

**SOCIAL MEDIA BRAND STRATEGY AND MARKETING
PERFORMANCE OF TELECOMMUNICATION FIRMS IN KENYA**

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been submitted for any degree in this or any other University.

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This research project has been submitted for Examination with my approval as the University supervisor.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to God Almighty my creator, my strong pillar, my source of inspiration, wisdom, knowledge and understanding. He has been my source of strength throughout this program. I also dedicate this work to my Wife Doris Luseka who has encouraged me all the way and whose encouragement has ensured I finished what I started. To my daughter Joey who has had to endure my absence and lack of play time as I pursued this quest. And to you my family in general for all the support throughout my academic life. God bless you.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

CA	-	Communication Authority
CVL	-	Customer Lifetime Value
DIT	-	Diffusion of Innovation
Ewom	-	Electronic Word of Mouth
RBV	-	Resource-Based view
SCA	-	Sustained competitive advantage
TAM	-	Technology Acceptance Model

ABSTRACT

In conducting this research, the main motivation was to find out how marketers can use the increasing popularity of social media to enhance marketing performance. The competition level in the Kenyan telecommunication sector has been so stiff in the last decade to the extent that some firms such as YU and previous owners Airtel and Telkom Kenya have exited the Kenyan market due to the high level of competition. This therefore calls for very strategic marketing programs that will help firms stay ahead of the competition while realizing their marketing objectives. The research is a descriptive survey design as the study is intended to describe the use of social media as a branding tool among the telecommunication firms in Kenya. The demographic information considered in this study included the length of service with the firms, number of employees and duration of firm operation. The findings were that 50% of the respondents had worked for the firms over 10 years and 90% over 5 years. This gives a good indication that they are well versed with the industry given the length of service. The result on number of employees show that 40% of firms employ over 500 employees and 30% employ between 100 and 499 employees. 20% of the firms sampled had over 1000 employees. We therefore conclude that a firm employing more than 100 employees can be considered a large firm. With regard to the length of their operations, all the firms sampled had operated for more than 10 years and from this 40% had operated for more than 20 years. Consequently, by the fact that the firm had operated for over ten years and with the social media usage over the last ten years, they will have adopted the social media as a marketing strategy over the period and also because they are major the facilitators of the use of social media in Kenya, they are better placed to understand its influence. The study found that the majority of the respondent believed that Twitter and youtube as social media platforms are popular among the customers based on their traffic and therefore influencing firms brand image. An effective brand strategy through the use of social media and proper marketing tools is a key for the functioning of the organization. From the findings, it was established that most of the respondent believed on the Twitter and Youtube as social media platforms popular among the customers. Therefore, the firms should use those social media effectively and aim to deliver their services to meet the expected demand of the customers and improve their marketing performance. The findings of the study should be read subject to the following limitations. First, the results represent a cross-sectional position in time and do not capture the ability of some of the participants to be motivated by individual interests as is possible with qualitative methods. The study found out that there is a tight relationship between social media brand strategy and marketing performance. Hence, it is recommended that the telecommunication firms should adopt the social media brand strategy and marketing performance. The study established that the Twitter and you tube as social media platforms popular among the customers. Therefore, the management of the firm should use those media effectively to enhance marketing performance. The study found out that the telecommunication firms have adopted branding strategies in social media which have resulted in improved marketing performance

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Over the last decade, social media platforms have become a principal in digital communication avenue through which customers learn about them and split information. This has become a dominant channel of marketing since over 40% of the world populations are online (ICT, 2014). Over half of the online users use two or more social networking spots with sites like Facebook and Google+ being frequently used to steer information on the Web in the account instead of traditional search engines. This means that the utilization of social media as a marketing tool will in future become an avenue through which marketing function will be won or lost and with near 90% diffusion of mobile-cellular phones internationally, social media will expand the usage at all period and locations due to the ease of accessibility (Neff, 2014). By using the social media, marketers can work together in two-way communications with the existing and potential clients and in the process receive consumer feedback faster than through the use of traditional communication channels. The use of social media also facilitates networking, brand appointments and information distribution among users, since regarding Facebook, the standard customer has 130 friends on the social network and as customers receive referrals from people they know, they are likely to like a product or service at a 15% higher rate than when they find out in relation to it through other ways.

The study will be anchored on the Technology Acceptance Theory (TAM) as advanced by Davis (1989) and the Resource Based Theory (Barney, 1991). The technology acceptance model (TAM) is of the view that external variables such as the development process, system characteristics and training affect the intention of technology by a user and this decision is intervened by professed effectiveness and ease of use. Also, the TAM, supposed

effectiveness of technology is as well affected by the relieve of utilization since, other things being equal, the easier the system is to use, and the more valuable it can be. The resource-based view of the firm (RBV) presents a structure for describing the foundation of a company's competitive benefit and performance (Barney 2011). They argue that internal aspects of the organization, namely, its resources and capabilities, are the ones that determined its profits and overall performance.

Due to the popularity of social media because of its associated benefits, marketers are becoming accustomed in their plans to attain the increasing networked customers, and therefore are rivalling for consumers' social media interest to coerce customer commitment. Consequently, to capitalize on the interactive as well as participation proportions of social media, marketers have transformed their marketing goals with a focus on structuring a pleasing consumer-brand affiliation via social media interface. Regardless of its appeal, Fournier and Avery (2011) have gone ahead to warn brands to be wary of social media involvement because constructing brand relations through social media might be difficult than merely cheering more communications. Different brands should employ various social media strategies to their customers and more so different market segment because different customer market will appeal to the social media (Gale, 2013). Hence social media affords organizations to have chances to move relationships with their clients from dialog to trialogue, in which customers not only connect with the firm but among themselves in a meaningful way (Hlavinka & Sullivan, 2011)

In Kenya, the Communication Authority (CA, 2016) points out that there are over 22 million active internet users who can subscribe to the various forms of social media platforms. In the same annual report by CA, the mobile penetration rate is over 90% with mobile subscriptions reaching 39.7 million up from 38.3 million subscriptions recorded in the year 2015. With the

over 22 million Kenyans that are connected to the internet, it shows that over 50% of the Kenyan population is online and therefore a potential market of any brand. The telecommunication firms in Kenya have increased in both the number and also their coverage and coupled with the growth in customer numbers that are connected to the internet; it becomes imperative that one way to increase their market base is to develop brand awareness through the utilization of social media. For the telecommunication firms in Kenya, the social media not only serves as a medium to recruit new customers but also helps to maintain client relationship, customer service, buyer investigate, sales promotion delivery channel and trademark (Schmitt, 2012).

1.1.1 Brand Strategy

Brand strategy refers to the mix and matches that firms use to make their products and services visible and present it to the world (Laforet & Saunders, 2009). Therefore, a corporate brand represents a relationship between an organization and its customers as well as to its employees, through its product and service offering. The business name, therefore, is a precious asset which combines the dream, core values, image and events of the company. If well taken care of, will increase its productivity and sales, and be in a point to develop an unusual market pose that stands on a well-run advertising campaign following a successful corporate branding plan (Aaker, 2004). Therefore, one of the critical decisions that need to be considered by a firm is how to come up with an appropriate corporate branding plan and continuously evaluate whether the selected projects adequately meets the proposed result or not.

