

**THE USE OF WEB-BASED COMMUNICATION TOOLS IN MANAGING
CORPORATE REPUTATION ONLINE BY NSE-LISTED COMPANIES**

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DECLARATION

This is to declare that this project proposal is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university for marking.

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to examine the use of web-based communication tools in managing corporate reputation online by NSE-listed companies. The objectives were first, to examine the adoption levels of web-based communication tools by companies listed on the Nairobi Securities Exchange in managing their corporate reputation online. Secondly, to examine the extent to which they apply these tools and thirdly, to examine how adoption factors effect on the companies' use of web-based communication tools by testing the strength of the four constructs effort expectancy, facilitating conditions, performance expectancy and social influence put forward in the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology model, a popular technology acceptance model used to predict and explain information systems' users' use intention and behaviour. Quantitative and qualitative data was collected in Nairobi using a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews (respectively) from a sample of 11 companies on the Main Investment Market and Alternate Investment Market segments. Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis techniques were used to analyse the data. Particularly, how these companies use the tools to manage their corporate reputation online. Six tools were studied – Blogs, Email, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Websites. This is important because the activities of companies listed on the Nairobi Securities Exchange are of great economic and national significance. There has been a lot of similar research undertaken in other countries (mostly Western countries and some African countries like Nigeria) but little has been done in Kenya. The research will provide more information on the use of digital media by large businesses in Kenya. The findings revealed that all the companies studied used web-based communication tools in managing their corporate reputation online. The most popular tool was Email which has 100% adoption rate. The companies use these tools as frequently as several times a day to update their stakeholders and to respond fast to issues raised online. All the adoption factors (effort expectancy, performance expectancy, social influence and facilitating conditions) have a significant effect on the companies' use of web-based communication tools in managing corporate reputation online, with effort expectancy being the most dominant. The study recommends that businesses of every kind and size should incorporate the use of web-based communication tools in their corporate reputation due to their speed, interactive and dialogical properties.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIMS Alternate Investment Market Segment

CFO Chief Financial Officer

CMA Capital Markets Authority

FISMS Fixed Income Securities Market Segment

GEMS Growth Enterprise Market Segment

ICT Information Communication and Technology

IPOs Initial Public Offering

IROs Investment Relations Officers

IS Information Systems

LSE London Stock Exchange

NGOs Non-Governmental Organisations

NSE Nairobi Securities Exchange

OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

ORM Online Reputation Management

Plc. Public Listed Company

PR Public Relations

SEO Search Engine Optimisation

SOJMC School of Journalism and Mass Communication

TV Television

UTUAT Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This chapter includes the study's background, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the objectives, the research questions, the significance of the study, the justification of the study, the scope and the limitations of the study and finally the definition of the operational terms used in the study.

1.2 Background

Web-based media technologies are platforms which communicate messages via the Internet. They are now recognised communication platforms for businesses globally, but for some businesses it is still an emerging concept that is yet to be fully harnessed especially because it is an area that develops rapidly.

Publicly listed companies occupy complex, hyper-competitive, dynamic and public spaces. In addition, they deal with a variety of key stakeholders with various and distinct needs. For instance, employees constantly need to get an assurance that the company is stable, ethical, well-run and therefore, an attractive and viable place to work in. The public (as the ownership of these companies is freely traded with the public being invited to own stock) also needs to receive a constant flow of financial performance information. The government as a regulator and sometimes as an investor too, needs to ensure regulatory compliance that is the company manages its affairs in a legal fashion; in the interest of the public and often that there is a proper return on investment for public funds. Lenders need financial and operational information (to

asses a company's creditworthiness) and finally, shareholders need information to track their investment in such a company.

The companies listed on the NSE are some of the most visible and relevant businesses in the Kenyan company, given their "public" status and their regulation by authorities such as the CMA. Looking at the "novelty", constant spread and the ubiquity of digital media alongside the complex and critical vital reputation management requirements of these companies was the motivation for this study. The study explores the approaches different companies listed on the NSE (East Africa's leading securities exchange) have taken in using new media forms (blogs, email, social media and websites) in managing their corporate reputation (a PR aspect) online.

1.3 Problem Statement

Several studies have shown that corporate reputation has a significant impact on the economic success of businesses. Web-based communication tools have revolutionised how businesses communicate and offer numerous benefits to businesses in the management of their corporate reputation. If companies fail to manage their corporate reputation online in this digital era, they will lose the opportunity to reap these benefits, such as being able to respond, quickly to large audiences online in an interactive fashion when stakeholder issues are raised for instance when there is a reputational crisis.

The use of these tools by the companies listed on the NSE (Kenya's biggest and most visible companies) needs to be understood given the economic significance of these companies and the prominent status they occupy. Despite the important and prominent role of these companies, studies on their use of these tools specifically for managing their corporate reputation is limited. To see whether these tools are used in managing the corporate reputation of Kenyan

public companies, it is important to examine their adoption so far and the extent to which they are used.

In technology adoption literature, there is plenty of debate on the suitability of different technology acceptance models in explaining the adoption of technology. Using UTUAT, this study tested the suitability of the model and its effectiveness in helping examine the adoption of web-based communication tools by these companies.

The focus on public companies could help develop more knowledge on technology adoption by businesses and how these tools can be used by businesses to manage their corporate reputation. This study could have practical benefits for other listed companies and other businesses as they could have a deeper understanding on how to manage the adoption of these tools for the management of their own corporate reputation. To my knowledge, no study has been conducted to examine the adoption levels of these web-based communication tools, how they are used by NSE-listed companies in managing their corporate reputation online and the factors that influence their use of these tools. This study sought to fill this knowledge gap.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was first, to examine the adoption levels of web-based communication tools by NSE-listed companies in managing their corporate reputation online. Second, to examine the extent to which they apply these tools and third, to examine how adoption factors effect on the NSE-listed companies' use of web-based communication tools by testing the strength of the four constructs of effort expectancy, facilitating conditions, performance expectancy and social influence put forward in the UTUAT model, a popular technology acceptance model used to predict and explain information systems' users' use intention and behaviour.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the adoption levels of web-based communication tools by NSE-listed companies in managing their corporate reputation online.
2. To investigate the extent NSE-listed companies use web-based communication tools in managing their corporate reputation online.
3. To examine how adoption factors effect on NSE-listed companies use of web-based communication tools in managing their corporate reputation online.

1.6 Research Questions

1. What are the current adoption levels of web-based communication tools by NSE-listed companies in managing their corporate reputation online?
2. To what extent do NSE-listed companies use web-based communication tools in managing their corporate reputation online?
3. How do adoption factors effect NSE-listed companies' use of web-based communication tools in managing their corporate reputation online?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The study helps extend the literature on technology acceptance in Kenya. It also helps increase the knowledge of web-based communication tools' use by Kenyan businesses. From a theoretical viewpoint, the examination of adoption factors could help guide the use of web-based communication tools in the context of NSE-listed companies. It could also help guide the use of these tools by providing moderators that influence users' use.

Adoption factors have been examined in various settings globally but very little has been done in the context of public companies, particularly in an African setting so this study could

contribute to the literature on adoption of technology in corporate reputation management and provide a new and unexamined area – Kenyan public companies. It could also guide the future practice of web-based communication tools use in Kenya by businesses by showing them what they need to deploy when adopting these tools to be able to take full advantage of the benefits they offer.

The study's findings could provide important information to policy makers such as the CMA and the NSE that could be used to make decisions related to the use of web-based communication tools by NSE-listed companies and influence their policy and legislation. Finally, this research could be useful to other scholars, examining the use of web-based communication tools and ICT in general by Kenyan businesses.

1.8 Justification of the Study

Companies listed on the NSE, do not engage in PR solely for creating favourable attitudes towards their organisations but often they must communicate routinely to their certain stakeholders such as shareholders by law or rules of a regulating authority such as the CMA.

Technology use rates in Kenya have been on an upward trend making the use of web-based communication tools even more relevant. This increased use of technology in the country is further reflected in the digitisation of several securities exchange-related processes. Case in point, the main markets regulator – the CMA has a link on its website allowing for the public to lodge their complaints online. In addition, the NSE provides market information, especially on share prices through a real time digital feed on its website. Plus, both the NSE and CMA have detailed websites through which they share both corporate and market updates.

The economic significance of the bourse is further highlighted by the prominence it is given in Kenyan TV news bulletins and newspapers, which often have a section/segment devoted

to sharing information on market performance particularly, on weekdays, during trading. On the latter point of national significance, from a regional perspective, the NSE is one of Africa's leading stock markets and is counted as one of the continent's most active stock market.

1.9 Scope of the Study and Limitations

There are many types of web-based communication tools, companies on the NSE, groups of stakeholders and theoretical models that put forward explanations as to the acceptance and use of information systems. However, due to time and cost restraints the boundaries of this research confined the study to Blogs, Email, social media (specifically Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter) and Websites. The population were the companies on the NSE's MIMS and AIMS segment. These are the two largest market segments for listed companies on the NSE. (Nairobi Securities Exchange, 2019). The respondents who were chosen on behalf of the companies were corporate communication professionals who are part of the marketing/PR teams of the companies and are actively engaged in managing corporate reputation on the companies' behalf. As the NSE is based in Nairobi, the study's locale was Nairobi. The data used for the study was collected over a 2-week data gathering window starting the 22 of September 2019. Regarding the factors influencing the use of the tools, though the UTUAT model offers additional moderating variables (age, experience, gender and voluntariness) these were excluded in the study.

1.10 Operational terms

Adoption factors are factors influencing the use of technology. *Intention to use* refers to *behavioural intention* which is defined as "the degree to which a person has formulated conscious plans to perform or not perform some specified future behaviour" (Warshaw & Davis, 1985, p. 214). *Web-based communication tools* describe those digital media tools that are accessed via an internet connection. (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis, 2003) posit that

Performance Expectancy has to do with how technology impacts ease in job performance that is “the degree to which an individual believes that using the system will help him or her to attain gains in job” (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis, 2003, p. 447).

Another direct construct that is put forward in the UTUAT model by (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis, 2003) is that of *Effort Expectancy* which has to do with how easy users find it to use a system or innovation that is “the degree of ease associated with the use of the system” (Venkatesh et al, 2003, p. 450). Yet another UTUAT construct is *Social Influence* which has to do with how other stakeholders in an organisation particularly those people that a user deems as important such as supervisors or shareholders that is “the degree to which an individual perceives that important others believe he or she should use the new system” (Venkatesh et al, 2003, p. 451). The fourth direct construct in UTUAT is *Facilitating Conditions* which has to do with the resources and infrastructure put in place to enable the use of a system that is “the organisational and technical infrastructure supporting a system” (Venkatesh et al, 2003, p. 453).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

This chapter covers existing literature with an aim to define and get a better understanding of terms and the theory related to the study.

