

**INFLUENCE OF AGILE MARKETING ON BRAND EQUITY AT
SAFARICOM LIMITED**

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for any academic credit in any other academic institution.

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Date: 30/11/2020

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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 my family, especially my daughter Melissa Wanjiku, my parents, and everyone else for their effort and support they relentlessly provided during the period I worked towards the completion of this project.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would sincerely like to acknowledge the Almighty God for bringing me to this point in my life. I would also thank Dr. Winnie Njeru for taking her time to shape me both as a scholar and an individual through her supervision of this project and her efforts to facilitate some of the academic classes i attended. I am also thankful to my project moderator, Dr. Victor Ndambuki, for his valuable guidance and advice. I would also like to thank my mother, Monica Wanjiku for continually encouraging me to be the best form of myself.

ABSTRACT

This project aimed at determining the influence of agile marketing on brand equity at Safaricom Limited. Brand Equity is an important intangible asset for a company. Therefore, it is imperative for companies to explore on sustainable techniques they can use to build their brand equity and consequently creating an advantage for themselves at the marketplace. Safaricom Limited is headquartered in Nairobi and, therefore, Nairobi, Kenya is the location of the study. Safaricom was selected as the ideal candidate for this study mainly because it's one of the Kenyan companies that has adopted agile marketing and agile methodologies in its operations. In addition to this, with an estimated 35.6 million subscribers, Safaricom operates at a scale that makes it an ideal candidate to understand the extent that agile marketing has on brand equity. The study was underpinned by the Dynamic capabilities theory and the Brand equity theory. To achieve the objective of this research study, a case study research design was employed with the objective of achieving an in-depth understanding of the influence of agile marketing on brand equity at Safaricom Limited. A sample size of four senior employees from Safaricom was the target of the study. Data was gathered by the means of an interview guide. The researcher employed digital communications tools, namely telephone calls and video calls to conduct the interviews due to the prevailing restriction that are in place to deal with the novel coronavirus, covid-19 scourge. Content analysis was employed to develop inferences from the results of the interviews. On analysis of the results, the findings revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between agile marketing and brand equity at Safaricom Limited. The study findings also revealed that Safaricom applies a number of agile marketing practices in its operations. Some of the key agile marketing practices applied at Safaricom include the use of cross-functional tools, user stories, scrum, and Kanban boards. The study revealed a significant positive relationship between agile marketing and brand equity. This is primarily because agile marketing has the customer at a central point of the marketing organization. Brand equity also places the customer at a key point since brand equity is heavily influenced by the perceptions that customers have towards a particular brand. The findings of the study complement similar academic research studies done on the two variables. The study recommends that Safaricom should explore more agile marketing practices such as feature driven development and retrospective that can be employed to enhance its brand equity. Agile Marketing is a nascent and evolving topic and therefore, Safaricom stands to reap the pioneer benefits of being among the first firms in Kenya and the region to leverage the latest agile marketing practices in its operations. In addition to this, other companies, especially that operate within the telecommunication industry in Kenya also stand to gain from the implementation of agile marketing/agile methodologies in their operations and should therefore explore ways to implements agile marketing in their operations. Regulatory policymakers as the Communication Authority of Kenya (CAK), should also explore ways to encourage the implementation of Agile Marketing/Methodologies in the management of telecommunication companies. In conclusion, academic researchers should explore how agile marketing/methodologies can be applied to other areas of commerce operations.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BE:	Brand Equity
IT:	Information Technology
CAK:	Communication Authority of Kenya
DCT:	Dynamic Capabilities Theory

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Brand Equity is one of the central themes in marketing. Farquhar (1989) postulates brand equity as the extra value that a brand grants to its products or services. Organizations consider brand equity a strategic reference point that has an impact on the profitability of a firm (Crass, Czarnitzki & Toole, 2019). In addition to this, Pahud de Mortanges & van Riel (2003), enunciate that Brand Equity influences the value of a firm and this consequently links brand equity to the key goals of commercial enterprises (Osborne, 1964). According to Tharmi & Senthilnathan, (2011) aspects of brand equity such as customer loyalty, perceived quality and brand awareness have directly influence purchase intentions. Brand Equity has also been linked to customer equity (Leone et al., 2006). There is, therefore, a recurring need for organizations to explore ways to improve their brand equity with a strategic goal of gaining competitive advantage in the marketplace (Aaker, 1992).

Agile Marketing has emerged as a modern approach to marketing in a dynamic environment (Gera, Gera & Mishra, 2019). Agile Marketing is based on the premise of agility, a term defined as being able to move quickly and easily. Agile Marketing complements responsive marketing. Kotler (2007), defined responsive marketing as the ability of an organization to find a need and satisfy it in a rapid way. Agile Marketing is a nascent topic that has shown a lot of potential. According to Vassileva (2017), Agile Marketing has influence over company performance and customer orientation. Aydin and Yasarol (2018) also argue that organizations can use agile marketing to improve their

marketing operations. Research on empirical the link between Agile Marketing and Brand Equity is scarce and this study addresses this.

