# The Effectiveness of Social Media Advertising on College Going Social

**Network Site Users:** 

A Survey of the University of Nairobi Students

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A Research Project Report Submitted to the School of Journalism and Communication Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree of Master of Arts in Communications Studies, at the University of

Nairobi

November, 2012



#### DECLARATION

I declare that this research project submitted to The University of Nairobi for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Communication Studies is my original work and has not previously been submitted to any other university or faculty.

Signature.

Date 12/11/

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I declare that I have supervised this candidate and hereby submit this proposal for review by

University Postgraduate Board

Signature .

Date 8/11/2012

Dr. Tom Odhiambo

# DEDICATION

This Research report is dedicated to my dad, the late Joshua Olilo Miseda.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Tom Odhiambo for guiding me throughout this study and encouraging me. I also would like to acknowledge research assistant Ken Alwala for the assistance he provided in data collection and analysis. I would also like to acknowledge my family for the support they provided during my study. Without their love and support this project would not have been made possible.

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#### ACRONYMS

- SNS Social networking sites
- FB Facebook
- WOM Word of mouth
- CCK Communication commission of Kenya
- IPA Institute of Practitioners in Advertising
- TV Television
- KBO Kenya Business online
- SME Small and medium enterprises
- UON University Of Nairobi
- FM Frequency Modulation
- KBO Kenya business online

#### ABSTRACT

This study seeks to find out the effectiveness of Social networking sites (SNS) advertisements among college going students. For the purposes of this study, effectiveness is measured by products awareness, purchasing intent and brand loyalty. The findings should be able to demonstrate that SNS advertisements have a positive effect on all three. The literature review has concentrated on information that clearly shows that traditional media is facing certain challenges when it comes to reaching youth populations. This challenges narrow down to issue such us measuring viewership and audience segmentation or targeting. There is shift towards new media in particular SNS to bridge theses gaps but whether that actually works is what the survey will be investigating. The research was carried out through simple questionnaires administered to a sample of 100 students from the University of Nairobi main campus. Over half of university students who are on SNS are subscribed to more than one service. Youths on social networking sites do interact with adverts on SNS. Brand or product information obtained on social media does influence youth attitudes towards them. Beyond knowledge reasons SNS is increasingly becoming the first port of call before purchasing decisions are made hence a key determiner of purchasing intent.

### CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

A social network can be defined as an interconnection of social interactions and personal relationships, (*Oxford Dictionary*). This can be group of friends living within a city, or a group of college classmates who remain in frequent contact socially. It can also be a group formed specifically to accomplish a poorly structured set of tasks over time

Humans in all cultures at all times form complex social networks. The term social network here means ongoing relations among people that matter to those engaged in the group, either for specific reasons (like fantasy football, cancer support groups, task forces at work) or for more general expressions of mutual solidarity (like families, clans, friends, social clubs). Social networks among individuals who may not be related can be validated and maintained by agreement on objectives, social values, or even by choice of entertainment, such as a group of people who meet for tailgating parties when their professional football team plays home games (Sriram, Babu, Kumar, & Sivantha).

Membership in these networks can be relatively permanent (extended families, which endure for lifetimes) or flexible (pregnancy support groups, in which members rotate out after a few months). They involve reciprocal responsibilities and roles that may be altruistic or self-interest based (or a combination or both). Social networks are trusted because of shared experiences and the perception of shared values or shared needs. Contemporarily as our lives become busier and technology advances, these networks and their interactions have been able to overcome limitations of time, distance and space by migrating to the internet. As such, Social Networks have an expanded definition that refers to the online tools and services that allow people to share and interact in virtual communities.

Virtual community is a frontier-less, geographically dispersed community of people and organizations connected via internet or other networks. This is also called online community or web community (*Online Business Dictionary*).

Social media or social network sites can be define as a web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semipublic profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those are made by others within the system. (Boyd & Ellison, 2007)

Social networking sites include social networks (Facebook, google+, Myspace), picture sharing online albums (Instagram, Picassa, Flickr, Photobucket), professional networking (linked-in, twitter).

As can be inferred, interactions on these networks are assumed to be mostly on social issues. People share with those they are close to about their personal lives; the highs and lows, events and incidences, but mostly of personal nature. But since our lives are not compartmentalized, this ideal does not hold. Friends tell friends about restaurants and movies, jobs and businesses, as well as they tell them about weddings and functals. And this creates a powerful business tool.

Business interest in online social networks in many cases is based upon the belief that the networks will be trusted, that trust will lead to trusted recommendations, that trusted recommendations will lead to sales, and that these sales can somehow be harnessed to produce revenues for the network operator. It is not yet clear to what extent the relationships in virtual social networks are trusted or valued, or to what extent they can be harnessed and monetized without destroying the trust on which the entire business model is based

In these networks due to the trust in each other and shared interest, marketing and advertisement depend more on word of mouth (WOM) transmission. Word of mouth advertising here is oral or written recommendation by a satisfied customer to the prospective customers of a good or service. Considered to be the most effective form of promotion, it is also called word of mouth advertising which is incorrect because, by definition, advertising is a paid and non-personal communication (*Business Dictionary*).

The principles of WOM advertising are part of what has been implemented in advertising on social network sites. Apart from the direct adds that are appropriated by service providers there is also reliance on people sharing their experiences with each other or recommending to each other products and services over social networking sites (*Business Dictionary*).

Social networking sites unique characteristics that make them suitable advertising medium as described by Dijk (2006) are integrated and interactive in nature. The Internet provides numerous venues for consumers to share their views, preferences, or experiences with others, as well as opportunities for firms to take advantage. This ability

to allow for sharing of views, preferences and experiences makes SNS advertising go further than traditional advertising in marketing a product. Social media amplifies tradition advertising media and make them come out more powerful.

# Advertising on Social Networking Sites

Social network advertising is a term that is used to describe a form of online advertising that focuses on social networking sites. Major benefits of advertising on a social networking site (Facebook, MySpace, Friendster, bebo Friendster, orkut...and many others) is that advertisers can take advantage of the users demographic information and target their advertisements appropriately. Direct advertising based on the network of friends is the most effective format but also causes the most controversy. Indirect advertising is an innovative marketing technique in which a company will create a 'page' or 'group' those users can choose to join. The best use out of social networks is not to make money 'directly' off them, but to harness their marketing potential and to use them to market your own business.

The use of social network sites for advertising has allowed for the popularity of other marketing techniques here being viral marketing which relies on the same principles. Poter & Golan, (2006) offer the first empirical effort to define viral advertising, as "unpaid peer-to-peer communication of provocative content originating from an identified sponsor using the Internet to persuade or influence an audience to pass along the content to others." With the emergence of social media, viral advertising also has gained tremendous popularity; online social platforms dramatically have changed the way consumers respond to advertising (Marken, 2007)

Once a consumer joins a brand-related group on Facebook, their brand perceptions and purchasing decisions could be influenced by mobilizing information they receive from other members. Meanwhile, they also may encounter more opportunities to pass along viral messages created by advertisers to their contacts through social network sites (SNS). As consumers increasingly turn to SNS groups as trusted sources of information and opmions, new opportunities arise to build consumer-brand relationships and advertising platforms (Shu-Chuan, 2011).

