



**Brand Followers' Motivations on Social Media:  
A Comparative Analysis across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.**

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
MSc in Digital Marketing at Dublin Business School.

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August 2020

## Declaration

I declare that this dissertation that I have submitted to Dublin Business School for the award of MSc in Digital Marketing is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated, where it is clearly acknowledged by references. Furthermore, this work has not been submitted for any other degree.

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## Acknowledgment

I would like to thank Dublin Business School for the support I received. I would particularly like to acknowledge the feedback given by my supervisor Dr. Shakeel Siddiqui.

I would also like to thank all my research participants for their time and kind co-operation in this study. Their assistance is very appreciated.

## Abstract

2.5 billion people use Social Media (SM) worldwide (Meshi et al. 2019); 4 in 10 internet users say they follow their favourite brands on Social Media Platforms (SMPs) (Smith, 2020). This research investigates SM users' primary motivations for following brand-pages on three of top 3 SMPs today: Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Through reviewing recent literature, 10 key motivations for brand-following on SM were identified. By surveying 18-44-year-old SM users, these motivations' relevance and weightings are investigated for brand-following on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Whether the weighting of these motivations change across these platforms is also examined. Different SMPs 'own' different motivations in their communications. The extent to which these owned motivations aligns with users' motivations for brand-following on that platform, is explored. 'Relationship Maintenance', 'Information', 'Brand Affiliation', 'Opportunity Seeking', 'Convenience', 'Inspiration', 'Conversation', and 'Entertainment' were relevant across the 3 platforms. Significant differences in motivations' prominence, between at least 2 of the 3 SMPs, were found for 7 of these motivations. The study's findings are discussed, providing insights for marketers and advertisers to enhance brands' communication's relevancy and efficiency on SMPs.

## List of Acronyms

B2B - Business-to-Business

B2C - Business-to-Customer

H - Hypothesis

MRT - Media Richness Theory

P2B - People-to-Business

P2P - Peer-to-Peer

RO - Research Objective

RQ - Research Question

SM - Social Media

SMP - Social Media Platform

U&G – Uses and Gratifications

## Table of Contents

Declaration .....	1
Acknowledgment .....	2
Abstract .....	3
List of Acronyms .....	4
Table of Contents .....	5
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Background .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Problem .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Purpose .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Research Question and Objectives .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Chapter 2: Literature Review .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Background .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>The Uses and Gratifications Theory .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Motivations for generic social media use .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Motivations for brand-related social media use .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Motivations for following brand pages on social media platforms .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Identification of Motivations .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Information .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Entertainment .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Convenience .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Inspiration .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Personal identity / Self-status seeking .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Brand affiliation .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Integration and social interaction .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Opportunity seeking .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Conversation .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Relationship maintenance .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>List of Motivation Items .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Chapter 3: Method .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Research Philosophy and Approach .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Methodological Choice .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Research Strategy .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Participants .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Population characteristics .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Sampling methods .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Sample size .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Research Design .....</b>	<b>40</b>

Data Collection .....	41
Materials .....	42
Demographic questions. ....	43
Social media use questions. ....	43
Motivation scale. ....	43
Procedure .....	46
Validity and Reliability.....	47
Ethics .....	48
Data Analysis.....	49
Chapter 4: Results.....	52
Motivations for Following Brands on Twitter .....	52
Motivations for Following Brands on Facebook .....	55
Motivations for Following Brands on Instagram.....	57
Comparison of Motivations across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.....	59
Chapter 5: Discussions and Implications .....	68
Relationship Maintenance .....	68
Information.....	70
Brand Affiliation .....	71
Opportunity Seeking .....	72
Convenience .....	73
Inspiration.....	73
Conversation.....	75
Entertainment.....	75
Integration and Social Interaction, and PI/Self-status Seeking .....	77
Limitations and Future Research.....	78
References .....	81
List of Tables.....	93
Appendices .....	94
Appendix 1: What drives consumers to interact with brands through social media?.....	94
Appendix 2: The Age Breakdown of motivations across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram ...	95
Appendix 3: The Gender Breakdown of motivations across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram .....	96
Appendix 4: Information Form and Consent Sheet .....	97
Appendix 5: Questionnaire .....	98
Appendix 6: Additional Questions for the Pilot-Survey .....	103

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Background

Digital technologies have transformed people's lives by eliminating barriers associated with time, distance and effort. This transformation has changed the way people communicate, travel, work, shop, socialise and more. Inevitably, by creating digital assets such as data, analytics, and insights about customers, products, operations and markets, it has also changed how businesses operate and interact with people in many, if not all, sectors (Parker et al., 2001; Schmarzo, 2017). As part of this process, developments in internet and web technologies have led to the rise of Social Media Platforms (SMPs), a group of web 2.0 based applications which enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content in text, image and video formats (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010), such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn. However, this was only the beginning of a new, social media-centric era. The integration of internet technologies and communication technologies, particularly the coupling of mobile and internet (Chaffey, 2012), has rendered the use of these platforms more convenient than ever, and turned them into a significant part of peoples' daily lives. Thereby, as remarkable "products" of digital transformation, SMPs have transformed online consumption behaviours, communication patterns and the relationship between people and brands. Today, this relationship is more personal, real-time, interactive, two-way, and demanding than it has ever been.

SMPs provide limitless possibilities for their users to interact, express feelings and convey ideas, by consuming, participating and/or creating content (Shao, 2009) about anything (e.g. what they think or eat, where they go, etc.) including about brands (Muntinga et al., 2011). Therefore, SMPs present both enormous opportunities and threats for brands. The rise of connectivity, and increased sharing of knowledge and experiences, enabled by SMPs, led to a significant shift in people's

sources of information and interaction. Today, when searching for information about brands, people use SMPs more than they use brands' websites (Tsai and Men, 2013). In 2012, in terms of time-spent-online per day, SMPs became the most popular online activity medium (Richter, 2013), capturing 33% of the time users spend online (Young, 2017). In October 2019, Social Media (SM) was forecasted to become the third-largest channel for advertising by 2019's end, with a 13% share of global ad spend (US\$84 billion), following television 29% and paid search 17% (Zenith, 2019).

Nowadays, significant amounts of Peer-To-Peer (P2P), Business-To-Customer (B2C), People-To-Business (P2B) and even Business-To-Business (B2B), brand-related conversations, interactions and transactions take place on SMPs. Examples of such interactions include: sharing a video on YouTube about the pros and cons of a pre-owned Volo car (P2P); answering a peer's question on Facebook about the sound experience of Sennheiser headphones (P2P); following Diesel's page on Instagram to get trend inspirations (B2C); Apple responding to a complaint on LinkedIn (P2B); a humorous conversation between KitKat's and Oreo's pages on Twitter (B2B); etc. Given SMPs' connectivity and transparency, brand-related user generated content (UGC) on SMPs not only impact peoples' perceptions about brands, but also the purchasing decisions they make (Zote, 2020). Electronic Word-of-Mouth, voluntarily shared and consumed brand-related information, and brand-related interactions in a transparent environment, have become a 'new form of empowerment' for people in their relationships with brands (Cova and Pace, 2006). Insights derived from SMPs also influence the decisions brands make on many areas from communication to new product development (Ruehl and Ingenhoff, 2015).

Heightened awareness of SMPs' potential for brands has been accompanied by an increase of brand pages on these platforms. They have been utilised as a key means for human-brand interactions and become prominent assets for brands'

marketing and advertising efforts. In the social media and marketing literature, these pages are often discussed in relation to brand communities, which are defined as ‘a specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relations among admirers of a brand’ (Muniz and O’Guinn 2001, pp. 412).

Traditional advertising is based on repetitive exposure to a brand-related message. In contrast, by subscribing to brand pages on SMPs, people choose to receive messages from brands and interact with them voluntarily (Kwon et al., 2015). Indeed, 4 in 10 internet users say they follow their favourite brands on SM (Smith, 2020). As 25% of SMP users also say that they follow brands which they would consider purchasing from in the future (ibid), SMPs not only provide opportunities to increase brand loyalty amongst current customers, but also chances to convert potential customers. With 2.5 billion people using SM worldwide (Meshi et al. 2019), brand pages provide brands with remarkable opportunities to reach, interact and influence their target markets. Thus, in today’s tough competitive environment, with ever increasing brand-related message bombardment and desensitisation, subscribing to a brand page on a SMP is a valuable signal of the user’s interest in that brand; and for brands, an opportunity to start and maintain a long-term relationship with these subscribers.

As SMPs have become a new phenomenon, existing theories were used and new ones have been developed to understand and explain what people do on SM. For example, user typology model characterises users in relation to people’s specific online behaviours (e.g. lurkers, socialisers, personal connectors, and transactional community members). For instance, according to this model, lurkers are those who observe other users’ activities on online communities, while socialisers are those who engage with other users to give information and/or maintain relationships etc. (Mathwick, 2002; Muntinga et al., 2011). User typology approach was also employed by SM studies (Li and Bernoff, 2009). However, as one may be a lurker at a given

time and a socialiser at another time, the theory was often criticised for ignoring interchangeability of identified user roles. As an alternative to user typology model, a usage typology-centred approach was developed (Shao, 2009), and became the predominantly employed conceptual background to explain patterns of SM use (Heinonen, 2011; Muntinga et al., 2011; Tsai and Men, 2013; Ruehl and Ingenhoff, 2015; Khan, 2017). This approach classifies people's SM behaviours in relation to their level of involvement in content (i.e. consumption, contribution, and creation), and acknowledges that one may be involved in any of these phases at different times. In the context of following brands, the particular user behaviour (i.e. following brand pages) was classified and studied as part of the contribution usage type (Heinonen, 2011; Muntinga et al., 2011). As this study particularly focuses on the brand following behaviour of SM users, the usage typology-centred approach was deemed more appropriate for the current study.

Given the rise of SMPs' influence, scholars went beyond investigating what people do on SM. They also explored why people do what they do on SMPs. In a marketing context, the focus was on 'why people interact with or about brands on SMPs'. One of the major conceptual frameworks widely employed by communication, media, and marketing studies to answer these question is Uses and Gratifications (U&G) Theory (Katz 1959; Katz et al. 1974b). It is discussed below. U&G, and other relevant theories on the topic are also evaluated and discussed in detail in 'Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Background' section of the current study.

U&G was developed in the traditional media context. However, it has been adopted to many different types of media studies, including radio, online communities, and SM. The fundamental principle of the U&G theory is that the audiences are active, and they aim to fulfil their certain needs by means of media. When a need is fulfilled users receive a satisfaction (McQuail, 1983). Thus, the level

of gratification determines activation and continuity of the media usage behaviour (Palmgreen and Rayburn, 1982). The term “active” refers to media uses and gratifications, meaning users actively select and interpret the content they consume, contribute, and/or create (Khan, 2017). Therefore, the theory asserts that value judgements of media content can only be assessed by the audience (Katz et al. 1974a). In U&G theory, gratifications sought by users (e.g. information, entertainment, etc.) are defined as motivations that drives people to use certain type of media (Pervin, 1989; Muntinga et al, 2011). By suggesting that SM is, by nature, a user-centred medium and requires active participation from users, U&G was considered a “cutting-edge approach” to explain why people use SM (Ruggiero 2000), and interact with brands on SMPs (Muntinga et al, 2011, pp.17). Therefore, as U&G explains users’ SM behaviours by relying on assumptions based on users’ active selections, participation and goal-oriented motivations, the theory was deemed suitable, and employed by this study. U&G theory is critically evaluated in the theoretical background section.

By employing and developing various theories, efforts to understand people’s motivations for generic (non-brand-related) use (Dholakia et. al. 2004; Boyd, 2007; Shao, 2009; Park et al., 2009; Heinonen, 2011; Khan, 2017) and brand-related use of SMPs, including following brands (Muntinga et al., 2011; Jahn and Kunz, 2012; Tsai and Men, 2013; Ruehl and Ingenhoff, 2015) led to a body of research both from the academic and business fields. As the research area matured, some studies concentrated specifically on revealing motivations for following brand pages on SMPs (Yilmaz and Enginkaya, 2015; Kwon et al., 2015). Understanding peoples’ motivations for following brand pages on SMPs provides actionable insights for marketers to form their communication strategies. Implementing these insights could increase the relevance of marketing efforts. This can aid in attracting new users, increasing current customers’ loyalty, and converting potential customers into new customers. As users always have the choice to unfollow a brand page on SMPs,

understanding these motivations is also key to maintaining and strengthening brands' relationship with current followers (Tang et al., 2019). Finally, exploring the possible differentiations of the prominence of users' motives across different SMPs would aid brands to use the SMP which fits their communication strategy and objectives best. This also would aid brands to refine their messages, offers and services they provide in line with the prominence of motives on different SMPs.

## **Problem**

Recognizable SMPs emerged from late 90s (Boyd and Ellison, 2008), and only became popular as marketing and advertising channels for brands almost a decade later. Therefore, research regarding peoples' brand-related SM use remain sparse. The first comprehensive study to explore these motivations was published in 2011 (Muntinga et al.). To date, the majority of studies have concentrated on revealing motivations for generic (Boyd, 2007; Shao, 2009; Park et al., 2009) and brand-related SM use (Muntinga et al., 2011; Jahn and Kunz, 2012), with few specifically or partially focused on exploring motivations for following brand pages on SMPs (Tsai and Men, 2013; Ruehl and Ingenhoff 2015; Yilmaz and Enginkaya, 2015; Kwon et al., 2015).

Previous studies have explored motivations for following brand pages by either focusing on one specific platform, such as Twitter or Facebook (Tsai and Men, 2013; Kwon et al., 2015), or without focusing on any particular SMP (Yilmaz and Enginkaya, 2015). While Ruehl and Ingenhoff's (2015) study included motivations for following corporate pages on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, this was only a small element of their broader focus on motivations for engaging with these corporate pages. Similarly, Tsai and Men's (2013) investigated motivations for following brand pages on Facebook. However, the research's main focus was motivations for engaging (e.g. using, visiting, and following) with brand pages on social networking sites.

Despite having some common features, SMPs can differ in their primary area of usage. For instance, both Twitter and Instagram technically allow users to share videos, pictures, and images. However, Twitter is mainly known as a micro-blogging platform, while Instagram is primarily considered as an image and video sharing platform. Therefore, it is possible that one's motivation to use a given SMP, or, where there are multiple motivations, the weighting/prominence of these motivations, may differ depending on the specific SMP in question, as well.

The current SM studies found that, despite some similarities, the weighting of U&Gs on each SMP changes considerably depending on the platform people use. For example, users visit Twitter for informational and social purposes, whereas Instagram use is mainly driven by social and entertainment purposes. However, this does not necessarily mean that Facebook users do not seek informational, social U&Gs, nor that either/both Facebook and Twitter users do not seek entertainment benefits from those platforms. In addition, it is not only motivations, level of uses also show differences for each SMP. For example, Instagram users have a greater tendency to contribute and create content than Twitter and Facebook (Pelletier et al., 2020).

If the weighting of motivations for using a SMP changes depending on the SMP, people's motivation, or prominence of their motivations, for following brands may also differ on different platforms (Ruehl and Ingenhoff, 2015; Pelletier et al., 2020). To tailor and enhance their marketing and advertising strategies, marketers must identify what people want to achieve, and prioritise by following their brands on different SMPs (Kwon et al., 2015). To date, to the best of the author's knowledge, no academic research has focused on 1) whether the prominence of SM users' motivations for following brands on SMPs change across Twitter, Facebook,

and Instagram in a comparative context 2) whether people's motivations for following brands on SMPs aligns with the motives each SMP associates itself with.

## Purpose

Customising and differentiating content strategies for different communication channels are key concepts in, and expectations from, marketing and advertising (Geraghty and Conway, 2016), which can lead brands to have relevant conversations and interactions with their target markets. Exploring and understanding people's motivations for following brand pages on SM, and how these motives may change across different mediums/SMPs, could provide brands with valuable insights into deciding which SMP to utilise, and how to customise their strategies according to the specific SMP in question. Moreover, marketers could potentially see whether the motives each SMP primarily associates itself with, align with users' motivation for following brands on the SMP in question. For example, as inspiration is an important motive in fashion industry, Levi's may plan to utilise a particular SMP for its SM marketing, due to its possible stronger association with inspiration motive. While Bank of Ireland may prefer to utilise another SMP, due to the finance sector's and a particular SMP's stronger association with information motive.