2.2 Introduction

This part of the study explores the terms corporate identity, image and reputation which are often used interchangeably and then look at literature to see if there is a relationship between corporate reputation and financial success. There will also be a historical look at the development of the stock exchange and PR. Finally, the chapter will also explore literature on technology acceptance with a focus on the UTUAT model, its respective constructs and its suitability.

2.3 Main Features of Public Companies

It is the Kenyan Companies Act 2015 that gives the requirements that a company must meet to be a public company. According to the statute, those requirements include that “[a company’s] articles must allow its members the right to transfer their shares in the company, its articles do not prohibit invitations to the public to subscribe for shares or debentures of the company and its certificate of incorporation states that it is a public company” (Companies Act, 2015, Section 10).

2.4 Web-based technologies

2.4.1 Different types of web-based technologies, their history and current place in culture

According to (Grunig J. E., 2009) “digital media have made most PR global and forced organisations to think globally about their PR practice” (p.3).

(Grunig J. E., 2009)’s journal article pointed out the following:

The new digital media have dialogical, interactive, relational and global properties that make them perfectly suited for a strategic management paradigm of public relations – properties that one would think would force public relations practitioners to abandon their traditional one-way, message-oriented, asymmetrical and ethnocentric paradigm of practice (p.6).

Web-based technologies like social media have proven hard to ignore for PR practitioners. According to (Dahl S. , 2015) “Few technological developments have created, enthused and petrified marketing communication professionals and academics more than the loose concoction of different platforms referred to as social media” (p. 1).

There is a big difference between Traditional PR and Web PR:

While traditional PR focuses on carefully crafted press releases and a controlled release of information, the Internet means that information is freely available to a wider audience. Web PR allows companies to engage in a more immediate form of communication. Unlike the traditional press release, Web PR is about connecting with customers (Blake & Stokes, 2009).

Web-based technologies have provided great PR opportunities for businesses to manage their reputation as well as presented great risks too:

The continual technological advances of the Internet – namely blogs and social networks – also have made it difficult for companies to prevent both positive and negative news about them from reaching individuals in virtually all corners of the world (Argenti P. A., 2015, p. 10).

Web-based communication tools are now increasingly used to manage corporate reputation and are suitable for this as they allow for interactive and multi-way conversations. (Phillips & Young, 2009) argue that these tools allow different stakeholders to communicate with each other and create discourse (Phillips & Young, 2009, p. 7).

Online Reputation management is defined “as the process by which a brand monitors, measures and manages the conversations that are happening around it online” (Blake & Stokes, 2009).

2.5 Web-based communication tools vs. Traditional communication tools

Gurning, J. E (2009) notes that public relations practitioners have rapidly embraced social media as being at the centre of what they consider to be a new form of public relations. The traditional media frenzy of so many practitioners has been replaced by a new social media frenzy (p.1).

When examining the differences between traditional communication tools and web-based communication tools, web-based communication tools are often further classified into two groups – Web 1.0 and Web 2.0. In their journal article (Darwish & Lakhtaria, 2011) explain the differences between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 as follows:

More recently a major change has occurred in the way web technology is being used in community to a tool for communicating and developing of communities. New social-sharing networks are transforming the web technology from Web 1.0 (read-only) environment to Web 2.0 (read/write) technologies (p.205).

Web-based communication is used to manage corporate reputation and is suitable for this as it allows for interactive and multi-way conversations. (Phillips & Young, 2009) argue that tools like blogs and social media allow users, clients, opponents and competitors to communicate freely with each other, with the potential to create a discourse that is significantly beyond the control of the subject (Phillips & Young, 2009, p. 7).

(Phillips & Young, 2009) also note that these tools give less control to companies unlike traditional media where messages had to pass through gatekeepers.

According to (Grunig J. , 2009) “ With the advent of digital media, the arguments continue, neither PR practitioners nor journalists working in traditional media can control the flow of information” (p.4).

There are many benefits to using web-based communication tools to manage corporate reputation:

ORM can have a huge impact on a brand’s reputation and its bottom line. It is only through listening to conversations being carried out by its customers and potential customers that an organisation can adequately respond and manage its situation in the market (Blake & Stokes, 2009).

There are financial benefits to be gained by businesses that leverage web-based communication tools to communicate. (Hagel & Armstrong, 1997) argue that commercial success online belongs to those who organise virtual communities to meet multiple social and commercial needs (p. 5).

2.6 Corporate Reputation

Reputation is defined “as overall assessments of organisations by their stakeholders. They are aggregate perceptions by stakeholders of an organisation’s ability to fulfil their expectations, whether these stakeholders are interested in buying the company’s products, working for the company, or investing in the company’s shares” (Riel & Fombrun, 2007).

2.6.2 Relationship between Corporate Reputation and Economic success

According to Roberts & Dowling (2002) “a good reputation is a valuable asset that allows a firm to achieve persistent profitability or sustained superior financial performance” (p. 1078).

2.7 Analytical framework

2.7.2 Theoretical framework

This study revolves around the UTUAT theory. According to (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis, 2003) “[UTAUT] was formulated, with four core determinants of intention and usage, and up to four moderators of key relationships” (p.425).

According to (Venkatesh et al, 2003) UTUAT posits “three direct determinants of intention to use (performance expectancy, effort expectancy and social influence) and two direct determinants of usage behaviour (intention and facilitating conditions)” (p.467).

There are many reasons why UTUAT is popular and is used in several other technology adoption studies. For instance, it was created through a collective synthesis of eight other pre-existing technology acceptance theories (Venkatesh et al, 2003).

2.7.3 Conceptual framework

The study's conceptual framework was created by using the UTUAT model and incorporating the categorical variables of levels of adoption and extent of use to further examine the adoption of the tools in managing corporate reputation online.

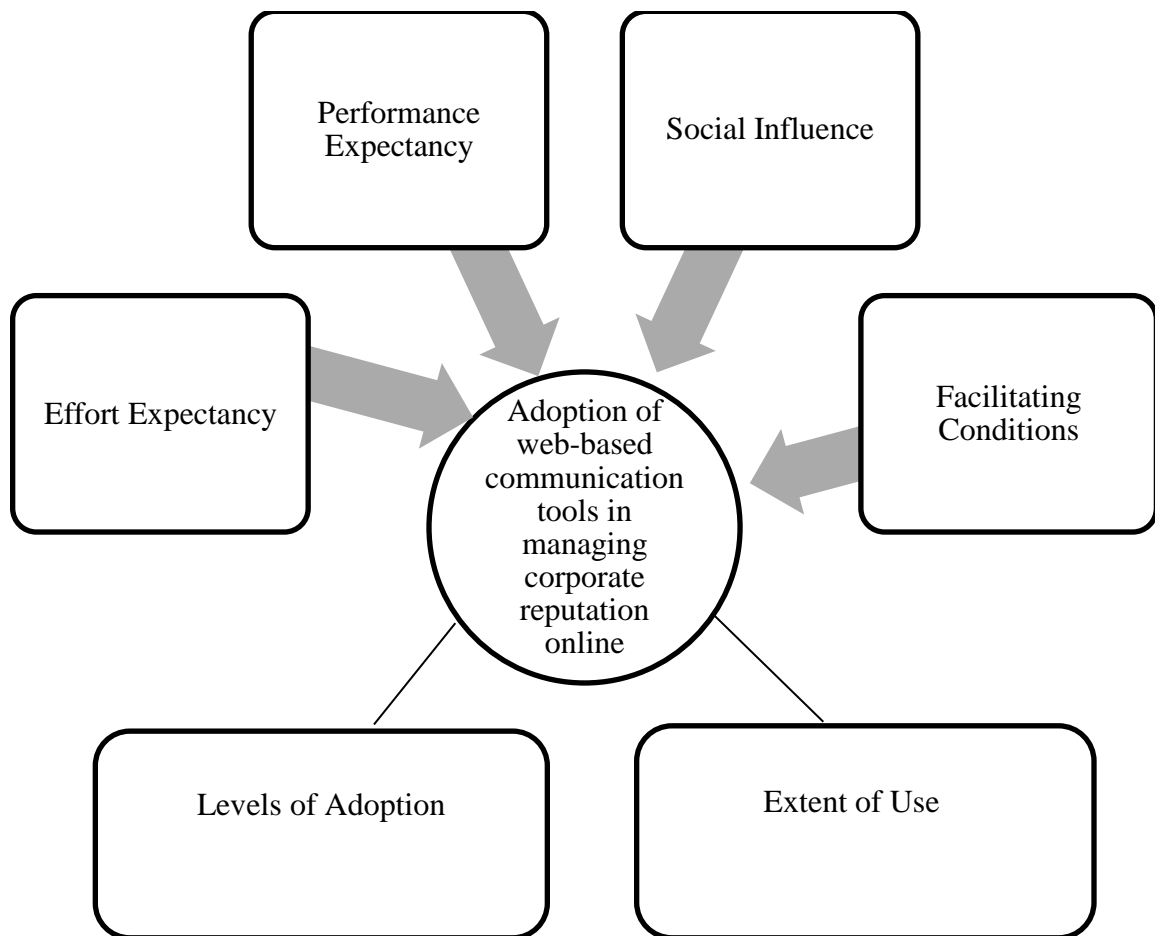


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

This chapter will discuss among other elements, the research approach, design, variables, study location, target population, sampling procedures, sample size, the rationale for choosing them, the data collection instruments, data collection procedures employed, methods of data analysis, presentation, ethical considerations and issues of validity and reliability.

3.2 Introduction

The study focused on several web-based communication tools such as blogs, email, social media (Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter). The location of the study was Nairobi, Kenya primarily because the study was focused on activities of companies listed on a stock exchange which is geographically based in Nairobi.

3.3 Research design

The study used descriptive research design. Descriptive Research Design is defined as “a scientific method which involves observing and describing the behaviour of a subject without influencing it in any way”(Explorable.com, 2019) . According to (Descriptive Research, 2019). “one of the advantages of descriptive research is the opportunity to integrate the qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection”.

3.4 Research approach

The research approach used for this study was mixed-methods combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

According to (Flick, 2009), “qualitative research above all, works with text. Methods for collecting information – interviews or observations – produce data, which are transformed into texts by recording and transcription” (p.4).