This study was guided by the Dynamic Capabilities Theory as advanced by Teece, Pisano & Shuen (1997) and the Aaker's Brand Equity Theory as advanced by Aaker (1991). The Dynamic Capability Theory is anchored on the thesis that in order for an organization to continually add value to their consumers, they have to be dynamic enough to shift their resources in an efficient way with the objective of fulfilling the demands of the market (Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1997). The brand equity theory proposed by Aaker (1991) states that an organization's brand relies on the marketing philosophy of the firm. According Aaker (1991), brand equity theory is established on five ideologies, which involve brand awareness creation, brand allegiance, intellectual property, perceived quality and brand association.

Telecommunication companies play a vital role in the Kenyan economy. The telecommunication industry has over the past decade revolutionized the Kenya life in terms of how we communicate, transfer monetary resources and has most importantly brought forth a positive tectonic disruption in commerce (Mbiti and Weil, 2016). Kenya has in particular gained tremendously from the investment in the telecommunication industry (Waburi, 2009). This is in the form of creation of both direct and indirect employment opportunities through platforms such as Safaricom's M-Pesa service, improvement of the per capita spending of Kenyans in the low-income bracket and has also led to the empowerment of entrepreneurial ventures through the industry powering e-commerce ventures (Suri, 2017).

Additionally, the industry has proven to be a robust government revenue source through taxation and dividend payouts. Safaricom, the largest company in the industry, contributed approximately 80% of the Kenyan government projected dividend earnings (Business Daily, 2018). Safaricom Limited is among the few Kenyan companies that has adopted agile marketing in its operations. With over 35.61 million customers (Safaricom, 2020), Safaricom operates on a scale that makes it an ideal candidate to measure the extent that agile marketing has on brand equity.

1.1.1 Agile Marketing

Yusoff et al, (2019) define agile marketing as a contemporary marketing strategy planning approach that employs the use of agile methodologies such as Kanban, iterative campaigns and Scrum. Aydin, Samet & Yaşarol, Levent. (2018) defined agile marketing as a new approach and methodology for marketing that enables resources to be used in the most efficient way and focuses on prioritizing the important ones. Agile marketing is also defined as a marketing tactic that emphasizes the utilization of data analytics to discover solutions and opportunities to marketing rapidly while concurrently deploying experiments, assessing the outcome of the tests, and rapidly implementing changes (Edelman, Heller & Spittaels, 2016). Agile marketing also employs the use of adaptive and iterative campaigns (Roth, 2015).

Agile Marketing has its genesis in Agile Manufacturing, a philosophy that companies use to respond quickly to customer needs (Yusuf, Sarhadi & Gunasekaran, 1999). Agile Marketing is also heavily influenced by Agile software development (Doz, 2015), a concept that employs the use of cross-functional teams and early customer involvement in

the development of new products. Research on the measures of agile marketing is limited. Common measures of agile marketing are the velocity of marketing tasks, number of experiments ran and the net aggregate of marketing performance (Whitler, 2017). Whitler (2017), further postulates that organizations can measure the quantitative influence of agile marketing by measuring the activities enabled through Agile Marketing.

1.1.2 Brand Equity

According to Aaker (1991), Brand Equity is a combination of a firm's assets and liabilities that are closely linked to a brand and symbols that in part complement, or withdraws from, the worth that is offered by a product or services to a firm and to its customers. Noor (2015), alluded that brand equity is a set of a brand's assets and liabilities that contain measures such as perceived quality, brand loyalty, brand awareness and related associations. Brand equity as a subject has gained interest as a research topic, primary because prominent scholars have argued that brand equity is one of the most cherished assets an organization can have (Aaker, 1991; Keller 2011; Lasser, 2015). Brand equity is considered a strategic intangible asset for a number reasons such as; increased consumer preferences (Walgreen, 2015), higher stock returns (Aaker & Jacobson, 2014), increased feasibility, opportunities for brand extensions, and can act as an effective barrier to market entry.

According to Walgreen (2015), the measures of brand equity are; brand performance, which is a metric that relates to the level in which a product/service effectively satisfies the desires of the customers that motivated the purchase intentions. Brand salience, a measure that denotes the awareness of the brand in the marketplace; brand imagery, concept that refers to the unique extrinsic properties of a product or a service; consumer feelings which

relates to the emotional reaction and responses that consumers have with respect to a brand; consumer judgements, a measure that focuses on consumers' personal opinions and evaluations; consumer feelings and brand resonance, a term that articulates the relationship between consumers and the brand. Furthermore, Agarwal & Rao, (1996) postulate that choice intentions and actual choice are additional measures of brand equity. Choice intentions is a measure that explores the likelihood of purchasing particular brands while the actual choice measure explores the self-reported past-purchase rate (Agarwal & Rao, 1996).

1.1.3 Safaricom Limited

Safaricom Limited is the principal provider of telecommunication services in Kenya. The company began its operations as a department inside the now-defunct Kenya Posts & Telecommunications Corporation and was on 3rd April 1997 consolidated into a private limited company. The company has a market share of 63.5% (CAK, 2020) and this makes it the largest company in the telecommunication industry. Safaricom has emerged as a major player in both the telecommunication industry and the Kenyan economy. The company injected an estimated Ksh. 600 Billion into the Kenyan economy, which is an equivalent of 6.5% of the Kenya's GDP (Safaricom, 2019). In addition to this the company sustains an estimated 978,633 direct and indirect jobs making the company a critical creator of value in the Kenyan economy (Safaricom, 2019).