Indeed, like brands, SMPs also have different positioning strategies to attract people to use and other brands to advertise on their platform. Therefore, in line with the features and benefits it offers, each SMP positions itself uniquely. For instance, Instagram primarily targets those seeking inspiration, claiming that it enables brands to inspire action: "Instagram is a place where visual expression from business inspires visible action from people [...] Inspire action." (Instagram, 2020). Meanwhile, Twitter targets those with information and entertainment motives by promising "It's what's happening. From breaking news and entertainment to sports and politics [...]" (Twitter, 2020). Facebook highlights relationship maintenance, social connection motives by communicating that it enables users to "Connect with

friends, family and other people [...]” and “Stay connected with your community and your customers [...]” (Facebook, 2020). Each SMP's brand promise is based on the different features and benefits they respectively offer, and the primary motivations each SMP associates itself with when inviting people to use their platform differ. Thus, when building marketing, advertising and channel strategies, brands should consider and critically evaluate both people’s motives for following their pages and that to what extent the key motives each SMP associates itself with align with the user’s motivations on these SMPs.

Thereby, this study aims to 1) list the main motivations for following brand pages SMPs by reviewing the relevant SM literature, 2) weight motivations for following brand pages on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram respectively, by conducting primary research, 3) compare the prominence of motivations for following brands across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram 4) examine the extent to which these motivations align with the main motives which each these SMPs associates itself with, by comparing the study’s data with SMP’s brand messages. Thus, this study’s findings will enable brands, when deciding which SMP(s) to use and how to use it/them, to make more informed advertising, marketing, and content strategy decisions. These decisions could enhance the relevancy, therefore efficiency, of brands’ communication strategies on SMPs. Therefore, the findings could advance the relationship between brands and their current and potential followers on SMPs.

## Research Question and Objectives

RQ1: What are the main motivations identified by prior literature for following brand pages on SM?

RO1: To list main motivations for following brand pages on SM by reviewing the SM literature.

RQ2: What is the weighting of motivations to follow brand pages on Twitter?

RO2: To find the weighting of motivations to follow brand pages on Twitter.

RQ3: What is the weighting of motivations to follow brand pages on Facebook?

RO3: To find the weighting of motivations to follow brand pages on Facebook.

RQ4: What is the weighting of motivations to follow brand pages on Instagram?

RO4: To find the weighting of motivations to follow brand pages on Instagram.

RQ5: Does the weighting of motivations for following brand pages on SM change across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram?

RO5: To compare the weighting of motivations for following brand pages across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

**H1: The prominence of SM users' motivations for following brand pages change across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.**

RO6: To examine whether more prominent motivations for following brands on and across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram align with the primary motives each SMP associates itself with.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Background

Various theories to explain SM behaviours were examined, such as The Reception Theory which focuses on interpretations and attributions of the meaning of an object by individuals depending on their cultural backgrounds (Hall, 1974); Media Richness Theory (MRT) which classifies various media types considering the ‘richness’ they provide for users, for example email cannot convey gestures, therefore, is considered less rich compare to video (Daft and Lengel, 1984); Social Exchange Theory which concentrates on rational choices based on people’s individual interest, cost, gain and risk evaluation, but not necessarily in the context of media usage (Homans, 1958); the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory which evaluates consumers’ motives to use a certain media and the gratification that are derived from that use from the users’ perspective (Katz 1959; Katz et al. 1974b).

MRT (Daft and Lengel, 1984) is based on the assumption that the goal of any communication is the resolution of ambiguity and the reduction of uncertainty (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, pp.61). The theory has been employed both by new media (Dennis and Kinney, 1998) and SM studies (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). MRT claims that people’s media choice is determined by the “richness” which a particular media provides to solve a particular communication problem (i.e. ambiguity, uncertainty). Therefore, media tools are evaluated by their problem-solving ability for certain communication situations (El-Shinnawy and Markus, 1997). MRT studies which focused on new media revealed the shortcomings of MRT theory for its use in the new media context (ibid). For example, despite the acknowledgement of “richness” of a given media over another for use in a specific communication situation (e.g. Facebook over email to communicate with brands), users did not necessarily receive greater communication satisfaction from the richer media tool (Mandal and Mcqueen, 2012; Dennis and Kinney, 1998). Moreover, MRT

is often employed when comparing two different media (e.g. Email vs. SMPs). This contrasts with U&G which, despite being developed for traditional media, is generally accepted as appropriate for new media. Due to its shortcomings at explaining people's new media behaviours, and this study's focus on a specific type of media (i.e. SMPs), MRT was not a fit for the theoretical background of the study.

In addition to this, the current study did not aim for a cross-cultural examination (e.g. The Reception Theory), and the research focused on one specific type of media (SMPs), rather than in a comparative context with other types of media (e.g. MRT). Moreover, MRT terminology, for instance, is formed around the concept of "effectiveness" (Dennis and Kinney, 1998), meaning the features of various media tools were in the centre of theory. Whereas, U&G theory's focus is people's media related needs, manipulations (e.g. their goal-oriented use of media), perceptions, and motivations from the users' point of view (Aitken et al. 2008). Therefore, the U&G theory was deemed the most appropriate approach for this study. U&G theory's approach centred on users' motives, its focus on motivations for media-related interactions fit the study's objectives.

### **The Uses and Gratifications Theory.**

A body of studies have employed U&G to explain how and why people use SM (Shao, 2009; Muntinga et al., 2011; Jahn and Kunz, 2012; Tsai and Men, 2013). U&G theory is a user-centric functionalist approach which suggests that people use certain media to gratify their certain needs. When doing so, they are conscious of their purposes and media choices (Katz 1959; Katz et al. 1974b). According to U&G studies, the two main motives which lead people to use media are functional and emotional motivations, also often cited as utilitarian and hedonic needs in U&G terminology (Krishnamurthy and Dou, 2008; Shao 2009; Heinonen, 2011). By employing U&G theory, studies have explored both new motives and sub-motives which have enriched and updated the classification of motives. U&G studies

revealed similar motivations for traditional media use, generic use of SM and brand-related use of SM (Park et al., 2009; Heinonen, 2011; Muntinga et al., 2011; Tsai and Men, 2013; Enginkaya and Yilmaz, 2014). Identification of these motivations is typically based on users' self-assessment of their SM activity. Studies on motivations for following brand pages on SMPs have, also, utilised U&G and updated previous classifications in line with their findings (Yilmaz and Enginkaya, 2015; Ruehl and Ingenhoff's 2015).

The U&G theory is particularly appropriate for examining peoples' use of new types of media, due to its user-centric perspective (Muntinga et al., 2011). However, the theory has been criticised for not explicitly defining some of its core concepts, such as what differentiates motivations from gratifications (Ruggiero, 2000). Seeking to satisfy certain needs through certain types of media can be described as gratifications (Rosengren, 1974). Muntinga, Moorman and Smit (2011) noted that U&G studies often use the term 'motivations' to describe why people use certain media types and what satisfaction they get eventually (Ko et al. 2005; Choi et al. 2009). To clarify the vagueness in the conceptual framework, U&G studies have suggested a distinction between antecedents and consequences of media behaviour. Antecedents of behaviour are considered 'gratifications sought', while consequences of behaviour are 'gratifications obtained'; motivations are accepted as gratifications sought (Greenberg, 1974; Pervin, 1989; Rubin, 2002).

The argument that asserts U&G is an appropriate theory to explain SM behaviours because it presumes "active participation" of users, and SM requires such active participation by its nature, has been subject to criticism. In SM and U&G studies, this argument was criticised by arguing that users do not always "actively" participate on SM content (Khan, 2017). According to this criticism, consuming SM content, for instance, does not require users' active participation. However, this argument ignores the fact that, regardless of the level of involvement in the content,

using SM itself requires the user's active participation. For example, people are exposed to TV content on many occasions whether or not they choose to do so (e.g. pubs, flights, waiting rooms, etc.). Therefore, on many occasions, if one does not actively choose to interact with TV content, 'active nonparticipation' is required. In contrast, due to its personal nature, using SM requires the user's active participation (e.g. opening an app each time on a personal device) in most, if not in all, conditions. This study concentrates on motivations for following brands on SMPs. The consensus in SM studies is that this particular user behaviour requires users' active participation, as they consciously chose to follow a brand by clicking/taping a button. Therefore, U&G theory is particularly appropriate to rely on this research.

### **Motivations for generic social media use.**

Several studies have examined motivations for generic SM use (Dholakia et al., 2004; Boyd, 2007; Shao, 2009; Park et al., 2009). Dholakia, Bagozzi and Pearo (2004) suggested that participation in virtual communities is driven by five main reasons: purposive value (e.g. giving/receiving information); self-discovery; maintaining interpersonal interconnectivity; social enhancement; and entertainment. Body (2007) found that users engage in self-presentation, impression management and identity expression. These can be understood as sub-motivations related to social and personal identity motives. Park, Kee, and Valenzuela (2009) revealed four motives for using social networking sites, and particularly for joining virtual communities on SMPs: socializing, entertainment, self-status seeking, and information. Shao's (2009) findings suggested, on SMPs: users consume content to satisfy information, entertainment, and mood-management needs; users' interact with content and with others to enhance social connections and for the virtual communities; and users produce content to gratify self-expression and self-actualization needs. Thus, Shao classified the motivations regarding users' various activities in SMPs, noting that motivations various usage types of SMPs are interdependent. Shao also found that usability attributes 'easy to use' and 'let users control' led users to greater gratification

from SMPs. By reviewing previous studies, Heinonen (2011) classified motivations for using SM in three major groups: Information, Social connection, and Entertainment. Heinonen argued that other motivations can be considered as sub-motivations of these three.

### **Motivations for brand-related social media use.**

The first comprehensive research exploring peoples' brand-related SM use and motivations behind their activities on SMPs (Muntinga et al., 2011), employed McQuail's (1983) classification designed for general media use. McQuail's is the most cited categorisation and several previous studies have examined McQuail's classification for SM relevancy and found it appropriate (Muntinga et al., 2011). McQuail's classification is based on four motivations: entertainment, integration and social interaction, personal identity, and information. Through reviewing literature, Muntinga, Moorman and Smit (2011) found two additional motives for the specific dynamics of SMPs: remuneration and empowerment. In addition to motivations, they categorised activities performed on SMPs by three dimensions related to the users' level of involvement: consuming, contributing and creating; and discussed the motivation in relation to these activities. Notably, a similar classification was introduced by Shao (2009), suggesting consumption, participation, and production are the main generic user activities on SMPs.

By employing and contributing to the findings in the literature, Muntinga, Moorman and Smit (2011) found that the motives that drive people to consume brand-related content on SMPs are: information (e.g. knowledge, pre-purchase information, inspiration); integration and social interaction (e.g. social identity, social pressure); entertainment (e.g. enjoyment; relaxation, pastime, escapism), and remuneration. Meanwhile, people's motives to contribute brand-related content were personal identity (e.g. self-expression, self-presentation, self-assurance); integration and social interaction (e.g. social interaction, social identity, helping);

entertainment (e.g. enjoyment, relaxation). Whereas the motives for creating content were personal identity (e.g. self-expression, self-presentation, self-assurance); integration and social interaction (e.g. social interaction, social identity, helping); entertainment (e.g. enjoyment, pastime); empowerment (e.g. enforcing service excellence, exerting influence power on companies), and remuneration (e.g. money or a prize). Again, it is important to note that, the motivations for particular usage types are not exclusive, but distinct.

Tsai and Men (2013) found three major motivations for engaging with brand pages on Facebook. Remuneration (e.g. discounts, free samples, sweepstakes prizes) was the primary motive for using brands' Facebook pages, followed by information (e.g. seeking product and/or brand-related information), and entertainment (e.g. escaping from daily routines or relaxing, passing time, experiencing aesthetic enjoyment). Remarkably, unlike in Muntinga, Moorman and Smit's findings (2011), neither social integration (e.g. connecting with like-minded users or to gaining a sense of belonging) nor personal identity motives (e.g. self-expression, personal identity, gaining recognition from their peers) were found to be motives for engaging with brand pages. Moreover, empowerment, was found as a motivation for brand-related SM use by Wang and Fesenmaier (2003), was not found as a motivation driving user engagement by Tsai and Men (2013).

Enginkaya and Yilmaz's (2014) developed a motivation scale for brand-related SM use (Appendix 1). Through focus groups and in-depth interviews, they found that brand affiliation, investigation, opportunity seeking, conversation, and entertainment were the drivers for users' interactions with brands through SM. They conducted quantitative research to examine the weighting of these motives. Opportunity seeking was the primary motivation for users to interact with brands on SMPs, followed by conversation, investigation, brand affiliation, and entertainment motives respectively.

Despite revealing similar motives to prior studies, Enginkaya and Yilmaz (2014) classified motives differently. For example, Shao (2009) classified users' narratives about SMPs, such as 'easy to use' and 'let users control', as usability attributes which lead users to greater gratification from SMPs. Whereas, Enginkaya and Yilmaz classified the attributes such as 'convenience' as part of conversation and opportunity motives, such as 'communicating instantly with brands without any time and space boundaries'. Enginkaya and Yilmaz's classification also differs from Muntinga, Moorman and Smit's (2011). While the latter adopts Wang and Fesenmaier's (2003) 'empowerment' motivation, the former discussed a similar driver, 'transmitting complaints and suggestions to brands', but only as a sub-motive of conversation motive. The motivation descriptions which refers to remuneration motive in prior studies (Muntinga et al., 2011; Tsai and Men, 2013) was also labelled as opportunity seeking, such as 'finding discounts and promotions'.

In addition to different approaches to labelling different motives, due to the interwoven structure of motivations, classification is also a challenging task which requires interpretation. Thus, for example, information motive, which was found to be one of the main motives for generic and brand-related SM use in prior studies, was not a major motivation label in Enginkaya and Yilmaz's classification (2014); but examined as a sub-motive under multiple major motivations, such as 'gathering more reliable information about products and brands' as part of investigation motivation.

### **Motivations for following brand pages on social media platforms.**

Although Muntinga, Moorman and Smit's (2011) focus was not exploring motivations for following brand pages on SMPs, they did investigate motivations for this specific activity as part of 'contributing' usage type. The activity was labelled as "Joining a brand profile on a social network site". The findings of the research

suggested that contributing activities are driven by three distinct motivations: personal identity; integration and social interaction; and entertainment.

Ruehl and Ingenhoff's (2015) comparative study on stakeholder motives and usage types of corporate Facebook, Twitter and YouTube pages, found that remuneration-related monetary motives (e.g. competitions, discounts, conducting business with a company) were the primary reasons for digital native users' participation with brands' Facebook and Twitter pages, including following them. Notably, no significant motivation to participate with brands on YouTube was identified. Information-related motives, such as 'keeping up to date with the latest company products and services', were also found as the second most prominent reason why users follow brands on Facebook. Similarly, brand and/or product likeability was another significant driver of users' participation in brand pages on Facebook. Following these motivations, identity and impression management was found to be another distinctive driver for following brand pages on SMPs. The desire to be perceived "smart", "clever" etc. by others, which can also be linked to brand likeability motive, was the basis of this motivation when following brands on Twitter and Facebook. Less influential motivations for participating and/or following brand pages were entertainment, and convenience related gratifications, such as obtaining brand-related information with ease, both on Twitter and Facebook.

Following their previous study on motivations for brand-related SM use, Yilmaz and Enginkaya (2015) studied motivations for following brand pages on SMPs. The study developed a motivational classification for following brands on SMPs. Following the motivational scale development, they examined the impact of these motivations. Brand affiliation and opportunity seeking were identified as distinct motivations for following brand pages on SMPs.

Kwon, Kim, Sung, and Yoo (2015) also concentrated on peoples' motivations for following brand pages on SMPs. Their study particularly investigated motivations for Twitter, and was based on the motivation labels derived from both market research and current literature (e.g. Sung et al. 2010). 'Brand usage and likeability' was found to be the most prominent motivation, followed by 'information seeking', 'incentive seeking' and 'social-interaction seeking'.

## Identification of Motivations

Several factors were considered when selecting which motivations to include in this research.

Firstly, the analysis of a body of literature revealed both commonalities and differentiations among motivations for generic, brand-related SM use, and brand-following motivations on SMPs. In addition to differentiations in classification, and labelling, the review of prior research shows that some user narratives are conceptualised as 'usability attributes' such as 'easy to use' and 'let users control', which lead users to greater gratification from SMPs (Shao, 2009). Differences in conceptualisation, classification, and labelling identified in the literature necessitate the amplification of motivations for following brand pages on SMPs.

