

**PUBLIC RELATIONS AS A MARKETING COMMUNICATION TOOL:**

**THE CASE OF NAIVAS SUPERMARKETS, NAIROBI COUNTY**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

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

  
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This project has been submitted for examination with my approval as University Supervisor.

  
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I thank our Almighty God for his love that surpasses all human understanding, His mercies are new every morning and his grace that is sufficient for all mankind. This far he has brought us and I say Acha Mungu aitwe Mungu.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this project to my loving daughters Tina Claudia and Jeanlynn Kiloko.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>PR</b>	Public Relations
<b>CSR</b>	Corporate Social Responsibility
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>PRO</b>	Public Relations Officer
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Government Organisation
<b>PRSK</b>	Public Relations Society of Kenya
<b>GOVT</b>	Government of Kenya
<b>TV</b>	Television

## ABSTRACT

This study sought to investigate the public relations as a marketing communication tool in Naivas Supermarkets. The objectives of the study were to establish the effectiveness of Public Relations tools and media channels used in Marketing Communication in Naivas Supermarkets, to determine Public Relations tools used in Marketing Communication in Naivas Supermarkets and to find out corporate benefits of using Public Relations as a Marketing Communication tool in Naivas Supermarkets. The study adopted the Hierarchy of Effects Model. The study utilised descriptive survey design and qualitative research approach. The study comprised all public relations, marketing and customer care staff in the head office, Kasarani, Westlands, Ngong road and Eastgate Donholm Naivas Supermarkets branches. The sample size for the study was 25 customer care staff and seven Marketing and Public Relations Managers. Census technique was used to obtain participants for the study. In depth interviews and focus group discussions were the main research methods. Qualitative data was analysed manually and presented in narratives. The study found that use of public relations tools as marketing communication tools for Naivas Supermarket products and services were effective. The study found out that social media, promotions, word of mouth, media relations, corporate social responsibility, editorial, feature stories, mentions in radio and documentaries are some of the public relations tools used as marketing communication tools by Naivas Supermarkets. The study found that pushing sales, customer awareness and brand visibility were some of the corporate benefits derived from the use of public relations as a marketing communication tool. The study concluded that public relations tools and media channels used as marketing communication tools by Naivas Supermarket were effective since they retain credibility and increase their visibility. The study recommends that Naivas Supermarkets should employ the use of chat pod to engage their clients more effectively by responding to their queries immediately and improve its corporate social responsibility initiative by partnering with other related organisations in order to reach wider customers, thus promoting their brand. The study further, recommends a similar study to be conducted focusing different research methodologies and also in other supermarkets in order to compare the consistency and accuracy of this study.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Overview**

This chapter focused on the background of the study, Public Relations and Advertising concepts, Public Relations tools, the concept for Marketing, Advertising, differences and similarities of Marketing, Public Relations and Advertising. In this chapter also is the statement of the problem, research questions and objectives of the study, justification and rationale of the study, scope and limitation of the study as well as operational definition of key terms.

### **1.1 Background to the study**

Public Relations is an event of communication designed to create a positive image that aims at creating a good relationship with the involved publics (Grunig, 1992). It is also a promotional mix that organisations use to promote their customers with products and mostly public relations is free to interact with customers unlike marketing.

Tengku et, al., (2015) states that Public Relations use in various organisations has expanded due to the relationship between the advertising and marketing communication. Therefore, it has led to an increase in profits thus leading many organisations to reexamine their key communication process (Lattimore et,al., 2009; Bush, 2009). Therefore, the use of Public Relations reduces the amount of money put aside to advertise products and services of organisations thus promoting brands, products and services.

However, the concept of Public Relations is the famous strategy used by various companies, governments and private firms to disseminate messages to target customers

thus good relationship to involved publics through Public Relations officers and marketers rather than communication technicians (Grunig, 1992).

Further, Public Relations is crucial in marketing since it used in meeting business objectives, building reputations and images of the enterprise and the customer's awareness about the products. According to Kotler, (2005) firms should always communicate effectively to their customers and this can be achieved through the use of advertising agencies, promotions and sign contracts with external Public Relations firms. In addition, Public Relations and Advertising help to activate the customer's interest or changing decisions in buying the products.

The study sought to investigate how Naivas Supermarkets uses Public Relations as a Marketing Communication tool.

### **1.1.1 Concept of Public Relations**

Public Relations aims at expressing a company's favorable image to stakeholders through relationship building and positive reputation management. This is done by drawing attention to conversations and media attention in order to divert negative discussions about an organisation (Frances & Stephen, 2003). Companies can adapt various PR tools depending on customers or consumers targeted by the company. It may be the use of social media, news releases, media relations, corporate social responsibility and many other tools. Public relations are component of marketing whose customers varies from media to internal publics. The basic aim of using PR in marketing is improving the relationships while shaping behavior of customers through persuasive messages which are tailored in form of press releases, advertorials, brochures, pitching or convincing

journalists to cover an organisation in a positive manner thus good reputation and image (Frances & Stephen, 2003).

Further, Public Relations monitor the attitudes of the customers while distributing information to build goodwill between the company and the customers. It also complements sales, build credibility and finally pushing sales promotions of some products. It can create awareness of a business, brand and products at a cheaper cost of advertising. Public Relations therefore, is a used by companies to market products and services. This will allow increase in profit, create good reputation, increase and maintain customers and create awareness of the company and products as well.

According to Heath & Coombs, (2006), Public Relations is used to help companies' to know how they should communicate to their publics and therefore, maintaining a good relationship (Suanne et al., 2010). This involves planning, doing research and making company products popular. Public Relations entails creating a good reputation of an organisation through regular dissemination of information to the public (Tengku, et.al, 2015). Having a positive image for companies is the most precious thing since more customers will be having trust or like the company's products or services thus having good relationship and increasing profits. For instance Naivas Supermarkets have to make sure that they have a positive relationship with its customers thus maintaining them and increasing sales of their products while increasing profits.

According to Okonkwo (2007) Public Relations allows customers to create a good understanding of the operations of a given company thus maintaining its good relationship with customers. Public Relations influences customers to have positive

perception towards a given company's image (Okonkwo, 2007). Public Relations can influence customers to make decisions for purchasing certain products or seeking services of a company without using a lot of money like in marketing.

### **1.1.2 Public Relations Tools**

These are techniques or activities marketers adapt for disseminating or conveying information about a given product or company with the aim of persuading or influencing targeted customers (Heath & Coombs, 2006). Since Public Relations is not paid for, marketers therefore, make use of them to communicate or market company products or services to consumers or customers other than advertising. Public Relations tools can only be effective when used by certain media outlets in order to influence customers and this depends on the media preference and channels to different customers. For instance, there are those customers who television, radio, social media, newspapers to access information and therefore, public relations officers should make sure that they have used different media channels to different stakeholders in order to communicate to every customer.

According to Otieno & Mohamed, (2015) Public Relations tools nowadays are often well articulated and key communication strategies in highly competitive businesses. These strategies further can help in communicating about an organisation in a better way (Otieno & Mohamed, 2015).

The study therefore sought to investigate how Naivas Supermarket make use of Public Relations tools to market products, customers' communication media preference and the

use of media channels and public relations tools available to market their products and services hence creating good image and maintaining good relationships with customers.

### **1.1.3 The Concept of Marketing**

According to Duncan, (2005) marketing is a combination of both public relations and advertising. Further, it is a process which aims at planning of organisation's promotional efforts thus boosting organisations' profits. In marketing, customers or potential buyers are the one targeted to drive sales of a company (Duncan, 2005). In addition, when marketing products to customers, public relations officers or practitioners need to do a customer's survey in order to guide organisations in developing the right products or services aimed at fulfilling a need and delivered at a profit. Identifying the needs and preference of customers is necessary since it may be at a position of influencing customers to purchase certain products. For instance, Naivas Supermarkets need to understand their customers' needs and interests in order to know how to communicate to them thus marketing their products.

### **1.1.4 The Concept of Advertising**

Kotler, (2005) states that advertising is the marketing component and a form of communication that marketers use to sell goods, services, images, and ideas. Further, advertising can be done through media, publicity, road shows, branding, exhibitions and promotions (Kotler, (2005; Solomon, 2011). In addition, advertising is an expensive component of marketing since it is paid for unlike Public Relations which is for free or at minimum cost. According to Kotler, (2005); Bovee & Arens, (1992) advertising is conveying persuasive information to someone who can be identified. This means that



companies like Naivas Supermarket must pay media houses for its advertisements thus creating awareness while increasing customers or profits (Tengku, et.al, 2015; McDaniel et al., 2011). Therefore, the main objectives for advertising are to inform, persuade consumers to buy a given product. Bearden, (2004) avers that advertising is the communication that is done through mass media aiming to a given products or brand.

Therefore, this research aims to interlink Public Relations tools as used in marketing and whether they influence Naivas Supermarkets customers to buy their products. The study therefore sought to investigate how Public Relations tools are used by marketers in Naivas Supermarkets in marketing their products, how the marketers make use of the media channels available to advertise their products and services hence creating good image and maintaining good relationships with customers and the public relations tools used in marketing communication of Naivas Supermarket.

#### **1.1.5 Differences and Similarities of Marketing, Public Relations and Advertising**

Public Relations, marketing and advertising concepts have their similarities and differences whereby marketing includes both PR and advertising component. This aims to promote the products of a company with the aim of making profits and these promotions can be done through direct sales, promoting customers and use of PR. Further, marketing is focusing on the relationships with customers and clients (Sudharshan, 1995). Public Relations aims at developing the relationships of an organisation and customers thus managing clients' image (Grunig et. al., 2002). Public Relation also casts a wider net to those stakeholders who are neither customers nor clients

to the organisation (Grunig & Huang, 2000) whereas advertising acts as a communication channel used by marketers to influence customers.

