THE USE OF TWITTER IN THE MANAGING OF A COMPANY'S REPUTATION: A STUDY OF STARTIMES MEDIA

by

Jairo Obege Ombudu

A thesis presented to the School of Communication

of

Daystar University
Nairobi, Kenya

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS
in Communication

June 2020

APPROVAL

THE USE OF TWITTER IN THE MANAGING OF A COMPANY'S
REPUTATION: A STUDY OF STARTIMES MEDIA

by

Jairo Obege Ombudu
11-0406

In accordance with Daystar University policies, this thesis is accepted in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree.

Date:

_____   _____
Wambui Wamunyu, PhD,
1st Supervisor

_____   _____
Nelius Kareri, MA
2nd Supervisor

_____   _____
Kinya Mwithia, PhD
HoD, Strategic and Organizational Communication

_____   _____
Levi Obonyo, PhD,
Dean, School of Communication

ii

Copyright © 2020 Jairo Obege Ombudu

DECLARATION

THE USE OF TWITTER IN THE MANAGING OF A COMPANY'S REPUTATION: A STUDY OF STARTIMES MEDIA

I declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit.

Signed: _____   Date: _____
        Jairo Obege Ombudu
        11-0406

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

API   Application Programming Interface

eWOM   Electronic Word of Mouth

ABSTRACT

ABSTRACT

This research project examined the importance of StarTime's Twitter use and its relation to safeguarding the corporate reputation of StarTimes as a media company in the modern world. The research utilized the company's publicly accessible Twitter feed to analyze the risk Twitter use presented in building customer relationships and providing quality service for a strong corporate reputation. The main study objective was to establish the effectiveness of using Twitter to manage a company's reputation, focusing on StarTimes Kenya. Another objective was to determine the nature of messages posted on StarTimes Kenya's Twitter media channel concerning reputation building, and lastly, to find out the mechanisms used by StarTimes to control and sustain its Twitter corporate reputation. The results revealed that Twitter's use presented a significant reputation risk for StarTimes, especially because it could be used as a platform to express emotions and ideas about the company's products and services. Twitter serves as a medium for real-time communication between StarTimes and Twitter users; therefore, it played a crucial role in communication and placed itself at the heart of a company's corporate reputation. The study concluded that the company needed to invest more time and resources to ensure quality customer service to Twitter users to safeguard its reputation against negative publicity. The study's recommendations included the need to use timely responses, ensuring value addition, understanding peak hours, using appropriate language, creating a social media policy, and privacy for building and maintaining positive relationships on Twitter.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Introduction

The internet era has witnessed a shift in the communication landscape, and the internet has steadily become a central focus for businesses, consumers, media, and government (Belair-Gagnon & Steinke, 2020). Social media is one of the most popular online platforms among internet users in the modern age (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2012). Social media users often show their feelings by publishing their opinions on specific issues. Hiebert (2014) explained that the dynamic and ever-growing social networking domain has prompted organizations to initiate the integration of virtual communication into their public relations strategies. Twitter is among the most popular online social media platforms today, and many organizations in Kenya are embracing it as a tool for interacting with their online consumers (Hennig-Thurau, Wiertz, & Feldhaus, 2015).

This study sought to understand how Twitter could be utilized to manage the corporate reputation of a firm. The chapter provided an understanding of the different aspects of the evolution of twitter use in organizations and how this had grown into a powerful tool for managing organizations' online and general reputation. The importance of reputation monitoring and management was also discussed, particularly pertaining to twitter use. The chapter covered the introduction, background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, specific objectives, research questions, justification of the study, significance of the study, assumptions of the study, scope of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study, definition of terms, and chapter summary.

Background to the Study

In today's corporate world, reputation management has become a critical aspect of sustainable business practice (Kumar & Dash, 2017). But what is company reputation? According to Men and Tsai (2011), company reputation has been described as the sum total of the interactions of a company's actions and statements, and the manner in which the external environment reacts to the same. Fombrun and Shanley (1990) defined reputation management as having to do with monitoring the reputation of an entity in order to identify and understand which comments, information, and opinions are being shared about it, as well as addressing any negative content that could potentially dent its corporate image.

Traditionally, this had been conducted through expensive marketing surveys as well as manual evaluation of media contents and consumer's grievances (Ryan, 2014). However, according to Wæraas and Maor (2015) the rise of social media has shifted the modes of interaction between organizations and their audience. Park, Cha, Kim, and Jeong (2012) argued that there has been a shift in power such that corporate firms only have some degree of control over issues brought up by social media users.

Individuals discuss and complain on blogs, forums, opinion sites, and social networks including Facebook, YouTube, MySpace, and Twitter. Social media has provided a new avenue of communication, with information emerging and flowing continuously (Carr & Hayes, 2015). The extensive use of social media in the sharing of facts and opinions about organizations and public figures have made it necessary that the reputation of these entities be managed through online platforms (Scott, 2015). Online mentioning of companies, products, or individuals gets generated throughout the day and are quickly shared via a wider platform. This means the control and regulation of

2

what is being said on a given entity have shifted from the entities themselves to their users and consumers (Gentile, Twenge, Freeman, & Campbell, 2012).

The development of social media has promoted convenient communication, while at the same time building the ideal global village, hence totally changing information distribution to the world, thereby making it possible for individuals to access information at their convenience and to stay up-to-date minute-by-minute (Hiebert, 2014). In developing countries, social media is growing at a very fast rate. For instance, most African countries have experienced exponential growth because of their developed communication channels (Bongaarts, 2017). A yearly report by international digital agencies indicated that Africa had witnessed the fastest rates of growth in internet penetration, with the number of users across the continent having increased by more than 20% since 2017 (Mumbere, 2018).

The emergence of social media has led to the redefining of how citizens, corporations and governments relate to each other. Any reasonable observer of African politics will have noted that in the aftermath of the Arab awakening, social media has grown into the next frontier of expression by citizens (Kwaja, 2017). For example, Cameroon found itself in trouble after switching off the internet in areas that were experiencing protests against discriminatory government practices (BBC News, 2017). The opportunities and risks presented by the fast-paced growth of social media in Africa are promising and multifaceted, yet subject to numerous constraints (Jere, Mungonena, & Peters, 2016). In Africa, firms are embracing the use of social media to interact with their consumers online. The unique features of social media such as participation, openness, and information sharing so far have been the catalyst (Chan-Olmsted, Cho, & Lee, 2013). Among the social media platforms in use is twitter, a social networking site that has made huge advances with a growing number of active

users. Twitter is defined as a micro-blogging service that sits at the forefront of the fastest growing internet trends today (Pond, 2016). As of today (2020), it is said that Twitter has more than 300 million users worldwide, and they generate more than 65 million messages (tweets) a day (Statista, n.d.). The African millennials and other entities in Africa today see Twitter as a fundamental tool they use for daily expressions and communication.

A study by Simon, Goldberg, Aharonson-Daniel, Leykin, and Adini (2014) found that majority of African twitter users are aged 21-29, compared to the global average of 39. In 2015, Portlands Communications, in Kenya, reported that Twitter in Africa was being utilized extensively as a tool for social conversation, and was fast becoming a vital source of information. From the report, the most active African country was South Africa, with 5,030,226 tweets, followed by Kenya, with 2,476,800 tweets (Portland Communications, 2015). According to Communications Authority of Kenya, the total data/internet subscriptions in Kenya in 2018 stood at 33.3 million, up from 30.8 million in the previous quarter, marking 8.0% growth.

Twitter users can either build or destroy a company's online reputation, thus proper management of an organization's image is crucial; but doing so requires that effective strategies be put in place by such organizations (Carroll, 2015). The importance of an organization's online reputation management process was underscored by Anderson (2013) because in his view, it is not easy to control what people talk about. The manner in which a firm carries itself on Twitter and how it is perceived by its extended audience is far more important than donations to charities, philanthropy or flashy websites (Nisar & Prabhakar, 2018). For instance, this was illustrated in the BP Oil Company's Gulf oil spill in 2012, in which it did not communicate these events to the rest of the world. BP Oil's failure to make this news public did negatively impact

4

its reputation, which in the end led to fall in the company's stock price and brand value (McCarthy, 2010).

Twitter offers an easy, cost effective way of communication, promotion of products and services. In Kenya, many firms are actively engaging their twitter users by creating firm-specific twitter media channels, thereby creating new dimensions of interactions. Media organizations in Kenya and companies such as Kenya Airways and Safaricom are using Twitter to interact better with customers and other Twitter users (Kwizera, Markus, Mugambi, & Diriye, 2017). A global study by Socialbakers revealed that Safaricom, Kenya Power, Airtel, and Kenya Airways topped the list of Kenyan firms that utilized social media platforms to engage their consumers and potential customers (Socialbakers, n.d.). The focus of this study was StarTimes Kenya and its use of Twitter media channel as a means of communication.

StarTimes officially launched its business in Kenya in July 14, 2012. Following the announcement of the plans to shift to the digital TV technology by the Kenya government in 2014, StarTimes was among the first to invest in the digital television broadcasting industry (Wanjau, Kitisha, Mwangi, & Ndung'u, 2016). According to the Communications Authority of Kenya (2017), Startimes was one of the two pay TV service providers on the Digital Terrestrial Television in Kenya, with an extensive digital presence on social media including more than 76,800 followers on their twitter account @StarTimesKenya, created in 2012. The company's vision, found on its digital page, is to "enable every household have access to digital TV, afford Digital TV, watch good Digital TV, and enjoy the beauty of Digital TV" (Twitter, n.d.). This study was about StarTimes' twitter use. Specifically, the study analyzed messages posted on twitter from 2012-2018, with the aim of understanding their influence on the online corporate reputation of StarTimes Kenya.

5

Statement of the Problem

Since 2011, StarTimes Kenya embraced the use of twitter as a mode of communication to consumers, stakeholders, and Twitter users. In 2015, Kenya became the fourth African country whose citizens tweeted the most with 76 geo-located tweets (Agutu, 2016). As explained by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), corporate organizations' use of social media platforms like Twitter to interact with customers comes with various challenges, including negative comments that may affect the image and control of a brand. In recent years, this had presented significant risks especially in matters of corporate reputation. The general problem of the study was that while it was the case that many public relations' professionals in Kenyan organizations recognized the significance of Twitter use; however, often they did not understand how their actions on Twitter could affect their companies' corporate reputation and public perception (Kaigwa, Madung, & Costello, 2015).

Studies had shown that any form of corporate reputation based on twitter could have a negative impact on a firm's performance (Carroll, 2015). This was why there was a need to research on how firms could effectively interact with their consumers to ensure a strong reputation. The specific problem of the study was that in addition to adversely affecting a company's reputation, twitter was subject to online reviews and customer complaints, resulting in potential poor customer service and reduced online presence (Ibrahim & Wang, 2019).

So far, most of the research on effective twitter use, including Owyang (2010), were those concerned with individual consumptions, the marketing of company products, and crises responses. Thus there was need to research on how companies could use twitter to manage their reputations. Even with the widespread adoption of twitter use

6

by organizations in Kenya, there was scanty literature on the use of twitter in managing company reputations that drew from tweets and twitter content (Men & Tsai, 2011). In addition, most of the studies on twitter use had focused on foreign countries, thus there was need to study this area under a local context (Owyang, 2010). There was therefore a need to address how companies could effectively use twitter to manage their reputations in Kenya.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to research how a firm could use twitter in order to promote and safeguard its corporate reputation.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to establish the effectiveness of using twitter to manage a company's reputation with specific interest on StarTimes Kenya.

Specific Objectives

1. To establish the types of messages posted on StarTimes' twitter account

2. To determine the nature of messages posted on StarTimes Kenya twitter media channel with regards to reputation building

3. To find out the mechanisms used by StarTimes to control and sustain its corporate reputation on twitter.

Research Questions

1. What types of messages were posted on StarTimes' twitter account?

2. Were the messages posted on StarTimes Kenya's twitter media channel intended for reputation building?

3. Which mechanisms had StarTimes Kenya put in place to control and sustain its corporate reputation on twitter?

Justification for the Study

The use of twitter as a means of communication can affect organization's reputation positively or negatively (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). It was therefore important to understand how the use of a twitter account by an organization could affect its corporate reputation. The researcher settled on StarTimes Kenya because it was a corporate organization that actively engaged its customers through twitter. The study was of the view that there were areas StarTimes Media Company could improve in its twitter operations so as to better control and sustain its corporate reputation on the twitter platform (Saffer, Sommerfeldt, & Taylor, 2013). Therefore, the study was both relevant and crucial to the company's future operations. Further, the study findings would help other digital broadcasting companies determine the areas of online corporate reputation that needed to be emphasized for effective service delivery and overall performance.

Significance of the Study

The study findings would help the StarTimes Media Company establish the best ways of using twitter to manage its corporate reputation. In addition, the findings would assist managers in devising appropriate and effective twitter strategies they could use to manage their reputation. This would positively impact on the overall perception the public would have about the organization. Further, the findings would benefit a number of stakeholders in the digital broadcasting companies and the management of various digital broadcasting companies in their twitter use reviews, and establish effective twitter ways they could use to build their reputation.

8

The study would be useful also to the government of Kenya and specifically the Communication Authority of Kenya by developing better policies for regulating the use of social media by public companies. The study findings would specifically aid on the use of social media policy formulation and reviews to ensure profitable organizational twitter use. No doubt the study findings added value to the existing knowledge on the use of twitter in building online corporate reputation, hence furthering research and scholarship.

Assumptions of the Study

The research assumed all the tweets directed at StarTimes by different users had an impact on the online corporate reputation of the company. The study also assumed that changes in twitter operations would not impact the study. The study further assumed there were areas StarTimes could improve to ensure effective use of its twitter account to enhance corporate reputation.

Scope of the Study

The main aim of the study was to assess the use of StarTimes Kenya's twitter media channel in managing its reputation. The research preferred one organization for study to narrow study findings and eliminate cases of ambiguous results. StarTimes according to some findings was by far the best digital set box to purchase in Kenya; with very strong signal and was relatively cheaper compared to other set boxes (VenasNews, 2017). Further, StarTimes was active on twitter by way of regular tweets and replies.

The company steadily engaged in numerous twitter interactions with its consumers from the time the account was created. Since the opening of its twitter account (in 2012), it had sent out a total of 55,436 tweets, majority of which were related to the

9

company's services and products (StarTimes Twitter, n.d.). Because StarTimes' twitter account had been consistently active from the time it joined the twitter platform, its twitter feed was a great asset in investigating the influence of twitter use in managing the company's online reputation (Stefanov, Darwish, Atanasov, & Nakov, 2020). The company's account provided important information related to twitter use as a medium of communication, while at the same time protecting its online corporate reputation (Kim & Hammick, 2017).

<div align="center">Limitations and Delimitations of the Study</div>

Studying corporate reputation presented a few challenges. As argued by Cornelissen, Van Bekkum, and Van Ruler (2006), the acquisition of a strong and sustainable reputation depends on a broad range of factors. This meant there was no uniform conventional technique out there that would enable one confirm the specific aspects of communication influencing reputation. The data collection method presented challenges of its own. The use of content analysis in this study was one of the main limitations because it was difficult to capture or express emotionally the feelings of a twitter user about a specific issue. According to Krippendorff (2013), the solution to many problems with interpretation when using content analysis involves systematically interpreting the needed information and how it is used by computers and humans. Another challenge was the limited research done in the area of twitter reputation management, especially with regards to the Kenyan context. Previous research studies in this area were mostly about foreign companies. Hence it was difficult to find studies on reputation management of Kenyan companies. The researcher overcome these challenges by ensuring a large sample size and increased sample representativeness, thus improving the reliability and validity of the findings.

<div align="center">10</div>

Definition of Terms

Corporate reputation: A comprehensive representation of a company's past actions and results that define the ability of the firm to deliver value to its different stakeholders (Van Riel & Fombrun, 1997).

Reputation: The overall appraisal of the character or quality of an individual held by those who know him or her (Reputation, n.d.a). It is the opinions or beliefs usually held about an object or individual. In this study, reputation was an opinion about a corporate entity, usually the result of social evaluation on a set of criteria (Reputation, n.d.b).

Reputation risk: The risk of loss emanating from dents to a firm's reputation in terms of revenue, rise in operation costs or obliteration of shareholder value (Honey, 2017).

Social Media: A collection of applications based on the internet that are founded on the technological and ideological principles of Web 2.0 that make it possible for the exchange and creation of content by users (Fuchs, 2017). This study focused on social media platform of twitter.

Tweet: The short messages created by twitter users (Twitter, n.d.).

Twitter: A social networking website whose capability allowed users to publish short messages that could be viewed by other users (Twitter, 2018).

Target market: The visible or invisible space that a company or business focuses to sell their goods and services (Abrams, 2014).

Hashtags: Consisted of hash sign (#). On twitter, this is used to draw attention, connect, promote, and organize content.

11

Summary

This study sought to establish the use of twitter in managing a company's reputation, focusing on StarTimes Kenya. The chapter provided an overview of the place of twitter in corporate reputation. Generally, the chapter presented the reasons for this study and outlined the principles which were followed in the research. This chapter provided the introduction and background to the study, and examined the problem statement, the purpose of the study, research objectives and questions, justification of the study, significance of the study, the study assumptions, scope of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study, and definition of terms. The next chapter reviewed literature relevant to the topic under study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This literature review presented an assessment of the significant concepts that were at the core of this study, including twitter, reputation risk, corporate reputation, and reputation management. The study did a review of latest publications on twitter, and looked at how it had challenged the field of corporate reputation management. This section started with a theoretical framework covering one theory related to the study. The study further evaluated literature that was found relevant to the topic of study. Lastly, the study designed a conceptual framework that illustrated the relationship between significant domains and concepts in the research.

