Chapter 4: Data Analysis, Presentation and Analysis of Findings

This chapter summarises and discusses major issues emanating from the research findings on readiness of SME's to adopt digital media for consumer engagement in the hospitality sector. In the process, descriptive statistics were analysed ranging from age structure, work experience and literacy or expertise. Semi-structured questionnaires were employed as data collection instruments. The study made use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS v.16) and Excel as analysis tools. The study undertook the research objectives through digging for answers to the following hypotheses:

- H_1: There is a positive relationship between employee innovativeness towards digital media technology and consumer brand identification;
- H_2: There is a positive relationship between employee optimism towards digital media technology and brand absorption by consumers;
- H3: There is a positive relationship between employee innovativeness towards digital media technology and consumer interaction with a brand.

*Table 4.1:* Semi-structured questionnaire response rate (Primary data, 2020)

Study unit	Sample	Response	Response rate
SME's	30	26	92.86%

Sample of 30 semi-structured questionnaires was used, valid cases for the distributed semi-structured questionnaires recorded a 92.86% response rate out of the 26 returned thus implying results are usable and can be generalised given that the minimum acceptable response rate is 70% (---).

Table 4.2: Questionnaire reliability (Primary data, 2020)

| Item	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Employee innovativeness	0.714	9
Employee optimism	0.755	10
Overall	0.727	19

Cronbach's alpha is a measurement tool of internal consistency or is a coefficient of reliability, that is, how closely related are a set of items are as a group. The study utilised the Cronbach's Alpha test for reliability. The benchmark of the alpha test is 0.7. Factors and dynamics influencing and facilitating investment in alternative investments produced 0.714 and 0.755 respectively. A reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher is considered "acceptable". Overall, reliability of questionnaires was 0.727 as annotated in Table 4.2 suggested that the items had significantly high internal consistency.
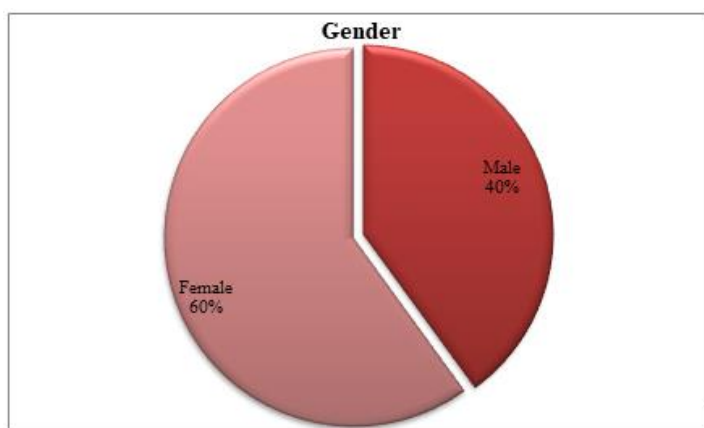
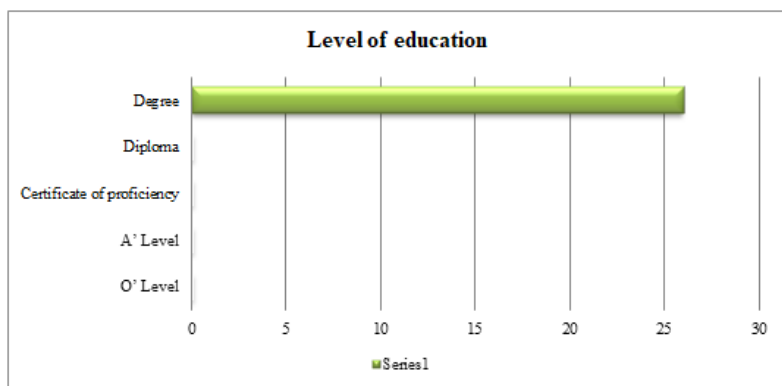*Figure 4.1:* Gender of respondents (Primary data)