Secondly, this literature review revealed a wide range of motivations for following brand pages on SMPs. When all sub-motivations are included, the number of motivational variables is countless. This obliged the researcher to select motivations that best served this study's scope and objectives. As discussed in the introduction section, this study aimed to uncover key motivations for following brand pages on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, and examine whether the weightings of these motivations change depending on the SMP people use. Therefore, the aim is to test **H1: "The prominence of SM users' motivations for following brand pages change across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram"** in

a comparative context. Thus, as discussed in the methodology chapter, quantitative research was conducted. The large number of sub-motivations, the questionnaire's length and participants' attention spans were considered. Including and examining all sub-motivations, for three separate SMPs, could have jeopardize the accuracy of the research by making the questionnaire too long (Bryman and Bell, 2015). In line with this study's main objective to examine primary motivations, not all sub-motives were included in this research.

Thirdly, the secondary objective of this study is to examine whether people's key motivations for following brands on each SMP align with the motives each SMPs associates itself with. Therefore, selecting which motives to include was also determined by considering whether the motive in question was "owned" by any of the SMPs. For example, although inspiration motive was classified as a sub-motive of the information motive in some studies (Muntinga et al., 2011); the motive was owned by Instagram claiming that "Instagram is a place where visual expression from business inspires visible action from people [...] Inspire action." (Instagram, 2020). Moreover, in market research conducted by PWC in 2018 (cited in Smith, 2020), inspiration was found as a key motive for using SMPs. Thereby, inspiration motive was included and examined as a separate motive in this study. The literature and market research review revealed several motivations which had been identified as the main reasons for why people follow brands on SMPs. These motivations are discussed below.

### **Information.**

Many studies on motivations for using SMPs found that information motive and related sub-motives are a major reason why people use SM (Shao, 2009; Park et al., 2009), why they interact with (Muntinga et al., 2011; Tsai and Men, 2013), and follow brands on SMPs (Yılmaz and Enginkaya, 2015; Kwon et al., 2015). In relation to following brands on SMPs, information motive refers to brand and/or

product/service information related gratifications. Information motive often described as ‘To learn more about the brands’ referring to gaining general information and impression about a brand and its products which users may not be familiar with (Ruehl and Ingenhoff, 2015; Kwon et al., 2015).

Acknowledging the interdependence of motivations is key to the reliability of any research which examine motivations for using SM. This applies to information motive. For example, remuneration may be considered a motive in its own right (Wang and Fesenmaier, 2003; Muntinga et al., 2011), covering media gratifications such as gaining brand related rewards through brand pages on SMPs (e.g. sweepstakes and contests). Nevertheless, remuneration is related to information motive because a reason people use brand pages is to gain information about sweepstakes and contests (Tsai and Men’s, 2013), which leads them to possible remuneration opportunities. Similarly, empowerment motivation, which refers to users’ exertion of influence on brands and/or other people (Muntinga et al., 2011), and enforcement for service excellence (Wang and Fesenmaier, 2003) is related to information motive. For example, when people use or follow Ryanair’s Twitter page to write about delays on flights and ask about their rights, they do so because they expect information from the brand via Twitter. As remuneration and empowerment related motivations are examined separately in this study, information motive refers to gaining general information, and learning more about brands, products, and services.

### **Entertainment.**

The entertainment motivation was found as a significant driver of consuming content (Shao, 2009), and joining virtual communities on SMPs (Park et al., 2009). It refers to gratifications from SM, such as enjoyment, relaxation, passing time when bored, escaping from daily routines, and experiencing aesthetic enjoyment. The motive is often discussed in relation to sub-motives such as passing time, relaxing,

receiving enjoyment etc. (Dholakia et al., 2004; Muntinga et al., 2011; Tsai and Men, 2013; Kwon et al., 2015). These sub-motives are often gratified through the videos, influential and creative content, and games shared by brands. For example, following Old Spice on Twitter because of the page's association with continuous entertaining content may be driven by the entertainment motive. In addition to driving people to consume brand-related content, entertainment motive was also identified as a reason for following brand pages on SMPs (Yilmaz and Enginkaya, 2015). By social psychological and SM theories/studies, it is often suggested that people interact with brands in ways that parallel their social relationships (Aggarwal, 2004; Kwon et al., 2015). As people often seek entertainment from their social environment, they may also expect it from brands. Recent market research on users' expectations from brands on SM supports this argument, as 83% expect brands to be 'funny', and 72% to be 'friendly' on SMPs (York, 2018).

### **Convenience.**

The convenience motivation is associated with 'practical incentives' (Ruehl and Ingenhoff, 2015), and gratifications such as obtaining brand-related information with ease through SMPs, or performing any transactional or non-transactional activity with ease. It also refers to the extent each SMP allows users to engage with brands, and brand related activities. The more 'easy to use', the greater gratification users experience from the SMP (Shao, 2009). Due to users' perception of SMPs as the most convenient channel to interact with brands, to participate with brand-related UGC (Girona and Korgaonkar, 2014), and to gain better access to instant information (Ruehl and Ingenhoff, 2015), people state that they follow brand pages on SM. In a group of prior research, the influence of convenience was examined as part of, and in relation to other motivations (e.g. information, opportunity seeking, conversation), such as 'to get information more quickly', 'to be informed about discounts and promotions with ease', or 'to transmit complaints and suggestions in a convenient way' (Yilmaz and Enginkaya, 2015; Kwon et al., 2015). In their study

on participation in virtual brand communities on SMPs, Sung, Kim and Moon (2010) found ‘convenience seeking’ as one of the primary motives, and it was discussed as a separate motive. To distinguish and understand its influence on users for following brand pages, this study classifies convenience as a separate motive.

### **Inspiration.**

The inspiration motivation refers to getting new ideas about lifestyle, use of products etc. (Muntinga et al., 2011). It is particularly relevant for fashion-related use of SMPs, such as inspirations for house, car, apparel designs etc. People use SMPs and follow brands to get inspiration both from their peers and from brands (Ruehl and Ingenhoff, 2015). The inspiration motive is often discussed as part of information motivation (Muntinga et al., 2011). By interacting with brand pages and brand related UGC, people gratify their need to enhance their styles, get new ideas about how to match their shoes with other clothes etc. As 37% of online shoppers say they use SM for ‘purchase inspiration’ (Smith, 2020), this study examines inspiration’s prominence at driving users to follow brand pages as a separate motivation. As Instagram positions itself as the medium of inspiration, labelling inspiration as a separate motive serves as the secondary purpose of this study, when examining whether users’ motivations for following brand pages aligns with the motivations each SMP associates itself with.

### **Personal identity / Self-status seeking.**

The personal identity motive was first identified in traditional media use context (McQuail, 1983). In several studies, sub-motives that addressed ‘personal identity’ were differently labelled. The motive refers to sub-motivations such as reinforcing personal values, and gaining recognition from peers, etc. (Muntinga et al., 2011). In addition to traditional media, personal identity was found to be a major driver for using social networking sites and joining virtual communities on SMPs, including

sub-motives such as self-status seeking, self-presentation, impression management and identity expression (Boyd, 2007; Park et al. 2009). Motives such as gratifying self-expression and self-actualization needs (Shao, 2009) are also related to personal identity. For example, in the context of brand followers, following luxury brands such as Chanel or Louis Vuitton on Instagram might be related to a user's desire to be associated with these brands. Or following Vans' and Quiksilver's page might be a signal which a user wants to send about his/her outdoorsy lifestyle. Personal identity motive is also often conceptualised in relation to 'brand affiliation', which involves concepts such as brand image, likeability, and suitability (Yılmaz and Enginkaya, 2015; Kwon et al., 2015). Notably, while some studies discussed personal identity as a driver of users' activities that require content participation (e.g. following a brand page on SMPs) (Muntinga et al., 2011), others found that users' narratives that refer to personal identity, such as self-expression and self-actualization, are drivers for producing content in SMPs (Shao, 2009).

### **Brand affiliation.**

Brand affiliation refers to sub-motives such as liking the brand, identifying the brand with one's lifestyle, and desire to purchase from the brand. It was found to be a distinct motivation both to visit and follow brand pages on SMPs (Ruehl and Ingenhoff, 2015; Yılmaz and Enginkaya, 2015), and often labelled as 'brand usage/likeability', as well. Several studies on motivations for brand-related SM use revealed that, if products and services correspond to a person's values or if the users likes the company, they engage with brands' pages on Facebook (Ruehl and Ingenhoff, 2015) or follow them on Twitter (Kwon et al., 2015). Again, it is important to note that brand affiliation is often discussed in relation to personal identity, and Integration and Social Interaction motives, as well.

### **Integration and social interaction.**

Integration and Social Interaction motivation refers to other people-related sub-motives, such as affiliation with like-minded others (Kaye, 2007), social identity, social interaction and identification (McQuail, 1983). In the SM literature, the motivation was also conceptualised as enhancing social connections and virtual communities (Shao, 2009), and found as one of the driving motives for contributing brand-related activities on SMPs, which includes following brands (Shao, 2009; Muntinga et al., 2011). For example, following Lego's Facebook page to gain a sense of belonging to a group of creative minds. Or one may recognise that many people (s)he admires, or identifies with, follow Under Armour on Instagram, and joining these people in following the brand's page may lead to feel as 'one of them' and part of the community. In brand following context, in user's point of view, the motivation was also classified and labelled as part of brand affiliation motive such as involvement with a brand on SM [...] influences one's friends in his/her social network (Yılmaz and Enginkaya, 2015).

### **Opportunity seeking.**

Opportunity seeking refers to remuneration-related SM gratifications, such as discounts, free samples, sweepstakes prizes. Despite differences in labelling the motivation (e.g. opportunity seeking, incentive seeking, remuneration) a body of research found it as a motivation both for brand-related SM use (Wang and Fesenmaier, 2003; Muntinga et al., 2011), and for following brands in particular (Kwon et al., 2015; Ruehl and Ingenhoff, 2015). Tsai and Men's (2013) study on people's motivations for visiting or liking a brand's Facebook pages, found that users' expectation to gain economic incentives is the main reason why they engage with these pages. As these incentives requires users to receive information about the opportunity in question, the motive may be related to information-related media gratifications. For example, the motive was identified as 'by following the SM pages

of brands, I can be informed of the discounts and promotions' in Yilmaz and Enginkaya's study (2015, p.13), and measured as one of the major drivers behind users' brand-following activity on SMPs.

### **Conversation.**

The conversation motivation refers to users' empowerment-related gratifications in their relationship with brands on SMPs. Due to the transparent nature of SM, many people prefer to communicate with brands through SMPs, instead of other channels. By doing so, they direct their questions, comments etc. in a transparent environment, and enforce brands for service excellence (Wang and Fesenmaier 2003; Muntinga et al., 2011). The conversation was found to be a distinct motive behind users' brand-following behaviour on SMPs. It is often argued that this transparency enabled by SMPs makes people feel more powerful against brands (Yilmaz and Enginkaya, 2015).

### **Relationship maintenance.**

In generic SM use, relationship maintenance refers to social connection related media gratification such as staying in touch with other members of a virtual community (Dholakia et al., 2004). People's desire for being up-to-date about events and topics such as 'what is going on', 'what others are doing', and 'what is new' in social networks they are interested in was identified as a distinct motivation for using SMPs (Heinonen, 2011). In brand-related SM use, the motivation is often discussed in relation to information motive such as 'to be kept up to date with the latest developments [...] New tastes, shops, campaigns' (Muntinga et al., 2011, p.27). Sub-motives found as reasons for following brands on SMPs were also related to the relationship maintenance motivation, such as following brands on SMPs to get information about new offerings (Yilmaz and Enginkaya, 2015). Examples include, receiving information through Facebook about a newest shoe line launched by Nike;

invitations on Instagram for the latest nightlife event run by Absolut; news on Twitter about the new promotion and/or discount announced by Apple.

### **List of Motivation Items**

This literature review analysed the key prior studies on exploring and identifying people's motivations for generic SM use, brand-related SM use, and motivations for following brand pages on SMPs. Thus, the list of motivation items which formed the basis of this research, displayed in Table 1, were adopted from these prior studies (Dholakia et al., 2004; Boyd, 2007; Kaye, 2007; Shao, 2009; Park et al., 2009; Wang and Fesenmaier, 2003; Muntinga et al., 2011; Heinonen, 2011; Tsai and Men, 2013; Enginkaya and Yilmaz's, 2014; Ruehl and Ingenhoff, 2015; Yilmaz and Enginkaya, 2015; Kwon et al., 2015) and recent market research (PWC, 2018; Mander et al., 2020). Therefore, the list presents a comprehensive coverage of all main motives for following brand pages on SMPs. This list was used to measure the ordering and the weighting/prominence of the motives across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

**RO1: To list main motivations for following brand pages on SM by reviewing the SM literature.**

*Table 1: Motivations for Following Brands on SMPs*

<b>Motivation</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Brand Affiliation</b>	Because I like the brand, its products and/or services (e.g. I buy and/or like to buy from the brand, It reflects my lifestyle).
<b>PI/Self-status Seeking</b>	Because I want people to see and/or think that I use the brand.
<b>Integration and Social Interaction</b>	Because people I like and/or admire follow the brand.
<b>Information</b>	To learn more about the brand and/or products/services.
<b>Relationship Maintenance</b>	To keep up to date with the latest company products and services.
<b>Opportunity Seeking</b>	To benefit from rewards and promotions the brand offers (e.g. discounts, sweepstakes).
<b>Convenience</b>	To do what I want with less effort (e.g. Transmitting complaints and/or suggestions, getting brand/product information, etc. is easier when I follow the brand).
<b>Conversation</b>	To communicate with the brand in a transparent environment (e.g. customer service/ask questions everyone can see).
<b>Entertainment</b>	Because the brand posts fun and/or interesting content that entertains me.
<b>Inspiration</b>	To get inspiration about lifestyle, fashion, design, food, etc.

## Chapter 3: Method

Methodologies are justified in this chapter. The research design and sampling method are described. Data collection and analysis are considered. Finally, the chapter discusses ethical considerations.

### Research Philosophy and Approach

This research's focus was on quantifiable observations leading to statistical analyses, and the researcher's role centred on data collection and interpretation. By claiming that people are active, goal-oriented and selective in their media use, and their active uses of media is to gratify their self-conscious needs, U&G is a positivist theory by its nature. Thus, a positivist approach can be used to research motives which drive certain types of media use, or what people do with media. Because people are conscious of their motives, value judgements of media content can only be assessed by the audience, and data can be derived from media users themselves (Katz et al. 1974a). Thereby, to gain knowledge of people's motivations for following brands on different SMPs, and to examine the relationship between motivations and SMPs, this study took a positivist stance.

Inductive and deductive research approaches were evaluated to form the basis of the research approach. A deductive approach is suited to research testing a prediction, while an inductive approach is more suited to research which does not begin with a question to be (dis)proved (McCormack et al., 2018). This research began with the prediction that the prominence of motivations for following brand pages change across different SMPs. This hypothesis was tested to explain relationships between variables, as is typical of deductive approach (Saunders et al, 2009). Therefore, a deductive approach was selected to fit the study's objectives.

## Methodological Choice

Quantitative research concentrates on the concept of measurement (Kendall, 2007), and on explaining social facts by gathering data about human behaviours, opinions etc. (Bryman and Bell, 2015). It is also consistent with positivist paradigm (Tuli, 2010). Therefore, quantitative research fit the research's positivist approach and aim to weigh/measure the prominence of motivations. H1 theorised that the prominence of SM users' motivations for following brand pages change across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Testing this theory, required statistical measurement. Quantitative methods enabled testing this assumption, by giving the researcher an opportunity to gather statistical data about users' motives (Saunders et al, 2009). Mono-quantitative method was deemed the appropriate methodological choice, to test the stated hypothesis.

## Research Strategy

Key quantitative research strategies were critically assessed for this study. A mandatory requirement of the research was primary data collection. Therefore, archival research, based on using administrative records and documents as the principal data source (Saunders et al. 2009), was not appropriate. This research was concerned with the actions of individuals rather than organisations, and actions will not be implemented by the researcher based on the study, ruling out action research. Case studies enable detailed and intensive analyse of a single case, such as an individual, family, community, school, organisation or event (Bryman, 2012) and often have external validity issues (ibid). Given the research question and large population, this study did not aim to engage in a theoretical analysis of a single case. Therefore, a case study was not appropriate. Lastly, surveys are considered as one of the most appropriate methods to analyse and identify relationships between variables derived from a large amount of data. As surveys allows researchers to test a hypothesis on a given topic, they are associated with deductive approach and

quantitative research (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Therefore, a survey was selected as the appropriate strategy.

## **Participants**

### **Population characteristics.**

Compared to the world average, Turkey has a higher time-per-day-spent using the internet (7.29 vs 6.43 hours/day) and SM (02.51 vs 02.24 hours/day) (Hootsuite and We are Social, 2020), and higher SMPs penetration rate (64% vs 49%) (ibid). In 2017 alone, Turkey's ad-spend on SM increased by 21% (IAB Turkey, 2019). Hence, understanding Turkish users' brand-related SM motivations has a crucial value for brands. However, this literature review revealed that the academic research on the topic remains sparse. Therefore, this research's focus is SM users in Turkey.