(Franzo, 2019) describes the main features of quantitative research as follows:

Quantitative Research is used to quantify the problem by way of generating numerical data or data that can be transformed into usable statistics. It is used to quantify attitudes, opinions, behaviours, and other defined variables – and generalise results from a larger sample population. Quantitative Research uses measurable data to formulate facts and uncover patterns in research.

3.5 Research method

Survey research was employed and standardised questionnaires and interviews were used to collect the data from the companies.

3.6 Variables

A *variable* is defined as “anything that can take on differing or varying values” (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016) p.398.

In this study, the dependent variable is the adoption of the web-based communication tools. The four constructs of UTAT (effort expectancy, facilitating conditions, performance expectancy and social influence) were the independent variables in this study. The last set of variables in this study was categorical variables. These include the levels of adoption of the web-based communication tools in managing the corporate reputation of the NSE-listed companies online and the extent of use of the web-based communication tools in managing the corporate reputation of the NSE-listed companies online.

3.7 Population and Sample

At the time the sampling was conducted there were sixty-two (62) listed companies on the NSE. Fifty-six (56) of those companies were listed on the MIMS and AIMS segments collectively. The population studied in this study consisted of these fifty-six (56) companies. A sample of eleven (11) companies was used to represent the larger population. These numbers were chosen due to budgetary and time constraints. The sample sets were selected using stratified purposive sampling. The technique was appropriate because the companies are already grouped into eleven (11) sectors (Agricultural, Automobiles & Accessories, Banking, Commercial & Services, Construction & Allied, Energy & Petroleum, Insurance, Investment, Investment Services, Manufacturing & Allied, Telecommunications & Technology).

For this study, the highest performers over a period of two weeks preceding the sampling were chosen in 8 of the sectors. The data over the stock's performance particularly increase in stock price over a four-week window (8 October 2018 – 5 November 2018 (excluding 10 October which was a public holiday)) was gathered from an online website – www.mystocks.co.ke that gives the trading history of the stocks on the NSE. In three of the 11 categories, there was only one company/unit and so these companies/units were included in the sample automatically. These companies are Car & General (Automobiles & Accessories), NSE (Investment Services) and Safaricom Plc (Telecommunication & Technology) were chosen as being leaders in their respective market. The next step that was taken was choosing the other units to sample based on their overall performance over the four-week window.

From the sampling, the following were some of the top performers in their respective categories: -

| Sector/Category | Company |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Agricultural | Williamson Tea |
| Banking | HF Group |
| Commercial & Services | Eveready East Africa |
| Construction & Allied | Bamburi Cement |
| Energy & Petroleum | KenGen |
| Insurance | Britam |
| Investment | Centum |
| Manufacturing & Allied | Mumias Sugar |

Table 3.1. Top performers in the eight remaining categories

3.8 Data collection methods

To measure data, the study employed both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. This helped optimise the research & gave greater insight into the phenomena being studied. Two instruments - interview schedule and questionnaires (via Google Forms) were used.

One questionnaire was used for the communication professionals. The questionnaires consisted of closed-ended questions (Likert scale type, multiple choice and Yes/No). The procedure used to collect data begun with getting the contacts of the companies and their communication teams from their websites, then emailing and calling the companies. After calling and getting through to the company, a request was made to be directed to the PR/Media Relations/Investor Relations and Communications Professionals. Once directed the corporate communication team, the participants were given the details of the research then, asked to send their email so that we and send them the questionnaire electronically via a link. The questionnaire was self-reporting and answers were received in real-time on the back-end of the form. For qualitative data collection, an interview schedule was used. The interviews which were conducted as the quantitative data was collected and analysed to give richer insights and save time) were semi-structured to allow the companies (the communication professionals) more

flexibility in giving their views & experiences with the tools. The interview schedule included a standardised list of open-ended questions that all the companies were asked in the same order. During the interview sessions, the responses were recorded and transcribed using pen and paper as most of the companies declined having the interviews recorded electronically. Due to geographic and time constraints, research assistants were used. To manage the data collection process, the questionnaire was hosted on the researcher's email account where responses were seen, received and monitored in real-time.

3.9 Data analysis and presentation

Analysis is defined as “the computation of certain measures along with searching for patterns of relationship that exist among data groups (Kothari, 2004, p. 130)”. The scales of measurement involved in this study were nominal and ordinal. In the study some of the nominal data includes the data to be collected in the questions eliciting a Yes or No response in the questionnaire such as the one below from the questionnaire:

Does your company use web-based communication tools in managing corporate reputation? Yes No

The study primarily used Likert scale tables and hence majority of the data that was collected is ordinal in nature. The main statistical test that was used is Descriptive Statistics. When looking at the nominal data, percentages and frequencies were used. For the ordinal data, the study only used median and mode measurements.

For the qualitative data from the interviews, the method that was used was thematic analysis. *Thematic analysis* is defined as a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 6) The data was analysed with the use

of the method detailed in (Braun & Clarke, 2006)'s .six-step guide to conducting thematic analysis.

First, the researcher increased familiarity with the data, by reading the transcribed notes, clarifying things that were not clear in the notes with the research assistants and checking the relevance of the responses against the interview schedule. The initial codes generated were guided by the data's relevance to each of the three research questions – adoption levels, extent of use and adoption factors. Due to the fact that the study used a semi-structured interview the identification of themes was done using the headings in the interview schedule. Some were data driven like Tools Used & The Extent of their Use and others were theory-driven like the ones named after the UTUAT constructs of Effort Expectancy, Performance Expectancy, Social Influence and Facilitating Conditions. During the fourth step (review of themes), the theme of Tools Used & The Extent of Their Use was seen to be too broad and was subsequently divided into sub-themes such as use of web-based communication tools, the type of tools and frequency of use. After the themes were refined, the data was reviewed and mapped with pen and paper. The purpose was to capture key vivid points, words that were similar to the words to express the UTUAT constructs such as easy (performance expectancy) and that could be related to the qualitative data and the research questions.

The quantitative data presentation consists of bar graphs and pie charts. The qualitative data presentation is in the form of a table with a summary of the interview responses as they relate to the study.

3.10 Validity and Reliability

The two terms are described and distinguished by (Middleton, 2019) as follows:

Reliability and validity are concepts used to evaluate the quality of research. They indicate how well a method, technique or test measures something. Reliability is about the consistency of a measure, and validity is about the accuracy of a measure.

The types of validity that this study needed to check included content validity and construct validity.

Content validity is defined as “the extent to which the items on a test are fairly representative of the entire domain the test seeks to measure” (Salkind, 2010, p. 239).

Construct validity is defined “as the degree to which inferences can legitimately be made from the operationalisations in your study to the theoretical constructs on which those operationalisations were based” (Web Center for Social Research Methods, 2019).

To ensure validity and reliability a literature review was done by the researcher and the data collection instruments (interview schedule and questionnaire) were submitted to the supervisor for verification prior to data collection to get an expert opinion.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

To ensure informed consent of the participants, a letter indicating the approval of the University (see Appendix 1) to demonstrate assurance participants that the research was being conducted for purely academic purposes. In addition, an introduction in the electronic questionnaire included a paragraph outlining more information on the research; how it was conducted to give more assurance and information to the participants (see Appendix 2). The same paragraph assured the participants that all their responses would be treated with

confidentiality. To further guarantee confidentiality the names of the participants were replaced with randomly generated aliases and these aliases were used in the discussions and results. The research data was collected by research assistants and there was need to take extra measures, to ensure the quality and integrity of the data, this was done through an online search on Google and on LinkedIn to help verify the identity of the participants as true representatives of the respective companies and members of the companies' respective corporate communication/PR teams. During the research, the voluntariness of the participants was respected, for instance when some of the participants declined to have their interviews recorded electronically, pen & paper notes were taken instead. The information the companies gave was sensitive and so to ensure that the participants did not see each other's' responses, only the researcher and research assistant teams could see the back-end of the form as the designated collaborators on the form.

The study was also subjected to various checks by the SOJMC including a requirement to obtain a Certificate of Fieldwork (see Appendix 8) prior to collecting data to ensure that all proposal requirements had been met. Another check that was conducted was a plagiarism test that was conducted post-defence using Turnitin software (see Appendix 9). Finally, to ensure that all the corrections proposed at the defence stage were made and that the document was edited as per the SOJMC's standards, the document was further reviewed by the study supervisor among other faculty representatives before a Certificate of Corrections (see Appendix 10) was obtained showing that the document had been properly edited.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Overview

This chapter discusses the interpretation and presentation of the findings obtained from the field. In analysing the responses from the companies, descriptive statistics have been used to discuss the findings of the study.

4.2. Thematic Analysis coding

The themes, sub-themes, codes and relevant participant quotes were identified and tabulated as illustrated in the table below: -

| Themes | Sub-themes | Codes | Relevant participant responses |
|-----------------|--|--|---|
| Adoption Levels | Acknowledgement of use of web-based communication tools in managing corporate reputation | Descriptions of management corporate reputation online Mention of the tools used to manage corporate reputation | Q1 a Which web-based communication tools do you use? Facebook LinkedIn Emails Blogs Websites Twitter |

| Themes | Sub-themes | Codes | Relevant participant responses |
|-----------------|--|---|--|
| Adoption Levels | Acknowledgement of use of web-based communication tools in managing corporate reputation | <p>Descriptions of management corporate reputation online</p> <p>Mention of the tools used to manage corporate reputation</p> | <p>Q3 How do you use web-based communication tools in the managing of your company's corporate reputation?</p> <p>By responding to clients when they raise issues on our platform</p> <p>by posting the current activities on our website to keep our clients updated.</p> <p>By clarifying on any controversial issue being discussed about our company by on our social [accounts].</p> |
| | | | <p>Q 4. Could you please mention the web-based communication tools you use?</p> <p>Facebook</p> <p>LinkedIn</p> <p>Emails</p> <p>Blogs</p> <p>Websites</p> <p>Twitter</p> |
| Extent of Use | Time spent on managing corporate reputation online with web-based communication tools | Frequency of use | <p>Q 5 Which of [these tools] do you use most frequently?</p> <p>Emails – Several times a day</p> <p>Facebook – Several times a day.</p> <p>Twitter – Several times a day.</p> |
| | Effort spent on managing corporate reputation online with these tools | Frequency of use | <p>Q 6 How often do you use these tools?</p> <p>Facebook – Daily.</p> <p>LinkedIn – Weekly.</p> <p>Emails – Daily.</p> <p>Blogs – More than once every week.</p> <p>Websites – Daily.</p> <p>Twitter – More than once a day.</p> |

| Themes | Sub-themes | Codes | Relevant participant responses |
|------------------|------------------------|--|---|
| Adoption Factors | Performance expectancy | Efficiency Effectiveness Usefulness Speed | <p>Q 9 Are these tools useful to you in managing your company's corporate reputation?</p> <p>Yes, they are. Not really.</p> |
| | | | <p>Q 10 How exactly do web-based communication tools help you in managing your company's reputation?</p> <p>By ensuring we keep our clients up to date with the information about the company hence gaining their trust.</p> |
| | | | <p>Q 11 Do web-based communication tools increase your effectiveness in managing your company's corporate reputation?</p> <p>Yes. No.</p> |
| Adoption Factors | Effort expectancy | Ease Difficulty Learning curve | <p>Q 7 Are these web-based communication tools easy to use?</p> <p>Yes, as long as one gets proper training. Some people find it somehow complex.</p> |
| | | | <p>Q 8 Was it easy for you/your team/your company to learn how to use these tools?</p> <p>Yes, it was. No, it wasn't. Depends with the [tool].</p> |

| Themes | Sub-themes | Codes | Relevant participant responses |
|------------------|-------------------------|---|--|
| Adoption Factors | Facilitating conditions | Training IT Infrastructure Resources | Q 12 Do you feel you have all the resources necessary to use web-based communication tools? Yes. No. |
| | | | Q 13 Do you/your team/your company feel you have the training you need to use web-based communication tools? Yes. Somehow. No. |
| Adoption Factors | Social Influence | Bosses' support Other supervisors' support | Q 7 Do your supervisors support you, in your use of these tools? Yes, they do. They give us the necessary tools to ensure we use the communication tools effectively. |

