastly, people may simply offer reasons that they have heard others mention. More promising might be the study of people's engagement with media as it happens (Chandler 1994). However, it would be more time consuming and expensive to have people in one room for a week to talk about the television dramas on SABC compared to obtaining their opinions while they are actually watching the dramas in their broadcast slots.

UGT also raises methodological concerns. Schroder (1994:41) points out one methodological issue encountered in a quantitative research – the fact that the gratifications list compiled by the researcher will decide the results of the study.

The findings are therefore limited by the researcher's imagination; no matter how mutually exclusive and exhaustive the list, there are always going to be potential gratifications that are not included (Schroder 1999:41). Elliot (1974) argues that one problem with UGT is that it treats mass communication in isolation from other social factors by focusing on individual processes that cannot be generalised to societal structures (as cited in Rubin & Windhal 1986:184).

### **3.3.Relevance of the uses and gratifications theory to this present study**

Although UGT was conventionally linked to television audiences, many researchers have found the theory well suited for internet research in particular. According to Luo (2002:4), it is precisely the assumption of active involvement in media usage that has made UGT applicable to interactive research.

In television research, a simple action such as switching on the television and choosing a channel allows for needs gratification to take place. Interactive technology such as the internet requires more innovative input and activity. Unlike television channel browsing, where the viewer is merely searching for an appealing image, Web browsing requires the browser to read actively and comprehend the information presented by the link or the hashtag to determine where he or she goes next (Hunter 2005). According to Johnson and Kaye (2002:54), it is assumed that Web use is a goal-oriented activity and users utilise the internet in an attempt to satisfy specific needs.

There are two general types of needs gratification identified by Stafford (2004:3) based on uses and gratifications research results from interactive studies. These are content gratifications and process gratifications. Content gratifications refers to the content that is transferred by the medium such as information or entertainment and the motivation to obtain specific information, whereas process gratifications refers to the gratifications obtained through the experience of media usage such as interacting with other audiences on Twitter, Facebook or any other social media network or internet-oriented applications.

### **3.4.LAWS GOVERNING BROADCASTING IN SOUTH AFRICA**

This section describes national broadcasting laws which provide the SABC with a mandate to broadcast and regulate the way the broadcaster should operate and be managed.

#### **3.4.1. Broadcasting Acts 1993 and 1999**

Prior to 1993, the SABC was like all media in South Africa; it was regulated, owned and controlled by the state and played a vital role in creating and supporting the apartheid

structures (Teer-Tomaselli 2001; Berger 2001; Tomaselli 1994). The SABC was also used by the apartheid state in its efforts to combat anti-apartheid forces, including the ANC in exile and other forces internally (Teer-Tomaselli 2001).

From 1991 a process of reform of the SABC began, which was part of a lengthy campaign to “free the airwaves” (Horwitz 2001). After various initiatives a new “vision and value” framework was created for the SABC, in the task of transforming the “state broadcaster” into a “public service broadcaster” (Teer-Tomaselli 2001). As the transformation of the South African political landscape took place, it was no longer an option for the SABC to be the voice of the apartheid government (Orgeret 2006). Further, as a result of the new democratic dispensation, it was no longer necessary for the state to be a regulator (Orgeret 2006). This process gave birth to PSB, which saw the people of South Africa having ownership of the broadcaster. In addition, their interests and well-being were placed at the forefront of everyday transmission.

In this context ICASA’s predecessor, the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), was created prior to democracy in 1993 to ensure that the SABC played an impartial role in the first democratic elections. The IBA was also created to regulate broadcasting activities in South Africa in the public interest (Horwitz 2001). Among the regulator's first duties was to conduct a wide-ranging policy inquiry, known as the Triple Inquiry, which concentrated on the viability of the public service broadcaster (Teer-Tomaselli. 2004) The Triple Inquiry Report laid out the regulator’s conclusions on these matters; one of its most important recommendations concerned the nature and funding of the public service broadcaster (Teer-Tomaselli 2004).

The IBA was charged with the key role of reforming the SABC into a public service broadcaster. The IBA Act stipulated that the IBA should monitor the public service broadcaster’s Charter (Independent Broadcasting Authority Act 1993). This Act enabled the IBA to play a fuller role in safeguarding the integrity of the broadcaster (Stiftung 2003). This is currently under threat owing to political interference that has seen the SABC having more than eight GCEOs between 2005 and 2015. The IBA merged with the South African Telecommunications Authority (SATRA) in 2000 to become ICASA in order to regulate the telecommunications and broadcasting industries, and more recently postal services (ICASA

Act 2000 as amended). The SABC's powers and functions, as well as its rights and obligations, are derived from a number of sources: legislation, the Charter, the licence conditions of each SABC station and channel, and regulations issued by ICASA from time to time, including the Code of Conduct for Broadcasters set by the BCCSA (The SABC Mandate:2). The code of conduct ensures that all broadcasters in South Africa do not broadcast content that is harmful or shows gratuitous violence. If these are broadcast, there should be audience advisories which alert the audience of the content to be broadcast.

### **3.5.THE SABC AND SOCIAL MEDIA USE**

In this section, literature is reviewed that will give an insight into the present study. The various subtopics under which this literature is discussed include 'interactive opportunities offered by social media to the SABC television drama audience', 'how SABC television drama can improve its interaction with the audience on Twitter and Facebook' and 'how can social media enhance the viewing experience of the SABC television drama audience?'

#### **3.5.1. Interactive opportunities offered by social media to the SABC television drama audience.**

The relationship between public broadcasters and their audiences is being cultivated through the new possibilities for participation offered by new technology. Public broadcasters can also actively experiment with the interactive capacity of digital technology (Murdock 2004:13).

Murdock (2004:13) states that public broadcasters need to take advantage of the extra capacity released by the digital compression to launch new digital channels catering to specific constituencies. This means that digital compression allows public broadcasters to offer enlarged spaces for current affairs, documentaries and arts programming or provide context where innovative ideas for comedy and drama can be tried out.

Television is no longer the only broadcasting medium, where the whole family sits down to watch their favourite programmes, but has evolved as a result of digitisation. Digitisation is challenging PSB more than it has ever been challenged before and this may weaken its

presence in the public domain. Hence, PSB needs to move online and develop a Web presence to reinforce customer loyalty by integrating audiences more fully into the channel's imagined community.

Technological mastery increasingly tends to rest in the hands of commercial broadcasters, this forcing PSB to re-invent itself. Marquand (2004:5) states that "we have to stop thinking of public broadcasting as a stand-alone organisation and see it as the principal node in an emerging network of public and digital commons". This can help forge new public connections and stand against the continual pressure coming from commercial interests

The arrival of social media has created a lot of competition for SABC television drama. Multichoice and e.tv have taken advantage of the opportunities offered by social media as they both have on-demand functions and a dedicated Twitter account and Facebook page for their dramas. SABC television drama has to compete for this niche market. Marquand (2004:5) argues that in the age of increasing individualisation and commercialism, PSB needs more than ever to reinvent itself if it wants to remain relevant.

For a programme to gain attention on social media, it must first be broadcast on television before it goes online. Beauvisage et al (2011) write that television channels continue to be the strong entry point for a subject in social media networks. Social media play a huge part in how television audiences connect with each other, with actors and producers who create a sense of community and belonging around a show (Bourdaa 2011:7). It is clear that the said innovations could extend the scope of SABC television drama and give audiences more choices. However, they do not alter the fundamental power relations between SABC television drama and its audiences. The SABC remains essentially a top-down system, meaning audiences are still responding to options orchestrated by programme producers.

Social media open up new audiences to public television and provide opportunities the SABC television drama to interact with its audience in new ways. In addition, they would enable SABC television drama to further the corporation's mandate of providing a wide range of programming in the official languages that

- reflects South African attitudes, opinions, ideas, values and artistic creativity
- displays South African talent in educational and entertaining programmes

- offers a plurality of views and a variety of news, information and analysis from a South African point of view
- advances the national and public interest (South Africa 1999:s 6.4).

Murdock (2004:13) further notes that “the internet and more particularly the World Wide Web (www) on the other hand, holds out the prospect of addressing public broadcasting’s historic limitations in more fundamental ways”. It is important to note that the internet presents both challenges and opportunities for public broadcasters. Beauvisage et al (2011) state that social media allows for freedom from time constraints regarding the flow of programme schedule and provides content to be consumed at any time.

Mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets are becoming indispensable to everyday life, as they continue to connect audiences in a more powerful network through services accessible via Web browsers or mobile application (Oh & Wang 2011:665). Using smartphones to enable audience participation not only offers convenience, but also tends to encourage audience engagement and an interactive social experience. Audience participation has been gaining increasing relevance, not only for public institutions but also for the media and communications industries (García-Avilés.2012:430). “Participation and audience interactivity are not only changing the media practices and consumption of information but the media landscape too” (Noguera, Pasquali & Bourdaa 2012:406). Noguera et al (2012:406) further state that social media allows for content producers to remain strong while engaging audiences emotionally and intellectually with the media content.

Murdock (2004:20) and Tracey (1998:72) argue that the advent of social media will threaten the existence of PSB and result in it closing down in the future. The more the SABC as an institution depends on sponsorship and advertising for its funding, the more it will be under pressure to achieve high audience ratings, which will result in it not complying with its ICASA mandate to inform, educate and entertain all South Africans of all ages, races, cultures and demographics. SABC television drama needs to re-launch itself for a new young and techno savvy generation. To keep the young audience, SABC television drama needs to introduce interesting programming that fits into its audiences’ daily lives and newly acquired habits of social media.

Social media can provide on-demand, user-generated content, interactive and flexible television, backchannel, intercontinental content sharing and lots of entertainment while informing and educating. According to Doyle (2010:4), social media distribution opens up a number of opportunities for public service broadcasters to offer new kinds of service and output to their audiences. SABC television drama needs to take advantage of the new technological devices such as smartphones, tablets, computers and other handheld devices to distribute their television dramas and strengthen their dominance in the public domain.

In addition, social media have increased the number of content providers in the marketplace which allows audiences access to a wide range of content on their digital devices through the internet.

### **3.5.2. How can the SABC television drama improve its interaction with the audience on Twitter and Facebook?**

It is difficult to talk about Twitter in isolation from Facebook because it is a Facebook spin off. Much of what Twitter does, Facebook can do as well, and hence this section of the literature review will discuss both Facebook and Twitter as they are central to the study.

Twitter is “basically a powerful mobile social network that enables you to keep up with the people, businesses, organizations you’re interested in, whether you know them personally or not; it also lets you share what you are doing with the world” (Fitton, 2009:9). According to Harrington et al (2013:405), “Twitter is a social media service that has managed very successfully to embed itself deeply in the everyday lives of its users”. Harrington et al (2013:405) further state that Twitter does not necessarily replace existing media channels such as broadcast or online offerings but often complements them, providing its users with alternative opportunities to contribute more actively to the wider mediasphere. Hence, the research question states that it will explore the way social media can enhance the interaction of SABC television drama with its audience.