Advertising and Marketing are very important activities or processes which ensure that products get to their targeted consumers whereby advertising majorly communicates ideas, products and services through media in order to raise awareness among customers or inducing them (McDaniel et. al., 2011). However, advertising is a unique component of marketing which falls under marketing effort of executing marketing plans. On the other hand, marketing is a complex process since it involves, market research, designing and packaging of products, pricing, promotions, distribution and even advertising of company products (Belch & Belch, 2007). All these activities in marketing aim to increase sales. This implies that you cannot market, distribute and promote a product that is not designed, and packaged. Packaging of products appeals the consumers thus purchasing. Low price of the product as well determines the increase of profits since most customers will tend to shop from Naivas Supermarkets when the price of products is low.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Ries & Ries, (2004) states that Public Relations is a component of marketing which is used to inform customers on products and services of a company and it can only function effectively if used with other components such as advertising, sales promotions, event sponsorships and many others. Kotler, (1988) is proposing that Public Relations need to be the communication strategy under marketing thus publicity. This means that public relation's role is to publicise products or the company thus creating or increasing customer awareness. Marketing and Public Relations are classified under the

communications responsibility by some organisations (Veena et. al, 2012). This means that public relations use by organisations, market their brand to the public since their aim to increase publicity of the organisations. Public Relations and Marketing hold different roles in organisations. On the other hand, Kotler, (1988) ; Ries & Ries, (2004) think of Public Relations and Marketing in communication. Finally, according to Belch and Belch, (2007) there is confusion and ambiguity between Public Relations and Marketing functions. It means some researchers such as Belch & Belch, (2007) take public relations to be different from marketing.

Arising from the above, the present study sought to understand the use of Public Relations as a marketing communication tool promoting Naivas Supermarkets' products. This research sought to investigate how Naivas Supermarkets uses Public Relations tools to attain Marketing goals which includes influencing customers to purchase which results in increased sales, build brand and at the same time maintain customers. It also aimed at finding out whether Public Relations as a marketing tool alone can help building brand, creating image and increasing sales. Finally, this research sought to establish the perceptions towards using PR as marketing communication tools in Naivas Supermarkets.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

#### **1.3.1 General Objective**

To investigate how Naivas Supermarkets uses Public Relations as a Marketing Communication tool.

### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

- i. To establish the effectiveness of Public Relations tools used in Marketing Communication in Naivas Supermarkets.
- ii. To determine Public Relations tools used in Marketing Communication in Naivas Supermarkets.
- iii. To find out corporate benefits of using Public Relations as a Marketing Communication tool in Naivas Supermarkets.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

- i. What is the effectiveness of Public Relations tools and media channels used in Marketing Communication in Naivas Supermarkets?
- ii. How are Public Relations tools used in Marketing Communication by Naivas Supermarkets?
- iii. What are the corporate benefits of using Public Relations as a Marketing Communication Tool in Naivas Supermarkets?

### **1.5 Rationale of the study**

The research may help organisations to understand how Public Relations as a Marketing Communication tool is utilised to increase the awareness level of a company and its reputation. Further, this study may determine if Public Relations practitioners are making use of Public Relations tools effectively in marketing of company products and services at the same time creating consumer or stakeholder awareness. The study also determined Public Relations tools used in Marketing Communication tool in Naivas Supermarkets and what corporate benefits are derived from their use. Additionally, the study enabled

Naivas Supermarkets know the appropriateness of the media in Marketing Communication.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The present study was useful to supermarkets businesses and other companies in Kenya and beyond. The study also provided information on how best Naivas Supermarkets can use Public Relations to improve their image or reputation thus maintaining customers and increasing their sales. It provided information to the Public Relations industry on how Public Relations tools are used by companies to influence customers in order to make purchasing decisions of products. Finally, this research contributed knowledge and data in Public Relations and Marketing Communication to scholars who wishes to do further studies on the same.

### **1.7 Scope and limitations of the Study**

The present study utilised qualitative approach. In depth interviews and a focus group discussion methods were used as instruments of data collection. In-depth interviews used interview guides while focus group discussions used focus group discussions guide to obtain data from respondents and participants. Further, the researcher used census technique to obtain participants and respondents in the present study because of the few number of the target population. More so, qualitative data was analysed through manually deductive approach by identifying and connecting themes in statements derived from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

The present study was conducted in Naivas Supermarkets Head Office, Naivas Supermarkets Kasarani branch, Westlands branch, Eastgate Donholm and Ngong road

branches. The researcher chose these four branches because of their distribution thus representing diverse areas within Nairobi City County. Finally, the head office is where the Senior Management, Public Relations Officers and Marketers are stationed and this is where the Public Relations and Marketing decision emanate from.

The present study took place in Nairobi City County, Naivas Supermarkets Head Office, Naivas Supermarkets Kasarani branch, Westlands branch, Eastgate Donholm and Ngong road branch due to time factor and limited resources. Nairobi City County was chosen since it has the highest number of Naivas Supermarkets branches as compared to other counties. Nairobi has nine out of 42 branches in the country.

The researcher used census technique whereby all thirty-two members of staff in the Public Relations and marketing department were participants. The participants for this study were chosen since they are the people who understand how Naivas Supermarkets uses Public Relations as a Marketing Communication tool in marketing its products and services. This proved to be expensive both in time and money resources since massive effort and time was required to execute this census.

## **1.8 Operational Definition of Terms**

**Persuasion** This is the way in which public relations tools in marketing communication can change consumers' behavior or attitude in order to purchase a product or seek the services of a given organisation.

**Media relations** This is having a good relationship with various media thus informing members on matters concerning an organisation for instance Naivas Supermarkets.

**Branding** Is the process of advertising an organisation or a product using a unique image or name thus visibility.

**Advertorials** This are advertisements in newspapers and magazines that provides information about a product or services inform of stories and they are not paid for publication.

**Publicity** This is a strategy in which organisations make their products or its existence known by many people. This can be done through the use of promotions, use of brochures and flyers to pass information to do with the products or an organisation.

<b>Influence</b>	This means how consumers are affected by certain communication in order to make decisions over something.
<b>Marketing Communication</b>	Marketing communication is the communication done while marketing products of a company with an aim of persuading and informing customers to buy or use or products from an organisation with the aim of increasing sales.
<b>Market mix</b>	Strategies used to promote brands, products or services to customers.
<b>Media channels</b>	Platforms where information is conveyed from the source to the customers or receiver.
<b>Marketing</b>	It is the systematic process of planning and executing of organisations' promotional efforts which includes conception of products, pricing, marketing and distribution of products to customers.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Overview**

This chapter discusses the in depth empirical studies with recent and related literature on how marketers and Public Relations practitioners make use of Public Relations as a tool for marketing. The research gap, conceptual and analytical framework related to the present study in line with the research objectives is also discussed in the chapter.

#### **2.1 The Functions of Public Relations in Marketing**

Since the evolution of Public Relations, its function has been changing at the same time expanding each time to an extent that it has attracted diverse organisations to start making use of public relations in the communication of their activities, services and products to customers. Cutlip et al, (1999) states that Public Relations includes publicity, the press, advertising, issues to do with public affairs, management of issues, lobbying and investor relations. Hutton, (1996) argues that Public Relations has got various core functions which include: research, creating of images, management and communicating to stakeholders who are Naivas Supermarket customers in this study.

Harris & Artur, (1991) calls Public Relations as Marketing Public Relations and argues that the expansion of Public Relations is comprehensive since it performs the marketing function in advertisements, creating corporate image, building relationships and many other functions. Therefore, companies are assigning Public Relations specialists to marketing department. On the other hand, Harris & Artur, (1991) further states that companies also engage Public Relations firms to introduce of products or services into the market, building brands through product life cycle and finally defending products.

According to McCarthy, (1975) the basic task for Public Relations is to make a marketing program that facilitate marketing mix. This mix involves product, price, place and promotion. The marketing mix involves the communication of products offered or sold by Naivas Supermarkets according to this study.

According to Sally, Lyndon, & Adam, (1996) advertising and Public Relations as components of marketing communication are slowly converting from mass media to interactive media. Interactive media here means the use of new media where consumers interact with the employees of a company. Consumers can send and receive texts through face book or twitter directly to their accounts. Adam, (1996) further, state that companies that will embrace the use of new media will have advantage to others companies thus increasing the number of customers.

According to the marketing theory Boyd et.al, (1995), advertising and Public Relations relates to persuading consumers to seek company services or commodities. They can persuade them through giving promotions to customers. Here, advertising therefore, is interpreted as presenting customer with information through various channels of communication and adverts are paid for before being disseminated (Boyd et.al, 1995). Therefore, using Public Relations can be adapted by various companies to market that company while creating a good relationship of an organisation to stakeholders and customers so that keeps on expanding or doing well in business. In this case Public Relations creates and retains a good or conducive environment for an organisation while preserving the market price of the companies' commodities (Otieno & Mohamed, 2015). However, non-profit making organisations have got PR department other than having a

marketing department (Otieno & Mohamed, 2015). This is because non-profit organisations have got no products to sell instead they have services for which they may need publicity. This means that marketing is done to only business oriented companies and not to nonprofit making organisations.