The rise of social media as an alternative channel for advertising in the resent years has made many organizations to take to it as a means of promoting and marketing their products. In Kenya there is a rising online community that would be a good target for advertisers and marketers. A good number of private companies and organizations both local and international have employed the use of social media to target the Kenya market. This is evidenced by Google's Kenya Business Online project which seeks to support Small and Medium Enterprises improve their visibility online. Big blue chip corporations are also increasing their brand communications in online SNS channels especially twitter and Facebook. Safaricom Kenya limited is especially renowned for this.

### Why Social Networking Sites are Used as an Advertising Tool

From the last decade, social networking is on the rise for business reasons and also for personal use With its popularity increasing day by day, the need for business tables to go social is indispensable. There are four main reasons for social networks used as advertising tools according (Wind & Todi, 2008)

Cost efficiency. Advertising on social networks is relatively cheap compared to other Traditional media; it usually has a similar or expanded reach at much lower costs. In Addition. it is possible for companies to generate free publicity through creative Advertising techniques. There have been a number of successful viral marketing Campaigns in YouTube and Facebook in the recent years. Creating a page for a brand in Facebook is free which is cost efficiency and also creates a large number of active followers.

- 2 I arge reach. Since social networking websites have millions of active users, it has become more popular and acts as a good medium for sharing their social experience and helps in building relationships. The impact for a social network is the reach of an advertisement on a large scale. With its demand for advertisement is on the rise, displaying an advertisement is significant in such networks is essential for its improvement in potential. The reach by a social network is greater than any other mass media of its kind.
- 3. Targeted advertising. Advertisers have access to a great deal of information about users and their interests, allowing them to customize and target their advertisements to a degree not yet seen in any other advertising medium. For example, if a user lists "pro Wrestling" as an interest on their Facebook profile, the websites advertising system Will generate advertisements based on that particular interest. However, this can raise Privacy issues: Facebook's Beacon targeted advertising system suffered a great deal of backlash and had to be modified heavily to appease its users.

4 Time spent online. People are spending increasing amounts of time online, especially on social networking websites, at the expense of traditional advertising media such as television and newspapers. This can be viewed as a result of many of the traditional functions – news, television shows – of the old advertising Media being shifted online to social networks such as Digg and YouTube. As a result, Advertisers are increasingly looking for ways to reach out to consumers who are spending more and more time online.

#### **Problem Statement**

In the past few years, social media have become perhaps the most popular communication channels for college-aged Internet users (Pelling & White, 2009). The Kenya national information communication technology survey (Communications Commission of Kenya, 2011) indicates that internet use peaks at the ages 20years to 34years. The survey also reports that in terms of level of education tertiary institutions have the highest internet use. Another report by Safaricom indicates that on the top ten most visited websites the highest ranked on the list is Facebook. Therefore we can also assume in Kenya too social networking sites are the most popular communication channels among college-aged Internet users.

In regard to the use of SNS, The Youth Fact Book (2010) indicates that some of the uses of social networking and their outcomes include up-loading photos and videos, joining brand fan groups, contributing to a decision, meeting old friends, checking out adverts, meeting someone for the first time online, meeting and dating someone as well as getting jobs. This study was interested in those who joined brand fan groups which was at 56% of SNS users and those checking out adverts which was at 40% according to (Njonjo, 2010).

This study was to find out how much advertising influence is there on Social Network Sites among college going SNS users. Bearing in mind that, they are they make the majority of internet users who are in social networking sites. It would be interesting to know if any of those who made any purchasing decisions or got more information about products or felt more attracted to a particular product how much did advertising have to do with that decision.

The assumption here is that this target group actually actively interacting with product advertisements on SNS and makes decisions from the level of interaction. There is also the assumption that the target group get to discuss and share with each other product experiences. This may on one on one basis or via discussion group fora. For example in I acebook when consumers join brand-related I acebook groups, this information gets disclosed to their friends on the site. Beyond the typical Facebook profiles, members of groups also can post comments and opinions about products on discussion fora, and the activity in these groups may be viewed by other friends through news feeds, (Shu-Chuan, 2011).

## Objectives of the study

The objective of this study was to find out if advertisements on social sites:

- 1. create/increase product awareness
- -. influence purchasing intent

# 3 Create or increase brand loyalty

Purchasing intent: This is the likelihood that a consumer will buy a particular product resulting from the interaction of his or her need for it, attitude towards 11 and perceptions of 11 and of the company which produces it. The study will try and find out how much of this would be swayed by his or her interactions, attitudes and perceptions gained from SNS.

Product awareness: This is the proportion of individuals within a target market who are aware of a particular product and/or brand. The study will also sort to find out how much of the target group here being college-aged SNS users, have increased their awareness of products through SNS.

Product loyalty 1 his is the situation in which a consumer generally buys the same **manufacturer**-originated product or service repeatedly over time rather than buying from multiple suppliers within the category. The study will also aim to find out how much of this loyalty is brought about by interaction with products or users in SNS.

#### **Research** questions

1. Is there significant change in the level of purchasing intent of SNS users?

2 Is there significant change in product awareness as influenced by adverts on SNS?

3 Is there significant change in product loyalty as influenced by SNS?

#### Hypothesis

Based on what we discussed in here, the hypothesis 1 and 2 of this study are formed as follows:

1 There is a significant relationship between social media advertising and purchasing intent among college aged SNS users

2: There is a significant relationship between social media advertising and product awareness and loyalty among college aged SNS users.

## Significance of the study

All companies need to advertise and traditional media is often expensive and has certain challenges that limit its effectiveness. This study will explore the extent to which SNS marketing is possible and give indications as to its effectiveness. This is important to itrms as it will enable decide on whether they need to incorporate it into their marketing channels as they expand their advertisement channels.

The study is very significant in unearthing what works and does not work when it comes to SNS advertising in Kenya Public relation and advertising agencies and consultancies should find this important as they help client firms design online marketing strategies.

## Limitations of the Study

It is not yet clear to what extent the relationships in virtual social networks are trusted or valued, or to what extent they can be harnessed and monetized without destroying the trust on which the entire business model is based

There was no guarantee that the students attending classes at the university of Nairobi main campus had similar knowledge, attitudes and exposure on SNS to those who did not attend classes at the university of Nairobi, as this sample was not drawn randomly, implying that not all students in the research population had an equal chance of being included in the research sample.

### Assumptions of the Study

From the information indicated on the background of this study the study assumes that assume in Kenya social networking sites are the most popular communication channels among college-aged Internet users.

The other assumption is that the college student while on social networking sites actually interact with advertisements on the SNS

## **CHAPTER TWO**

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

# **Definition of Advertisement**

Advertising is any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods and services through mass media such as newspapers, magazines, television or radio by an identified sponsor (Kotler & Armstrong. Principles of Marketing, 2009).

The Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA), the body which represents advertising in the agencies United Kingdom, defines advertising as: "The means of providing the most persuasive possible selling message to the right prospects at the lowest possible cost"

The Oxford Dictionary defines advertisement as a notice or announcement in a public medium promoting a product, service, or event.

Traditional forms of advertising media can be television, radio, newspaper, magazine and yellow pages. These traditional medium come with several limitations to them that make the new media look more lucrative or worth venturing into.

Traditional mediums come with several weaknesses, the most outstanding being that they subscribe to the mass effect theories that suggest that the mass media could influence a very large group of people directly and uniformly by 'shooting' or 'injecting' them with appropriate messages designed to trigger a desired response (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 2005).

New media here are mobile advertising, video game advertising and online advertising which include SNS advertising. Mobile advertising is the communication of messages or media content to one or more potential customers who use mobile devices (*E-marketing Dictionary*). Video game advertising is the communication of media content on any of various games played using a microchip-controlled device, as an areade machine or handheld toy. Social media advertising refers to the process of gaining website traffic or attention through social media sites (*Online Business Dictionary*). SNS advertising has an edge over traditional media mainly because of its interactive ability.

## Social media and product awareness

This is the Extent to which a brand is recognized by potential customers, and is correctly associated with a particular product. Expressed usually as a percentage of target market, brand awareness is the primary goal of advertising in the early months or years of a product's introduction (*Online Business Dictionary*)

Traditional media for example radio achieves this via repeated adverts on air at prime times when most people are assumed to be listening. There is no exact means of measuring the influence brought about by radio.

Social media advertising take this a level further providing instant observation on consumer reaction at the point of being made aware of a product. If one introduces a product/brand or announces an event on a medium such us l acebook, from the number of likes and comments it accumulates one can be able to gauge the initial level of awareness at inception. This can be compared as time goes by to see the general intake of the product/brand

Traditional media also worked on the assumption that the population is as a sitting duck. People are seen as passive and are seen as having a lot media material "shot" at them. People end up thinking what they are told because there is no other source of information (Katz Lazarsfeld, 2005).

Consumers are turning away from the traditional sources of advertising: radio, television, magazines, and newspapers. Consumers also consistently demand more control over their media consumption. They require on-demand and immediate access to information at their own convenience (Rashtchy, Kessler, Bieber, Shindler, & Tzeng, 2007)

In his book The New Influencers (Gillin, 2007) points out that Conventional marketing wisdom has long held that a dissatisfied customer tells ten people. But that is out of date. In the new age of social media, he or she has the tools to tell 10 million consumers virtually overnight.

#### Social Media and Purchasing Intent

This is the likelihood that a consumer will buy a particular product resulting from the interaction of his or her need for it, attitude towards it and perceptions of it and of the company which produces it.

Traditional media ideally has no way of measuring purchasing intent. If you announce an event on TV there is no way of gauging the number of people who will attend.

If you announce the same event on social media from the number of responses one can approximate the most likely number of attendants expected. This gives SNS some edge over traditional media in gauging purchasing intent of prospective consumers, which is something that previously may not have existed. Consumers are turning more frequently to various types of social media to conduct their information searches and to make their purchasing decisions (Vollmer & Precourt, 2008).

# Social Media and Product/Brand Loyalty

This is the situation in which a consumer generally buys the same manufactureroriginated product or service repeatedly over time rather than buying from multiple suppliers within the category.

I raditional media do not have an exact way of measuring customer loyalty as such. I or example the way of measuring readership for a newspaper is via the number of copies distributed which is not exactly accurate because the number of people who buy newspapers does not directly translate to the number of people who read it. A newspaper copy can be bought by one person but be read by six other people in which case one copy was distributed but the readership by extension to six people.

Other ways of gaining product or brand loyalty is via incentives such as loyalty points or even freebics. This is evident with the major supermarkets that award points for particular volumes of purchase and can be redeemed for goods or even money. The same is applied by the mobile telephone companies.

Social media advertising brings in a new way of gauging and retaining loyalty. When one likes a page or follows a brand on SNS they rarely stop following the product brand. therefore once you capture a customer online you may be able to keep them for almost eternity. SNS also provides avenue for feedback and participation of the customers thus making them feel more affiliated to the product or brand. Traditional media has tried to increase interactivity by incorporating mobile telephony as part of its communication media. The incorporation of mobile telephony is evident in the number of call in programs especially on I'M radio stations that allow for listeners to contribute and do requests. This goes to show the acknowledgment of the importance of interactivity in mass communication. However the incorporation of mobile telephony still does not allow for independent listener to listener interaction as seen in SNS.

Consumers' ability to communicate with one another limit the amount of control companies have over the content and dissemination of information. Christopher Vollmer und Geoffrey Precourt (2008) underscore this in their book, Always On. As they note, in the era of social media "consumers are in control; they have greater access to information and greater command over media consumption than ever before" (p. 5).

Social media is perceived by consumers as a more trustworthy source of information regarding products and services than corporate-sponsored communications transmitted via the traditional elements of the promotion mix (Foux & Marken, 2006)

In his article a social media mindset (Edwards, 2011) says while paid advertising that shouts into the traditional purchase funnel is inefficient compared with social media marketing, advertising that builds brands and provides social media content is often necessary for amplifying social media conversations. This process is "flipping the funnel" traditional advertising activities are amplified through social media and come out the other end more powerful (Evans, 2008).

# Theoretical Framework

This study is based on audience theories and specifically active audience theories. In marketing and advertising, a target audience, is a specific group of people within the target market at which a product or the marketing message of a product is aimed at (Kotler, Principles of Marketing, 2000). Digital technology has led to an increasing uncertainty over how we define an audience, the notion of a large group of people. brought together by time, responding to a single text is outdated and that audiences are now 'fragmented'.

This particular study intended to find out if interaction of college going students, as a target audience, with the social media actually affects their perception and affiliations with the advertising products. For these effects to be realized the student have to actively interact with the media and thus experience the effects.

Traditional media does not allow for much interactivity between audience and media, they subscribe to the mass theories such us the magic bullet theory that assumes that audiences are passive thus only capable of receiving communication. For example in the case of TV the audience may not have a way interacting with the broadcast.

Active models are where the audience is seen as reacting to texts in a challenging, engaged way and hence making it appropriate for this study. The audience here would be the college aged students and the study will be based on how their active interaction with social media produces particular effects if any.

During the 1970s and 1980s, researchers in the United States of America became increasingly focused on media audience. Most of them focus to gain more useful understanding of what people do with the media in their daily lives. As this research developed, new and less pessimistic conceptualization of audience began to develop Emparcal researchers started to re examined limited-effect assumption about audience and argued that people were not as passive as these effects theory assumed (Baran & Davis, 2006). Their assumption were supported by cultural studies research while conducting their own audience research and found out that the powers of elites to manipulate audiences were not as great as had been assumed by carlier theorist.

