



## **The Influence of Sources of Social Media Communication on Building Brand Equity in Small Medium Enterprises in Kenya: A Case of Dotsavvy Limited**

**Irankunda Annie, Celestyn Musau, MBA & Abraham Waithima, PhD.**

# The Influence of Sources of Social Media Communication on Building Brand Equity in Small Medium Enterprises in Kenya: A Case of Dotsavvy Limited

<sup>1</sup>Irakunda Annie, <sup>2</sup>Celestyn Musau, MBA & <sup>3</sup>Abraham Waithima, PhD.

<sup>1</sup>Post Graduate Student, Daystar University

<sup>2</sup>Lecturer, Daystar University

<sup>3</sup>Lecturer, Daystar University

\*E-mail of corresponding author: [airakunda@gmail.com](mailto:airakunda@gmail.com)

*How to cite this article:* Irakunda A., Musau C., & Waithima, A. (2018), The Influence of Sources of Social Media Communication on Building Brand Equity in Small Medium Enterprises in Kenya: A Case of Dotsavvy Limited. *Journal of Marketing & Communication*. Vol 1(1) pp. 43- 60.

## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of sources of social media communication in building brand equity at Dotsavvy Limited. The objectives were to identify the sources of social media communication used at Dotsavvy Limited, to establish how the sources of social media communication influence the building of brand equity at Dotsavvy Limited and to identify the challenges faced in using the sources of social media communication at Dotsavvy Limited. The study used descriptive approach research design to analyze and interpret data. Data collected was derived from a sample size of 10% of the social media sites followers used at Dotsavvy Limited which were: 89 Facebook followers, 126 LinkedIn followers, 62 Twitter followers, and 32 followers from Dotsavvy website blog. The study established the sources of social media communication mostly used was Facebook with 50% of 308 respondents, while 25% of the respondents use Dotsavvy website blog. The study also established that the two sources of social media communication with the most influence in building brand equity at Dotsavvy were Facebook at 50% and the website blog at 25%. The study concluded that social media communication sources have influence on the building of brand equity with a majority influence from Facebook and the website blog. The findings of the study show that Dotsavvy should increase their brand presence on its least used social media communication sources should increase their marketing content and interactions with their social media followers through creative and strategic marketing campaigns. This will increase Dotsavvy's brand equity across their social media communication sources which are Twitter and LinkedIn.

**Keywords:** *Social Media Communication, Facebook, website blog, Twitter, LinkedIn, brand equity, Dotsavvy Limited.*

## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Social media is the latest development in most organizations, it has developed further from traditional middleman and linking firms directly to their customers. Whether an organization is well established, or just starting up, social media is a drift that cannot be neglected if the firm wants to thrive. Marketing has been extended to incorporate this trend, in which the most common social media sites such as: Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Digg, LinkedIn, MySpace, StumbleUpon, Delicious, Scribd, Flickr, and blogs have allowed users to share their contents and views through an interactive medium. The term media in social media is referred to the communication of information through sources or channels (Neti, 2011).

Brand equity is one of the most commonly used marketing concepts for research studies as well as practices in organizations. There are various dimensions that comprise of brand equity such as; factors that can influence its enhancement, the numerous views of how it should be studied, and the different measures that can be used (Baalbaki, 2012). It is therefore defined as “a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by the product to a firm and or to that firm’s customers” (Aaker, 1991, p. 20).

Sources of social media communication play an important role in influencing the organization’s brand equity. The content created and allowed on social media sites by the organization must be consistent with the brand they are trying to sell, and the easier the consumer is able to decode the information of the brand, the more they are able to formulate a perception towards it. The brand of a company must communicate clearly to the consumer and that communication when done strategically, can contribute positively to the organization’s brand equity (Christodoulides, Jevons, & Bonhom, 2012).

In addition, with the proper application of sources of social media communication, organizations can develop a strong relationship with their consumers and that in result can contribute to the promotion of their brands. This can be done by consumers willingly blogging, reviewing, following and tweeting the firms’ products and services which is also another cost-effective channel of marketing. Consumers are therefore more loyal to their brands and that benefits Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises that are budget constraint or capacity limited (Kuofie & Gholston, 2015)

The focus of the study was on small enterprise category which are any organizations that employ 11-50 employees. Dotsavvy belongs to the small enterprise category of SME as it employs 16. Small enterprises in Kenya use both firm-created content and user-generated content social media communication. The most commonly used sources of social media communication in small enterprises in Kenya include: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn and company websites as well as blogs (Kemibaro, 2016). The reason why Dotsavvy was chosen among other SMEs is because it is the first digital agency in Kenya.