Given the study's focus on adults, alongside consent issues for those under 18 years, only people over 18 years were included. Most SMP users are under 44 years (Clement, 2020a-c). Moreover, the breakdown of user's age-groups above 44 years are less homogenous between Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, than the age-groups below 44 years (ibid). Therefore, the study's sample was refined to 18- to 44-year-olds. Participants were screened for eligibility; that each sampling unit must live in Turkey, follow a brand on each of the three platforms and be between 18-44 years.

### **Sampling methods.**

Sampling methods are commonly divided into probability and non-probability (Saunders et al., 2009). While probability sampling would have produced a good population representation, it was impossible to gain a list of all SMP users in Turkey, and such a list would have been too large. Despite non-probability sampling's subjective nature, it is useful when randomisation is impossible for very large

populations (Etikan et al. 2016). Purposive sampling is typically used in qualitative research to select articulate participants (ibid), who offer the most information on the characteristic of interest (Guarte and Barrios, 2006). Just using particularly informed participants was not necessary or appropriate for this research. Thus, purposive sampling was ruled out.

Self-selection sampling was used, placing a link to the online questionnaire on various Turkish groups/pages on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. This was fitting given the research targeted SMP users. However, a disadvantage of self-selection is low response rates. As the study's eligibility criteria was relatively exclusive, to ensure that there was a large enough sample gained within the short timeframe, also using either/both convenience and snowball sampling were considered. Different types of sampling bias are likely for convenience and snowball sampling. Therefore, to increase the number of potential respondents and to reduce the overall effect of each type of bias, both methods were employed. Convenience sampling was used with the researcher asking contacts to participate. Exponential non-discriminative snowball sampling was also used, with the primary data source (i.e. the researcher's contacts) nominating other potential data sources. This fast, cost-effective method suited the study's time and resource limitations.

Given the above risk of bias, quota sampling was used to increase the accuracy of the population's representation. The population was divided into strata based on age-groups and the proportion of the population which each subgroup represented was identified. Breakdown of Turkish users per age-group, for May 2020, was, 18–24-years: 12% Facebook, 29% Instagram, 24% Twitter; 25–34-years: 16% Facebook, 35% Instagram, 28% Twitter; 35–44-years: 8% Facebook, 16% Instagram, 21% Twitter (Clement, 2020a-c). From these figures, the average representations of ages included in the study was deduced as 18-24 (34.39%), 25-34 (41.80%), 35-44 (23.81%).

All participants were volunteers. No incentives were offered, as they are arguably coercive, could lead to disproportionately high recruitment of participants from a particular, typically lower, socio-economic background and it is debatable whether incentives are effective at increasing overall participation rates (Zutlevics, 2016).

Towards the end of data collection, results from 18- to 24-year-olds were somewhat lower than targeted. Therefore, the survey was distributed more on additional pages targeting 18- to 24-year-olds and those distributing the survey (through snowball sampling) were asked to nominate 18- to 24-year-olds. Through these efforts, the sample reached a similar age-brake-down to the assigned quotas. Respondents who did not meet the eligibility criteria were removed and the data was cleaned. As a result of this process a disproportionately high portion from the 18-24 group and a disproportionately low portion of the 35-44 group were removed, slightly changing the age brake-down from the aimed quotas.

A roughly even gender spit was reached: 47.3% males; 52.7% females. Details of the sample are displayed in Table 2.

*Table 2: Sample Characteristics* (N148)

Age groups	Participants	Males	Females
18-24	45 (30.4%)	28 (40.0%)	17 (21.7%)
25-34	74 (50.0%)	24 (34.2%)	50 (64.1%)
35-44	29 (19.6%)	18 (25.7%)	11 (14.1%)

## Sample size.

As of April 2020, in Turkey, there were 52,670,000 Facebook (Johnson, 2020), 39,000,000 Instagram (Clement, 2020d), and 13,650,000 Twitter (Clement, 2020e) users. Many SMP users use multiple platforms, for example, of Facebook users worldwide, 67% also use Instagram and 52% use Twitter (Kemp, 2020). However, it is unknown how many people in Turkey have an account with all three platforms and, of those, how many follow a brand on each of the three platforms. Therefore, the biggest possible number 13,650,000 was used as the population in the formula.

$$S = \frac{Z_2 * StdDev * (1 - StdDev)}{E_2}$$

Thus 385 was deemed as the ideal sample size. However, it was recognised from the beginning that 385 is a very large number considering this research's time and resource limitations. Therefore, a lower number of responses was expected. The survey ran for two weeks in July-August 2020 and had 320 respondents with an 88% compilation rate. After removing those who did not meet the eligibility criteria (described in 'Population Characteristics'), as shown by the screening questions, and after data cleaning, 148 participants fit the sample frame. Details of screening questions and data cleaning procedure are discussed in 'Sample Characteristics' and 'Data Analysis' sections.

## Research Design

The study looked at whether motivations for following brand pages varied depending on the SMP in question. Therefore, the independent/predictor variable was the SMP. The independent variable had three levels: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The dependent/criterion variable was motivations for following brand pages. The dependent variable had 10 levels; the 10 motivations listed in Table 1.

All participants had to follow at least one brand page on each of the three SMPs. This to account for the individual differences that occur between participants, ensuring the same baseline for answering/ranking. Therefore, comparing the whole sample's motivations across the SMPs, was between-subjects. When motivations were compared between the different age-groups, this was between-subjects.

## **Data Collection**

The study's data-collection method was a closed-ended, self-administered online questionnaire. The advantages of this method are 1) its cost-efficiency 2) it can be distributed via SMPs, an advantage as SMP users as targeted 3) it can be answered without time and location barriers, and via multiple devices (desktop, mobile, tablet etc.). The main disadvantage of self-administered online surveys may be high incompleteness rates. Given the large sample size and time limitation, interviewing participants in a face-to-face setting, or by phone-calls, was not a realistic option. In such research cases, self-administered online surveys are considered as a suitable option both for the researcher and participants (Blackstone, 2012). Use of specific devices is associated with socio-demographic characteristics (Brosnan, 2017), therefore, to decrease bias and to increase completion rates, the survey could be taken on any device type. Due to detailed data collection and analysis options it provides, SurveyMonkey was used for survey construction and data collection.

In line with the sampling strategy, the link to the online questionnaire was placed on various Turkish groups/pages on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn (self-selection). Participants were also able to reach the link on the researcher's SM pages (Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn). The researcher's contacts were sent the survey link via instant messaging app WhatsApp, and SM channels (convenience sampling). To increase participation, people who took the survey were asked to inform and

nominate other potential data sources (snowball sampling). The distribution of data sources is displayed in Table 3.

*Table 3: Breakdown of Data Sources*

<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A friend of mine sent the survey link (WhatsApp, SM)	57,4%
The researcher sent the survey link (WhatsApp, SM)	28,3%
Via Facebook groups	6,1%
Via LinkedIn groups	5,4%
I saw the link on the researcher's SM pages	2,0%
Via Twitter groups	0,7%

## Materials

Dichotomous, multiple-choice and Likert-type scale questions were used in the survey. All questions were asked in closed-ended format as they are often faster and easier for participants to answer (Hyman and Sierra, 2016), and have higher rates of item-response (Dillman et al., 2014). They can also increase the accuracy and ease of data processing. The questionnaire contained three main sections: demographic questions; questions related to SM use; and questions related to users' motivations for following brand-pages on SMPs.

As the participants' native language was Turkish, the questionnaire was translated from English to Turkish. The researcher's previous work-experience as an English-Turkish interpreter, for a news portal, enabled a high level of accuracy when translating the questionnaire. However, the possibility of potential subtle differences between linguistic versions is recognised as a potential limitation.

### **Demographic questions.**

The survey started with questions to gather demographic information, such as gender. It included screening questions on residence, and age-range. Dichotomous questions were primarily used to collect data about participants' demographic characteristics, to keep responses simple and fast for participants. A multiple-choice question was used for age-range. The items were (Under 18), (18-24), (25-34), (35-44), and (45+). While having the participants' exact ages may have allowed for greater analysis outside of these groupings, these groups were used as they were in line with the quota sampling strategy.

### **Social media use questions.**

Further screening questions about participants' SM use were asked. Firstly, participants were asked whether they use the relevant SMPs (i.e. 'Do you use Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram?'). Secondly, participants were asked whether they follow brands on SM. Lastly, participants were asked whether they follow at least one brands on each of the SMPs which this study focused on (i.e. 'Do you follow at least one brand on Twitter?'). This question was also asked for Facebook, and Instagram respectively. All SM-use related questions were asked by using multiple-choice, 'Yes', 'No', or 'Not Sure' format.

### **Motivation scale.**

To assess users' primary motivations for following brands on SMPs, a 10-item scale of motivation descriptions was used (e.g. 'To learn more about the brand, its products and services'; 'Because the brand posts fun and interesting content that entertains me'; etc.). As discussed in Chapter 2, the scale items were derived from prior literature (Dholakia et al., 2004; Boyd, 2007; Kaye, 2007; Shao, 2009; Park et al., 2009; Wang and Fesenmaier, 2003; Muntinga et al., 2011; Heinonen, 2011; Tsai

and Men, 2013, 2014; Ruehl and Ingenhoff, 2015; Yılmaz and Enginkaya, 2015; Kwon et al., 2015) and recent market research (PWC, 2018; Mander et al., 2020). To avoid the use of technical terms, which would require expertise in the field and could be hard for participants to understand (Krosnick, 2018), motivation items/descriptions were refined using simple language. These motivations and descriptions are contained in Table 1 in the Literature Review.

A Likert-type scale can be a reliable instrument for measuring self-efficacy (Maurer, 1998). A five-point scale appears more reliable than a three-point scale (Croasmun and Ostrom, 2011), but there are contradictory findings over whether a five-point or seven-point Likert scale is more reliable (ibid). While an even number may be preferable for surveys looking to avoid an uncertain/neutral answer, that was not necessary for this research. On this basis, a five-point scale was selected.

Respondents were asked to indicate how much they disagreed or agreed with each item on a 5-point Likert-type scale. The statements began ‘I follow brands on Twitter...’. This was followed by a descriptor depicting a motivation for each item (e.g. ‘I follow brands on Twitter... To/because [motivation]’). The response anchor was: 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither Disagree or Agree; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree. This question was repeated twice, replacing the ‘Twitter’ with ‘Facebook’ and ‘Instagram’ respectively in the statements. This construct (Likert-type scale) enabled the researcher to examine the weightings of users’ motivations for each SMP. Hence, it was possible to test H1. The measures of all the variables can be found in Appendix 2 and 3.

*Table 4: Example of Motivation Assessment Question*

*Please select how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement below.*

Q7. I follow brands **on Twitter...**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
Because <b>I like the brand</b> , its products and/or services (e.g. I buy and/or like to buy from the brand, It reflects my lifestyle).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Because I want people to see and/or think that I use the brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Because people I like and/or admire follow the brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To learn more about the brand and/or products/services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To keep up to date with the latest company products and services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To benefit from rewards and promotions the brand offers ( <b>e.g. discounts, sweepstakes</b> )	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To do what I want with <b>less effort</b> . (e.g. Transmitting complaints and/or suggestions, getting brand/product information, etc. <b>is easier when I follow the brand.</b> )	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To communicate with the brand in a transparent environment (e.g. customer service/ask questions everyone can see).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Because the brand posts fun and/or interesting content that entertains me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To get inspiration about lifestyle, fashion, design, food, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Procedure

The link to the survey first opened an information and consent sheet. Participants were given accurate information about the study's purpose (i.e. 'This survey aims to examine social media users' motivations for following brands on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram'), with no element of deception or important details omitted. The information and consent sheet can be found in Appendix 4 and is discussed in more detail in the 'Ethics' subsection.

After consenting to the information and consent sheet, participants could access the survey. They were asked about their demographics (e.g. country of residence, gender, age), including some screening questions. Finally, in line with the objectives of this study, participants were asked about why they follow brands across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram respectively. The details are discussed in the 'Materials' section. Participants were thanked upon completing the survey. The full questionnaire can be found in the Appendix 5. The survey took an average of 5 minutes.

Three main functions of debriefing have been identified: ethical, educational, and methodological (Allen, 2017). There was no deception or omission regarding the survey's intention, and no potential harm to participants was identified. Debriefing as an educational tool was not relevant in this case. For example, there could be no participant misperceptions to correct. Moreover, debriefing was not methodological useful to follow the questionnaire. Therefore, no debriefing was necessary following the main research survey. Following the survey, some participants contacted the researcher, using the contact details provided in the information sheet, to request information on the survey's findings. These participants will be issued with a completed version of the dissertation.

The pilot survey followed the same procedure as the main study, with the addition of a debriefing (Appendix 6). This had the methodological function of gaining user feedback to check for any unforeseen problems and to improve the questionnaire, for example by improving clarity, before the main data collection.

## **Validity and Reliability**

To increase the research's quality, both in terms of data collection and analysis, validity and reliability related actions were considered and taken.

For the sake of internal validity, a large population sample was sought. While the ideal sample size calculated was not reached, this goal sample size was an likely an overestimate as it had to be based on the biggest possible figure for the population, as the actual figures were not available, as described in 'Sample Size' subsection of 'Participants'.

Recruiting participants who followed a brand page on one of the three SMPs, and having unpaired/independent or mixed groups, would have increased the number of eligible potential participants. However, instead participants had to follow a brand page on all three SMPs. This to account for the individual differences that occur between participants, ensuring the same baseline for answering/ranking.

To achieve construct validity, the research's motivations scale was carefully developed based on relevant existing literature. For example, 'Relationship Maintenance' described as 'keeping up to date with the latest company products and services' was from Ruehl and Ingenhoff's (2015), and 'Convenience' motivation, 'To do what I want with less effort' was from Sung, Kim and Moon's (2010) SM studies. These studies' and the descriptions/meanings of the motivations investigated in this research were discussed in detail the 'Literature Review' section.

To increase content validity, two main actions are often suggested: 1) the measures of the research should be critically evaluated by others (e.g. experts in the specific field of research) (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2005) 2) conducting a pilot study with people who have similar characteristics to the research's potential participants should be considered (Roberts et al., 2006). Therefore, the study's materials (e.g. questionnaire, motivation items) were critically evaluated by an expert (i.e. an experienced scholar in marketing and research fields). Materials were edited in line with the expert's feedback. In addition, a pilot survey was conducted with respondents who fit the survey's eligibility criteria. Pilot participants answered a series of questions on their experience (Appendix 6) and the survey was adjusted in line with insights gained through the pilot study. Thus, the gap between interpretations of the materials (e.g. questions, motivations items) by the researcher and the participants was reduced, increasing the research's validity.

To consider criterion validity, the results are compared with the results from other similar research. Many of the results correspond with previous findings. However, as the previous research differs slightly in its sample, it is understandable that the results also differ somewhat. These prior studies are cited, and potential explanations for the similarities and differences between findings are discussed/theorised in the 'Discussions and Implications' chapter.

## **Ethics**

There are four main ethical principles often conceptualised as participant harming, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy and deception (Diener and Crandall, 1978).

'Participant harming' includes causing any form of physical or emotional harm to the research subjects, such as harming their self-esteem, etc. (Bryman and Bell, 2015). No potential harms were envisioned from participation in the survey.

Moreover, feedback was gathered from the pilot-survey's participants, to refine the questionnaire. They were asked whether they thought any politically incorrect or offensive terms were used in the survey. No such issues were identified.

Providing relevant information allows participants to decide whether they want to take part in the study and give informed consent (ibid). Therefore, the questionnaire began with an information and consent sheet. Participants were informed about the study's purposes and the use of the results. In case of further questions, the researcher's contact details were provided. At the end of the information sheet, potential participants were asked for their consent. The full copy of pre-survey information given to the participants can be found in Appendix 4. To prevent 'invasion of privacy', participants' answers were anonymous. They were informed of this and their right to withdraw; that agreeing to taking part in the survey did not necessarily mean they had to complete the survey, as not giving the chance to decline is considered as violations of privacy (ibid).

Giving misleading background information about the research or hiding information from participants to receive more natural answers, are considered 'deception' (ibid) and may potentially harm participants (Erwin et al., 2015). To ensure no deception was caused, the information to be provided to participants was reviewed by a scholar and research expert.