Twitter and Facebook challenge the notion of a passive audience as they allow for audiences to interact with and share their opinions on a particular television drama. Twitter and Facebook can be used as a backchannel, allowing the audience to share their comments and

opinions on the episode while on air (Proulx & Shepatin 2012:11). They can also allow for interactivity in real time and beyond, providing a strong increase in the supply of television programmes. Proulx and Shepatin (2012:10) are of the opinion that “social media can provide real time backchannel which exposes the conversations taking place in our once-isolated living rooms and connects households around the world into a single, opt-in co-viewing event”.

Twitter and Facebook enhance the social activities such as audience discussion and interaction which are readily catalysed by television, allowing for the sustainability and accessibility of the television dramas. SABC television drama needs to create a dedicated hash tag for all their dramas on air as well as an active Facebook page to allow for audience engagement while strengthening its ties with these audiences. This could improve the relationship that already exists while providing a potentially rich network of information that presents empirical evidence of how other people make sense of the world.

Twitter and Facebook make it possible for television drama to gain insight into the audience reaction to key moments of the show at a temporal resolution which cannot be matched by other audience measurement approaches (Harrington et al 2013:407). SABC television drama could use Twitter and Facebook for dramas that are trying to push the boundaries and that challenge the status quo, to get a clear insight into their audience taste and their opinion. Twitter and Facebook will also help with audience rating analysis as market researchers will not need to rely only on television audience ratings to determine the success or failure of the drama but will also be able to look to Twitter use to determine the target audience.

Twitter and Facebook are the place of measurable “buzz” phenomena that correspond to a rapid concentration of attention on some content (Beauvisage et al 2011:4). Hence, the SABC television drama can use those social networks to create a buzz around their new dramas as well as events around those dramas, for example episode promos that can be downloaded on these social networks to create that buzz and anticipation in the audience. This would expand the SABC television drama brand, extend its reach and deepen its impact with the South Africa audience. García-Avilés (2012:429) states that social networks provide a wide range of initiatives so that the public might engage by sharing, commenting, promoting or criticising programmes, as well as elaborating their own material or getting involved in the

design, production or distribution of content. Twitter and Facebook allow for interaction between the audience and the fictional characters; hence, the characters in a drama must have Twitter and Facebook accounts for this opportunity to be appreciated.

SABC television drama could employ a simulcast strategy and broadcast its programmes on Facebook since it now has a video streaming link for amortisation. Facebook could allow for SABC television content to be available beyond broadcast, that is, the audience would be able to access the episodes of a particular programme they missed online. Facebook allows for more local content offering with more specialised appeal, thereby increasing interactivity.

Twitter is powered by the people around the world and it allows them to share and discover what is happening ‘now’. Twitter remains consistent with McQuail’s (2010:81) argument that “mass media and society are continually interacting and influencing each other”.

Twitter has changed the way audiences interact with television, offering new ways of watching and sharing with friends. It offers a new series of innovations that will greatly enrich the viewing experience. Twitter allows users to discuss and share their thoughts on any topic, whether social, cultural, economic or political.

### **3.5.3. How can social media enhance the viewing experience of the SABC television drama audience?**

Social networking in South Africa has crossed the age barrier, the urban–rural divide, and even the relationship gap, according to new research findings from technology market researchers World Wide Worx and information analysts Fuseware (Worldwide worx 2013). Clearly, current audiences have a wider choice as to what they can watch than ever before. Social media has changed the viewing appointment that audiences used to make with their television programmes by developing on-demand programming that allows audiences to view their favourite programmes at anytime and anywhere.

SNS users are increasing at a dizzying rate in South Africa, with Facebook dominating the first spot with 9.4 million active users. This site has become more than just a meeting place, becoming a place to explore new content. “Facebook is a social networking site that allows

users to be in total control” (Thompson 2011:2). Facebook provides several simple services to users. The profile allows users to show themselves, so other people can know about them personally. In addition, using the wall they can share information and their status updates which allows them to update their thoughts at any time.

The 2012 worldwide work report suggests that Facebook is becoming less of a kids’ game and more of a tool used by older generations to connect with friends and family, with the number of over-60 year olds on Facebook growing by 40% year on year. Now it seems it’s back to the youth, as the fastest growing age group on Facebook is 23 to 26 years (Granger 2013).

### **3.6. SUMMARY AND OUTLINE OF CHAPTER 4**

Television has always been considered helpful for passing the time and escaping (Katz et al 1973). This may not change even with the advent of new media, as is still very much demonstrated in South Africa. Particularly in fulfilling social integrative needs, Katz et al (1973) concluded that “it is the medium of film or television which contributes to friendship and familial solidarity, but the content of conversation is contributed by newspapers and books”. Chapter 4 discusses the research methodology used for data collection in this study.

## **4. CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

Data collection has been identified as one of the most critical and yet most time-consuming processes in research. Nevertheless, it has to be done because without data it would be impossible to broaden one's understanding and explain the unknown or even to add new knowledge to already existing knowledge (Brynard & Hanekom 1997:27).

Research methodology explains the methods researchers use in performing research operations (Kothari 2004:7). Accordingly, this chapter presents the process of the research methodology that was applied to this study in order to address the research problem outlined in section 4.2.

This chapter further discusses the research method that was used to explore the way social media can enhance the viewing experience of the SABC television drama audience with specific reference to the

- rationale for selecting the method
- target population
- sampling process and sampling size
- data collection procedure
- data analysis
- ethical consideration
- limitations of the study.

### **4.2. RESEARCH AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

#### **4.2.1. The research aim**

It would seem that social media continue to embed themselves in the everyday lives of their users, thus having a major impact on both television consumption and distribution. This has challenged both commercial and public broadcasters in South Africa and around the world.

The primary research aim of this study was to explore the way social media can enhance the viewing experiences of SABC television drama audiences. In order to do so, it was important to understand the audience's views on the way social media would enhance their SABC television drama viewing experience.

#### **4.2.2. The research question**

The primary research objective for this study was to explore the way social media can enhance the viewing experiences of SABC television drama audiences. In order to do so, the study addressed the following research questions which are stated as follows in 1.8 above.

- What are the interactive opportunities offered by social media to enhance the SABC television drama audience? That is, those dramas which do not yet use social media.
- How can SABC television drama improve its interaction with the audience on Twitter?
- How can social media enhance the viewing experience of the SABC television drama audience?
- Why would you interact with SABC television drama on Twitter or/and Facebook?

### **4.3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In order to explore the way social media can enhance the viewing experience of the SABC television drama audience, a quantitative research design was chosen for this study. Quantitative research is designed to provide objective descriptions of phenomena and to demonstrate how phenomena can be controlled through a specific treatment (Taylor 1977:171). In research it is vital that the findings are reliable and valid. Accordingly, the researcher used the deductive method, shifting the focus from the general to the specific. According to Harwell ([sa]:149), quantitative methods are frequently described as being deductive in nature, in the sense that inferences from tests of statistical hypotheses lead to general inferences about the characteristics of a population. Foxcroft and Roodt (2009) state that quantitative research refers to counts and measures of respondents' views on the

researched topic, which in this case is how social media can enhance the viewing experience of SABC television drama audiences.

Quantitative research makes use of questionnaires, surveys and experiments to gather data that is revised and tabulated in the form of numbers, which allows the data to be characterised by the use of statistical analysis (Hittleman & Simon 1997:31). This will be clear in Chapter 5 when discussing the findings of the research. Hussey and Hussey (1997:12) state that a quantitative research approach provides objective and unbiased results that have not been influenced by the researcher. Quantitative methods focus on numerical results and attempt to limit the influence of the human factor; for example when large-scale, formalised questionnaires are distributed in an impersonal manner (by post or e-mail) and the responses are coded and statistically analysed. In this research the questionnaires were handed to the respondents by the researcher.

The quantitative research approach used in this study employed a survey comprising offline self-administered questionnaire with 50 people in Northriding, north of Johannesburg, in the Randburg Municipality completing the structured questionnaires – 25 people at Virgin Active and 25 at Doppio Zero.

The main purpose of a survey is to estimate, with significant precision, the percentage of the population that has a specific attribute by collecting data from a small portion of the total population (Dillman, 2000; Wallen & Fraenkel 2001). Du Plooy (2009:215) defines a survey as a data collection tool, used to gather information about individuals, which is not limited by geography.

The survey method was used because, according to Babbie (1992), surveys are particularly suited to the field of mass public opinion. Since the main focus of this work was to explore and explain how social media can enhance the viewing experience of the SABC television drama audience, there could not have been a better method.

In addition, considering the quantity of information that was gathered, a survey would appear to be less costly. However, it must be noted that there are certain obstacles that the survey method could pose considering that they have their drawbacks. This is largely because

independent variables cannot be manipulated in the way they are in laboratory experiments (Wimmer & Dominick 2000). It is also a fact that inappropriate wording or poor arrangement of questions in a questionnaire could produce biased results.

Surveys are used for descriptive, explanatory and exploratory purposes (Babbie 1992), hence the researcher's decision to use this method. In addition, a survey was used as they are generally used in a quantitative research design and such measuring instruments include the application of closed-ended items (Du Plooy 2009:189). A number of questions in the questionnaire comprised closed ended questions.

#### **4.4. RESEARCH DESIGN**

According to Du Plooy (2009:51), a research design is a method and technique used to collect, analyse and interpret data. According to Mouton (1996:175), the research design serves to "plan, structure and execute" the research to maximise the "validity of the findings". Wimmer and Dominick (2006) describe research design as a plan for the proposed research work. This plan is outlined in section 4.1.

Polit and Hungler (1999:160) are of the view that research designs vary with how much structure the researcher imposes on the research situation and how much flexibility is allowed once the study is underway. In this research, sufficient flexibility was allowed by the location in which it was conducted. A quantitative approach was employed.

**Table 4.1: Advantages and disadvantages of surveys**

Advantages of surveys	Disadvantages of surveys
1. They can be used to investigate problems in realistic settings.	1. Independent variables cannot be manipulated in the way they are in laboratory experiments.
2. The cost is reasonable considering the amount of information gathered. For this research a self-administered questionnaire was employed.	3. Inappropriate wording or replacement of questions within a questionnaire can bias results. In this research a pilot was conducted to eliminate the element of bias from the results.
4. A large amount of data can be collected with relative ease from a variety of people. In this study data was collected from 50 people in Northriding, north of Johannesburg, in Gauteng.	2. The wrong respondents may be included in survey research. For example in a telephone interview, a respondent may claim to be 18 to 24 years old but may in fact be well over 30 years old or a mail survey maybe completed by a teenager when the target respondent is a parent in the household. In this research the age category question was inclusive and mutually exhaustive of all age groups i.e. 18 years and below, as well 50 and above.
5. Surveys are not restricted by geographic boundaries; they can be conducted almost everywhere. For this study, the survey was conducted at Virgin Active (a health club) and Doppio Zero (a restaurant).	3. Some survey research becoming is difficult to conduct, for example telephone participants generally unwilling to participate, which was the case in this research as it employed a convenient sampling and

	many people did not want to participate.
6. Data helpful to survey research already exists. For this research data was obtained from the literature review.	4. Pre-set answers do not necessarily reflect the way people feel about a topic and in some cases these might just be the closest to what they really feel.