According to Balmer (2014), an organizations' corporate brand appeals not only to customer-based images of the business but to the position that the teams hold from the eyes of all other stakeholders to the firm that includes employees, investors, consumers, shareholder, partners,

special interests and local communities. According to Hatch and Schultz, (2010) argued that corporate branding brings the capability to propagate the vision and culture of an organization, as one form of marketing to commercialization. The social media has been enchanting branding to latest heights because of quicker use and spin of information. The social media can provide an avenue through which brand strategies are used to link the gap between what the marketer wishes to say and what the customer needs to hear. Indeed, MacInnis, Moorman, and Jaworski, (2011) point that brand marketers have a high rank of concern in social media because of their significance to advertising results and their cost effectiveness as compared to the traditional marketing channels.

1.1.2 Social Media

Various definitions of social media have been advanced. Miletsky (2008) define social media as a broad term that describes web 2.0 applications that are specifically designed to allow users to interact and socialize with others. Strauss and Frost, (2009) opine that social media online outfit and policies that permit internet customers to team up on substance, share imminent experiences, and link for business or pleasure or as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content”. The term Web 2.0 has been used since 2005 when it was first coined by O’Reilly (2005) to refer to a collection of open-source, user-controlled online and interactive applications that expand the existing experiences, knowledge and market power of the users as participants in business and social processes. Thus, social media permits individuals and organizations to participate in social interactions, in a manner and on a scale that was not likely before (Fischer & Reuber, 2011).

Social media can participate in a vital responsibility and contain a noticeable impact on brand management for service in the organization, as confirmed by the recent social media

procedures with service names. Almost all leading brands have an active social media interaction with their stakeholders. Social media has been used to manage volatile customer reaction to organization activities alleged as unenthusiastic and therefore endangering the service brand's reputational capital. The shift towards social media, in the last decade, for advertising can be attributed to the declining response rate in the conventional online marketing strategies, such as the use of banners and email advertising due to the disinterest spam, the rising of online population that add to social media charisma, increased customer preference because people tend to trust their friends and all the demographic shifts whereby young persons, have stirred online and the use of local media guide has reduced . Also, the use of the social media for branding is relatively small in comparison to the tradition channels such as a television campaign (Sigala & Marinidis, 2009).

Marketers are currently using many forms of social media platforms. As Farshid et al. (2011) it is for the brand managers to gather a thorough understanding of the different types of social media and the particular channel inside each kind to skill the most efficient social media plan for their trademark. The common forms of social media include blogs that are web sites sustained and written by persons, but hosted and precisely possessed by a company that offers the way to the internet space and a substance management system. Video-Sharing Websites permit the consumer to watch and share videos with the unregistered customers only allowed to watch videos previously placed to the site, while registered users are authorized to upload videos and comment on other users' videos. The common form of video-sharing website is YouTube. By 2014, there were over 1.2 trillion videos viewed on YouTube (Szeto & Cheng, 2016). Other types of social media platforms include social networking sites that include Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn and Plaxo that mainly aim expert and company networking (Chiang, Suen & Hsiao, 2013).

1.1.3 Marketing Performance

A firm marketing performance is as a result of its operational performance which refers to the accomplishment of objectives inside various value-chain movement areas of the organization that consequently lead to organizational performance. A firms' corporate performance is measured by the economic results which arise from the interaction among a group's trait, actions, and surroundings (Combs, Crook, and Shook 2015). The marketing performance of a firm is determined by the marketing resources, plans, and actions that become apparent in the product marketplace in companies' recognized marketing agenda (Rust et al. 2004), which indicates the primary phase of the operational routine results of firms' value chain actions linked with marketing. Only when consumers in the product marketplace are showed to firms' strategic marketing decisions and the use of marketing program-related possessions to ratify these choices can the organization begin to recognize its marketing program value (Ray, Barney & Muhanna 2008).

According to Katsikeas, Morgan, Leonidou and Hult (2016) while citing various authorities highlight that a firms marketing performance can be measured from different marketing function. They identify six performance measures that will form the essential marketing function. The ability of a marketing team to influence customer mindset outcomes; such as customer perception and attitudes concerning the firm brand equity and customer level of satisfaction will form an essential marketing performance. Ray, Barney, and Muhanna (2014) also indicate that the marketing performance should include its ability to influence customer-level performance outcomes that measure economic performance for the firm regarding individual customer or group of clients profitability and customer lifetime value (CVL). The performance of a product in the market place will also determine a marketing

performance. This function is measured by the unit sales and increase in the firms' market share.

Chiang, Suen, and Hsiao (2013) also suggest that marketing performance should be measured by accounting performance outcomes reported in a company's financial statements and reports. These financial measures include profitability and return on investments. The performance of the firm in the financial market should also determine the marketing performance of the marketing department. This will include the financial instruments, such as shares and debt securities, fulfilment in the financial market.

1.1.4 Telecommunication Firms in Kenya

The mobile phone industry in Kenya was transformed by the enactment of the Kenya communications act in 1998. As a result, the Communications Authority of Kenya was established in February 1999. Its purpose is to license and standardize telecommunications, radio communication, and postal services in Kenya. The business has experienced an extensive development in the number of subscribers as well as the geographic extension of cellular mobile services in the country (ca.go.ke). Since inception, mobile penetration in Kenya has developed dramatically and stood at 82.6% as at December 2016 (CA quarterly sector statistical report October-December 2016 Pg. 6). Much of the growth has come from the development of a single company Safaricom, which began as part of the state owned telecommunications monopoly Telkom Kenya but was partially privatized in 1997 and became a public company in 2002 (World Development indicators. The World Bank Group, 2009).

Kenya had over 35.6 million subscribers as at 31st December 2016, with Safaricom enjoying 67.4% market share, followed by Airtel Networks Kenya Limited's 22.6%, while Telkom Kenya, under the brand name Orange, and who formerly gained entry into the market with

CDMA technology, but later adopted the GSM technology due to changing technology and market demand, share stood at 10%. Econet Wireless, formerly owner of the brand name Yu, and who was the last GSM entrant exited the market after being bought by both Safaricom and Airtel in 2014 (CA quarterly sector statistical report October-December 2016 Pg. 8) Yu was operating under the umbrella of Essar Group (CAK report, September-December 2016 Pg. 10).

1.2 Research Problem

In the preceding decade, the development of the internet has not only presented customers many new opportunities but also firms in the marketing of their products. The internet provides information and communication opportunities without boundaries in that one can his/her feelings and thoughts through social media without incurring significant cost. The growth of the social media has created opportunities for business entities by providing them with marketing opportunities, and as such, firms are increasingly capitalizing on social media to be the ingredient of their marketing and brand structuring activities (Gallaughier & Ransbotham, 2010). Social media has the potential to provide marketers with an opportunity to link with clients using a media channel that has a greater reach. Sashi (2012) assert that through the use of social media, companies can develop relations with the existing customers as well as new ones through its capacity to recognize issues and develop solutions for them.

The competition level in the Kenyan telecommunication sector has been so stiff in the last decade to the extent that some firms such as YU and previous owners Airtel and Telkom Kenya have exited the Kenyan market due to the high level of competition. The customer base with mobile phones has also increased to close to 30M with 90% of this group having access to the smart phones (CAK, 2016). At the same time, the mobile phone companies are also serving a customer base that is more enlightened, and that will demand high-quality

service as opposed to the last five year. Indeed, according to the CAK annual report (2016), close to 75% of the mobile subscribers are the youth who have smart phones and can access the internet. This market segment forms a large proportion of the Kenyan population and with their accessibility to the social media; they afford firms brand building opportunities to grow. This is because social media offer opportunities to bond with clients through richer media with a superior reach compared to the traditional forms of media. Hence, it will be necessary to seek and establish how brand strategies in social media influence their marketing performance.