Dotsavvy Limited is Kenya’s first digital agency firm which integrates digital business solutions to African companies. It is a small enterprise with a team of 16 staff as of 2016. It began in 2002, where Kenya and East Africa’s website design agencies hadn’t been familiar to the tech world.

From a small staff of social media experts, Dotsavvy began developing websites and building its brand by offering all sorts of digital designs to companies (Dotsavvy Limited, 2016).

Dotsavvy's past clients in social media services are; First assurance, Mo-Lit, Iwayafrica, and Proctor and Allan (Dotsavvy Limited, 2016). Dotsavvy Limited has been on social media since 2008, and uses the following social networking sites; Facebook which has 892 followers, 1264 LinkedIn followers, 616 Twitter followers, 325 Blog followers and later Instagram and YouTube (Kemibaro, 2016). In 2015, Dotsavvy Limited launched a blog on their website that uses content marketing and has contributed greatly to Dotsavvy's sales. Its use of social media practitioners offers clients advanced services compare to other local companies in Kenya. Dotsavvy's social media communicates their mission and vision to the public, by regularly posting opinion marketing digital insights on their social networking platforms. Through social media, they gain consumer loyalty and prospective clients solely on their social media active contents (Kemibaro, 2016).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Many organizations around the world have relied on social media communication in building brand equity. Effective management of social media communication sources has been shown to be critical in building brand equity (Zailskaite & Kuvykaite, 2013). However, despite the accredited importance of social media communication in aiding organization's brand equity, many organizations in Kenya still face challenges in building a strong brand (Owino et al., 2016). This has been especially true for Dotsavvy Limited where the SME has been experiencing challenges in building their brand equity (Kemibaro, 2016). Nonetheless, the manager of Dotsavvy has set out to manage the sources of social media communication to try and mitigate these challenges. The challenges that have been facing the company is building a strong brand across all their social media communication sources as well as increasing their followers on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and their website blog (Kemibaro, 2016). Hence this study seeks to investigate whether indeed the sources of social media communication have an influence on building brand equity in SMEs in Kenya.

The use of sources of social media communication by small medium enterprises in Kenya is a topic that has limited research knowledge (Mwangi, 2014). The creation of Web 2.0 tools has enabled small businesses to use social media communication to enhance their business. Schivinski and Dabrowski (2015) explored the impact of brand communication on brand equity through Facebook in Poland. Therefore, there is a need to address the influence of the sources of social media communication on building brand equity.

## **1.3 Specific Objectives**

- i. To identify the sources of social media communication used at Dotsavvy Limited.
- ii. To establish how the sources of social media communication influence the building of brand equity at Dotsavvy Limited.
- iii. To identify the challenges faced in using the sources of social media communication at Dotsavvy Limited.

## **2.1 Theoretical Review**

This section focuses extensively on theoretical review of literature.

### **2.1.1 Social Media Integration Theory**

Social media integration theory was founded by Emile Durkheim in 1917, and later modified by Isra (2011). Social integration is explained as the channel through which individuals exchange, connect, and validate one another within a society. The theory states that when individuals gain acceptance and have the impression that they are contributing to something, they will experience mental, physical, and emotional benefits. This model is best used when evaluating communication sources as well as online marketing applications. Due to the rise of social media marketing as the main player in the communication integration field, it is important to include how that interaction affects the communication process. Social media platforms enable the following to occur; exposure, feedback, engagement which is also connecting, and exchange which is also sharing. Communication therefore is not only from the organization, but extends a two-way interaction. In addition, social media integration can be viewed as the interactive process which allows exchange of information between the customers and the brand and in result enhances the brand by giving it a total engagement perspective (Isra, 2011).

This theory is relevant to the study as it gave a brief representation of the sources of social media communication which are firm-created content and user-generated content. The firm-created content is applied in this theory as the creation of the information first spread through the end-user. While the user-generated content in this perspective, is the two-way interaction with the brand and the audience.

### **2.1.2 Uses and Gratification Theory**

Uses and gratification theory theory was developed by Elihu Katz: An American and Israeli sociologist and communication scientist. It was later remodified and edited by his two colleagues, Blumer and Gurevitch. The theory explains the reasons people use social media. It further elaborates that people choose the social media contents that best applies to their social or psychological needs (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974). Uses and gratification theory states that end-users are motivated by many needs that can be grouped into the following: cognitive needs, which incorporates information gathering, surveillance, and understanding; affective needs, that includes aesthetics and emotional experiences; personal integrative needs, which relates to confidence building and credibility; social integrative needs, that explains the influence from friends and family; and tension-release needs, which relates to escapism and diversion (Katz et al., 1974).