Source: Wimmer and Dominick (2003:16)

#### **4.4.1. Population and sampling**

As the target population, the research used people who were found at the Virgin Active gym and people at the Doppio Zero restaurant. According to Du Plooy (2009:109), a target population is the actual population to which the researcher wants to generalise the results. Thus, for the purpose of this study, all people who were in Northriding on the days that the research was conducted were chosen as the target population.

This particular population was chosen because of its unique dynamic of including a ‘now’ generation and global citizen audience, as this community has residents who are income-earning and probably possess televisions and cell phones, and have access to the internet through mobile phones or other devices. This population was also selected because of its ability to access the internet, which is an important requirement for participating in social media, and comprises different ages, genders and races. Furthermore, the Northriding location was convenient as the researcher lives in this suburb.

A sample is a percentage of the population selected by means of some clearly distinct procedure. According to Van Rensburg (2000:161) sample size refers to the number of elements in a sample. There are various sampling methods available for use in research. Researchers distinguish between probability (random) and non-probability (non-random) sampling (Leedy & Ormrod 2005:99). This is further discussed below.

The researcher decided on a sample size of 50 people in Northriding: 25 people at Virgin Active and 25 people at Doppio Zero. Wimmer and Dominick (2003:96) state that determining a sample size is one of the most controversial aspects of sampling. They further question how large a sample should be to provide the desired level of confidence in the results. They argue that certain sample sizes are suggested for various statistical procedures, but no single sample-size formula or method is available for every research method or statistical procedure. The small sample size was intentionally decided on to enable researcher to save time and resources.

Communications research methodology usually differentiates between two general categories of sampling, that is, probability and non-probability sampling.

Probability sampling is employed when every member (unit analysis) of a population has an equal chance of being drawn for the sample to represent the target population, so that the sample error can be calculated (Du Plooy 2009:115). This research was conducted in Northriding and, thus, it was not only limited to the people who live in Northriding as the locations in which the researcher chose to conduct this study did not exclude people who do not reside in Northriding. Virgin Active in Belair Mall is visited by people from almost everywhere in Johannesburg if that person has national membership; also people at Doppio Zero are not only from Northriding but almost everywhere in Johannesburg or even outside Johannesburg.

Non-probability sampling is employed when every member of the population does not have an equal chance of being drawn for the sample to represent the target population, so it is difficult to ascertain the sample error (Du Plooy 2009:123). This was the case in this study as the people were readily available at Virgin Active and at Doppio Zero.

For the purpose of this study a non-probability, convenience or availability sample was selected from the people in Northriding Virgin Active and Doppio Zero restaurant. A convenience sample results when a researcher draws the sample based on the availability of the respondents (Du Plooy 2009:123). This sampling method does not allow for the findings to be generalised. The self-administered questionnaire respondents in the survey were people of Northriding, who were fortunately accessible during the week and on weekends from

morning to late in the afternoon. They would often complete the questionnaire on the spot, though sometimes the researcher had to go and collect it later in the day to ensure that no questionnaires were lost or spoiled. Therefore, convenience was achieved.

#### **4.4.2. Data capturing**

Data was collected by requesting people at Virgin Active and Doppio Zero in Northriding to respond to the questionnaire. The questionnaire was six pages in length excluding the consent form; so that the attention of the respondent was retained.

The open-ended nature of a few of the questions gave the respondents the chance and the independence to provide in-depth responses to the questions (Babbie 1992), especially Question 13 which was a follow up from Question 11.

The 50 questionnaires which comprised the sample size were divided into two, with 25 questionnaires being administered at Virgin Active and the other 25 at Doppio Zero. The questionnaires were left with the respondents for a maximum of 1 hour. The quick turn-around time was deliberate to ensure that the respondents responded immediately and didn't take or lose the questionnaires and also to receive the feedback early enough for further action to be taken.

The questionnaires were not all returned within an hour, some respondents took longer to complete especially at Doppio Zero, as the researcher targeted people just after they had ordered their meal. The researcher approached them then as this way seemed more convenient than asking people who were already enjoying their meal. It should be noted that not everyone that the researcher approached was willing to participate.

The research attempted to discover how social media could enhance the viewing experience of the SABC television drama audience. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007), data can be collected using observation, interviews, questionnaires and other secondary data collecting methods. In this research a survey of self-administered questionnaires was circulated and completed by people in Northriding Virgin Active and the Doppio Zero restaurant.

To facilitate follow-ups, more questionnaires were printed so that the questionnaires of respondents who spoiled them could be replaced. The method used helped to save money on transport and postage.

Generally, a response rate of 85 per cent was initially anticipated, but 100 per cent was attained. Meanwhile, following Babbie's (1992) recommendation, a response rate of 80 per cent would have been considered satisfactory for the analysis and reporting of this work. A response rate of 75 per cent is considered good but a response rate of 90 per cent is considered as being very good, as it would have fairly represented the views of the entire research population.

#### **4.4.3. Data capturing instrument**

A questionnaire is a form that is filled in by a respondent alone without any outside assistance, so it requires a high level of literacy. A questionnaire can be used to collect information on attitude, knowledge and experience (Parahoo 2006:283). The first page of a questionnaire must include an introduction (Du Plooy 2009:192). Accordingly, a cover letter accompanied the questionnaire explaining the purpose of the research and guaranteeing the confidentiality of the responses. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2006:189), there are six principles of writing a successful cover letter: it should be short, realistically worded, non-threatening, serious, neutral, and pleasant but firm.

In general, the aim of the cover letter is to persuade the respondent to fill in and return the questionnaire by a specific date (Du Plooy 2009:192). (See Appendix 1 for more information on the person undertaking the survey, as well as the purpose of or reasons why a survey is carried out.)

The primary aim of the introductory letter/consent form is to persuade the respondent to complete the questionnaire within a set time (Du Plooy 2009:192). Apart from the six principles mentioned here it must also give the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity. This proved to be a challenge in this research as the consent form allowed by the institution overseeing this research study requires the respondent to give their full names and to sign the questionnaire, which takes away from the confidentiality and anonymity.

The questionnaire opted to use close-ended questions as they are less time consuming and easier to understand, and open-ended questions were kept to a minimum. The questionnaires were designed to be as simple and clear as possible, with targeted sections and questions. Most importantly, the questionnaire was made as short as possible with only 21 questions.

#### **4.4.4. Questionnaire structure**

The questionnaire was divided into two sections, A and B; this done to give the questionnaire structure.

Section A sought to obtain demographic information on the respondent, such as gender, age, race, employment status and others (see Appendix 2). This was done as a way to warm up the respondent before the actual questions about the researched topic were asked. Du Plooy (2009:193) states that a logical sequence must be applied when structuring the questionnaire as he is of the view that some questions are easier to answer which will encourage the respondents to respond. This was the case with the structure of the questionnaire for this study.

The questions in Section B related to the topic being researched and they were kept to a minimum as people do not like thinking too much after having worked an eight-hour day. The questions in this section were also mostly closed-ended with a few follow-up questions that were open-ended. This was done to allow respondents the freedom to share their views, opinions and ideas on “how social media would enhance the viewing experience of the SABC television drama audiences”.

#### **4.4.5. Piloting the structured questionnaire**

To eliminate any doubts regarding construct validity, a pre-test or pilot study of the questionnaire was conducted. A pilot study can be used as a trial run to prepare for a major study (Polit, Beck & Hungler 2001:467). A pilot study to test the self-administered questionnaire was conducted on a sample of three purposefully selected residents of Northriding. Babbie (1990:222) states that “the selection of the subject for instrument pre-tests can be profitably flexible and varied”, hence the idea of using only five respondents.

Both the sample and the pilot study respondents had to be kept to a minimal due to the time constraints and financial constraints of this study. Although a pilot study does not guarantee the success of the actual study it does, however, increase the likelihood. The sample comprised all people 18 and below as well as 50 and above. This sample later participated in the actual study.

The process assisted the researcher in determining the strengths and weaknesses of the survey, as well as possible ambiguity with respect to the formulation of the questions in the questionnaire. For example, the questions below (14, 16, 18 and 20) were rephrased after the pilot study after all the three respondents had stated that it is not clear whether the respondent was supposed to choose one option or all the options that applied, as they wanted to select all but the question was not clear. These questions were then rephrased and a “Mark which applies to you most” included in the questions before the questionnaires were distributed.

**Question 14**

How can social media enhance the viewing experience of SABC television drama audiences?

There will be increased interactivity with people you are watching with and others on same social network like you.	TV drama viewing on the go from your mobile devices at anytime and anywhere.	Audiences will be able to interact directly with their favourite actor/actress.	In other ways
1	2	3	4

**Question 16**

What are the interactive opportunities that Twitter and Facebook can offer to those SABC television dramas that don't use social media?

Increased viewership	Audience engagement and audience providing feedback to the drama producers	Social media can act as a marketing tool for a broadcasting station	Other opportunities
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1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

**Question 18**

How can SABC television drama improve its interaction with the audience on Twitter or/and Facebook?

Programme hashtag on screen	Facebook account on screen	Programme website link on screen	Other
1	2	3	4

**Question 20**

<b>19. Why would you interact with SABC television drama on Twitter or/and Facebook? If a tick then 1, otherwise 0</b>		
19.1	To get information	
19.2	For personal identity with other characters on the drama I am watching	
19.3	For integration and social interaction with other audiences	
19.4	For entertainment	
19.5	To escape from daily stresses.	
19.6	Other	

Minor editorial changes were executed to these questions to ensure that the respondents understood them.

However, the primary objective of the pre-test study was to measure the time it would take a respondent to complete the questionnaire and to ensure that there was no ambiguity in the survey questions. The five respondents that had been selected for the pilot study were visited on the 21 and 22 November 2015. During the pilot study it was noted that some of the closed-

ended questions needed clarity on whether the respondent has to mark only one answer provided or all those that applied to them in that particular question.

It was further noted that out of the five respondents only one wrote their opinion and the other four only selected from the answers provided. This prompted the researcher to keep the open-ended questions to a minimum.

#### **4.4.6. Data analysis**

Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the collected data (Marshall & Rossman 1990:11). Parahoo (2006:375) agrees with this and states that data analysis is “an integrated part of the research design, and it is a means of making sense of data before presenting them in an understandable manner”.