Several studies have been carried out to establish the role of social media in brand strategies. Fanion (2011) sought to determine whether social media has associated benefits to large companies and found that since a large number of people are previously visiting social media, a brand's name presence all over mobile networks can assist to inform people about it and become known for the organization, developing brand consciousness. Michaelidou, Siamagka, and Christodoulides (2014) in a researched on the usage, barriers, and measurement of social media marketing among French telecommunication firms in which their findings were that the social media could be a functional equipment for communicating with the previous customers, recognizing and getting new clients, and structuring relations and trust. However the two international studies have not linked the adoption of social media brand strategy and marketing performance which the present study will endeavour to fulfil.

Locally, Awino (2013) researched on an evaluation of service branding plans adopted by Airtel Kenya limited. He found that the most important factors for the choice of mobile firm branding strategy were allied to the associations, competition, nature of the product, and company resources. Ali (2014) researched on corporate brand equity and firm performance in the pharmaceutical industry in Kenya and found that the firm's corporate reputation used to

communicate with stakeholders has a positive effect on the brand image setting regarding product differentiation. Ndila (2016) researched on the factors influencing branding strategy among commercial banks in Kenya. She found that an associative relationship between the brand association, competition, and branding strategy was the most vital part according to the findings of this research. Kamiti (2015) investigated the influence of branding of Equity bank on its performance. The findings were that consumers are attracted to a brand that has a national appeal and can be trusted to meet the financial challenges that come from economic downturn. Locally, while studies on brand strategy have been undertaken, adoption of social media branding by the telecommunication firms in an emergent economy as Kenya. The use of traditional media is currently being overtaken by its effectiveness by the use of social media. Consequently, there is need to lack of study on the nexus between social media advertising and marketing performance leads to the following question; How do brand strategies in social media influence marketing performance of telecom companies in Kenya?

1.3 Research Objective

The objectives of the study was

- i. To evaluate the extent of usage of social media brand marketing by marketers by the telecommunication firms in Kenya;
- ii. To determine the influence of social media brand strategy on marketing performance of telecommunication firms in Kenya.

1.4 Value of the Study

This study is of benefit to the management and players in the Kenyan telecommunication industry as the findings on how their brand strategies enhance marketing performance through the use of the social media will be discussed, and suggestions on how best the same

will be improved and considered. By identifying the various social media platforms at their disposal and the market segments that each appeals most to, managers will have the opportunity to individually develop targeted marketing strategies on the target customers and which will be expected to respond appropriately to the marketing strategy.

The study is timely in the sense that it happens when there is an increase in the number of telecommunication firms in the country, and there is the need for effective regulatory framework that will need to be developed to guide and manage the industry to develop appropriate incentives that will guide the industry players in achieving their objectives. Hence, the study will be able to provide policy guidance on how brand strategies can be developed through the use of social media.

To the academicians, the study will be able to bring in the new perspective on the link between social media and the firms marketing function. Adoption of appropriate marketing strategy has been shown to improve the overall organizational performance, and there is need to delve further into how the company's operational performance through the marketing function is going to be enhanced during the process of utilizing the social media. Also, the study will shape a basis for further research in the area.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The section presents information from publications on topics related to the research problem. It observes what various scholars and authors have said about the concept of brand extension strategies. The chapter consists of the theoretical foundation of brand strategies and the role of social media in enhancing the organizational brand. The section covers, the theories of the study, and the factors influencing branding strategy. Further, the factors that determine the use of social media by firms are discussed.

2.2 Theories Underlying the Study

The adoption of social media in the marketing function can be looked at from three general views. The ideas that support the adoption of technology have dominantly come to explain why firms will employ technology to propagate their strategies. Also, the utilization of the internal resources as advocated by the resource based view has also come out to explain influence a firm brand on its performance. Last, the theory of reasoned action is adapted to account for the effect of social media on companies marketing performance.

2.2.1 Theories of Adoption of Technology

Over time, the user acceptance of technology has popularly been explained using the Technology Acceptance Model as well as the Diffusion of Technology model. The technology acceptance model (TAM) postulates that external variables such as the development process, system characteristics and training affect the intention of technology by a user and this decision is intervened by professed effectiveness and ease of use (Davis, 1989). Also, the TAM, supposed effectiveness of technology is as well affected by the relieve

of utilization since, other things being equal, the easier the system is to use, and the more valuable it can be. TAM is theorized to illustrate the determinants of user acceptance of a broad range of end-user computing technologies. Moreover, TAM is not only parsimonious but also can present empirical support to clarify determinants of technology usage (Agarwal & Prasad, 2009). They further noted the need for TAM to be included with other IT approaches that incorporate decision-makers' social and idiosyncratic characteristics. It argues that customer's acceptance of technology is established by the purpose to use, which in turn is determined by the user's attitude and faith concerning the system.

Across different experiential investigation of TAM, supposed effectiveness has always resulted in a prime determinant of handling intentions, with uniform deterioration coefficients typically around 0.6 (Venkatesh & Davis, 2002). Since perceived value is such a fundamental driver of usage plans, it is vital to recognize the determinants of this make and how their control transforms over time with rising knowledge employing the system. It is also supposed to ease the usage, TAM's other direct determinant of intention has revealed a less steady impact on plan across studies. Davis also described perceived effectiveness as the level to which an individual trust that by accurate information systems would improve competitiveness in the organization. Conservativeness in communication can, therefore, be broken by the TAM model as one of the factors for technology use is perceived performance (Hartwick & Barki, 1994).

Rogers (2003) while advancing the Diffusion of Innovation Theory declared that there are four key fundamentals in the diffusion procedure namely; the innovation, the means of communication through which the innovation is diffused, time, and the social system. The theory approach has its primary focus on how potential adopters perceive a change regarding relative advantage/disadvantage; hence some of the factors of the DOI resources likely can

produce SCA. Barney and Hesterly (2012) highlight that plan help form a framework and comparative advantage (Li & Atuagene-Gima, 2011). Different features of the innovation, communication means, and social system are probably to have to alter influence at various times throughout the diffusion procedure. This is because of different diffusion plans are required as the phases of the distribution process progress, researchers can get assistance from a more in-depth consideration of the diffusion process to help them in interpreting their research and innovative agenda into action. Thus, the theory recommends that innovations that have a clear, unambiguous advantage over the previous approach will be more readily adopted and employed (Greenhalgh, 2004).

2.2.2 Resource Based View

The resource-based view of the firm (RBV) presents a structure for describing the foundation of a company's competitive benefit and performance (Barney, 2011). They argue that internal aspects of the organization, namely, its resources and capabilities, are the ones that determined its profits and overall performance. An earlier seminal work by Wernerfelt (1984) is measured as the first major beneficiary to the RBV, though it was later transformed by other researchers to a full-fledged, resource-based theory. Peteraf and Barney (2003) stated that an organization could realize a competitive advantage when it can produce more monetary assessment than the marginal opponent in its real market. The sustained competitive advantage (SCA) will further result when a firm can create more financial worth than the subsidiary company in its business and when other companies are not capable of duplicating the advantageous of this plan.