In relation to the above statement this study strives to delve more into the idea that the advent of the social media has created an atmosphere where the audience has more to do with how they get affected by media content. Contrary to the mass effect theories that proposed that the audience consumed media wholly and thus the effects were holistic, here the audience gets to be pro active and determines the level of influence generated from the media they interact with. This is very evident in the use of twitter and Facebook by SNS users to voice their opinions about product and services. To cite an example in February 2012 Safaricom limited put out a cumpaign for St. Valentines via short message service (ams) for one their products (Skiza) but had to withdraw it after a few days due to the negative reaction of customers on their twitter and Facebook forums. The chief executive officer used the same avenue (twitter) to offer an apology to the public. This goes to show the power of the audience, in this case Safaricom consumers' power in determining what the service provider puts out for them. And this can be accredited to the interactivity available on SNS.

Still under the active audience theory we have the Uses and Gratification Theory. According to Blumler & Katz (1974) individuals mix and match uses with goals, —sording to specific context, needs, social backgrounds and so on. Thus, they are seen as active participants in the media consumption process. "Uses and gratification theory suggests that media users play an active role in choosing and using the media. Users take an active part in the communication process and are goal oriented in their media user. The theorists say that a media user seeks out a media source that best fulfills the needs of the user. Uses and gratifications assume that the user has alternate choices to satisfy their need "Derek R Lane, Ph D (University of Kentucky).

This study was looking at the influence of need for gratification in relation to advertising. As in the background information from the TNS report, Kenyans have a need that needs to be satisfied. Kenyans would like to purchase goods and services online. So it would be interesting to find out how much of this need come about as influenced by advertising on SNS.

## CHAPTER THREE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## Introduction

This chapter deals with the research methodology of the study, the research design, setting, population sample and data-collection instrument.

## **Research** design

Research design is a blueprint, or outline, for conducting the study in such a way that maximum control will be exercised over factors that could interfere with the validity of the research results. The research design is the researcher's overall plan for obtaining answers to the research questions guiding the study (Polit & Hungler, 1998).

This study attempted to quantify the effectiveness advertising on college going SNS users. It used a quantitative exploratory descriptive design to identify, analyze and describe the effectiveness of advertising on social networking used by college students.

Quantitative research has the following characteristics (Burns & Grove, 2001):

- It describes, examines relationships, and determines causality among variables, where possible.
- Statistical analysis is conducted to reduce and organize data, determine significant relationships and identify differences and/or similarities within and between different categories of data.

- 3 Comprehensive data collected by employing different methods and/or instruments should result in a complete description of the variable or the population studied
- 4 It provides an accurate account of characteristics of particular individuals, situations, or groups.

I xploratory research examines the relevant factors in detail to arrive at an appropriate description of the reality of the existing situation (Brink & Wood, 1998). Descriptive research provides an accurate account of characteristics of a particular individual, event or group in real-life situations (Polit & Hungler, 1998). A descriptive design may be used for the purpose of developing theory, identifying problems with current practice, justifying current practice, making judgments, or determining what others in similar situations are doing (Waltz & Bausell 1981:7). The purpose of a descriptive design is to provide the perceptions and views of the respondents about the phenomenon studied (Burns & Grove, 2001). This study attempted to describe whether Social Media Advertising is effective on College students

I his design was chosen because it is the best method when we are seeking to better understand the issue under study. We cannot use experimental designs because for our population defining control and experiment groups will be hard.

The study was exploratory because it explored the factors contributing to the effectiveness of advertising on social networks used by college students. Exploratory research studies what has not previously been studied and attempts to identify new knowledge, new insights, new understandings, and new meanings and to look into the factors related to the topic (Brink & Wood, 1998).

The research design was exploratory because it met the criteria described by Polit and Hungler (1999), namely that this research attempted to investigate the nature of the iberomenon Social Media Advertising On College students, the manner in which it becomes manifested as well as related factors that make it effective on this particular dience Results of exploratory studies are not necessarily generalisable to a larger population but provide a better understanding of the sample being examined (Burns & (irove, 2001). The researcher deemed this approach to be suitable for gaining a better understanding of Effectiveness of Social Media Advertising on College students.

#### **Research Setting**

The research setting refers to the place where the data are collected. In this study, data was collected at The University of Nairobi. Students who participated were specifically from the Main Campus of The University of Nairobi.

#### **Research Population and Sample**

Polit and Hungler (1999) define a population as the totality of all subjects that conform to a set of specifications, comprising the entire group of persons that is of interest to the researcher and to whom the research results can be generalized. LoBiondo-Wood and Haber (1998) describe a sample as a portion or a subset of the research population selected to participate in a study, representing the research population.

# Population

The research population for this study comprised of students in The University of Nairobi Main Campus. Eligibility criteria specify the characteristics that people in the population must possess in order to be included in the study (Polit & Hungler, 1998). In this study, the participants had to be members of at least one social networking site; had to attend classes at the university of Nairobi main campus and be willing to participate in the study

#### Sample

Non-probability or convenience sampling was used. Brink and Wood, (Burns & Grove, 1998) and (Welman & Kruger, 1999) point out the following characteristics of non-probability sampling:

Every person who meets the criteria is asked to participate. In this study, for example, the students who attend classes at the University of Nairobi Main Campus and are SNS users were asked to participate in the study.

It is a less complicated and more economical procedure than random sampling. It requires very little resources to carry out especially in monetary terms.

The researcher's judgment is used to select individual subjects who meet the eligibility criteria for the study. The researcher chose the most convenient days and classes to distribute the questionnaires.

Questionnaires were distributed to college students who attended classes at the university of Nairobi main campus. Not every student had an equal chance of being included in the sample because there was no census or complete list of students using social networking sites attending classes in the main campus. Consequently, there was no sampling frame from which a sample could be drawn randomly to ensure that every student had an equal chance of being included in the sample. Hence the researcher used non-probability or convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is the rational choice in cases where it is impossible to identify all the members of a population (De vos, 1998).

### **Data Collection**

Polis and Hungler (1999) define data as "information obtained during the course of an investigation or study". In this study, questionnaires were used to obtain data relevant to the study's objectives and research questions. The purpose of the study was to find out how effective Social Media Advertising is on College students.

The researcher approached student who attended classes at the University of Nairobi main campus to participate in the study. Every student who was willing to participate received a letter with information about the study and a questionnaire. The researcher, assisted by student volunteers handed out the questionnaires on the specific days when there were common course classes during the week of 9th and 15th of July 2012. When 100 students had completed questionnaires, the completed questionnaires were subjected to a statistical analysis.

# Data collection instrument

Units collection instruments refer to devices used to collect data such as questionnaires, tests, structured interview schedules and checklists. For this study questionnaires were

used the questionnaire was designed to gather information on how effective social media advertising is on college students.