Theoretical Framework

Impression Management Theory

In 1959, Erving Goffman introduced the impression management theory, a goal-oriented process conducted either consciously or unconsciously to influence how other people perceive an event, object, or individual (Goffman, 1959). This is accomplished through the control or regulation of information shared during interactions. When doing this, the individual who aims to influence others would attempt to incline them to adopt a certain perception. Goffman's theory could be applied in public relations and professional communication domains, where it could be utilized to describe the process by which a company could craft its public image (Tedeschi, 2013).

13

After proposing the impression management theory, Goffman further enhanced it to include efforts made by individuals to exercise control over the impression that other people have over their traits. These developments sparked the attention of people to look at impression management as a fundamental interpersonal process. The theory stipulated that any organization or individual had the capability of establishing and maintaining an impression that aligned with the kind of perception they wanted conveyed to the public (Goffman, 1959). According to Tedeschi (2013), a look at this theory from a public relations viewpoint showed it entails the vital tactics of communication that brings out harmony between organizations and individual goals on one hand, and the actions that would determine public perception on the other. The impression management theory places emphasis on the reality of perception that links to the belief that how other people perceive you or your organization forms a basis on which they form ideas (Zaharopoulos & Kwok, 2017).

In this study, the concept of impression management referred to the attempts people make to control and regulate information with the aim of influencing the impressions people should form about them (Goffman, 1959, Khedher, 2014). Studies on the sociological aspects of organizations placed a lot of attention on the management of impressions during communication where a person colludes to retain some form of social reality amongst peers or the general public (McDonnell & King, 2013; Raghuram, 2013; Westphal, Park, McDonald, & Hayward, 2012). In his research, Goffman (1959) used dramaturgical metaphors to define these commonplace organizational interactions. He compared individuals to actors who prepared themselves into casts to perform a specific, pre-arranged sort of reality, while at the same time hiding any indication that might refute the constructed model (McDonnell & King, 2013).

14

The impression management theory concentrated on presentations and public performance, thus was ideal for a study that looked at a company's twitter use such as this one (Treem & Leonardi, 2013). Twitter has grown into a popular tool used by many organizations to interact with the general public in the world today. On twitter, there are no face-to-face interactions. Instead, the tweets made to corporate profiles are the means of interaction, for instance when it comes to managing a company's impression. Twitter primarily involves textual messages being broadcasted to a group of followers, though there are tweets that could encompass a range of multimedia content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). By publishing tweets, public relations professionals have the ability to promote likable impressions of their firms. This could assist the firm in achieving its strategic goals (Schniederjans, Cao, & Schniederjans, 2013). The successful strategic presentation of organizations relies on public relations professionals and other team members to maintain a suitable twitter presence.

Consistent with the ongoing discussion, the researcher argued that corporate reputation of an organization was linked to the impression management strategies that a company implemented (Highhouse, Brooks, & Gregarus, 2009). In their study, Bolino, Kacmar, Turnley, and Gilstrap (2008) outlined the different management techniques that companies have utilized to enhance their corporate reputation. An organization could adopt a defensive technique to protect the organization from negative events or an assertive technique to improve or maintain a positive impression. In turn, these techniques consist of an array of activities that could be implemented to accomplish a particular goal or motive on the general public, for example, pro-social behavior or role modeling, among others.

It was therefore important for companies to select the appropriate techniques for engaging in twitter conversations or for reacting to activities on twitter. In relation to

15

the study, the adoption of the impression management theory helps companies improve their communication capabilities on twitter operations, facilitating the selection of effective organizational impression management techniques. Hence this research argued that a company's reputation on twitter was a product of the techniques deployed.

General Literature Review

Twitter

Twitter is an internet-based social network website that was first used in 2006 (Murthy, 2018). It is also known as a "status update service," that allows individuals to publish short messages and to view what other users have posted. It operates on tweets (short messages) that are 280 characters long and is renowned for its ability to reach many people speedily (Ott, 2017). Some of the other important twitter features include the retweet function, reply function, hashtags, follow, and direct messages (Twitter, n.d.).

The Retweet (RT) function makes it possible for users to repost a tweet from another user with an option of making additions to the previous textual message or tweet, while the reply function allows users to send public messages to other twitter users. Twitter hashtags facilitate the categorization of tweets by inserting a prefix with a hash symbol, e.g. #StarTimesTV (Enli & Simonsen, 2018). To follow is to add a user to one's list so as to be able to keep up with their network wherever they are. A direct message, allows users to send private messages between them (Twitter, n.d.).

Unlike other social media networks such as Facebook, twitter has a limit to the number of characters per tweet, thus communication ranges from personal diaries of

daily happenings to business applications (Weller, Bruns, Burgess, Mahrt, & Puschmann, 2014).

However, in spite of the high number of users, a study by Smith (n.d.) found that "a total of 1.3 billion accounts had been created, of those, 44% made an account and left before ever sending a tweet and only 550 million people have ever sent a tweet"(para. 5). The study also revealed that 77% of twitter users felt more positive about a brand once their tweet was replied to. A research done by Maritz and Evolve24 that consisted of 1,298 twitter complainants found that only 29% of those tweet gripes were replied to by the companies in question (Baer, n.d.).

<div align="center">Use of Twitter in Organizations</div>

Kane, Alavi, Labianca, and Borgatti (2014) posited that organizations were increasingly becoming complex in their use of twitter media channels. Organizations taking up twitter anticipate various strategic benefits, and it was now common for organizations to use twitter to communicate to external audiences an impression favorable to its activities (Kane et al., 2014; Leonardi, Huysman, & Steinfield, 2013). Organizations were now devoting more resources and efforts to develop a desired impression by ensuring tweets were more carefully crafted and communicated. In some organizations, they have hired individuals and assigned them twitter-specific duties. For instance, in recent times Apple (Mann, 2014) and Goldman Sachs (Alden, 2012) conducted recruitments and employed digital marketing directors with experience in managing twitter activities. Nonetheless, those with the responsibility of overseeing corporate twitter channels face numerous challenges in managing the organization's image in the online platform. For instance, there is the risk of

inappropriate tweets that could severely damage a company's reputation (Barak, 2014; Wang et al., 2011).

The past few years have presented a number of illustrative examples. One such example was when Singapore Airlines was heavily criticized after a team member sent some insensitive tweet moments after MH17, the Malaysian jetliner, went missing (Radulova & Associated Press, 2014). The tweet on the company's twitter account is presented by Figure 2.1 below.

Figure 2.1: Singapore Airlines Tweet

The person who posted the tweet had claimed a lot of customers were making inquiries about flight routes and she wanted to make a swift response via the company's twitter account.

In another scenario, an employee of KitchenAid, an American brand posted an inappropriate joke following the demise of President Barak Obama's grandmother via the company's twitter channel. In the apology, the company's media manager explained that one of the team members had erroneously published an invasive and inappropriate tweet through the company's public handle instead of their private handle (USA Today, 2012). The effects of inappropriate posts on twitter include business losses, embarrassment, public humiliations, and damaged relationships (Barak, 2014; Warren 2015).

18

Benefits of Using Twitter in Organizations

Twitter is gradually growing into an essential tool for the external communication of nearly every organization. This is due to its wide range of uses and subsequent benefits to organizations. One of such benefits is that as a communication tool, twitter keeps a company's followers updated on its most current affairs (Filou, 2013). But even more important is that it allows company followers to interact with the organization. A good example was Safaricom in Kenya, which had deployed the use of twitter to enhance its interaction with subscribers, like making recommendations and reposting interesting tweets from Kenyans on twitter.

Twitter could also be used in generating leads by tweeting new products, special offers, and reduced prices. Such posts could encourage followers to make enquiries, which would potentially result in increased sales. Twitter is a chance to liven up a company's image, this could be used to showcase a company's brand personality. Sending tweets that align with the personality of a brand gives followers a certain business feel that does more than the supply of goods and services (Saffer et al., 2013). It is also useful in researching for current trends because following threads or searching tweets could give someone an idea on the topics and trends users find interesting.

Many businesses use twitter to seek feedback through reviews and comments. According to Xu and Wu (2015), information that is acquired this way is beneficial to businesses that want to improve the quality of their products. Lastly, twitter is a tool that provides customer service. For consumers who are twitter-savvy, making enquiries and receiving services through twitter is very convenient. Safaricom is one

19

of the companies capitalizing on this by offering round the clock response services to customer questions.

Corporate Reputation

Corporate reputation refers to "a collective representation of a firm's past actions and results that describes the firm's ability to deliver valued outcomes to multiple stakeholders" (Van Riel & Fombrun, 1997, p. 10). It is the overall assessment created by stakeholders of a firm based on their direct experiences (Hannington, 2016). The concept of organizational reputation gauges the relative position of a firm both internally with workers and externally with other stakeholders (Ravasi, Rindova, Etter, & Cornelissen, 2018). The corporate reputation a firm has with its stakeholders must be viewed as a dynamic construct that impacts, and is impacted by various factors including financial performance, product quality, service quality, relations with stakeholders and environmental responsibility (Barnett & Pollock, 2014; Grover, Kar, & Ilavarasan, 2019). In short, corporate reputation is formed over time, and is a function of sophisticated exchanges and interrelationships between stakeholders and a given firm, in diverse contexts (Cornelissen, 2017).

Companies that are held in high regard by consumers tend to strengthen their reputation by providing better quality and more creative products and services (Fatma, Rahman, & Khan, 2015). An organization's corporate reputation was dependent on its corporate social responsibility (Aula, 2011). The social and environmental obligation aspect captures the beliefs of the consumers that the firm in question has a positive role both in society and the environment. Such firms are usually expected to offer greater job security, better remuneration, better health and retirement benefits, profit sharing, and employee stock ownership (Fatma et al., 2015). Progressively, a

20

company's favorable treatment of workers is also expected to manifest itself in heightened corporate reputation (Ravasi et al., 2018).

In today's business world, a strong corporate reputation is one of the essential assets that ensure sustained financial outcomes (Laaksonen, 2017). This strategic potential is attributed to its own value-creation proficiency, and to its immaterial nature, since it makes it difficult for competitors to imitate corporate reputation, allowing companies to maintain their edge over competitors (Gao, Zuzul, Jones, & Khanna, 2017). At the same time, companies better beware that corporate reputation can be tricky; not only does it present an excellent source of competitive advantage, however, a wrong decision could massively damage all the efforts made in building a firm's reputation.

Corporate Reputation and Twitter

In an online setting such as twitter, reputation is about how to adequately reflect the continuous changes and communication that characterizes corporate messaging. In essence then, corporate reputation is derived from the internet and interactions therein. Such that reflections of a firm's reputation in the mind of a stakeholder and the firm's performance are mutually dependent: if they believe that a company offers a poor service, they will potentially also presume the company is poor in other departments.

Twitter users are creatures of habit and they link their experiences to their overall assessment of the organization, either positive or negative (Möller, van de Velde, Merten, & Puschmann, 2020). As a result, happy customers are more likely to continue giving the organization business and recommend it to others. This applies whether the organizational reputation is being measured online or offline. In the

modern-day business environment, reputation matters online just as it does offline (Lin, Liu, & Viswanathan, 2016).

Some companies have appointed public relations professionals to interact with twitter users. These individuals interact with the twitter community and provide responses to customer's queries swiftly and effectively (Wojcik & Hughes, 2019). Public relations professionals have an opportunity to share their unique ideas and display commitment to the values, mission, and vision of the company. Further, by involving itself in the community through its employees, a company is able to generate a clearer sense of its involvement with the twitter community (Laaksonen, 2017). Consequently, as the visibility of the individuals behind the firm become more obvious, showing greater involvement, the emotional link between the company and the twitter community will surge, resulting into enhanced engagement (Cornelissen, 2017).

StarTimes Media's Use of Twitter

Startimes is Chinese multinational media company that offers terrestrial and satellite television to consumers all over the world. It joined the Kenyan market in 2010 and in 2012 it opened a twitter account (@StarTimesKenya), amassing an approximate total of 55,436 tweets from inception to the present (2020). With a following of 77,100 twitter users, StarTimes Media Kenya is hugely popular especially with Kenyan twitter users. The company's activities on twitter are closely followed by twitter users in Kenya and beyond, and they are free to voice their opinions on matters pertaining to services or products offered by the company (Twitter, n.d.).

Following the tax waiver on mobile phones by the Kenya government in 2009, more Kenyans purchased mobile phones and the number of twitter registrations shot up (Ndung'u, 2019). A report by Nendo estimated that twitter has over 2 million active

22

Kenyan users (Kaigwa et al., 2015). Kenya has an estimated 700,000+ monthly active users and they are continuously communicating about StarTimes brand, with or without the firm's consent (Mola, 2014). It was therefore important for StarTimes to decide if it wanted to be part of this conversation or not (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011).

Research on twitter showed that users create an account chiefly to stay updated on the happenings around them; while they are also aware that organizations use twitter as a medium of communication. Twitter could also be used as a means to stay in touch with customers, build relationships, and spread messages (Cornelissen, 2017). Considering the many twitter users in Kenya, it was recommended StarTimes to regard its twitter platform as an important reputation management resource (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Additionally, the study offered tips on the need for the involvement of a company in the activities of its twitter community on account of corporate reputation management matters. StarTimes' use of twitter allowed them to manage their brand, market their products, and respond to customers' questions or concerns. How these duties were performed could impact the overall corporate reputation of the company.

Empirical Literature Review

These were studies conducted to establish the effectiveness of using twitter as a tool of corporate reputation. Wang (2016) did a study showing that the motivation behind impression management in the disclosure of corporate information was brought by the desire to achieve a certain reputation or to harmonize public perception with organizational ends. The level of impression management depended on the desire to

23

manage the impression along with the significance of the resultant public perception (Zaharopoulos & Kwok, 2017).

Impression management is effected at the organizational level on the presumption that individuals could implement reputation management techniques to control and regulate public perception of other organizations or groups (Benthaus, Risius, & Beck, 2016). Hence firms utilized reputation management techniques to present themselves in good light. For example, supporting a charity foundation could enable an organization to project a good public image (Lu, Zhou, & Chen, 2019). According to McDonnell and King (2013), organizations pursued reputation management for a number of reasons including handling product complaints, enhancing financial outcomes, presenting organizational performance, and addressing social movement boycotts.

A study by Lu et al. (2019) was carried out to assess the interaction of top management groups, stakeholders, and situational factors on specific corporate reputation management strategies. The findings showed that increased engagement with the public to present them information was vital in the creation and maintenance of a desired public perception of the operations of a firm (Lu et al., 2019). There are several channels that companies could use for public engagement including the issuance of written statements, press releases, mass media, and the internet.

The rise of twitter and its effectiveness in communication presented an opportunity for companies to deploy corporate reputation management. Companies could engage on twitter as a complementary channel to control and influence how a company was perceived by twitter users (Schniederjans et al., 2013). Organizations use twitter to share information thereby building their brand image, advertising their products,

24

involving users in the development process of products, offering customer care services, and displaying corporate social responsibility (Culnan, McHugh, & Zubillaga, 2010).

Aula (2010) carried out research on social media and reputation risks. He found that online reputation of companies was constructed based on the stories formed by stakeholders and spread within networks. Twitter users could still demand services made available through traditional channels, hence the need for companies to understand how to provide effective and efficient customer service via twitter. As the popularity of twitter continues to grow and the platform becomes more interactive, users would undoubtedly want to use it more. The ability to retain customers and build strong relationships with new clients on twitter could both save organizations some money but also act as a planning mechanism.

Online corporate reputation management involves a company going online in a bid to build, maintain, protect, or even undo its current reputation in the event of a twitter corporate reputation crisis (Faller, n.d.). In regards to twitter, companies need to make this a priority because their stakeholders and consumers are on twitter and are aware of what is happening in the online platform. Enhanced quality of service on twitter measurably improves the overall profits of a firm and its market share (Benthaus et al., 2016). Many organizations could benefit from this understanding as the need to continuously protect and sustain their reputation, which could be achieved through efficient customer service. David (2016) suggested that the fear of companies operating online might be related to the fictional notion that quality of service and reputation may be different online than offline. The reality, however, is that consistency is key. A company's online image should complement its offline image.

25

Literature had also shown a connection between competence, trustworthiness and credibility (Jenkins, Ilicic, Barklamb, & McCaffrey, 2020). The idea of credibility hinged on believability. In his study, David (2016) found out that online trustworthiness and expertise had a substantial influence on the acceptability, hence believability of those online sites. A growing body of literature had shown that opinions from twitter content influenced consumers in the buying of products (Karakaya & Barnes, 2010). This is where the Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) notion came from.

The power of eWOM communication emanated from the fact that people believed that individual information sources were more credible (Jin & Phua, 2014). Interactions between friends, families, and interest groups are continuously growing and their actions pointing to the fact that eWOM could be as useful and influential as the conventional word of mouth. The relationship between a company's reputation and eWOM on twitter comes about when consumers view a firm's reputation favorably. Users have a higher likelihood of identifying with an organization in that regard and become part of positive eWOM interactions (Jin & Phua, 2014).

Research had shown that twitter offers a unique opportunity for organizations to move closer to their consumers thus an effective means of building a relationship (Watkins, 2017). However, little had been done in Kenya to investigate the use of twitter in the management of corporate reputation. This study therefore made an important contribution to scholarship in this area by studying the place of twitter as a tool of corporate reputation management in Kenyan organizations. The amount of interactions on twitter places a huge burden on companies such as StarTimes Media to be reputable as they work towards building a strong relationship with their twitter

26

clients. If StarTimes Media consumers frequent twitter, then the company must ensure its twitter presence was felt by the very consumers.