Figure 4.1 above depict that of the total sample of people who responded to the questionnaires, 60% were females and 40% were male. This shows that the study was somewhat balanced given that world population statistics according to United Nations Population data, women constitute 52% of the world's population. More so, it shows that women penetration into positions of influence has improved. This will ensure a

balanced reporting of the findings in respect of each objective and its variables.
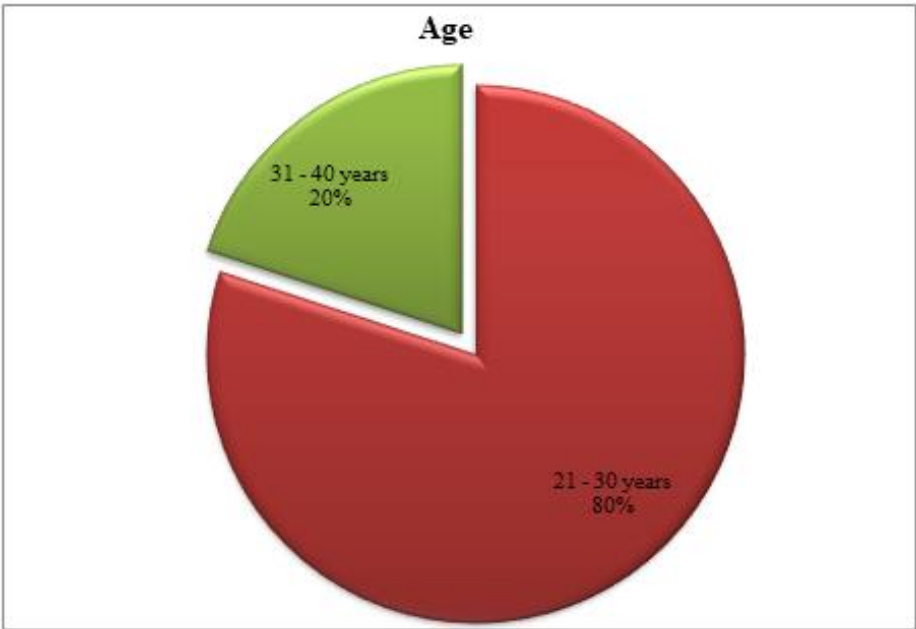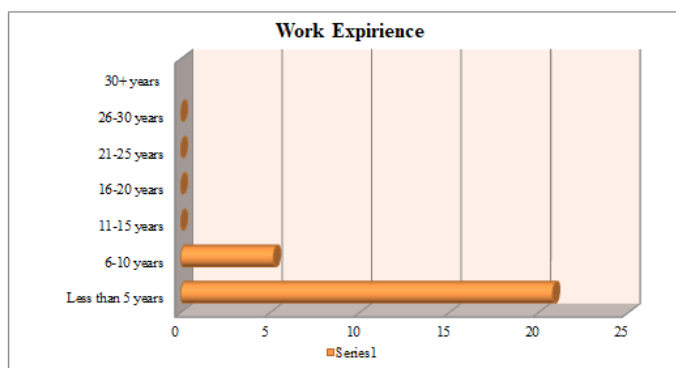

Figure 4.2: Age of respondents (Primary data, 2020)

Figure 4.2 shows the ages of participants who took time to respond to the questionnaires. It shows that people questioned were highly skewed on the 21-30 years age range and they accounted for 80% and the balance of 20% constituted the 31-40 years age group. The analysis could be that we have a meagre 20% responding because they maybe the proprietors or a manager of the lodges, hotel, motels, restaurants and other tourist place. The greater percentage of 80% may constitute the operatives or officers who use technology on a regular basis to ensure the sustenance of the tourism sector business in the SME's sector. Zimbabwe is a fairly young population and it is normal to see most young people in many institutions and also most companies are now favouring young blood as they are technologically savvy and are able to handle change management.