The Public Relations as a marketing component can be used to create awareness of a given company or product once used with other components effectively (Ries & Ries, 2004). Long ago public relations was treated as part of marketing strategy (Grunig, 1992). This indicates it is that included as a marketing strategy which is always treated as playing a role of publicity while marketing company goods and commodities for instance Naivas Supermarkets' services and products Kitchen & Moss, (1995). In addition, several communication and marketing scholars, including Kotler, (1988) and Schwartz, (1982), in their various papers made a number of attempts for absorbing Public Relations under marketing as it is used to communicate information of accompany thus persuading customers. Specifically, Kotler, (1988) proposed that Public Relations need to be considered as a marketing strategy of a company since it is used to persuade and create awareness of the company and its products. On the other hand, Grunig, (1992), suggest that the Public Relations and marketing communication roles a company have separate roles to fulfill the objective so the company.

Further, Public Relations is used to support marketing activities within organisations technically. Grunig, (1992) posits that marketing managers seem to lift marketing to dominate and also a very important function in the company. The Public Relations Society of America provides various views of many Public Relations officials affirming

that it has completed many roles of an organisation for instance marketing (Rose & Miller, 1994). This means that marketing is part of Public Relations department.

Additionally, Public Relations practitioners through the use of effective communication protect the reputation of a company thus marching the interests of organisations with those of customers (Grunig & Dozier, 2006). The publics here according to the present research topic are the Naivas Supermarket customers that are being targeted by Naivas Supermarkets. Public Relations practitioners employ a variety of communication tactics to maintain company image. This can be done through the use of media releases, social media accounts, events, flyers, pamphlets, annual CSR reports, newsletters, and other materials (Mahoney, 2013). These tactics can maintain or enhance the relationship of Naivas Supermarkets and their customers.

Public Relations does not focus on businesses only but also in aligning messages of a company to customers (Benyman, 2010). For instance, PR can be used by Naivas Supermarket to tailor messages to targeted customers in different ways. This means Public Relations use in organisations is expanding each period. Therefore, Public Relations can be used to launch products or brand to the market and also maintain the company's image. Additionally, according to Andrea, (2012) Public Relations is structured in various steps in order to harmonise stakeholders of a company so that it can enjoy the goodwill of its customers (Andrea, 2012).

Public Relations creates the perception of customers who are Naivas Supermarkets customers in this study. In other words, Public Relations communications includes explaining reality for the customers that Naivas Supermarkets depends on. Further, public

relations underscore its capacity to convey messages to customers thus providing customers with trustworthiness (Naumovska & Blazeska, 2016). Therefore, the researcher in the present study was concerned with how Naivas Supermarkets marketers are using Public Relations tools for marketing its products and services thus creating the company's reputation and increasing customers as well.

## **2.2 Models of Public Relations**

The researcher sought to investigate whether Naivas Supermarkets public relations and marketers use press publicity model by using propaganda and pseudo- events in their marketing of the supermarket products and services. Further, according to Grunig & Grunig, (1992) public relations is used by communications professionals to persuade thus shaping the thoughts and opinions of key customers or customers. In contrast, according to Alex et.al, (2000) in the public information model the function of Public Relations is to communicate information with facts that the media personnel use to make the news for instance business news. For instance, Naivas Supermarkets marketing officers can provide journalists with information on their products and services which can be aired in form of news or published in newspapers. This model entails the use of media relations as a public relations tool in marketing company products.

There is also a two-way asymmetrical model which is a way of communicating with customers or consumers thus persuading them (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). This is because those creating messages or content conduct customers research to better understand their attitudes and behaviors before creating messages for advertising or deciding on marketing strategies. The model focuses on how organisation's profits can increase through

advertising and consumer marketing communication (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Finally, Grunig & Hunt, (1984) posits that there is a two-way symmetrical model which argues that Public Relations practitioners negotiate with the involved parties. The parties for instance include the Naivas Supermarkets as company and its customers or consumers. However, this is an ethical model that professionals need to consider when doing their marketing of products and services or brand since it creates a mutual benefit between the company and the consumers.

In the present study, the researcher is interested in establishing how Naivas Supermarkets marketers use the Public Relations models in communicating to their customers and other stakeholders. The researcher is also interested in finding out the best models adopted by Naivas Supermarkets in marketing its products and services. Finally, the study will establish the media channels preferred by Naivas Supermarkets Public Relations and Marketers in maintaining a good relationship with its customers before creating any advertising messages or strategies.

### **2.3 The Aim of Marketing**

Marketing aims to impact or influence the buying behavior of consumers so that they make decisions to purchase a given product or brand. However, once consumers have been influenced the impact remains in the mind of the consumer towards that product. Therefore, marketing influences the Naivas Supermarkets' customers to consider a given product, evaluate a product, and eventually purchasing thus influencing consumer behavior. The major aim of consumer behavior analysis is to determine the behavior of certain consumers (Kumar & Raju, 2013). Further, the concept identifies elements that

change the behaviors of consumers (Kumar & Raju, 2013). For instance, Naivas Supermarkets can aim to analyse the consumer behavior of their customers by identifying the elements which can change them behave in a manner they behave.

Nevertheless, marketing is defined as communication, advertising, a Public Relations or persuasion process. However, advertising is viewed as a paid, non-personal information dissemination to customers through mass media about firms and non-profit organisations in order to inform or persuade particular customers. Moreover, marketing is used to establish or increase the awareness level of the company for instance Naivas Supermarkets and its services in the mind of customers thus making it known (Kumar & Raju, 2013). This means that Public Relations can be used to create corporate image and reputation without paying while in advertising you can do the same by paying for the adverts. The present study will therefore investigate how Naivas Supermarkets marketers uses Public Relations tools to market their firm, services and products with an aim of increasing sales, persuading customers, creating its corporate image and reputation, raising awareness and maintain their stakeholders.

According to the present study, the researcher will establish how marketers package their advertising messages, the kind of media they use in conveying advertising messages in order to influence customers. According to Schultz & Patti, (2009) the work of public relations in marketing is prioritised as a medium used for conveying messages towards consumers of targeted by those messages in this case the Naivas Supermarkets customers.

Schultz & Patti, (2009) considers advertising to be one way of communication from business firms to customers using media platforms such as print media, electronic, social

media, and internet without any feedback from the customers or buyers. Therefore, adapting a one-way communication can barely be appropriate when launching a brand in the market. In addition, advertising cannot establish a given brand but it can only protect it once it has been built by Public Relations (Alex et.al, 2000).

Finally, advertising costs in television, radio, newspaper, magazine, as well as the new media are largely increasing. As a result of this problem, the marketers, even the media planner, need to implement cost effectiveness and efficiency in order to establish goodwill and to sell company products and or services. That is to say that public relations is not paid for when conveying information thus the marketer can save as much money as he or she can (Pawar, 2014). Therefore, according to the present study, Naivas Supermarkets marketers should make maximum use of public relations tools for marketing other than advertising since the media advertisement rates are increasing. In addition, public relations tools are cost effective for products and services marketing since they were not paid for but still are used to establish goodwill, increase sales and increase customer awareness.

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## **2.4 Difference between Marketing and Public Relations**

According to Belch and Belch, (2007) there is need to recognise the difference between Marketing and PR strategies in order for companies to understand how best they can use these strategies as they market their brand. This means that organisations disseminate messages that aim to manage and protect their images and also remain popular. Belch and Belch, (2007) further states that the role of Public Relations and marketing confuse people and they do not understand their use. Further, there is need to recognise that both Public Relations and marketing are strategies of passing persuading messages to customers. Therefore, PR and marketing can be used to persuade Naivas Supermarkets customers to like their outlets. Therefore, both PR and marketing can be used to increase customers and protect the image to Naivas Supermarket and their customers.

Consequently, Grunig, Larissa, & Elizabeth, (2007) argue that there is need for PR to cater for all stakeholders of the company since its purpose is marketing communication thus increasing profits for a company as well as saving advertising costs that could be used for marketing company products. According to Wilcox & Cameron, (2009) Public Relations' theorists point the basic distinction between Public Relations and Marketing. In Wilcox and Cameron, (2009)'s view is that Public Relations theory does not convince the public in order to create mutual understanding between the company and the public.

Marketing and public relations uses have to be separated by their mission and their objectives. According to Skinner et., al. (2004), communicators, marketers and Public Relations practitioners have similarities whereby they deal with organisational relationships. Kotler & Keller, (2009) explains that marketing involves pointing out and

meeting needs of the people in a society. Further, Keller, (2009) states that marketing is a process by which the public what they need through creating and offering products and services.

According to Veena et.al, (2012) the two disciplines are under one umbrella and they will always complement one another in all the roles in an organisation. Further, marketing seeks to improve visibility of products of the company, retaining Naivas Supermarkets' products in the market thus customer satisfaction.

Furthermore, Veena et.al, (2012) continue stating that Marketing and Public Relations functions are very essential in any organisation. For instance, Public Relations does not seek for instead it is the work of the marketing department.

Nowadays employees of an organisations are equipped with both Public Relations and Marketing skills which enable them to be well conversant to both disciplines (Veena et.al, 2012). Grunig et., al. (2007) further states that marketing aims to pass information about the company, products, and services and brand too. For example, to Naivas Supermarkets need to make use of Public Relations to reach out their customers and other stakeholders. Finally, many firms or companies tend to merge Public Relations with marketing because both are perceived to do same roles and have same characteristics (Grunig et al., 2007).

Therefore, according to the present research, Naivas Supermarkets management should be able to distinguish the roles of the two and how they create customer awareness, protecting the brand, create corporate image and also to increase sales. This is important

also since corporations such as Naivas Supermarkets are able to understand each role of the two disciplines and how important they are to the corporation.

## **2.5 Use of Media in Marketing Communication**

In the 20th century, print, radio, and television dominated the media industry. These media attracted the public while giving them the opportunity to read, listen, and watch what is happening across creating awareness of particular products and services offered by companies, organisations and institutions through sales promotions, advertising and Public Relations (Sin, et al., 2012). Therefore, many companies have spent a lot of money on marketing, relying on the various forms of media thus increasing demand and popularising the brand of the company thus increasing sales.