The RBV theory makes an assumption that a company has a different resource which means that some organizations are more trained in achieving certain activities since they have unique resources (Peteraf & Barney 2003). Hence a resource-based logic aims that if an

organisation possesses significant resources that few other organisations have, and that others find it too expensive or hard to imitate these resources, then the corporation controlling these organizational ability are subset of the firm's resources and represent an organizationally entrenched non-transferable firm particular resource whose idea is to improve the yield of the other resources possessed by the organisation. This means that they are an information-based, tangible or intangible procedure that allows the organizational brand, relational and knowledge resources. Morgan et al (2009) the organization to arrange its other resources more competently and therefore increase the output of those resources. In the marketing field, the resource based theory has been applied) while studying on market-sensing, and brand management found that advertising capability has direct and matching impacts on profits and margin expansion rates. They establish that the effects of brand management are reversed upon not utilizing the internal firm capabilities effectively. The overall blow of both capabilities on firm's revenue growth rates is optimistic. On their part, Ramaswami et al. (2009) studied new product growth, customer management; Supply chain management and found out that client management has the strongest blow on organization performance.

2.3 Factors Influencing Branding Strategy

A brand association is a link to a consumer memory to a brand (Aaker, 2013). The association has a level of strength and becomes stronger grounded on many experiences or publicity to communications rather than few. A well-positioned trademark will have an aggressively attractive spot sustained by strong relations. Brand associations are the other informational nodes correlated to the brand lump in memory and hold the implication of the brand for customers. The favourability, power, and exceptionality of brand relations are the elements characterizing name information. This plays a significant function in shaping the

discrepancy reply that makes up brand fairness mainly in better participation in decision settings (Keller, 2003).

The strength of associations of a brand depends on how the information penetrates customer memory and how it is sustained as part of the brand image. Strength is a role of both the amount and quantity of dispensing the information obtained by encoding, how much an individual thinks about the information, the character or quality of the processing the information obtained at encoding and the approach in which an individual feels concerning the information. When a customer keenly thinks about and describes the importance of goods or service information, stronger relations are produced in memory. This vigor, in turn, boosts both the possibility that information will be available and the simplicity with which it can be remembered.

Favourability is replicated in the customers' trust that the brand has attribute and benefits that suit their requirements and desires such that a constructive overall brand attitude is created (Keller, 2003). Customers are not likely to view an attribute or benefit as excellent or wrong if they do not also think it to be very significant. Hence, it was hard to produce a good association for an irrelevant attribute. Not all relations for a brand will be substantial or treasured in a purchase or expenditure decision. Associations might aid brand acknowledgment or consciousness or lead them to the conclusion about goods quality thus it might not always be measured an important aspect of a purchase decision. Furthermore, the assessment of brand associations may be situational or information dependent and differ according to customers' particular objectives in their investment or expenditure choice.

Attributes are the critical traits that describe a good or service. Attributes are renowned according to how directly they share to good or service performance. Product-related attributes are defined as the components required for performing the product or service

purpose sought by customers. Non-product related attributes are defined as external features of the product or service that relate to its purchase or expenditure. Price is a leading significant attribute association since customers often have high trust about the price and worth of the brand and may arrange their good form information concerning the price tiers of various brands (Blattberg & Wisniewski, 2009).

Functional benefits are the more natural advantages of goods or service utilization and usually match to the product-related characteristics. These advantages are often related to relatively basic incentive like physiological and safety needs. Pragmatic benefits which are the second group relate to what it feels like to use the good or service and also usually match to the products related manner. This benefit gratifies desires like sensory pleasure, variety, and cognitive stimulation. Symbolic benefits as the third class are more extrinsic advantages of goods or service expenditure. They match to non-product related attributes and relate to underlying needs for social endorsement or personal expression and outer-directed self-esteem. Customers may value the status, exclusivity or fashion capability of a brand because of how it recounts to their self-concept (Solomon, 2003 cited in Keller, 2008).

2.4 Factors Influencing Brands to Use Social Media

The factors that have been identified to affect a brand selection of use of social media have been varied. Kozinets (2012) identifies two main reasons that include attention in online brand societies through the: word of mouth and market research. Indeed, the emergence of internet-based media has introduced the expansion of express of mouth online (eWOM) (Chu & Kim, 2011). eWOM is prevalent on different online means, like the blogs, forums, virtual communities, and social networks. Social media has turned out to be modern equipment for eWOM, because users freely produce and extend brand-related information in their systems that are made up of their friends. The other reason is that social media offer an original

platform for customer interaction and therefore opening up new promises for marketing researchers to get close to the customers and gather info about their favourites, wishes, and needs (Kozinets, 2012).

Selina and Milz (2009) stated that the social media not only increase the present firm-to-client and customer-to-firm associations but as well introduces original disparity on existing alternative by improving the capability of the organization to interact in the firm-customer dialog which strengthens their communications. Gallagher and Ransbotham, (2010) argued that with the use of social media, there has been the first change in the ease of contact, volume, speed, and character of these interactions. Also, with the use of social media, organizations can reach out to people that or else could not be attained because the social media can move information to a more diverse variety of individuals contrast to the mass media. They make a “small-world” where information is easily shared with a huge number of people, as the network is created through the charitable bond and entails fewer steps for the exchange of information.

Social media can arouse brand awareness because it has tools that allow firms to access millions of people. Monseau (2012) opine that since there is a large number of individuals that previously exist in the social media, the presence of a brand’s name all over those networks can assist inform people about it and become recognized as the organization, making brand alertness. Social media relationships can increase sales (New Media Age, 2010). This is because by having people visit a brands page in social media, it is likely to generate congestion for the web site and make extra online sales. A case in point is Sony, which publicized in February 2014 that they had made more million pounds in sales through Twitter. Correspondingly, Dell also broadcasted in June 2014 that they had received three million dollars boost in sales from their presence on Twitter.

Dimitriadis (2014), highlight that, the increased utilization of social media by brands is partly due to the growth and popularity of the social media platform. The various groups of social media have continuously gained popularity among people since their introduction, and therefore firms try to keep up with the technological expansion by having their brand flow with this growth. The viral character of social media creates digital managers want everyone to talk online concerning their brand, and the social media is the most excellent place to realize this.

O'Flynn, (2012) note that the presence of a competitor in the social media is another reason why a brand will also join the bandwagon. The fact that a challenger is already dynamic on a social media platform is yet a compelling explanation for a firm to use the social media platforms for marketing its brand. Indeed, Dimitriadis (2014) consider that it's a mistake for a brand not to pursue a competitor who makes a page on social media, as it will offer a huge benefit.

Dekay (2012) however cautions that besides the reimbursement that social media provide the to the organization, there are some risks associated with its usage. An example is the unenthusiastic Facebook clarifications that are made by users, and yet studies show that many organizations do not react to such remarks and delete them. Additionally, even those organizations that respond to negative comments do not approve definite plans that convert these observations into useful chances for communication. Corstjens and Umblijs, (2012) warn that fruitless managing of such circumstances may direct to unenthusiastic word of mouth along with social media customers and therefore, a major dispute for the social media active organisations is to enlarge suitable answer plans to harmful word of mouth or else, social media marketing may have adverse effects on a firm's brand image and sales.

2.5 Social Media Brand Strategy and Marketing Performance

The 2013 Social Media Industry Report note that the major goal of marketers in the social media is to increase target audiences to the brand message, improve search rankings and increased traffic to brand Web sites by the target customers (Stelzner, 2013). Customer engagement is yet another goal and this should extend beyond a purchases. Customers' engagement should be done along the value, form, impact and the scope that the product or service is offering to the firm. Hutton and Fosdick (2011) opine that in the social media, engaged consumers participate and share the information about the brand. Participation among the consumers might take a passive form whereby they simply consume the social content or active including such behaviors as submitting consumer-generated stories. Active consumers may share their own opinions with their network and this means that a measure of consumer response to social media is determined on whether the consumer links, bookmarks, blogs, refers others, clicks, friends, connects, subscribes, submits an inquiry or idea, and/or buys the brand (Falls, 2010).