#### **4.4.7. Analysis of quantitative data**

For effective data analysis, data were extracted from the responses to the questionnaire and making notes on a notepad about the content of each response to the questionnaire item. Answers were documented on paper in the order that they appeared in the questionnaire; and the data captured on the notepad were then typed on the computer using Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel software.

This was done to assess the respondents’ opinions, ideas and attitudes on how SABC could enhance the viewing experience of television drama audiences. The questionnaire included matrix items with options scaled for each, ranking questions, multiple-choice items and filter questions. For each question, the researcher counted the number of different responses per question.

Once the data had been coded into categories, a descriptive analysis was carried out on the collected data, as the questionnaire included population parameters such as age, education level, gender and other demographic information. The frequency of a certain response to a question was calculated as a percentage and the data illustrated using bar charts and tables. These methods were chosen because tables facilitate the presentation of large amounts of

data, and bar charts give a clear picture of results with a sense of proportion (Parahoo 2006:378). The completed questionnaires are kept in a secure place and on the researcher's computer as this is vital both for back-up and security reasons.

#### **4.5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The main limitation of this study was the sample size. Owing to the small sample and the time constraints, only five people were conveniently selected to conduct the pilot. While extensive research has been done on these platforms, the focus of this research was on the Twitter and Facebook viewing experience for SABC television drama audiences.

In view of the fact that the sample population was a convenience sample, many people had the chance of being selected to participate in the research. Although the survey focused on people in Northriding, the environment in which the questionnaire was administered would have made it impossible to limit it to people who reside in Northriding only, as not all people who go to Virgin Active in Northriding reside there and people who go to Doppio Zero are not necessarily Northriding residents. The survey also focused on respondents of all age groups.

#### **4.6. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY**

Validity and reliability in a study are vital in ensuring a genuine and replicable study. Reliability and validity are essential concepts in assessing the significance of quantitative research. However, as qualitative research is based upon assumptions and views of the world that differ from those of quantitative research, there have been discussions about the relevance for these concepts in the evaluation of qualitative studies, where many have argued that these should be evaluated differently (Bryman 2004). Both reliability and validity reflect the degree to which an error may occur in the research measuring instruments (Leedy & Ormrod 2010:29).

Reliability shows analysts the extent to which a measuring procedure can produce the same results on repeated trials (Carmines & Zeller 1979:11); that is, the consistency with which a measuring instrument yields a certain result when the entity being measured has not changed (Leedy & Ormrod 2010:29). To address reliability in quantitative research, which concerns the question of whether the results of a study are repeatable (Bryman 2004), the researcher included detailed planning and implementation to avoid repetition.

It is, however, significant to note that a replication of a quantitative study such as this would not necessarily obtain in similar results. Reliability seeks to check whether the information obtained is accurate and consistent (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Deport 2002:75). Reliability is also not one-dimensional; it consists of stability, internal consistency and equivalency (Wimmer & Dominick 2006:57).

Reliability refers to the consistency of a result or measure at different points in time (Wimmer & Dominick. 2006:57). There are some limitations to this method as it involves two rounds of data collection which tends to be time-consuming. The possibility also exists that respondents may repeat their responses during the second test or change their views over a period of time, thereby lowering the reliability estimate. However, this method is considered useful when the measure contains single items that combine factors that are independent of others on the same measure (Du Plooy 2006:132).

Internal consistency involves the extent to which all items in the scale measure the same phenomenon (Wimmer & Dominick 2006:58). Equivalency refers to the extent of the agreement between two measuring instruments or coders (Wimmer & Dominick 2006:58).

Validity is generally described in research texts as the degree to which a particular research instrument measures what it needs to measure (Leedy & Ormrod 2005:28). According to Creswell (2003:195) validity is used to determine whether the findings are accurate from the perspective of the researcher. Furthermore, validity seeks to check if relevant questions about the research topic are being asked, and whether sufficient areas are covered (Wimmer & Dominick 2006:59). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:6) state that in quantitative research, validity often concerns itself with objectivity, generalisability, replicability, predictability, controllability and nomothetic statements.

Neuendorf (2002:115–117) identifies five types of validity, namely, external validity, face validity, criterion validity, content validity and construct validity. External validity refers to the generalisability of the study, and is related to the sampling method used. As this study used convenient sampling, external validity did apply. It should be noted that external validity cannot exist without internal validity; this will ensure that the results can be generalised.

Internal validity refers to the extent to which the effects identified in the study are a true reflection of reality rather than the result of some other irrelevant factor. External validity on the other hand refers to the ability to generalise the results of a study to other settings (Wimmer & Dominick 2006:30). For example, in this study the results can be generalised to the Northriding population. Face validity is the extent to which the measure fits what is expected, or is generally believed to be true (Krippendorff 2004:313). Therefore, if the findings of a survey make general sense, they are considered valid in terms of face validity.

#### **4.7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

The reason for a researcher to be ethical while conducting research is to avoid harming the participants or the respondents physically or mentally, nor to expose them to risk. Dominick and Wimmer (2003:66) state that “mass media research involves observation of human beings; asking them questions or examining what they have done”. A lot of mass media research involves observation of human beings; asking them questions or examining what they have done (Dominick & Wimmer, 2003:66). In this research, a self-administered questionnaire was distributed to 50 people in Northriding. During this process, the researcher ensured that the rights of participants were not violated, and that in the questionnaire cover letter they were given all the facts needed to provide informed, voluntary consent.

The participants were to remain anonymous as the consent form would not have requested them to write their names on the questionnaire thus assuring them that their answers would be kept confidential. However this was challenged because the institution required that the respondents give their names on the questionnaire, thus challenging respondents’ anonymity.

## **4.8. SUMMARY AND OUTLINE OF CHAPTER 5**

A quantitative research approach was selected as the appropriate research method to explore the way social media can enhance the viewing experience of the SABC television drama audience. This chapter discussed the research problem with specific reference to the

- the rationale for selecting the method
- target population
- sampling process and sample size
- data collection procedure
- data analysis
- ethical considerations, and
- limitations of the study.

In Chapter 5, the findings of the processed data in relation to the research questions in section 4.3 will be discussed in order to answer those research questions.

## **5. CHAPTER 5: QUANTITATIVE DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the data that were collected using the survey questionnaire described in Chapter 4. The data were gathered to capture television viewers' opinions about the TV programmes broadcast by the SABC to establish why these viewers watch SABC TV, how they think social media would enhance their viewing experience of dramas in order to assess what pleases them when watching SABC TV shows. This chapter therefore presents answers to the questions posed in the questionnaire in the order that they were asked in the survey. Questions relating to the demographic characteristics of the respondents were asked first; hence the related findings are presented first in the next section. These questions, in the final analysis, provide answers to the problem statement of the research and contribute to the achievement of the study objectives, which were stated in Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

The research findings are presented in the form of illustrative graphs and charts, as well as on engaging and informative quantitative data and reports.

The aims and objectives of the study focus on an evaluation of what the SABC should be aware of in terms of making use of social media to communicate with its drama and soap opera viewers in terms of improving its dialogue and engagement with its publics who are the main viewers of these TV programmes. The first set of data reported on is the demographic information of the respondents who answered the questionnaire.

### **5.2. PRESENTATION OF RESPONDENTS' PERSONAL OR DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

The first section of the questionnaire sought to obtain certain demographic information from the respondents, including asking them about their gender, age, racial group, highest educational qualification, employment status and monthly income. The respondents' answers to these questions are found in Section A of the questionnaire and are presented next. The gender, age and race of the respondents are reported first, followed by the other demographic variables, including, employment status and educational qualifications of each respondent. These questions appeared in Section A of the questionnaire.

### 5.2.1. Respondents' gender

**Table 5.1: Respondent profile by gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Total</b>
Female Cases (% of sample)	32 (64%)	32 (64%)
Male Cases (% of sample)	16 (32%)	16 32%
Person/s did not answer question	2 (4%)	2 (4%)
<b>Total (Cases %)</b>	<b>50 100%</b>	<b>50 100%</b>

The findings revealed that 32 of the 50 respondents were female (i.e. 64% of the sample) and 16 were male (i.e. 32% of the respondents). Two people did not answer the questionnaire and returned it to the researcher unanswered. The researcher did not realise this issue during the process of questionnaire administration and found out about it only when capturing the data on the computer.

The age of the respondents is stated next.

### 5.2.2. The age of the respondents

**Table 5.2: Respondent profile by age**

Age (years)	Number of Respondents	Total
18 years and under		
Cases	1	1
%	2%	2%
19–25	11	11
	22%	22%
26–33	24	24
	48%	48%
34–41	7	7
	14%	14%
42–49	4	4
	8%	8%
50 and above	1	1
	2%	2%
No answer	2	2
	4%	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Sample</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

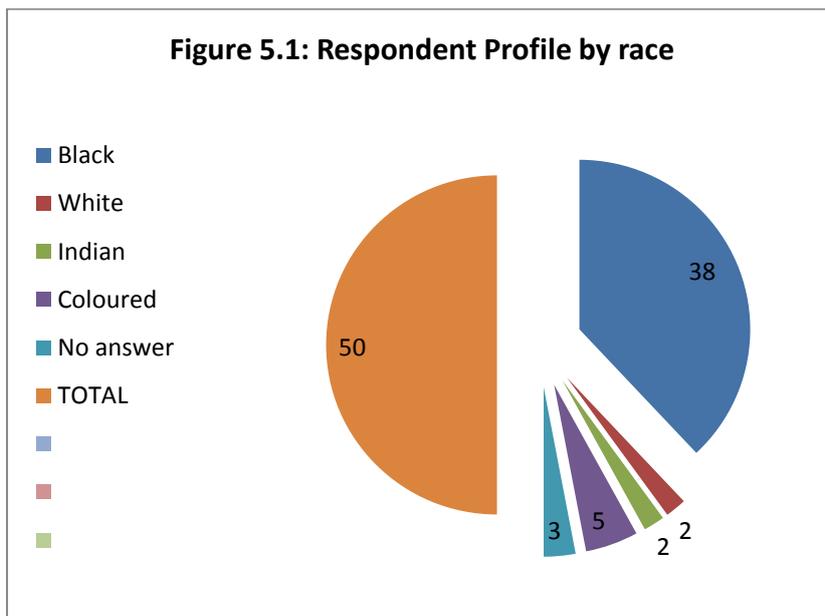
**Table 5.2** indicates that of the 50 respondents who answered the questionnaire, one person (i.e. 2% of the sample) was aged 18 years or younger, 11 respondents (22% of the respondents) were between 19 and 25 years of age; two people did not respond to the question (representing 4% of the respondents); 24 respondents (representing 48% of the group) were aged between 26 and 33; seven respondents (14% of the sample) were aged between 34 and 41; one person (2% of the sample) was aged 50 or older; and last but not least four respondents (8% of the sample) were between 42 and 49 years of age.