Conceptual Framework
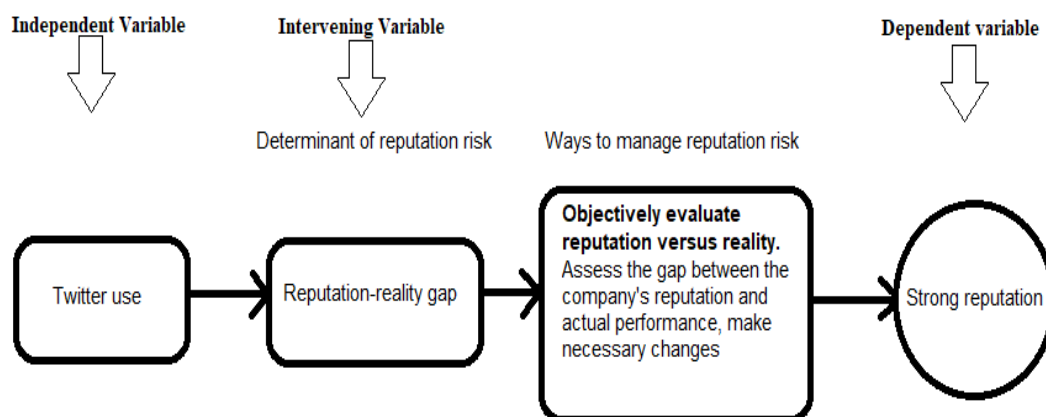
Figure 2.2: Conceptual Framework
Source: Author (2020)

The conceptual framework that guided this research was constructed from a combination of several models of corporate reputation management, the use of twitter and the impression management theory. Figure 2.2 above was arrived at after careful consideration of the use of twitter as the independent variable and strong reputation as the dependent variable. The intervening variable (reputation-reality gap) was also considered in defining the interrelationship between the dependent and independent variables.

Reputation risk on twitter strikes with no prior warning. It shifts a company's corporate landscape, affects revenue, and sparks confusion. In a worst-case scenario, it impacts customer opinions and organic traffic by inserting negative content in the company's twitter search results (Garcia, Mavrodiev, Casati, & Schweitzer, 2017). Therefore, it's critical to be aware of the hazards that cause company twitter reputation damage. This could be done through a reputation risk assessment to

establish the reputation-reality gap. Reputation risk assessment could be undertaken by assessing the gap between the company's reputation and the actual performance. This helps to determine the public perception of a company, and the requisite changes to be made once the need arises.

There are various things that determine the extent to which a company could be exposed to reputation risk from its twitter activities (Doorley & Garcia, 2015). For instance, the estimation of corporate reputation was founded on the ability and readiness to carry out an activity recurrently, like a habit. The overall reputation of a company is a function of its reputation among different stakeholders in specific categories. A sustainable and positive reputation among stakeholders across diverse groups results in a positive overall reputation of an organization (Crowley, Huang, Lu, & Luo, 2019). Substantial risk is posed when the reputation of an organization is more positive than the underlying reality. With time, the failure of a firm to live up to expectations gets exposed, and will most likely damage its reputation in the end (Divol, Edelman, & Sarrazin, 2012).

According to Benthaus et al. (2016), twitter use in general presents a reputation risk on the part of the organization since decisions are made by different departments and groups. For instance, if one department creates expectations that cannot be met by another department then the company's reputation on twitter could be damaged. For example, a marketing unit of a company that deals with software might run a twitter advertisement campaign for a new product before developers have actually established and fixed all the bugs. Once this message goes to the public through its twitter page, the firm would now have a tough decision to make between releasing an unfinished product into the market or waiting for the developers to complete and release it later. The inefficient utilization of twitter could put any organization's

28

reputation at risk, particularly if this misstep could lead to a negative conclusion by a stakeholder(s).

Summary

This chapter reviewed and explicated significant concepts at the center of this study such as twitter, corporate reputation, reputation risk, and corporate reputation management. It also looked at the theoretical framework featuring the impression management theory and its relation to the topic of the research. The study also reviewed the general literature on twitter use in the management of corporate reputation, effective response strategies, the benefits of twitter use in organizations, StarTimes Media's use of twitter, and the potential corporate reputation challenges posed by its twitter use. Also discussed was the empirical literature review that made the case for twitter as a tool of corporate reputation management. Finally, the conceptual framework illustrated the linkages between twitter use (independent variable), corporate reputation (dependent variable), and accurate assessment and/or mitigation of the gap between a real and ideal corporate reputation (intervening variable).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The research methodology section presented a framework of how the study was conducted, providing detailed information about the approaches utilized in carrying out the research. Reputational variables were presented in the form of twitter interactions between StarTimes and the public on twitter. This was followed by a detailed outline of the research strategies that were useful in the gathering of data and the analysis. Lastly the ethical considerations of the study were discussed.

Research Design

The main purpose of this study was to investigate twitter use in corporate organizations and determine its influence in managing corporate reputation. A descriptive approach was adopted to evaluate the impact of twitter use on corporate reputation. A descriptive research strategy was deemed appropriate for the study because it provided a better infrastructure for understanding the relationship between the use of twitter by StarTimes Kenya and corporate reputation management (Men & Tsai, 2011). A descriptive approach further helped in the extraction of data that addressed the research questions and acted as a platform for further comparison with a broad range of users from different countries and academic fields (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012).

Since the study adopted a descriptive research strategy the design was to utilize quantitative data. This approach was used because quantitative data could easily be collected via online data analysis (Gummesson, 2017). Also, quantitative research was ideal for the study because of its emphasis on collecting numerical data and

30

generalizing it across groups of individuals as well as providing an explanation to a phenomenon.

On a general scale, Startimes had been active in posting and replying tweets since launching its twitter page, and as such provided unique research data. StarTimes' twitter account was ideal because of its active twitter presence compared to other organizations in Kenya. The decision to settle on StarTimes was made easier because not so much research had been done in this area in Kenya. Even more precisely, the company was chosen because of its well-known and reputable brand, operating in various countries around the world. First, Kenyan twitter users had known StarTimes; they were even following the company's twitter activities. Second, StarTimes offered a unique case study with various opportunities for research (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Third, from inception, the company had actively integrated digital and social media marketing strategies throughout its marketing campaigns.

Population

A population can be defined as the whole group of objects or events that possess traits that can be observed. In other words, it is the aggregate of all that fits to a particular specification (Asenahabi, 2019). This study's population consisted of tweets sent from the StarTimes' Kenya twitter account consisting of 55,436 postings. The study was confined to StarTimes' twitter activities that ranged from 2012-December 2018, the period within which StarTimes was overly active on twitter and regularly engaged its twitter users.

A number of factors were responsible for this steady progression in the company's twitter use, and the researcher sought to evaluate and understand the effects this had on the organization's corporate reputation. More specifically, there were some major

31

events that may have conspired in the company's favor, thus contributing to the steady progressive momentum in the company's twitter use. During this period, there were major events both local, regional, and global that brought a dramatic shift in the conversations around the world, such as the digital migration, 2013 and 2017 Kenya's general elections, the African Cup of Nations, the World Cup, and the UEFA European Football Championship in 2016.

These events caused a dramatic shift in the tone and pace of StarTimes' twitter conversations and hence the operations. For example, there was a notable rise in the share of tweets discussing the transition from a largely free-to-air TV to a pay-to-watch regime that saw analogue signals switched off from December 2014-March 2015. Many twitter users used the #DigitalMigration hashtag to share their opinion through tweets to express support or criticism.

Target Population

Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) defined target population as the population from which a study generalizes its results. The researcher found that there was no specific number of tweets sent per day by StarTimes. Therefore, the target population was StarTimes' existing data on its twitter usage. The data that was employed included 40,000 tweets sent from @StarTimesKenya twitter account from 2012-2018.

Sample Size

The sampling timeframe of the study was 72 months, January 2012-December 2018. The study sample size included tweets sent within this timeframe.

Sampling Technique

Due to the unpredictability of the amount of content in this population, a disproportionate random sampling technique was employed to select the tweets from the study period (Etikan & Bala, 2017). Disproportionate allocation to strata sampling entails dividing the population of interest into mutually exclusive and exhaustive strata and selecting elements from each stratum (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2014).

Startimes's twitter feed was the focal point of this research since customer service could be observed from the content of the tweets found in the company's twitter feed. Twitter is a public site hence twitter users or those that visit the company's account could view messages posted there. The seven strata for the tweets in the population consisted of 2012 tweets, 2013 tweets, 2014 tweets, 2015 tweets, 2016 tweets, 2017 tweets, and 2018 tweets. Dividing the population into a series of relevant strata was done to increase the likelihood of the representativeness of the sample (Saunders, 2012). Table 3.1 below showed the various classes of tweets in the StarTimes' twitter feed within the study period.

Table 3.1: StarTimes Yearly Tweets 2012-2018

Category/Year	Number of Tweets
2012	2,991
2013	4,177
2014	5,409
2015	7,013
2016	8,854
2017	11,556
2018	15,436
Total	55,436

Only a few content analysis studies had been carried out on twitter, particularly those focusing on digital TV broadcasting companies (Treem & Leonardi, 2013). To fill this clear gap, it was essential to analyze how twitter was used as a customer service mechanism for safeguarding and protecting corporate reputation. A better

understanding of this phenomenon was needed to further understand the use of twitter as a medium of communication. Alhabash and McAlister (2015) explained that the original intentions of twitter founders was to create a medium for building relationships with stakeholders by engaging them in conversations and imploring their ideas on projects and emerging issues. Related studies that utilized content analysis had placed emphasis on campaign research and frequency of discussion of a particular topic.

The platform makes it possible for users to identify the company they intend to interact with. When visiting StarTimes' twitter profile one was able to see the following features on the page: the company's profile picture, number of tweets, number of followers, amount of likes, and the number of twitter users they were following. Following a twitter conversation was relatively easy because the pages were on public display. In some rare cases, a user's profile could be private, rendering it inaccessible unless in the case of those following each other. Figure 3.1 below was an example of a twitter conversation between StarTimes and one of the users with a public profile. Evidently, users constantly posted tweets to StarTimes with an

expectation of receiving customer service.

Figure 3.1: Example of a Conversation on StarTimes' Twitter Page

Creswell (2013) explained that in the disproportionate stratified random sampling technique, the number of items sampled from each stratum is not proportional in their representation of the total population. Unequal sampling fractions are applied to each stratum, and hence the population composition must be used as weights to balance the disproportionate sample. Remler and Van Ryzin (2014) defined disproportionate sampling as "variation on stratified sampling in which some strata are sampled at different rates" (p. 22). The sample size calculator was preferred because it allowed the study to focus on each year of the study period, making it easy to generalize the results over the 7 years as it was a large study population. Working with a large sample size made it possible for the study to identify various interaction patterns between the company and its users during the study period. In addition, it made it possible to assess adjustments that needed to be made in the company's twitter operations on matters of corporate reputation. The sample sizes for each stratum were determined by the following equation and the results tabulated in table 3.2 below:

$$n_h = (N_h / N) \text{ x } n$$

Where: n_h is the sample size for stratum h, N_h is the population size for stratum h, N is the total population size, and n is the total sample size (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2014).

Table 3.2: Tweets Sample Size

Stratum	Frequency	Percentage	Sample size
2012 tweets	2,991	5.40	32
2013 tweets	4,177	7.52	44
2014 tweets	5,409	9.76	57
2015 tweets	7,013	12.65	74
2016 tweets	8,854	16.00	94
2017 tweets	11,556	20.83	123
2018 tweets	15,436	27.84	164
Sub total	55,436	100	588

35

Data Collection Instruments

Content analysis was used to explore the use of twitter in reputation management for StarTimes Kenya. Content analysis refers to the quantitative research of message characteristics (Krippendorff, 2013). The content analysis approach was selected for a number of reasons. One, because of its strengths in systematic categorization and summarization of large data sets; two, its usefulness in the interpretation of patterns displayed in the texts, with attention placed on the settings from which sample data could be drawn (Bengtsson, 2016). This method is particularly useful when a study is assessing a large set of data with an aim to obtain general insight into an area of study hampered by limited literature (Neuendorf, 2016).

According to Lungu, Caraiani, and Dascălu (2011) the most commonly utilized technique in the assessment of the social and environmental revelations of companies is content analysis. The origins of content analysis dates back to the 17th century, with evidence of its use in studies of censorship (Stone, 1966). According to Krippendorff (2013), the intellectual roots of this research method goes back to ancient human history once humans began to consciously use symbols, voice, and writing. It was traditionally used by scholars in the field of communication; but as the study of social media messages progressed, researchers in other fields have increasingly depended on the methodology.

The company's tweets were analyzed to determine reputation building characteristics. Specifically, how the company tweeted, what it tweeted, and how the tweets were received by the followers. In this study, the material for content analysis was the messages contained in tweets sent from the @StarTimesKenya account. The messages were gauged according to the responses that emanated from a public domain

36

interaction between a user and StarTimes' twitter account. Some of the variables that were considered in this research included emotions, outcomes, types of tweets and number of tweets. The purpose of content analysis of tweets was to observe how StarTimes Kenya interacted with its customers on twitter. This was done by analyzing StarTimes' twitter interactions.

Primary data was valuable since it could result in new insights and greater confidence in the research outcomes (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2012). For the study's primary research, a systematic selection of tweets sent from the company's twitter account was analysed. The tweets were selected using a coding system that was designed for the study featured in Appendix I. From there the tweets were saved manually, five times a month, using a web clipper tool.

A counter checking was done to ensure nothing on StarTimes's twitter media channel was missed. Subsequently, the selected tweets together with the subsequent replies from other twitter users were saved to a computer and cloud system. A Microsoft Excel archive was created that indexed the collected tweets with their identification features (i.e., number) for coding purposes. Secondary data was obtained from case studies, StarTimes' website, magazines, pamphlets, and such related literature.

Data Collection Procedures

Babbie and Mouton (2001) underscored the importance of segmentation of data into units of analysis. This section dealt with the categorization of data into smaller segments. The two units of analysis were the texts of each tweet and the picture captions of StarTimes' tweeted images.

The data obtained represented the company's reputation from its twitter use. Twitter classification framework designed by Dann (2015) was utilized in the identification of

37

variables. The model was useful in coding the tweets as conversational, status, pass along, news, phatic, and spam. It also contained supplementary sub-categories, thus offering a wide range of variables. In addition, the study incorporated countable variables such as retweets, favorites, questions, hashtags, and the @-signs.

StarTimes had posted 55,436 public tweets in the period ranging 2012-2018. The study attempted to identify the above mentioned variables in those tweets. In addition, the study examined the company's received tweets in the form of coded replies, likes and retweets. Replies, likes, and retweets were indicators of stakeholders reaching out to the organization, thus its response to these initiatives was an important aspect worth noting. Table 3.3 below presented a codebook outlining the variables of the study.

38

Table 3.3: Codebook

Unit of data collection	All public tweets and Retweets posted by @StarTimes Kenya durng the period from 2012 to 2018. Conversational tweets are excluded, since it is impossible to automatically view them in the users Twitter profiles.
Tweet ID	Fill in the tweets ID as indicated on the tweet ID list: Date of posted tweet + which (when) tweet that day (1st, 3rd, etc.). Mark as original tweet or Retweet. Include tweet text. Who posted the tweet? Give tweet unique number, beginning with 1.

Topic of tweets	Indicates the content of the selected Tweets. The study adopted guidelines from the Twitter classification framework to design these categories. Fill in using the numbers and letters as shown below:
	1. Conversational
	   a) Query
	   b) Action
	   c) Response
	2. Status
	   a) Personal
	   b) Location
	   c) Automated
	3. Pass along
	   a) RT- Retweet
	   b) User Generated Content
	   c) Endorsement
	4. News
	   a) Headlines
	   b) Sport
	   c) Event
	5. Phatic
	   a) Greeting
	   b) Unclassifiable
	6. Spam

Number of '@'s	How many people have posted a response to the tweet? Insert only number. Include further answers posted by StarTimes themselves.
Number of retweets	How many people have reposted the tweet on their timelines? Insert only number.
Number of likes	How many people have liked the tweet? Insert only number.
Hashtags	Does tweet have a hashtag? Insert "x" if yes.
Picture	Does tweet include a picture? Insert "x" if yes.
Response time	Initial company's response time will be recorded. Response time could range from same day response to over one week.
Emotions	Indicates the emotions expressed by the user in Tweet. Fill in using the numbers and letters as shown below: a) Angry- frustrated reaction toward a product offered by the company b) Unsatisfied- expressed unhappiness or disappointment based on service by StarTimes c) No emotion-neither satisfied nor dissatisfied d) Satisfied- satisfaction based on product or service provided by the company e) Acknowledgement/appreciation- StarTimes recognition of customer's tweet f) Empathy/Apology- company's response showing they are concerned g) Product/Service not offered- company unable to solve issue or concern h) Contact us- company's request for customers to contact them for further assistance

Source: Dann (2015)

39

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Version 11.0 was used to develop a coding sheet, where all the data was collected to provide an overview of emerging themes for effective analysis. Appendix 1 illustrated the coding scheme followed in the data analysis.

Coders need to come up with a code that can be understood and used by other coders who intend to study or assess data. Lavrakas (2008) defined intercoder reliability as the degree to which two or more autonomous coders agree on the categorization of the data under study where similar coding schemes are applied. For researchers who use content analysis, intercoder reliability is crucial, and low intercoder reliability might be a weakness in the study (Kripperndort, 2004).

Analysts can check the reliability of a research by duplicating their study efforts under varying conditions and observing the similarities and variances in interpretations, readings, responses, or uses of particular texts or sets of data (Krippendorff, 2004). In this research, two coders were used and the intercoder reliability was reported as simple percentages of agreement. The first coder was a social media expert who coded all the tweets; the second coder was a twitter influencer who coded 50% of the tweets. This was done to ensure intercoder reliability. Both coders received training on using the codebook and the researcher ensured all variables were fully understood.

The formula presented below was used to determine Holsti's reliability coefficient for the research:

$$R = 2M / N1 + N2$$

where;

R = coefficient of reliability,

M = number of coding decisions agreed upon

40

N1 = total number of coding decisions made by the first coder,

N2 = total number of coding decisions made by the second coder (Stacks & Bowen, 2006).