In addition, Public Relations practitioners and marketers make use corporate website, email and social networks to attain corporate image, create awareness and increase sales (Kitchen, 1999). Kitchen, (1999) states that it is only a mass media channel that can set up customer relationships. The use of new media has become key element in marketing companies or their products (Erica, 2010). However, according to Erica, (2010) Public Relations practitioners were the first people to new media.

Further, marketing through social networks comprises using social media applications or websites to convey persuading information about a company's products, services and brand to consumers thus increasing profits (Ward, 2012). Therefore, companies can build their customer base, managing the firm's image towards a company and its products (Ward, 2012). For instance Naivas Supermarket can build its image in their customers' mind. Marketing and Public Relations professionals use social media in different ways,

for instance by disseminating information about brands and prices of products to their customers (Khang et al, 2012). In addition, according to Papasolomou et. al, (2013) Marketing Public Relations is appropriate in achieving the goals of a company for instance creating brand awareness, increasing demands of products and services of a given company.

In addition, the new media has also impacted or changed the consumers' attitude from accessing information in regard to a certain company product or service (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). This implies that companies like Naivas Supermarkets should make use of social networks appropriately to market their products thus influencing its customers thus gaining more.

This will help the researcher in the present study to find out how Public Relations practitioners and Marketers use various media platforms in marketing thus creating awareness of products and services of a given company. Therefore, the study is investigating how Public Relations and marketers in Naivas Supermarkets make use of the various forms of media to influence, persuade, create and maintain a good relationship with customers.

## **2.6 Use of Sponsorship and events as a Marketing Communication Tool**

Lagae, (2005) defines sponsorship as a consensus between the two parties of business which include customers as the sponsored party and the company as the sponsor itself whereby the sponsor provides things like money, goods.

According to Reid, et. al, (2005) events and sponsorships are planned and designed by companies in order to involve the public to participate in the events thus communicating about the products or services offered by the company. Further, Reid, et. al, (2005) avers that events and sponsorships are strategies in which corporations involve their customers hence getting attached to their brand and this can have a greater impact than marketing communication since it involves the public. According to Reid, et. al, (2005) sponsorships are planned and designed by firms to involve stakeholders to participate in the events thus communicating about the products offered by the company. In addition, Clow & Baack, (2002) states that event and sponsorship marketing are similar. Therefore, Naivas Supermarkets need to involve its customers or the public in its events or sponsorship programs in order for them to get attached to their brand.

Koekemoer, (2004) states further, that firms provide resources to some beneficiaries directly in form of sponsorship thus creating good image. Further, marketing, sponsorship offers helps firms to build their brands and those of their commodities (Koekemoer, 2004). Therefore, communication concentrates on sponsoring the image of a company.

Since most companies adopt various means to reach their customers or consumers, they have embraced promotional activities and sponsorships to the customers. Therefore, using sponsorship as a marketing communication strategy is one of the necessity companies need to communicate to consumers directly (Nufer & Buhler, 2010). Through sponsorship, stakeholders are able to understand more about a given company or products since he or she is benefitting from it. Additionally, according to Jobber, (2007) most companies are fully aware that their customers need to be maintained. According to the

present study, this literature guides marketers that the use of promotions and sponsorships as marketing communication strategy is a very important strategy they need to consider in maintaining their customers thus having good relationship. It also guides Naivas Supermarkets marketers on how they should create their market mix so as to outshine the competitors for instance Tuskys supermarkets.

Companies also make use of promotions as strategies of marketing their brands and products to consumers. Promotion is the way companies give customers free products once they shop from them (Jobber, 2007). For instance, Naivas Supermarket to give free products attached to a product a customer buys. They involve communication strategies to convey information to their customers that are effective and efficient in communication with existing and potential target markets (Shank, 2009). The objectives of these promotions and sponsorship programs include; establishing promotional opportunities to customers, establishing and maintaining community and customer relations, creating a favorable brand for the company or product and finally gaining publicity to the customers.

Kumar & Raju, (2013) states that a company's brand cannot be popular unless they have invested in their promotional activities that are inform of advertisements to reach their customers thus influencing time. Further, Kumar & Raju, (2013) states that companies through marketing departments use money to keep their customers. It appears that marketing messages may influence customers to seek brand of their choice.

This literature is important to the present study since it explains how sponsorships and promotions are being used by marketers in various organisations in promoting their

products and services. It also helps the researcher to investigate whether promotions and sponsorship programs carried out by Naivas Supermarkets help to achieve the intended objectives.

## **2.7 Public Relations Marketing in Brand Building**

Ries & Ries, (2002) states that advertising does not build brands but they inform customers about the existence of the brand. This means that companies no longer use advertising strategy to market their products and services. According to Nancy, (2012) messages become most favorable once there is constant communication of information to clients about the brand thus making it stronger. However, if the brand is not popular to customers it will be strenuous to launch that brand with the help of Public Relations. In addition, no one will be interested to buy a product he or she has never heard of in any media channel. Actually, through media message or communication companies attain publicity of various brands (Ries & Ries, 2002). Therefore, Public Relations are important since it gives a brand substance by informing consumers what they will always remember and relate to a given company or brand (Nancy, 2012). Public Relations are essential in giving a brand substance by informing consumers what they will always remember and relate to a given brand (Nancy, 2012).

Since Public Relations does not have a clear impact on sales there will be difficulties in creating customers' attention and interest to purchase products according to Sandel, (2012). Further, Sandel, (2012) continues to argue that Public Relations is the first thing companies need to focus about or thinking about when entering the new market. This is because Public Relations is key in establishing a brand and influencing customers

(Sandel, 2012). For instance, placing an editorial in magazines and newspapers about Naivas Supermarkets' products including the benefits and price of products builds the brand stronger. In the present study, the researcher sought to establish if the Public Relations tools Naivas Supermarkets marketers use in marketing influence customers to shop from the Supermarket thus increasing its sales. Further, Sandel, (2012) continues to argue that Public Relations is the first thing companies need to focus about or thinking about when entering the new market. The researcher also seeks to find out if the use of Public Relations as marketing communication tool by Naivas Supermarkets influences perceptions of their customers towards their products.

On the other hand, blogs have also become important ways to promote brands and achieve customer awareness thus maintaining customers while increasing profits (Sandel, 2012). Therefore, in the present study, the researcher seeks to find out whether the media platforms used by the Naivas Supermarkets marketers have created awareness to its customers as well as promoting the Supermarket's brand.



## **2.8 Customer Relations as a Public Relations Activity**

According to Oladele et.al, (2016) advertising has a number of social roles despite publicity and creating awareness and introducing new products, brands and services into the market. These social roles creating awareness of new products into the market; it further, it enhances aesthetic sense to consumers. It also teaches consumers about new products and how to use that new product (Oladele et.al, 2016). Finally, advertising presents images to consumers capturing the variety of the world in which we live.

Eventually, Churchill, (1998) states that marketing communication maintain the consuming power of consumers and also it stimulates customers' efforts and increased production. Since customer relations is a strategy or a social role of businesses and organisations to maintain customers according to Churchill, (1998); Oladele et.al, (2016), the researcher therefore, is investigating how customer relationship is practiced by Naivas Supermarkets marketers and Public Relations professionals during their advertising and if indeed it has an impact on sales.

The study intended to investigate how Naivas Supermarkets marketers and Public Relations practitioners use Public Relations tools for marketing and how those tools meet the customer's interests and needs during advertising despite publicity or creating brand awareness. The study intended to establish if the use Public Relations tools and the preferred media for advertising have an impact on sales, have increased customer awareness about a given product or service. For instance, the kind of media channels the supermarket uses to inform its customers on the new brand or products they sell, how to use the product and how beneficial it is to the consumers.

## **2.9 Use of Corporate Social Responsibility Activities**

Public Relations practitioners consider corporate social responsibility as a key marketing opportunity that enhances the trustworthiness of a company. Corporate social responsibility helps the firm to invest in the community thus uplifting the community to meet its needs and creating a favorable corporate image and reputation for the company (Morsing & Schultz, (2006). When the community get involved in the corporate social responsibility activities by an organisation, they tend to accept the organisation thus supporting it. For instance Naivas Supermarket should practice more CSR while involving the community in order to create a good reputation. Additionally, Public Relations keep an organisation be informed of the social needs of the community through involvement of the community in corporate social responsibility programmes (Mersham, et. al, 1995). Therefore, the researcher seeks to find out if Naivas Supermarkets marketers and Public Relations officers use CSR to market their products since it is a Public Relations tool. Corporate social responsibility is an essential activity that improves the welfare of the community in which a company operates thus increasing its profits and company credibility. The study sought to find out if Naivas Supermarkets uses corporate social responsibility to maintain and create its relationship with the customers, thus increasing sales and enhancing its credibility.

## **2.10 Use of Media Relations in Marketing Communication**

According to Belch & Belch, (2007) media relations use helps an organisation to gain publicity directly, to control and influence media coverage of organisations through news. Podcasts, brochures, Web sites and social media can also be used.

Therefore, media Relations takes an important position in Public Relations since media controls the information that flows to the publics. Naivas Supermarkets Public Relations and marketing people should create with the media for favorable coverage. However, Naivas Supermarkets should develop messages that attract targeted mediums (Belch & Belch, 2007).

According to Belch & Belch, (2007) press conferences also are good media relations strategies which can be used to market products or brands whereby organisations invite the press people to assist them disseminate or announce important information to customers. Press conferences are not paid for but they act as sources of news to media houses. Information on Naivas Supermarket products and services can be spread to customers or the public inform of news.