Table 4.1 Thematic analysis coding details

4.3 Questionnaire Response Rate

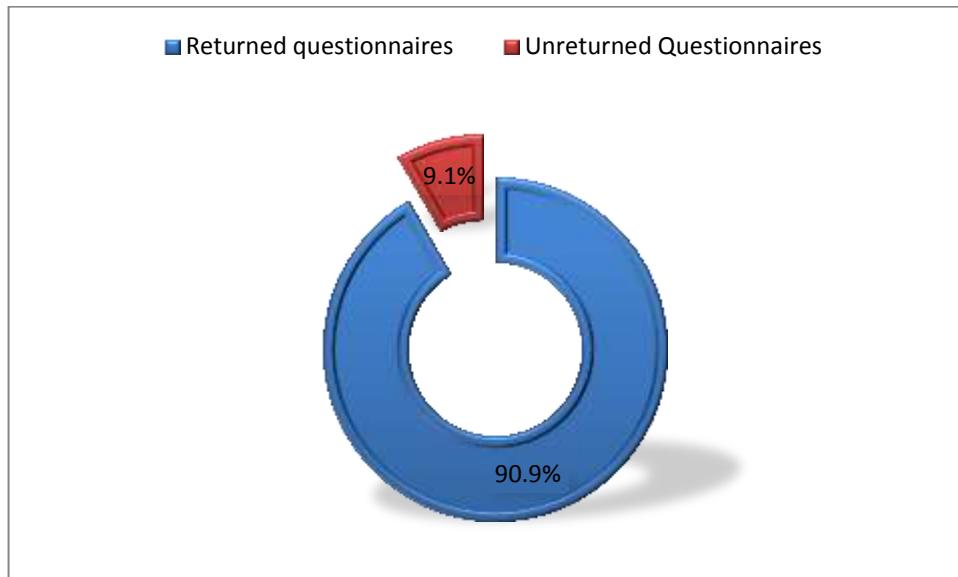


Figure 4.1: Response Rate

The study targeted a sample of 11 companies from the NSE. Of the questionnaires issued, 10 were filled in (there were 11 responses on the back end of the questionnaire and one was omitted as it was a duplicate) and returned making a response rate of 90.9%. The same 11 companies were asked to be interviewed for the qualitative bits but the response rate was lower at 50% with some of the respondents citing concerns around confidentiality. This response rate was still sufficient and favourable enough to make conclusions for the study.

This response rate confirmed the general expectation that companies of this size and prominence value their corporate reputations. It also confirms the point made by (Fombrun, 1996) that in companies where reputation is valued, managers take great pains to build, sustain and defend that reputation by following a set of practices that shape a unique identity and project a coherent and consistent set of images to the public.

Another reason could be the fact as Kenya's largest public companies they are used to dealing with a multitude of information requests as they deal with many stakeholders regularly.

Additional follow-up that was done with phone calls and emails after the first communication was sent also helped here.

4.4: Adoption Levels of Web-Based Communication

The study also sought to establish from the companies, whether they used web-based tools in managing the corporate reputation of the firm. The results of the questionnaire findings are illustrated in the figure below: -.

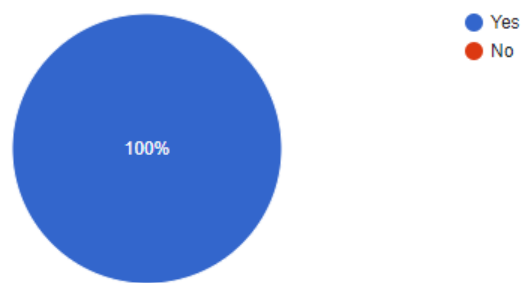


Figure 4.2: Use of Web-Based Tools in Managing Corporate Reputation

All the companies strongly agreed that their companies used web-based tools in managing their corporate reputation. This is further backed up by the data from the thematic analysis where the companies showed that they feel that these tools are important in managing corporate reputation.

Wide adoption of these tools was expected given the prominence of these companies and the fact that statistics indicate that by 2016, 40% of Kenya's adult population were using the internet (Pew Research Centre, 2016).

The data showed 100% adoption. A reason for this 100% adoption could be regulatory reasons; this is inferred from the thematic analysis as two of the companies made reference to the words – law and legislation when describing their use of web-based tools. The first of the two

companies stated that web-based tools are used to communicate routinely to their companies' shareholders as a prerequisite by law such as the yearly financial statements. The second of the two companies stated that it is important to point out that most corporate Kenyan legislation has been updated to allow for some of this disclosure to be conducted via web-based communication tools such as email and website.

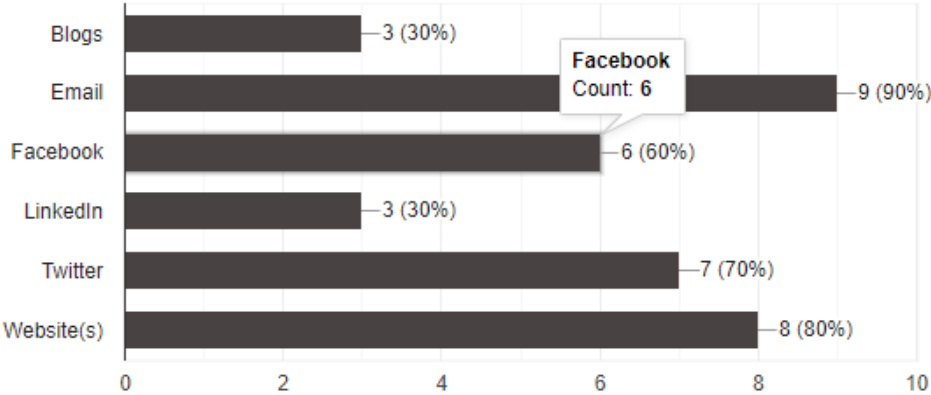
4.4.1: Web-based Communication Tools Used in Managing Corporate Reputation

The study sought to establish the web-based tools adopted by the firms listed in the Nairobi Security Exchange. The results from the analysis of the questionnaire findings are illustrated in the figure below: -.

Figure 4.3: Web-based Communication Tools Used

If you answered yes above, please indicate below the web-based communication tools your company has adopted in the management of your company's reputation. Select all that apply.

10 responses



From these findings, majority of the companies (80%) indicated that their firm used websites as a communication tool. A similar percentage of the companies (90%) indicated that they used

Email as a communication tool within the organisation. 70% indicated that they used Twitter as a web-based communication tool among others while 60% of the companies conceded that they used Facebook as the communication tool. 25% of the companies conceded to using LinkedIn while another 30% also said they use blogs.

From the thematic analysis all the tools that were the subject of the study (Blogs, Email, Facebook LinkedIn, Twitter and Websites) were mentioned in response to Q4 in the Interview Schedule (Could you please mention the web-based communication tools you use?) In addition to these five tools, other web-based communication tools were also mentioned. In response to Q1 in the Interview Schedule (What do you understand by the term web-based communication tools?) One of the companies stated that they are the different kinds of Internet communications tool, such as email, VoIP, forums, online chat and social networking among others.

It can be inferred from the thematic analysis that Email, Facebook, Websites and Twitter are some of the most popular web-based communication tools. One of the companies stated that most corporations have already adopted most of the web-based communications tools such as Websites, Twitter pages and Facebook in an attempt to build their corporate image. The popularity of Websites (indicated in Figure 4.3) is not surprising given that websites were one of the first web-based communication tools to be used. Also, as websites are one of the main ways information is organised on the Internet

Aside from email, the other prominent tools are social media (specifically Twitter and Facebook). The popularity and pervasiveness of social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter was generally expected.

It is important to note that Twitter was expected to be one of the most popular tools, given that “Kenyans” are known worldwide for their use of Twitter and there is even a “group”

popularly and loosely known as #KOT that is Kenyans on Twitter. The popularity and pervasiveness of Facebook is also confirmed in literature.

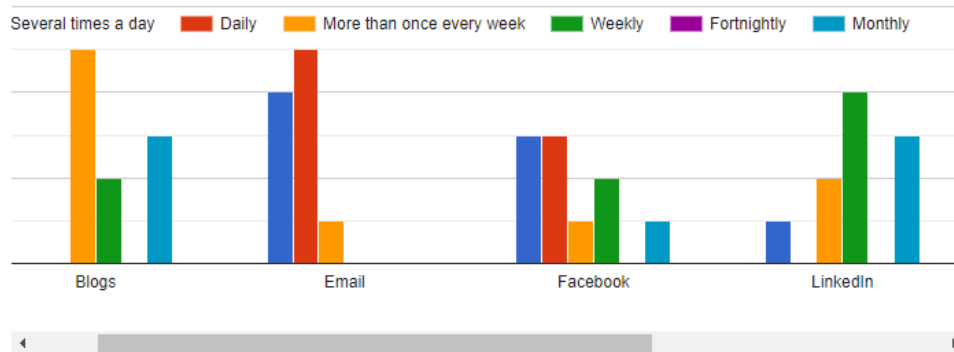
In regard to the actual rankings of the social media tools in order of popularity, a 2018 social media report (SIMELab, 2018) in Kenya indicated that Facebook is the second most popular social media platform, Twitter is sixth and LinkedIn is the eighth. Of the three social media platforms that the study examined, LinkedIn was the least popular and this data confirms it. However, the same report seems to contradict Figure 4.3 when it comes to the rankings of Twitter vis-à-vis Facebook. From the questionnaire findings, Twitter is the most popular social media tool for these companies. This is very surprising as the general expectation was that the public's use of the respective tools by the public would match the companies' use of the tools. The study also examined whether the companies were engaging in Web 1.0 or Web 2.0 and saw that actually the companies were engaged in both as websites are considered to fall under the realm of Web 1.0 while social media like Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter are considered to fall under the realm of Web 2.0 according to (Cornelissen, 2014).