The theory is relevant to the study as it provided a theoretical framework for finding out the end-users' goal and motive in using the sources of social media communication, and how this would influence the building of the organization's brand equity.

### **2.1.3 Social Exchange Theory**

Social exchange theory was founded by the exploration of sociologies studies done between individuals and small groups (Emerson, 1976). The theory states that the way human beings interact with one another is based on the level of attachment one has with the source of communication they are using. Through continuous interaction with the source of communication, a stronger bond is created with the person who initiates the interaction and the receiver. Social exchange theory focuses on cost-benefit framework where each social exchange is based on a subjective reasoning of what the other perceives is of benefit. It further elaborates that individuals participate in social behaviors that they see of benefit to them and avoid any other behaviors that

have a higher cost. Social behaviors are therefore the exchange of goods, which can be material or non-material (Homans, 1958).

Social exchange theory is relevant for this study as it explains the importance of how the sources of social media communication are exchanged between the content publisher and the end-user receiving the information published. This further guides the study in understanding that the sources of social media communication are a two-way exchange and for that exchange to be effective, continuous interaction must be developed.

## **2.2 Empirical Review**

Social Media Communication builds brand equity through the sharing of content. Research shows that over 67% surf the web, 49% reading and writing emails while 48% are reading content through blogs, articles and websites daily. Facebook alone has 49% of people sharing content through the web at least once a week, and more than 30 billion content information is spread monthly through the sharing button. The most shared channel is through email and Facebook comes second. Therefore social media is a powerful tool that over 49% utilize and 27% use often (Bailey, 2010).

A study was done measuring the impact of brand communication on brand equity through Facebook in Poland. The purpose of the study was to see how the two sources of social media communication; firm-created and user-generated content impacted brand equity through Facebook. Data was collected using online surveys of 302 sets, to examine the impact of firm-created and user-generated social media communication on the following brand equity dimensions; brand awareness and associations, perceived quality and brand loyalty. The scope was among 60 brands in the following industries; non-alcoholic beverages, clothing and mobile network services (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015). The conceptual framework was formed using firm-created content and user-generated content social communications as their independent variable while the dependent variable incorporated; brand awareness and association, brand loyalty and perceived quality. The findings found that the sources of social media communication, both firm-created and user-generated have influence on the brand equity dimensions; brand awareness and association, while user-generated social media communication positively impacts brand loyalty and perceived brand quality (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015).

Another study was done at Concordia University in Canada by He (2016), examining the effect of social media communication on brand equity creation. The study used schema theory as theoretical foundation in examining the effect of communication on enhancing consumer-based brand equity. The results concluded that the channel a message is transmitted through is what leads to the consumer's perception of a certain brand. The study further used a conceptual framework that included firm-created content and user-generated content as the independent variable, and the following as dependent variable; brand awareness, brand association and brand image (He, 2016). The study collected 260 surveys online, with 30 most liked brands on social media. Results showed that the source of social media communication; firm-created content contributed to positive effects on brand awareness, brand associations and brand image. While user-generated content social media communication had positive effects on brand associations and brand image (He, 2016).

A study was done by iModerate Research Technologies on understanding social media usage and content sharing influences. The study found that people click on brands they see with the most followers, and easily share their contents through Facebook and Twitter. Further results showed

that 67% are more prone to purchasing brands that they follow on Twitter and 51% on brands they follow Facebook (Bailey, 2010).

The above studies act as evidence that both sources of social media communication; firm-created content and user-generated content variables are used to establish their influence on building the brand equity dimensions of brand awareness, brand association, brand loyalty and perceived quality. Furthermore, the studies above indicate that Facebook, Twitter are the dominant sources of social media communication that have influence on building brand equity. Therefore, firm-generated and user-generated content communication have influence the building of brand equity.