Brand strategies in the social media need to encourage engagement and this should be made out of the realisation that people are inherently social and look to create and maintain relations not only with other people, but also with brands. Hence, brand message strategies need not only combine information that was previously considered unrelated, but also help make innovative connections and relationship between individuals. Sheehan and Morrison (2009) opine that when brand marketers establish an engagement mode with consumers, the brand's messaging shifts from being a transactional perspective to an interactional perspective where the brand becomes a part of the consumer's own identity. This therefore calls for creativity in the development of brand messages that encourages consumer engagement in order to produce desired brand outcomes (Hutton & Fosdick, 2011).

Johar and Sirgy (2011) highlight that image appeals in the social media are more effective when the product being promoted is value-expressive to the target consumer, while functional appeals are more effective when the product is utilitarian. This implies that marketing managers need to match functional attribute of the message to high-involvement consumers and transformational messages to low-involvement consumers (Areni, 2013). Involvement is a person's perceived relevance of the object in question based on inherent needs, values, and interests.

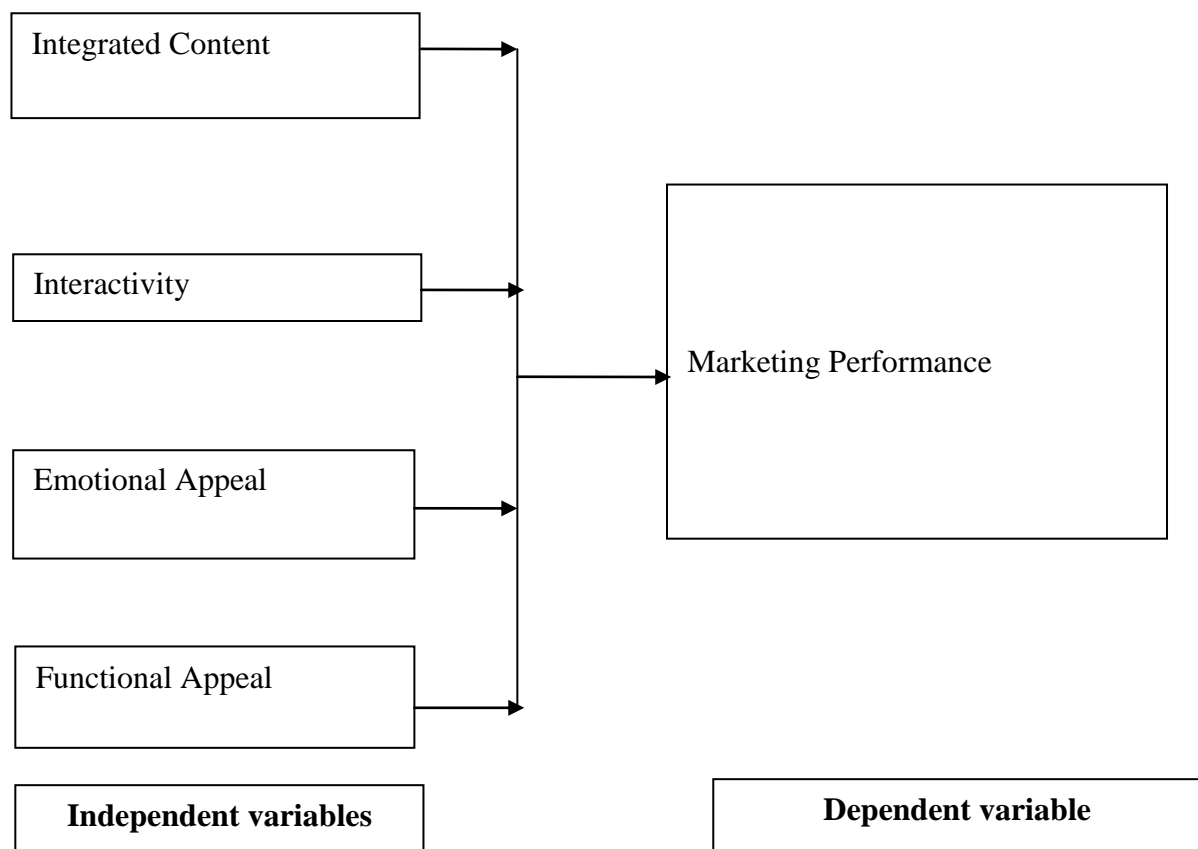
Jahn and Kunz (2012) suggest that consumer participation in brand profile pages on such social media platforms as Facebook was influenced by functional and hedonic contents and this reinforces the position held by the gratification theory that suggest that people's needs for communications are oriented to content, relationships, and self. Luo(2012). Content refers to the information delivered by the media; content can be either functional or hedonic. In the study of participation in brand profile pages, content drove fan page usage. Relationship-orientation refers to the fulfilment of social interaction provided by the media. Self-orientation refers to the specific needs of the individual in question (Jahn & Kunz, 2012).

Nelson, Keum and Yaros (2004) suggests that the use of social media with branded entertainment attributes, particularly advergames provide uninterrupted sensory immersion that can benefit the brand by extending the time the consumer spends with the brand message. Achievements in advergames, often represented by trophies or badges, can provide affirmation, group identification, and help shape user activities (Antin & Churchill, 2011). Their research lends support to the use of brand personas to meet objectives for improving consumer brand awareness and brand evaluations. Cho and Huh (2010) analyzed the content of corporate blogs and found that corporate blogs sought to establish content that was easy to use, frequent, social, and linked to other relevant content.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a diagrammatical research tool intended to assist the researcher to develop awareness and understanding of the situation under scrutiny and to communicate this (Cole, 2002). A conceptual framework is used in research to outline possible courses of action or to present a preferred approach to an idea or thought. It can be defined as a set of broad ideas and principles taken from relevant fields of enquiry and used to structure a subsequent presentation. The interconnection of these blocks completes the framework for certain expected outcomes. The research independent variables are Brand awareness, market segmentation, customer engagement and media integration. The dependent variable is the marketing performance.

Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework



Source: Researcher (2017)

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter looks at other scholarly and literature works from different renowned and distinguished scholars and authors on the influence of social media on a firm performance. It started by highlighting the theoretical framework guiding the study followed by a detailed discussion on the role of the different social media platforms. In addition, the chapter covered the factors influencing digital media integration and finally looked at the empirical studies on the research subject matter. The conceptual framework which is a diagrammatic representation of all the identified variables and how they interact and link with each other was also covered.

Though different studies have been undertaken on how social media influences a firm performance, the studies done so far have not delved to establishing the role of social media on the firm's marketing performance. It is this gap that the researcher will seek to fill. The section that follows is the research methodology which captures how the study will be conducted.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is about the research methodology that was used, including research design, data collection methods, and the data analysis methods. The objective of this chapter is to reveal how data collection and analysis is employed in the study to answer the research questions and meet the goals summarized in chapter one.

3.2 Research Design

The research adopted a descriptive survey design as the study was intended to describe the use of social media as a branding tool among the telecommunication firms in Kenya. It was a correlation study of how companies brand strategies in social media influence its marketing performance. The descriptive research represents a perfect profile of individuals, events or circumstances, and allows the gathering of the vast amount of qualitative and quantitative data from the target population. In addition, it offers opportunities of the researcher to describe a phenomenon without manipulating the existing position.