4.5.: Extent of Use

4.5.1 Frequency of Use

The results from the analysis of findings are illustrated in the figure below: -

How frequently do you use the following web-based communication tools to manage your company's corporate reputation?



How frequently do you use the following web-based communication tools to manage your company's corporate reputation?

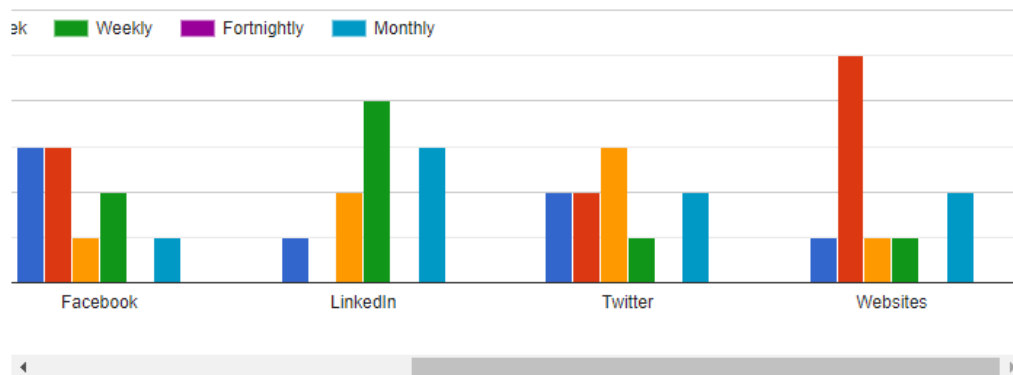


Figure 4.4: Frequency of Use

From the analysis of the questionnaire findings, majority of the companies (5, 50%) indicated that they used Blogs more than once every week in managing communication tools.

50% of the companies indicated that they used Emails every day to manage the corporate image of the organisation. 30% of the companies indicated that they used Facebook daily and yet another 30% indicated they used it several times a day to manage the corporate image of the organisation while another 30% of the companies indicated to using Twitter several times a week so as to manage the corporate reputation of their companies. Another 50% of the companies conceded to using their websites daily to manage the corporate image of the companies. The Twitter and Facebook frequency data was generally not expected because for maximum engagement it is recommended that on Twitter, the ideal number of posts is 1-5 tweets per day and 1 per day for Facebook (Co-Schedule, 2019).

From the thematic analysis of the interview responses, the frequency of use for each respective tool can be summarised as several times a day for Twitter, Daily for Emails, Facebook, and websites, More than once a week for Blogs and Weekly for LinkedIn. This differs slightly from the questionnaire findings. It can be inferred from both the qualitative and quantitative data that these six tools are regularly used in managing corporate reputation of these companies, confirming their adoption of these tools. Though there was an allowance for a fortnightly and monthly frequency in the questionnaire, the companies indicated that they used all the tools every 1 – 7 days which shows a high frequency of use.

This high frequency was generally expected because companies do not use web-based communication tools to solely disseminate news about their companies but to also respond to their stakeholders, analyse and monitor positive and negative news regarding their company. This means they need to use the tools frequently to keep abreast of changes and respond to them quickly and consistently. This use of social media to engage in dialogue and to react to stakeholders is also seen from the thematic analysis, specifically in some of the responses to Q3

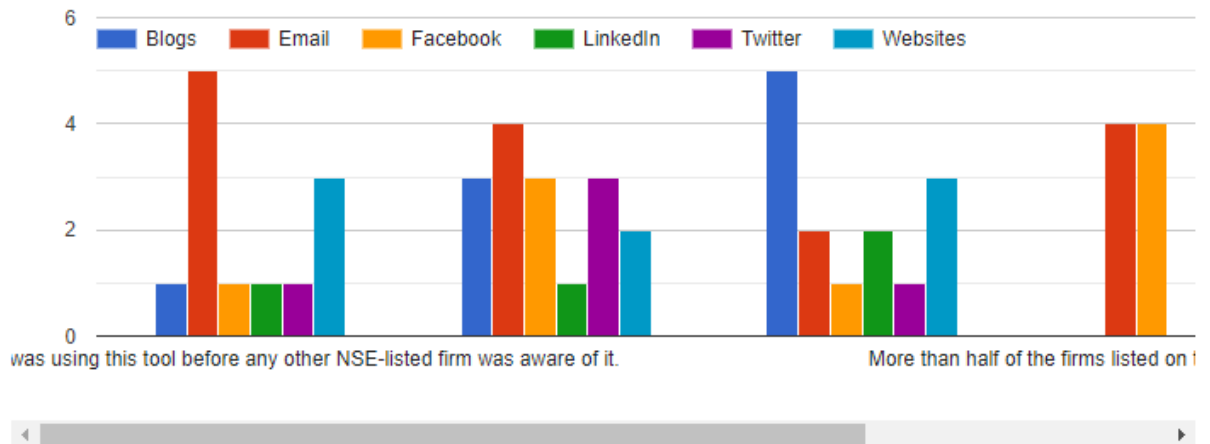
(How do you use web-based communication tools in the managing of your company's reputation?) One respondent gave the answer – by responding to clients when they raise issues on our platform. Another respondent gave the answer – by clarifying on any controversial issue being discussed about our company on our social [accounts].

Another explanation for this high frequency is the reputational risk that companies would have to bear for not reacting in good time to the negative social media actions of stakeholders such as in the above-mentioned case of Chase Bank.

4.5.2 History of Use

The study sought to establish the extent of use by looking at the history of the companies' use of the web-based tools. The results from the analysis of the questionnaire are illustrated in the figure below: -.

Under each of the tools listed below, tick the sentence that best describes your use of that tool.



Under each of the tools listed below, tick the sentence that best describes your use of that tool.

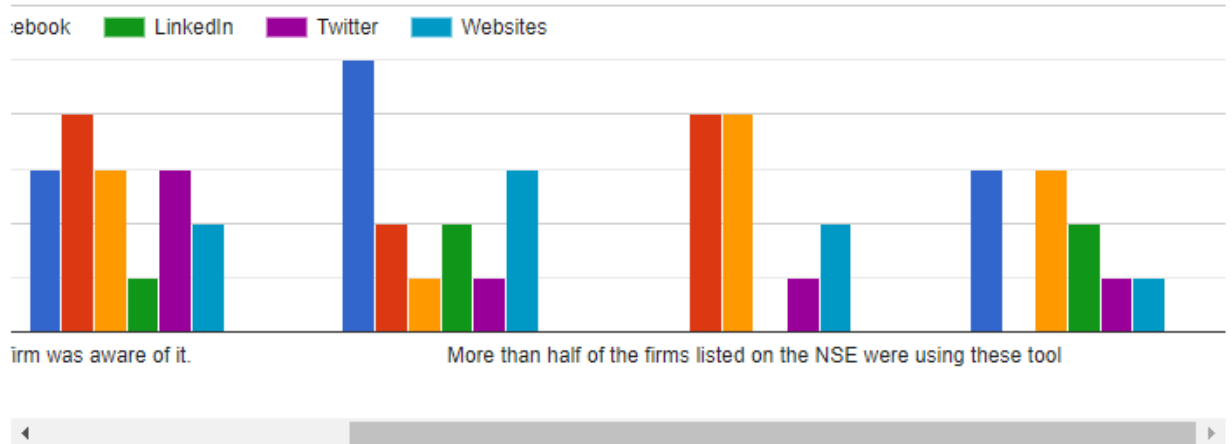


Figure 4.5: History of Use

From the analysis of the questionnaire findings, majority of the companies (5, 50%) conceded to being the first to use emails before any other listed NSE firm was aware of it. 50% of the companies indicated that they were among the first to use Emails, Blogs, (30%), Twitter (30%) and Websites (20%). It was also established that majority of the companies (50%) believed that less than half of the firms listed in the NSE were using Blogs when their firms started using. 20% of the companies conceded that they started using Emails before half of the NSE firms started using them. It was also clear that majority of the companies (40%) thought that more than half of the NSE-listed firms were using emails. before they did 40% conceded that more than half of the listed firms were using Facebook before they did while 20% of the companies conceded that more than half of the firms were using Websites before they did. From the quantitative findings, it can be inferred that Email is the web-based communication tool that

has been used by all the companies. Some companies have not yet adopted the other five tools that is Blogs, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Websites. This shows that adoption of technology is not a simultaneous one-time event but rather a process where members of a population adopt technology at different times. From Figure 4.5 it is clear that the companies started using these tools at different times.

4.6: Adoption Factors

Here, the four main constructs of UTUAT (effort expectancy, performance expectancy, social influence and facilitating conditions) were applied to the questionnaire findings and the interview responses. Then they were examined to see whether they affect the companies' intention to use web-based communication tools in managing their corporate reputation.

4.6.1 Effort Expectancy

The study sought to establish from the companies whether **effort expectancy** had a significant effect on their intention to use web-based communication tools.