### 2.3 Conceptual Framework

Independent Variable

Dependent Variable

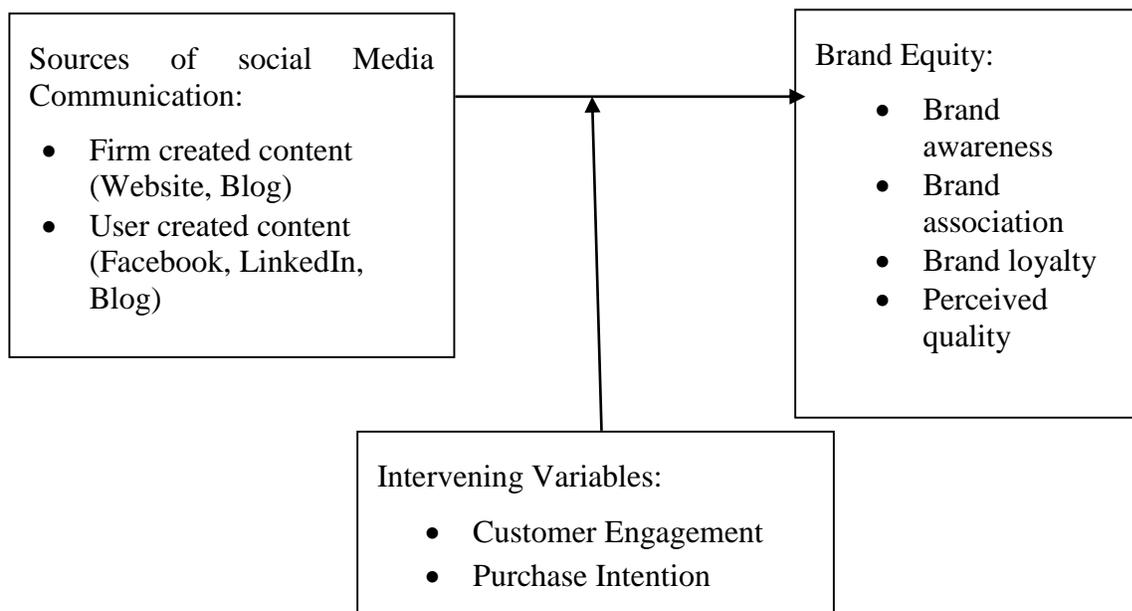


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author (2016)

### 3.0 Research Methodology

This study used descriptive approach research design. It was appropriate for the study to ensure that the data collected is incorporating all the main components of the research to enhance accuracy and therefore identify the purpose of this research. The population of this study was comprised of 3097 which is the target population of the social media users from the Dotsavvy limited social media sites (Dotsavvy Limited, 2016). This study used Dotsavvy Limited’s social media sites; Facebook which has 892 followers, LinkedIn, which has 1264, Twitter which has 616 followers and blog which has 325. This study selected a sample of 10% as it gives adequate sample of respondents and thus making a sample of 89 Facebook followers, 126 LinkedIn followers, 62 Twitter followers and 32 bloggers.

The questionnaires were administered online and structured using multiple choices, yes and no responses, checking the appropriate blanks and ranking from least to the greatest. The surveys were completed using this online software: [www.kwiksurveys.com](http://www.kwiksurveys.com). The study collected both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Qualitative data was used to provide nonnumeric results from respondents. Pretesting was used to illustrate the relevancy and clarity of the instruments used. The test included 10 selected respondents from Daystar University. This is because the selected students use the sources of social media communication at Dotsavvy.

The data analysis used statistical methods to analyze the questionnaires administered online. The coded data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Program (SPSS) version 22. Both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used. Descriptive statistics is a crucial part of analysis and a prerequisite in understanding and decoding statistical evaluations while inferential statistics is used in drawing inferences about the targeted populations in which the data is sampled (Larson, 2006). Furthermore, they were used as a guide in describing and summarizing the data in a meaningful manner and for the enabling of clear interpretation of data. Therefore, presentations of the data collected in the form of tables and graphs.

#### 4.0 Research Results and Discussion

##### Response Rate

The target population was derived from the users of Dotsavvy sources of social media communication, where 3097 was the total number of social media users. The actual data was collected from a sample of 308 users. For online surveys, 30% is averagely good and can qualify for the generalizations (Hamilton, 2003). This research however experienced 100% response rate making it quite exceptional for the study carried out despite it being administered mainly online. The study focused on the data collection of at least 10% of the target population (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2008). Therefore, the target population for data collection and analysis was 308 people. The survey was carried out on an online basis.

##### Gender

The research sought to identify the gender of the respondents. Table 1 presents the results of the analysis.

Table 1: Female and Male Ratio

	Frequency	Percentage
Female	231	75%
Male	77	25%
Total	308	100

The survey sought to have a representation of the gender of the respondents. However, the data indicates uneven distribution among the respondents with seventy-five of the respondents being female and twenty-five males. This indicated that the majority of internet users on Dotsavvy social sites were female. The implication equally applies to marketing and product choice for the social media target.

##### Age of Respondents

The research sought to identify the age of the respondents. Table 2 presents the results of the analysis.