Neuendorf (2016) reviews 'rules of thumb' was set out by various scholars. It concluded that a coefficient above .80 would be acceptable in most scenarios. Anything below that would be disagreeable to most people. In this research, the intercoder reliability of content analysis had a coefficient of .89. This was deemed appropriate for a study exploring new concepts rich in analytical value. As a result, it was concluded that the results of content analysis of tweets were highly reliable.

Pretesting

In this study, there were various risks and challenges faced, some anticipated while others not. The first one was justification of the study in regard to the effectiveness of StarTimes' twitter account reputation management. There was also the challenge of collecting data from one company. This raised questions of validity and reliability of the data, and whether the study conclusions were generalizable to the entire population of study. A pre-study was done with Gotv's twitter account to test the conception and interpretation of the variables in the coding scheme. From the pre-study, necessary reviews were made such as the phrasing of variables and the use of alphanumeric numbering format instead of italics in the codebook. This in the end served to increase the validity and reliability of the study findings (Yin, 2009).

Data Analysis Plan

Mugenda and Mugenda (2012) posited that the process of data analysis involves the description and application of the suggested techniques of the analysis. In this study, the tweets were analyzed using coding as a primary analytical process. Coding was

41

defined in this research as the affixation of categories or codes to data drawn from tweets (Kozinets, 2010). During coding, categories and labels were assigned to specific units of data. There were seven categories of tweets that emerged, and that were analyzed. The categories were aligned to the research questions with each tweet having an assigned value based on the content of the tweet. Coding was done in two steps, with each analysed tweet getting assessed using the coding techniques mentioned above. Mean and frequencies were tabulated when it came to questions of the dialogic attributes of StarTimes' twitter account. The results of the coded tweets were analyzed using Microsoft Excel for categorization and interpretation of data.

<div align="center">Ethical Considerations</div>

The central concern of the study was to ensure the research was conducted within acceptable standards and principles of research undertaking. In this regard, approval to conduct the study was granted by the Department of Communication of Daystar University. The Daystar University Ethics Review Board approval was granted prior to conducting the research as well, and the authorization/permit was issued (Appendix II). Approval to conduct the study was also sought from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation, and authorization issued for data collection and analysis (Appendix III).

Online communication research faces numerous ethical challenges. One of the challenges, according to Boddy and Dominelli (2017), is the content posted on the internet with respect to privacy and consent. Needless to say, matters of consent and privacy protection are essential research components. But communication online research is a different ballgame. This is because it is categorized under online private spaces and online public spaces. Scholars have argued that the difference between

<div align="center">42</div>

private and public space on the internet is not always clear (Taylor & Pagliari, 2018). Further, twitter offers real-time access to large quantities of content through its Application Programming Interface (API).

Some of the information that could be obtained using API includes information of the user who tweeted, the time zone, location, the time the tweet was published, the number of tweets they have ever published, and the number of followers they have (Rivers & Lewis, 2014). This way, the study was able to discriminate public and private twitter profiles. Ordinarily, private information is not found on twitter API or public timelines. But most importantly, it would mean the users' permission be sought or granted to access their information. In line with these research guidelines, the researcher only gathered tweets that appeared after doing a search on public timelines. Therefore, all the content the study used fell within the public domain and could be cited without infringing on ethical principles of research such as consent and privacy concerns.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

This chapter discussed the method that the researcher used in undertaking the study. It included the research design, the study population, the target population, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION, AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction

The main aim of the study was to establish the effectiveness of twitter in managing corporate reputation. The research investigated the general impact of twitter use in the corporate environment, especially how StarTimes' twitter use impacted consumer awareness and perception of the company. Specifically, the focus was about StarTime's online reputation than the overall company reputation. This chapter discussed the findings of the study and interpretation of the results as guided by research objectives and questions. The study objectives were: to establish the types of messages posted on StarTimes' twitter account; to determine the nature of messages posted on StarTimes Kenya twitter media channel about reputation building; and to find out the mechanisms used by StarTimes to control and sustain its twitter corporate reputation.

Analysis and Interpretation

The data results were based on 588 tweets posted from the company's twitter account for a period of 72 months (2012-2018). The following information was gathered from the StarTimes Media twitter account. The information gave an idea on the types of interactions StarTimes had on twitter and provided insights on the viability of using twitter as a tool for corporate reputation management.

Summary of the StarTimes' Twitter Account

44

A typical twitter account operated by a company is characterized by a verification symbol, pictures, company logo, company values, or an important notice. Table 4.1 below shows the features of StarTimes twitter account.

Table 4.1: Features of StarTimes' Twitter Account

Verified Site	1
Followers	1 (76,800 Followers)
Following	1 (33,760 Following)
Company Logo	1
Important notice	1

StarTimes' twitter account was not verified (Castillo, Mendoza, & Poblete, 2011). The main purpose of verification of an account was to ensure users knew that the account was a legitimate company account (Edgerly & Vraga, 2019). In addition, it provided a sense of security that allowed customers to raise concerns and ask questions since the information would be transmitted directly to the company. StarTimes frequently posted pictures on its account during the study period. The pictures were posted to promote products, raise awareness, showcase events and relay important messages.

During the study period, the profile picture mostly used was the company's logo. Having a logo on the twitter account makes it possible for twitter users to identify the

brand. When twitter users spot something that they could identify with, it becomes easier for them to freely communicate with the said company. This could likely

45

Figure 4.1: Key Characteristics of StarTimes' Twitter Page

trigger emotions about an organization as it resonates well with customers (Men & Tsai, 2011). Figure 4.1 displays the key characteristics of StarTimes twitter page.

StarTimes' twitter page mainly consisted of the company's logo as its profile picture. In the bio section, it had a description of the company and its vision that said "Our vision is to enable every household to have access to digital TV, afford digital TV, watch good digital TV, and enjoy the beauty of digital TV" (Twitter, n.d.). The profile was open to public viewing. The company regularly added important notices to its twitter header that could be seen by any twitter user once they opened StarTimes' twitter feed. Posting important notices or disclaimers on twitter provides comfort to twitter customers since they can access information with minimal hassle (Castillo et al., 2011).

By the end of December 2018, StarTimes' twitter account had 33,700 followers, and it had followed 10,760 users. The number of followers on twitter usually shows the popularity of a user. This could be attributed to a number of reasons including language, brand, activity, clients, and impressions (Chan-Olmsted et al., 2013). The number of users followed by StarTimes was an indication of how the company engaged its customers or followers. Effective communication on twitter occurred through a two-way mechanism; therefore it is important to have a two-way following system (Castillo et al., 2011).

Figure 4.2 below illustrates an example of StarTimes' conversation on twitter.
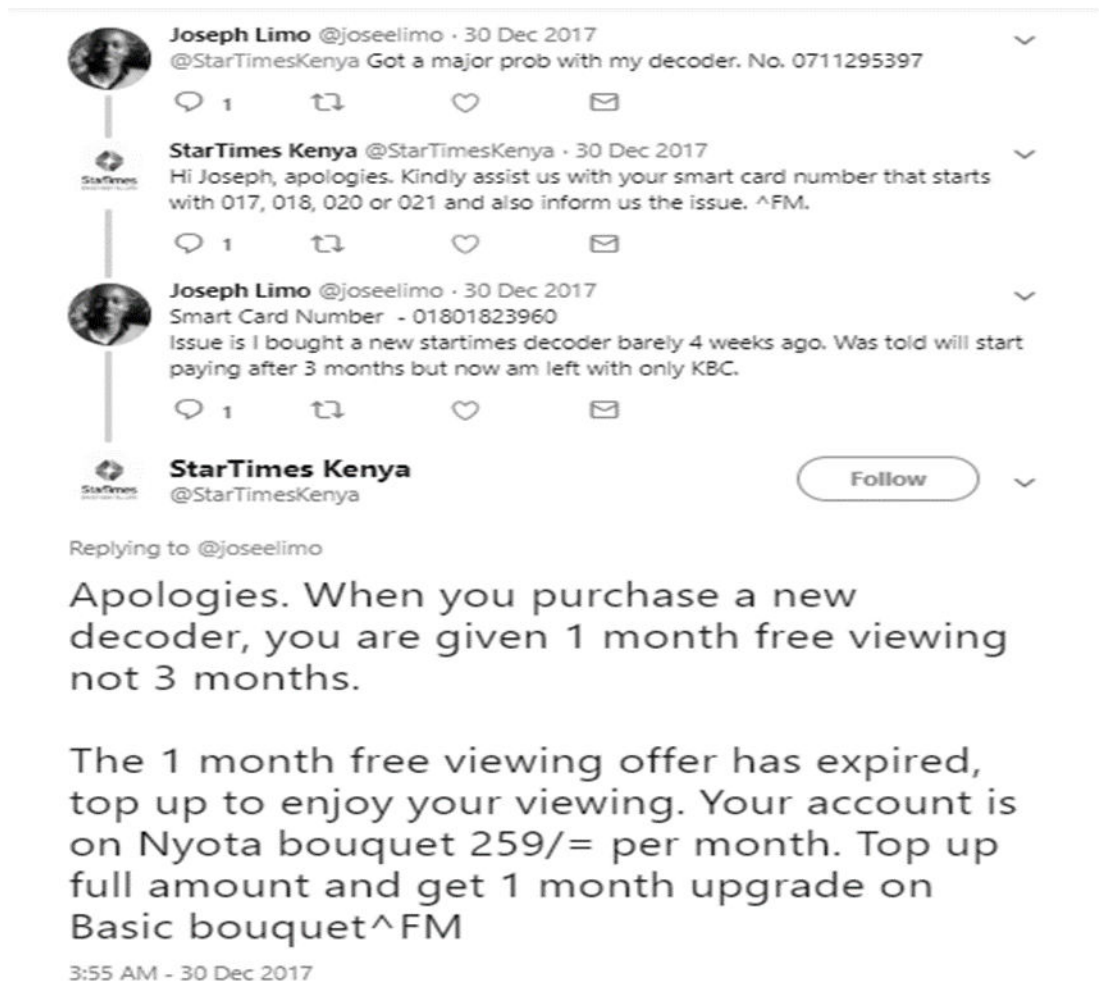
Figure 4.2: Example of StarTimes' Conversation on Twitter

The number of StarTimes' followers and those it followed indicated the company probably was not able to communicate privately to all its followers since they only followed 10,760 twitter users. Having a two-way following system provided an opportunity for the company to share private information over a secure platform thereby reducing the risks associated with sharing personal information online. The company had a liked tweets' category signifying the interaction between the company and its customers as well as stakeholders. The liked tweets' category indicated the company had identified those tweets that were a priority or got them classified. Overall the likes revealed the extent to which StarTimes' twitter account was active. The company had not specified their operating hours on their twitter profile.

47

However, it was clear from their trend that its twitter activities took place during normal business hours.

Data Collection

A total of 55,436 tweets from @StarTimes Kenya account were available for data harvesting from 2012-2018. 588 tweets were selected for analysis. They were selected from the company's twitter feed for a period of 72 months. Out of the 588 selected, 541 were used in the study. This figure represented 92% of the coded tweets within the study period. The remainder 8% (not included in this study) consisted of private and informational tweets that had showed no emotions attached to them. Based on the tweets, the following were the answers to the research questions:

The Types of Messages Posted on Startimes' Twitter Account

This first research question concentrated on the potential of twitter messages in general. The findings established that the tweets were a consistent group of messages from twitter users mainly interested in finding company information, an indication

49

that twitter users took interest in those companies that were on twitter. The tweets suggested that a typical twitter message was not easily distinguishable unless with additional features. This is because a typical twitter message mainly consists of a

50

query, commendation, complaint, or inquiry related to the services offered by the company. In general, messages posted to the company's twitter account showed the typical StarTimes' tweet, one that majority of its stakeholders were familiar with. In

51

addition, tweets predominantly posted on the company's twitter account were
conversational, with most of them involving interactions between the company and its
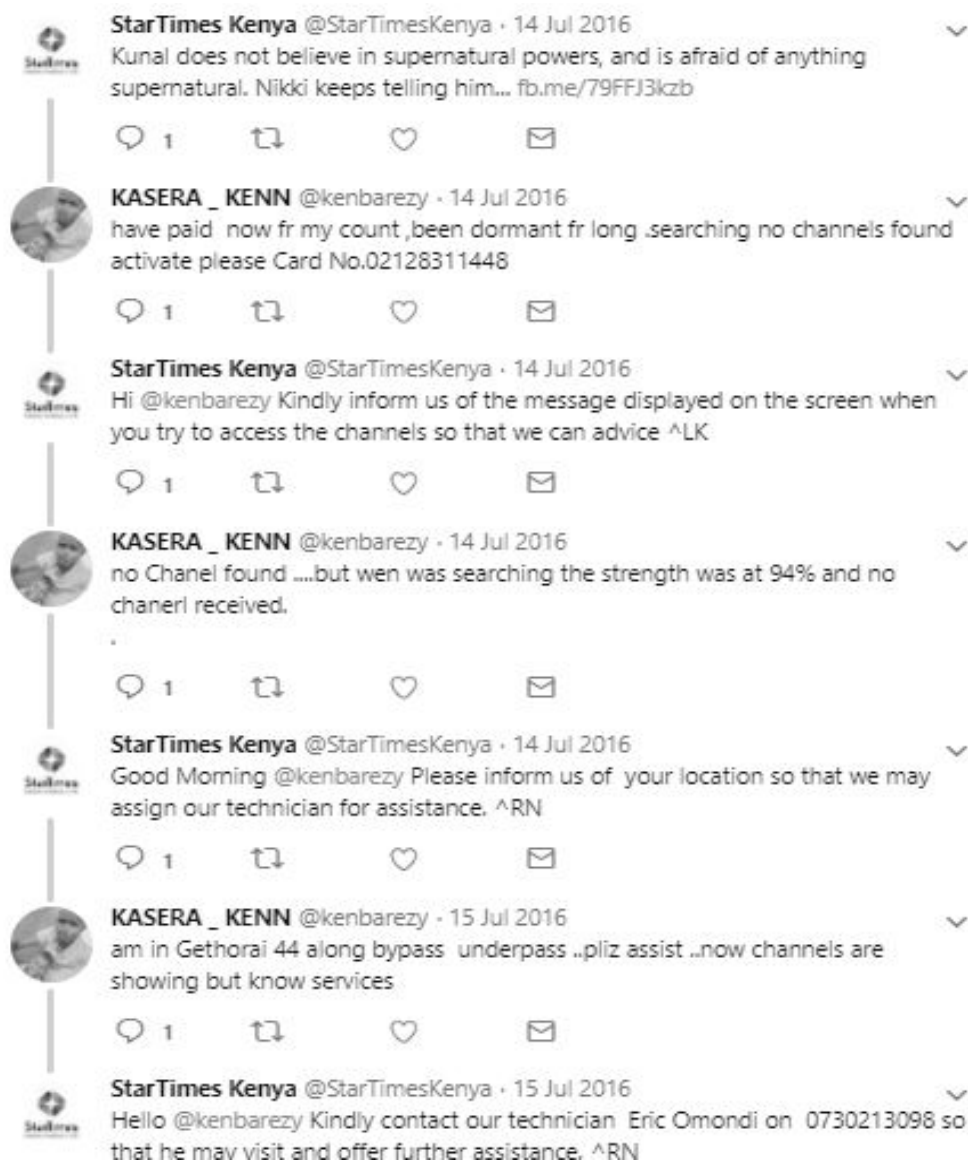clients. 313 tweets (hence majority) were conversational, in line with the users'

Figure 4.3: Conversational Tweets

52

general preferences as shown below by Figure 4.3.

The company also made regular status updates on their twitter account to convey important information to followers and other twitter users. This sample produced 49 tweets. Some tweets contained content classified as 'news.' Others contained phatic messages (banter/social pleasantries) and spam. This information was presented in Figure 4.4 below.
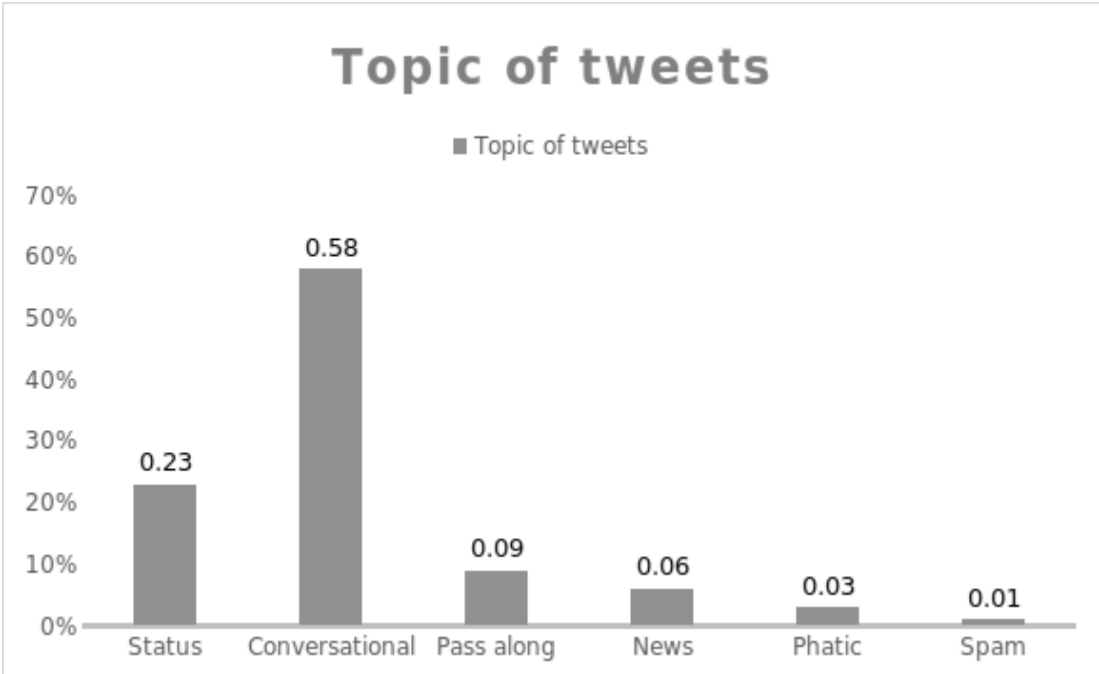
Figure 4.4: Topic of Tweets

As shown in Figure 4.4, the most popular tweets were conversational, accounting for 58% from the 541 tweets. This was followed by status with 23%. Pass along accounted for 8%, while news was at 6%. Tweets with phatic messages (banter/social pleasantries) were at 3%, and spam at 1%. These twitter postings were in line with the general trend of posting messages on twitter.