Safaricom is also a leader when it comes to innovation. Some of the key successful products that have been developed by Safaricom include M-Pesa, an award-winning mobile transfer service that is now an integral part of the Kenyan society and Digi Farm, an innovative

platform that provides financial access to over one million Kenyan smallholder farmers. Safaricom is ranked as the 12th most admired brands in Africa (Brand Africa 100, 2020) and therefore, brand equity is of critical importance to Safaricom. Safaricom has employed its brand value to its advantage and has used aspects of the concept such as customer loyalty to continually outperform its peers in the industry (Mutunga, 2012). Therefore, it is imperative to research on how practices such as agile marketing can influence brand equity.

1.2 Research Problem

Failure by a company to effectively and continuously develop its brand equity can lead to a firm facing challenges in achieving its desired organizational goals. Brand equity plays a vital role in sustaining customer loyalty and the general organizational performance in the marketplace (Keller, 2011). Grundey (2008) argues that keeping up with the dynamic needs of modern customers is a demanding exertion for traditional marketing.

There is the need for marketing and marketing departments to integrate agility in their operations and be more responsive to customer's need as this will enable such organizations to reap the pioneer advantages of being the first to fulfill customer needs as argued by Lieberman & Montgomery (1988). The use of agile marketing is now an essential strategy to maximize the productivity of marketing teams as well as to ensure that the goals of an organization are aligned to the goals of the customers. A mismatch between the firm's goals and those of the customers is costly. This is clearly evidenced by the emergence of fast fashion, a manufacturing strategy in the retail sector that incorporates agility in the product design process (Bernard & Walker, 2009).

Agile Marketing presents itself as an emerging solution that has the potential to improve the brand equity of companies. There are limited empirical studies on the influence that agile marketing has on brand equity. Poolton, Ismail, Reid and Arokiam (2006) conducted a study on the influence of agile marketing on manufacturing SMEs in United Kingdom. The study concluded that agile marketing innovations are a cost-effective course towards sustainable business growth. However, the context was this study was manufacturing-based SMEs and did not comprehensively look into the brand equity topic.

On the other hand, Aydin and Yasarol (2018), published a study that focused on how agile marketing influences the efficacy of marketing processes in a telecommunication company in Turkey. The conclusion was that agile marketing methods lead to a 33.2% improvement in terms of time to market when compared to the traditional waterfall method. This study, however, focused on marketing operations as opposed to brand equity.

Locally, academic research on the empirical relationship between agile marketing and brand equity is limited. Nyairo (2016), carried out a study on the influence that the use of social media marketing has on developing brand equity amongst three-star hotels within Nairobi County. The findings of the study revealed that social media use is beneficial to the brand equity of the three-star hotels. The study, however, focuses on social media use and not agile marketing.

Mwangi (2014) on the other hand, worked on a study that focused on the empirical relationship between the use of social media techniques and brand equity at Safaricom Limited. The study found that social media marketing is a cost-effective marketing option that helps to improve brand equity. Nevertheless, whereas the study is in the context of a telecommunication company, it fails to show if an empirical relationship between agile

marketing and brand equity exists. Therefore, there is a need to research on the relationship between agile marketing and brand equity in a telecommunication company. Therefore, this study seeks the answer to the research question; What is the influence of agile marketing on brand equity at Safaricom Limited?

1.3 Research Objective

This study establishes the influence of agile marketing on brand equity at Safaricom Limited.

1.4 Value of the Study

This study offers critical insights to Safaricom and other telecommunication companies on how they can leverage the use of agile marketing to improve their brand equity. Government institutions such as the Communication Authority of Kenya and related policy makers can use the findings of the study to gain insights about how organizations can employ agile marketing techniques to enhance organizational and brand equity. The findings of this study is also beneficial to the application of theory; this is particularly in the application of the Dynamic Capability Theory and Aaker's Brand Equity Theory on the relationship between agile marketing and brand equity.

This study offers insights to the management of telecommunication firms. It aids in the discovery of the most impactful tactics of agile marketing that can be used for the purposes of building brand equity. Further, the findings of this study can be used by academic and business researchers as literary citations and additionally be used to advance themes for additional research. The study findings also add to the limited body of knowledge available on the influence of agile marketing on brand equity.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents relevant literature that is germane and consistent with the objectives of the study. The chapter covers literature mainly on agile marketing and brand equity. It also covers areas such as the theoretical basis specifically for the Dynamic Capabilities Theory and Aaker's Brand Equity Theory.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation

This study was underpinned by the Dynamic Capabilities Theory and Aaker's Brand Equity Theory.

2.2.1 Dynamic Capabilities Theory

Teece, Pisano & Shuen (1997), advanced the Dynamic Capability Theory. The theory of dynamic capabilities articulates how firms assimilate, develop, and re-assemble their core and exterior firm-specific competencies into new capabilities that will be aligned with the unique dynamic environment. The theory postulates that firms that have superior dynamic competencies will outpace organizations with inferior dynamic competencies. The relevance of the dynamic capabilities theory in this study is based on how the theory mirrors the concept of agile marketing. Flexible planning is a central theme in agile marketing and by an organization being agile, it implies that it is favorable to use the dynamic capabilities of the organization in the achievement of both marketing and organization goals.