Figure 4.3: Level of education of respondents (Primary data, 2020)

The above pictorial representation shows the level of education of the respondents and it is unfortunate or fortunate enough that all of the respondents cited that they have a degree. This is helpful in the sense that anyone with a degree appreciates the essence of a study study. More so, the people are level headed thus may avoid bias and distorted data and or information. This is crucial because the researcher then compared like for like, however, it is disadvantageous in that the research will lack flair of other qualification or no qualification to bring a critical analysis because these degreed people may respond according to what the researcher wants to conceal information due to ghost shopper and competition. As such they have mastered the art of responding to walk-ins and information seekers.


Figure 4.4: Number of years working in current position of respondents (Primary Data, 2020)

The analysis presented or illustrated on Figure 4.4 graphic illustration show that of the people questioned. The majority (constituting 80%) has less than 5 years working experience. However, they are supported by 20% of the sampled people who had 6-10 years' work experience.
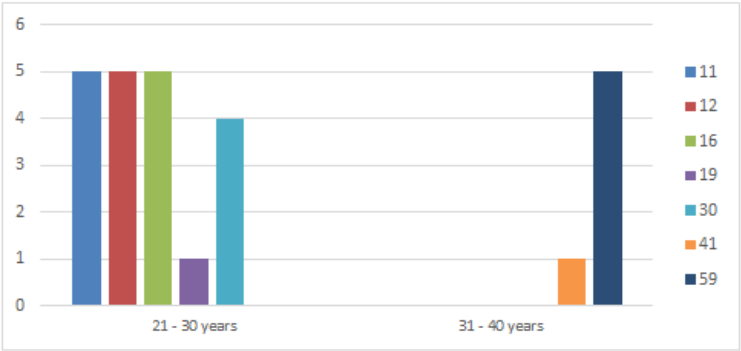
Figure 4.5: Optimism in relation to innovativeness and technology (Primary Data, 2020)

Findings revealed that the younger the person the more optimist they become. As such, from the illustration more young people are seen to be innovative in terms of technological readiness. Consequently, there is a positive nexus between optimism and innovativeness. It is incumbent upon the senior executives to let loose on these young people for them to explore and implement simple applications or technologies which may enhance clients or consumers experiences and influence their buying behaviours.
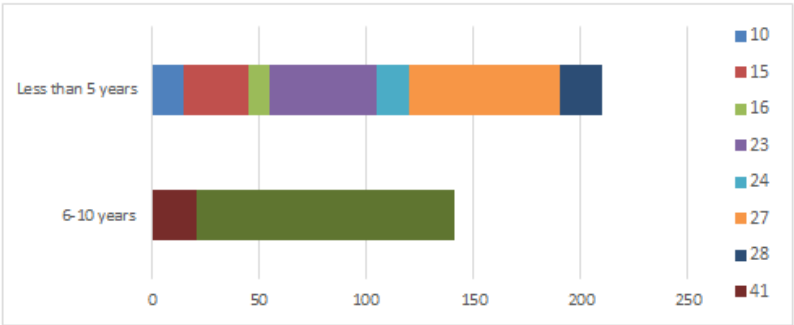
Figure 4.6: Employee experience in relation to innovativeness (Primary Data, 2020)

The above figure suggests that people with fewer years on experience are more innovative than their peers. This is reinforced by the last reading which showed that young people are more innovative technologically than will be their colleagues. On the other hand, it could be also that the research sample had a greater number of young people constituting about 80% thus results are heavily skewed towards young minds. Those with more experience have average appreciation and innovation ideas to technologically enhance customer experiences.
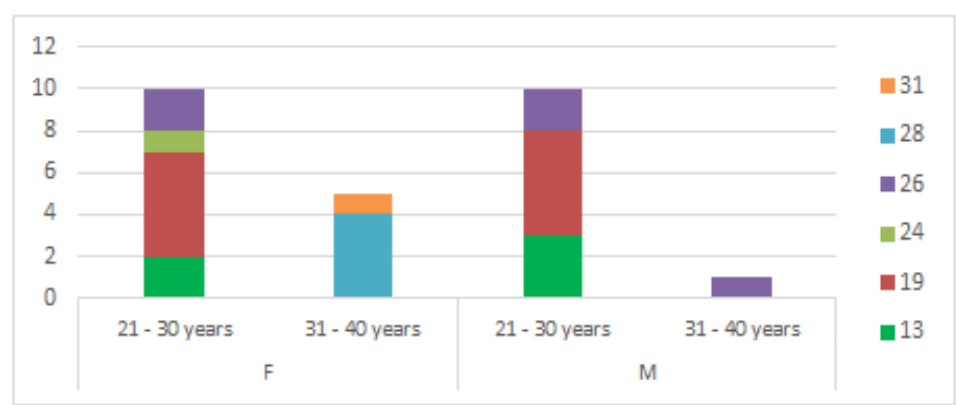
Figure 4.7: Age and gender in relation to absorption of technology. (Primary Data, 2020)