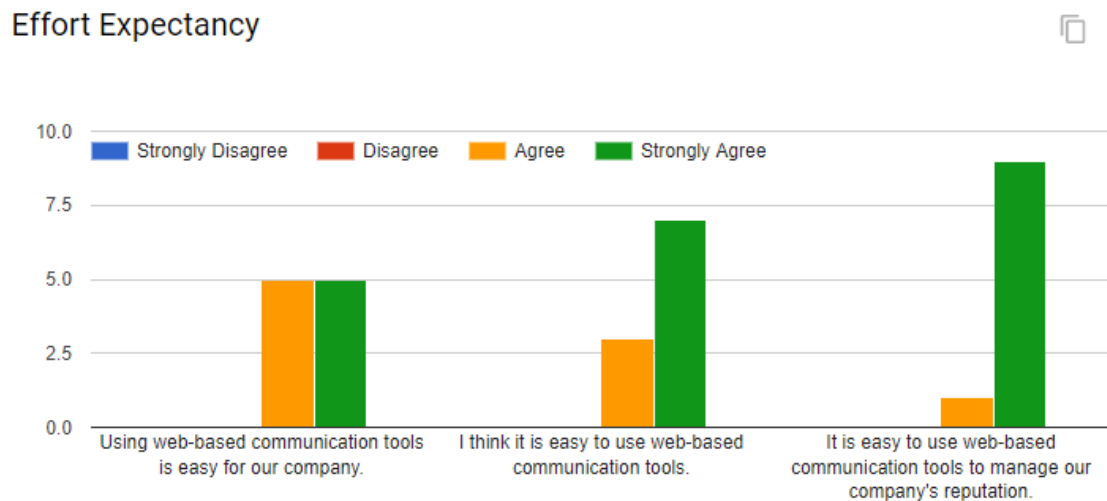


Figure 4.6: Effort Expectancy

In the questionnaire, the construct of effort expectancy was represented by the statements – Using web-based communication tools is easy for our company, I think it is easy to use web-based communication tools and it is easy to use web-based communication tools to manage corporate reputation. From the analysis of the questionnaire findings, 50% of the companies strongly agreed that using web-based tools was easy for their company. 70% of the companies strongly agreed it is easy to use web-based communication tools another 90% of the companies strongly agreed it was easy to use the web-based communication tools to manage their company's reputation.

To evaluate effort expectancy during the thematic analysis, the study sought to identify words that showed aspects such as ease of use and learnability. This was indicated in some of the responses to Q8 of the Interview Schedule (Are these web-based communication tools easy to use?). One respondent answered the question saying, yes, as long as one gets the proper training. Another respondent gave a different response showing that not all of the companies found the tools easy to use, saying that, some people find it somehow complex. From these findings it can be inferred that ease of use is a key factor that influences the use of technology.

The fact that some companies find using these tools complex to use is expected and it could be attributed to the fact that these tools have changed the way corporate communication practitioners communicate, from Traditional PR to Web PR. There is a learning curve here as they are moving from having more control of information dissemination to less control over messages and working with audiences that are anything but passive when interacting with information.

Another reason that could cause these companies to perceive using these tools as “complex” is the fast pace at which information travels using these tools as well as the speed at

which these tools keep being developed and updated. Second, that technological developments are moving so quickly that for many of them it is hard to keep up. Overall, effort expectancy was seen to have a significant effect on NSE-listed companies' intention to use web-based communication tools.

4.6.2: Facilitating Conditions

The study also sought to establish from the companies whether **facilitating conditions** had a significant effect on the companies' intention to use web-based communication tools. The results from the analysis of the questionnaire findings are illustrated in the figure below: -

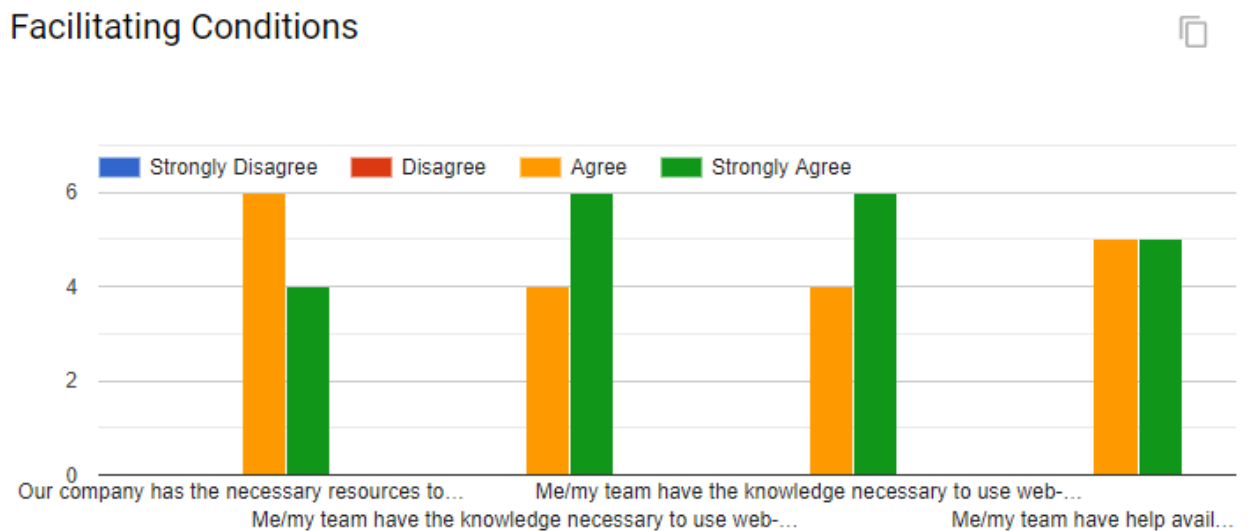


Figure 4.7: Facilitating Conditions

In the questionnaire, the construct of facilitating conditions was represented by the three following statements. Our company has the necessary resources to use-web-based communication tools, Me/My team have the knowledge necessary to use web-based communication tools in the management of our company's corporate reputation and Me/My

team have help available when we have problems using web-based communication tools in the management of our company's corporate reputation. From the analysis of the questionnaire findings, majority of the companies (6, 60%) agreed that their company had the necessary resources to use web-based communication tools. Also noted from the findings was that another 60% of the companies strongly agreed that their team had the knowledge necessary to use web-based communication tools in the management of the company's corporate reputation. 50% of the companies strongly agreed that their team has help available when they have problems using web-based communication tools in the management of their company's corporate reputation.

Looking at the thematic analysis, it seems there are differences in the organisational and technical support that the companies give to their corporate communication professionals for the use of these tools. For instance, Q12 in the Interview Schedule (Do you feel that you have all the resources necessary to use web-based communication tools) got two types of one-word responses from the companies – Yes and No. Noteworthy is that responses to Q13 (Do you/your team/company feel you have the training you need to use web-based tools?) varied slightly from the two extremes Yes & No to include a third response – Somehow. The companies that offer a greater deal of support whether in terms of training their corporate communication teams or investment in the required technical infrastructure clearly recognise the value of online reputation management. While the ones that do not are failing to recognise the importance of online reputation management and the link between their corporate reputation and their economic success.

This presents a problem as these companies are failing to recognise the fact that corporate communicators have a key part to play in the success of their companies.

Therefore, the construct of facilitating conditions was seen to have a significant effect on NSE-listed companies' intention to use web-based communication tools.

4.6.3: Performance Expectancy

The study also sought to establish from the companies whether **performance expectancy** had a significant effect on their intention to use web-based communication tools. In the questionnaire, the construct of performance expectancy was represented by the following five statements – web-based communication tools help our company communicate corporate reputation messages quickly, Web-based communication tools are helpful to our communication tasks in relation to the management of corporate reputation, Web-based communication tools allow my team and I to communicate corporate reputation messages easily, Web-based communication tools allow my team to communicate corporate reputation messages accurately and Web-based communication tools allow my team and I to communicate to our corporate stakeholders with interactivity. The questionnaire findings are illustrated in the figure below: -



Figure 4.8 Performance Expectancy

From the analysis of the questionnaire findings, majority of the companies (5, 50%) conceded that web-based communication tools help their companies communicate corporate reputation messages quickly. Also noted from the findings was that a significant number of companies (6, 60%) strongly agreed that web-based communication tools are helpful to communication tasks in relation to the management of corporate reputation. 40% of the companies agreed that web-based communication tools allow their teams to communicate corporate reputation messages easily while another 4, 40% conceded that web-based communication tools allow the team to communicate corporate reputation messages accurately. It was evident from the findings that the companies saw web-based tools as useful in managing the corporate reputation of the listed NSE firms.

From the thematic analysis, it can be inferred that some of the companies do find these tools helpful in managing corporate reputation, in fact in response to Q 10 in the Interview Schedule (How exactly do web-based communication tools help you in managing your company's respondent) one respondent answered that, by ensuring that we keep our clients up-to-date with the information about our company hence gaining their trust. However, it is clear that not all the companies find the tools useful in managing their corporate reputation as in response to Q9 in the interview schedule, one respondent answered - not really. What was unclear from both sets of data is what aspect made the tools less helpful to that company (lack of speed, accuracy, usefulness or interactivity) or just a simple preference for other tools that are not web-based such as press releases?

Are they not able to use the tools effectively because they are using them the wrong way? This difficulty in adopting these new tools based on the perceived usefulness is likely as there are major differences between how PR professionals used to employ traditional communication

channels and how web-based media work and are currently used. This is possible first, because companies are dealing with change and change is a difficult thing, this is something recognised universally.

From the findings it can be inferred that usefulness, an aspect which represents the construct of performance expectancy is a key factor that influences the adoption of the web-based media. Speed which is an aspect of effectiveness and efficiency is something that these tools have brought to the management of corporate reputation. Overall, performance expectancy was seen to have a significant effect on NSE-listed companies 'intention to use web-based communication tools.

4.6.4: Social Influence

The study also sought to establish from the companies whether **social influence** had a significant effect on their behavioural intention to use web-based communication tools. In the questionnaire, the construct of social influence was represented by the following two statements – people who are important to me/my team think that me/my team should use web-based communication tools to manage corporate reputation and people who are important to our company think that our company should use web-based communication tools to manage corporate reputation.

From the analysis of findings, majority of the companies (6, 60%) conceded that the people who are important to them and their team think should use web-based communication tools to manage corporate reputation. It was also evident from the findings that majority (5, 50%) also conceded that people who are important to the company think that the company should use web-based communication tools to manage corporate reputation. There were no strongly agree or strongly disagree responses from any of the companies which means that all the companies

perceived that important others believed that they should use these tools. From the interview data this was clearly evident as (in response to Q16 Do your supervisors support you, in your use of these tools?) – Yes, they do.