## **2.11 Theoretical Framework**

### **2.11.1 Hierarchy of Effects Model**

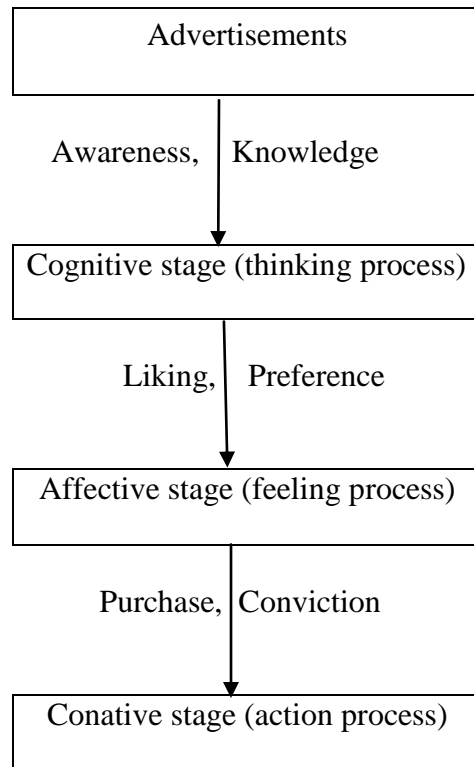
The present study adopted Lavidge and Steiner's Hierarchy of Effects model which explains the stages that influences customers to make various decisions when purchasing products or seeking services (Barry & Howard, 1990; Weilbacher, 2001). The stages are being aware, having knowledge, liking something, preferring something, conviction and purchasing which emanate from three main stages that include; cognitive, affective and conative stages. Advocates of this model suggest that consumers or customers act to messages in an orderly way (Weilbacher, 2001). This means that Naivas Supermarkets consumers or customers must get convinced to purchase or choose a given product or service due to the influence and power of these stages.

Further, the theory explains that consumers start with cognitive stage which is the thinking process, followed by effective which is the feeling that develops after thinking about a given message (Weilbacher, 2001). Finally, the consumer reaches the conative stage and this is when the consumer takes an action towards the advertised message or advertisement (Barry & Howard, 1990; Grover & Vriens, 2006). Cognition involves the beliefs, thoughts and knowledge one has towards a given product or service that is being advertised. Hierarchy of effects model helped the researcher to show how Public Relations is used in marketing by Naivas Supermarkets to convey various marketing messages or information through posters, social media, documentaries, press releases and many other Public Relations tools in order to convince or influence consumers. Further, the hierarchy of effects model helped the researcher to explain how Public Relations messages or advertisement influences customers in order to purchase Naivas Supermarkets products. Finally, the theory will help Naivas Supermarkets public relations and marketing officers to know the importance of packaging, designing and communicating their products to customers with an aim of convincing them to purchase their products. Further, it incorporates other stages which include; Attention, Interest, Desire and Action. This means that Naivas Supermarket consumers must get convinced to purchase or choose a given product or service due to the influence and power of these stages.

In addition, according to Bambang, (2012) the Hierarchy of Effects model consists of two models that try to explain further how the buyer make decisions based on the influence from Public Relations message or advertisement. The two models include Attention,

Interest, Desire and Action model and Defining Advertising Goals for Measuring Advertising Results model which is considered to set communication objectives.

**Figure 2.1: Hierarchy of effects model**



## **2.12 Conceptual Framework**

### **2.12.1 Public Relations tools**

Public Relations are strategies PR practitioners use during conveying tailored messages of a given product and service offered by companies to customers. Therefore, marketers use Public Relations tools like social media, sponsorships, promotions, media relations, newsletters, corporate social responsibility, exhibitions and many others for marketing purposes. Messages are tailored or framed in a suitable manner so as to reach their customers in an effective way through a given media thus persuading them always to

shop in Naivas Supermarkets. However, these can influence consumers to purchase products thus increasing sales, create awareness of the new and existing products, and create a good reputation and image to its customers.

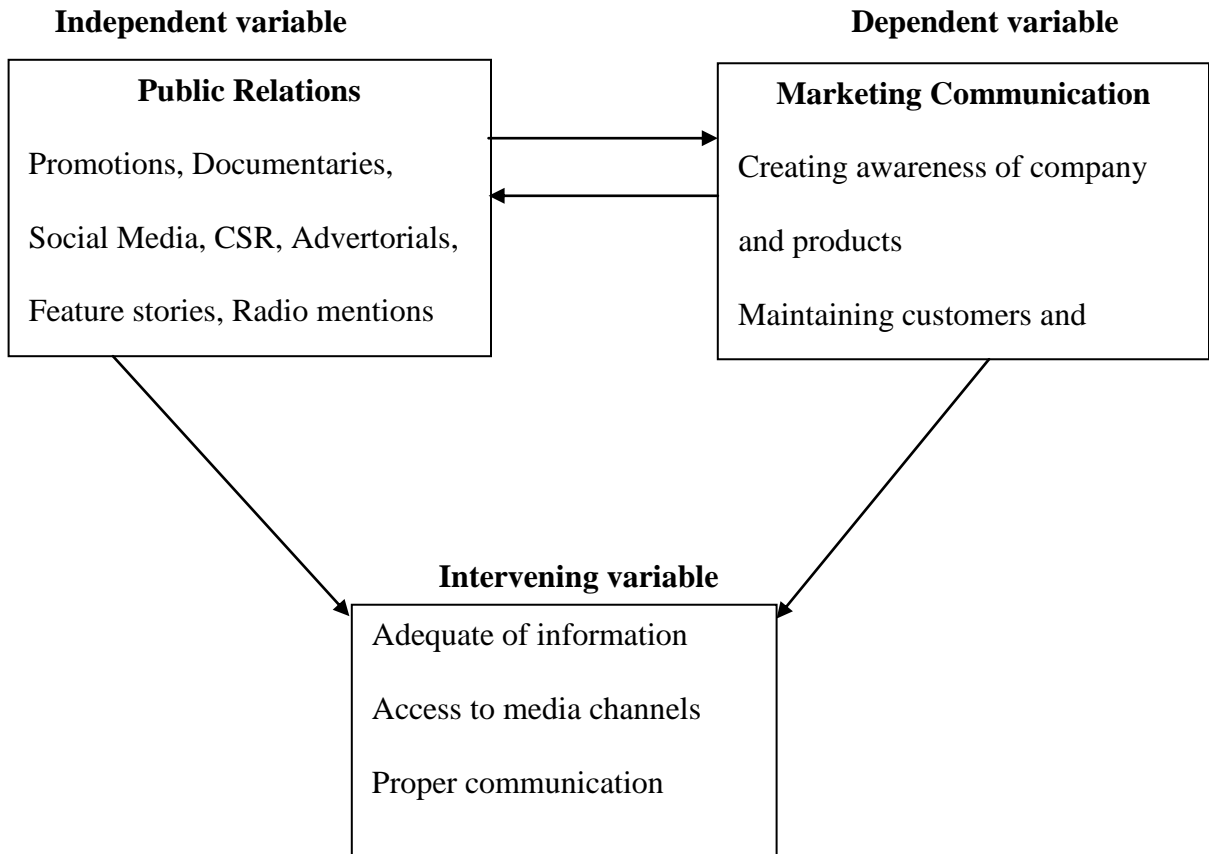
### **2.12.2 Marketing Communication**

This is conceptualized as using public relations in creating awareness of a company's products and services for instance Naivas Supermarket. Public relations can be used to market the products thus creating awareness of the company and products, publicity, creating a good reputation and maintaining customers. This means that all these can happen through the use of the available public relations tools used by Naivas Supermarket.

### **2.12.3 Intervening Variable**

For marketing to be effective, there must be proper communication between the organisation and the customers, there must be adequate information, availability and access to media channels. This means that Naivas Supermarket managers should make use of media channels effectively to create awareness of a company, maintain customers and also create good reputation of the company. Understanding the kind of customers Naivas deals with and what are their expectations are will enable the public relations officers and marketing team to use proper public relations tools so as the information can reach to customers. Therefore, Naivas Supermarkets marketing department must do a thorough research on how to package their messages and how to disseminate in order to reach their intended customers. This variable influences the cause effect of the independent and dependent variable.

**Figure 2.2 Conceptual Framework**



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Overview**

This chapter explains research design, data collection methods, data analysis and data presentation methods considered during research. The chapter also includes the study population, sample size, sampling techniques and research ethics.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The study used descriptive survey design. The design describes what and the how of a situation or a problem. For instance, in the present study descriptive survey design was used to explain how marketers use Public Relations tools in advertising and what Public Relations tools they use to maintain customer relationships and creating awareness. Finally, descriptive survey design employed a qualitative approach to collect data on how marketers use Public Relations tools for advertising. In-depth interviews and focused group discussions guides were the qualitative research approach used to obtain data that described the situation in the present study.

#### **3.2 Research Approach**

The researcher used qualitative research approach. Hypothesis was formed after collection and initial analysis of data. In qualitative research approach in-depth interviews, focus group discussions were used to obtain qualitative data in the present study. Therefore, in depth interviews were carried out to Naivas Supermarkets Customer Care staff in the head office, Kasarani, Ngong road, Eastgate Donholm and Westlands branches. Focus group discussions were carried out to both marketers and Public Relations officers in the Naivas Supermarkets head office. Research approaches are



ways researchers adopt to get relevant data for a given study and from relevant sources (Koul, 1984).

### **3.3 Research Method**

This study utilized the case study of Naivas Supermarkets, whereby indepth interviews and focus group discussions were used to collect qualitative data from members of staff in the Public Relations, Marketing and Customer Care department.