Table 2: Respondents' Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-25	231	75%
26-35	77	25%
Total	308	100%

Findings show a whole 75% (231) of those who took part in the online study were between 18-25 years of age. However, 25% (77) of the respondents were under the category of 26-35 age brackets. There were no respondents on the other age brackets starting from 36 upwards. In Kenya, over 77% access the internet on a daily basis through their phones, and among them the youth ranging from 16-24 year olds were the major contributor to social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Facebook accounts for 50% of the most used source of social media communication among the youth of 18-25 (Burgoyne, 2012). This reflected the findings above which indicate that the age group which were used Dotsavvy social media communication are among the youth. With a 25% (77) were equally distributed among these groups, it is clear that the youth's daily use and understanding of technology directed them toward the use of social media communication.

#### Relationship between Gender and Age

The study sought to establish the relationship between gender and age in the use of sources of social media communication. The results guided the small medium enterprise in indicating whether gender and age can influence the use of the sources of social communication. Tables 3 and 4 presents the results of the analysis.

Table 3: Cross Tabulation between Gender and Age

Age	Frequency (Percentage)	Gender	
		Male	Female
18-25	231 (75%)	58 (25%)	153 (75%)
26-35	77 (25%)	20 (25%)	57 (75%)
Total	308 (100%)		

Table 4: Cross-Tabulation between the Most Used Sources of Social Media Communication and Gender

Gender	Facebook (Percentage)	LinkedIn (Percentage)	Twitter (Percentage)	Website (Percentage)	Blog (Percentage)	Total (Percentage)
Female	115 (50%)	58 (25%)	0 (0%)	58 (25%)		231 (75%)
Male	39 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	38 (50%)		77 (25%)
Total	154	58	0	96		308 (100%)

Table 5: Cross-Tabulation between the Most Used Sources of Social Media Communication and Age

Age	Facebook (Percentage)	LinkedIn (Percentage)	Twitter (Percentage)	Website Blog (Percentage)	Total (Percentage)
18-25	115 (50%)	58 (25%)	0 (0%)	58 (25%)	231 (75%)
26-35	39 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	38 (50%)	77 (25%)
Total	154	58	0	96	308 (100%)

Tables 3, 4, and 5 above represent the relationship between age and gender from the respondents in the use of sources of social media communication at Dotsavvy. As indicated, the age group 18-25 represented 75% of 231, among them 25% (58) were male, while 75% (153) were female. The table also indicates that the remaining 25% (77) belonged to the age group 26-35, of which 25% (20) were male and 75% (57) were female. This implies that between both age groups of the respondents, the majority remained female. There is no clear significance as to why they were more females who use Dotsavvy’s social media communication in comparison to males. According to the research agency, 77% of Kenyans who consists of the age group 18-25 use social media communication on a daily basis specifically Facebook (Burgoyne, 2012). It is therefore clear that age is a significant factor in the use of social media.

Q.1: Source of social media communication from Dotsavvy used the most

The survey findings indicate that Facebook was the most used with a degree of 50% (154) followed by LinkedIn at 25% (77) and Website at 25% (77) respectively. Twitter and other forms of social media all received 0% indicating that Facebook, LinkedIn, and the Website blog were the most used at Dotsavvy as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Sources of Social Media Communication used the most at Dotsavvy

	Facebook	LinkedIn	Website	Twitter	Response
Frequency	154	77	77	0	308
Percentage	50%	25%	25%	0%	100

These findings are in agreement with Isra (2011) who explains that the social media integration process consists of social sites which create content into a platform that enables a two way interaction through sites such as Facebook, where content is spread and from there, the connections are made between the brand and the end-users. Furthermore, social media communication is a verbal method of non-commercial communication among two parties (Arndt, 1967). These interactions are then used as measurements for the influence the content had on the brand and in result turn it into a feedback and exposure effect. This implies that the sources of social media communication used at Dotsavvy: Facebook, LinkedIn, and the website blog, are used to measure the influence they have on building the brand equity of the firm.

Q.2: Source used for Dotsavvy Brand Awareness

The study sought to establish the sources used for Dotsavvy’s brand awareness. The findings show that 50% of the respondents get information about Dotsavvy on Facebook. Another 42.5% (131) gets the information from website blog and 3.2% (10) from Twitter while another 4.2% (13) from other. The other represents users who received information about Dotsavvy through a friend. Given the data collected, 50% (154) of the respondents got information about Dotsavvy in multiple social media sites but mainly from Facebook, Twitter and the Website blog Table 7 represents the results of the analysis.