The dynamic capabilities theory is an advancement of the resource-based view (RBV) of the firm. The resource-based view theory had a weakness and was criticized for ignoring an organization's external environment of an organization and making a flawed assumption that the external environment does not exist. The dynamic capabilities theory on its part, makes important considerations on how resources are developed and integrated within an organization (Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1997). Additionally, the theory of dynamic capabilities assumes a process approach while doing this. The theory acts as the buffer between the resources of the firm and the dynamic business environment. Dynamic resources are a strategic asset to an organization adjusting how it combines its resources and consequently maintaining the sustainability of how a firm's strategy is implemented. Therefore, the key differences between the RBV and the dynamic capabilities theory are that while RBV focuses the resource choice, the dynamic capabilities theory places emphasizes on resource development and renewal.

2.2.2 Aaker's Brand Equity Theory

Aaker (1992) advanced the Brand Equity Theory. The theory enunciates that brand equity relates to the unique combination of brand assets and liabilities that are linked to a brand. The combination of these resources determines the total value the customers get. Aaker (1992) further alluded that Brand equity is the combination of brand awareness, loyalty, brand associations and perceived quality. Brand loyalty in particular relates to repeat purchase actions by a customer that have been influenced by the different measures of brand equity. Brand loyalty is of critical importance to an organization. Reichheld and Sasser (1990) argue that it takes more resources to attract a new customer compared to keeping an existing one. Additionally, Barsky (1994) also postulates that it is more

economic to maintain loyal customers than it is to acquire new ones. This implies that organizations with a high level of customer loyalty will incur less financial and non-financial costs when marketing products to a loyal customer base.

The brand equity model advances a number of ways in which brands can create value to a customer. Customer education is key in improving the value of a brand, this is in the context that brands need to provide comprehensive information that will influence the purchase intentions and actions (Aaker, 1992). Aaker (1992) also argues that the value of the brand has a strong impact on the confidence that a customer has on a particular brand. Brands can also exploit the perceived quality and related brand associations to improve the value of the brand in the eyes of the customers. In addition to this, Aaker (1992) also alluded that brand can improve their value by enhancing their efficiency and effectiveness of their marketing activities. Brands can also leverage the use of measures such as perceived quality, brand association, brand awareness to make brands stronger and additionally strengthen loyalty through customer satisfaction. Organizations can also use their brand equity to widen their sale margins by employing a premium price strategy, which will effectively minimize the over reliance on promotions. Brand Equity also provides organizations the opportunity to leverage brand equity to develop brand extensions and this consequently gives the organization the opportunity to use their unique distribution channels (Keller, 1998). This accountability builds trust within the organization and among team members.

2.3 Dimensions of Agile Marketing

The Agile Marketing Manifesto postulates that the dimensions of agile marketing consist of validated learning over sentiments and conventions, adaptive and reiterative campaigns, customer discovery, customer-focused collaboration, fluid plans and responding to changes over following a fixed plan (Agile Marketing Manifesto, 2012). Validated learning is a term that describes learning through an implement-measure-learn feedback loop (Agile Marketing Manifesto, 2012). In this regard, Agile marketing employs a heavy emphasis on the use of data analytics. According to Brinker (2016), agile marketing gives modern marketing a framework to minimize its dependence on clairvoyance when deciding which marketing ideas have the best chances of success.

This is through the use of numerous small experiments over large single bets. Quantitative data gathered from the iterative campaigns give marketing teams the guidance needed to develop the next experiment(s), the proceeding step after this is to test and evaluate (Kambi, 2017). Success in the development of agile marketing campaigns is dependent on marketing professionals being agile in the understanding of their customers (Johansen, 2017). Customer-focused collaboration is also a dimension of agile marketing. Poolton (2016), in his study focused on agile practices and proposed a customer-centric approach that placed a central importance on intimate and continuous collaboration with customers. This is contrary to the push model that is common in traditional marketing (Levy et al., 1983).

Agile Marketing also emphasizes on the use of adaptive and iterative campaigns. Plans are translated into components, individual projects or deliverables to be delivered over the short, medium or long term (Angela, 2015). Priorities are based on goals outlined in the plan. Conboy and Fitzgerald (2004) argue that by an organization being agile, it implies a premise of rapid adaptation to changes; this is specifically important in a dynamic marketplace. Customer discovery is a technique that determines if customers for a product/service exist and the specifics of what the customer desire before beginning the development of a product or service (Thamjamrassri et al., 2018). This is a dimension of agile marketing that is a build-up to the customer collaboration dimension.

Flexibility planning is also a central theme in agile marketing. Agile marketing campaigns are built on the thesis of the capabilities of quickly handling and responding to fluctuations in the operating environment. The first priority in this respect is to be the first to satisfy customer needs. It is believed that responding quickly to the change creates a competitive advantage. Marketing programs under agile marketing are based on shorter time intervals (Fusaro et al, 2016).

2.4 Summary of Empirical Review and Knowledge Gaps

Zelbst (2017) investigated the interplay between JIT, market orientation and agility. The study adopted a multiple case study research design and found an association between key strategic agility attributes like total quality and market orientation and operations and logistics performance. The empirical analysis of the study revealed a statistically significant positive association between market orientation and agility. However, the study

falls short of empirically testing the direct linkages between various aspects of agile marketing to brand equity.