This result reveals that most of the people who answered the questionnaire were between 26 and 33 years of age, followed by the 19 to 25 year age group and then the 34 to 41 year age group of TV viewers.

The following section of the questionnaire sought to establish the respondents' racial group. This is reported on in **Figure 5.1**.

### 5.2.3. Respondents' racial group

The results revealed that the respondents were from four racial groups: black, white, Indian and coloured. **Figure 5.1** indicates the number of respondents in each racial group.

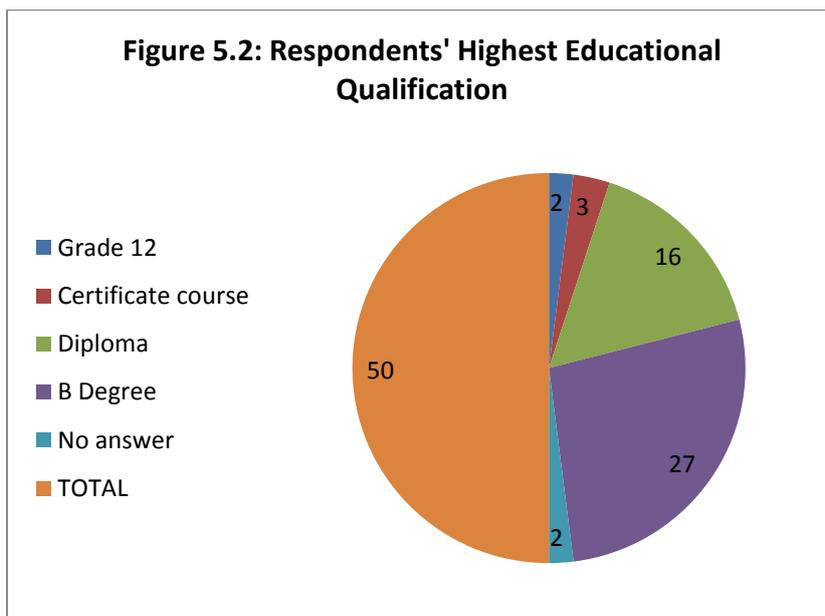


The respondents were also asked about their highest educational qualifications. The results of the answers to this question are stated next.

#### 5.2.4. Highest educational qualification of the respondents

The most educated group among the respondents had a bachelor degree and this group comprised 54 per cent of the sample (i.e. 27 respondents). Next, 16 people or 32 per cent of the respondents had a diploma; this was followed by a group with a certificate which comprised six per cent of the sample, that is, three respondents; this was followed by the group with Grade 12 as their highest qualification (2 people or 4%). Two people did not answer the question at all, representing four per cent of the sampled group.

The results relating to educational qualifications are exhibited in **Figure 5.2**.



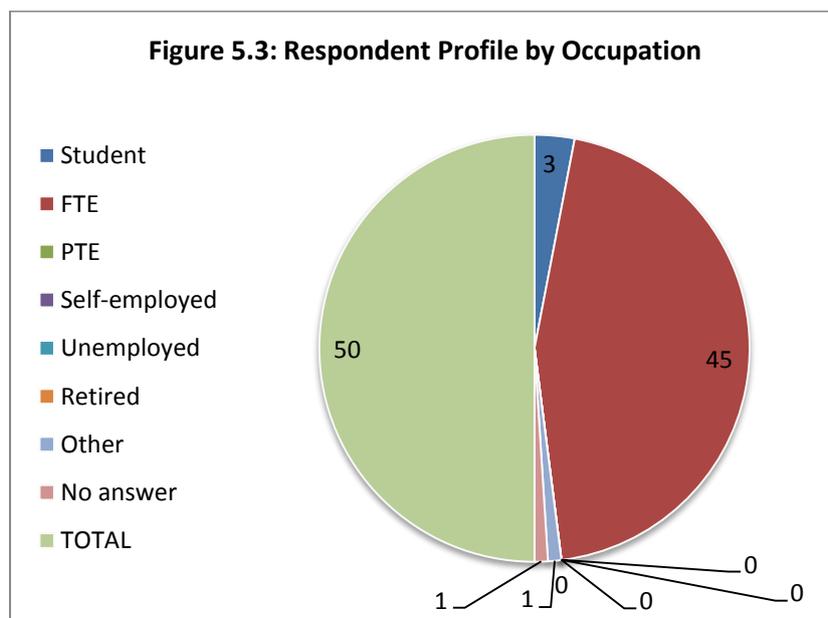
The next question in the questionnaire pertained to the work the respondents do or the kind of employment they were doing during the period in which they answered this survey.

### 5.2.5. Respondents' employment status

Results revealed that three respondents were students (representing 6% of the sample) and 45 respondents had full-time employment (FTE, this group represented 90% of the respondents). There were no part-time employed (PTE) respondents, no self-employed persons, no retirees and no unemployed respondents. However, there was one respondent whose occupation was not stated in the closed question but who added their occupation in a next question as being an accountant – this respondent formed two per cent of the sample.

One individual did not answer the question, representing two per cent of the sample.

Figure 5.3 provides a summary of this result.



Regarding **Question 6** in the questionnaire, only one person stated that they were an accountant, representing 'Other' occupation. This individual represented two per cent of the respondents. This detail is included in Figure 5.3. Forty-nine (49) respondents did not answer that question, representing 98% of the respondents.

**Question 7**, which asked about self-employment, was also not answered by the respondents. It transpired in the non-responses that there were no self-employed respondents; therefore 50 out of 50 respondents did not answer this question on self-employment.

Section B of the questionnaire focused on how the SABC makes use of social media to interact with audiences. The next section reports on the responses to these questions.

### **5.3. RESPONSES ABOUT THE SABC AND THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY THE PUBLIC BROADCASTER**

Question 8 was a simple closed question which asked the respondents whether they made use of social media in their lives or not. The answers revealed that an overwhelming 48 out of 50 make use of social media on a daily basis. This figure represents 96 per cent of the respondents. One respondent stated that he or she did not use social media at all, representing two per cent of the respondents. Another individual did not answer this question, which also represents another two per cent of the sample. These results are illustrated in **Table 5.3**.

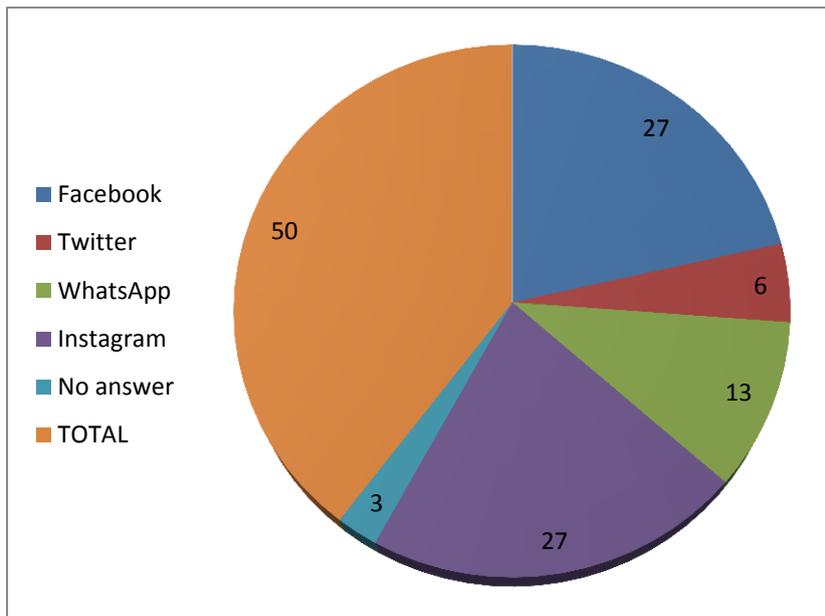
**Table 5.3: Respondents' use of social media**

<b>Use of Social Media</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Total</b>
Yes Cases (% of sample)	48 (96%)	48 (96%)
No Cases (% of sample)	1 (2%)	1 2%
Person/s did not answer question	1	1

	(2%)	(2%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>(Cases %)</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Consequent to the respondents' use of social media, the respondents were further asked to state which social media platform they used most on a daily basis. The results of this question yielded the data captured in **Figure 5.4**.

**Figure 5.4: Social media used most on a daily basis**



**Figure 5.4** indicates that of the 50 respondents, six (12% of the sample) used Twitter more than the other social media most of the time; 13 people or 26 per cent of the sample used WhatsApp more than the other social media; three people (6% of the sample) did not answer the question, while one person (2% of the sample) stated that he or she used Instagram more on a daily basis than other social media. Facebook turned out to be used by most of the people in this sample, with 27 individuals or 54 per cent of the sample stating as such. Other social media such as LinkedIn and You Tube were rated as being used by the respondents but were not used most; they were used after the social media appearing in Figure 5.4 have been

used. In other words, as stated by the respondents, although used by some of the respondents (20 individuals or 40% of the sample – see Table 5.4), LinkedIn and YouTube are not used as much as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram.

The social media used by some of the respondents are listed in **Table 5.4**.

**Table 5.4: All social media used by some respondents**

	Facebook	Twitter	WhatsApp	Instagram	LinkedIn	YouTube
Respondent 13	√		√			√
Respondent 14	√		√	√		
Respondent 17	√		√		√	
Respondent 19	√	√	√	√	√	√
Respondent 20	√		√			√
Respondent 23		√	√		√	√
Respondent 26	√		√			√
Respondent 27	√	√	√	√	√	√
Respondent 31	√		√			
Respondent 32	√	√	√	√	√	√
Respondent 33	√	√	√	√	√	√
Respondent 34	√	√	√	√	√	√
Respondent 37	√	√	√	√	√	√
Respondent 38	√		√			√
Respondent 39	√		√	√		
Respondent 44	√		√			
Respondent 45	√	√	√	√	√	√
Respondent 47	√	√	√	√	√	√
Respondent 48	√	√	√	√	√	√
Respondent 49	√	√	√			√

The respondents not mentioned in Table 5.4 only used one social medium on a daily basis and these respondents' information appears in Figure 5.4.

The next batch of questions in the questionnaire focused on asking the respondents about whether they watch SABC soapies and dramas. The following results portray the answers to these questions.

Respondents were asked to state the drama series that they watched most on the SABC television channels. The results of this question yielded the data indicated in Figure 5.5.