Table 7: Source Used to Gain Information on Dotsavvy

	Facebook	LinkedIn	Dotsavvy blog	Twitter	Other	Responses
Frequency	154	0	131	10	13	308
Percentage	50%	0%	42.5%	3.2%	4.2%	100%

The results display the two forms of brand awareness; brand recognition and brand recall. As Aaker (1996) explains that these are the dimensions of brand equity. Brand recall takes a step further into the assessment of the consumer’s ability of describing the product information such as its uses, and needs it fulfills. Brand awareness significantly implies that customers gain knowledge about a firm through social media through the way information is remembered by a consumer (Keller, 1993). This implies that the sources of social media communication; Facebook, the Website blog were the most effective in bringing brand awareness to Dotsavvy’s users. While the remaining LinkedIn, Twitter and other were the least effective.

The study established that the most used source of social media communication is Facebook with 50% (154) accounted from the respondents. This signifies that this source of social media communication affects brand equity (Lee & Schumann, 2004). In relation, the same respondents 154 (50%) stated that they gained information from Dotsavvy on Facebook. However, though 77 (25%) of the respondents used LinkedIn, results show 0% for this source used for brand awareness. Furthermore, the study established that 77 (25%) respondents used the website blog the second most, in comparison, a lower 10 (3.2%) used it to gain information on Dotsavvy. According to Aaker (1991) brand awareness is a key determinant in building brand equity, which agrees with the findings that 154 (50%) of the respondents use Facebook the most as well as gain information on the small medium enterprise.

Q.3: Respondents on what they do most on Dotsavvy

The researcher sought to understand the various activities that the participants in the study engage in while on the sources of social media communication sites. The findings indicated that different social media platforms induce different kinds of activities (Agichtein, Castillo, Donato, Gionis, & Mishne, 2008). Facebook had 50% (154) like and 50% (154) reading was the only activities done by the respondents. LinkedIn on the other hand had 100% (308) reading but with 0% on liking, writing or sharing. Twitter had 25% (77) of liking, 25% (77) writing and 50% (154) reading while the website blog had 25% (77) of writing and 75% (231) of reading. The tabulation and graphical representation gave a summary of this finding. According to Bailey (2010), Facebook alone has 49% of people sharing content through the web at least once a week. This relates with 67 of the

people who surf the internet daily and as had been indicated through the finding of Dotsavvy study. The following Table 8 represents the results of the analysis.

Table 8: Respondents on What They Do Most on Dotsavvy

What do you do most on;	Like	Write and Comment	Read	Share	Responses
Facebook (Percentage)	154 (50%)	0 (0%)	154 (50%)	0 (0%)	308
LinkedIn (Percentage)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	308 (100%)	0 (0%)	308
Twitter (Percentage)	77 (25%)	77 (25%)	154 (50%)	0 (0%)	308
Website Blog (Percentage)	0 (0%)	77 (25%)	231 (75%)	0 (0%)	308

According to Katz (1974) states that users engage in the sources of social media communication based on what best satisfies their need at the moment. He further states that users play an important role in the type of organization they choose to interact with on social media, and therefore are goal oriented when they are communication on social media. The motives that users select what they do on the social media sites can be by the following; passing time, increasing their product knowledge, entertainment and opinion of others (MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989). This implies that the survey findings indicated their reason for choosing what to do on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and the Website blog. 50% (154) of Facebook users liked and read the page more than they shared and commented on the content. Twitter had users who interact with the content by liking, reading and commenting on the posts made on the social media (Christodoulides et al., 2012). LinkedIn users had the least interaction by 100% (308) who just read Dotsavvy's content.

#### Q.4: Respondents on the influence of sources of social media communication on building brand equity

This study sought to establish the influence the sources of social media communication has on building brand equity.

Table 9: Brand Equity Dimensions

Question	Facebook	LinkedIn	Twitter	Website Blog	Total
Which sources of social media communication do you recognize Dotsavvy from the most? (Brand Recognition)	154 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	154 (50%)	308 (100%)
Dotsavvy Limited is viewed as one of the best digital agency in Kenya on... (Brand Association)	154 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	154 (50%)	308 (100%)
Dotsavvy Limited is a trusted brand you are loyal to mainly on... (Brand Loyalty)	154 (50%)	77(25%)	0 (0%)	77(25%)	308 (100%)
Dotsavvy Limited is viewed as a high quality digital business solution on... (Perceived Quality)	154 (50%)	77(25%)	77 (25%)	0(0%)	308 (100%)

Following the level of the effects, popularity and identification with the Dotsavvy as a social media brand in Kenya, 50% (154) of the respondents admitted to the fact that they had only known Dotsavvy on Facebook and thus recognized Facebook as the main source of information on Dotsavvy. This agrees with Social Exchange Theory that explains the reason why human beings choose specific sources of social media communication is based on their level of connection for the brand (Emerson, 1976). While another 50% (154) of the respondents recognized website blog as their main source of information. Interestingly, in categorizing Dotsavvy as the most popular digital brand in Kenya, the similar trend appears. 50% of the respondents' base this on Facebook platform while another 50% bases their judgment on the website blog. Therefore consumers were aware of a brand through the level of exposure they have received from the different sources of social media communication (Percy & Rossiter, 1992).