Twitter stakeholders

StarTimes attracted a distinctive group of participants, which was referred to as twitter stakeholders. It was difficult to determine if these twitter stakeholders were different from the company's primary consumers. Consequently, the study investigated whether the possession of a StarTimes decoder influenced the participation of twitter stakeholders in StarTimes' twitter activities. To understand if a user had a decoder, tweets containing messages about their account with StarTimes were identified as presented by Figure 4.5.

54

Figure 4.5: Tweet from Potential StarTimes' Decoder Client

Table 4.2 below compared participants and non-participants of StarTimes' twitter activities and whether they had a StarTimes decoder.

Table 4.2: Twitter Stakeholders

Possession of a StarTimes decoder	Participation in StarTimes Twitter activities
No StarTimes decoder	107
Current StarTimes decoder holder	284
Potential StarTimes decoder client	98
Unclassifiable	52
Total	541

As indicated in Table 4.2, it was observed that although more StarTimes decoder holders posted messages to StarTimes on twitter than non-StarTimes decoder holders, there were also 98 messages posted with the intention of acquiring a StarTimes decoder. This suggested the possession of a StarTimes decoder played a significant role on twitter users when posting messages to StarTimes on twitter.

55

Participation on twitter

The findings suggested that a typical tweet was conversational in nature. Since the main criterion for selecting tweets was the inclusion of StarTimes twitter handle in a tweet, notably, all the 541 tweets met this threshold. Further, the findings indicated it was not possible to identify twitter users whether by nationality, age, gender, or profession from their tweets; only a few distinctions could be made but was not very useful in helping identify tweeters. It was also observed twitter users relied on the platform to make purchasing decisions, decisions that were the result of influence from reviews and ratings of the company's products and services by other users. Figure 4.6 below depicts a twitter user requesting product information from StarTimes.

Figure 4.6: Twitter User Requesting for Product Information from StarTimes

The main reasons for posting messages on StarTimes' twitter were product information, technical information related to signals, account information, and industry information as shown in Figure 4.7 below.
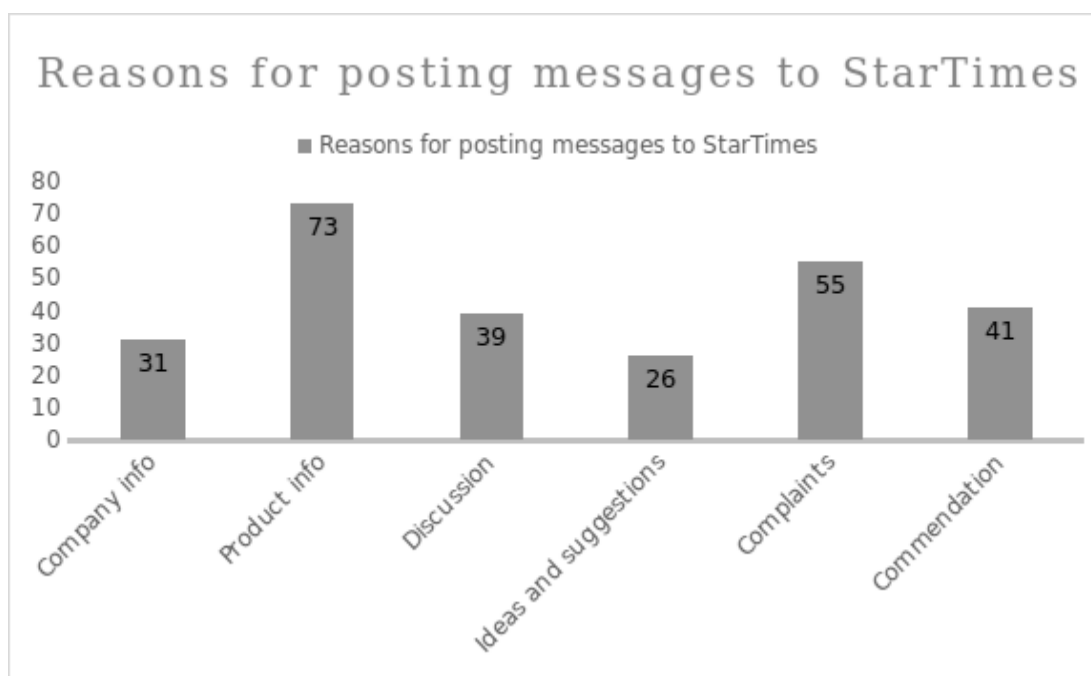
Reasons for posting messages to StarTimes

■ Reasons for posting messages to StarTimes

Category	Value
Company info	31
Product info	73
Discussion	39
Ideas and suggestions	26
Complaints	55
Commendation	41

Figure 4.7: Reasons for Posting Messages to StarTimes on Twitter

Figure 4.7 showed that the main reasons for posting twitter messages to StarTimes had to do with the generic trend where firms work to influence customers to want to attach themselves to them on twitter. Such reasons included (1) company or industry information (2) product information (3) discussions (4) ideas and suggestions (5) complaints, and (6) commendation. From the findings, this order changed: the participants were primarily interested in product information (28%), followed by complaints (21%), and commendation (15%).

Use of hashtags

One of the easiest ways to reach a wider twitter audience was the use of hashtags. Enli & Simonsen (2018) explained that any twitter user could search a hashtag to find updates or related tweets, amounting to more interactions and impressions for a company. As presented by Figure 4.8 below, only some of the tweets had hashtags, majority did not include them.

57

Use of hashtags

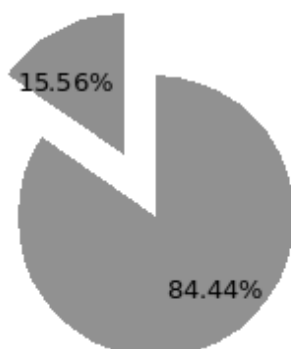■ No hashtag ■ Hashtag used

15.56%

84.44%

Figure 4.8: Use of Hashtags

From the coded tweets, the most common hashtag was #StarTimesOn. From these, 455 tweets had no hashtags, and the tweets were generally a text message. On the other hand, 86 tweets used a hashtag that was associated with the company or its twitter trend. With the right hashtag, a message posted by a user could be viewed by accounts that were completely unrelated. Since twitter is characterized by a fast diffusion of information, according to Kwak, Lee, Park, and Moon (2010), likes and retweets of the analyzed tweets was a significant part of this research. An examination of the retweets showed that a retweeted tweet had the ability to reach an average of 1000 users (Kwak et al., 2010).

Figure 4.9 below displays an example of a tweet that used a hashtag.

58

Figure 4.9: A Tweet that Used a Hashtag

This study's findings showed that tweets that used one or more hashtags generated more traffic in terms of retweets and likes as indicated by Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Level of Engagement When Using Hashtags

Hashtag use	Number of tweets	Number of retweets	Number of likes
Tweets with one or more hashtags	96	665	745
Tweets with no hashtag	445	1340	1359

Tweets that had one or more hashtags generated 665 RTs and 745 likes, representing approximately 7 retweets and 8 likes per tweet. On the other hand, the tweets that did not include a hashtag had 1340 retweets and 1359 likes, translating to approximately 3 tweets and 3 likes per tweet.

59

Use of pictures

The study findings showed that colored visuals increased people's willingness to open a tweet and this was a strategy the company used. Even though StarTimes had made an effort in posting tweets and including images, most of its tweets were not accompanied by a picture. As shown in figure 4.10, only 43 tweets (out of 541) included an image, with all the others as text messages.

Use of pictures
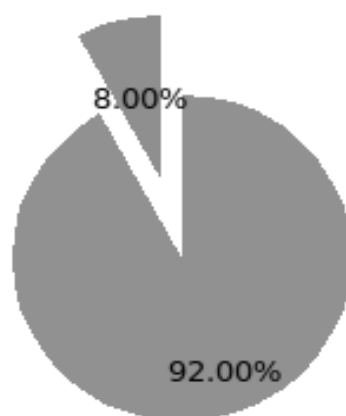
■ No picture   ■ Picture used

8.00%

92.00%

Figure 4.10: Use of Pictures in Tweets

Tweets accompanied by relevant images attracted more replies than text-only tweets. This indicated that visuals are extremely important to a company's twitter reputation risk management strategy. According to Bolino et al. (2008), interaction is a crucial component of impression management for a company that conducts online activities.

Figure 4.11 below illustrates a tweet that was accompanied by an image and the number of retweets and likes it received.

60

Figure 4.11: A Tweet that was Accompanied by an Image

The findings from the content analysis showed that use of pictures led to an increase in the number of retweets and likes which in turn facilitated more interactions for StarTimes.

Table 4.4 below indicates the impact of the use of pictures on interactions on twitter.

Table 4.4: Impact of the Use of Pictures on Interactions

Picture use	Number of tweets	Number of retweets	Number of likes
Tweets with a picture	78	698	712
Tweets with no picture	463	1342	1209

As indicated in Table 4.4, tweets that had pictures generated a total of 698 retweets and 712 likes, representing approximately 9 retweets and 10 likes for each tweet. On the other hand, tweets with no pictures had 1342 retweets and 1209 likes, translating to approximately 3 tweets and 4 likes per tweet.

61

The Nature of the Messages Posted on StarTimes Kenya Twitter Media Channel in

Relation to Reputation Building

Response time

Companies utilize twitter to provide customer service and the intention to protect their

reputation could be gauged by examining their response time and effort (Yang &

Fang, 2014). This is about whether a company took time to acknowledge customer's

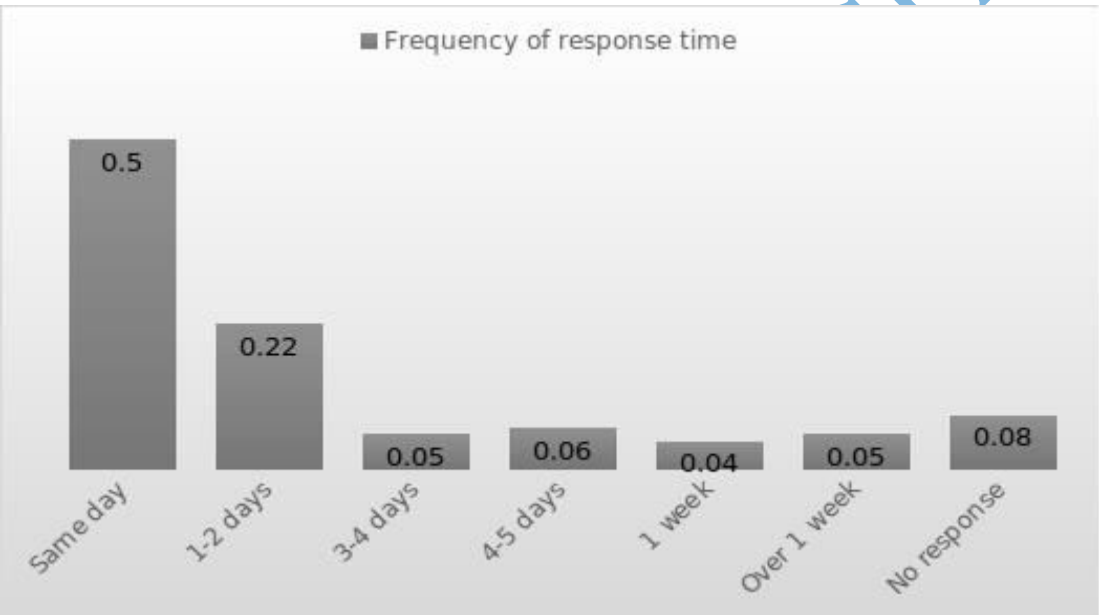views and concerns. The response time of StarTimes is shown below in Figure 4.12.

Figure 4.12: StarTimes Response Time

In most instances, the company responded to the tweets within a day, though some

tweets were neutral hence had no request for assistance. In some instances, the

company did not respond to tweets directed at them by their customers on twitter. As

shown above in Figure 4.12, 270 tweets received same day response representing 50%

of the coded tweets. 118 tweets received a response within 1-2 days, while 27 tweets

received a response within 3-4 days. A total of 32 tweets received a response within

4-5 days while 22 tweets received response a week later.

62

This indicated the company responded to most of the tweets sent by twitter users. However, in some instances, the company took a lot of time to respond to twitter messages. Further, 43 tweets failed to get a response even when a user had mentioned StarTimes in their message as portrayed by Figure 4.13.

Figure 4.13: A Question from a Twitter User that Received no Response

Some of the tweets that received no responses included messages from users inquiring about StarTimes' services. Consequently, this possibly had a negative impact on the company's twitter corporate reputation as users had showed interest in knowing more about the company's operations.

Assistance received through twitter

Offering help when requested is also a good indicator of positive customer care. On average, there was a sense of fulfillment expressed by the customer when the organization responded empathetically with help.

For instance, Figure 4.14 presents a conversation showing a satisfied twitter user.

63

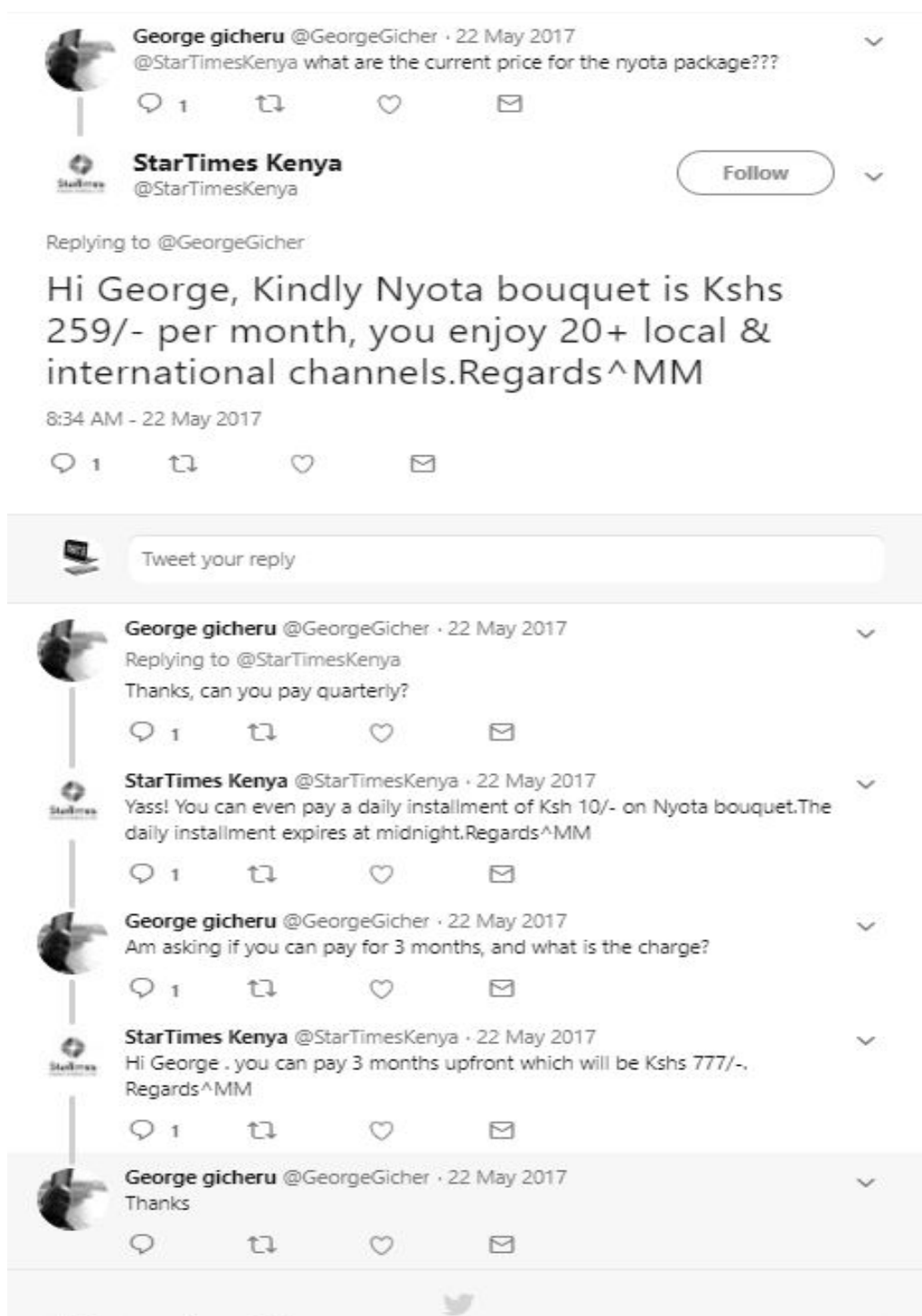*Figure 4.14: A Conversation Showing a Satisfied Twitter User*

Users who did not receive help expressed their frustration by posting messages on twitter directed at StarTimes. From the 405 tweets the company sent, they were in attempt to offer help to customers and other twitter users after an issue had been raised via twitter. In most instances, the company offered help by replying to the

64

tweets, as displayed by Figure 4.14 above. But there were others that were neutral, with no request for assistance. In other instances, the company failed to offer assistance by not responding to the tweets which were directed at them by the users.