Hobbs & Scheepers (2010) conducted a study that identifies the elements of marketing agility among IT providers in China. The study used a survey of 74 organizations, adopted a descriptive survey research, and developed a conceptual model for analyzing the role of marketing agility on organization performance. The study revealed that the application of Value stream mapping mechanisms demonstrated the extent to which IT function can foster agility. The study is however limited given that it takes a narrow approach to agile marketing.

Zhou, Mavondo, and Saunders (2019) explored the influence of marketing agility on financial performance under different levels of market turbulence. Data was collected from 518 Chinese food processing companies. The study employed a cross-sectional survey research design. The study revealed a strong empirical relationship between marketing agility and financial performance under high market turbulence for food processing companies in China. The study, however, fails to connect marketing agility to brand equity.

Davoudi (2017) performed a study on the role of marketing agility in firms' performance among chemical firms in Pakistan. The study adopted a multiple case study of a sample of 12 firms. The study established that willingness to change and internal readiness are the most important factors in adopting marketing agility. The study falls short of expounding on the linkages between marketing agility and brand value creation in turbulent business environments.

Mason (2018) conducted a survey of 28 companies in South Africa. The objective of the survey was to study the relationship between trust and empowerment and the agility of an organization and the level of how that relationship influences productivity. The study found out that agility does influence the productivity level of an organization and that the organization with a high level of agility will have a higher the productivity. The researcher observed that by embracing agility, an organization acquires a competency to sense, respond and concurrently learn of new developments in the external environment. The researcher proposed that organizations can employ dynamic capabilities to detect changes and trends in the external operating environment. Firms should also involve its partners and customers in order to remain competitive.

Adeola (2017) explored the relationship between strategic agility and the perceived performance of hospitals in Lagos, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey design with a sample of 31 major hospitals from across the city of Lagos. The study found out that indeed strategic agility moderately influenced the performance of hospitals in Nigeria. The study, however, falls short of establishing the direct linkages between the various marketing agility dimensions and brand equity. Poolton (2016) explored the agile methodologies adopted by manufacturing firms in Ghana. His study used a population that constituted of 29 manufacturing firms in the Accra. His research employed survey design. Primary data was gathered through questionnaires. Both descriptive and factor analysis techniques were employed for data analysis. Additionally, the study proposed that marketing professionals have to maintain a high level of agility in order to be in tandem with the velocity of communication between the firm and the customers. In addition to this a deep understanding of the customer is essential for successful agile marketing. In his

study, Noor (2015) sought to examine the drivers and critical success factors for integrated agile manufacturing among motor vehicle organizations in Kenya. His study employed a descriptive research design. The study found out that indeed they apply integrated agile and adaptive techniques to meet customer demands. The study, however, fails to demonstrate how strategic agility can enable manufacturing firms can effectively develop brand equity.

Mumo (2016) carried out a survey on alternative forms of fit into their distribution flexibility strategies among Kenyan food processing firms. The study assumed a descriptive survey research design. The study revealed that firms end up choosing strategic fit depending on the context of the markets they are operating in and the complexes of their supply chains. Misiko (2014) on the other hand performed a study that focused on the link between total quality management and operations management techniques as agility strategies employed by organizations in the Kenyan Dairy Industry. He discovered that agile firms have an extra impetus to develop new business models; they are innovative and speedy to seize opportunities.

Murungi (2015) performed a study that focused on the impact of strategic agility on the competencies of private universities in Kenya. The study discovered that various strategic agility variables influenced the competitive capabilities of private universities. Additionally, the study revealed that the chances for organizational growth and survival are enhanced by the existence of the firm's competitive capabilities. Murungi (2015) also argues that organizations that have coupled a high level of integration intensity with related market transactions are able to minimize transaction costs. The study recommended that

private universities should adopt the various strategic agile practices more in their institutions to achieve the desired levels of competitive ability.

From the literature reviewed, it is evident that agile marketing is has been scarcely investigated. The few studies done on agile marketing have been conducted in the developed economies and mostly focused on the concept and little on the empirical link between agile marketing and brand equity. It is clear, therefore, that more research is required in this area, which this study addresses.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This part outlines the research methodology, which was incorporated for meeting the stated objectives of this research. The research design, methods of collecting data, techniques of analyzing and presenting data are discussed.

3.2 Research Design

The study adopts a case study design that focuses on the detailed investigation of individuals from the organization by employing an interview guide. A case study is an approach that enables a researcher to gather comprehensive data on the population being investigated.

The use of a case study research design is essential in cases where an inclusive analysis of one unit is intended, as it provides a valuable and comprehensive view into a phenomenon that otherwise would be wrong or ambiguous. Eisenhart (2009) contends that case studies can hold a range of data sources that include archival data, interviews, observations and survey data.

3.3 Data Collection

In order to investigate the relationship between agile marketing and brand equity at Safaricom Limited, this study targeted 4 senior managers in the following departments: Marketing, Strategy and Innovation, Risk Management, Enterprise Business Unit and Customer Operations. The researcher personally conducted the interviews. An interview

guide is going to be employed in the study for the purposes of getting comprehensive information on the subjects under investigation.