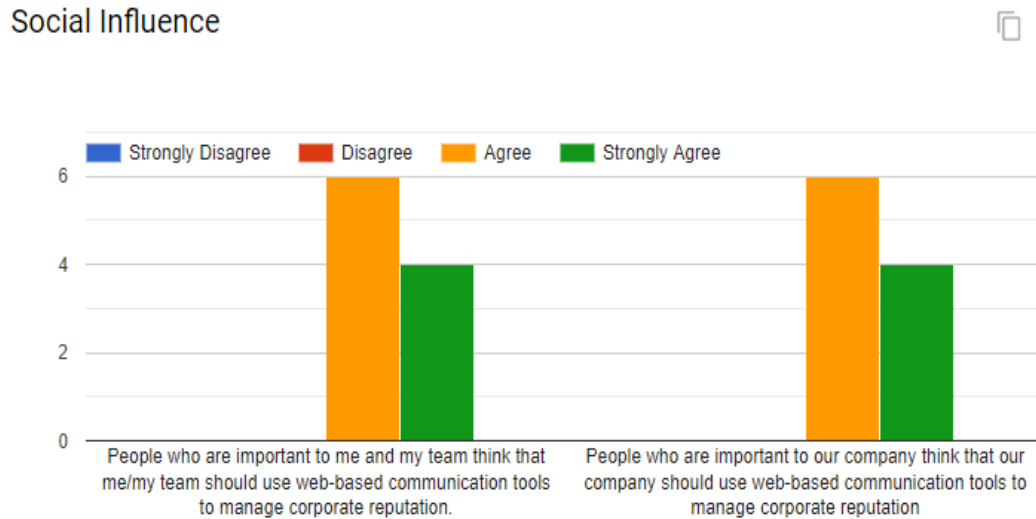


Figure 4.9 Social Influence

There was no respondent who indicated in the interviews that they did not perceive that the important others in their organisation thought they should use these tools. This is positive. In addition to internal “important others” like supervisors the thematic analysis showed that the companies also factored in external “important others” like regulators and shareholders. In response to Q3 in the Interview Schedule (How do you use web-based communication tools in the managing of your company’s reputation), one respondent answered that web-based tools are used to communicate routinely to my company’s shareholders as a pre-requisite by law such as the yearly financial statements. In response to the same question (Q3) another respondent stated that it is important to point out that most corporate Kenyan legislation has been updated to allow

for some of this disclosure to be conducted via web-based communication tools such as email and websites. All in all, social influence was seen to have a significant effect on NSE-listed companies' intention to use web-based communication tools.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1: Overview

This chapter will discuss among other elements, the research summary, findings, implications, limitations, conclusion and recommendations.

5.2: Introduction

The study was conducted to identify the web-based communication tools used by NSE-listed companies and the extent of that use. Also, to examine how adoption factors effect on NSE-listed companies' intention to use web-based communication tools. The technology acceptance model used was UTUAT and the four main determinants (effort expectancy, performance expectancy, social influence and facilitating conditions) were the independent variables in the study while the six web-based communication tools (blogs, email, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter) were categorical variables.

The study's focus was companies listed on the NSE's MIMS and AIMS segments and specifically, their use of web-based communication tools in managing their corporate reputation. The study was conducted in Nairobi using a mix of both quantitative and qualitative data. The former was collected using a questionnaire and the latter was collected using semi-structured interviews, guided by an interview schedule. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the quantitative data while thematic analysis was used to analyse the companies' responses to the interview schedule questions. The sample consisting of 11 companies was chosen through stratified purposive sampling which was used to select top performers in each of the NSE's 11 industry categories.

5.3: Summary of Findings

The study targeted a sample size of 11 companies in the communications department of the listed firms in the NSE. 10 companies filled in and returned the questionnaires making a response rate of 90.9%. and 5 agreed to participate in the interviews, making a response rate of 50%. This response rate was satisfactory to make conclusions for the study.

From the findings all the listed firms have a communications department, which has been operational for at least 5 years. Majority of the companies also conceded that there were at least five staff members in their communications departments. Also noted was that all of the companies use web-based communication tools to manage their corporate reputation. All the web-based communication tools that is Blogs, Email, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter are used by the companies in managing their corporate reputation and the most popular of the tools is Emails. The most popular social media tool among the companies for managing their corporate reputation is Twitter.

The companies use web-based communication tools frequently. 50% of the companies use email several times a day to manage their corporate reputation. Moreover, 30% of the companies indicate they use Facebook to manage their corporate reputation several times a day. While 50% of the companies use their websites daily to manage their corporate reputation.

Email is the web-based communication tool that has been used by all the companies. However, some companies have not yet adopted some of the other five tools that is Blogs, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Websites. Also, the companies started using the tools at different times.

The findings show that the four UTUAT constructs of performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence and facilitating conditions do have a significant effect on the

companies' intention to use web-based communication tools. The most dominant UTUAT construct is Effort Expectancy with a modal value of 9. All the other constructs have a modal value that is above 5, showing that adoption factors do have a significant effect on these companies' intention to use web-based communication tools.

| Construct | N | Scale Range | Modal Values |
|-------------------------|----------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Effort Expectancy | 11 | 1-10 | 9 |
| Facilitating Conditions | 11 | 1-10 | 6 |
| Performance Expectancy | 11 | 1-10 | 6 |
| Social Influence | 11 | 1-10 | 6 |

N signifies the sample size.

Table 5.1: Descriptive Statistics for the Adoption Factors (UTUAT constructs)

5.4: Conclusions

From the findings, it was evident that all NSE firms have adopted web-based communication tools and that these tools are essential in the management of their corporate reputation and they use some of the tools as frequently as several times a day.

In addition, from the study findings all the companies have a corporate communications department indicating that companies of this size and prominence value their corporate reputations, take great pain to maintain it and understand that it is a major asset for their companies. Also, they recognise the role and value of a corporate communications team in an organisation.

There is 100% adoption of web-based communication tools and all companies are using these tools in the management of their corporate reputation. The main ways the companies use

these tools is to update their stakeholders and to respond to stakeholder issues in a two-way, interactive fashion.

Additionally, the findings show that the companies use both Web 1.0 tools like websites and Web 2.0 tools like Facebook and Twitter to manage their corporate reputation.

The study also concluded that web-based communication tools can be used in many ways in managing a company's reputation and that traditional PR has indeed seen a dramatic shift since the advent of the Internet and web-based communication tools.

Having applied UTUAT's main constructs in the examination of the questionnaire and interview to examine how adoption factors effect on NSE-listed companies' intention to use web-based communication tools, the study concluded that the UTUAT constructs were easy to identify. Another conclusion made is that UTUAT is indeed a suitable technology acceptance model and contrary to what (Kiwauka, 2015) suggests it is also applicable for organisations. Additionally, the need to comply with legislation came up as another factor that the companies consider – a factor that is not included as a determinant by UTUAT, this is the theoretical contribution of this research.

The practical implications of this research is that businesses should not ignore using web-based communication tools in managing their corporate reputation, particularly to react to issues or concerns raised by any of their constituents. Another practical implication is that managing corporate reputation is demanding in terms of time, given the frequency of use, this should guide these companies in allocating time and staff to their corporate communication departments.

5.5 Recommendations

For companies to encourage adoption of these web-based communication tools they should aim to provide their corporate communication teams with additional infrastructure

support, training and show that there is management support of the use of these tools as the constructs of facilitating conditions, performance expectancy and social influence registered lower modal values than effort expectancy. The sample consisted of the top performers on the NSE indicating that as market leaders they take their online reputation very seriously, something that smaller and younger companies can use to guide them in making their own online reputations' a priority. Businesses of every kind and size should incorporate the use of web-based communication tools in their corporate reputation due to their speed, interactive and dialogical properties. When examining adoption of technology in public relations by Plcs. The UTUAT model should be extended to include another variable – regulatory compliance.

5.6: Limitations

The population of the NSE-listed companies currently stands at 63 so 11 companies is a fairly small sample size to use to generalise the results. The sampling profile used the pre-set industry categories defined by the NSE but failed to take into account other differences the companies may have, like the number of years they have been on the NSE or the number of years they have been in existence. Consolidating companies in the AIMS and MIMS made sampling easier but failed to take into account differences the companies have given they are in two different market segments. Using a self-reporting questionnaire which was designed to reflect the UTUAT constructs is something that has been done by other researchers but in this case, because it related to corporate reputation management and was answered by the people in charge of managing the companies' corporate reputation the answers might have been biased if the respondents wanted to make sure their companies appear, modern and up-to-date with technology trends. The data was collected from the companies and no data was collected from any of the companies' constituents like shareholders to corroborate the use of these tools in the

companies' corporate reputation management as indicated in the data. Conducting the semi-structured interviews on phone was not appropriate as the participants raised issues on confidentiality and privacy and declined to be recorded. This made the first step of the thematic analysis somewhat challenging as to gain familiarity with the data, the researcher only had the transcribed notes to go by. Time was another limitation as the researcher was working fast to meet the SOJMC's October 18 deadline and so, was not able to follow-up further with the 11th unit in the sample – Britam to get responses. The literature covered in chapter 2 was mainly from Western countries like the UK and USA, and there was limited UTUAT-related and technology acceptance literature from African researchers.

5.7: Suggestions for Further Research

Building on the findings of the research it would be useful to conduct a study focused primarily on the relationship between the use of these tools by public companies and their corporate reputation. To specifically involve one of the companies' stakeholder's groups like shareholders to get data on whether there is indeed the kind of effect using these tools has on the companies' corporate reputation as perceived by these groups. It would also be useful to examine the differences between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 further and compare the effects of each type on corporate reputation.

In terms of the theoretical framework, this study only focused on the four main constructs of UTUAT (performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence and facilitating conditions) as determinants, but future studies should be done with an extension of the theory to include other factors that could influence the companies' intention to use these tools like regulatory compliance.

Though this study was limited to six web-based communication tools (Blogs, Emails, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Websites), statistics indicate that the most popular social media tool in Kenya is WhatsApp, and so a study examining the use of WhatsApp in managing corporate reputation could help contribute to the understanding of this area.

In terms of a different context, to increase knowledge around the technology acceptance in corporate reputation management, it would be good to conduct a similar study of companies in the other NSE segment – GEMS to see if they use the same tools and if they use them to the same extent as the companies on the MIMS and AIMS segments.

Despite high technology penetration rates in Kenya, not everyone is web-literate so a study on the use of traditional non-digital tools like regular mail in managing corporate reputation could be useful to address that gap.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letter of Introduction

Dear Respondent,

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to participate in this research project. I am currently a Masters student at the University of Nairobi, specifically in its School of Journalism and Mass Communication, carrying out a field research. The research is on, “The Use of Web-Based Communication Tools in Managing Corporate Reputation Online by NSE-Listed Companies.”

This research project has been reviewed and approved by my faculty and my supervisor Dr. George Gathigi. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and all information provided will be treated as highly confidential.

If you have any questions, concerns or comments, please feel free to ask me before consenting to participate. Thank you again for helping me in this endeavour.

Olivia Nyambura Kiratu.