## **Data Analysis**

Due to the comprehensive analysis possibilities it provides, SurveyMonkey was used to analyse data. Before performing data analysis, data was refined to respondents who stated that 1) they use Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram; 2) follow brands on Twitter 3) follow brands on Facebook 4) follow brands on Instagram. Respondents who chose 'No' or 'Not Sure' options were removed from the data set. To increase the accuracy of results, straight-liners (e.g. respondents who chose '5 = Strongly

Agree' or '1 = Strongly Disagree' for all SMPs) were also removed from the dataset. 148 participants fitted the determined sample criteria.

To determine each motivations' correspondence with each SMP, and to compare the prominence of motivations across SMPs, mean ( $M$ ) and standard deviation ( $SD$ ) scores of motivation items were used. Each motivation item was measured between the values of 1 and 5, while 1 represents the absence of the related motivation, 5 represents the complete correspondence of the motivation for the respondent. Motivations for following brands were ranked based on how strongly participants agreed/disagreed that each motivation applied for following brand pages on each of the SMPs.

A repeated measures ANOVA was ruled out for testing as the research did not meet the necessary assumption of independence of observations. Therefore, for each motivation, a Friedman test was run, to show if there was a significant difference in that motivation's prominence between at least two of the SMPs (Table 10). Using a Friedman test was deemed appropriate for dependence of observations (the entire sample answered in relation to all three SMPs) and the dependent variable (motivation for following brand pages) was measured on an ordinal (Likert-type) scale.

When such a significant difference was found, a Friedman test cannot show which of the two or three SMPs this difference is between. Therefore, post-hoc tests using Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were then performed (Table 11).

To increase the readability in tables, the acronyms displayed in Table 5 were used for motivations.

*Table 5: List of Acronyms for Motivations*

<b>Motivation</b>	<b>Acronym</b>
<b>Brand Affiliation</b>	Brand Aff.
<b>PI/Self-status Seeking</b>	Self-stat.
<b>Integration and Social Interaction</b>	Integ. and Soc. Inter.
<b>Information</b>	Info.
<b>Relationship Maintenance</b>	Rel. Maint.
<b>Opportunity Seeking</b>	Opp. Seeking
<b>Convenience</b>	Conven.
<b>Conversation</b>	Conver.
<b>Entertainment</b>	Entert.
<b>Inspiration</b>	Insp.

## Chapter 4: Results

This 'Results' chapter explores the data analysis, by constructing a holistic picture of the findings in relation to the U&G theory. To address the RQs and ROs, several steps were taken.

Firstly, motivations for following brands are weighted and ranked for each SMPs. The response anchor was: 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither Disagree or Agree; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree. Weighting and rank were based on the mean scores for how strongly participants agreed/disagreed that each motivation applied to the SMP in question. Therefore, the most prominent motivations were identified for each SMP individually.

Secondly, the order/ranking of the motivations are examined, in a comparative context, across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

Thirdly, to assess the significant differences related to each motivation's prominence across the three SMPs, the results of the performed statistical analyses are shown. Thus, it is possible to identify whether a particular motivation was significantly more prominent on any platform compare to others (H1).

Finally, to what extent the more prominent motivations for following brands on each SMP align with the primary motives each SMP associates itself with was investigated.

### Motivations for Following Brands on Twitter

Firstly, motivations relevancy for following brands were ranked for Twitter. As shown in Table 6, 'Relationship Maintenance' ( $M = 4.37$ ;  $SD = 0.82$ ) was found to be the primary reason for following brand-pages on Twitter, meaning people follow

brands on Twitter mostly to stay connected with them. This was followed by 'Information' ( $M= 4.32$ ;  $SD = 0.85$ ) motive, implying that, by following brands on Twitter, users want to gain general information and/or learn more about the brand's products/services. These motivations were followed by 'Brand Affiliation' ( $M= 3.95$ ;  $SD = 0.91$ ); 'Convenience' ( $M= 3.89$ ;  $SD = 1.03$ ); 'Opportunity Seeking' ( $M= 3.75$ ;  $SD = 1.13$ ); 'Inspiration' ( $M= 3.72$ ;  $SD = 1.12$ ); and 'Conversation' ( $M= 3.68$ ;  $SD = 1.04$ ) respectively.

The data shows that the motivations listed above, with higher than 3.00 mean score ( $M>3$ ; 3= neither disagree nor agree), are strong drivers of brand-following behaviour for Twitter users. Although the results suggest each motive mentioned above is strongly relevant for Twitter, the differences between mean scores show that users prioritise some media gratifications over others when/for following brands on the platform. For example, "liking the brand [...]" (Brand Affiliation:  $M= 3.95$ ;  $SD = 0.91$ ) and "seeking convenience in band-related activities" (Convenience  $M= 3.89$ ;  $SD = 1.03$ ); are more prominent motives than reward and promotion related gratifications (Opportunity Seeking:  $M= 3.75$ ;  $SD = 1.13$ ). Nonetheless, 'Opportunity Seeking' related gratifications were still more prominent than inspiration, such as getting lifestyle, fashion, design, food ideas (Inspiration:  $M= 3.72$ ;  $SD = 1.12$ ) and conversation related gratifications (Conversation:  $M= 3.68$ ;  $SD = 1.04$ ) such as communicating with the brand.

Motivations with mean scores of or below three ( $M\leq 3$ ) are not considered relevant for brand followers on Twitter. These motives were 'Integration and Social Interaction' ( $M = 2.65$ ;  $SD = 1.29$ ), such as following a brand due to the influence of significant others; and 'PI/Self-status Seeking' ( $M = 2.30$ ;  $SD = 1.20$ ) such as following a brand for other people to see. It should also be noted that while 'Entertainment' ( $M = 3.09$ ;  $SD = 1.18$ ), referring to fun and/or interesting content which brands post, had a mean above 3, it was only just above 3 and therefore, not

as relevant as most motives for Twitter. However, it should also be noted that these three motives had the largest standard deviations on Twitter and were relevant for some participants.

These weighting are compared across SMPs and the meanings of these weightings – both within and across platforms – is discussed in greater detail, both later in this Chapter under the ‘Comparison of Motivations across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram’ subheading and in the Discussion Chapter.

**RO2: To find the weighting of motivations to follow brand pages on Twitter.**

*Table 6: Weighting of Motivations for Following Brands on Twitter*

Mean /Weighted Average = *M*; Standard Deviation = *SD* (N148)

Motivation	Description	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<b>Relationship Maintenance</b>	To keep up to date with the latest company products/services.	4.37	0.82
<b>Information</b>	To learn more about the brand and/or products/services.	4.32	0.85
<b>Brand Affiliation</b>	Because I like the brand, its products and/or services (e.g. I buy and/or like to buy from the brand, It reflects my lifestyle).	3.95	0.91
<b>Convenience</b>	To do what I want with less effort. (e.g. Transmitting complaints and/or suggestions, getting brand/product information, etc. is easier when I follow the brand.)	3.89	1.03
<b>Opportunity Seeking</b>	To benefit from rewards and promotions the brand offers (e.g. discounts, sweepstakes)	3.75	1.13
<b>Inspiration</b>	To get inspiration about lifestyle, fashion, design, food, etc.	3.72	1.12
<b>Conversation</b>	To communicate with the brand in a transparent environment (e.g. customer service/ask questions everyone can see.)	3.68	1.04
<b>Entertainment</b>	Because the brand posts fun and/or interesting content that entertains me.	3.09	1.18
<b>Integration and Social Interaction</b>	Because people I like and/or admire follow the brand.	2.65	1.29
<b>PI/Self-status Seeking</b>	Because I want people to see and/or think that I use the brand.	2.30	1.20

## Motivations for Following Brands on Facebook

As with Twitter, the different motivations for Facebook have different mean scores, with some more prominent than others (see Table 7).

'Relationship Maintenance' was found to be the most prominent motivation for following brands on Facebook ( $M = 4.14$ ;  $SD = 0.93$ ), as in Twitter's case. As shown in Table 7, this motivation was respectively followed by 'Information' ( $M = 4.05$ ;  $SD = 0.97$ ); 'Brand Affiliation' ( $M = 3.99$ ;  $SD = 0.93$ ); 'Inspiration' ( $M = 3.73$ ;  $SD = 1.11$ ); 'Opportunity Seeking' ( $M = 3.61$ ;  $SD = 1.20$ ); 'Convenience' ( $M = 3.57$ ;  $SD = 1.14$ ); 'Conversation' ( $M = 3.41$ ;  $SD = 1.21$ ); 'Entertainment' ( $M = 3.16$ ;  $SD = 1.08$ ).

The results suggest that except 'Integration and Social Interaction' ( $M = 2.55$ ;  $SD = 1.25$ ) and 'PI/Self-status Seeking' ( $M = 2.28$ ;  $SD = 1.21$ ), all motivations investigated were found relevant for brand following on Facebook.

**RO3: To find the weighting of motivations to follow brand pages on Facebook.**

*Table 7: Weighting of Motivations for Following Brands on Facebook*

Mean /Weighted Average =  $M$ ; Standard Deviation =  $SD$

**(N148)**

<b>Motivation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b><math>M</math></b>	<b><math>SD</math></b>
<b>Relationship Maintenance</b>	To keep up to date with the latest company products/services.	4.14	0.93
<b>Information</b>	To learn more about the brand and/or products/services.	4.05	0.97
<b>Brand Affiliation</b>	Because I like the brand, its products and/or services (e.g. I buy and/or like to buy from the brand, It reflects my lifestyle).	3.99	0.93
<b>Inspiration</b>	To get inspiration about lifestyle, fashion, design, food, etc.	3.73	1.11
<b>Opportunity Seeking</b>	To benefit from rewards and promotions the brand offers (e.g. discounts, sweepstakes)	3.61	1.20
<b>Convenience</b>	To do what I want with less effort. (e.g. Transmitting complaints and/or suggestions, getting brand/product information, etc. is easier when I follow the brand.)	3.57	1.14
<b>Conversation</b>	To communicate with the brand in a transparent environment (e.g. customer service/ask questions everyone can see.)	3.41	1.21
<b>Entertainment</b>	Because the brand posts fun and/or interesting content that entertains me.	3.16	1.08
<b>Integration and Social Interaction</b>	Because people I like and/or admire follow the brand.	2.55	1.25
<b>PI/Self-status Seeking</b>	Because I want people to see and/or think that I use the brand.	2.28	1.21

## Motivations for Following Brands on Instagram

The primary motivation found for following brands on Instagram was ‘Relationship Maintenance’ ( $M = 4.37$ ;  $SD = 0.79$ ), followed by ‘Brand Affiliation’ ( $M = 4.35$ ;  $SD = 0.83$ ). ‘Inspiration’ ( $M = 4.33$ ;  $SD = 0.86$ ) was the third most prominent motivations for Instagram, referring to users starting and continuing to follow brands to get inspirations, for example about lifestyle, fashion etc. As shown in Table 8, these motives were followed by ‘Information’ ( $M = 4.25$ ;  $SD = 0.88$ ); ‘Opportunity Seeking’ ( $M = 3.95$ ;  $SD = 1.15$ ); ‘Convenience’ ( $M = 3.71$ ;  $SD = 1.22$ ); ‘Entertainment’ ( $M = 3.64$ ;  $SD = 1.19$ ); ‘Conversation’ ( $M = 3.50$ ;  $SD = 1.23$ ). Notably, ‘Brand Affiliation’ (e.g. liking the brand and identifying with one’s lifestyle) and ‘Inspiration’ related benefits were even more frequently/strongly rated motives than practical motivations such as information, opportunity seeking or convenience. Another salient finding was respondents’ application for the entertainment value when/for following brands on Instagram. Only on Instagram, the ‘Entertainment’ motivation was ranked above the ‘Conversation’ motive which refers to communicating with the brand in a transparent environment (e.g. customer service/ask questions everyone can see.).

The results suggest that, similar to Twitter and Facebook, ‘Integration and Social Interaction’ ( $M = 2.99$ ;  $SD = 1.39$ ); and ‘PI/Self-status Seeking’ ( $M = 2.45$ ;  $SD = 1.41$ ) motives were not as relevant as others for Instagram neither. However, it should be noted that these motives had the largest standard deviations.

**RO4: To find the weighting of motivations to follow brand pages on Instagram.**

*Table 8: Weighting of Motivations for Following Brands on Instagram*

Mean /Weighted Average =  $M$ ; Standard Deviation =  $SD$

**(N148)**

<b>Motivation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b><math>M</math></b>	<b><math>SD</math></b>
<b>Relationship Maintenance</b>	To keep up to date with the latest company products/services.	4.37	0.79
<b>Brand Affiliation</b>	Because I like the brand, its products and/or services (e.g. I buy and/or like to buy from the brand, It reflects my lifestyle).	4.35	0.83
<b>Inspiration</b>	To get inspiration about lifestyle, fashion, design, food, etc.	4.33	0.86
<b>Information</b>	To learn more about the brand and/or products/services.	4.25	0.88
<b>Opportunity Seeking</b>	To benefit from rewards and promotions the brand offers (e.g. discounts, sweepstakes)	3.95	1.15
<b>Convenience</b>	To do what I want with less effort. (e.g. Transmitting complaints and/or suggestions, getting brand/product information, etc. is easier when I follow the brand.)	3.71	1.22
<b>Entertainment</b>	Because the brand posts fun and/or interesting content that entertains me.	3.64	1.19
<b>Conversation</b>	To communicate with the brand in a transparent environment (e.g. customer service/ask questions everyone can see.)	3.50	1.23
<b>Integration and Social Interaction</b>	Because people I like and/or admire follow the brand.	2.99	1.39
<b>PI/Self-status Seeking</b>	Because I want people to see and/or think that I use the brand.	2.45	1.41

## Comparison of Motivations across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram

To understand how motivations for following brands differentiate across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, if in fact they do differentiate, the mean  $M$ ,  $SD$  and ranking of each motivation for each SMP is displayed in Table 9 in a comparative context. This initial comparison is based on order of the motives on each SMP but does not suggest that some motivations were significantly more prominent on a SMP compare to others. Significant differences across the mean ranks of the three SMP will be analysed, to test H1 further, in this paper.

On all three SMPs, the primary motivation to follow brands was 'Relationship Maintenance' (Instagram:  $M = 4.37$ ;  $SD = 0.79$ ), (Twitter:  $M = 4.37$ ;  $SD = 0.82$ ), (Facebook:  $M = 4.14$ ;  $SD = 0.93$ ). 'Information' was the second most prominent on Twitter and Facebook (Twitter:  $M = 4.32$ ;  $SD = 0.85$ ), (Facebook:  $M = 4.05$ ;  $SD = 0.97$ ), but the fourth on Instagram ( $M = 4.25$ ;  $SD = 0.88$ ). 'Brand Affiliation' ranked second on Instagram ( $M = 4.35$ ;  $SD = 0.83$ ) and third on both Facebook ( $M = 3.99$ ;  $SD = 0.93$ ) and Twitter ( $M = 3.95$ ;  $SD = 0.91$ ). 'Inspiration' was revealed as third most prominent on Instagram ( $M = 4.33$ ;  $SD = 0.86$ ), whereas it was the fourth on Facebook ( $M = 3.73$ ;  $SD = 1.11$ ), and the sixth on Twitter ( $M = 3.72$ ;  $SD = 1.12$ ).

The results show that the most remarkable differentiation in the order of motivations between the three SMPs was related to 'Information' and 'Inspiration' motives. Comparing the order/ranking of motivations across the SMPs, the above findings suggest that while information related motivations were ranked remarkably higher than inspiration related ones on Twitter and Facebook; it was vice versa on Instagram. Seeking inspirational ideas about fashion, lifestyle etc. by following the brand pages was even ranked above getting general brand-related information motives (e.g. to learn more about the brand and/or products/services) on Instagram.

‘Convenience’ was the fourth most prominent motive for following brands on Twitter ( $M = 3.89$ ;  $SD = 1.03$ ), and the sixth on both Instagram ( $M = 3.71$ ;  $SD = 1.22$ ) and Facebook ( $M = 3.57$ ;  $SD = 1.14$ ). On all three SMPs, ‘Opportunity Seeking’ was the fifth motivation (Instagram:  $M = 3.95$ ;  $SD = 1.15$ ), (Twitter:  $M = 3.75$ ;  $SD = 1.13$ ), (Facebook:  $M = 3.61$ ;  $SD = 1.20$ ). ‘Conversation’ ranked seventh motivation on Twitter ( $M = 3.68$ ;  $SD = 1.04$ ) and Facebook ( $M = 3.41$ ;  $SD = 1.21$ ), whereas it was the eighth on Instagram ( $M = 3.50$ ;  $SD = 1.23$ ). ‘Entertainment’ was the seventh most prominent motive on Instagram ( $M = 3.64$ ;  $SD = 1.19$ ), and the eighth on Facebook ( $M = 3.16$ ;  $SD = 1.08$ ), and Twitter ( $M = 3.09$ ;  $SD = 1.18$ ).