Table 10: Cross-Tabulations between the Sources of Social Media Communication and Brand Equity

Brand Equity	Facebook (Percentage)	LinkedIn (Percentage)	Twitter (Percentage)	Website Blog (Percentage)	Total (Percentage)
Brand Awareness	154 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	154 (50%)	308 (100%)
Brand Association	154 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	154 (50%)	308 (100%)
Brand Loyalty	154 (50%)	77 (25%)	0 (0%)	77 (25%)	308 (100%)
Perceived Quality	154 (50%)	77 (25%)	77 (25%)	0 (0%)	308 (100%)

These findings indicated the unpopularity of twitter and LinkedIn in deciphering the brand popularity of Dotsavvy. 50% (154) of the respondents reported that their loyalty to Dotsavvy as a brand is on Facebook. However, 25% (77) indicated their loyalty through LinkedIn and another 25% (77) through Website blog. Brand loyalty is commitment which implies that loyal customers are able to reduce competition and enhance brand image while leveraging a positive exchange (Aaker, 1991). This implies that users who were most loyal to Dotsavvy were through Facebook followers while both LinkedIn and the Website blog were the least loyal to the brand.

Dotsavvy is viewed as a high quality business solution, with 50% (154) of the respondents indicating that this is mainly on Facebook. Another 25% (77) reported Twitter and another 25% (77) LinkedIn as is indicated in the table above. This further implies that the attitude a consumer had over a product is rather subjective to their perception (Zeithaml, 1988).

Q.5: Respondents on challenges of using Dotsavvy’s social media services

Table 11: Challenges Faced Using Dotsavvy’s Sources of Social Media Communication

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	77	25%
No	231	75%
Total	308	100%

The study further sought to find out if customers faced any challenges with the use of social media platform for Dotsavvy; the respondents reported that they had not experienced significant challenge with using the any of the social media platform for their various activities. Therefore social media communication had positive effects on brand equity (He, 2016). 75% (231) of the respondents reported not having challenges and 25% (77) of them said they did not have challenges because they only followed Dotsavvy on Facebook. The use of social media communication contributes greatly the brand equity dimensions of a firm (Alam & Khan, 2015).

## **Key Findings**

The research analysis in examining the influence of sources of social media communication on building brand equity was able to establish the following key findings:

1. The study established the sources of social media communication respondents mostly used are with 50% (154) Facebook and 25% (77) website blog. The study also established that LinkedIn is followed in becoming a major source of social media communication in this small medium enterprise accounting for 25% (77) of the respondents.
2. The study established that Facebook has 50% (154) the most influence at Dotsavvy in building the following brand equity dimensions; brand recognition and association which viewed Dotsavvy as the best digital agency, brand loyalty which Dotsavvy followers indicated they're loyal to the brand, and perceived quality that respondents viewed the firm as a high quality digital business solution. Furthermore, the website blog had the next most influence on building the following brand equity dimensions: brand recognition, brand association, and brand loyalty.
3. The study established that 25% (77) of the respondents did face challenges in using Dotsavvy sources of social media communication while 75% (231) reported to have had few problems in utilizing the small and medium-sized enterprise's social media communication. The reasons that the 25% (77) encountered the few challenges was due to mainly the fact that they only follow Dotsavvy on Facebook and no other social media communication.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

It is therefore; clear that the marketing professionals targeting the use of social media to market their products must look at the dominant areas of the social media communication. Facebook takes the centre stage in this consideration in sources for communications, ease of use to visit of the website blog of a company. As the study at Dotsavvy Limited revealed, the importance therefore, lies with understanding the demographic make-up of the social media community so as to enhance the level of efficacy that is needed for effective measurement. This also couples a good and organized marketing strategy.