3.4 Data Analysis

The researcher applied the content analysis methodology to analyze the data. Downe-Wamboldt, (1992), postulates that content analysis is a research methodology that delivers an organized and impartial means to make effective inferences from written, verbal, or visual data in order to compute and label detailed phenomena. Content Analysis provides a qualitative image of the feelings, attitudes, ideas and concerns of respondents. The researcher developed a summary of the different opinions, measure the consensus level or variances shown by respondents and blend the patterns and themes that emerged from the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter collates the findings that was gathered from the respondents of this study. The findings of this study was analyzed using the content analysis method. Senior managers from Marketing, Strategy, Enterprise and Customer Operations gave responses to the questions through the use of the interview guide located in Appendix 2 of this research study.

4.2 Demographic Information

From the findings, the study found that the respondents were aged between 35 and 45. years. Their working duration at Safaricom Limited was an average of between 4 to 7 years, an indication that the respondents have an intricate knowledge over the operations of Safaricom Limited. All the respondents hold senior positions at Safaricom Limited with them being in their current role for an average of three years. The highest education level among the respondents was a master's degree with the minimum education level being a bachelor degree.

4.2.1 Response Rate

This section infers to the comparison between what was targeted and the numbers of actual of responses.

Table 4.1: Study Response Rate

Staff	Target	Actual Response	Percentage
Marketing	1	1	100%
Strategy	1	0	0%
Innovation	1	1	100%
Customer Operations	1	1	100%

Source: Primary Data (2020)

4.3 Agile Marketing Practices Adopted by Safaricom Limited

This study set out to determine the influence that Agile Marketing has on Brand Equity at Safaricom Limited. The following were the findings as per the responses that were collated from the interviews conducted.

The use of cross-functional teams is one of the agile marketing techniques used at Safaricom Limited. Krajewski & Ritzman (2005) define a cross-function team as a group of people within an organization with diverse functional expertise that are working together towards achieving a common goal. Cross-functional teams are widely used at Safaricom, especially, for projects around new product development. Members of the cross-functional team are given specific roles depending on their specialty and this is opposed to the traditional model that could lead to the instances of employees placed in the incorrect roles. In this context, therefore, the right people are placed in the right role.

Typical roles in cross-functional teams include product owners, scrum master and members of the development team. The Product Owner is the member of the team who is fully responsible for the project. The key roles of the product owner include being responsible for ensuring that the team achieves its specific targets within the specified timelines,

providing overall direction of the marketing projects through the use milestones and also plays the key responsibility of being the customer's representative in the team. The scrum master plays the role of the coach in the team by ensuring that every member has a comprehensive understanding of scrum. In addition, the scrum master plays the role of a conflict negotiator in situations of disagreements.

Safaricom Limited also uses user stories as a key agile marketing technique. Agile Sherpas (2020) postulate user stories to be simple statements that document marketing work that needs to be done. In the context of marketing, user stories give marketing teams the ability to take the perspective of the customers when developing marketing projects and campaigns. The use of user stories has the critical importance of ensuring that a product feature or a marketing campaign adds a distinct value to the customer (Diebold, Theobald, Wahl & Rausch, 2018). In addition to this, user stories enable marketing teams to maintain laser focus on providing value to the customer.

Scrum and Kanban are also employed as an Agile marketing technique at Safaricom Limited. Scrum in the context of agile marketing is defined as a framework that helps marketing teams to solve complex problems through efficient planning and organization. Scrum helps marketing teams to learn from work already done while concurrently helps to plan on how to solve future challenges. Kanban in the context of marketing is applied through using Kanban boards to visualize priorities. This enables marketing teams to assign roles, self-organize while at the same time be able to monitor work in progress.

Safaricom Limited also makes use of iterative delivery as an agile marketing technique. The conventional way of traditional marketing is to deliver a project once it's complete. Iterative Delivery is a radical approach that employs the use of two to three weeks sprints to deliver the project. Iterative delivery is more effective as a marketing project management tool since it minimizes both the related costs and time to market period.

4.4 Relationship between Agile Marketing and Brand Equity of Safaricom Limited

The use of agile marketing techniques has improved the relationship that Safaricom Limited has with its customers and has therefore in part positively influenced the Brand Equity of Safaricom Limited. Customer perception of a particular brand is one of the measures of Brand Equity (Aaker, 1990) and through the use of agile marketing techniques such as customer collaboration Safaricom has been able to develop and sustain an intimate relationship with its customers.

This has enhanced the positive perception that Safaricom customers have towards the brand. This is in line with Keller's brand equity model that postulates that for an organization to build a valuable brand, the organization should be able to shape how its customers feel and think about their products. Customer collaboration enables Safaricom Limited to be able to achieve this.

In addition to this, Safaricom employs face to face communication with their customers through the use of focus groups. The use of focus groups ensures that data is gathered in a personal and timely way. In addition to this, focus groups enables organizations to get critical insights that other impersonal ways of gathering customer data cannot be able to

achieve. Customer collaboration has a positive influence on how customers perceive a particular brand and as a consequence, has an influence on the brand equity. In this context, customer collaboration effectively enhances brand equity.