Polit and Hungler define a questionnaire as "a method of gathering information from respondents about attitudes, knowledge, beliefs and feelings". Brink and Wood state that the following aspects characterize a questionnaire:

- Each participant enters his/her responses on the questionnaire, saving the researcher's time, compared to the time required to conduct personal interviews.
- 2 It is less expensive than conducting personal interviews.
- 3 Respondents feel that they remain anonymous and can express themselves in their own words without fear of identification
- 4. Data on a broad range of topics may be collected within a limited period.
- The format is standard for all subjects and is independent of the interviewer's mood.

#### Development of the Questionnaire

The objective of this study was to find out if advertisements on social sites change purchasing intent and create/increase product awareness and loyalty among college going students. This study attempted to identify if there is significant change in the level of product awareness of SNS users, their purchasing intent as influenced by adverts on SNS and change in product loyalty. These three categories were not specified as such in the questionnaire in order to avoid the possibility of the respondents' creation of mindsets similar to these categories. pilot study was conducted with ten students who visited the UON main campus communications computer lab. All ten managed to complete the questionnaires within 10 minutes and understood the questions. No apparent problems were encountered during the completion of the questionnaires.

# Structure of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of the following three sections:

- 1 Section A Personal (biographical) data
- 2 Section B direct advertising on SNS
- 3 Section C fan page affiliation or effects

The items contained in the questionnaire, comprising both open-ended and closed questions, attempted to find out if advertisements on social sites have any effect on -ollege going students.

#### **Reliability of the research instrument**

Reliability refers to the degree of consistency or accuracy with which an instrument measures the attribute it is designed to measure (Polit & Hungler, 1997). If a study and its results are reliable, it means that the same results would be obtained if the study were to be replicated by other researchers using the same method.

A pretest utilizing ten students with similar characteristics to the study sample was conducted to determine the clarity of the items and consistency of the responses. The major anomaly detected was that the used of yes and no answers did not give satisfactory responses for some questions. In order to enhance the reliability of the instrument an extra space was introduced to allow respondents to explain some of their responses.

# Validity of the Research Instrument

Validity refers to the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to be measuring (Uys & Basson, 1991). Validity can be sub-categorized as external and internal validity.

### **External Validity**

Burns and Grove describe external validity as the extent to which the results can be generalized beyond the sample used in the study. This usually depends on the degree to which the sample represents the population. Low external validity in this study implies that the results can apply only to students who attend classes at The University of Nairobi main campus (Burns & Grove 1997; Neuman 1997).

The external validity of this study may have been compromised by selecting a nonrandom, convenient sample of students attending classes at the university of Nairobi main campus during the data-collection phase. There was no guarantee that the students attending classes at The University of Nairobi Main Campus had similar knowledge. attitudes and exposure on SNS to those who did not attend classes at the university of Nairobi, as this sample was not drawn randomly, implying that not all students in the research population had an equal chance of being included in the research sample.

# Internal Validity

Internal validity is the extent to which effectiveness of social media advertising on college students is a true reflection of reality rather than the result of the effects of extraneous or chance variables.

# Ethical Considerations

Researchers face ethical dilemmas in their daily duties, when people are used as study participants in an investigation. Researchers need to exercise care that the rights of individuals and institutions are safeguarded (Polit & Hungler 1999).

#### Permission to conduct the study

Permission to conduct the study at The University of Nairobi was sought from and granted by the Assistant Registrar in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. The class representatives of the classes that were participating in the research were informed about the study and the lecturers in charges permission request the students to complete questionnaires at these classes. Their cooperation was requested and promised like researcher undertook not to cause any disruption to the class proceedings.

### **Principles of research ethics**

The principles of respect for human dignity were observed during data collection. This principle includes the right to self-determination and to full disclosure (Polit & Hungler 1999). Respondents' rights to self-determination were honored because respondents could decide independently, without any coercion, whether or not to participate in the atudy: they had the right not to answer any questions that caused discomfort; to disclose or not to disclose personal information and to ask for clarification about any aspect that

caused some uncertainty. The right to full disclosure was respected because the researcher described the nature of the study as well as the respondents' rights to participate or to refuse to participate in the study. This was done through an introductory statement at the beginning of the questionnaire. Confidentiality was maintained because no names were disclosed in the research report.

#### **CHAPTER FOUR**

# PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This is an analysis of the data collected for the study, statistical techniques are applied and interpretations made in order to draw the conclusions of the study.

# Introduction

This chapter analyses and graphically presents the findings of the survey.

It has 4 parts:

- 1. Provide a demographic profile of the respondents including SNS activity.
- 2. Examine whether SNS does increase brand awareness
- 3. Uncover whether or not SNS adverts can increase the intention to purchase
- 4. Critically look at the extent to which SNS contributes to brand loyalty

### **General Information**

### **Respondents by Gender**

Our sample had a slightly higher number of females than males. Of the respondents sampled, 57% were female while male ones accounted for the remaining 43% of the sample

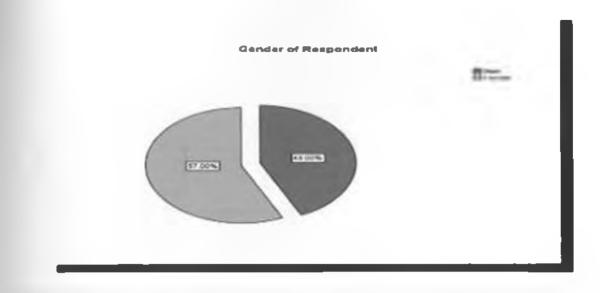


Figure 3.1 Distribution of respondents by gender

### **Respondents by Age**

A look at the age distribution of the respondents also did not vary much from what is likely to be found in an average university campus. Most of the respondents, a whopping 72% were people aged between 18 and 25 years, followed by 26-32 year olds who jointly with the first group accounted for 93% of the respondents. People over 33, presumably post graduate students constituted just 7% of the sample

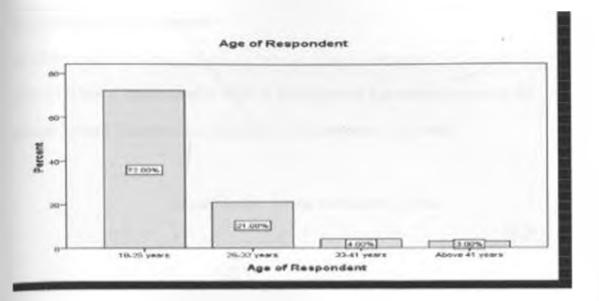
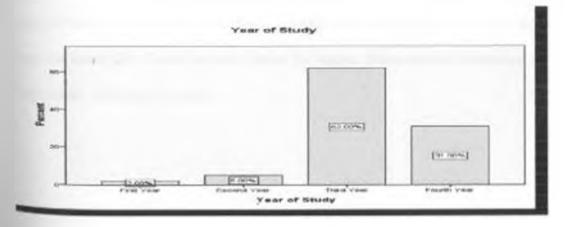