As shown above, another notable difference between the three SMP was about convenience-related gratifications. Performing brand-related activities with less effort by following brands was ranked notably higher on Twitter compared to Facebook, and Instagram.

To assess the motivations on each SMPs, Likert-type scales were used where ‘3’ on the response anchor was equal to ‘Neither Disagree Or Agree’. Thus, items with a mean score lower than 3.00 were not as relevant for the platforms in question. As noted above, for all three SMPs, ‘Integration and Social Interaction’ (Instagram:  $M = 2.99$ ;  $SD = 1.39$ ), (Twitter:  $M = 2.65$ ;  $SD = 1.29$ ), (Facebook:  $M = 2.55$ ;  $SD = 1.25$ ) and ‘PI/Self-status Seeking’ (Instagram:  $M = 2.45$ ;  $SD = 1.41$ ), (Twitter:  $M = 2.30$ ;  $SD = 1.20$ ), (Facebook:  $M = 2.28$ ;  $SD = 1.21$ ) were the last two motivations in the ranking with lowest mean scores. Both ‘Integration and Social Interaction’ and ‘PI/Self-status Seeking’ scored below a 3.00 mean on each SMP. Therefore, these two motivation items were not included in further data analysis.

**RO5: To compare the weighting of motivations for following brand pages across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.**

*Table 9: Weighting of Motivations for Following Brands across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram*

Mean /Weighted Average =  $M$ ; Standard Deviation =  $SD$  (N148)

	Rel. Maint.	Info.	Brand Aff.	Opp. Seeking	Conven.	Insp.	Conver.	Entert.	Integ. and Soc. Inter.	Pers. Id./ Self-stat.
	$\mu; SD$	$\mu; SD$	$\mu; SD$	$\mu; SD$	$\mu; SD$	$\mu; SD$	$\mu; SD$	$\mu; SD$	$\mu; SD$	$\mu; SD$
<b>Weighted Averages across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram</b>	4.29 0.84	4.20 0.90	4.09 0.89	3.77 1.16	3.72 1.13	3.59 1.03	3.53 1.16	3.29 1.15	2.73 1.31	2.34 1.27
Ranking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>SMPs</b>										
<b>Twitter</b>	4.37 0.82	4.32 0.85	3.95 0.91	3.75 1.13	3.89 1.03	3.72 1.12	3.68 1.04	3.09 1.18	2.65 1.29	2.30 1.20
Ranking	1	2	3	5	4	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Facebook</b>	4.14 0.93	4.05 0.97	3.99 0.93	3.61 1.20	3.57 1.14	3.73 1.11	3.41 1.21	3.16 1.08	2.55 1.25	2.28 1.21
Ranking	1	2	3	5	6	4	7	8	9	10
<b>Instagram</b>	4.37 0.79	4.25 0.88	4.35 0.83	3.95 1.15	3.71 1.22	4.33 0.86	3.50 1.23	3.64 1.19	2.99 1.39	2.45 1.41
Ranking	1	4	2	5	6	3	8	7	9	10

Notably, although some motivations rank lower on a particular SMP, relative to other SMPs, it does not necessarily indicate that the motivation was significantly less relevant or less prominent for that SMP compare to other motives. For example, ‘Information’ motive was ranked second place for both Twitter ( $M = 4.32$ ;  $SD = 0.85$ ) and Facebook ( $M = 4.05$ ;  $SD = 0.97$ ), but forth on Instagram ( $M = 4.33$ ;  $SD = 0.86$ ). However, as shown in the figures above, the motive has higher mean score on Instagram compared to Facebook.

The H1, whether the prominence of motivations for following brands significantly change across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, was next examined.

**H1: The prominence of SM users' motivations for following brand pages change across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.**

H<sub>0</sub>: Each motivation for brand page following has the same prominence across SMPs.

H<sub>a</sub>: At least one motivation for brand page following has a different prominence across SMPs.

A repeated measures ANOVA was ruled out for testing as the research did not meet the necessary assumption of independence of observations. Therefore, for each motivation, a Friedman test was run, to show if there was a significant difference in that motivation's prominence between at least two of the SMPs (Table 10). These Friedman tests were run with each of the 8 motivations which had a mean score over three (discussed above). Significant differences were found between at least two SMPs, for 7 of the 8 motivations.

There were statistically significant differences, between SMPs, for 'Brand Affiliation'  $\chi^2(2)=48.678$ ,  $p<.0005$ ; 'Information'  $\chi^2(2)=10.976$ ,  $p<.005$ ; 'Relationship Maintenance'  $\chi^2(2)=11.156$ ,  $p=.004$ ; 'Opportunity Seeking'  $\chi^2(2)=13.550$ ,  $p=.001$ ; 'Convenience'  $\chi^2(2)=12.698$ ,  $p=.002$ ; 'Entertainment'  $\chi^2(2)=40.474$ , ( $p<.0005$ ); and 'Inspiration'  $\chi^2(2)=54.934$ , ( $p<.0005$ ). Because the  $p$ -value of these motivations was less than the  $\alpha$  (.05), the researcher rejected the null hypothesis, concluding that each of these motivations has a difference prominence on at least one of the SMPs.

'Conversation' was highest on Twitter ( $Mdn=4.00$ ), then Instagram ( $Mdn=4.00$ ), followed by Facebook ( $Mdn=4.00$ ), but the differences were not statistically significant,  $\chi^2(2)=4.610$ ,  $p=.100$ . For 'Conversation', the  $p$ -value was is

less than the significance level ( $\alpha$ ) of .05, therefore, to this point the researcher retained the null hypothesis.

*Table 10: Overall Friedman ANOVA Results*

(N148)

Variables/ Motivation	Facebook M (SD)	Twitter M (SD)	Instagram M (SD)	X <sub>2</sub>	Df	p-value
<b>Brand Aff.</b>	3.99 (.933)	3.95 (.914)	4.35 (.832)	48.678	2	<.0005*
<b>Info.</b>	4.05 (.971)	4.32 (.849)	4.25 (.880)	10.976	2	.004*
<b>Rel. Maint.</b>	4.14 (.931)	4.37 (.819)	4.37 (.794)	11.156	2	.004*
<b>Opp. Seeking</b>	3.61 (1.204)	3.75 (1.136)	3.95 (1.153)	13.550	2	.001*
<b>Conven.</b>	3.57 (1.143)	3.89 (1.038)	3.71 (1.219)	12.698	2	.002*
<b>Conver.</b>	3.41 (1.217)	3.68 (1.045)	3.50 (1.237)	4.610	2	.100
<b>Entert.</b>	3.16 (1.082)	3.09 (1.186)	3.64 (1.190)	40.474	2	<.0005*
<b>Insp.</b>	3.73 (1.116)	3.72 (1.124)	4.33 (.860)	54.934	2	<.0005*

\*Correlation is significant at  $p \leq .05$

Post-hoc tests using Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were then performed to show which of the SMPs the significant differences were between (Table 11). This was carried out with each of the 7 motives where significant differences were found between at least two SMPs. Making multiple comparisons increases the likelihood of declaring a result significant when it is not (a Type I error). Therefore, a Bonferroni-adjusted alpha level of .017 (.05/3) was used. The difference scores were approximately symmetrically distributed, as assessed by a histogram with superimposed normal curve. Data are medians unless otherwise stated.

Post hoc analysis revealed statistically significant differences, in 'Brand Affiliation', in favour of Instagram ( $Mdn= 4.00$ ) over Facebook ( $Mdn=4.00$ ) ( $\chi^2=-4.66$ ;  $p<.0005$ ), ranking more positively for Instagram 49 times compared to Facebook's 6 times. Instagram was also statistically significantly more positive for 'Brand Affiliation' than Twitter ( $Mdn= 4.00$ ) ( $\chi^2=-4.90$ ;  $p<.0005$ ); Instagram having

53 more positive ranks, while Twitter had 8 more positive ranks. Differences between Facebook and Twitter were not statistically significant ( $z=-.38, p<.707$ ).

For 'Information', statistically significant differences were revealed in favour of Twitter ( $Mdn=4.00$ ) over Facebook ( $Mdn=4.00$ ) ( $z=-3.20, p=.001$ ). Twitter had 43 positive ranks compared to Facebook's 19. Differences were statistically significant for Instagram ( $Mdn=4.00$ ) over Facebook ( $z=-2.45; p=.014$ ); Instagram having 20 positive ranks compared to Facebook's 38. Differences in favour of Twitter over Instagram were not significant ( $z=-.89, p=.375$ ).

'Relationship Maintenance' ranked statistically significantly higher for Twitter ( $Mdn=5.00$ ) than Facebook ( $Mdn=4.00$ ) ( $z=-3.07, p=.002$ ). Twitter had 35 positive ranks compared to Facebook's 17. Instagram ( $Mdn=4.00$ ), which had 35 more positive ranks than Facebook's 13 more positive ranks, was ranked statistically significantly higher than Facebook ( $z=-3.13, p=.002$ ). However, Instagram's higher ranking than Twitter was not statistically significant ( $z=-.30, p=.764$ ).

'Opportunity Seeking' was statistically significantly higher for Instagram ( $Mdn=4.00$ ) than Facebook ( $Mdn=4.00$ ) ( $z=-3.44, p=.001$ ). Instagram ranked more positively 47 times, while Facebook did 18 times. Differences in favour of Twitter ( $Mdn=4.00$ ) over Facebook ( $z=-1.37, p=.170$ ), and Instagram over Twitter ( $z=-2.23, p=.026$ ), were not statistically significant.

Post hoc analysis revealed 'Convenience' was statistically significantly higher for Twitter ( $Mdn=4.00$ ) than Facebook ( $Mdn=4.00$ ) ( $z=-3.20, p=.001$ ). Twitter had 46 positive ranks, while Facebook had 20. 'Convenience' was higher for Instagram ( $Mdn=4.00$ ) than Facebook ( $z=-1.58, p=.113$ ), and for Twitter than Instagram ( $z=-1.59, p=.112$ ), but not statistically significant in either case.

Statistically significant differences in ‘Entertainment’ were found in favour of Instagram ( $Mdn= 4.00$ ) over Facebook ( $Mdn= 3.00$ ) ( $z=-4.51, p<.0005$ ). Instagram had 59 positive ranks compared with Facebook’s 16. ‘Entertainment’ was also statistically significantly higher for Instagram than Twitter ( $Mdn= 3.00$ ) ( $z=-4.91, p<.0005$ ). Instagram had the large number of 61 positive rankings, while Instagram had 16 more positive ranks. While ‘Entertainment’ ranked higher for Facebook than Twitter, this difference was not statistically significant ( $z=-.86, p=.390$ ).

Regarding ‘Inspiration’, statistically significant differences were revealed in favour of Instagram ( $Mdn= 4.50$ ) over Facebook ( $Mdn= 4.00$ ) ( $z=-5.97, p<.0005$ ). Higher ‘Inspiration’ motivation rankings were given for Instagram 56 times, while only 6 times for Facebook. Similarly, statistically significant differences were revealed in favour of Instagram over Twitter ( $Mdn= 4.00$ ) ( $z=-5.77, p<.0005$ ). More positive ranks were given 59 times in relation to Instagram, versus 12 times regarding Twitter. ‘Inspiration’ ranked higher for Facebook than Twitter, but not significantly ( $z=-.06, p=.949$ ).

**Table 11: Individual SMP Significance Levels**

**(N148)**

Variables/ Motivation	Facebook vs Twitter <i>z (p-values)</i>	Facebook vs Instagram <i>z (p-values)</i>	Twitter vs Instagram <i>z (p-values)</i>
<b>Brand Aff.</b>	-0.38 (.707)	-4.66 (<.0005*)	-4.90 (<.0005*)
<b>Info.</b>	-3.20 (.001*)	-2.45 (.014*)	-.89 (.375)
<b>Rel. Maint.</b>	-3.07 (.002*)	-3.13 (.002*)	-.30 (.764)
<b>Opp. Seeking</b>	-1.37 (.170)	-3.44 (.001*)	-2.23 (.026)
<b>Conven.</b>	-3.20 (.001*)	-1.58 (.113)	-1.59 (.112)
<b>Entert.</b>	-.86 (.390)	-4.51 (<.0005*)	-4.91 (<.0005*)
<b>Insp.</b>	-.06 (.949)	-5.97 (<.0005*)	-5.77 (<.0005*)

\*Correlation is significant at Bonferroni-adjusted alpha level of .017 (0.05/3)

To avoid excessive repetition, in terms of SMPs’ users’ brand following behaviours, the meaning of these correlations, significant differences across the SMPs, are discussed in the ‘Discussions and Implications’ chapter.

**RO6: To examine whether more prominent motivations for following brands on and across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram align with the primary motives each SMP associates itself with.**

The primary motivations each SMP associates itself with, and how these SMPs communicate these motives, are shown in Table 12. These motivations were ‘Information’, and ‘Entertainment’ for Twitter; ‘Relationship Maintenance’ for Facebook; and ‘Inspiration’ for Instagram.

*Table 12: Motivations each SMP Primarily Associates with Itself*

SMP	Communication Message(s) of the SMPs	Related Brand-Following Motivation(s) in SM Literature
Twitter	“It's what's happening. From breaking news and entertainment to sports and politics [...]” (Twitter, 2020).	Information, Entertainment
Facebook	“Connect with friends, family and other people [...]” and “Stay connected with your community and your customers [...]” (Facebook, 2020).	Relationship Maintenance
Instagram	“Instagram is a place where visual expression from business inspires visible action from people [...] Inspire action.” (Instagram, 2020).	Inspiration

On Facebook, the most prominent motive was ‘Relationship Maintenance’. However, this is not specific to the platform, as the motive had highest mean on each of the SMPs (Instagram:  $M = 4.37, SD = 0.79$ ), (Twitter:  $M = 4.37, SD = 0.82$ ), (Facebook:  $M = 4.14, SD = 0.93$ ). Moreover, this motive was significantly higher in favour of both Twitter over Facebook ( $\chi = -3.07, p=.002$ ) and Instagram over Facebook ( $\chi = -3.13, p=.002$ ). Therefore, even for Facebook users ‘Relationship Maintenance’ is the main motivation for following brands on the platform, the motive is not distinctively associated with Facebook.

Remarkably, amongst these SMPs, ‘Information’ motive had the highest mean on Twitter (Twitter:  $M = 4.32$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ), (Instagram:  $M = 4.25$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ), (Facebook:  $M = 4.05$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ), where it was ranked as the second most prominent motive. ‘Information’s was significantly more prominent for Twitter than Facebook ( $z = -3.20$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), but the difference was not significant when compared with Instagram ( $z = -0.89$ ,  $p = 0.375$ ). Therefore, although a relatively stronger association can be suggested in favour of Twitter, ‘Information’ was not an exclusively distinct motive for Twitter for following brands across the platforms.

For ‘Entertainment’ motive, the lowest mean regarding Twitter (Instagram:  $M = 3.64$ ,  $SD = 1.19$ ) (Facebook:  $M = 3.16$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ), (Twitter:  $M = 3.09$ ,  $SD = 1.18$ ). Twitter’s median difference was significantly lower than Instagram’ ( $z = -4.91$ ,  $p < .0005$ ), but the difference between Twitter and Facebook was not significant ( $z = -.86$ ,  $p = 0.390$ ). Thus, the motive was not distinct in favour of Twitter.

The most distinct alignment, between the motivation each SMP owns, and the motives for following brands on the SMPs, was on Instagram. The platform’s communication focuses on the ‘Inspiration’ motive. Although, it was the third most prominent motive for following brands on the platform, Instagram ( $M = 4.33$ ;  $SD = 0.86$ ), had the highest mean for ‘Inspiration’ motive over Facebook ( $M = 3.73$ ;  $SD = 1.11$ ) and Twitter ( $M = 3.72$ ;  $SD = 1.12$ ). ‘Inspiration’ was statically significant in favour of Instagram over both Facebook ( $z = -5.97$ ,  $p < .0005$ ) and Twitter ( $z = -5.77$ ,  $p < .0005$ ). Therefore, compared to the other two SMPs, the stronger alignment can be suggested.