**Figure 5.5: Television programmes watched by the respondents**

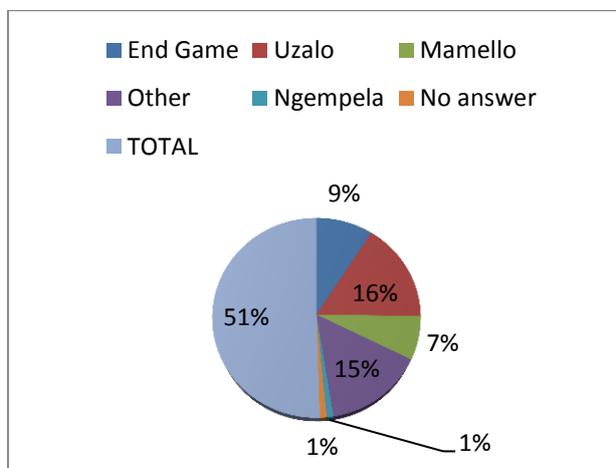


Figure 5.5 indicates that most respondents, 16 out of the sample of 50 (i.e. 32% of the sample) stated that they watched the TV show *Uzalo* more than others. The next shows stated as the second most watched by this group of people are other TV shows which were not stated in the closed question (which turned out in answers to the next question to be *Generations*, *The Legacy*, *Muvhango*, *Skeem Saam*, *Isidingo the Need*, *Go Plein Street*, *Say Yes to the Dress*, *Medical Detectives*, *My Perfect Wedding*, *High Rollers*, BBC First Entertainment Channel, Afrikaans Channel on DsTV, Tennis Grand Slams, Game of Thrones, English Premier League on DStv, *Date my Family*, *The Cougar Wives*, *Long Island Medium* on DsTV, *The Preachers of LA*, and *The Real Housewives of Atlanta*).

The TV show *End Game* was reportedly watched by nine persons, which represents 18 per cent of the sample; the TV show *Mamello* was watched by seven persons from the sample, representing 14 per cent of the sample; the show *Ngempela* was watched by one person representing two per cent of the sample; one person did not answer the question (i.e. another

2% of the sample); and the TV show *Mfolozi Street* was also watched by just one person (i.e. 2% of the sample).

The number of respondents stating that they watched ‘Other’ shows (regarding Question 12 of the questionnaire) that were not listed in the closed question turned out to be high, which is interesting because most of the shows that this group stated as their favourite are broadcast by the SABC’s competition, DStv. These TV shows have been stated above. To recap: *Generations, The Legacy, Muvhango, Skeem Saam, Isidingo the Need, Go Plein Street, Say Yes to the Dress (SYTD), My Perfect Wedding (MPW), Medical Detectives (MD), My Perfect Wedding, High Rollers, BBC First Entertainment Channel, Afrikaans Channel on DStv, Tennis grand slams, Game of Thrones, English Premier League on DStv, Date my Family (DmF), The Cougar Wives (TCW), Long Island Medium (LIM) on DStv, The Preachers of LA (TPLA), The Real Housewives of Atlanta (TRHA)*. Table 5.5 indicates which respondents watched which TV shows.

**Table 5.5: Other TV shows watched by some respondents**

	<b>High Rollers</b>	<b>Generations the Legacy and Isidingo The Need</b>	<b>Sports Shows on DTSV, Soccer and Tennis BBC News</b>	<b>Muvhango and Skeem Saam</b>	<b>Afrikaans Shows on DStv and Go Plein Street</b>	<b>DmF, LIM, TCW, TPLA, TRHA MPW MD SYTD</b>
Respondent 5	√					
Respondent 13						√
Respondent 17						
Respondent 18				√		
Respondent 20		√		√		
Respondent 21		√				
Respondent 23	√	√			√	

Respondent 24				√		
Respondent 25		√		√		
Respondent 32			√			
Respondent 33				√		
Respondent 34			√			
Respondent 35					√	
Respondent 39			√			
Respondent 44				√		
Respondent 47	√			√		
Respondent 49		√		√		

The respondents were asked why they watched their favourite TV shows. A variety of reasons were stated in answer to this question, which are repeated verbatim here:

- “interesting story lines with good performances” – Respondent 01, referring to the show *End Game*
- “story line and language used” liked by Respondent 03, commenting about the show *Uzalo*
- “interesting setting in the casino” by Respondent 05, referring to the show *High Rollers*
- “it’s a thriller” – Respondent 06, capturing the thrill in *End Game*
- “very interesting” – Respondent 09, referring to *Generations The Legacy* and *Skeem Saam*
- “they are set in provinces and they tell good stories with strong characters” – stated by Respondent 11 – commenting about *Mamello* and *Uzalo*
- “their characters are real” – Respondent 12 about *Uzalo* show
- “life related characters, it’s interesting watching the drama unfold” – affirmed by Respondent 13 about these shows that she watches: *Say Yes to the Dress*, *Medical Detectives*, *My Perfect Wedding*, *Date my Family*, *Long Island Medium*, *The Cougar Wives*, *The Preachers of LA*, *The Real Housewives of Atlanta*. This respondent stated vehemently that she **does not** watch the SABC shows
- “they are very interesting and entertaining” – Respondent 14, mentioned watching *Generations The Legacy*
- “the drama and creativity” are liked by Respondent 15, mentioned watching *Muvhango* show
- “things acted reflect real-life issues; stories do happen in life so I can relate to the shows” – Respondent 16 – mentioned watching *Uzalo* drama
- “Follow that story line and it’s easy to catch up with the story if you miss an episode” –

Respondent 17 – referring to *Muvhango* and *Generations the Legacy*

- “this drama came up with many new actors I did not know before instead of using the same old actors that we know from other TV soapies” – Respondent 18, referring to *Skeem Saam*
- “interesting story line and interesting drama that I can relate to” – Respondent 19 commenting about *Uzalo* show
- “they are entertaining, I enjoy this drama more than others” – Respondent 20 referring to *Generations the Legacy* and *Muvhango* shows
- “I watch Uzalo with my kids. It teaches them to stop being dramatic in life” – stated Respondent 21
- “Dramatic, I watch Generations because there is no other interesting program for me at that time of the evening to watch” – stated Respondent 22
- “entertainment and truth about life” is obtained by Respondent 23 from watching TV dramas *Isidingo the Need* and *Go Plein Street*
- “Muvhango have more to do with culture and it’s always good to keep up with your culture: - Respondent 25 [Venda culture is portrayed in this TV show]
- “Politics! I don’t like politics but with health and emergency show I like them because there are intriguing plots that make me want to see more” – Respondent 27, mentioned *End Game* show
- “Escapism, alternative insights into solid issues” – Respondent 28, stated watching shows *End Game*, *Uzalo*, *Ngempela*, *Sticks and Stones*, *Mfolozi Street*
- “the show represents life, children can be swapped in hospital” – Respondent 30, watching *Uzalo*
- “it portrays real life issues” – Respondent 31, about *Mamello*
- “great plots, interesting character journeys, political thriller genre that I enjoy” – Respondent 32, commenting about *End Game* and others watched including *English Premier League*, *Tennis Grand Slams* and *Game of Thrones*
- “story takes place in KZN, feels believable” – Respondent 33, mentioned watching *End Game*, *Skeem Saam*, *Mamello*, *Uzalo*, *Ngempela*, *Sticks and Stones*, *Mfolozi Street*
- “personal taste, I enjoy crime dramas and period dramas, I also enjoy lifestyle viewing” – Respondent 34, stated watching DStv shows, BBC First Entertainment Channel and Afrikaans Channels on DsTV
- the publicity drive was incredible! The marketing was well done and the story line is unique

and original” – Respondent 35, mentioned watching *Uzalo*

- “the story line is authentic, audiences relate to family dynamics” – Respondent 36, referred to *Uzalo* and *Ngempela*
- “I watch for exposure to other cultures and a way of life, and for entertainment” – Respondent 38, stated watching *Uzalo*
- “Because it entertains though there is nothing that I’m learning from it because it focuses more on gangsterism” – Respondent 42, mentioned watching *Uzalo*
- “Uzalo, I love Uzalo! – it’s one of the best dramas on the SABC, love the characters; they’re real and believable; also love that follows the Zulu culture fully. Muvhango – I love Muvhango for its real, they follow proper tradition, no short cuts when it comes to tradition” stated Respondent 44, adding *Muvhango* and *Skeem Saam* to one’s list of favourite SABC TV drama shows
- “my family watches soopies they are interesting and have a story line that builds up” – Respondent 49, writing about *Muvhango* (and *Uzalo*, *Ngempela*, *Sticks and Stones*), and
- “they tell South African stories that I can identify with; I identify with characters and they resonate with the world” – Respondent 50 wrote about *End Game*, *Mamello*, *Uzalo*, *Ngempela*, *Sticks and Stones* and *Mfolozi Street*.

From these comments quoted above, in answer to Question 13, it is clear that 34 respondents – representing 64 per cent of the sample – had much to write about what they enjoyed and what satisfied them in the TV shows that they watched. These are a range of reasons which clearly reflect **uses and gratifications theory (UGT)**, which formed the foundation of this study. Some respondents also stated what kind of shows they did not like to watch, for example those who stated that they did not like or watch politics and gangsterism. It is clear that these respondents enjoy shows that have a positive impact on a person, shows that promote happiness and good family values and which have entertainment value for them. The remaining 16 respondents, comprising 32 per cent of the sample, did not answer the question.

### **Questions 14 and 15**

Question 14 provided respondents with answer options to choose from and also allowed the respondents to suggest – subsequently in Question 15 – other communication means and platforms that the SABC could employ to improve interactive communication with audiences

in a highly digital environment. Answers to Question 14 are reflected in Table 5.6.

**Table 5.6: How social media can enhance the television viewing experience of SABC television drama audiences**

<b>Answer option or statement of choice</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Total</b>
<p>There will be increased interactivity with people you are watching with and others on same social network like you</p> <p>Cases</p> <p>(% of sample)</p>	<p>21</p> <p>(42%)</p>	<p>21</p> <p>(42%)</p>
<p>TV drama viewing on the go, on your mobile device at anytime and anywhere</p> <p>Cases</p> <p>(% of sample)</p>	<p>25</p> <p>(50%)</p>	<p>25</p> <p>50%</p>
<p>In other ways</p> <p>Cases</p> <p>(% of sample)</p>	<p>1</p> <p>(2%)</p>	<p>1</p> <p>(2%)</p>

No answer		
Cases	3	3
(% of sample)	6%	6%
<b>Total (cases %)</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>
	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

With reference to the question of what other ways the SABC could employ to facilitate iTV with its audience, one respondent who answered this question – Question 15 – was of the view that a hashtag like the Muvhango hashtag could be introduced by the SABC so that viewers of this show could communicate with each other on that hashtag and also with the SABC while the TV show is airing, and views and debates about the show could be entertained by all those interested on that particular online platform. This would provide immediacy of communication and may also reveal a wealth of comments and knowledge about the show from TV viewers. Ninety four (94) per cent of the respondents – see Table 5.6 – who answered Questions 14 and 15 support the introduction and use of social media for SABC drama on TV as they believe that these media would enhance communication between the SABC and its audiences, as well as offering marketing and communication strategies to the SABC to introduce social media as part of the drama and soapie viewing experience. This would allow the broadcaster to enjoy the fruits of communicating with millions of social media users who watch these SABC drama series. Communication between the audience members and the broadcaster could thus improve dramatically. Consequently, the broadcaster could enhance the quality of the stories and also provide the show producers with more ideas about how some stories could be enhanced and developed further in the future. This could contribute to increased viewership figures and attract more viewers to some content-enhanced TV shows.