Figure 3.2 Distribution of respondents by age

# **Respondents by Year of Study**

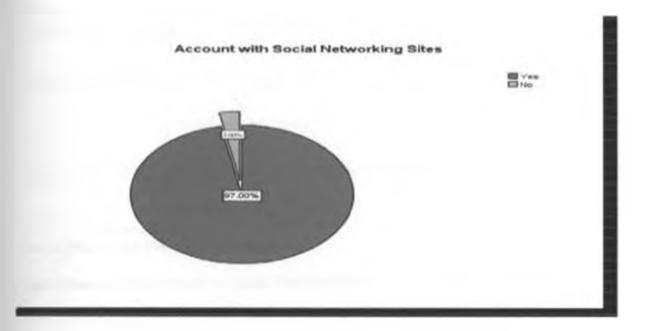
Of the respondents who were students, there were very few first and second years represented, jointly constituting less than 7%. This can be explained by the use of convenience sampling. Most of those surveyed were third year students, at 62% of all students surveyed



<sup>1</sup> Bure 3.3 Distribution of respondents by year of study

# **Respondents by SNS Account**

Of all the respondents only 3% did not have an account with any of the SN sites. The other 97% had at least 1 account. Most of them however had multiple accounts, the average boing 2.3 accounts per persons for all respondents interviewed



### Figure 3.4 Respondents on social networks

The most popular Social Networking site is Facebook. All the respondents are registered users of Facebook. Apart from Facebook, over half of the respondents belonged to at least one other SNS. The table below shows the various Networks and percentage of respondents subscribed to them

Percentage
93.0
59.0
43.0
21.0
15.0

Table 4.1 Social Networking sites ranked according to popularity

# Social Media and Product Awareness

# Advertisement Viewership on Social Network Sites

80% of the respondents on social networks indicated that they look at

advertisements placed on the sites with which they have accounts compared to just 20% who do not.

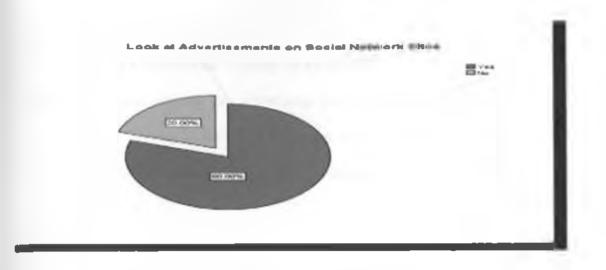


Figure 3.5 Advertisement viewership on Social Networking Sites

# Have been introduced to a New Product by SNS.

Two thirds of all the respondents have been introduced to a new product by

advertisements placed on SNS. This means they actually learnt about a product/service.

for the first time on SNS.

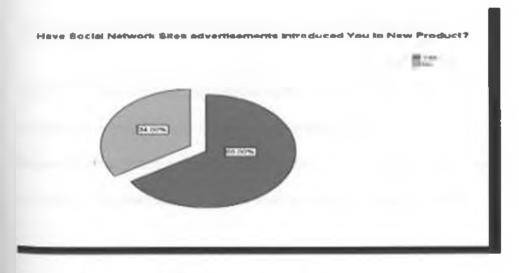


Figure 3.6 New product awareness from SNS

### Social Media and Purchasing Intent

# Wanted to Buy a Product after Viewing an Ad on SNS

People do not just see and get information from advertisements placed on Social networking Sites. Among all the respondents interviewed, slightly more than half (56%) say they have considered buying something after seeing it advertised on a SNS.

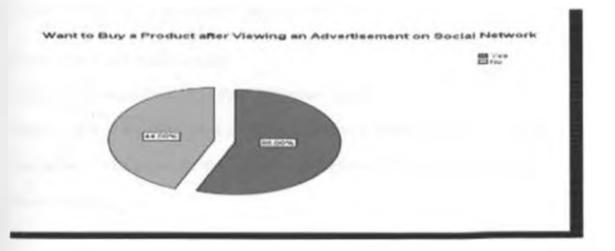


Figure 3.7 Considered huying a product after viewing a SNS advert

### Actually Purchased Product/Service Advertised on SNS

Beyond the intention to buy, 17% of all respondents have actually went ahead and bought

a product or accessed a service based on advertisements placed on SNS

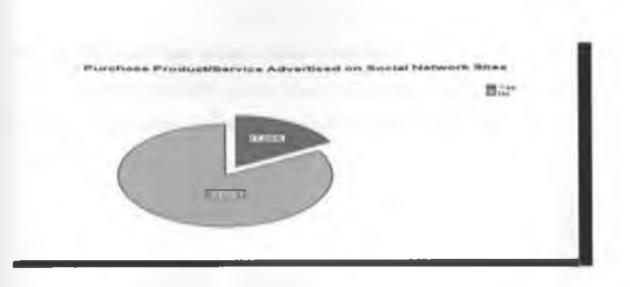


Figure 3.8 Purchase of product service advertised on SNS

# Social Media and Brand Loyalty

### Liking/Following a Brand Fan Page or Twitter Handle

Nearly half of all the respondents on SNS subscribe to or follow at least one brand on

their account. This means that they have created deliberate channels to interact with

brands of their

choice

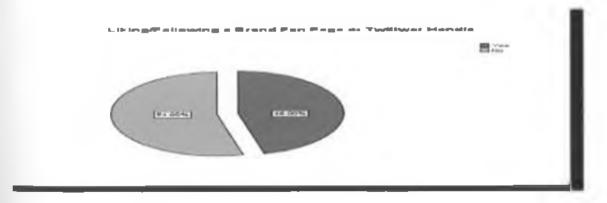


Figure 3.9 Following liking brand fan-pages, groups or handles

### Effect of Fan-pages/twitter handles on Brand Attachment

Of all the respondents who follow/like brand fan-pages, groups, or handles, slightly over half, 55% indicate that their attachment to the products/brands they interate with on SNS increased as a result

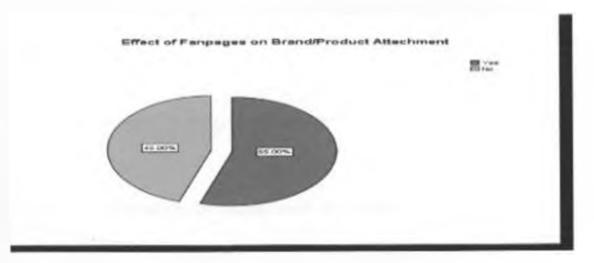


Figure 3-10 Positive effect of brand fanpages twitter handles on product attachment

# **CHAPTER FIVE**

# DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Introduction

This concluding chapter recaps the survey and discusses the main findings and their implications.

It has 4 parts:

- Provide a recap of the study; its purpose, research questions, methodology and findings
- 2 Present a discussion on the findings under each research question
- Draw conclusions on each of the research questions based on the discussion on the findings
- 4 Highlight the key recommendations for the areas examined by the research questions and for further research.

### Summary of the Major Findings

Over half of university students who are on SNS are subscribed to more than one service. Youths on SNS do interact with adverts on SNS.