3.3 Study Population

The project undertaken was a census survey involving all the registered and licensed eleven (11) telecommunication firms in Kenya (Appendix, II). The list of the eleven companies is obtained from the Communication Authority of Kenya at the end of the year 2016.

3.4 Data Collection

Primary data was collected by use of questionnaires. The questionnaire had three sections with Section A aimed to gather data about the research unit. Part B sought to establish the

social media brand strategy employed by the telecommunication firms and Section C collecting data on the use of social media and its effect on marketing performance. Discussions and guidance on how to complete the questionnaire was offered and any additional information to be gathered was recorded in a note book to assist in analyzing the data collected through the questionnaires. The target respondents were the marketing managers of the identified telecommunication companies. Where societies had brand managers or brand strategists, they were preferred interviewees. The questionnaires was dropped and then picked upon follow-up with the relevant people. Some of the research units were contacted by phone to follow up on when the questionnaire is likely to be ready, and those respondents who had difficulties completing the questionnaires guidance were offered. Secondary data was gathered from the firm's financial reports as well as the Communication Authority annual reports.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data collected was both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The data was checked and edited for accuracy, completeness, and consistency, then analyzed through examination, categorizing, coding, tabulating and testing to identify the patterns and enhance the validity of the study. To answer question two, a correlation analysis was carried to establish the degree of association between the social media brand strategy and marketing performance.

The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics resulting to tables, graphs, charts, and percentages. Content analysis was used to analyze qualitative data to facilitate in making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics of variables. To test influence of social media brand strategy on performance, correlation and regression analysis was employed. This took the form:

$$Y = \alpha + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + B_3X_3 + B_4X_4 + \epsilon$$

Y = Marketing Performance

α = Constant (Co-efficient of intercept)

X_1 = Integrated Content

X_2 = Interactivity

X_3 = Emotional Appeal

X_4 = Functional Appeal

ϵ = Error Term

$B_1 \dots B_4$ = Regression co-efficient of three variables

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis, findings and discussion. The findings are presented in percentages and frequency distributions, mean and standard deviations. A total of 11 questionnaires were issued out. The completed questionnaires were edited for completeness and consistency. Of the 11 questionnaires distributed, 10 were returned. The returned questionnaires' represented a response rate of 90. % and this response rate were deemed to be adequate in the realization of the research objectives (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003).

4.2 Demographic and Respondent Profile

The demographic information considered in this study included the length of service with the firms, number of employees and duration of firm operation.

Table 4.1 : Demographic Characteristics

Length of Continuous Service	Frequency	Percent
Less than Five years	1	10.0
5-10 yrs	4	40.0
over 10 yrs	5	50.0
Total	10	100.0
Number of Employees		
Less than 100	1	10.0
100-499	3	30.0
500-999	4	40.0
Above 1000	2	20.0
Total	10	100.0
Duration of Firm operation		
6-10 yrs	-	-
10-20 yrs	6	60.0
20-30 yrs	4	40.0
Total	10	100.0

Source: Primary Data

The result in Table 4.1 indicates that majority of the respondent 50.0% had worked in the telecommunication firms for over 10 years and cumulatively 90% of the respondents had worked for over 5 years in the sector. All other factors remaining constant, it can be deemed that the respondents will be versed with the operation of the sector considering that they have long experience in the field.

The results on the number of employees show that 40.0% of the telecommunication firms have between 500-999 employees and 30.0% of the firms have between 100-499 employees while two of the firms, representing 20% have employed more 1000 employees to meet. Thus 90% of the firms sample had more than 100 employees and can be considered to be large in size. With regard to the length of their operations, all the firms sampled had operated for more than 10 years and from this 40% had operated for more than 20 years. Consequently, by the fact that the firm had operated for over ten years and with the social media usage over the last ten years, they will have adopted the social media as a marketing strategy over the period and also because they are major the facilitators of the use of social media in Kenya, they are better placed to understand its influence.

4.3 Use of Social Media

This section of the questionnaire sought to get from the respondents the forms of social media that they use to reach their target customers based on their traffic and therefore influencing your brand image. The range was 'Not at all' (1) to 'very large extent' (5). The scores of respondents' low level of practice usage represent a variable which had a mean score of below 3.0 while the scores of above 3.0 represent respondents' agreement with the usage of marketing practice. A standard deviation of >0.9 implies a significant difference on the impact of the variable among respondents.

Table 4.2 : Form of Social Media

Form of Social Media	Mean	Std. Deviation
Twitter	4.300	.675
You tube	4.000	.667
SMS marketing	3.900	.876
Face book	3.800	.7889
Blogs	3.700	.823
Picture sharing websites	3.500	.850

Source: Primary Data

The result in Table 4.2 shows that majority of the respondent believed that the common forms of social media used by their customers are Twitter (M=4.300, SD=.675) and you tube (M=4.000, SD=.667). The low standard deviation shows that majority of the respondent were in agreement that the two form of social media are the most popular because their standard deviation was less than 1.0. To a moderate extent, blogs and picture sharing websites was also found to be used by the telecommunication firms customers and therefore will be a popular social media platform to use to promote the firms products.

4. 4 Social Media Brand Strategies

The respondents were requested to indicate the various social media strategies that they apply in their marketing process. The results is presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 : Social Media Brand Strategies

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Using appropriate social media to reach a target market segment that have unique social characteristics or cultural background	4.400	.699
The firm has developed corporate blogs that is easy to use, frequent and linked to other relevant content that the firm offers	4.400	.699
The firm invite consumers to experience branded entertainment such as advert games or opt-in interactive experiences	4.300	.483
Establishment of brand community whereby clients with shared interest interact	4.000	.666
The firm defines and identifies its own customer engagement behaviors (CEBs) that will appeal to their likings	4.000	.667
Creation of competition through the use of various social media and which lead to increased brand awareness of the firm	3.900	.876
The firm matches the brand to consumer aspirations (image), insights and experiences (resonance, experiential), and feelings (sexual desire, fear, guilt, and joy/humor).	3.900	.876
The firm develops multiple sources of the same message which led to an improvement of the message credibility	3.800	.422

Source: Primary Data

The finding on Table 4.3 indicates that to a great extent, the telecommunication firms use various social media platforms to reach a target market segment that have unique social characteristics or cultural background (M=4.400) and the firm have developed corporate blogs that is easy to use, frequent and linked to other relevant content that the firm offers to increase the users traffic to the firm products (M=4.400, SD=0.699). Similarly, the study found that the firm uses the social media to invite consumers to experience branded entertainment such as advert games or opt-in interactive experiences in their blogs and in the process they get introduced to the firms' products and services. The other common strategy

that the telecommunication firms use is to match the brand to consumer aspirations (image), insights and experiences (resonance, experiential), and feelings (sexual desire, fear, guilt, and joy/humour) (M=3.900, SD=0.876). However, to the low standard deviation among the respondents implies that the firm develops multiple sources of the same message which led to an improvement of the message credibility and also to develop multiple sources of the same message which led to an improvement of the message credibility (Mean=3.800, SD= 0.422).