Question 16 was similar in structure and response expectation from the respondent. It is a closed question which offered the respondents some answer options to choose from and also allowed them to add their own views in subsequent Question 17. Responses to Question 16 are stated in **Table 5.7**

**Table 5.7: Interactive opportunities that Twitter and Facebook can offer SABC TV dramas that do not use social media currently to communicate with audiences**

<b>Answer option or statement of choice</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Total</b>
Increased viewership Cases (% of sample)	14 (28%)	14 (28%)
Audience engagement and feedback to the drama producers Cases (% of sample)	21 42%	
Social media can act as a marketing tool for a broadcaster Cases (% of sample)	9 (18%)	9 (18%)
Other opportunities Cases (% of sample)	1 2%	1 2%

No answer		
Cases	5	5
(% of sample)	10%	10%
<b>TOTAL</b>		
<b>Cases</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>(% of sample)</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 5.7** reflects support for the use of social media that would benefit the SABC if such social media were introduced by the broadcaster to TV dramas which do not use social media at this stage to communicate with TV audiences. Of the 50 respondents, 21 (42% of the sample) stated that increased TV viewership would have the effect of introducing social media to TV dramas with no current social media exposure. Twenty-one respondents (42% of the sample) stated that audience engagement and feedback to the SABC about dramas would increase if social media were to be introduced as part of the TV viewing experience where these are lacking. Nine respondents or 18 per cent of the sample stated that social media can act as an efficient marketing tool for the SABC if they were introduced to TV shows that do not use social media at present. One individual mentioned the use of a hashtag to improve audience interactivity with SABC TV shows.

An elaboration on the other means of communication that could be used by the SABC was required in Question 17.

It should be mentioned that only one respondent (out of 50 people) answered this question, offering advice to the SABC. This person represents two per cent of the sample and 48 respondents or 98 per cent of the sample did not answer the question but opted to select their answer options from the options presented in Question 16. Respondent 28's answer to Question 17 is given verbatim as follows:

If the idea is constructed to build the social media in the space of radio the interactive element can be engaged beyond the high current footprint, informing urban focus; interaction will extend beyond celebrities to include issues.

Question 18 was structured as a closed question in the same way as Questions 14 and 16, offering the respondent a choice from a number of options . Answers to this question, and also Question 19 (which requested the respondent to elaborate on their choice of “other” in Question 18), yielded the results depicted in Table 5.8.

**Table 5.8: How the SABC can improve television drama to increase interaction with audiences on Twitter and Facebook**

<b>Answer option or statement of choice</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Total</b>
Programme hashtag on screen Cases (% of sample)	31 (62%)	31 (62%)
Facebook account on screen Cases (% of sample)	9 18%	
Programme website link on screen Cases (% of sample)	5 (10%)	5 (10%)

Other		
Cases	2	2
(% of sample)	4%	4%
No answer		
Cases	3	3
(% of sample)	6%	6%
<b>TOTAL</b>		
<b>Cases</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>(% of sample)</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 5.8** indicates that 31 respondents (62% of the sample) stated that the SABC should program a hashtag on screen to promote audience participation in and engagement with the TV shows they watch. Nine respondents (18% of the sample) stated that the SABC should program a Facebook account on screen to promote interactivity with viewers of TV drama series and soapies who do not currently engage with social media. Five respondents (10%) stated that the SABC should program website links for TV shows on screen to encourage audience engagement with and debate about TV shows.

Three respondents (6%) did not answer this question and therefore did not contribute any views on how the SABC can use social media to enhance communication with audiences. Two persons offered other ways that the SABC could use to engage audiences in social media for enhanced communication purposes.

These comments, which were in answer to Question 19, included “the use of Hashtag to speed up the story in a show or offer faster solutions to the burning issue on the show” for communication and also a response about “reconfigure the footprint in radio and print”. It should be noted that a number of respondents did not answer Question 19, with responses from 46 of the 50 respondents (i.e. 92%).

In fact, many of the open questions in the questionnaire received not responses at all,

including Questions 15, 17 and 19. Respondents seem to have regarded their answers to the closed questions, which were related to these open questions, viz. Questions 14, 16 and 18, as being sufficient. This respondent saturation did not bode well for the open questions although more than adequate responses were obtained for most closed questions, as reported in this chapter.

Finally, the respondents were asked, in **Questions 20** and **21**, about why they would interact with SABC television drama personnel on social media such as Twitter and Facebook. Answers to this question are reflected in Table 5.9.

**Table 5.9: • Why would people interact with SABC television drama on Twitter or/and Facebook?**

<b>Answer option or statement of choice</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Total</b>
To get information Cases (% of sample)	15 (30%)	15 (30%)
For personal identity with other characters on the drama I am watching Cases (% of sample)	4 8%	
For integration and social		

interaction with other audiences		
Cases		
(% of sample)	13 (26%)	13 (26%)
For entertainment		
Cases	9	9
(% of sample)	18%	18%
To escape from daily stresses		
Cases	3	3
(% of sample)	6%	6%
No answer		
Cases	2	2
(% of sample)	4%	4%
Other		
Cases	4	4
(% of sample)	8%	8%
<b>TOTAL</b>		
<b>Cases</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>(% of sample)</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 5.9** indicates that the majority of the respondents, that is, 15, representing 30 per cent of the sample, would use social media to obtain information from the SABC, while 13 respondents (26%) would use social media to interact with other audiences for the social enhancement of their lives and to integrate into society; nine respondents (18%) would use the social media to enjoy the entertainment that the SABC has to offer, while four

respondents or eight per cent of the sample would use social media to identify with the characters in SABC dramas.

Three respondents (6% of the sample) stated that they would use social media for SABC dramas and soaps to escape from daily stresses and life's daily challenges, while three other people did not respond to the question.

The last three respondents (representative of 6% of the sample) stated that they would use the social media to gain other forms of gratification from the SABC or other TV channels. The sentiments of this last group of respondents were expressed in their answers to Question 21, which was the final question in the questionnaire. These statements are mentioned here:

- Respondent 13: "I don't watch the SABC. It's outdated! Even my child doesn't"
- Respondent 23: "To learn about real life issues"
- Respondent 27: "To get extended information apart from TV offering a 360 degrees experience with the show and therefore increasing my interaction with the show", and
- Respondent 39: "It will be entertaining to see what other people think about programs. Great competitive edge".

#### **5.4. SUMMARY AND OUTLINE OF CHAPTER 6**

Chapter 5 provided the data analysed for the research based on the information collected from the selected TV viewers under study. These responses were gathered through the administration of a survey questionnaire, which is added at the end of the dissertation as an Appendix B. The survey consisted of two sections. Section A asked the respondents about personal information while Section B requested respondents to provide their views on the SABC TV dramas they watched, why they watched these shows, whether the introduction of social media to the viewers of SABC TV drama would be beneficial to the SABC and SABC TV drama viewers and, finally, how they would use social media to enhance the SABC's engagement and communication with its different audiences.

The purpose of asking these questions was to achieve the aim of the study and to answer the research questions. These revolve around the use of social media by the SABC in a technologically demanding and changing environment, where TV audiences want to constantly engage and communicate with TV show producers. In today's world, TV audiences are no longer merely consumers of TV content but are also co-producers of that content. Furthermore, TV stations and producers are grappling with the business challenges brought about by the digitalisation of media platforms.

In conclusion, Chapter 6, the final chapter, provides a critical evaluation of the research with a view to concluding the study and illustrating the way the goals have been attained. Challenges experienced during the actual field research process are also briefly stated and recommendations are made for further research in this area of study. The chapter also discusses the shortcomings of the study before the final study conclusions are stated.

## **6. CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION**

### **6.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the conclusion of this study by highlighting specific areas that SABC television drama needs to consider in order to enhance its audiences' viewing experience and to survive the advent of digital migration in a competitive broadcasting environment. This chapter also makes recommendations for future research. The chapter offers conclusions to the study, which are reflective of the quantitative findings that were produced in Chapter 5. It further offers an overview of the aims and objectives of the study that were mentioned in Chapter 4.

### **6.2. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

This study focused on social media and how they can enhance the viewing experiences of SABC television drama audiences. Based on the research it is clear that social media are here to stay and that audiences would like to interact more with their favourite dramas. Social media have continued to challenge television programmers as they allow for content to be viewed anywhere at any time provided one has a smartphone device. Audiences no longer do appointment viewing; they can now choose what they want to view and when they want to view it. If the SABC wants to remain relevant in the age of social media it needs to start thinking beyond linear television programming and move to multi-platform programming.

The SABC should also consider the length of television drama and offer programmes of, say, fifteen minutes duration rather than the current 24 minutes. This is because the trend on social media is for people to watch on the go, so the concentration and engagement level is not the same as when watching on a television set. If one does not get an audience's attention in the first few minutes they will switch off and look for something else. This all comes down to the fact that audiences have a great deal of content choice these days.

In exploring the way social media can enhance the viewing experiences of SABC television drama audiences, the emphasis was on the different opportunities that audiences believe exist out there for SABC television drama to extend its reach and target them, as well as how they can do it. Social media have challenged the SABC footprint as a number of programmes that trend on Twitter are those of the competition, which have created a footprint or rather an online presence to target SABC television audiences through their marketing-related social media strategies.

It was interesting to note that 96 per cent of the respondents are active on social media; this agrees with the basic tenets of UGT which state that audiences are active in their media of choice. Thirty per cent of the respondents in this research study indicated that they would interact on social media with SABC television drama for cognitive reasons; while 18 per cent indicated that it would be to fulfil affective needs. These needs are among the five types of needs identified by Katz et al. (1974). This shows that audiences continue to use media for the same basic purposes as before; nothing has changed but the medium of consumption.

After discussing the definitions in Chapter 2, detailing the literature and theoretical framework in Chapter 3, and conducting data analysis from the responses of the self-administered questionnaire in Chapter 4, the research has explored the way SABC television drama could enhance its audiences' experience. With social media being a key focus point of the study, the opportunities that exist for the SABC were analysed.

### **6.3. CONCLUSIONS**

This section of Chapter 6 presents the conclusions drawn from the study based on the objectives that were formulated in Chapter 1. These sought to explore how social media would enhance the viewing experiences of the SABC television drama audience. In the past, SABC television drama dominated the television industry in South Africa with the greatest share of the market. Today, this dominance no longer exists as a result of new broadcasting technologies and the presence of other broadcasters.