Brand/product information obtained on social media does influence youth attitudes towards them.

Beyond knowledge reasons hence increased product awareness. SNS is increasingly becoming the first port of call before purchasing decisions are made hence a key determiner of purchasing intent.

Interactivity and feedback are increasingly becoming standard features for ads and media. SNS easily incorporates them. They have premium value for brand loyalty.

Beyond ads peer comments also greatly all 3 aspects under study.

Successful ads are detailed, well targeted, have updated information and employ a lot visual ads/graphics

#### DISCUSSION

#### Social Media and Product Awareness

### **Advertisement Viewership on Social Network Sites**

SNS allows for deployment of multimedia adverts, as much as phone screens might look too small, internet costs too high, and that SNS users rarely looked at let alone interacting with advertisements.

This study found that on the contrary 80% of the respondents on social networks indicated that they actually look at advertisements placed on the sites with which they have accounts compared to just 20% who do not.

Eighty percent is a very big number especially given that rates on traditional media cannot get that high. The TV for example, people turn commercial breaks in between programming to be actual breaks away from the TV. In this case the blanket advertisements on TV miss out on audience who do not attend to them probably because they are not the target. What makes a difference on SNS is that adverts are served based on very accurate analysis of browsing patterns to create profiles that are detailed including interests of an individual at a given moments in time. This means that the ads are very well narrowly targeted and response is more assured.

#### Have been introduced to a New Product by SNS.

The targeting edge that has just been highlighted explains the finding that 66% of all the respondents have been introduced to a new product by advertisements placed on SNS. This means they actually learnt about a product/service for the first time on SNS.

Mostly new product launches engage different advertising media sales promotion tactics for maximum effect. This effectively means that for certain categories of products it is hard to eliminate the effect of SNS alone on new product introduction

What was interesting to learn however is that there are certain Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises that have exclusively just advertised on SNS and got a lot of traction from it and a good example is *www.rupu.co.ke*. This is web based product advertisement that specializes on giving out discounted rates for an array of products and services from different service providers.

Once a new business is up and running, there is quite a high chance that even before they get a postal address, telephone land-line and a website, they will have a Facebook page. This is especially true of business started by younger entrepreneurs. Most times, a lot of their first customers will come from here.

It is important to point out that certain products/brands are exclusively marketed on SNS. A lot of event-like products or concerts, safaris, trips, theater performances, album launches and new product launches top the list of those SNS users hear about for the first time online. In fact they proactively look for this information.

#### Social Media and Purchasing Intent

#### Wanted to Buy a Product after Viewing an Ad on SNS

People do not just see and get information from advertisements placed on Social networking Sites. Among all the respondents interviewed, slightly more than half (56%) say they have considered buying something after seeing it advertised on a SNS.

And this really does make sense. The level of targeting, the effect of community, both ensure that this actually happens. Adverts on SNS are based on evolving continuous profiling for maximum response. And when a person you know further endorses a particular brand whose advert you have seen, then the sale is almost sealed half the time.

If you run an internet search on smart-phones in Kenya, then browse websites belonging to phone manufactures or mobile network operators, from the history, when you go to your SNS account within the same browsing session, these are the advertisements you will find. The advertisements will keep changing depending on what your perceived interests are.

Incidentally a lot of young people go online to get more information as a standard prepurchase behavior. SNS advertising rides on this. But beyond advertising, communities and word of mouth play a very big role when it comes to influencing purchasing intent For example 1 can just ask people in my network what they think about a particular brand, or I can just search to see what they had to say about it. Online user reviews have been known to generate a lot of comments both positive and negative. Beyond what is said on brand's fan page or twitter handle, these can and do have a sway on product perception and in the end purchasing intention

#### **Actually Purchased Product/Service Advertised on SNS**

Beyond the intention to buy, 17% of all respondents have actually went ahead and bought a product or accessed a service based on advertisements placed on SNS. This somewhat low figure becomes really attractive when for SNS and other media alternatives, comparisons are made not just on conversion rates (how many actually buy) but also acquisition costs (how much does it cost us to put an ad here) as well

For many of the respondents this is not attributable to the quality of information on SNS ads 61 % of them are satisfied with the level of information on SNS ads

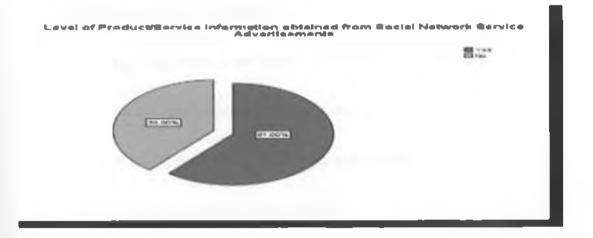


Figure 4.1 the respondents satisfaction with level of information on SNS advertisements

The respondents rate these adverts highly on speaking their Language, identifying with their needs, giving more/detailed information, and using catchy visual aids/graphics. Although some could be better by ensuring that they give full correct information. For example pricing /no price, have up to date information.

A lot of the respondents feel they would be able to buy more if there was an easy seamless e-commerce system especially for the products that are exclusively advertised online. Bottom-line is that it is not all gloom at the 17%.

#### Social Media and Brand Loyalty

### Liking/Following a Brand Fan Page or Twitter Handle

If someone loves Subaru's and there is a fan page on Facebook for Subaru Kenya one will like it just so that I can track new developments, interact with other users, and get a forum where they can be helped or referred to good help in case they need it for anything about my car.

Brand fan-pages and twitter handles are willing audiences, seeking to further engage with the brand on a constant sustained basis.

The reasons given for joining these pages/following these handles are that:

- 1. They allow for comments and giving immediate feedback
- 2. They keep one updated on existing products & services
- They introduce one to new products/launches
- They allow for reading of others comments, reviews and see their ratings for products
- 5. They allow for fast direct communication with provider

Nearly half of all the respondents on SNS subscribe to or follow at least one brand on their account. This means that they have created deliberate channels to interact with brands of their choice.

Interestingly media houses feature prominently among brands with very vibrant online SNS communities. To not are the FM radio stations who have devised a way of extending programs into SNS i.e. having an independent twitter handle or brand fan page for a particular program Beyond them other products targeting younger audiences also have some activity. Some of the brands followed by the sampled respondents are:

1. Juliani Kenya (performing artist)

2 Safaricom (a telecommunications company)

3. NSE (Nairobi stock exchange)

4. Sony Erikson (Mobile handsets manufacturer)

5. Kenya vision 2030 (Government parastatal)

6. Ghetto Radio (Radio station)

7. NTV (nation television)

8. Arsenal (football club)

9. Rupu (discount sales websites)

10. Airtel (a telecommunications company)

11. TPF (television program)

### 12. KTN (TV station)

### 13. Classic fm (Radio station)

#### Effect of Fan-pages/twitter handles on Brand Attachment

Of all the respondents who follow/like brand fan-pages, groups, or handles, slightly over half; 55% indicate that their attachment to the products or brands they interact with on SNS increased as a result.