Safaricom employs user stories as one of the agile marketing techniques. The use of user stories enables the Safaricom limited to have a continuous and consistent channel that streams feedback from its customers. User stories ensure that organizations deliver concrete value to their customers mainly through making sure that marketing campaigns take the perspective of the customer as opposed to forcing a product that may not have the value that the customers are seeking. Research findings have shown that user stories positively affect customer satisfaction (Torres & Tribó, 2011).

Safaricom employs the of iterative delivery as an agile marketing technique. The thesis of iterative delivery is being able to minimize to time to market and therefore, enhances how proactive an organization is. By being proactive to customer needs, Safaricom is able to attain a high level of innovation. This is evident by how Safaricom Limited has been the first to market innovative technologies such M-Pesa, M-Shwari, Okoa Jahazi and Fuliza. In the case of M-Pesa, the money transfer service has a positive impact on customer loyalty as argued by Mutunga (2012). Customer loyalty is one of the core measures of brand equity and, therefore, this effectively links innovation to brand equity. This argument is further complemented by an empirical study performed by Moliner-Velázquez et al. (2006) that confirmed a significant positive relationship between innovation and brand equity.

Interviewees from the study revealed that Safaricom Limited employs adaptive and iterative campaigns in its marketing operations. Adaptive and iterative campaigns make the use of many small experiments over few large ones. The use of adaptive campaigns in the context of marketing has its thesis from adaptive marketing. In this context, adaptive campaigns involve active tracking and responding to customers' feedback. The use of adaptive campaigns ensures that a brand is more responsive to customer feedback and concerns. A brand being responsive to its customer is a key competitive advantage since it is directly linked to how customers will perceive the brand and therefore has a waterfall effect on brand equity.

Iterative campaigns on the other hand are based on the test and experiment philosophy that is the core element in modern marketing. Iterative marketing campaigns can be described as a framework for planning, executing and optimizing marketing campaigns. The use of iterative marketing campaigns enables a company to quickly gather insights that competitors might miss. This consequently enables a company to be the first to market innovative products and services. Through this a brand enhances the perception that its customers have towards it and consequently improves its brand equity.

The interviewees also highlighted that the combined use of flexible marketing planning and validated learning improved the performance of the marketing activities of Safaricom Limited. Flexible Marketing is one of the core thesis of agile marketing. It helps organizations detect shifting customer demands, predict the actions of competitors and at the same time minimize risk while at the same time maximize returns. Singh (2010) further complements this finding by arguing that flexible marketing system has the potential of

capturing the fluctuations of the key marketing variables (product, price, place and promotion) and enhance the implementation of marketing decisions.

4.5 Discussion of Findings

In order to develop the link between agile marketing and brand equity, the findings of the study are complemented with literature review used in the preceding sections. The results of the study revealed that various agile marketing techniques have been used to influence brand equity at Safaricom Limited. The results of the study are in line with Aydin, S. and Yasarol, L., (2018) who also discovered that agile marketing contributes positively to the efficiency of a telecommunication company. This comparison particularly relevant in this case because both studies were done in the context of telecommunication companies.

In the findings it emerged that Safaricom Limited used cross functional teams as an agile marketing technique this is match to what Ind & Bjerke (2007) argued in their study. They postulate that whereas the conventional marketing literature places emphasis on the marketing having the sole responsibility of building the organizations brand's equity, the modern organization should view this as an organization-wide responsibility. They further argue that the role of marketing should combine elements such as human resource, organization culture and leadership to enhance the customer experience (Ind & Bjerke, 2007). This is the ultimate goal that the use of cross functional teams in the organization intends to fulfill.

In the findings of Safaricom Limited using user stories as a key agile marketing technique, this is in line with a similar study by Philip, et al (2018). The study confirms user stories as a key agile technique and based on the positive experience that resulted from the

implementation of user stories employees at the SME under study were open to use user stories to proceed with the agile transition. The study also revealed that customers play a critical role in enhancement of brand equity. It was revealed that one of the core motivations of the use of agile marketing is achieving customer satisfaction.

This is in the context of being able to anticipate the needs of customers and satisfy those needs before their competitors. This is in line with a study by Anna and Josep (2011) that revealed that customer satisfaction has an influence on brand equity. The reverse also applies as demonstrated by Rehman (2016). Rehman study revealed that Brand Equity also has a significant positive impact the overall customer satisfaction (Rehman, 2016).

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The focus of this section is to give a summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations that were inferred from the conclusions. Additionally, this final chapter will highlight the insights into the limitations the researcher encountered in the course of compiling the thesis and also discuss the suggestions for further reading and study.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The main objective to this thesis was to determine the influence that agile marketing has on brand equity as Safaricom Limited. The core reason why Safaricom Limited was selected as the context of the study is due to the fact it is a company that operates at a significant scale and this makes it ideal for the researcher to understand the empirical relationship between the two variables

Agile Marketing was found to have a significant positive influence on brand equity at Safaricom Limited. This is primarily due to the nature/DNA of agile marketing. It was found out that agile marketing places a lot of emphasis and focus on the customer. This is in line with the modern market philosophy that places the customer at the central role of the marketing operations. On the other hand, Brand Equity also has the customer at a central position since brand equity is dependent on the perception that a customer has towards a specific brand. This therefore, links Agile Marketing to Brand Equity.