The above caption shows that as much as more females were interviewed, the survey showed that both male and females around the 20 - 30 years of age tend to either strongly agree or just agree with absorption of technology compared to the older age males of 31-40 who tend to be neutral while the females of that age group tend to disagree with that fact. The succeeding analysis presented findings on the research variables.

Table 4.3: Innovativeness towards digital media technology and consumer brand identification (Primary Data, 2020).

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

|	*INN*	*ID*
Mean	24.576923	13.615385
Variance	148.17385	22.246154
Observations	26	26
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	32	
t Stat	4.2815193	
P(T<=t) one-tail	7.891E-05	
t Critical one-tail	1.6938887	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.0001578	
t Critical two-tail	2.0369333	
	Column 1	*Column 2*
Column 1	1	
Column 2	0.8595	1

Table 4.3 analysed the relationship between innovativeness towards digital media technology and consumer brand identification and it shows that the result was significant at $p < .05$. This also highlights the strong correlation between the two variables. In other words, consumers are drawn to a product or service which resembles creativity and innovativeness. This is because with the advent of the internet of things, there is now information symmetry and consumers are more enlightened on their spending patterns on products and the exact pricing they should be charged out of that transaction.

Thus it is of paramount importance to actively and regularly innovate to attract consumers to a company. Nowadays, technology products are now relatively cheap with hosting fees of a simple website very manageable. From the foregoing, we therefore conclude that the interconnection between employee innovativeness towards digital media technology and consumer brand identification is very significant

since the Pearson co-efficient is very high at 0.8595, thus it implies that the relationship between these variables was positive.

This follows that adoption of digital media technology tools like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, B2B applications among other have a far reach in terms of brand identification. Big data presented by digital media technology have reaching results because digital media technology is cheap and unregulated hence most companies either big or small are in one way or the other on those platforms. Thus the SME's need to adopt the go to market strategies using these digital media technology platforms to enhance customer experiences and help them make informed decisions before parting with their cash. This is on the background that there is a strong relationship between the two variables and the connection is very significant.
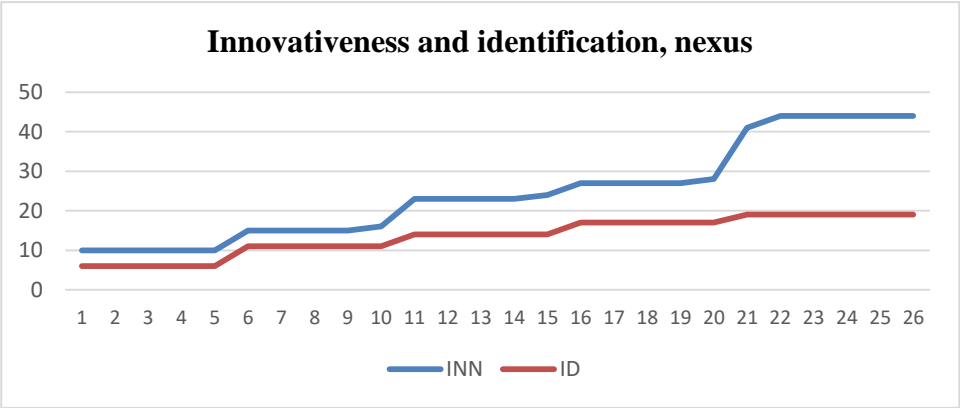
Figure 4.8: Nexus between innovativeness and brand identification (Primary Data, 2020)

The above pictorial representationbrings to light the fact that innovativeness and brand identification work hand in hand to reach a common goal of enhancing the brand. Thus there is a causal nexus that if the employees are innovative it then follows that the brand is easily

identifiable. The above captioned pictorial representation proves that there is coherence between the two variables and how they work. To this end, questionnaires proved that digital media is the fastest internet trend. It is gaining popularity among users or contextually from clients and customers.