4.5 Brand image of company's products

This section of the questionnaire sought to establish the effect that social media strategies have on the marketing performance of the telecommunication firms. The range was 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5). The scores of respondents' low level of practice usage represent a variable which had a mean score of below 3.0 while the scores of above 3.0 represent respondents' agreement with the usage of social media on the firms marketing performance. A standard deviation of >0.9 implies a significant difference on the impact of the variable among respondents. The results are presented in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4 : Brand image of company's products

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
The firm interaction with its customers through the social has improved their attitudinal loyalty	4.200	.632
There has been an improved customer acquisition and retention as a result of the using social media platforms as Facebook, Whatsapp and Twitter for interaction	4.000	.471
Marketing through the social media has led to an increased new product success	3.900	.667
The level of customer satisfaction has increased as a result of using the social media to improve the firms brand image	3.800	.919
The use of social media has led to improved revenue for the telecommunication firm	3.800	.7889
The firm has increased its investor returns as a result of adopting social media	3.700	.632

There has greater consumer empowerment, authenticity and transparency as a result of using social media in our marketing	3.700	.7889
The firm is able to tailor its marketing strategies to individual customers	3.600	.7889
Social media has the capacity to impact our brand by generating goodwill, increasing brand engagement, and driving momentum of our products	3.500	.633
The use of social media has increased the perception of our customers on the firm product quality	3.400	.675
Through the use of social media, the firm market share has improved	3.3000	.94868

Source: Primary Data

The findings in Table 4.7 indicate that the firm interaction with its customers through the social has improved their attitudinal loyalty ($M=4.200$, $SD=.632$) and as a result of the positive connection, there has been an improved customer acquisition and retention as a result of the using social media platforms as Facebook, Whatsapp and Twitter for interaction. In addition, the level of customer satisfaction has increased as a result of using the social media to improve the firms brand image as well as the use of social media to improve revenue for the telecommunication firm ($M=3.800$). On the side of moderate extent, the firm has increased its investor returns due to embracing the social media as a marketing tool and this as led to a greater consumer empowerment, authenticity and transparency as a result of using social media in our marketing ($M=3.700$). Further, on the small extent, the use of social media has increased the perception of our customers on the firm product quality ($M=3.400$) and through the use of social media, the firm market share has improved ($M=3.300$). The findings also had a low standard deviation of less than 1,0 implying a concurrence among the respondents.

4.6 Relationship between Social Media brand Strategy and Marketing Performance

For quantitative analysis the study used regression analysis to establish the relationship between social media brand strategy and marketing performance. To determine the same, the

relationship between the overall mean of each of the social media brand strategies was regressed with the resultant mean from the marketing performance measure. The coefficient of determination is a measure of how well a statistical model is likely to predict future outcomes. The results model summary is presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.886 ^a	.786	.614	.54371

a. Dependent Variable: marketing performance

b. Predictor Variable: (constant); $X_1 = IC$, $X_2 = I$; $X_3 = EA$, $X_4 = FA$

The coefficient of determination, r^2 is the square of the sample correlation coefficient between outcomes and predicted values. As such it explains the extent to which changes in the dependent variable can be explained by the change in the independent variables or the percentage of variation in the dependent variable (marketing performance) that is explained by all the four independent variables (integrated content, interactivity, emotional appeal and functional appeal). From the results in Table 4.5, the four independent variables that were studied, explain 78.6% of the marketing performance as represented by the R^2 . This implies that the four independent variables only contribute about 78.6% to the marketing performance to the telecommunication firms while other factors not studied in this research contributes 21.4% of the firms marketing performance. The standard error of the estimate (S_e) indicates that on average, the marketing performance level deviate from the predicted regression line by a score of 0. 69097.

The researcher further conducted a multiple regression analysis so as to determine the relationship between the parameters of social media brand strategy and marketing performance of the telecommunication firms. The findings are presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 : Model Summary of simple regression for organization performance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.356	1.587		.224	.727
	X ₁	.041	.330	.029	.123	.907
	X ₂	-.494	.292	-.381	-1.694	.151
	X ₃	.281	.235	.295	1.195	.286
	X ₄	.806	.292	.644	2.766	.040

From the findings in the Table 4.9, the regression equation is:-

$$Y = 0.356 + 0.041 X_1 - 0.494X_2 + 0.281X_3 + 0.806X_4$$

Where;

Y = Marketing Performance, X₁ = Integrated Content, X₂ = Interactivity,

X₃ = Emotional Appeal, X₄ = Functional Appeal

The value of the intercept (B_0) indicates that the level of the telecommunication firm marketing performance when all the explanatory variables are zero is 0.356. This implies that were the firms to withdraw from their existing social media brand strategies, then the current level of marketing performance will be maintained at 35.6 %.

The coefficient of the firm's integrated content was 0.041 implying that the firms marketing performance will increase by 0.041 units for every unit increase in the firm's social media interactivity would lead, surprisingly, to a decrease in marketing performance by a factor of - 0.494. The study also found that emotional appeal led to increased marketing performance of firm by a factor of 0.281 and adoption of the firms functional appeal lead to a 0.806 increase in marketing performance of telecommunication firms. This clearly indicates that there existed a positive relationship between social media brand strategy and marketing performance of telecommunication firms in Kenya.

4.5 Discussion

The global environment is complex and it is very important for firms to understand this environment and make effective choices in this complex business set-up. The firms in developed markets have greatly adopted the social media brand strategies and have led to the expansion of their operations beyond geographical borders hence improving performance.

The findings have established that majority of the respondent perceive the Twitter and YouTube as social media platforms popular among the customers based on their traffic and therefore influencing firms brand image. This findings support that of Monseau (2012) who opined that among the globally, Twitter and Youtube are currently the most popular social media avenues that corporate organizations use to increase their performance.

Cho and Huh (2010) analyzed the content of corporate blogs and found that corporate blogs need to be easy to use, frequent, social, and linked to other relevant content. The study found that the firms are using using appropriate social media to reach a target market segment that have unique social characteristics or cultural background and the firm has developed corporate blogs that is easy to use, frequent and linked to other relevant content that the firm offers. The study revealed that the firm interaction with its customers through the social

media has improved their attitudinal loyalty and customer acquisition and retention as a result of using social media platforms such as Facebook, Whatsapp and Twitter for interaction.

The study established that the telecommunication firms not only use a single social media platform as a marketing tool, rather, it uses a combination of different tools to reach its target market. As Vorhies and Morgan (2005) suggested, only when customers in the product marketplace are exposed to firms' strategic marketing decisions and the deployment of a multiple marketing program-related resources to enact these decisions can the firm begin to realize its marketing program value. This therefore means that firms should adopt a combination of different marketing tools to enhance their marketing performance and therefore firm performance.

The study also found that the pre-existing knowledge of some of the firm's market-based assets may also directly influence customers' perceptions and behaviors. The study findings suggest that an existing brand equity, customer relationships, and perceived firm category expertise may influence the effectiveness of social media brand strategy. This concurs with Homburg, Koschate, and Hoyer (2005) findings that, *ceteris paribus*, the greater the number of target customers who are aware of the firm's marketing program and perceive it positively with respect to their consumption needs, the better the performance. Hence the multiplicity of the social media platforms used enhances a firm marketing performance.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This section covers the summary of findings, conclusion, limitations and recommendations in line with the topic of study which is to establish the social media brand strategy and marketing performance of telecommunication firms in Kenya

5.2 Summary

The results show that the telecommunication firms have been in operation in the local market for a long time and therefore they understand the dynamics of the local market and thus the need to adopt the social brand strategies in order to improve the marketing performance. The study found that the majority of the respondent believed that Twitter and youtube as social media platforms are popular among the customers based on their traffic and therefore influencing firms brand image. In addition, the study found that organization use news delivery sites (Current TV station) and creativity works sharing sites: (Video sharing sites (YouTube); and Photo sharing sites (Flickr). The study reinforced the importance of using social media as more effective in reinforcing a firm brand compared to the traditional marketing strategies which was limited and also because it is a recent technological step and targets young consumer market in the society.