### **3.4 Sampling Frame**

The sampling frame comprised seven Public Relations and Marketing Officers and 25 Customer Care staff from the head office, Kasarani, Ngong Road, Eastgate Donholm and Westlands branches. Therefore, the target population comprised all staff members from the Public Relations and Marketing office and the Customer Care office.

#### **3.4.1 Sample Size**

The study sample size was all staff members from the Public Relations and Marketing office and Customer Care in head office, Kasarani, Ngong Road, Eastgate Donholm and Westlands branches since they are few. The study therefore, comprised of seven participants from the Public Relations and Marketing office and 25 participants from Customer Care. Koul, (1984), describes the sample size as being significance since it gives a general description of the target population, event, elements or any other subject that is under study.

**Table 3.1: shows the distribution of the sample size**

Sampling Frame	Study population	Sample size	Percentage (%)
Public Relations & Marketing staff	7	7	22
Customer care staff	25	25	78
Total	32	32	100

### **3.4.2 Sampling Procedure**

The researcher used census technique to obtain data on how Public Relations tool are used as Marketing Communication Tools in Naivas Supermarkets. This technique was chosen since Naivas Supermarkets has a total of 32 members of staff in the Public Relations, Marketing and Customer Care department. Census technique was used to provide the study with a wealth of information for further follow-up action. This technique was reliable and accurate for the researcher, since it involved each member of the population in the collection of data.

The sample size helps the researcher to make a generalisation of the whole population. The sample size also enables the researcher to be able to collect data from the whole population easily. Participants were from Naivas Supermarkets at the head office, Kasarani, Westlands, Eastgate Donholm and Ngong Road branches.

### **3.5 Research Methods and Instruments**

Interview guide was used (Appendix I) and focus group discussions guide (Appendix II) to collect qualitative data in this study.

The researcher called and booked an appointment with the Marketing Manager of Naivas Supervisor. During the meeting, the researcher explained to the Marketing Manager why the sample group had been chosen to participate in the interview and the tentative duration of the interview or focus group discussion. The researcher further informed him that the research was purely academic and would be kept confidential. A Certificate of Fieldwork from The University of Nairobi was presented which was to prove the authenticity of the study. The Marketing Manager requested for the research tools to be sent to him for logistics purposes which the researcher sent.

The Marketing Manager upon consultation with the Naivas management agreed to have the research undertaken at Naivas Supermarkets and gave the researcher two weeks to complete the exercise within the identified branches and to be communicating with the Customer Experience Manager prior to visiting the branches for logistics preparations.

While undertaking the research, the researcher was accompanied by a moderator and a note taker who assisted in taking notes during interviews and FGDs and also made use of two recorders that could record the interviews. The moderator ensured that everyone in the FGD had an opportunity to give opinions on the topic. The interviewer also probed for more information during interviews and FGDs.

FGD was carried out to Public Relations Officers and Marketing Managers at Naivas Supermarkets Head Office Boardroom. The discussion took around 1 ½ hours. The in depth interview took four days and was conducted to the Customer Care staff in Kasarani, Ngong Road, Eastgate and Westlands branches.

Qualitative data was generated from five key informants in the management level and 23 participants in the customer care departments of Naivas Supermarkets. The participants for focused group discussions were named from FGD 1 to FGD 5 while for Interview guides were named from P1 to P23. For in depth interviews, few participants are required to give more insights compared to surveys using questionnaires (Babbie, R. E. 1990). This therefore, means that interviews gave information without limiting the information the participants has on a given question.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

Qualitative data was analysed manually by identifying while connecting themes in statements derived from in-depth interviews and FGDs. Therefore, the researcher analysed while organising all sampled information from statements, explanations and observations made by the researcher to a doable size by interpreting and summarising it. According to (Cooper & Schindler, 2006) data analysis entails summarising data collected to a doable size. This means that the collected data was summarised into various themes and presented in narratives.

### **3.7 Data Presentation**

Qualitative data was presented in narrative and prose form. For every objective, the researcher identified themes from the findings of FGD and in-depth interviews which formed the basis for discussing the findings. The combination of in-depth interviews and FGD data findings enabled the researcher make conclusions and recommendations for the study.

### **3.8 Validity and Reliability**

A pilot study was conducted in Naivas Supermarkets, Kenyatta Avenue in order to validate the interview guide and the focus group discussion guides. The validation checked on the language structure used and the significance of the information to how marketers in Naivas Supermarkets use Public Relations tools in marketing. This enabled the researcher to improve the research tools in order to obtain reliable and valid results.

According to Kerlinger, (1978) reliability is the consistency of an instrument when it is used in the same study thus producing reliable results while validity is producing credible results. This means that the researcher's findings can be trusted and if different studies are done by different scholars, the results will be the same.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

The researcher ensured that research ethics were adhered to during the entire research study. The researcher presented a research proposal to the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Nairobi for approval. Once approved, a Certificate of Fieldwork was awarded (see appendix III). An interview and focus group discussion guides were prepared and pre-tested to allow credible data collection (see appendix I and II).

The researcher used her interpersonal skills, the Interview guide, Focus Group Discussion guide and the Certificate of Fieldwork documents to sought consent from Naivas Supermarkets management to undertake the study. Participants were informed that giving their names and personal details in writing was voluntary and all the information gathered during the study would be used only for the study and destroyed thereafter.

The researcher observed high standards of integrity, confidentiality and privacy and ensured to remain impartial. This was done by ensuring that all data analysed was the exact information collected without manipulation.

Once primary data was collected and the research was over, the work was subjected to an originality test after which a certificate of originality was issued, (see appendix IV). The final research work was checked and verified for corrections as a final step to ensure the quality of the research meets the prescribed standards (see appendix V).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.0 Overview

This chapter presents and discusses results of the study. This includes presentation and analyses of data from both the in depth interviews and focused group discussions based on study objectives. Data from the FGDs and in-depth interviews were transcribed and presented in the form of narratives.

#### 4.1 Presentation, analysis and interpretation of findings as per research objectives

##### 4.1.1 The effectiveness of Public Relations Tools and Media Channels used in Marketing Communication in Naivas Supermarkets

The findings showed that, Naivas Supermarkets reaches a large number of customers through social media. The management can gauge the number of people or customers who visit their social media accounts. This is done by social media personnel who checks the number of people who visit their social media accounts through likes, comments, tweets and retweets and those following. FGD 1 explained that:

*“the majority of customers of the age bracket of 18-35 years is reached since they are majority social media users. Our face book account for instance has over 175,000 followers and it is easier to gauge how many people visit their site every day.”*

This is an indication that the use of social media to market Naivas Supermarket products is effective to young people aged between 18-35 years since they use social media frequently. The study further established that social networks are most effective mode used to disseminate information especially to young people since majority are technoservy and whenever Naivas Supermarkets uses social media in its communication,

it reaches most of the young people. Participant (P16) expressed that: *“The use of social media to market the supermarket products communicate is effective to youth since most of them are on social media.”* The finding is an indication that the supermarket should use social media appropriately to target young people when marketing the products.

The researcher found that measuring effectiveness of media channels used as a marketing communication tool was not easy since different modes reached different clients differently. However, it was evident that only the sales behavior could show the effect, however, FGD 3 and FGD 5 expressed in a focused group discussion:

*“The use of social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and website) is the current mode of communication which has been embraced by the customers. Social Media Handlers are able to know the number of people who have interacted in their site.”*

This is an implication that from the interaction of customers in social media, a company can determine the way customers perceive the company and they can also share ideas with customers on the services they offer.

Social media use can also help in marketing products by uploading them on social media sites and social media users can be able to access such information and get persuaded to use the products. Customers can get influenced to purchase products through the comments about the product especially when the messages are positive.

Findings of the study established that sometimes media houses give metrics to gauge the number of people who accessed Naivas Supermarkets feature stories in print media for instance in local newspapers. This is what one participant expressed, *“Metrics are also*



*given by media houses to gauge how many people saw Naivas article placed in the local newspapers.” (FGD 3).* This finding implies that since the supermarket is able to gauge the number of customers who visit their social media accounts, it is a good public relation tool to market its products in order to reach them. The supermarket management can be able to know the number of customers who follow them.

Further to the findings, there was a notable increase in sales at Naivas Supermarkets once activation is undertaken in the social media. The use of social media sites as one of the public relations tools in marketing therefore, increases sales and customers of a company and also create awareness to customers about an organisation. This aligns with the hierarchy of effects models which states that consumers must get convinced to purchase or choose a given product or service due to the influence and power of these stages through different channels or public relations tools. According to FGD 5, *“Social media use sensationalizes promotions in order to attract maximum attention from the customers.”*

Further, findings indicate that use of public relations has enabled Naivas Supermarkets retain its credibility. Therefore, the finding depicts that public relations use is effective. For example, Naivas Supermarkets’ brand is sustained since the customers are assured of the commitment of the supermarket to give them the best services. Below is an expression from participant P12; *“The use of PR marketing communication has helped Naivas supermarket to retain its credibility. This is evidenced by the many clients the supermarket gets every day.”*

From the findings, Naivas Supermarkets reaches its customers through various media channels chosen depending on the products and the target customers. The channels include magazines, newspapers, fliers, posters, brochures, television and, radio. Naivas Supermarkets ensures that messaging is done right in order to reach the customers. Below is an expression from FGD 1:

*“Use of different print and electronic media channels in marketing Naivas Supermarkets services and products has given the customers an opportunity to appreciate and choose the available products in the market.”*

This implies that the use of different media channels to communicate about an organisation provides customers with an opportunity to get informed of the available products and services in the supermarket since every customer has his or her media preference.