As a result in trying to keep abreast with the technological advancement, innovativeness should lead to evolution of brands for identification. The other point that was revealed is the snow bolling effect of social media platforms. They are a beacon for raising brands, thus digital managers confessed that they wish everyone to talk and discuss on the internet concerning their brand. They are aware that digital media is the best system to spread the brand name. Several them came up with examples on how this can occur for example on Facebook applications such as Like or Share buttons and also re-Tweet alternatives are some of the best methods for enabling a brand's message or name known very quickly. It will just spread like wildfires.

In the wake of economic turmoil and upheaval, SMEs tourism managers revealed that they had to implore on their staff to be innovative in adding value to their brands. The benefit of digital media is that it is the best cost effective way of communicating with their customers and other stakeholders which increases their visibility in this VUCA world. Thus, the SME's seem to find social media extremely cheap when it comes to brand awareness. Digital media enable their brand and products to well-known at a cheaper cost. Looking at it differently, if your competitor is already visible on the digital platform, then there is something good about it and it's also high time to get into the same platform. This will give great advantage as people will be able to compare you from the same means or mode.

Table 4.4: Employee optimism towards digital media technology and brand absorption by consumers (Primary Data, 2020)

OPTVsAB

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

	Variable 1	*Variable 2*
Mean	25.76923077	21.23076923
Variance	335.4646154	31.54461538
Observations	26	26
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	30	
t Stat	1.207971922	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.118247412	
t Critical one-tail	1.697260887	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.236494824	
t Critical two-tail	2.042272456	

	Column 1	*Column 2*
Column 1	1	
Column 2	0.866880061	1

When analysing employee optimism towards digital media technology and brand absorption by consumers, we observed *t* value of 1.6972 and the *p* value of .2364 which result resembled insignificance at *p*<.05. However, the Pearson co-efficient was very high at 0.8669. We therefore conclude that the inter-connection between employee optimism towards digital media technology and brand absorption by consumers was not significant, thus it implied that the relationship between these variables was negative.

Employees were not optimistic that if digital media technology was introduced and managed well, it would encourage brand absorption by consumers. However, people spend most of their time on digital media

technology while browsing the internet and if properly implemented digital media technology in this modern day and age has positive effects to a business. Nevertheless, most firms concur that Facebook is a platform that is mostly used as a social media network by them and their competitors or rival firms.

In respect of the activities that organisations have on their digital media, most managers responded that the most prevalent and critical activities were coming up with competitions and giving out prizes, in the form of coupons, discounts and gift products and interacting daily with their users. Day to day interaction involves simple messages such as "Good morning," "enjoy your week". It even relates to asking the stakeholders how they are going to spend their weekend etc.

Another significant activity noted was the introduction of new products or services. Some SME's in the hospitality industry announce new products outlining detailed information that may relate to price, characteristics and distribution points. Through fan pages, some interviewed employees indicated that they provide advice and information for their everyday activities. This is considered to be more than just communication as users receives knowledge and tips on everyday life experiences.

However, some participants believe that employee optimism towards digital media technology and brand absorption by consumers is affected by direct complains coming through social media. Managers stated that digital media actually improve customer service in relation to the customers' requests. Complaint management is not a pre-planned activity, but since social media are a 24-hour direct user platform, it then is inevitable to avoid handling such circumstances. Thus, it is necessary that it be a regular principle of these companies about customers'

comments and complaints that they orderly answer to every comment or question. Hence, there is need for a culture change among the employees. In any case organisations can only know how their customers feel as a result of social media and get correct on their short comings thereby enhancing their brand.