This attachement comes about because despite them being willing audiences, brands have the reponsibility to keep them engaged and make the fanpages and handles deliver value for those who interate with them. And this where most of them fail.

For example, when one follows Safaricom on twitter, can it resolve some of my querries there such that I do not have to call the helpline? When someone points out that M-pesa is not working, can someone respond and apologize, say what is happening, and most likely tell by what time it is likely to be resolved? Can one get information on new offers?

If the answer to two or more of these questions is yes, then there are very high chances, that the handle will be enhancing brand loyalty. The customer still wants to feel like they are king and in any way that this is enhanced, brand value and attachment grows.

#### CONCLUSIONS

A lot of young people are on SNS and they interact with advertisements on SNS. This study puts the number of students on SNS who look or interact with adverts at 80% of respondents.

Beyond adverts, brands/products are highlighted on SNS via user generated contents and comments and this word of mouth from peers is equally important.

Adverts and user comments on SNS are successful in informing people and creating awareness of new products

Adverts and user comments on SNS also influence people's perceptions towards products and brands and purchasing intent. Fifty six percent of respondents on this study said they have wanted to buy a product after viewing the advert on SNS. Some went further to explain that arriving to decision to huy was also influenced partly by viewing what their friends say or recommend on SNS post.

SNS has inbuilt interactivity that creates a two-way communication platform that is can very easily be leveraged to inculcate/increase brand loyalty. Fifty five percent of the respondents in this study felt that the product fan pages on Facebook or Twitter handles made them more loyal. A reason for their loyalty being that the fan pages and handles provided an avenue for them to give their feedback. SNS creates the opportunity to serve-up more targeted adverts even for broadly segmented markets. This study was conducted on college going student and the examples of products we can assume they indicated to interact with highly are FM stations and mobile telecommunication companies. Mobile telecommunication companies and FM stations can be said to have actually been able to segment the youth as a target audience successfully using SNS from the sentiments of the respondents in this study.

SNS advertising does work. But certain things render themselves optimal for SNS marketing especially events and products targeting youthful populations. Some of the respondents mentioned Juliani Kenya a performing artist as one of the pages they like on Facebook. A look at the Juliani Kenya page shows that it is used by the artist to announce his album launches and give performance timetables to his fans. To be noted here is the concert timetables. Juliani can actually create an event announcement on Facebook and within a few hours get feedback on the take of his fans on things such as location, ticket prices and choice of music to be performed. This goes to show how event organization for example renders itself optimal for SNS advertising.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

There are a lot of young people on SNS who interact with advertisements on SNS as established by the study to be 80%. Firms would do well to explore ways to make the most of SNS to segment the youth as a target audience. Such strategy to be able to reach college going youths in the different SNS it should at least cover Facebook and I witter as these have the greatest majority of following among young people. SNS advertising has advertising has unique differences from advertising on traditional media. One of the key differences is in content and presentation. The study established that adverts that the respondents prefer adverts that are detailed and speak in the target audience's language, resonates with their needs, have updated information and employ a lot of visual aids or graphics. Many firms have not invested in SNS and as such quality of SNS marketing initiatives is compromised. Firms should optimize SNS adverts both in terms of messaging and outlay for maximum effect.

SNS advertisements are great, especially if they are well executed hut beyond adverts, brands/products are highlighted on SNS via user generated contents and comments and this word of mouth from peers are equally important. Every person has an influence in their circle on SNS. Friends on Facebook, followers on Twitter, they talk and listen to each other. If a user shares with four hundred friends on Facebook about a good or bad experience with a product or brand, it is likely to have some effect, even if it is just among a fraction of those friends. Firms should increasingly find ways to get people talking about their brands or products and explore ways to monitor and respond to negative comments when they come up.

SNS has value for brand loyalty only if it acts as a two-way communication. Interactivity is the one edge SNS has over all forms of traditional media. Firms should explore ways to use this to extend customer engagement with their brands. Some radio stations and TV stations have mastered this art where listeners interact with program hosts in real-time. Nokia Asha 600 through its 'don't break the beat campaign' had found a way to do this.

Other Firms should emulate this. Beyond interaction content is what creates traffic, firms should ensure that their SNS accounts actually deliver value for customers by ensuring relevant, up to date content and quick response times to queries as they arise. If possible they should also find ways to use feedback and the information gleaned from customer interaction on SNS to improve products, processing and offerings.

Since certain things render themselves optimal for SNS marketing especially promotions, events and products targeting youthful populations. For such, firms should extensively use SNS for such and also find ways to leverage them for other products or services that they offer. One easy way doing this is linking the SNS adverts to the tirm's website or online store. If Safaricom is having an open day where they have offers on laptops and mobile phones, share the event on Facebook indicating dates, times, locations, with a picture of some of the likely bargains as the profile picture. Once the invites are sent to all the followers or fans, as they invite their friends get a bit more information on the event, and it is supported by a landing page on the website with complete details of the devices on offer.

### **Recommendations for further studies**

This study just set out to map the existing space as far as SNS marketing goes in Kenya among college students. Now that we have established the situation as it is, it would be interesting to know what it takes to successfully leverage SNS advertisement or marketing and whether the requirements for big companies are different from those of Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises. The requirements here are in terms of budgets, human resource competences and enabling ICT tools or infrastructure.

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# 1010-timment Of Social Media Advertising On College students

#### Questionnaire

My name is Ken Miseda an M.A – Communication Studies student working on a research project 1 seek to find out The Effectiveness of Social Media Advertising On social networking sites used by College students. 1 am conducting a study at the University Of Nairobi. It will take only 5 minutes of your time to fill this questionnaire Your participation in this research is appreciated and the information obtained will only be used for educational purposes. Thank you.

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What is your year of study?	

- 5. Tick any of the social networking sites you are subscribed to
  - a Facebook
  - b. Twitter
  - c LinkedIn [\_\_]
  - d. Myspace
  - e Youtube
  - f. Google+
  - g. Other\_\_\_\_\_

6	Do you	look a	at advertisements.	on social	network	sites?
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Yes	$\square$		No

- 7. Have you over wanted to buy a product after viewing the advertisement on social network site?
  - Yes No
- 8. Have you ever purchased a product/service advertised on social network sites?

Yes			No	
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9. Have the advertisements on SNS introduced you to service or product you didn't know of?

Yes 🗍	No
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10. Do you feel the advertisements on SNS give you more info on product and services?

Yes	No	

Briefly explain your answer above

11. Have you liked/followed a brand fan page or twitter handle?

E a Sataroom-Keeve-Official Facebook Page/twitter (@Satarcom1.td) or Homehoyz Radio Lacebook page/twitter (inffomehoyzRadio) of OneFM 97 1(upDateFMKz) etc

yes		
no		
If yes, state the names	 	

12. Do these fan pages make you feel more attached to the brand/product?

yes	
no	
If yes, state the names	