The study findings indicated that the Corporate Social Responsibility programs carried out by Naivas Supermarkets were not enough to the community. According to FGD1 in a focused group discussion: *“Naivas has helped children in various orphanages but I feel it is not enough for Corporate Social Responsibility.”*

This finding implies that Naivas Supermarkets needs to engage more CSR in order to improve or support the society. The use of corporate social responsibility activities helps in sustainable development of an organisation, for instance, it helps Naivas Supermarket to develop and also increase its visibility. Customers will create a good relationship with the supermarket because it involves them or it realises their needs as a community thus getting more customers and maintaining its image as well.

In terms of customer relations, the study found out that Naivas Supermarkets has not done enough on how it relates to its loyal customers. For instance, it neither makes a follow up on feedback from customers after doing promotions nor does it record complaints from customers concerning their products or services.

This was expressed by one participant:

*“After a promotion campaign in regard to a particular product, Naivas Supermarkets does not make a follow up to collect feedback from the public on its reception.” (P7).*

The above finding implies that Naivas Supermarkets does not take its relationship with the customers seriously since they do not make a follow up on their customer’s perceptions towards the promotions. Considering customer’s feedback is very essential to Naivas Supermarkets in retaining its credibility.

The researcher therefore noted that there was need for the supermarket to procure a software which can record complaints from customers. Below is what one of the customer care staff had to say:

*“Naivas Supermarkets should procure a software to record complaints and how they are resolved. The software would ease on customer feedback and address similar queries at the same time.” (P11).*

This finding implies that when complaints are recorded, the management can always refer back to the complaints and improve services and also maintain customers as well.

The researcher sought to find out any other Public Relations tools that Naivas Supermarkets uses as a Marketing Communication tool. The study established that there

was need for Naivas Supermarkets to use chat pot to acquire, engage and retain customers. One of the managers stated that, *“The supermarket need to use chat pot to sort out complaints and addressing clients’ issues as the need arises and also responding to questions frequently asked by clients.”* (FGD 4).

This finding was an indicator that Naivas Supermarket do not engage its customers in order to get their communication or complaints about their products and services. Getting feedback from customers on services offered is an important aspect in maintaining customer relationships and creating a good image as well.

In addition, Annual General Meetings (AGM) was suggested as a way that the supermarket can use to interact with customers. The expression is as follows, *“There is a need for an AGM with loyal clients so that they can make them feel part of the chain”*. (P8) Annual General Meetings can provide customers with an opportunity to share ideas and ask questions concerning the supermarket thus improving its operations. This will help the supermarket to know how it will treat its customers, thus retaining its credibility.

The research findings agrees with Harris & Artur, (1991) who states that companies use Public Relations to introduce products or services into the market, keeping the prominence of brands through product life cycle and finally defending products that are at risk. Pawar, (2014) also states that corporations should make use of Public Relations to market or publicise a brand. Churchill, (1998) also states that marketing communication increases consuming, creating wants for better standards of living and also increases the level of production.

#### **4.1.2 Public Relations Tools used in Marketing Communication by Naivas Supermarkets**

The findings revealed that Naivas supermarket uses social media (Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook and twitter), word of mouth, documentaries, billboards, newsletters, feature stories, media relations, supermarket promotions and online shopping as Public Relations tools to communicate to their customers or stakeholders in the form of marketing their products or brand. Naivas has an interactive Facebook page handled on real time basis.

Further, the findings established that the supermarket engages a ‘mystery shopper’ who visits a designated supermarket branch to gauge whether clients are aware of the available merchandise or not and also to check whether Naivas stores are well stocked with the right merchandise. *“This is done to gauge Naivas Supermarkets employees’ attitude, behavior and how they handle their products.” (FGD 3)* The finding depicts that mysterious shopper approach is one of the tools used to know the perceptions of customers towards the supermarkets products and services.

The researcher found that using WhatsApp to promote Naivas Supermarkets’ products that were new and those that do not have a long life span in the market was effective. Further, since there is sales competition amongst Naivas Supermarkets branches, staff in each branch are encouraged to promote products on their social media accounts and if sales increase as a result of the promotion, commission is given to the said workers.

A member of focus group expressed:

*“Since WhatsApp status runs for 24 hours, this method works well for the products that are valuable and new in the market. Staff promote their stores by using their WhatsApp status to*

*inform their family and friends about the new products in the supermarket, upcoming sales or new offers and discounts in the market.” (FGD 2).*

Further research findings indicated that according to FGD 11, use of personal WhatsApp was encouraged because some messages may annoy the public once they sent to them direct or to groups. They encourage members to post them as status in order for their friends to read the messages once they check on their status. The expression in a focused group discussion is as follows:

*“Some messages might be intrusive and annoying if sent to a group but once put on a person's phone it takes personal deliberate effort to view the status of a person, which is a personal choice to view.” (FGD11).*

Further, the findings revealed that the supermarket also uses twitter accounts where the marketing employees interact with customers, thus increasing sales and maintaining customers.

*“During the introduction or launch of a new product in the market, social media crew crafts a tweet that is meant to trend the whole day where members of staff and public are encouraged to retweet. Someone with most tweets is rewarded with shopping voucher.” (FGD 3).*

The above findings of the study indicate that social media use by the staff has been in the forefront in promoting Naivas Supermarket products. Every day, friends to Naivas Supermarkets get access to the accounts of its staff and they are able to view information concerning the supermarkets thus creating awareness. This is an implication that using social media is one of the public relations tool that utilised to communicate the supermarkets products in order to inform and influence their attitudes and behavior thus making decisions whether to buy or not.

Findings revealed that Naivas Supermarkets uses promotions that are carried out to either introduce a product, clear sales or to retain their brand.

*“Naivas Supermarkets promotes its customers by rewarding them with gifts for instance “Naivas na Chisi” promotion that was undertaken in 2018 December” (FGD 3).*

This is an indication that promoting customers with products retains the brand of Naivas Supermarket. Public relations should therefore, ensure that promotions are part of the company's public relations used to market its products thus retaining customers.

Further, the findings indicated that Naivas Supermarkets has recorded documentary that run in their radio situated in the supermarkets so that members of the public can be entertained and informed as they shop. At the cashier paying points there are television screens which run Naivas Supermarkets adverts which keeps clients entertained and informed as they plan to pay for their products.

*“Naivas Supermarkets undertakes television, radio and newspaper adverts whenever they are launching a new product, new branch or for relevance purposes. As a result, a good working relationship is created between Naivas Supermarket and the media houses.” (FGD 1).*

Further, FGD 6 in a focused group discussion indicated that:

*“Media houses are always willing to partner with us when called upon. Sometimes we are given airtime of mentions in radios, news features in television, editorial space in newspapers and news stories during news coverage.”*

The findings established that brochures, fliers and posters are being distributed to different clients either in the streets or at the supermarkets with an aim of marketing Naivas Supermarkets products whenever there is a launch of a new product. More so, the

study revealed that it has an internal magazine which is designed by the marketing and Public Relations section for promoting its products and services as expressed by FGD3:

*“Naivas Supermarkets prints internal magazine, brochures, fliers and posters which are distributed to different clients either in the streets or at the supermarkets for a particular promotion.”*

In addition, the findings revealed that Naivas Supermarkets has introduced online shopping with a delivery of maximum three hours. This is where online shoppers are relieved the hustle of walking to a supermarket. They are served at their comfort zone which saves them on time and energy of going to Naivas Supermarkets. Below is what one participant informed the interviewer, *“The public is informed of current offers and which branches are offering them through Naivas Supermarkets website.”* (FGD 4).

The findings of the study established that corporate social responsibility, road shows in partnership with local media houses and free media coverage were also public relations tools that are used by Naivas Supermarkets to market their products to customers, thus increasing sales. The expression supported by FGD 4:

*“Naivas Supermarkets calls media to give them ‘free’ coverage whenever they do their CSR activities which is undertaken willingly since they know later that here would be paid adverts.”*

These findings are in line with Belch & Belch, (2007) who states that press conferences also are good media relations strategies whereby organisations invite the press people to assist then disseminate or announce important information.



The study also revealed from an interview that Naivas Supermarket wishes to make use of their clients' database who usually shops at their supermarket chains well by sending them electronic mails as a form of communication.

*“Naivas Supermarket has a big database of clients who shop at their supermarket chains but they are not utilised fully and there is a need to communicate with them using email in order to create a personal touch.” (P9).*

Communicating to customers through emails makes customer to be aware of the new products available at Naivas Supermarket and also is a way of reminding customers on the products and services available.

#### **4.1.3 Corporate benefits of using Public Relations as a Marketing Communication tool in Naivas Supermarkets**

Findings from the research indicated that Public Relations tools helps the supermarket to push sales since customers are being informed of the new products and offers in all supermarket branches. According to one participant FGD1:

*“In 2018, the sales went up with 41% against 38% in 2017. However, she was optimistic that analysis for this year would be higher than the previous year.”*

Further, the findings from FGD 4 indicated that:

*“Public Relations tool in marketing communication help in pushing sales of the supermarket since customers are being informed of the new products and offers in the supermarket branches, it promotes customers to be aware of their rights, it makes Naivas Supermarket brand visible.” (FGD4).*

This is an implication that there was an increase in profit or customers who purchased in Naivas Supermarkets. The use of public relations according to the marketing manager were effective and appropriately used.

From the above findings, it translates that there was an increase in sales at Naivas Supermarket. Sandel, (2012) avers that Public Relations is very essential in making a brand stronger and creating positive perceptions towards customers.

The findings established that Public Relations tools used as marketing communication tools have also promoted customers to be aware of their rights and at the same time making Naivas Supermarkets brand visible. The findings further found that clients also got more information about the products in the market. This depicts that the supermarket customers were aware of the products in the supermarket. According to participant FGD1:

*“Naivas Supermarkets social media crew embarked on enhancing product knowledge of cheese, butter and olive oil with an aim of demystifying the products to the common mwananchi by starting a discussion on social media.”*

The above findings concur with Oladele et.al, (2016) that various media make consumers to identify a product which they like and associate with some personalities and sense of style and finally decide to purchase it.