## Chapter 5: Discussions and Implications

Prior SM studies explored motives for brand-related interactions on SM from the users' perspective, by employing U&G theory. However, efforts to investigate possible differentiations of brand-following motivations across different SMPs remain rare. This study aimed to, firstly, find motivations, for following brands on SM, through reviewing the current literature, and secondly, to weight these motivations' prominence on three of today's most popular SMPs: Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Thirdly, the prominence of motivations was compared across these three SMPs. While similarities were identified for some motives, H1 was retained as significant differences were observed between SMPs for the majority of motives included in this research. They are discussed below. As this discussion provides a comprehensive breakdown of the three platforms and ten motivations, in line with the findings possible implications are also recommended.

It is important to note that, the discussions below both considered each motivation's prominence for each individual SMP, and a comparative investigation of significant differences for each motivation across the platforms. While the first might be more relevant for brands which already utilise one or some of these SMPs, and are seeking insights to refine and enhance their communication strategies on one of these SMPs; the second may help marketers and advertisers to make more informed decisions when deciding which platform to use, how to segment them, and utilise them more effectively.

### Relationship Maintenance

Although there were significant differences in most motivations' prominence across the three SMPs, 'Relationship Maintenance' was ranked as the primary motive for following brands on all three SMPs. Previous research showed that, when people were asked about their reasons for following brands on SM, without specifying a

particular SMP, 'keeping up to date with the latest company products/services' was often stated as the primary motive (Sabanoglu 2020; Southern 2019). Given this fact, 'Relationship Maintenance' being the main motive on each individual SMP may be due to being a generic benefit for following brands on SM. As U&G theory suggests, media users are value-conscious and individuals' perceived benefits are the determinant of why and how people use a particular media and perform particular media related activities (e.g. following brands on SM) (Tang et al., 2019). 'Relationship Maintenance' may be considered the main perceived benefit of following brands across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

As mentioned before, unlike traditional advertising, by subscribing to brand pages on SMPs, people choose to receive messages from brands and interact with them voluntarily (Kwon et al., 2015); meaning brand followers are, not solely but mostly, those who are aware of the brand to some extent, and already show interest in the latest updates about the brand's products/services. Current marketing practises should also reflect this fact. For example, Lilly Pulitzer, an American fashion brand, first introduces its new product lines and big discount news on their Instagram page (The Innovation Group, 2018). Therefore, 'Relationship Maintenance' becomes a value for their followers, as U&G theory suggests that continuity of the user's behaviour is heavily based on this perceived value from a particular media.

On the other hand, this research found that users are significantly more driven by 'Relationship Maintenance' motive for following brand pages on Instagram and Twitter than they are on Facebook. But there was no significant difference between Instagram and Twitter. No research emerged from the literature review comparing motivations for following brands across these three SMPs. However, significant differences in favour of Instagram and Twitter aligns with previous findings on/about motivations for generic use of Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram (Pelletier

et al., 2020). A reason that brand followers are more motivated to maintain their connection with the brands on Instagram and Twitter than they are on Facebook, might be due to Facebook's decreasing use and popularity, compared to the other two SMPs (Kemp, 2019); as using a SMP less frequently would typically defeat the purpose of being updated about latest brand news.

## **Information**

'Information' had previously been found to be, a more distinct motive for using Twitter over Facebook, and Instagram (Pelletier et al., 2020). In the context of motivations for following brands, Twitter had the highest mean for 'Information' in this study. Although the motive's predominance was significantly in favour of Twitter over Facebook, and in favour of Instagram over Facebook, there was no significant difference between Instagram and Twitter. This would suggest that when users turn to SM to learn more about a brand/product/service they primarily prefer to follow brands on Twitter and Instagram.

It is important to note the difference between the 'Information' and 'Relationship Maintenance' motives, although they are interdependent to some extent. In this study, 'Information' motive refers to 'gaining general information, and learning more about brands, products, and services'. Therefore, when referring to the information related motivations, receiving 'the latest' news and updates about the products/services is not necessarily the main gratification sought. Instead, after hearing/seeing about a brand, users with information motive turn to SM, follow the brand's SM page, and seek to discover 'more information', both to shape an image about the brand and to consider its products/services (Ruehl and Ingenhoff, 2015). As these users may not typically have strong feelings about the brand yet, content that aids these new-comers to shape this image by communicating what the brand stands for, and what differentiates it etc., should be prioritised. Additionally, as people use SMPs to get product/service information more than they use brand

websites (Tsai and Men, 2013), brands should gratify their followers' information need by providing detailed information about their products/services on their SM pages.

### **Brand Affiliation**

'Brand Affiliation' was found to be one of the three most prominent motivations for following brands, on each SMP this research investigated. This result is consistent with the findings of prior SM studies, as 'brand usage/likeability' was identified as a distinct motive for following brands on SM (Kwon et al., 2015; Yilmaz and Enginkaya, 2015).

'Brand Affiliation' motive's prominence was significantly in favour of Instagram over Twitter and Facebook. There were no significant differences between Twitter and Facebook. Again, for 'Brand Affiliation' motive, Instagram's prominence may be due to its current popularity over Twitter and Facebook, as it is the most actively used of the three SMP in Turkey (Kemp, 2019). In this research, the motive was described as 'Because I like the brand, its products and/or services; I buy and/or like to buy from the brand; It reflects my lifestyle'. Thereby, people may prefer to follow the brands they use and/or like most on the SMP they use more actively.

In prior studies, 'Brand Affiliation' was found to be strongly correlated with brand identification, relationship continuance and recommendation intentions (Kwon et al., 2015). Therefore, brand should also utilise SMPs to build and reinforce affiliation with their current and potential followers. To do so, however, they first need to identify what made their brand 'likeable' (e.g. particular ads, brand image, specific products/services, designs etc.) and emphasise these in their SM communication on these SMPs.

## Opportunity Seeking

‘Opportunity Seeking’ was ranked in the same position (5<sup>th</sup>) on all three SMPs. Comparing ‘Opportunity Seeking’s’ *M* across platforms, its only significant change was in favour of Instagram over Facebook. Differences between Twitter and Facebook, and between Instagram and Twitter, were not statistically significant; meaning when following brands, users expect them to offer a variety of sales promotions (e.g. contests, sweepstakes, discounts) almost equally on each SMP.

‘Opportunity Seeking’s’ ranking (5<sup>th</sup>) on each SMP in this research, initially appears inconsistent with prior study where ‘Opportunity Seeking’, also labelled ‘Incentive Seeking’, was the main motivation for interacting with, and following brand pages on Twitter (Kwon et al., 2015). However, Kwon et al.’s (2015) study’s sample was US college students aged 18-38 (age *M* = 21). Notably, this study’s findings suggest that the average mean across the three SMPs for ‘Opportunity Seeking’ motive was higher for 18- to 24-years-olds (*M* = 4.04; *SD* = 1.13), compared to participants in 25- to 34- age-group (*M* = 3.60; *SD* = 1.15) and 35- to 44-age-group (35-44: *M* = 3.77; *SD* = 1.09). This could suggest that the difference may be linked to the sample’s age. Younger SM users may be more motivated by ‘Opportunity Seeking’ (e.g. benefiting from rewards and promotions the brand offers), as they tend to have less disposable income (OECD, 2016). Given the higher percentage of younger (18-24-years) users on Instagram compare to Twitter and Facebook, the significant prominence of the Opportunity Seeking’ motive on Instagram over the other two SMPs found in this research also make sense.

Strategically, when targeting their younger followers, advertisers should consider adopting more incentive-centred campaigns (e.g. discounts, sweepstakes) for their SM marketing strategies. However, this is not to say their strategies should be solely base on incentives. Although incentives are more important for the 18-24 age group, ‘Brand Affiliation’ (e.g. ‘liking the brand and identifying one’s lifestyle) is

still a more prominent motive for following brands for this age group. Therefore, when communicating to their younger followers, brands should reinforce their brand image, which originally made them “likeable”. The full copy of age and gender breakdown of motivations is shown in Appendices 2 and 3.

## **Convenience**

The ‘Convenience’ motive was found as one of the primary motives for brand-related SM use (Sung, Kim and Moon, 2010). The findings of this study also suggest that users follow brands on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram for the convenience it allows them in carrying out actions related to the brands (e.g. Transmitting complaints and/or suggestions, getting brand/product information, etc. is easier when I follow the brand.). The only significant difference was in favour of Twitter over Facebook; meaning convenience related motivations better gratify on Twitter. This might be due to the current trend that brands use Twitter for real-time customer service activities more often than they use Instagram and Facebook. Or they provide such services only on Twitter (Jackson, 2015).

On the other hand, ‘Convenience’s’ similar predominance on Instagram and Facebook, and on Twitter and Instagram, may be related to the rise of mobile devices, mobile application use and the internet-speed, as it is likely to be perceived as a given benefit or default expectation from all SMPs. Indeed, in the prior literature, ‘Convenience’ was conceptualised as a ‘usability attribute’ which leads users to a greater gratification from SMPs (Shao, 2009).

## **Inspiration**

‘Inspiration’ was identified as a statistically more prominent motive for Instagram over the other two SMPs. There were no significant differences between Twitter and Facebook. The distinct predominance of the ‘Inspiration’ motive on Instagram,

might be due to product features (e.g. image-dominated nature of the SMP, filters and image editing tools within the app etc.) that enable brands and users to consume/contribute/create visual, and aesthetic content on platform. In addition, Instagram's advertising's focus on its inspiration message may be another reason for this strong association with the motive.

'Inspiration' was even more prominent than the 'Information' motive on Instagram. This finding is remarkable as 'Information' is one of the most dominant motives for using SM (Heinonen, 2011), joining virtual communities (Dholakia et al., 2004), and following brands on SMPs (Tsai and Men, 2013; Ruehl and Ingenhoff, 2015). By following brands on Instagram, users do not only expect brands to be informative. They follow brands also to be inspired about lifestyle, fashion, food-drink, etc. Therefore, marketers should look for ways to convey brand-related informative messages in an inspirational context (e.g. Influencers, real-life examples, new and/or alternative usage forms and occasions of products/services to enhance users' current knowledge etc.). Given that the 'Inspiration' motive was ranked just behind 'Information' on Facebook, a similar argument could be valid for the platform.

While 'Inspiration' was been examined by previous SM research (Muntinga et al., 2011; PWC, 2018), it had not been examined as a separate motive for Twitter by those studies (Kwon et al., 2015). This study found that 'Inspiration' had a lower mean score compared to the majority of other motives on Twitter. As inspiration is often associated with visual codes (e.g. Fashion, design, food and drink etc.), this lower mean may be due to Twitter's text-dominated nature as a micro-blogging platform (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010), and the other two SMPs' emphasis on visual content.

## Conversation

Notably, of the three SMPs examined, despite Twitter having the highest mean, the prominence of the ‘Conversation’ motive did not change significantly in favour of any of the platforms. The motive also had a lower mean compared to the majority of other motivations (e.g. ‘Relationship Maintenance’, ‘Information’, ‘Brand Affiliation’, ‘Inspiration’, and ‘Convenience’) across all SMPs. In previous literature, conversation related gratifications including sub-motives such as “To talk with [...] brands or brand manager” were labelled as ‘Social-interaction Seeking’. Although this motive was not investigated in a comparative context by including Instagram, it was found to be a distinctive but less strong motive for following brands on Twitter and Facebook (Kwon et al., 2015; Ruehl and Ingenhoff’s 2015), which is consistent with the findings of this research.

## Entertainment

In this study, although ‘Entertainment’ was found as a relevant motive ( $M > 3.00$ ) for following brands on each of the SMPs, it was less prominent than the majority of motivations on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. The finding that SM users were less driven by the ‘Entertainment’ motive than ‘Information’, ‘Brand Affiliation’, and ‘Opportunity Seeking’ motives for following brands on SM was consistent with the previous literature (Ruehl and Ingenhoff’s, 2015; Yılmaz and Enginkaya, 2015).

A potential theory to explain the relatively lower mean for ‘Entertainment’ motive, might be that brand pages are not typically considered to be entertaining, as they may contain too much advertising and over-branding in brands’ current SM strategies and executions. Indeed, in prior SM literature, over-advertising and “boring content” were found to be the main reasons for unfollowing brands on SM. A brand-unfollower stated that “Toyota China updated only ads [...]. It annoys me.”. Another said, “I unfollow [...] because most of its updates are uninteresting

and boring.” (Tang et al., 2019, p.6). U&G theory/studies suggest that the continuity of a particular media behaviour is determined by the level and the continuity of gratification derived from a media-related activity (Palmgreen and Rayburn, 1982). As ‘Entertainment’ is one of the main motives to use SM (Dholakia et al., 2004), “boring” brand ads and brand-related content might be considered interruptive by users. Brands should find ways to gratify their followers’ need for entertainment when delivering their brand messages and ads on their SMP pages. Therefore, when building SM strategies, brands should pursue a balance between advertising to push/emphasise the brand and ‘content marketing’ which communicates a brand-related message in entertaining, interesting, and attractive ways without pushing the brand disproportionately.

On the other hand, this study’s findings suggest that brand followers are more motivated for ‘Entertainment’ on Instagram than they are on Twitter and Facebook, as the motive was significantly more prominent on Instagram. There were no significant differences between Twitter and Facebook. In other words, using U&G terminology, Instagram was the primary platform to gratify this motive when/by/for following brands. In Pelletier, Krallman, Adams, and Hancock’s (2020) study, which focused on multi-platform comparisons for motivations behind generic use of SM, ‘Entertainment’ was also identified as a significantly more prominent motive for Instagram over the other two SMPs. This significant differentiation in favour of Instagram may be due to Instagram’s strong associations with visual and hedonic attributes and gratifications over Twitter and Facebook (Pelletier et al., 2020). Therefore, for brands which prioritise entertainment in their communication strategies (e.g. due to the nature of their sector, brand character etc.) utilising Instagram primarily, but not solely, may be a fit.

## Integration and Social Interaction, and PI/Self-status Seeking

A notable commonality across the three SMPs was related to ‘Integration and Social Interaction’, and ‘PI/Self-status Seeking’ motivations. As shown in the ‘Results’ section, these two motives had the lowest mean scores across all platforms. Similar findings were found by Tsai and Men’s (2013) quantitative study on motivations for using brand pages on SM. Interestingly, these motives were found to be relevant in prior qualitative research, which conducted interviews to explore U&Gs for contributing to brand-related content, including following brands, on SM (Muntinga et al., 2011). In contrast, they were not found relevant in this study ( $M < 3$ ), although they did have higher standard deviations than most of the other motivations for each platform.

In this study’s questionnaire, these motives were described as ‘Because people I like and/or admire follow the brand’ (‘Integration and Social Interaction’), and ‘Because I want people to see and/or think that I use the brand’ (‘PI/Self-status Seeking’). Both motives imply that people follow brands in relation to what other people see/think/do. Thereby, in both this quantitative study and Tsai and Men’s (2013) quantitative surveys, participants may not have wished to directly admit this out of pride. Whereas in the in-depth interviews, as they talk more about the topic, these motives may have been unintentionally revealed.

Overall, digital transformation, and SM’s increasing popularity, has turned SMPs into key communication tools for brands. As the number of SMPs have increased, these platforms have continuously tried to differentiate themselves from each other, through advertising strategies, introducing different features, etc. Thus, this research explored the prominence of U&Gs of users’ brand-related activities on different SMPs, particularly for following brands. The findings provide insights for marketers and advertisers to enhance their brands’ communication’s relevancy and efficiency on SMPs.

## Limitations and Future Research

Although this study presents useful insights into users' motivations for following brands on SM, several limitations of the research were identified.

385 was deemed the ideal sample size. However, as predicted from the beginning, due to the time and resource constraints, alongside relatively exclusive criteria for participation, this number was not reached. There were 320 respondents, reduced to 148 participants after eligibility screening questions and data cleaning. This lower sample size is a limitation to generalise the findings for the population.

The questionnaire was translated from English to Turkish. As previously mentioned, the researcher's work-experience as an English-Turkish interpreter, for a news portal, enabled a high level of accuracy when translating the questionnaire. Nevertheless, another potential limitation is the possibility of subtle differences between linguistic versions.

In terms of the questionnaire's content/structure, one Likert-type scale item was asked per motivation per SMP. It would have been more thorough to ask several items per motivation per SMP, and then get an overall score motivation per SMP. Instead, the current approach was taken to prevent the questionnaire being too long which can increase the non-completion rate and can jeopardize the accuracy of the research (Bryman and Bell, 2015). However, it is recognised as a limitation.

Another potential limitation related to the questionnaire, was including the same Likert-type scales three times, each time in relation to a different SMP. This could cause respondent fatigue, where participants become tired of the survey task and the quality of their data begins to deteriorate (Lavrakas, 2008). An alternative would have been to use the same scale but split the scales by motivation, rather than

by SMP. This would have made shorter Likert-type scales, but more would be necessary (10 vs. 3), still risking respondent fatigue. Moreover, asking about the motivation directly in comparison on the different platforms may have encouraged people to rank the motivation differently on the different SMPs, to show a difference even where one was not strongly felt. Therefore, the questions' current form was selected but is recognised as a limitation.