The study finding indicated using appropriate social media to reach a target market segment that have unique social characteristics or cultural background and the firm has developed corporate blogs that is easy to use, frequent and linked to other relevant content that the firm offers. The study revealed that the firm interaction with its customers through the social has

improved their attitudinal loyalty and improves customer acquisition and retention as a result of the using social media platforms as Facebook, Whatsapp and Twitter for interaction.

5.3 Conclusion

An effective brand strategy through the use of social media and proper marketing tools is a key for the functioning of the organization. From the findings, it was established that most of the respondent believed on the Twitter and Youtube as social media platforms popular among the customers. Therefore, the firms should use those social media effectively and aim to deliver their services to meet the expected demand of the customers and improve their marketing performance.

Strategies in social media adoption is important to the telecommunication firm since it targets market segment that have unique social characteristics or cultural background and the firm has developed corporate blogs that is easy to use, frequent and linked to other relevant content that the firm offers. It can be concluded that firm interaction with its customers through the social has improved their attitudinal loyalty and improves customer acquisition and retention as a result of the using social media platforms as Facebook, Whatsapp and Twitter for interaction. Therefore, the management of the telecommunication firm should be able to improve the relationship with customers through the social media platforms to improve on the marketing performance.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

The findings of the study should be read subject to the following limitations. First, the results represent a cross-sectional position in time and do not capture the ability of some of the participants to be motivated by individual interests as is possible with qualitative methods. Second, it is possible that the common methods bias might have arisen since a single respondent answered all questions though the same was not captured but at the same time it cannot be

completely ruled out. Further, a majority of the telecommunication firms had operated for more than 10 years respondent organizations are more than 10 years old. While this is perhaps an important criterion for achieving some level of maturity in deployment of information systems in the supply chain, it does raise the question of whether the relationships we examine in this study would be qualitatively different for smaller focal firms.

5.5 Recommendations for Policy and Practice

The study found out that there is a tight relationship between social media brand strategy and marketing performance. Hence, it is recommended that the telecommunication firms should adopt the social media brand strategy and marketing performance. The study established that the Twitter and you tube as social media platforms popular among the customers. Therefore, the management of the firm should use those media effectively to enhance marketing performance. The study found out that the telecommunication firms have adopted branding strategies in social media which have resulted in improved marketing performance. It is therefore recommended that the study adds greater comprehensiveness of the brand strategies and more connections in the social media with customers to impact the marketing performance.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

The study was undertaken on the social media brand strategy and marketing performance of telecommunication firms in Kenya. The study recommends that a similar study should be carried out to establish ways through which other firm could enhance social media brand strategy in order to improve their marketing performance. A further study should be carried out to establish the challenges facing the implementation of social media brand strategy and marketing performance in organisation.

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APPENDIX I

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Date.....

To.....

.....

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: COLLECTION OF RESEARCH DATA

My name is Jacob Peter Musoka and an MBA student in Business Administration – Marketing option at The University of Nairobi. Currently, I’ am carrying out a research on the “*Brand Strategies in Social Media and Marketing Performance of Telecommunication Firms in Kenya*”.

I ‘am in the process of gathering relevant data for this study. You have been identified as one of the collaborators and respondents in this study and kindly request for your assistance towards making this study a success.

I therefore kindly request you to take some time to respond to the attached questionnaire. I wish to assure you that your responses will be treated with confidentiality and will be used solely for the purpose of this study.

I thank you in advance for your time and responses. It will be appreciated if you can fill the questionnaire within the next 5days to enable early finalization of the study.

Yours Sincerely

Jacob Peter Musoka

Student Reg No. D61/68066/2013

APPENDIX II

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please give answers in the spaces provided and tick (✓) in the box that matches your response to the questions where applicable.

PART A: Demographic and Respondents Profile

1. Name of the Telecommunication.....

2. Length of continuous service with the company?

a) Less than five years ()

b) 5-10 years ()

c) Over 10 years ()

3. How many employees are there in your company?

a) Less than 100 () b) 100 – 499 ()

c) 300 – 999 () e) Above 1000 ()

4. For how long has your telecommunication firm been in operation in Kenya?

a) Under 5 years () b) 6 – 10 years ()

c) 10 – 20 years () d) 20 – 30 years ()

e) Over 30 years ()

PART B: Use of Social Media

5. To what extent do the following social media platforms popular among your customers based on their traffic and therefore influencing your brand image? Use **1**-Not at all, **2**-Small extent, **3**-Moderate extent, **4**-Great extent and **5**-Very great extent.

Form of Social Media	1	2	3	4	5
Face book					
Twitter					
You tube					
SMS marketing					
Blogs					
Picture Sharing Websites					

6. The following are some of the social media strategies that can be used by a firm. Please indicate the extent to which your firm has adopted the strategies

Use **1**-Not at all, **2**-Small extent, **3**-Moderate extent, **4**-Great extent and **5**-Very great extent.

Social Media Brand Strategies	1	2	3	4	5
Establishment of brand community whereby clients with shared interest interact					
Creation of competition through the use of various social media and which lead to increased brand awareness of the firm					

Using appropriate social media to reach a target market segment that have unique social characteristics or cultural background					
The firm defines and identifies its own customer engagement behaviors (CEBs) that will appeal to their likings					
The firm matches the brand to consumer aspirations (image), insights and experiences (resonance, experiential), and feelings (sexual desire, fear, guilt, and joy/humor).					
The firm invite consumers to experience branded entertainment such as advert games or opt-in interactive experiences					
The firm has developed corporate blogs that is easy to use, frequent and linked to other relevant content that the firm offers					
The firm develops multiple sources of the same message which led to an improvement of the message credibility					

SECTION C: Marketing Performance

- 7.) To what extent do you agree with the following regarding the brand image of your company's products? Use 1- Strongly Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Moderate, 4- Agree and 5-strongly agree.

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
The use of social media has increased the perception of our customers on the firm product quality					
The firm interaction with its customers through the social has improved their attitudinal loyalty					
The level of customer satisfaction has increased as a result of using the social media to improve the firms brand image					
There has been an improved customer acquisition and retention as a result of the using social media platforms as Facebook, Whatsapp and Twitter for interaction					
Through the use of social media, the firm market share has improved					
Marketing through the social media has led to an increased new product success					
The use of social media has led to improved revenue for the telecommunication firm					
The firm has increased its investor returns as a result of adopting social media					

There has greater consumer empowerment, authenticity and transparency as a result of using social media in our marketing					
The firm is able to tailor its marketing strategies to individual customers					
Social media has the capacity to impact our brand by generating goodwill, increasing brand engagement, and driving momentum of our products					

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR TIME

APPENDIX III

LIST OF TELECOMMUNICATION FIRMS IN KENYA

1. Safaricom Kenya Limited
2. Airtel Networks Kenya Limited
3. Telkom Orange Kenya Limited
4. Access Kenya(Dimension Data)
5. Liquid telecom
6. Jamii Telecom
7. Wananchi Telecom
8. MTN Business Kenya
9. Internet Solutions Kenya
10. Africa Online
11. Swift Global