Tourism SMEs managers in the hospitality industry based in Vic falls were optimistic in favour of digital media technology and brand absorption by consumers given the underlying facts. Most of the managers who were interviewed agreed that interacting with customers via digital media channels greatly enhance personal relationships which get to be built between the organisation and the users. Social media enables the firm to properly interact on a daily basis with its stakeholders which enables everyone to have a sense of belonging and togetherness. The communication becomes much more personalised hence strengthening the relationship as per individual customer's preferences and tastes.

Through this study, it has been realised that social media is the most convenient form of communication with customers or clients. Customers find it easy to send or post their feelings about a particular service or product. Also on the same vein, companies can quickly respond to customers concerns and the information is fast spread across the globe.

New visitors to the platform and can quickly join the communication and share experiences with those that already had first-hand experience with the product or service. Most managers who were interviewed in Vic falls confirmed that they often see brand related chats among customers and stakeholders who go to an extent or asking to share experiences privately about a particular brand or service. This therefore means there is much interaction outside the brand's fan page. It

therefore follows that social media platforms like the Facebook page is a great space for customer's socialization which help promote a brand if it is viewed from a positive position.

Moreover, the managers' optimism of brand absorption led them to observe how customers may most likely become familiar and also like the brand as a result of social media. The snow bolling effect of social media enables a brand to be quickly known as it is discussed by several people. This can also be done through several competitions which include gift prizes and or discounts. A well run fan page enables the whole world to know about a particular brand and firms take advantage of this to spread their word and increase their visibility and brand image.

In addition, through digital media platforms, firms expect to grab the attention of a wider network. Social media has enabled the world to become a global village. Social media enables a specific brand to target a certain group of people with relative easy. Most digital media platforms enable access to certain demographics of their targeted market hence social media strategy is crafted according to that demographic

Companies and managers who were interviewed agreed that they are optimistic to be able to engage with their target market through social media. As indicated already, digital media is one of the best forms of consumer engagement throughout and at very low costs. Stakeholders can relate and discuss about favourite brand as if they talk to a friend and get responses instantly this direct way of interaction creates a sense of engagement and belonging between people and brand. As a result brand loyalty is earned. This also has the potential to increase sales. Further there is also the acquisition of new customers which are expected benefits obtained from social media use.

Table 4.5: Employee innovations towards digital media technology and consumer interaction with a brand (Primary Data, 2020).

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

		Variable 1	*Variable 2*
Mean		24.57692308	17.88461538
Variance		148.1738462	48.98615385
Observations		26	26
Hypothesized	Mean		
Difference		0	
Df		40	
t Stat		2.43026241	
P(T<=t) one-tail		0.009833728	
t Critical one-tail		1.683851013	
P(T<=t) two-tail		0.019667456	
t Critical two-tail		2.02107539	

	Column 1	*Column 2*
Column 1	1	
Column 2	0.92714892	1

These variables tried to analyse the link between employee innovations towards digital media technology and consumer interaction with a brand. It was observed that the result was significant at $p < .05$. Hence the study concluded that the there was a significant positive relationship between employee innovativeness towards digital media technology and consumer interaction with a brand since the Pearson co-efficient was very high at 0.92714.

Usually, where the target group is comprised of younger generation, the brand is most likely to be on social media. Technological brands are some of those which are likely to be on social media. Companies decide to be on social media depending on the external and internal factors which also determine the relevant social media to be on, in relation to their specific campaign. For example Facebook fan page is more ideal for

a company that wishes to have a full interactive process with its customers.

Media organisations are most likely to choose on a twitter platform. These could be newspapers or online portals and TV channels as these spread short messages. YouTube channels are more likely to be adopted by brands that have more to do with visual messaging. It was however, discovered that most of the SMEs would rather prefer to use either or a combination of most of these platforms depending on strategy to be used for each service or product. So there is a choice on the correct and relevant media platform.