Furthermore, the study concludes that sources of social media communication Facebook and the Website blog have a significant influence on building the brand equity of Dotsavvy. Within the users of social media communication at the firm, all respondents were below the age of 35. Among them, females were dominant. The results indicate that Facebook and the website sources of social media communication at Dotsavvy have influence on the building of brand equity. The brand equity dimensions that were found are brand recognition and awareness, brand loyalty where the firm was viewed as a trust worthy digital agency, and perceived quality where Dotsavvy followers highly praised the small enterprise for its high quality digital business solutions.

## **6.0 Recommendation**

This study has helped unearth significant insights that can be applied directly in the area of marketing. The dominance of the Facebook as a source of social media communication means that more marketing can be focused on increasing Dotsavvy's brand equity. The recommendations from the key findings are as follows:

1. The study recommends that Dotsavvy should find solutions to increasing their brand presence in the least used social media communication sites which were Twitter and LinkedIn. LinkedIn is becoming a major source of social media communication at Dotsavvy, therefore the firm should use push marketing efforts to increase followers for their brand.
2. The study recommends that Dotsavvy needs to further investigate why Twitter and LinkedIn have the least influence in building their brand equity. This can be done by increasing their marketing content, and increasing their interactions with the followers through a creative and strategic marketing campaign that can run across their social media sites. This will guide Dotsavvy in ways they can increase their brand presence on all their social media sites and as a result improve their brand equity on all their sources of social media communication.
3. Dotsavvy needs to clearly identify the challenges that users face when using the sources of social media communication. The key findings indicated that the majority of users did not have any challenges in using these sources of social media communication, however there was a small segment that indicated some challenges. One of the reasons that were presented was due to using only Facebook, Dotsavvy should increase customer interactions through all its sources of social media communication. This guides the firm to understand its customers on a deeper level and hence improve its brand equity.

## 7.0 References

- Baalbaki, S. S. (2012). *Consumer perception of brand equity measurments: A new scale.* (Master's thesis) Retrieved from [https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc115043/m2/1/high\\_res\\_d/dissertation.pdf](https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc115043/m2/1/high_res_d/dissertation.pdf)
- Dotsavvy Limited. (2015). *First assurance.* (Dotsavvy Limited) Retrieved from <http://www.dotsavvyafrika.com/portfolio-item/first-assurance/>
- Dotsavvy Limited. (2015). *IWAYAFRICA.* Retrieved from <http://www.dotsavvyafrika.com/portfolio-item/iwayafrika/>
- Dotsavvy Limited. (2015). *Mo-Lito.* Retrieved from <http://www.dotsavvyafrika.com/portfolio-item/mo-lito/>
- Dotsavvy Limited. (2015). *Proctor and Allan's facebook campaign report.* Retrieved from <http://www.dotsavvyafrika.com/portfolio-item/proctor-allans-mamaknowske-facebook-campaign/>
- Emerson, R. (1976). Social exchange theory. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2, 335-362.
- Hamilton, M. B. (2003). *Online survey response rates and times: background and guidance for industry.* (Master's Thesis). Retrieved from Tercent.
- He, Y. (2016). *Examining the effect of social media communication on brand equity creation.*(Unpublished Master's Thesis). Retrieved from Concordia University on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2016.
- Isra, G. (2011). *Social media-integration-theory-model.* Retrieved from Social Media Today: <http://www.socialmediatoday.com/content/social-media-integration-theory-model>
- Kemibaro, M. (2016 a). *Dotsavvy on building brand equity.* Retrieved from <http://www.dotsavvyafrika.com/>
- Kemibaro, M. (2016 b). *Dotsavvy's background.* Retrieved from <http://www.dotsavvyafrika.com/>

Kemibaro, M. (2016). *Kenya's latest 2016 mobile & internet statistics*. Retrieved from Moses Kemibaro: <http://www.moseskemibaro.com/2016/10/01/kenyas-latest-2016-mobile-internet-statistics/>

Larson, M. G. (2006). Descriptive statistics and graphical displays. *Research Gate 114*, 76-81.

Lee, E.-J., & Schumann, D. W. (2004). Explaining the special case of incongruity in advertising: Combining classic theoretical approaches. *Marketing theory*, 4(1/2), 59-63.

Mugenda, O. M., & Mugenda, A. (2008). *Research methods: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. Nairobi: African Centre for Technology Studies.

Mwangi, D. K. (2014). *Influence of social media marketing on brand equity at Safaricom Limited in Kenya*. (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Nairobi, Nairobi.

Schivinski, B., & Dabrowski, D. (2015). The impact of brand communication on brand equity through Facebook. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 9(1), 31-53.

Zailskaite, J. L., & Kuvykaite, R. (2013). Communication in social media for brand equity building. *Economics and Management*, 18(1), 22-28.