Researcher.

okiratu@gmail.com

Appendix 2: Communication Professionals' Questionnaire

Welcome and thank you for sparing time to fill this questionnaire. I am undertaking a Master's Degree in Communication Studies at the University of Nairobi' SOJMC. The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out the extent of the application of the web-based communication tools used by NSE listed companies, the extent to which they are used to manage corporate reputation, stages of adoption/diffusion companies are in and factors that influence this use. All your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality. For instance, I will replace your name and company name with a randomly generated alias and only these aliases will be used in the results.

Please complete each section as instructed.

SECTION A: Demographic Data

Full
names.....

Name of
company.....

Job
Title.....

Please tick your chosen response () where appropriate.

1) How many years has your company had a communications team?

a) Less than 12 months [] b) 1 - 5 years [] c) 6 - 10 years [] d) 11- 15 years []

e) 16 - 20 years [] f) 21 years and above []

2) How large is your company's communication department, in terms of the number of employees, including yourself?

- a) 1 - 5 people [] b) 6 - 10 people [] c) 11- 15 people [] d) 16 - 20 people []
e) 21 people and above []

SECTION B: Tools used and the extent of their use

1) Does your company use web-based communication tools in managing corporate reputation?

Yes [] No []

2) Indicate below the web-based communication tools your company has adopted in the management of your company's reputation. Please select all that apply:

- a) Blogs [] b) Email [] c) Facebook [] d) LinkedIn [] e) Twitter []
f) Websites []

3) Which of these corporate reputation aspects areas does your company use web-based communication tools to manage. Please select all that apply:

- a) Blogs [] b) Email [] c) Facebook [] d) LinkedIn [] e) Twitter []
f) Websites []

4) How frequently do you use the following web-based communication tools to manage your company's corporate reputation?

| | | Several times a day | Daily | More once every week | Weekly | Fortnig htly | Mon thly |
|--|----------|------------------------|-------|-------------------------------|--------|-----------------|-------------|
| | Blogs | | | | | | |
| | Email | | | | | | |
| | Facebook | | | | | | |
| | LinkedIn | | | | | | |
| | Twitter | | | | | | |
| | Websites | | | | | | |

SECTION C: Level of Innovativeness

For this research, six web-based communication tools have been identified to be used in the context of management of corporate reputation. Under each of the tools listed below, check next to the description that best describes your use of that tool.

| | | Blogs | Email | Facebook | LinkedIn | Twitter | Websites |
|----|--|-------|-------|----------|----------|---------|----------|
| 1) | Our company was using this tool before any other NSE-listed bank was aware of it | | | | | | |
| 2) | We were among the first NSE-listed banks to use this tool, when it became available | | | | | | |
| 3) | Less than half of the banks listed on the NSE were using this tool when we started using it. | | | | | | |
| 4) | More than half of the banks listed on the NSE were using this tool when we started using it. | | | | | | |
| 5) | We have not yet begun to use this tool. | | | | | | |

SECTION D: Influencing Factors

Choose only one statement that best describes in each line: Strongly disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Agree (A) and Strongly Agree (SA).

| | | SD | D | A | SA |
|-------------------------|--|----|---|---|----|
| Effort expectancy | | | | | |
| 1 | Using web-based communication tools is easy for our company. | | | | |
| 2 | I think it is easy to use web-based communication tools. | | | | |
| 3 | It is easy to use web-based communication tools to manage our company's corporate reputation. | | | | |
| Facilitating conditions | | | | | |
| 6 | Our company has the necessary resources to use web-based communication tools | | | | |
| 7 | Me /My team have the knowledge necessary to use web-based communication tools in the management of our company's corporate reputation | | | | |
| 8 | Me/My team have help available when we have problems using web-based communication tools in the management of our company's corporate reputation | | | | |

| Performance expectancy | | SD | D | DA | SA |
|------------------------|---|----|---|----|----|
| 11 | Web-based communication tools help our company communicate corporate reputation messages quickly | | | | |
| 12 | Web-based communication tools are helpful to our communication tasks in relation to the management of corporate reputation | | | | |
| 13 | Web-based communication tools allow my team and I to communicate corporate reputation messages easily. | | | | |
| 14 | Web-based communication tools allow my team and I to communicate corporate reputation messages accurately. | | | | |
| 15 | Web-based communication tools allow my team and I to communicate to our corporate stakeholders with interactivity. | | | | |
| Social Influence | | | | | |
| 15 | People who are important to me and my team think that me/my team should use web-based communication tools to manage corporate reputation. | | | | |
| 16 | People who are important to our company think that our company should use web-based communication tools to manage corporate reputation. | | | | |

Appendix 4: Communication Professionals' Interview Schedule

Introduction

I would like to know which web-based communication tools you use; what extent do you use them. Also what factors affect your use of these tools.

Concepts

1. What do you understand by the term web-based communication tools?

Tools Used & The Extent of their Use

2. How would you describe your company's current use of web-based communication tools?
3. How do you use web-based communication tools in the managing of your company's corporate reputation?
4. Could you please mention the web-based communication tools you use?
5. Which of those tools from (3) above do you use most frequently?
6. How often do you use these tools?

Effort Expectancy

7. Are these web-based communication tools easy to use?
8. Was it easy for you/your team/your company to learn how to use these tools?

Performance Expectancy

9. Are these tools useful to you in managing your company's corporate reputation?
10. How exactly do web-based communication tools help you in managing your company's corporate reputation?
11. Do web-based communication tools increase your effectiveness in managing your company's corporate reputation?

Facilitating Conditions

12. Do you feel you have all the resources necessary to use web-based communication tools?
13. Do you/your team/your company feel you have the training you need to use web-based communication tools?

Social Influence

14. Who are your supervisors (the people who you report to)?
15. Can you describe how they feel about you using these tools to manage your company's corporate reputation?
16. Do your supervisors support you, in your use of these tools?

Appendix 5: Budget

| | Item | Estimated cost |
|---|--|----------------|
| 1 | Email & Internet connectivity (inclusive of beverage costs when a restaurant was used) | 6000 |
| 2 | Library access | 500 |
| 3 | Personnel | 26000 |
| 4 | Printing | 10000 |
| 5 | Stationery | 2000 |
| 6 | Telephone | 2500 |
| 7 | Travel costs | 3500 |
| | Total | 50500 |

Appendix 6: Work plan

The study will take 8 weeks from the date of approval of the research proposal.

| | |
|------------|---|
| Week 1 | Review of work plan with supervisor and getting letter of introduction from the School of Journalism and Mass Communication/Research staffing |
| Week 2 | Sample selection |
| Week 3 | Validation of research tools |
| Week 4 – 6 | Data collection |
| Week 7 | Data entry & analysis |
| Week 8 | Thesis report & Writing |


Appendix 7: Sampling Frame

1. Eaagads Ltd
2. Kakuzi Plc
3. Kapchorua Tea Kenya
4. The Limuru Tea Plc
5. Sasini Plc
6. Williamson Tea Kenya Plc
7. Car & General
8. Barcalys Bank of Kenya
9. Diamond Trust Bank Kenya Ltd
10. Equity Group Holdings Ltd
11. HF Group Plc
12. I&M Holdings Plc
13. KCB Group
14. National Bank of Kenya
15. NIC Bank
16. Stanbic Holdings Plc
17. Standard Chartered Bank Kenya Ltd
18. The Co-operative Bank of Kenya Ltd
19. Deacons(East Africa) Plc
20. Eveready East Africa Ltd
21. Express Kenya Ltd
22. Kenya Airways Ltd

23. Longhorn Publishers Plc
24. Nation Media Group Plc
25. Sameer Africa Plc
26. Standard Group Plc
27. TPS Eastern Africa Ltd
28. Uchumi Supermarket Plc
29. WPP Scangroup Plc
30. ARM Cement Plc
31. Bamburi Cement Ltd
32. Crown Paints Kenya Plc
33. E.A. Cables Ltd
34. E.A. Portland Cement Ltd
35. KenGen Co.
36. Kenya Power & Lightning Co. Ltd
37. Total Kenya Ltd
38. Umeme Ltd
39. Britam Holdings Plc
40. CIC Insurance Group Plc
41. Jubilee Holdings Ltd
42. Kenya Re Insurance Corporation
43. Liberty Kenya Holdings Ltd
44. Sanlam Kenya Plc
45. Centum Investment Co. Plc

46. Olympia Capital Holdings Ltd
47. Trans-Century Plc
48. Nairobi Securities Exchange
49. B.O.C Kenya Plc
50. British American Tobacco Kenya Plc
51. Carbacid Investments Plc
52. East African Breweries Ltd
53. Kenyan Orchards Ltd
54. Mumias Sugar Co. Ltd
55. Unga Group Ltd
56. Safaricom Plc

Appendix 8: Certificate of Fieldwork


UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM & MASS COMMUNICATION

Telegram: Journalism Variety Nairobi
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Telex: 22095 Fax: 254-02-243266
Email: director.soi@uonbi.ac.ke

P.O. Box 30197-00100
Nairobi, GPO
Kenya

REF: CERTIFICATE OF FIELDWORK

This is to certify that all corrections proposed at the Board of Examiners meeting held on 24 AUG 2018 in respect of M.A/PhD. Project/Thesis Proposal defence have been effected to my/our satisfaction and the project can be allowed to proceed for fieldwork.

Reg. No: K50/700 57/2013

Name: OLIVIA NYAMBURA KIRATU

Title: MA: COMMUNICATION

| | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <u>George Githugi</u> SUPERVISOR | <u>[Signature]</u> SIGNATURE | <u>26-08-2019</u> DATE |
| <u>Dr Samuel Sirugi</u> ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR | <u>[Signature]</u> SIGNATURE | <u>27/08/201</u> DATE |
| <u>Prof Ndeth Ndeth</u> DIRECTOR | <u>[Signature]</u> SIGNATURE/STAMP | <u>27.8.2019</u> DATE |

Appendix 9: Plagiarism Test Results

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Appendix 10: Certificate of Corrections


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Phone: 011-254-20720000

Reg. No: KSO/70057/2013
Name: OLIVIA NYAMBURA KIRATU
Title: THE USE OF WEB-BASED COMMUNICATION TOOLS IN MANAGING CORPORATE REPUTATION BY NSE-LISTED COMPANIES.

REF: CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTIONS

This is to certify that all corrections proposed at the Board of Examiners meeting held on 4/1/2019 in respect of M.A./PHD Thesis/Thesis defense have been effected to my/our satisfaction and the project/thesis can be allowed to proceed for binding.

Dr. George Mutua SUPERVISOR George Mutua SIGNATURE 28/11/2019 DATE

Dr. Samuel Sindi ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR Sindi SIGNATURE 02/12/2019 DATE

Prof. Nestor Ndeti DIRECTOR Ndeti SIGNATURE 3/12/2019 DATE