Furthermore, not all sub-motivations explored by prior research were investigated. Attempting to include such a large number of sub-motivations would have drastically increased the number of items in the motivation scales. This would be particularly problematic, given the comparative nature of this research, as these questions are repeated for each SMP. Increasing the number of items would make the motivation questions too long. Therefore, it was strategically decided to only select some key motivations (this selection is detailed in the 'Literature Review' chapter). However, omitting some less prominent motivations / sub-motivations is recognised as a limitation. Future studies could only focus on sub-motivations across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram; and investigate their predominance on each SMP.

In line with a prior SM study (Yılmaz and Enginkaya, 2015), 'Because the brand reflects my lifestyle' statement was investigated as part of 'Brand Affiliation' motive. However, this description has also been discussed in relation to 'Personal Identity' motive (Muntinga et al., 2011). Future studies could consider investigating this description as a separate item in relation to 'Personal Identity' motive.

Due to the length of this dissertation, it was not possible to consider whether characteristics, such as gender or occupation, influenced motivations for following brand pages on the three SMPs. This could be an area of further research.

This research investigated the prominence of motivations on/across SMP(s). However, motivations, and the prominence of motives, may also change depending on the industry which the brand is from. Therefore, possible similarities and differences on/across different industries for following brands on SMPs could be explored by future studies. In addition, exploring motivations for other popular and/or emerging SMPs which brands utilise (e.g. LinkedIn, Pinterest, YouTube, TikTok, Snapchat etc.) in a comparative context could be considered in future studies.

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## List of Tables

Table 1: <i>Motivations for Following Brands on SMPs</i> .....	34
Table 2: <i>Sample Characteristics</i> .....	39
Table 3: <i>Breakdown of Data Sources</i> .....	42
Table 4: <i>Example of Motivation Assessment Question</i> .....	45
Table 5: <i>List of Acronyms for Motivations</i> .....	51
Table 6: <i>Weighting of Motivations for Following Brands on Twitter</i> .....	54
Table 7: <i>Weighting of Motivations for Following Brands on Facebook</i> .....	56
Table 8: <i>Weighting of Motivations for Following Brands on Instagram</i> .....	58
Table 9: <i>Weighting of Motivations for Following Brands across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram</i> .....	61
Table 10: <i>Overall Friedman ANOVA Results</i> .....	63
Table 11: <i>Individual SMP Significance Levels</i> .....	65
Table 12: <i>Motivations each SMP Primarily Associates with Itself</i> .....	66

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: What drives consumers to interact with brands through social media?

Table 3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

Component Names	Items	$\beta$	SE	T
Brand Affiliation AVE= .59 $\alpha$ = .848	I generally follow the brands on social media (SM) which are congruent with my life style. [BrAff1]	.768	.097	13.684
	On SM, I follow some brands that I fancy to buy in future, although I can't afford buying right now. [BrAff2]	.808	.102	14.678
	I follow the brands on SM which I consume and/or purchase often. [BrAff3]	.824	.09	15.184
	I think that my involvement with a brand on SM due to my satisfaction / dissatisfaction influences my friends in my social network. [BrAff4]	.67	.098	11.370
Opportunity Seeking AVE= .71 $\alpha$ = .868	Promotions and discount campaigns offered on SM by the brands generate financial benefits for the customers. [Opp1]	.831	.087	15.504
	By following the SM pages of brands, I can be informed of the discounts and promotions without visiting any stores and/or shops. [Opp2]	.802	.088	14.696
	Following brands on SM helps me to get information about new offerings. [Opp3]	.854	.082	16.148
Conversation AVE= .69 $\alpha$ = .869	To me, social media (SM) is a very convenient tool for the customers to transmit their complaints and suggestions to the brands. [Con1]	.836	.092	15.493
	I think it is possible to communicate instantly with brands on SM without any time and space boundaries. [Con2]	.849	.09	15.854
	Getting in to contact with companies is easy through SM because it's simple and free. [Con3]	.808	.092	14.73
Entertainment AVE= .60 $\alpha$ = .815	I like the influential and creative contents on SM which were generated by the brands. [Ent1]	.784	.097	13.926
	Games and / or videos created by brands, provides opportunity for me to have fun time over SM. [Ent2]	.703	.113	11.981
	I think the entertaining content provided by a brand on SM positively influences the customer attitudes and company's image. [Ent3]	.829	.089	15.065
Investigation AVE= .74 $\alpha$ = .852	I believe that the product related information which can be gathered from SM is relatively reliable. [Inv1]	.844	.084	15.675
	SM provides a reliable information resource by enabling a transparent integration between brands and consumers. [Inv2]	.88	.085	16.65

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## Appendix 2: The Age Breakdown of motivations across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram

Mean /Weighted Average = *M*; Standard Deviation = *SD*

Motivations	Weighted Averages across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram <i>M</i> ; <i>SD</i> ; Ranking	Twitter			Facebook			Instagram		
		<i>M</i> ; <i>SD</i> ; Ranking	<i>M</i> ; <i>SD</i> ; Ranking	<i>M</i> ; <i>SD</i> ; Ranking	<i>M</i> ; <i>SD</i> ; Ranking	<i>M</i> ; <i>SD</i> ; Ranking	<i>M</i> ; <i>SD</i> ; Ranking	<i>M</i> ; <i>SD</i> ; Ranking	<i>M</i> ; <i>SD</i> ; Ranking	<i>M</i> ; <i>SD</i> ; Ranking
	All Age Groups	18-24	25-34	35-44	18-24	25-34	35-44	18-24	25-34	35-44
Rel. Maint.	4.29	4.49	4.35	4.24	4.27	4.16	3.86	4.42	4.54	3.86
	0.84	0.96	0.65	0.93	1.02	0.74	1.14	0.88	0.52	0.97
	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	3
Info.	4.20	4.31	4.38	4.17	4.18	4.07	3.79	4.36	4.38	3.76
	0.90	1.05	0.65	0.91	1.10	0.78	1.13	0.97	0.65	1.04
	2	2	1	2	2	2	3	4	4	5
Brand Aff.	4.09	4.13	3.82	4.00	4.11	3.91	4.00	4.40	4.45	4.03
	0.89	1.00	0.89	0.74	1.10	0.90	0.64	0.98	0.57	1.03
	3	3	4	5	3	3	1	2	2	2
Opp. Seeking	3.77	4.04	3.45	4.07	3.87	3.51	3.45	4.22	3.84	3.79
	1.16	1.09	1.15	0.91	1.15	1.19	1.25	1.15	1.13	1.13
	4	5	7	3	5	6	4	5	5	4
Conven	3.72	3.64	3.97	4.07	3.53	3.69	3.34	3.76	3.78	3.45
	1.13	1.14	0.94	1.01	1.11	1.04	1.37	1.34	1.19	1.04
	5	6	3	4	6	4	7	6	6	7
Insp.	3.59	4.07	3.62	3.45	4.07	3.58	3.59	4.38	4.39	4.10
	1.03	1.20	1.02	1.10	1.22	1.05	0.97	1.04	0.67	0.92
	6	4	6	7	4	5	5	3	3	1
Conver.	3.53	3.56	3.65	3.93	3.33	3.42	3.52	3.53	3.54	3.34
	1.16	1.24	0.99	0.74	1.19	1.19	1.30	1.34	1.21	1.09
	7	7	5	6	8	7	6	8	7	8
Entert.	3.29	3.38	3.03	2.83	3.51	3.04	2.93	3.93	3.47	3.59
	1.15	1.27	1.13	1.08	1.09	1.08	0.91	1.14	1.22	1.07
	8	8	8	8	7	8	8	7	8	6
Integ. and Soc. Inter	2.73	2.98	2.38	2.83	2.80	2.46	2.38	3.24	2.93	2.72
	1.31	1.37	1.19	1.23	1.31	1.22	1.10	1.46	1.32	1.39
	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
Pers. Id./ Self-stat	2.34	2.62	2.07	2.41	2.42	2.15	2.38	2.73	2.34	2.28
	1.27	1.42	1.08	0.97	1.37	1.14	1.19	1.62	1.36	1.05
	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10

### Appendix 3: The Gender Breakdown of motivations across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram

Mean /Weighted Average =  $M$ ; Standard Deviation =  $SD$

Motivations	Weighted Averages across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram	Twitter		Facebook		Instagram	
	$M$ ; $SD$ ; Ranking	$M$ ; $SD$ ; Ranking	$M$ ; $SD$ ; Ranking	$M$ ; $SD$ ; Ranking	$M$ ; $SD$ ; Ranking	$M$ ; $SD$ ; Ranking	$M$ ; $SD$ ; Ranking
	All Genders	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Rel. Maint.	4.29	4.26	4.47	3.97	4.28	4.20	4.53
	0.84	0.98	0.61	1.03	0.80	0.98	0.52
	1	1	2	1	1	1	2
Info.	4.20	4.13	4.49	3.81	4.26	4.03	4.45
	0.90	1.01	0.61	1.10	0.78	1.06	0.61
	2	2	1	3	2	4	3
Brand Aff.	4.09	3.87	4.03	3.91	4.05	4.16	4.53
	0.89	0.94	0.88	0.91	0.95	1.01	0.57
	3	4	3	2	3	3	1
Opp. Seeking	3.77	3.73	3.77	3.59	3.63	3.79	4.09
	1.16	1.15	1.12	1.26	1.14	1.25	1.03
	4	5	6	5	5	5	5
Conven	3.72	3.94	3.85	3.54	3.60	3.61	3.79
	1.13	1.09	0.98	1.22	1.07	1.30	1.12
	5	3	5	6	6	7	6
Insp.	3.59	3.54	3.88	3.63	3.82	4.20	4.45
	1.03	1.19	1.03	1.19	1.03	1.01	0.67
	6	7	4	4	4	2	4
Conver.	3.53	3.87	3.50	3.50	3.33	3.41	3.58
	1.16	1.00	1.05	1.20	1.22	1.27	1.19
	7	6	7	7	7	8	8
Entert.	3.29	3.07	3.12	3.34	3.00	3.64	3.63
	1.15	1.21	1.15	1.09	1.04	1.22	1.16
	8	8	8	8	8	6	7
Integ. and Soc. Inter	2.73	2.76	2.55	2.53	2.56	3.07	2.91
	1.31	1.31	1.26	1.17	1.33	1.37	1.41
	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
Pers. Id./ Self-stat	2.34	2.46	2.17	2.39	2.18	2.73	2.19
	1.27	1.15	1.22	1.19	1.23	1.37	1.39
	10	10	10	10	10	10	10

## Appendix 4: Information Form and Consent Sheet

### PROJECT

This research aims to explore brand-related social media use. It is part of a master dissertation at Dublin Business School. The research aims to investigate whether the reasons to follow brands on social media change depending on the social media platform.

### PROJECT TITLE

Brand Followers' Motivations on Social Media:  
A Comparative Analysis Across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram

### TIME COMMITMENT

Completing the survey typically takes about 5 minutes.

### ELIGIBILITY

To participate in this survey, you must:

- 1) be a user of Twitter, Facebook, **and** Instagram
- 2) follow\* at least one brand on Twitter
- 3) follow\* at least one brand on Facebook
- 4) follow\* at least one brand Instagram
- 5) be within the ages 18- to 44-years-old

*Brands include any company from any sector. e.g. Fashion, Café/Restaurants/Bars, media, private schools, sports clubs, beauty/cosmetics, fashion, finance, food/drink, hotels, electronics and technology, automotive, etc.*

### CONFIDENTIALITY

Your answers will be anonymous and used only for data analysis and academic articles. You may withdraw the survey at any time. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Sedcan Altundal via [sedcan.altundal@gmail.com](mailto:sedcan.altundal@gmail.com)

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### CONSENT

By clicking on the 'Agree' button below you will confirm that you have read and understand information above, and you are willingly participating in this research study voluntarily (without coercion).

- Agree  
 Disagree
-

## Appendix 5: Questionnaire

Q1. Which age group are you in?

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45+

Q3. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to answer

Q2. Do you currently reside in Turkey?

- Yes
  - No
- 

Q4. Do you use Twitter, Facebook **and** Instagram?

- Yes
- No

Q5. Do you follow\* brands\*\* on social media?

*\*'Following' refers to subscribing to a page on social media. The term used to describe this action may change depending on the social media platform. To subscribe to a page, Instagram and Twitter have a 'follow' button; while Facebook has a 'like' button.*

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Q6. Do you follow at least one brand on Twitter?

*Brands include any company from any sector. e.g. Fashion, Café/ Restaurants/ Bars, media, private schools, sports clubs, beauty/ cosmetics, fashion, finance, food/ drink, hotels, electronics and technology, automotive, etc.*

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

*Please select how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement below.*

Q7. I follow brands **on Twitter...**

*Please select how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement below.*

Q7. I follow brands **on Twitter...**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
Because <b>I like the brand</b> , its products and/or services (e.g. I buy and/or like to buy from the brand, It reflects my lifestyle).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Because I want people to see and/or think that I use the brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Because people I like and/or admire follow the brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To learn more about the brand and/or products/services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To keep up to date with the latest company products and services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To benefit from rewards and promotions the brand offers ( <b>e.g. discounts, sweepstakes</b> )	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To do what I want with <b>less effort</b> . (e.g. Transmitting complaints and/or suggestions, getting brand/product information, etc. <b>is easier when I follow the brand.</b> )	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To communicate with the brand in a transparent environment (e.g. customer service/ask questions everyone can see).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Because the brand posts fun and/or interesting content that entertains me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To get inspiration about lifestyle, fashion, design, food, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q8. Do you follow at least one brand on Facebook?

*Brands include any company from any sector. e.g. Fashion, Café/ Restaurants/ Bars, media, private schools, sports clubs, beauty/ cosmetics, fashion, finance, food/ drink, hotels, electronics and technology, automotive, etc.*

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Please select how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement below.

Q9. I follow brands on Facebook...

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
Because <b>I like the brand</b> , its products and/or services (e.g. I buy and/or like to buy from the brand, It reflects my lifestyle).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Because I want people to see and/or think that I use the brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Because people I like and/or admire follow the brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To learn more about the brand and/or products/services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To keep up to date with the latest company products and services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To benefit from rewards and promotions the brand offers (e.g. <b>discounts, sweepstakes</b> )	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To do what I want with <b>less effort</b> . (e.g. Transmitting complaints and/or suggestions, getting brand/product information, etc. <b>is easier when I follow the brand.</b> )	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To communicate with the brand in a transparent environment (e.g. customer service/ask questions everyone can see).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Because the brand posts fun and/or interesting content that entertains me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To get inspiration about lifestyle, fashion, design, food, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q10. Do you follow at least one brand on Instagram?

*Brands include any company from any sector. e.g. Fashion, Café/ Restaurants/ Bars, media, private schools, sports clubs, beauty/ cosmetics, fashion, finance, food/ drink, hotels, electronics and technology, automotive, etc.*

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

*Please select how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement below.*

Q11. I follow brands on Instagram...

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
Because <b>I like the brand</b> , its products and/or services (e.g. I buy and/or like to buy from the brand, It reflects my lifestyle).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Because I want people to see and/or think that I use the brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Because people I like and/or admire follow the brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To learn more about the brand and/or products/services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To keep up to date with the latest company products and services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To benefit from rewards and promotions the brand offers ( <b>e.g. discounts, sweepstakes</b> )	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To do what I want with <b>less effort</b> . (e.g. Transmitting complaints and/or suggestions, getting brand/product information, etc. <b>is easier when I follow the brand.</b> )	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To communicate with the brand in a transparent environment (e.g. customer service/ask questions everyone can see).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Because the brand posts fun and/or interesting content that entertains me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To get inspiration about lifestyle, fashion, design, food, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How did you reach this survey?

- The researcher sent the survey link (WhatsApp, SM)
- A friend of mine sent the survey link (WhatsApp, SM)
- I saw the link on the researcher's SM pages
- Via Facebook groups
- Via LinkedIn groups
- Via Twitter groups
- Other (Please state)

## Appendix 6: Additional Questions for the Pilot-Survey

Q1. How long did it take you to complete this survey?

Q.2 Do you think there was any offensive and/or politically incorrect terms were used and/or questions were asked? If “Yes”, please explain.

Q.3. Was the questions and the terms used in this survey clear and easy enough to understand and answer? If “Yes”, please explain.

Thank you for your time and participation.