5.3 Conclusions

The research study concluded that the use agile marketing techniques namely customer collaboration, cross-functional teams, user stories, scrum and Kanban have an influence on brand equity at Safaricom Limited. Agile Marketing emerged as a link between the company and the dynamic operation environment. It was revealed that agile marketing provides companies with a framework that enables them to detect and effectively respond to changes in the operating environment. A company being able to be pro-active in its operation can be a critical competitive advantage that has the potential of giving a company an edge in its operations.

The study also concluded that it is commendable that Safaricom has developed a structured way to implement agile marketing within its marketing operations despite the practice still being on its nascent phase. This is primarily effective implementation is necessary to reap the full benefits of the agile marketing. By a company having a framework and designating roles within the company that guide the implementation of agile marketing, it greatly improves the implementation of agile marketing withing the organization. Additionally, the study concluded that other companies in the telecommunication industry have a lot to gain from agile marketing and should invest resources to see its implementation within their organizations.

5.4 Recommendations

The study recommends that Safaricom should look into the use of more agile marketing technique. Agile Marketing is still a nascent topic in marketing and with new developments and additions, Safaricom stands to gain from the continued implementation on new agile

marketing techniques. Safaricom should consider using more sophisticated agile marketing methods such as feature-driven development, lean startup and retrospectives.

In addition to this Safaricom should also consider the implementation of agile methodologies in upstream and downstream functions of marketing. Marketing professionals stand to gain from the knowledge and application of agile methodologies in marketing. As a recommendation, professionals should work on a localized framework that will guide marketers in the implementation of agile marketing.

5.5 Limitations of the study

Due to the limitation attributed to time and related costs, the focus of this study was Safaricom Limited. The findings of this study are therefore, exclusive to Safaricom Limited and may not be used as a direct reference or be directly applied to other related studies. Additionally, a case study research design was employed for this study with the objective of developing an in-depth investigation of Safaricom Limited.

A case study research design has the limitation in that it does not establish a quantitative empirical relationship and thus cannot be used to test a hypothesis. The study was conducted during the period that the World and Kenya was ravaged by the effects of the novel coronavirus (Covid-19). Mobility was limited and the researcher had to use digital communication tools to converse with the respondents.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

Having completed the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the research study, it is now appropriate to have offer suggestions on areas of further studies. Researchers can perform additional studies on the latest agile marketing techniques since research on the subject is limited and hence the need for scholars to effectively build a body of knowledge around the subject and as well as how agile marketing can be used to improve marketing operations on a micro level and general company operations at a macro-level.

Brand Equity remains one of the key cornerstones of the importance that branding has on giving companies a sustainable competitive advantage. Research on how modern marketing concepts such as Agile Marketing and Digital Marketing limited and scholars and academic researchers have the opportunity to study how such emergent concepts affect brand equity. In addition to this, a potential area of study is on the influence that agile methodologies have new product development. With the dynamic and complex nature of the modern consumer, it is imperative to develop frameworks that companies can refer to when dealing with consumers. Scholars can also expand the scope of the study to include more firms beyond the telecommunication industry.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Introductory Letter from the University



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Telephone: 020-8095398
Telegrams: "Varsity", Nairobi
Telex: 22095 Varsities
Our Ref: D61/10363/2018

Tel: 020 8095398
Nairobi, Kenya

Date: 20th November, 2020

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The bearer of this letter, **Kevin Kimani Ndung'u** of Registration Number **D61/10363/2018** is a Master of Business Administration (MBA) student of the University of Nairobi.

He is required to submit as part of his coursework assessment a research project report. We would like the student to do his project on **the influence of agile marketing on brand equity at Safaricom Limited**. We would, therefore, appreciate if you assist him by allowing him to collect data within your organization for the research.

The results of the report will be used solely for academic purposes and a copy of the same will be availed to the interviewed organization on request.

Thank you.


PHILIP NGIGI

FOR: DEAN, SCHOOL OF BUSINESS



Appendix II: Interview Guide

PART A

1. What is your position at Safaricom Kenya Limited?

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2. What is your working duration with Safaricom?

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3. How long have you held your current position?

.....
.....

4. Kindly state your highest academic qualification?

.....
.....

PART B

5. What are the current agile marketing strategies at Safaricom Kenya?

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.....

6. What strategies have Safaricom put satisfy the customer? And are they adequate?

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.....
.....

7. Do you have software's in place to support the organisation marketing strategy? Kindly note them

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.....

8. How has the software's helped to create a strong Safaricom brand?

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.....
.....

9. Are your marketing teams built around motivated individuals? Kindly elaborate

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.....
.....

10. What is your organisation doing to encourage face-to-face communication in the organisation?

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.....
.....

11. How effective are your customer's feedback channels?

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.....
.....

12. Does the organisation fully address customer's feedback concern?

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.....
.....

13. Do you consider the agile marketing strategies deployed by Safaricom Limited to be proactive or reactive to the changes in the external environment?

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14. What is your take on Safaricom brand equity based on agile marketing practices adopted?

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15. How have the agile marketing practices reflected on Safaricom share price?

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16. In your view, do agile marketing at Safaricom shape consumer's perception of the company using measures such as quality, price, distinctiveness and availability service?

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17. What agile marketing practices would you recommend to Safaricom going forward for the purposes of enhancing their brand Equity?

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