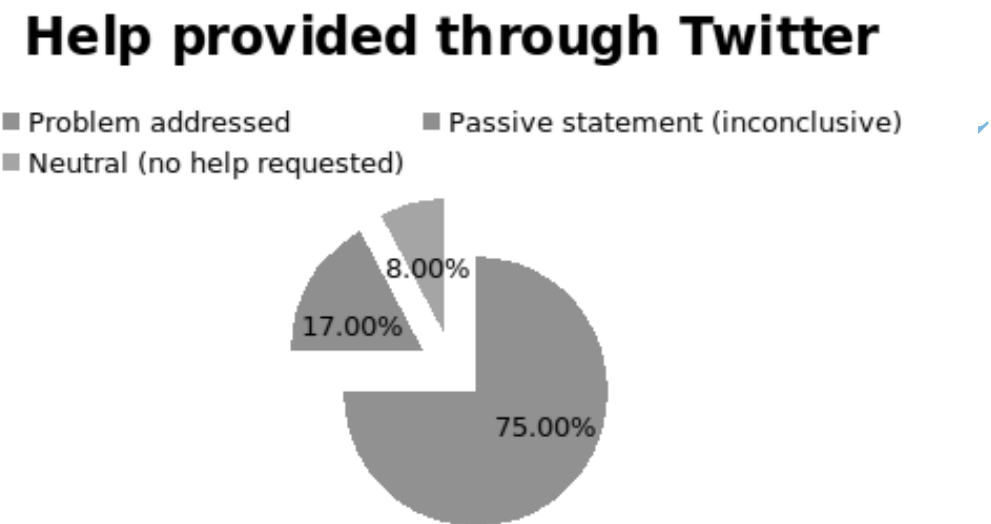Provision of help through twitter is illustrated by Figure 4.15.

Help provided through Twitter

■ Problem addressed   ■ Passive statement (inconclusive)
■ Neutral (no help requested)

Figure 4.15: Provision of Help Through Twitter

From the 541 coded tweets, Figure 4.15 showed 405(75%) tweets were in response to a problem, while 92(17%) were inconclusive, with no help given. In addition, 44(8%) tweets were treated as neutral since the message posted did not warrant company's response.

Whether StarTimes Kenya Made Effort to Control and Sustain its Corporate

Reputation on Twitter

StarTimes' twitter presence

StarTimes' twitter presence still needed to be improved in relation to managing twitter perception. Although its twitter presence was visible, StarTimes did not use twitter's reply function fully responding to questions posted on twitter. Figure 4.16 shows a

65

user who had posted a complaint about the company's services but received no response.

Figure 4.16: A Dissatisfied User Who did not Receive a Response from StarTimes

Majority of the tweets directed at StarTimes warranted a response but the company did not respond to the queries posted by its users. Figure 4.17 outlines replies to tweets by StarTimes.
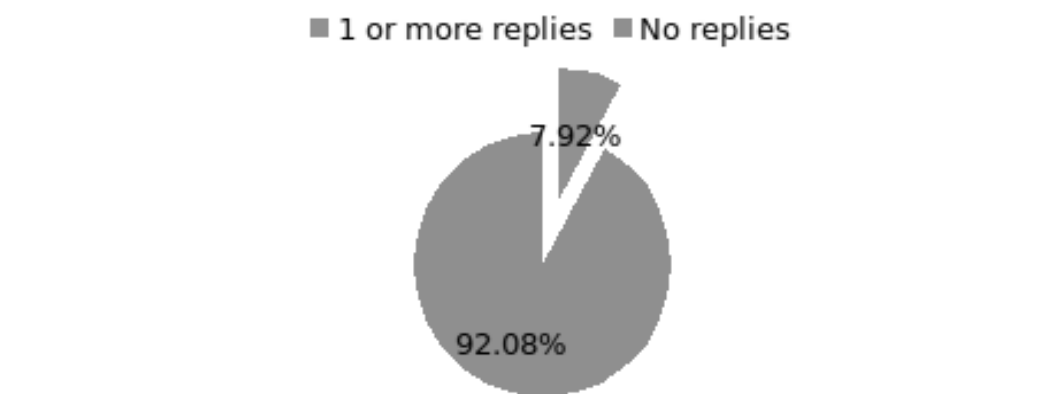

Figure 4.17: StarTimes Replying to Tweets

From the 541 coded tweets, approximately 497 required direct response from the company since they were directly related to the company's products. Replies to users' questions or inquiries were posted from the company's own account, and appropriate

66

responses given to the questions or enquiries. But StarTimes only responded to 458(92.08%) tweets, with 39(7.92%) tweets unanswered as outlined by Figure 4.17 above. Some of the tweets that did not receive a response were concerned with matters of signal quality, subscription renewal, repairs and maintenance. The failure to respond obviously elicited negative responses from users in some cases.

Personalization of communication

Aula (2010) asserted that using someone's name repeatedly in a conversation is a great way to convey feeling of acquaintance. A company that uses a customer's name when interacting with them helps to build a strong bond that lasts a life time. Figure 4.18 below presents an example of StarTimes' personalized tweets

67

Figure 4.18: Example of StarTimes' Personalized Tweets

StarTimes' tweets were not automated thus they would address their customers by their first name or their twitter handle in the interactions as presented above by Figure 4.18. This added a personal touch to their customer service and made the company come across as caring and empathic.

StarTimes's personalization of help is outlined below by Figure 4.19.

68

Using customer's name

■ Used customer's f irst name/twitter handle
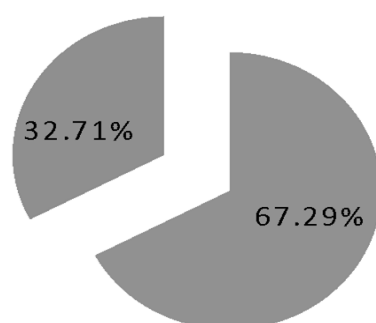■ Did not use any name

Figure 4.19: StarTimes's Personalization of Help

In Figure 4.19 above, 362(67.29%) tweets were those in which the company addressed customers using their names or their twitter handle during twitter conversations, especially the replies. 178(32.71%) tweets were those where the company preferred not to address customers using their first names during a conversation.

StarTime's twitter use

Majority of twitter users see twitter as a tool of communicating and sharing of information (Enli & Simonsen, 2018). Thus it could be deduced that twitter is no different from other mediums of communication. It is a powerful means of online communication and its utility lies in its ability to increase users' influence, reach, and visibility. StarTimes' use of twitter was mainly as a mode of communication as indicated in Figure 4.20 below.
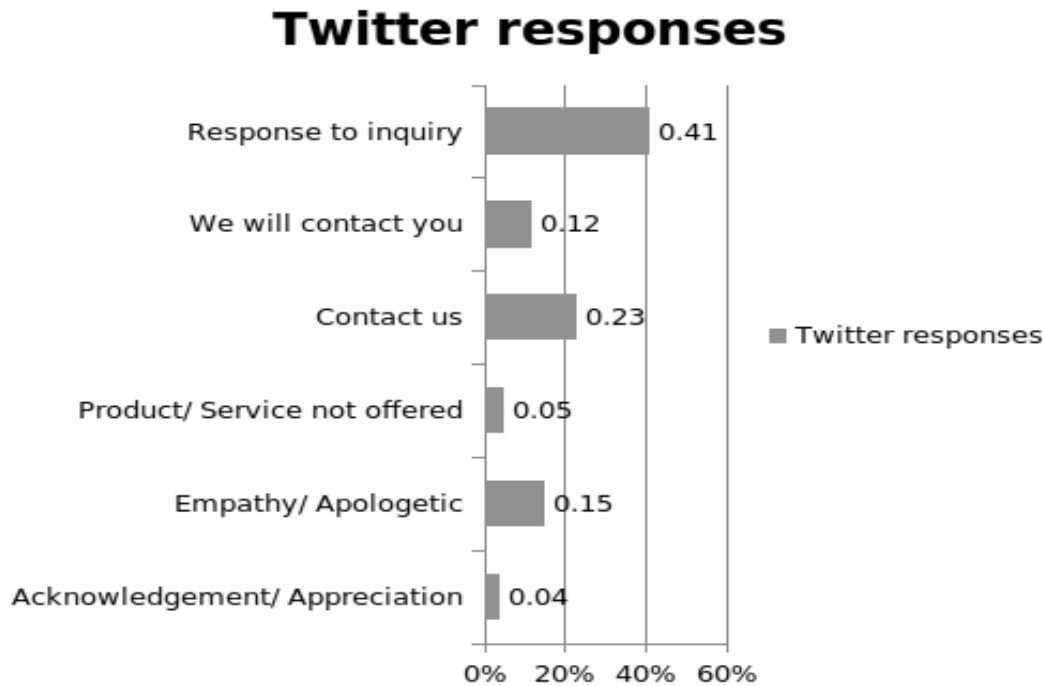
69

Twitter responses

Figure 4.20: StarTimes Twitter Responses

Figure 4.20 above showed that 221 StarTimes' tweets were a response to users. It was however noted that some of the tweets were inconclusive, though this did not necessarily suggest passivity in responding to customers' needs. StarTimes' 124 tweets were a correspondence with users asking users to contact them through direct messages on twitter or by other mediums such as mobile phone. This happened especially where the company needed additional information on a question from a user or where there was need for a user to provide personal information.

From the 541 coded tweets, 81 were apologetic (damage control), meaning the result of dissatisfaction from clients, most of whom expressed their displeasure via twitter. Only 21 tweets were in the form of acknowledgements or appreciation, an indication that StarTimes needed to up its game on customer interactions. Overall, the back and forth twitter conversations was a pointer to customer satisfaction of StarTimes' twitter services.

70

Emotion analysis

Twitter users freely shared personal views with the digital TV broadcasting company and within their network and in some cases they showed their emotions. There was no emotion evident from 25 interactive tweets between the company and its twitter users. Though in some cases there were messages posted by users displaying emotion, especially when a user wanted to express frustrations or satisfaction. One such instance is presented by Figure 4.21 below.

Figure 4.21: StarTimes's Customer Expressing Anger

Users who got assisted as a result of their interactions with the company on twitter expressed satisfaction on twitter as well as shown by Figure 4.22 below.

71

Figure 4.22: Customer Expressing Satisfaction

In the same vein, users who were dissatisfied because they did not get the help they needed posted their dissatisfaction with StarTimes' services on twitter. Figure 4.23 below depicts tweets that were analyzed to show expression of emotions by customers.

72

Help provided through Twitter

■ Problem addressed   ■ Passive statement (inconclusive)
■ Neutral (no help requested)
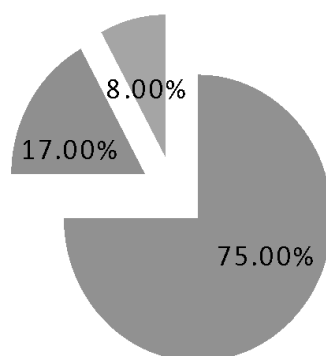
8.00%

17.00%

75.00%

Figure 4.23: Analysis of Emotions

Figure 4.23 depicts that most of the messages derived from the tweets did not show any form of emotion, including the 292 tweets. 184 tweets had a message showing satisfaction with the company's twitter services while messages from 43 tweets showed dissatisfaction with the services received. Messages that reflected anger on the part of the twitter users were contained by 22 tweets.

Summary of Key Findings

StarTimes' twitter account was created primarily as a tool for customer service, essential for preserving online twitter reputation. A large number of StarTimes' customers went to twitter to post messages to the company. This was because twitter could be used in real-time interactions, for instance asking questions and expressing customer concerns to the organization. On the other hand, it was notable from the findings that most of the tweets from StarTimes were responses to clients' tweets seeking assistance.

73

Analysis of StarTimes' twitter profile revealed the company had used their logo as a profile picture though the account was not verified. An unverified company account on twitter could raise safety concerns to clients wondering whether the account was legitimate or not. In addition, it was likely a client could send a message to the wrong account if they were not able to recognize a company's legitimate twitter account. StarTimes was not consistent with its follow up of clients, except for few cases. This had the potential to affect the two-way communication twitter traffic that enhanced protection of private information. Given that users shared their account details along with their personal details, it was important for the company to make an effort and do a follow up of their customers on twitter.

The findings also indicated the company's operating hours were not spelt out on its twitter platform. This was crucial information that would have enabled twitter users to know the appropriate time of communicating with the company.

It was also noted that most of the messages posted on twitter had the potential of being used by other users for their reviews and ratings of the company's products. For instance, customers expressed their emotions on twitter based on the services they received, with the potential to influence the feelings of other users towards the company.

Further, users had different reasons for posting messages directed at StarTimes. Thus more noticeable distinctions needed to be made such as the use of pictures, hashtags as well as the retweets, likes, and replies. With regard to the purpose of posting messages, findings showed product information was a big incentive. The possession of a StarTimes decoder was also important to the users when posting a message to StarTimes on twitter.

Generally, the study showed there was a significant connection between StarTimes' twitter activities and user's assessment of company reputation. For example, those users who directed tweets to the company as well as those that rated the company's online presence highly were primarily interested in finding solutions via twitter. The content analysis indicated twitter was important to Kenyan consumers, and underscored the important twitter role on StarTimes' customer satisfaction.

The users' twitter messages showed StarTimes' twitter was an important aspect of how it was perceived, and the company's image improved or diminished based on its twitter activities. In the tweets that were sampled, StarTimes' twitter activity was rated more positively, therefore a connection between twitter and corporate reputation was established. And so companies like StarTimes should prepare adequately to enhance their online presence and have the flexibility to adopt to changes on the twitter platform. This could ensure a positive rather than a negative effect of twitter on corporate reputation.

The StarTimes' public relations professionals could promote a likable public image of the company through the publication of tweets. This could help the firm in its management and control of corporate reputation. Evidently, StarTimes' positive profile depended on its ability to provide timely and satisfactory responses to questions posted by customers on twitter. The results showed users came to twitter with certain expectations, such as timely replies. There was therefore need for the company to come up with mechanisms that would ensure this was achieved.

Summary

This chapter presented results, findings, and interpretations of the study results. The results and study findings were presented in figures and tables. The chapter consisted

of sections that included analysis of data from coded tweets, types of messages posted on SrartTimes' twitter account, twitter stakeholders, twitter participation, use of hashtags, use of pictures, response time, assistance received through twitter, StartTimes' twitter presence, personalization of communication, StartTimes' twitter use, emotion analysis, and the study's key findings. The next chapter presented a discussion of the study findings, conclusions, recommendations, and areas of further research.

76

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter offered a summary of the study findings, addressed the conclusions drawn from those findings, and gave recommendations. It also suggested areas for further research from the gaps identified by the study. This was done in line with the study objectives. Three objectives were discussed from which conclusions were drawn.

Discussions

This study's findings and conclusions were about the use of StarTimes' twitter account as a means to safeguard and enhance corporate reputation.

Objective One: To Establish the Types of Messages Posted on Startimes' Twitter Account

StarTimes used twitter as a means of interacting with the public that mirrored conventional forms of mass media communication. From the study, it was clear that twitter was and remained a popular communication platform that StarTimes used to interact with the public. Since twitter interactions are not face-to-face, StarTimes resorted to using tweets to manage its public corporate image. By default, Goffman's impression management theory found its voice in the study and StarTimes perhaps unwittingly put the theory into its best use. Impression management is a self-presentation technique that places emphasis on a company's public image and how this is perceived by others. Twitter is a social networking platform where individuals communicate with others, and as they do they will try to manage the impressions

77

others have about them, and they do this by controlling the flow of information during the conversation.

The messages posted on StarTimes were an indication users were interested in being informed about StarTimes' products. Overall, it showed that twitter users had an interest in the companies on twitter and wanted to engage them about the products and services they offered. From the findings, it showed that the main reasons users tweeted StarTimes were search of product information, technical information about signals, information about their accounts, as well as industry information. In addition, the most popular tweets were conversational, this accounted for 58% of the total (541) tweets. This showed that users who tweeted preferred to get a response from the company.

Being in possession of a StarTimes' decoder played a major role when it came to tweeting the company. Hence it was evident the back and forth interactive engagement between the company and twitter users, coupled with users' knowledge of StarTimes' twitter activities, sufficed to influence the company twitter reputation and its reputation overall. This implied StarTimes' twitter reputation was a product of these conversational tweets.

However, it was also found that overall, the use of pictures and hashtags made a difference on the company's twitter outreach, and hence showed that users were keen on the types of messages in a tweet, in other words the whole package, not just individual items. In conclusion, it could be said that twitter messages played a role in influencing the company's twitter image. Still, it was noted that this was an area open for further research to further explore the nature of this relationship and the potentialities in it.

Objective Two: To Determine the Nature of Messages Posted on the Twitter Media

Channel of StarTimes Kenya in Relation to Reputation Building

Highhouse et al. (2009) did note how a company's corporate reputation was tied to the impression management strategies it adopted. Even though not by design, it could be said there were ways StarTimes aligned itself to various impression management techniques in order to safeguard and enhance its corporate reputation, such as timely responses to users' tweets, posting important information on the company's twitter page, and placing company's logo on its twitter profile (Benthaus et al., 2016). Also noticeable was that the company went out of its way to safeguard against negativities of or from twitter users. To do this, the company adopted an assertive approach on its twitter platform that enabled a positive impression on users.

For instance, the company was more careful on the techniques to employ as it engaged twitter consumers in the twitter conversations, or when reacting to trends on twitter. In principle, it was notable the company paid attention and monitored the different activities that took place on twitter, including its own activities. That said, however, there was still need for the company to double its efforts in safeguarding and protecting its twitter reputation. This would come through developing an effective impression management technique on how to manage corporate reputation via twitter interactions.