Social media are considered to constitute a large part of future media communications, with people, organisations and institutions developing their presence on them to either promote themselves or generate a sense of belonging in the world. Television is rapidly accepting the emergence of social media and integrating them as part of their narrative to drive audience

viewership. Public television in South Africa also needs to understand that television can no longer exist in isolation from social media, because social media have the ability to enhance the television experience. Social media will lead to new and exciting ways for consumers to access public service programmes, seamlessly combining linear and non-linear content. As we move to DTT it is essential that SABC television drama adapt as if it does not it will drown.

The SABC continues to be hampered by its technology, since it has not migrated to DTT and does not even broadcast on HD. HD has been adopted by the competition, which offers their audiences high definition picture quality with a number of new programming options.

This study was aimed at attaining the following objectives and answering the following research questions:

- **What are the interactive opportunities offered by social media to enhance the SABC television drama audience? That is, those dramas which don't use social media yet.** The findings show that only two per cent of respondents did not agree with what the literature review suggested as opportunities for television drama in social media. In addition, 42 per cent of respondents believe that social media will offer audiences engagement and feedback from producers.
- **How can SABC television drama improve its interaction with its audience on Twitter?** The findings of this objective showed a 62 per cent response relating to the use of Twitter hashtags on screen while a programme is being broadcast to increase interactivity and direct audiences to where interaction between the programme and other audiences is taking place. This is very interesting as it is something that does not cost much or add to the budget to alert the online editor of the programme to include programme hashtags on the screen. So the SABC has no excuse not to put a hashtag on screen during drama broadcasts.
- **How can social media enhance the viewing experience of the SABC television drama audience?** Ninety-four (94) per cent of the respondents who answered Questions 14 and 15 support the introduction and use of social media for SABC TV

drama, as they believe that these media would enhance communication between the SABC and its audiences, as well as offering marketing and communication strategies to the SABC for introducing social media as part of the drama and soapie viewing experience. In this way, the broadcaster could enjoy the fruits of communicating with millions of social media users who watch SABC drama.

Communication between audience members and the broadcaster could improve dramatically. Consequently, the broadcaster could enhance the quality of the stories and also provide the shows' producers with ideas for enhancing stories and developing them further into the future. Content-enhanced TV shows could contribute to increased viewership figures and attract more viewers.

- **Why would you interact with SABC television drama on Twitter or/and Facebook?** It was interesting to note that the highest number of responses (26%) of audiences who believe they would interact with SABC television drama for integration and social interaction with other audiences. This is what makes these two social media networks (Facebook and Twitter) strong as the conversation happens inside the living room and outside with other people watching the same programme from other parts of the country, thus allowing for criticism and comments.

#### **6.4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

As with any research, there are limitations to concluding results and interpreting data. Furthermore, the survey questionnaire was self-administered and anonymous, and thus depended on honest responses from the respondents.

The main limitation of this study was the sample size. As a result of the small sample size and the time constraints involved, only five people were conveniently selected to conduct the pilot study. While extensive research has been done on these platforms, the focus of this research was on the Twitter and Facebook viewing experience for SABC television drama audiences. The study was also limited to people in Northriding on those particular days on which the questionnaire was administered. There have been no previous studies that explore SABC television drama in the interactive age of social media.

## **6.5. CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Social media are considered to constitute a large part of future media communications, with people, organisations and institutions developing their presence on them to either promote themselves or generate a sense of belonging in the world. Television is rapidly accepting the emergence of social media and integrating them as part of their narrative to drive audience viewership. Public television in South Africa also needs to understand that television can no longer exist in isolation from social media, because social media have the ability to enhance the television experience. Social media will lead to new and exciting ways for consumers to access public service programmes, seamlessly combining linear and non-linear content. As we move to DTT it is essential that SABC television drama adapt as if it does not it will drown.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX A: LETTER OF CONSENT**

#### **CONSENT FORM**

**TITLE:** SABC AUDIENCES IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA: AN EXPLORATION INTO HOW SOCIAL MEDIA CAN ENHANCE THE VIEWING EXPERIENCE OF SABC TELEVISION DRAMA AUDIENCES.

Dear prospective research participant. Date ...../...../.....

#### **1) INTRODUCTION**

You are invited to participate in this research study undertaken for a masters study at the University of South Africa (UNISA).

Before you agree to take part in this study you should fully understand what is involved.

If you have any questions, which are not fully explained in this leaflet, do not hesitate to ask the researcher.

If you agree to volunteer to participate, you will be asked to sign the consent letter.

#### **2) THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to explore how social media can enhance the SABC television drama audience's viewing experience. You have been selected to participate in this study because you stay in Johannesburg.

#### **3) EXPLANATION OF PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED**

A number of questions will be asked and the survey will last for approximately 25 to 40 minutes. The researcher will come to collect the questionnaire one day after you

have received it. This is done in order to keep track of the questionnaires circulated and to avoid it being misplaced.

**4) RISK AND DISCOMFORT INVOLVED**

The research will not involve any physical, emotional, and psychological discomfort.

**5) POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF THIS STUDY**

Participation in this study will give you the opportunity to share your experiences which will contribute to improvements in how SABC television dramas use Social Media to enhance your viewing experience.

**6) I understand that if I do not want to participate in this study, it will not be held against me.**

**7) I may at any time withdraw from this study.**

**8) ETHICAL APPROVAL**

The study adheres to the guidelines of the ethical committee of The University of South Africa (UNISA). You are free to discuss your participation in this study with the researcher contactable on [lufunolefowa@gmail.com](mailto:lufunolefowa@gmail.com). If you would like to speak to an officer of the University, you may contact Dr N.C. Lesame at the Department of Communication Science via email: [lesamnc@unisa.ac.za](mailto:lesamnc@unisa.ac.za)

**9) INFORMATION**

I have read the information contained in the consent and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction and any further questions concerning this study, I should contact:

Name of candidate: Miss Lufuno Lefowa

Contact details of researcher: email:[lufunolefowa@gmail.com](mailto:lufunolefowa@gmail.com)

**10) CONFIDENTIALITY**

All records obtained whilst in this study will be regarded as confidential. Results will be published or presented in such a fashion that you remain unidentifiable.

**11) Feedback**

If you would like to be invited to a meeting where the findings will be presented or if you are interested in obtaining a summary of the findings, please write your e-mail address below or indicate how you would like to receive the summary or to be contacted

**12) CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY**

I hereby wish to take part in this study.

I have received a signed copy of this informed consent agreement.

**Person obtaining informed consent**

**Date**

**(Full name)**

.....

.....

**Researcher:**

**(Full name)**

# APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE

Date of Questionnaire Administration: ... /.... /....

## CLOSED-ENDED QUESTIONS

### SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION – PERSONAL DETAILS OF RESPONDENTS

Participant – Number (e.g. 1, 2, 3): .....

1	

Please provide me with the following information by selecting the correct answer and indicating it with a tick  or an **X** in the applicable box.

#### Question 1

What is your gender?

Male	Female
1	2

2-3	

#### Question 2

How old are you?

18 years and/or under	19–25	26–33	34–41	42–49	50 and above
1	2	3	4	5	6

4-9	

#### Question 3

What is your race group?

Black	White	Indian	Coloured

10-13	

**Question 4**

What is your highest educational qualification?

Grade 12	Certificate course	Diploma	Bachelor's degree	MA Degreed

14-18	

**Question 5**

What is your employment status?

Student	Full-time employed	Part-time employed	Self-employed	Unemployed	Retired	Other (please specify)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS (6 & 7)**

**Question 6**

If you chose "other" above, specify or state your employment

15-21	

.....

.....

.....

**Question 7**

If you have chosen "self-employed", please provide a description of your business

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**CLOSED-ENDED QUESTION**

**Question 8**

What is your monthly household income?

Below R5000.00	R5001– R10 000.00	R10001.00– R20000.00	R20 001.00 and above
1	2	3	4

22-25	

**SECTION B: SOCIAL MEDIA AND SABC TELEVISION DRAMA RELATED QUESTIONS**

**OPEN AND CLOSED QUESTIONS**

**Question 9**

Are you active on social media?

Yes	No
1	2

26-27	

**Question 10**

If you use social media, please select the social media network you use mostly from the list below.

Facebook	Twitter	WhatsApp	Instagram	LinkedIn	You Tube
1	2	3	4	5	6

28-33	

**Question 11**

10. Which SABC television dramas do you watch? Tick all those that are applicable to you or those that you watch. If a tick then 1, otherwise		
10.1	End game	
10.2	Mamello	
10.3	Uzalo	
10.4	Ngempela	
10.5	Sticks and Stones	
10.6	Mfolozi Street	
10.7	Other	

34-40	

**Question 12**

If you chose "other" in your answer to **Question 10** above, please specify which are those other TV programmes?

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**Question 13**

Regarding the dramas you have selected and stated in Questions 10 & 11, briefly explain why you watch these dramas in the space provided below

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**Question 14**

How can social media enhance the viewing experience of SABC television drama audiences? Mark that applies to you.

There will be increased interactivity with people you are watching with and others on same social network like you.	TV drama viewing on the go, from your mobile devices at anytime and anywhere.	Audiences will be able to interact directly with their favourite actor/actress.	In other ways
1	2	3	4

41-44	

**Question 15**

If you chose “in other ways” in your answer to Question 13 above, briefly explain your “in other ways” choice in the space provided below.

.....

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.....

**Question 16**

What are the interactive opportunities that Twitter and Facebook can offer to those SABC television dramas that don’t use social media? Mark which applies to you.

Increased viewership	Audience engagement and audience providing feedback to the drama producers	Social media can act as a marketing tool for a broadcasting station	Other opportunities
1	2	3	4

45-48	

**Question 17**

If you chose “other” in your answer to **Question 15** above, specify these opportunities in this space provided below?

.....

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**Question 18**

How can the SABC television drama improve its interaction with the audience on Twitter or/and Facebook? Mark that applies to you.

Programme Hashtag on screen	Facebook account on screen	Programme Web site link on screen	Other
1	2	3	4

49-52	

**Question 19**

If you chose “other” in your **Question 17** answer above, specify what you mean by “other” in the space provided below.

.....  
 .....  
 .....

**Question 20**

<b>19. Why would you interact with SABC television drama on Twitter or/and Facebook? Mark that applies to you.</b>		
19.1	To get information	
19.2	For personal identity with other characters on the drama I am watching.	
19.3	For integration and social interaction with other audiences	
19.4	For entertainment	
19.5	To escape from daily stresses.	
19.6	Other	

53-57	

**Question 21**

If you chose "other" in Question 19 above, specify what you mean by "other" in this space provided below?

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
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 .....

**THE END  
 THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.**