H₁: There is a positive relationship between employee innovativeness towards digital media technology and consumer brand identification.
The study findings revealed that there is a positive correlation between employee innovativeness towards digital media technology and consumer brand identification. As such, it is of paramount importance to actively and regularly innovate to attract consumers to a company. The same results were found by Law *et al. (*2016:743) who empirically found that digital media plays a crucial role in on-line marketing and tourists' decision-making.

H₂: There is a positive relationship between employee optimism towards digital media technology and brand absorption by consumers.
In contrast to the hypothesis, the research found out that there was an inverse nexus between employee optimism towards digital media technology and brand absorption by consumers, it implies that the relationship between these variables was negative. The foregoing was supported by a study by O'Connor (2008:65) who found that a greater problem in managing hospitality IT "is the lack of a correct communications system that support intended systems functionality".

The research, however, observed that the problem has more to do with suppliers who are unable to offer adequate services at global or regional

basis as compared to mere lack of infrastructure. However, lack of communication infrastructure in specific countries may also be a problem. But Parker (2016) is of the view that African countries are both ready and eager to adopt new technologies.

Consolidation of data and interfacing are found to be a huge challenge for CIO's in chain hotels when dealing with information technology adoption (O'Connor, 2008:66).

H_3: *There is a positive relationship between employee innovativeness towards digital media technology and consumer interaction with a brand.*
The research found out that there was a significant positive relationship between employee innovativeness towards digital media technology and consumer interaction with a brand. This study's findings were similar to those of Dijkmans *et al.* (2015) which was revealed in their US study that digital media technology and consumer engagements have a positive correlation. In support of this, Willems, Brengman and Van Kerrebroeck. (2019) put forth that online consumer engagement increases conversion rate through interactions.

There are opportunities which have come to the forefront through the customer engagement notion which are the interactive notions of web 2.0 technologies which change the way customers and service providers relate on a day to day basis. Practitioners and experts alike have recognised its crucial role in exploiting social media in an effort to build social media relations which creates a strong bond thereby improving business performance as articulated by (Sashi, 2012).

Word of mouth has also been observed to be quite powerful in information dissemination of which several experts fully concur. A company can become better known through the use of various social media platforms which are better forms of customer persuasion (Kumar *et al.*, 2007). Digital media behaves like a big gossiper when it comes to viral dissemination of information. (Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012).

These social media systems are amplifiers, piggy backing on client's word-of-mouth at the same time blending with information which is highly noticeable as compared to other forms of online advertising. Anyway, organisations should be aware of the fact that similar mechanisms can negatively distribute outrage, disgruntlement and scorn just as equally rapidly. Monitoring of customer to customer dialogue or conversations results in market intelligence and provides room for a company or organisation to increase positive messages, correct misconceptions and prevent serious potential current or future damage to the organisation's brand or image. Of course it must be noted that the ultimate primary goal or aim is to increase sales. This could be done by having new customer acquisition, retention of existing customers and or an uptake in consumption, or cross-selling. Following the above discussion, there is no doubt that it can be safely pronounced that adoption of digital media propels the level of engagement with consumers.

This then also proves the presence of social media benefits that appear to be ignored so far in the digital landscape (Colgate *et al.,* 2005). As a form of social interaction, consumers get feedback and personal experiences from those users who have already tested the system and made use of as envisaged by (Garretson, 2008). Some clients provide visible feedback on their experiences which could be either both negative and positive. This helps make an evaluation the organisation's complaint handling technique (Jin, 2012).

The current chapter concentrated on data presentation and analysis on the study of an assessment of hospitality SMEs technology readiness to adopt digital media for consumer engagement.

Looking at the data collected and analysis made thereafter, two sets of results emerge. On the one hand results tend to agree with the available researched empirical and theoretical literature obtained from different

schools of thought who tend to agree yet some tend to dispute. As such leaving these research findings on a standalone basis will not do any justice hence this study will design some recommendations. These will be used to justify the results. As a result the closing chapter to this study will deal with conclusions and recommendations.