The impression management theory posits that a particular impression once created (good or bad) could allow people to equate a twitter communication with traditional forms of communication through the words and contexts of the tweeted messages. Impression has the potential to regulate how a company and twitter users interact, especially if public relations professionals decode the messages. Goffman (1959)

79

suggested organizations should be able to establish and maintain impression in line with the perception they would want passed on to their twitter users and clients. The theory placed emphasis on how the perception phenomenon works, the notion that people form ideas about you (individual or organization) based off of their perceptions (Goffman, 1959).

Since twitter use was likely to be on an upward trend, the company therefore needed to increase its twitter presence to ensure concerns raised by users got addressed in a timely manner, thus promoting positive impression. Notably, from the time @StarTimesKE twitter account was opened in 2012, thousands of tweeting Kenyans have so far sent out numerous tweets about the company and its services. This clearly showed the need for companies to put in place proper impression management strategies to safeguard their reputation. Customers or users tend to direct their anger and frustrations of a company (perhaps due to dissatisfaction or bad service) through twitter. Perhaps a crisis management strategy was needed to help protect company image in the event of negative tweets (David, 2016). Emotions expressed by users on twitter (negative or positive) aligned themselves with real-time trends. Hence it was necessary the company developed an interactive method with its customers and stakeholders to safeguard and protect company image.

Objective Three: To Assess the Efforts Made by Startimes to Control and Sustain Perceptions as Experienced on Twitter

It was evident that StarTimes made attempts to manage and be in control of its twitter corporate image the entire study period (2012-2018). It did this through mechanisms such as replies to tweets, timely responses, personalization of tweets, and the use of company logo in their account. The findings showed the need for the company to

80

ensure it was visible, and that its twitter presence was felt by clients. In addition, the findings showed a need for the company to develop strategies that could be used to manage its twitter client impression. To this end, perhaps StarTimes could double its resources and efforts to improve the quality of its tweets and enhance communication (Leonardi et al., 2013).

Previous studies on the topic revealed the effects and potential impact of the retweet function, and how it could be used to influence company reputation. Studies also showed the connection between competence, trustworthiness and credibility (David, 2016; Kietzmann et al., 2011). Thus the need for StarTimes to come up with a specific plan of action for doing damage control could not have been overstated. The possibility of twitter conversations going out of hand or viral was noted as something the company should have made advance arrangements. The tweets analyzed were self-coded. This made it difficult to avoid bias. But StarTimes to its credit responded to most of the trending twitter topics.

On the other hand, StarTimes needed to keep to good business practice in its twitter reputation management. For instance, ensuring enough manpower was on standby to keep its interactive sessions with customers ongoing, round the clock, especially when sending out press releases, new products, or when experiencing issues with the broadcasting service in some areas. Inefficiency in the utilization of twitter, it was noted, could put any organization's reputation at risk, particularly if it could result to a stakeholder group arriving at a negative conclusion about the organization (Barak, 2014; Wang et al., 2011).

Having a personal touch with customers could leave a good impression on the customers about a company. Failure to answer important questions about the company

81

could lead to negative twitter image perception on its twitter page. Customers out of frustration could tweet about a lack of response or slow response to a problem that in their view was taking too long with no meaningful solution, and they could vent these emotions right on twitter.

StarTimes needed to be alive to the reputational risks that come with twitter use as a communication model in managing impression for corporate reputation management. The tweets were observed over a long period of time that gave a general idea of the attempts made by StarTimes to improve its online presence through its online communication platform, i.e., twitter. From the findings, it was clear the impact of negative conversations on twitter could be damaging to the overall reputation of the company.

Conclusion

The research on the use of twitter was beneficial especially in the field of public relations and communication. Today's corporate world have embraced digital approaches to undertake daily business operations, forsaking their traditional ways. Times have changed. People are now using smart phones, high speed internet, and social media platforms. Information can be accessed any time from any part of the world. In the modern world, people are spending a large portion of their time on the internet, multitasking, and constantly being inquisitive about things.

This research focused on defending the view that the digital TV broadcasting industry should make use of the new model of communication, i.e., twitter, because of its effectiveness in building favorable twitter corporate reputation. The goal was to gather empirical evidence to make the case how StarTimes could utilize their twitter presence in public relations and enhance its corporate reputation. The findings

82

revealed that customers frequented twitter to express their displeasure, frustration, or dissatisfaction with a product or company service. This showed that individuals tweeted important messages to the company with the hope that the company would have them addressed.

Generally, the tweeted messages revealed that customers were in fact utilizing twitter as a tool of interaction with StarTimes. Hence, it was hoped the company could put in place measures to ensure their availability for customer service and corporate image protection. As a free, fast, and convenient application, twitter appeals to both StarTimes and its customers.

Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

Timely Response

Although there was a challenge for StarTimes to respond to all tweets in good time, considering the amount of work this involved, not to mention its other responsibilities; still, the company was obligated to respond to users' tweets in a timely manner. Anderson (2013) found out that sending an actual tweeted response was the most powerful and effective way of maintaining positive twitter impression. This was more so where a user had tweeted the company or tagged them in a post that could generate criticism or draw the attention of other customers. In such instances, responding to tweets the soonest possible needed to be a priority. Responding to a users' tweet, at the very least, increased the chance that they, in turn, would acknowledge the company's response. But it could also boost users' confidence when engaging StarTimes in future tweets (Aula, 2011).

Understanding Peak Hours

On twitter, there will be certain times of the day or specific days when most users are active or more likely to interact with the company or its twitter page about its products or services (Castillo et al., 2011). The onus was on the company to discern those peak hours and engage users during those hours. This would generate more views, giving the company opportunity to respond to queries and basically engage its customers on twitter, thereby enhance its reputation.

Always Ensure Value Addition

For most people, twitter has become a platform where they can post anything that crosses their mind. While it is possible one can get away with posting anything such as individual opinions about topical issues or events on their individual accounts, a brand such as StarTimes could not afford to do that; it would not get away with it. Thus StarTimes needed to offer value addition in a variety of ways, including publishing tweets that offered value whether by way of informing, inspiring, entertaining or persuading twitter users on certain matters (David, 2016). Providing value addition in whatever form was among the most important factors in twitter impression management. This could get users coming back, staying interested and in turn generating interaction hence promoting the brand image.

Use of Clean, Straight-Forward Language

StarTimes needed to ensure it was neither ambiguous nor complex in its twitter interactions. The most effective technique to be learnt was to state the message clearly. Twitter only provided 280 characters per tweet. It was thus imperative that a tweet conveyed the intended message effectively without compromising on relevance and accuracy in the description of the company's content.

Creation of a Social Media Policy

84

It was important to craft a social media policy for twitter to act as a guideline to support the reputation goals of the company. According to Sharma and Bhatnagar (2016), a social media policy refers to how a company and its employees interact in the online platform. A policy would allow StarTimes to control what staff members posted on twitter to avoid a scenario where individuals freely posted whatever came to their mind. A social media policy was essential in the protection of the company's twitter reputation. A positive online impression is all about professionalism and this applies to publishing content on twitter. Therefore, StarTimes should reserve the right to delete or edit content that it deemed potentially harmful to its corporate reputation.

Privacy

The company needed to up its game and be active in impression management, and be aware that information about them could be found anywhere including twitter. Thus the need for company protection via appropriate levels of privacy and legislations. Further, StarTimes needed to put appropriate measures in place to ensure sensitive data was not shared with the public. This included but not limited to legal, financial, and private client information (Sharma & Bhatnagar, 2016).

Study the Impact of Twitter Activities on the Company' Performance.

There was need for StarTimes to carry out research to investigate whether the company's twitter performance affected the bottom line and company overall performance. This would allow for the examination of stakeholder perception on the value of using twitter as a means of safeguarding corporate reputation (Filou, 2013).

Recommendations for Further Research

A suggested area for future research was the use of a lengthy study to accurately predict consumer behavior on StarTimes' twitter account. It was deemed necessary

85

that future researchers widen their scope, assess tweets from different companies for a better and extensive understanding of consumer interaction on different topics about digital broadcasting companies.

Another suggested area for future research was a comparative study featuring StarTimes on twitter and Facebook to understand and compare the effectiveness of the two social media platforms. It was important that a study be carried out that combined content analysis and interviews for different StarTimes' stakeholders to greatly widen the scope of the research.

86

REFERENCES

Abrams, R. M. (2014). *Successful business plan: Secrets & strategies* (6th ed.). Palo Alto, CA: Planning Shop.

Agutu, N. (2016, April 6). Kenyans 4th most active Twitter users in Africa, politics among hot topics. *The Star*. Retrieved from https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2016/04/06/kenyans-4th-most-active-twitter-users-in-africa-politics-among-hot_c1326926

Alden, W. (2012, May 1). Goldman looks to hire social media strategist. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://dealbook.nytimes.com/2012/05/01/goldman-sachslooks-to-hire-social-media-strategist/?_r=0

Alhabash, S., & McAlister, A. R. (2015). Redefining virality in less broad strokes: Predicting viral behavioral intentions from motivations and uses of Facebook and Twitter. *New Media & Society*, *17*(8), 1317-1339.

Anderson, T. (2013, July 17). Managing brand reputation in the age of Twitter.| *The Guardian*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2013/jul/17/managing-brand-reputation-in-the-age-of-twitter

Asenahabi, B. M. (2019). Basics of research design: A guide to selecting appropriate research design. *International Journal of Contemporary Applied Researches*, *6*(5), 76-89.

Aula, P. (2010). Social media, reputation risk and ambient publicity management. *Strategy & Leadership*, *38*(6), 43-49.

Aula, P. (2011). Meshworked reputation: Publicists' views on the reputational impacts of online communication. *Public Relations Review*, *37*(1), 28-36. doi: 10.1016/j.pubrev.2010.09.008

Babbie, E., & Mouton, J. (2001). *The practice of social research*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University.

Baer, J. (n.d.). *70% of companies ignore customer complaints on Twitter*. Retrieved from https://www.convinceandconvert.com/social-media-strategy/70-of-companies-ignore-customer-complaints-on-twitter/

Barak, N. (2014, December 22). The 8 worst social media blunders of 2014. *New York Post*. Retrieved from https://nypost.com/2014/12/22/the-worst-social-media-blunders-of-2014/

Barnett, M. L., & Pollock, T. G. (2014). *The Oxford handbook of corporate reputation*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University.

BBC News. (2017). *Why has Cameroon blocked the internet?* Retrieved from https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-38895541

87

Belair-Gagnon, V., & Steinke, A. J. (2020). Capturing digital news innovation research in organizations, 1990-2018. *Journalism Studies*, *21*(12), 1724-1743. doi: 10.1080/1461670X.2020.1789496

Bengtsson, M. (2016). How to plan and perform a qualitative study using content analysis. *NursingPlus Open*, *2*, 8-14. doi: 10.1016/j.npls.2016.01.001

Benthaus, J., Risius, M., & Beck, R. (2016). Social media management strategies for organizational impression management and their effect on public perception. *The Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, *25*(2), 127-139.

Boddy, J., & Dominelli, L. (2017). Social media and social work: The challenges of a new ethical space. *Australian Social Work*, *70*(2), 172-184.

Bolino, M. C., Kacmar, K. M., Turnley, W. H., & Gilstrap, J. B. (2008). A multi-level review of impression management motives and behaviors. *Journal of Management*, *34*(6), 1080-1109.

Bongaarts, J. (2017). Africa's unique fertility transition. *Population and Development Review*, *43*(S1), 39-58.

Carr, C. T., & Hayes, R. A. (2015). Social media: Defining, developing, and divining. *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, *23*(1), 46-65.

Carroll, C. E. (Ed.). (2015). *The handbook of communication and corporate reputation*. West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

Castillo, C., Mendoza, M., & Poblete, B. (2011). Information credibility on twitter. In S. Sadagopan & K. Ramamritham (Eds.), *Www'11: Proceedings of the 20th international conference on World wide web* (pp. 675-684). New York, NY: Association for Computing Machinery.

Chan-Olmsted, S. M., Cho, M., & Lee, S. (2013). User Perceptions of Social Media: A Comparative Study of Perceived Characteristics and User Profiles by Social Media. *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies*, *3*(4), 149-178. doi: 10.29333/ojcmt/2451

Communications Authority of Kenya. (2017). *Internet penetration hits 112 per cent, latest report shows.* Retrieved from https://ca.go.ke/internet-penetration-hits-112-per-cent-latest-report-shows/

Cornelissen, J. P. (2017). *Corporate communication: A guide to theory and practice* (5th ed.). London, UK: Sage.

Cornelissen, J., Van Bekkum, T., & Van Ruler, B. (2006). Corporate communications: A practice-based theoretical conceptualization. *Corporate Reputation Review*, *9*(2), 114-133.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

88

Crowley, R. M., Huang, W., Lu, H., & Luo, W. (2019). *Do firms manage their CSR reputation? Evidence from Twitter*. Retrieved from https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3472473

Culnan, M. J., McHugh, P. J., & Zubillaga, J. I. (2010). How large US companies can use Twitter and other social media to gain business value. *Managing Information Systems Quarterly*, *9*(4), 243-259.

Dann, S. (2015). Benchmarking micro-blog performance: Twitter content classification framework. In J. Burkhalter & N. Wood (Eds.), *Maximizing commerce and marketing strategies through micro-blogging* (pp. 313-332). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

David, J. P. (2016). *How to protect (or destroy) your reputation online: The essential guide to avoid digital damage, lock down your brand, and defend your business*. Wayne, NJ: Career.

Divol, R., Edelman, D., & Sarrazin, H. (2012). *Demystifying social media*. Retrieved from http://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/demystifying-social-media

Doorley, J., & Garcia, H. F. (2015). *Reputation management: The key to successful public relations and corporate communication* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R., & Jackson, P. (2012) *Management research* (4th ed.). London, UK: Sage.

Edgerly, S., & Vraga, E. K. (2019). The blue check of credibility: Does account verification matter when evaluating news on Twitter? *Cyberpsychology, behavior, and social networking*, *22*(4), 283-287.

Eisenhardt, K. M., & Graebner, M. E. (2007). Theory building from cases: Opportunities and challenges. *Academy of Management Journal*, *50*(1), 25-32.

Enli, G., & Simonsen, C. A. (2018). 'Social media logic' meets professional norms: Twitter hashtags usage by journalists and politicians. *Information, Communication & Society*, *21*(8), 1081-1096.

Etikan, I., & Bala, K. (2017). Sampling and sampling methods. *Biometrics & Biostatistics International Journal*, *5*(6). doi: 10.15406/bbij.2017.05.00149

Faller, C. (n.d.). *The epicenter of social media crises*. Retrieved from https://visual.ly/community/infographic/social-media/epicenters-social-media-crises

Fatma, M., Rahman, Z., & Khan, I. (2015). Building company reputation and brand equity through CSR: The mediating role of trust. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, *33*(6), 840-856.

Filou, E. (2013, December 5). Making Twitter work for international organisations. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2013/dec/05/twitter-international-organisations-twiplomacy

Fombrun, C., & Shanley, M. (1990). What's in a name? Reputation building and corporate strategy. *Academy of Management Journal, 33*(2), 233-258.

Fuchs, C. (2017). *Social media: A critical introduction* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Sage.

Gao, C., Zuzul, T., Jones, G., & Khanna, T. (2017). Overcoming institutional voids: A reputation-based view of long-run survival. *Strategic Management Journal*, *38*(11), 2147-2167.

Garcia, D., Mavrodiev, P., Casati, D., & Schweitzer, F. (2017). Understanding popularity, reputation, and social influence in the twitter society. *Policy & Internet*, *9*(3), 343-364.

Gentile, B., Twenge, J. M., Freeman, E. C., & Campbell, W. K. (2012). The effect of social networking websites on positive self-views: An experimental investigation. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *28*(5), 1929-1933.

Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York, NY: Anchor Books.

Grover, P., Kar, A. K., & Ilavarasan, P. V. (2019). Impact of corporate social responsibility on reputation—Insights from tweets on sustainable development goals by CEOs. *International Journal of Information Management*, *48*, 39-52. doi: 10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2019.01.009

Gummesson, E. (2017). *Case theory in business and management: Reinventing case study research*. London, UK: Sage.

Hannington, T. (2016). *How to measure and manage your corporate reputation.* London, UK: Routledge.

Hennig-Thurau, T., Wiertz, C., & Feldhaus, F. (2015). Does Twitter matter? The impact of microblogging word of mouth on consumers' adoption of new movies. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *43*(3), 375-394.

Hiebert, R. (2014). An empirical review of Twitter as an interactive tool. *DT Perspectives*, pp.31-41.

Highhouse, S., Brooks, M. E., & Gregarus, G. (2009). An organizational impression management perspective on the formation of corporate reputations. *Journal of Management*, *35*(6), 1481-1493.

Honey, G. (2017). *Short guide to reputation risk*. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.

Ibrahim, N. F., & Wang, X. (2019). A text analytics approach for online retailing service improvement: Evidence from Twitter. *Decision Support Systems*, *121*, 37-50. doi: 10.1016/j.dss.2019.03.002

Jenkins, E. L., Ilicic, J., Barklamb, A. M., & McCaffrey, T. A. (2020). Assessing the credibility and authenticity of social media content for applications in health communication: Scoping review. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, *22*(7). doi: 10.2196/17296

Jere, N., Mungonena, N., & Peters, A. (2016). Social media usage in Africa and its ethical implications. In K. Awori & N. J. Bidwell (Eds.), *Proceedings of the first African conference on human computer interaction* (pp. 263-266). New York, NY: Association for Computing Machinery.

Jin, S. A. A., & Phua, J. (2014). Following celebrities' tweets about brands: The impact of twitter-based electronic word-of-mouth on consumers' source credibility perception, buying intention, and social identification with celebrities. *Journal of Advertising*, *43*(2), 181-195.