Naivas Supermarkets clients are given a platform in social networks to express their opinions, satisfaction or dissatisfaction in regard to the products. There are also customer feedback forms or questionnaires that are given randomly to the clients which they use to give their opinions or suggestions on Naivas Supermarkets products and services.

According to participant P1, “*Customer Care staff gives simple questionnaires randomly to clients in the supermarket to check on the level of satisfaction.*” This is an implication that customer feedback is taken seriously by the Naivas Supermarket management.

The hierarchy of effects model helped the researcher to explain how Public Relations messages influences customers in order to purchase Naivas Supermarket products. According to Bambang, (2012) the hierarchy of effects model includes elements of awareness, comprehension, conviction and purchase as stages towards consumer behavior. Further, the model has other stages which include; Attention, Interest, Desire and Action. This means that Naivas Supermarket consumers or customers must get convinced to purchase or choose a given product or service due to the influence and power of these stages.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Overview**

This chapter discusses the study findings as analysed in chapter four. This chapter presents a comprehensive summary of the study, major findings, conclusion of the study, recommendations and areas for further study on the topic are also drawn.

#### **5.1 Summary of Findings**

Public relations is part of the strategies used by Naivas Supermarkets in marketing its brand as well as promoting its products and services to target customers thus maximizing profits and retaining their brand. The study established that Public Relations used as marketing communication tools by Naivas Supermarkets are effective. This finding is in line with Sandel, (2012) who avers that Public Relations has been an key element making a brand stronger and creating positive perceptions towards customers.

The use of Public Relations has enabled Naivas Supermarkets retain its credibility among its stakeholders, customers and the general public thus creating good relationship which agrees with Ward, (2012) who argues that companies like Naivas Supermarkets can benefit from using social media in building their customer base while maintaining the reputation of a company.

Research findings established that CSR activities, promotions, social media (WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), feature stories, documentaries, company website, media relations, customer relations, promotions, word of mouth and billboards are used to engage customers, thus marketing its brand, products and services. Social media use,

can be able to reach most young people since most of them are tech savvy. Communicating through social media assists the supermarkets to understand how consumers or customers perceive their products and services through interaction. According to Kumar & Raju, (2013) states that awareness, attitudes and buying behavior, the company cannot be known until the company invests heavily on promotions to customers thus influencing them through advertisements.

The study established that the use of Public Relations promotes awareness of customers' rights and also making Naivas Supermarkets brand visible to the public. Study findings further indicate that Naivas Supermarket need to make proper use of media relations, customer relations, organize for events where they invite the media for coverage while involving the public they wish to target as they promote their brand and products. Inviting stakeholders to events, forums and even exhibitions leads to awareness of the company and the stakeholders. For instance inviting media for coverage of an event and having public participation can lead to good relationship thus increase in sales. The finding is agreeing with what Reid, et. al, (2005) states that events are organised in order to involve the public and also increase the marketing communication. Therefore, Naivas Supermarkets should make sure that they organise for events that involves their esteemed customers as a way of maintaining customers and increase the level of awareness about the supermarket.

Study findings further indicate that Naivas Supermarkets makes proper use of newsletters, posters, fliers, internal magazine, radio, and brochures to market their products and services. The media channels used by the supermarkets were effective since

they have increased its sales, maintain brand and increased their customers' level of awareness about products and services offered in the supermarkets chains.

The study established that CSR and roadshows are some of the Public Relations strategies used as communication tools but they have not been exhausted by the company. Suggestions from the interviews reveals that the supermarkets should incorporate or partner with other interrelated companies like Bata Shoe Company and Unilever when carrying out their CSR activities in order to maximize their effect thus making profits, creating a good image and reputation. This agrees with Mershan, et. al (1995) who states that corporate social responsibility aims at uplifting the community while increasing profits for the company. The issue of Naivas Supermarkets partnering with other companies leads to more publicity thus high level of awareness about its products and services.

From the study findings, Naivas Supermarkets has not done enough on their relationship with their loyal customers. It was revealed from the interviews carried out that the supermarkets neither makes follow up on feedback from customers nor does it record complaints from customers concerning their products and services after promotions.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The study concludes that social media, promotions, word of mouth, media relations, customer relations and print media were effective marketing communication tool used. Naivas Supermarkets management is able to gauge the number of people who visit their social media accounts every day and gets metrics from media houses. According to

Sandel, (2012) blogs have become important ways to promote brands and achieve customer awareness thus increasing profits due to their effectiveness.

The study concludes that CSR activities undertaken by Naivas Supermarkets of donating food stuffs, clothing, and money and sanitation materials to children's homes alone is not enough. Naivas Supermarkets needs to extend the program to other areas.

The researcher concluded that Naivas Supermarkets does not have good customer relations since it does not seek feedback from its customers once they have undertaken promotions or given offers on products.

Finally, the researcher found that through the use of various media and Public Relations tools, Naivas Supermarkets gives its customers an opportunity to be aware of varieties and new products available on the shelves to choose from thus making informed decisions when purchasing.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the study recommends that:

There is need for Naivas Supermarkets to make proper use of media relations, customer relations, organize for special events or functions targeting a certain customers and invite the media to cover the event. In addition, Annual General Meetings need to be held with the aim of bringing together the Supermarket's management and its loyal customers.

The researcher recommends Naivas supermarkets to maintain and increase its social media use for marketing communication to target young people since young people were found to use of social media on daily basis.

Naivas Supermarkets Public Relations and Marketing staff should employ the use of Chat pot, a new social media platform that may help the supermarket to engage and retain its customers by answering frequently asked questions (FAQ) from customers concerning their products and services.

Naivas Supermarkets needs to improve its Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives to other areas. The study also recommends that there is a need for the supermarket to incorporate other interrelated corporates like Bata Shoe Company and Unilever in its CSR programs so that they can maximize their effect thus building its brand.

There is need for Naivas Supermarkets to use sponsorship programs whereby it gives scholarships to best needy learners and also establishing infrastructure in schools, slums and hospitals in order to build Naivas Supermarkets brand and also at the same time increasing sales.

#### **5.4 Suggestions for Further Research**

The present research focused on Public Relations as a marketing communication tool: the case of Naivas Supermarket, Nairobi City County. The study was limited to Nairobi City County and it was carried at the head office and its four branches namely; Westlands, Ngong Road, Kasarani and Donholm. Descriptive survey design and qualitative method



approach were used in this research. Further, census technique as a sampling procedure was used to obtain the sample size for the study.

The researcher used Focused Group Discussions and interviews to collect qualitative data from Customer Care, Public Relations and Marketing department staff. The researcher observed that in FGDs, participants may not express true opinions about the questions at hand, especially when they are opposing other participants' views, in interviews also, consistency and objectivity are hard to achieve since different interviewees understand and transcribe interviews differently. A similar study therefore, should be conducted focusing on different research methodology thus comparing the consistency and accuracy of this study.

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## **APPENDICES**


### **APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CUSTOMER CARE STAFF**

1. Describe the effectiveness of the Public Relations tools used in the Marketing Communication in Naivas Supermarkets.
2. By giving examples, describe the Public Relations tools used in the Marketing Communication in Naivas Supermarkets.
3. In your opinion, what are the corporate benefits of using Public Relations as a Marketing Communication tool in Naivas Supermarkets?
4. How effective are the media channels used by Naivas Supermarkets as a Marketing Communication tool?
5. What are the other Public Relations tools do you suggest to be used by Naivas Supermarkets in marketing their products and services?

## **APPENDIX II: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE**

1. What are the Public Relations tools used in marketing communication by Naivas Supermarkets?
2. Describe the effectiveness of Public Relations tools used in Marketing Naivas Supermarkets products and services?
3. In your own opinion, describe the corporate benefits of using Public Relations as a Marketing Communication tool in Naivas Supermarkets?
4. Explain the effectiveness of media channels used by Naivas Supermarkets in Marketing Communication.
5. What are the responses you receive from customers or other stakeholders in regard to Public Relations tools used in marketing by Naivas Supermarkets?
6. Apart from Public Relations Naivas Supermarkets use, is there any other tool you would prefer to use to influence customers and other stakeholders other than what you are using currently? If yes, Why?

APPENDIX III: CERTIFICATE OF FIELD WORK

  
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**REF: CERTIFICATE OF FIELDWORK**

This is to certify that all corrections proposed at the Board of Examiners meeting held on 7/6/2019 in respect of M.A/PhD. Project/Thesis Proposal defence have been effected to my/our satisfaction and the project can be allowed to proceed for fieldwork.

Reg. No: K50/57411/2016  
Name: LUCY MUTHONI MAINA  
Title: PUBLIC RELATIONS AS A MARKETING COMMUNICATION TOOL  
THE CASE OF NANA'S SUPERMARKET, MURANGI COUNTY

<u>DR. JOSEPH NIANDJI</u> SUPERVISOR	 SIGNATURE	<u>7/6/19</u> DATE
<u>DR. SAMUEL SIRINGI</u> ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR	 SIGNATURE	<u>7/6/2019</u> DATE
<u>DR. Samuel Siringi</u> DIRECTOR	 SIGNATURE/STAMP	<u>12/6/2019</u> DATE



# APPENDIX IV: CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY

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Reg. No: K50/89411/2016

Name: LUCY MUTHONI MAINA

Title: PUBLIC RELATIONS AS A MARKETING COMMUNICATION

TOOL: THE CASE OF NAIVAS SUPERMARKETS, NAIROBI COUNTY

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