Kaigwa, M., Madung, O., & Costello, S. (2015). *Nendo 2014/15 social media trend report.* Retrieved from https://daks2k3a4ib2z.cloudfront.net/59ad2221052e560001d6401f/59ef01cd4fd45300 01d2f18a_2014-2015%20Nendo%20Social%20Media%20Trend%20Report.pdf

Kane, G. C., Alavi, M., Labianca, G., & Borgatti, S. P. (2014). What's different about social media networks? A framework and research agenda. *MIS Quarterly*, *38*(1), 275-304.

Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2012). Social media: Back to the roots and back to the future. *Journal of Systems and Information Technology*, *14*(2), 101-104. doi: 10.1108/13287261211232126

Kaplan, A., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, *53*(1), 59-68.

Karakaya, F., & Barnes, N. G. (2010). Impact of online reviews of customer care experience on brand or company selection. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, *27*(5), 447-457. doi: 10.1108/07363761011063349

Khedher, M. (2014). Personal branding phenomenon. *International Journal of Information, Business and Management, 6*(2), 29-40.

Kietzmann, J. H., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I. P., & Silvestre, B. S. (2011). Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media. *Business Horizons*, *54*(3), 241-251.

Kim, J. Y., & Hammick, J. K. (2017). Effects of corporate online communication on attitude and trust: Experimental analysis of Twitter messages. *Public Relations Journal*, *11*(2), 1-19.

Kozinets, R. V. (2010). *Netnography: The marketer's secret weapon-how social media understanding drives innovation*. Retrieved from https://preventviolentextremism .info/sites/default/files/White%20Paper%20%E2%80%93%20Netnography-%20The%20Marketer%E2%80%99s%20Secret%20Weapon.pdf

91

Krippendorff, K. (2004). Reliability in content analysis: Some common misconceptions and recommendations. *Human Communication Research*, *30*(3), 411-433.

Krippendorff, K. (2013). *Content Analysis: An Introduction to its methodology* (3rd ed.). London, UK: Sage.

Kumar, A., & Dash, M. K. (2017). Causal modelling and analysis evaluation of online reputation management using fuzzy Delphi and DEMATEL. *International Journal of Strategic Decision Sciences (IJSDS)*, *8*(1), 27-45.

Kwaja, C. M. (2017). The Arab Spring and democratic processes in North Africa: Implications for sub-Saharan Africa. In S. M. Haque, A. Shyaka, & G. M. Mudacumura (Eds.), *Democratizing public governance in developing nations: With special reference to Africa* (pp. 73-83). London, UK: Routledge.

Kwak, H., Lee, C., Park, H., & Moon, S. (2010). What is Twitter, a social network or a news media? *Proceedings of the 19th International Conference on World Wide Web*, 591-600. doi: 10.1145/1772690.1772751

Kwizera, F., Markus, I., Mugambi, P., & Diriye, A. (2017). Use of Twitter data toward the development of an English and Swahili question answering agent for the Kenyan customer service market. *Proceedings of the Ninth International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies and Development 22*, 1-5. doi: 10.1145/3136560.3136587

Laaksonen, S. M. (2017). *Hybrid narratives: Organizational reputation in the hybrid media system* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Helsinki). Retrieved from https://helda.helsinki.fi/handle/10138/185426

Lavrakas, P. J. (Ed.). (2008). *Encyclopedia of survey research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Leonardi, P. M., Huysman, M., & Steinfield, C. (2013). Enterprise social media: Definition, history, and prospects for the study of social technologies in organizations. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *19*(1), 1-19.

Lin, M., Liu, Y., & Viswanathan, S. (2016). Effectiveness of reputation in contracting for customized production: Evidence from online labor markets. *Management Science, 64*(1), 345-359. doi: 10.1287/mnsc.2016.2594

Lu, X., Zhou, H., & Chen, S. (2019). Facilitate knowledge sharing by leading ethically: The role of organizational concern and impression management climate. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, *34*(4), 539-553.

Lungu, C. I., Caraiani, C., & Dascălu, C. (2011). Research on corporate social responsibility reporting. *Amfiteatru Economic Journal*, *13*(29), 117-131.

Mann, R. (2014). *Apple hires former Nike exec to expand its social media: Musa Tariq goes to work for CEO Tim Cook*. Retrieved from http://www.adweek.com/news/technology/apple-hires-former-nikeexec-expand-its-social-media-159300

92

McCarthy, C. (2010). *Corporate social responsibility: Learning from the BP oil spill.* Retrieved from http://www.zdnet.com/article/corporate-social-responsibility-learning-from-the-bp-oil-spill/

McDonnell, M. H., & King, B. (2013) Keeping up appearances: Reputational threat and impression management after social movement boycotts. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *58*(3), 387-419.

Men, P., & Tsai, K. (2011). *Analysis of social media platforms and various communication channels*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University.

Mola, E. (2014). *The number of social media users in Kenya*. Retrieved from https://hapakenya.com/2014/10/13/number-of-social-media-users-in-kenya/

Möller, J., van de Velde, R. N., Merten, L., & Puschmann, C. (2020). Explaining online news engagement based on browsing behavior: Creatures of habit? *Social Science Computer Review*, *38*(5), 616-632.

Mugenda, A. G., & Mugenda, O. M. (2012). *Research methods dictionary*. Nairobi, Kenya: Applied Research & Training Services.

Mugenda, O., & Mugenda, G. (1999). *Research methods: Quantitative and qualitative approaches.* Nairobi, Kenya: Acts.

Mumbere, D. (2018). *Digital in 2018: Africa's internet users increase by 20%.* Retrieved from http://www.africanews.com/2018/02/06/digital-in-2018-africa-s-internet-users-increase-by-20-percent//

Murthy, D. (2018). *Twitter: Social communication in the Twitter age* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, UK: Polity.

Ndung'u, N. (2019, August). *Digital technology and state capacity in Kenya* (CGD Policy Paper No. 154). Washington, DC: Center for Global Development.

Neuendorf, K. A. (2016). *The content analysis guidebook* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Sage.

Nisar, T. M., & Prabhakar, G. (2018). Trains and Twitter: Firm generated content, consumer relationship management and message framing. *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice*, *113*, 318-334. doi: 10.1016/j.tra.2018.04.026

Ott, B. L. (2017). The age of Twitter: Donald J. Trump and the politics of debasement. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, *34*(1), 59-68.

Owyang, J. (2010). *A guide on effective use of Twitter in marketing*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University.

Park, J., Cha, M., Kim, H., & Jeong, J. (2012). *Managing bad news in social media: A case study on domino's pizza crisis*. Retrieved from https://www.aaai.org/ocs/index.php/ICWSM/ICWSM12/paper/viewFile/4672/4994

93

Pond, P. (2016). The space between us: Twitter and crisis communication. *International Journal of Disaster Resilience in the Built Environment*, *7*(1), 40-48. doi: 10.1108/IJDRBE-08-2013-0030

Portland Communications. (2015). *How Africa tweets 2015*. Retrieved from http://www.portland-communications.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Twitter_in_Africa_PPT.pdf

Radulova, L., & Associated Press. (2014, July 19). Singapore Airlines apologises for 'insensitive' social media posts following MH17 disaster after public backlash. *Daily Mail*. Retrieved from http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2698269/SingaporeAirlines-apologises-Ukraine-remarks.html

Raghuram, S. (2013). Identities on call: Impact of impression management on Indian call centre agents. *Human Relations*, *66*(11), 1471-1496.

Ravasi, D., Rindova, V., Etter, M., & Cornelissen, J. (2018). The formation of organizational reputation. *Academy of Management Annals*, *12*(2), 574-599.

Remler, D. K., & Van Ryzin, G. G. (2014). *Research methods in practice: Strategies for description and causation* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Reputation. (n.d.a). In *Merriam-Webster's online dictionary*. Retrieved from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/reputation

Reputation. (n.d.b). In *English Oxford dictionary*. Retrieved from https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/reputation

Rivers, C. M., & Lewis, B. L. (2014). *Ethical research standards in a world of big data*. Retrieved from https://f1000research.com/articles/3-38/v2

Ryan, D. (2014). *Understanding digital marketing: Marketing strategies for engaging the digital generation* (3rd ed.). London, UK: Kogan Page.

Saffer, A. J., Sommerfeldt, E. J., & Taylor, M. (2013). The effects of organizational Twitter interactivity on organization–public relationships. *Public Relations Review*, *39*(3), 213-215.

Saunders, M. N. (2012). Choosing research participants. In G. Symon & C. Cassell (Eds.), *Qualitative organizational research: Core methods and current challenges* (pp. 35-52). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Schniederjans, D., Cao, E., & Schniederjans, M. (2013). Enhancing financial performance with social media: An impression management perspective. *Decision Support Systems*, *55*(4), 911-918.

Scott, D. M. (2015). *The new rules of marketing and PR: How to use social media, online video, mobile applications, blogs, news releases, and viral marketing to reach buyers directly* (5th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Sharma, A., & Bhatnagar, J. (2016). Enterprise social media at work: Web-based solutions for employee engagement. *Human Resource Management International Digest*, *24*(7), 16-19.

Simon, T., Goldberg, A., Aharonson-Daniel, L., Leykin, D., & Adini, B. (2014). Twitter in the cross fire—the use of social media in the Westgate Mall terror attack in Kenya. *PLoS ONE*, *9*(8). doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0104136

Smith, K. (n.d.). *60 incredible and interesting Twitter stats and statistics*. Retrieved from https://www.brandwatch.com/blog/44-twitter-stats/

Socialbakers. (n.d.). *Most popular Twitter accounts in Kenya*. Retrieved from https://www.socialbakers.com/statistics/twitter/profiles/kenya

Stacks, D. W., & Bowen, S. (2006). *Dictionary of public relations measurement and research*. Gainesville, FL: Institute for Public Relations.

StarTimes Twitter. (n.d.). *StarTimes' Twitter account*. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/StarTimesKenya

Statista. (n.d.). *Number of monthly active Twitter users worldwide from 1st quarter 2010 to 1st quarter 2019*. Retrieved from https://www.statista.com/statistics/282087/number-of-monthly-active-twitter-users/

Stefanov, P., Darwish, K., Atanasov, A., & Nakov, P. (2020). Predicting the topical stance and political leaning of media using tweets. *Proceedings of the 58th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics,* 527-537. doi: 10.18653/v1/2020.acl-main.50

Stone, L. (1966). Social mobility in England, 1500–1700. *Past & Present, 33*(1), 16-55.

Taylor, J., & Pagliari, C. (2018). Mining social media data: How are research sponsors and researchers addressing the ethical challenges? *Research Ethics*, *14*(2), 1-39.

Tedeschi, J. T. (2013). *Impression management theory and social psychological research*. New York, NY: Elsevier.

Treem, J. W., & Leonardi, P. M. (2013). Social media use in organizations: Exploring the affordances of visibility, editability, persistence, and association. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, *36*(1), 143-189.

Twitter. (n.d.). *Twitter support*. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/TwitterSupport

USA Today. (2012, October 4). KitchenAid apologizes for tweet about Obama grandmother. *USA Today*. Retrieved from https://www.usatoday.com/story/theoval/2012/10/04/company-apologizes-for-tweet-about-obamas-grandmother/1612701/

Van Riel, C., & Fombrun, C. (1997). The reputational landscape. *Corporate Reputation Review*, *1*(1-2), 5-13.

95

VenasNews. (2017). *Best decoder to buy between GoTV, DSTV, Bamba TV, Zuku and Startimes*. Retrieved from https://venasnews.co.ke/2017/05/14/best-decoder-to-buy-between-gotv-dstvbamba-tv-and-startimes/

Wæraas, A., & Maor, M. (2015). Understanding organizational reputation in a public sector context. In A. Wæraas & M. Maor (Eds.), *Organizational reputation in the public sector* (pp. 1-15). New York, NY: Routledge.

Wang, J. (2016). Literature review on the impression management in corporate information disclosure. *Modern Economy*, *7*(6), 725-731. doi: 10.4236/me.2016.76076

Wang, Y., Komanduri, S., Leon, P.G., Norcie, G., Acquisti, A., & Cranor, L.F. (2011). "I regretted the minute I pressed share": A qualitative study of regrets on Facebook. *Proceedings of the Seventh Symposium on Usable Privacy and Security (SOUPS) 10*, 1-16. doi: 10.1145/2078827.2078841

Wanjau, K. L., Kitisha, G. N., Mwangi, W., & Ndung'u, S. I. (2016). Effect of broadcast policy & regulations on timely implementation of the analogue to digital migration in Kenya. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Innovative Technology*, *3*(8), 13-24.

Warren, M. J. (2015). The security, privacy, and ethical implications of social networking sites. In M. Gupta (Ed.), *Handbook of research on emerging developments in data privacy* (pp. 329-338). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

Watkins, B. A. (2017). Experimenting with dialogue on Twitter: An examination of the influence of the dialogic principles on engagement, interaction, and attitude. *Public Relations Review*, *43*(1), 163-171.

Weller, K., Bruns, A., Burgess, J., Mahrt, M., & Puschmann, C. (2014). *Computer-assisted content analysis of Twitter data*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Westphal, J. D., Park, S. H., McDonald, M. L., & Hayward, M. L. A. (2012). Helping other CEOs avoid bad press: Social exchange and impression management support among CEOs in communications with journalists. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *57*(2), 217-268.

Wojcik, S., & Hughes, A. (2019). *Sizing up Twitter users*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center.

Xu, J., & Wu, Y. (2015). Using Twitter in crisis management for organizations bearing different country-of-origin perceptions. *Journal of Communication Management*, *19*(3), 239-253. doi: 10.1108/jcom-06-2013-0050

Yang, Z., & Fang, X. (2014). Online service quality dimensions and their relationships with satisfaction: A content analysis of customer reviews of securities brokerage services. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, *15*(3), 302-326. doi: 10.1108/09564230410540953

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

96

Zaharopoulos, D., & Kwok, L. (2017). Law firms' organizational impression management strategies on Twitter. *Journal of Creative Communications*, *12*(1), 48-61.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Coding Scheme

Part I

Coder: Jairo		
Q1	Tweet ID	01xxx
Q2	What type of tweet is being coded?	1a=Conversational Query 1b=Conversational Action 1c=Conversational Response 2a=Personal StatuS 2b=Location Status 2c=Automated Status 3a=Pass Along RT 3b=Pass Along UGC 3c=Pass Along Endorsement 4a=Headline News 4b=Sport News 4c=Event News 5a=Phatic Greeting 5b=Unclassifiable
Q3	Published date	DD/MM/YYYY
Q4	What is the topic of the tweet?	1=Company/industry information 2=Product information 3=Discussions 4=Ideas and suggestions 5=Complaints 6=Commendation
Q5	How many responses does the tweet have?	___xx___
Q6	How many likes does the tweet have?	___xx___
Q7	Does the tweet include a hashtag?	1=Yes 2=No
Q8	Does the tweet include a picture?	1=Yes 2=No
Q9	What is the customer's emotion expressed in the tweet?	1=Anger/Frustration 2=Satisfied 3=Unsatisfied 4=No Emotion

98

Q10	What type of reply did StarTimes offer to the tweet?	1=Response to inquiry 2=We will contact you 3=Contact us 4=No service 5=Empathy 6=Acknowledgement	
Q11	Initial StarTimes' response time	1= Same Day 2=1-2 Days 3=3-4 Days 4=5-6 Days 5=1 Week 6= Over 1 week	
Q12	Coded tweet implies	1=Current client 2=Potential client 3=Others	

Q13	Company page characteristics: Verified Site Followers Following Company Logo Important Notice	1=Yes 2=No 1=Yes 2=No 1=Yes 2=No 1=Yes 2=No 1=Yes 2=No	Number of followers __XX__ Number of following __XX__

99

Daystar University Ethics Review Board

Our Ref. DU-ERB/01/03/ 2019 /00252

Date: 01-02-2019

Jairo Obege Ombudu

Dear Jairo,

THE USE OF TWITTER IN MANAGING A COMPANY'S REPUTATION: A STUDY OF STAR TIMES MEDIA

Reference is made to your request dated 07-02-2019 for ethical approval of your proposal by Daystar University Ethics Review Board.

We are pleased to inform you that ethical review has been done and approval granted. In line with the research projects policy, you will be required to submit a copy of the final research findings to the Board for records.

Before proceeding to the next stage, ensure the following attached comments are addressed to the satisfaction of your supervisor. Note that it's an offence to proceed without addressing the concerns of ERB.

This approval is valid for a year from 01-03-2019

This approval does not exempt you from obtaining a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI).

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Purity Kiambi,
Secretary, Daystar University Ethics Review Board
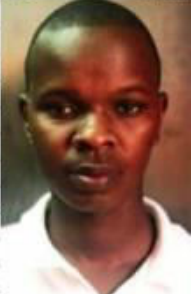
Appendix B: Ethical Clearance

100

Appendix C: Research PermitPlago

101

Appendix D: Plagiarism Report

ORIGINALITY REPORT

10%	9%	3%	3%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	lib.dr.iastate.edu Internet Source	1%
2	www.duo.uio.no Internet Source	1%
3	Submitted to Daystar University Student Paper	<1%
4	Paola Barbara Floreddu, Francesca Cabiddu. "Social media communication strategies", Journal of Services Marketing, 2016 Publication	<1%
5	erepository.uonbi.ac.ke Internet Source	<1%
6	www.emeraldinsight.com Internet Source	<1%
7	etheses.whiterose.ac.uk Internet Source	<1%
8	ufdc.ufl.edu Internet Source	<1%

102

Jairo Obege Ombudu thesis

by Jairo Ombudu

Submission date: 29-Oct-2020 11:12AM (UTC+0300)
Submission ID: 1429987063
File name: Jairo_Obege_Ombudu_thesis.docx (1.3M)
Word count: 20961
Character count: 119662