Digital platforms and effectiveness of marketing communication in the telecom industry in tanzania: Evidence from Vodacom company

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Abstract

Internet marketing uses a powerful tool called social media, which provides new opportunities for users to engage in social networking through the Internet. This paper examines the role of digital platforms on the effectiveness of marketing communication in Telecommunication Industry in Tanzania. It specifically ascertains the extent to which peoples' awareness; attitude and skills towards digital platforms influence the effectiveness of marketing communication. The study was conducted in the Tanzania largest city of Dar es Salaam using Vodacom as a study ground. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to 390 respondents and response rate was (365)93.6%). Data were quantitatively analyzed using multiple regression analysis. The findings of the study revealed that, all the three independent variables were found to have positive influence on the effectiveness of marketing communication with coefficient of less than 1 %. Nevertheless, only two variables namely the users' attitude and skills were strong predictors of effectiveness of marketing communication. The level of customers' awareness on digital platforms had positive but insignificant influence on the effectiveness of marketing communication. From these findings it is recommended that, the organization's management has to take the best side in capitalizing on peoples' skills and attitude, as failure to do so may lead to failure in realizing the desired outcome of marketing efforts hence incur irrecoverable monetary cost to the organization.

Introduction

The significance of the marketing institution within the company has changed the direction of the business where the core focus lies to the final user instead of the manufacturer which is very essential in the era of intense competition (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018; Baines *et al*, 2019). Besides, the advanced technological world has left people with no option to remain dull as marketing has taken over that science of organizing the need and want of the customers as determinants of the coming product (Mueller *et al.,* 2011). Internet development generates the various options for marketers to market their products and services since many people are increasingly using digital platforms (*Ibid*). Moreover, it requires interaction on digital platforms for people not to be taken for granted as target for marketing. Currently, internet marketing uses a powerful tool called digital platforms which give new advantage for people to interact in social networks through the internet. Digital marketing is said to have transformed how businesses and other organizations communicate with their audiences and a such they can be used alongside traditional marketing practices (Chaffey and Chadwick, 2019). Connections and contents developed by different users are from different types of social media. Social Media involves the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into an interactive dialogue. According to Baruah, (2012) Social media takes on many different forms including Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, microblogging, wikis, podcasts etc. With the world in the midst of a social media revolution, social media are used extensively for the purpose of communication. The general availability of Internet has given people in organizations, the ability to use social media to connect with clients without a need of meeting (Gruen *et al,* 2006). In this case, users can access different sources of information and communication means because other users can recommend and advance their response via same communication means (Mueller *et al,* 2011). Thus technology has made information to travel in two ways more easily and fast (Senecal, 2004). This is very crucial in marketing dynamism as customers' involvement has been made a priority in business (Do-Hyung *et al.,* 2007). Essentially all organizations

ought to have effective online presence to prosper or possibly even survive. According to Chaffey and Chadwick, (2019) the key question is not whether to deploy technology -companies have no choice if they want to stay competitive. The question is how to deploy the technology.

Context of the paper

According to Chen *et al.,* (2011), social network can have different advantages for the brand awareness, loyalty, gain valuable customer insights, increase in sales as well as customer retention. In addition, social networking is a two-way channel where business owners have an opportunity to build relationships with their customers and create values proposition that lead to a positive impact on trust (Wu *et al*., 2010). Because of the development of Internet and the existence of social media, Evans (2012) revealed the nature of social media based on personal oppression. This may be perceived to be so since individuality tend to be compromised through the development of technology. Clients may discuss about various issues from economical, technological, social and political arena through social media. Consistently, marketing is done via word of mouth marketing (WOMM) or competing through profession. Through social media, users depend on mobile and web based technologies to create highly interesting platforms of which individuals, communities and organizations can introduce, search, update, co-innovate, dialogue, modify and evaluate user generated shared posts. Moreover, Adam, *et al* (1992) point out that, social marketing sites play vital role in the growth of the business. It is critical for the companies to comprehend marketing environment for interacting with clients and revenue growth; though, there are some factors that increase companies' anxiousness about using digital platforms in marketing. These may be conceived in terms of inadequate of awareness and experience, trust and privacy concerns, acceptability of information, the nature of social networks which cannot be controlled and the fear of receiving bad reviews and/or comments on their services. In Tanzania like any other part of the world, social networking has become more popular among older and young generation and have gradually undermined the traditionally authoritative voices of Radios and Televisions. Firms are now considering digital platforms as a place of marketing since they can create strong personal connections with their prospective customers. This has shifted the advertising strategies from traditional media communications which is expensive and time consuming to two ways communications via social media sites which is friendly and cost effectives (Han, *et al.*, 2011). Today most of the people specially the youngsters are hooked on to the different social media for keeping in contact with their peer partly for social interaction but also as a means to a business end.

Internet marketing has revolutionized the way owners of business and consumers interact to do business. Previously, number of brands and business for different companies were adopting traditional marketing more extensively than marketing through Internet (Sandra *et al.*, 1996). In comparison with advertising, social networks such as Facebook and WhatsApp can be personalized based on the profiles and behaviours of targeted customers. This provides customers with value proposition compared to what they registered for. Furthermore, it gives insights of different types of products and services they need and looking for. Hence, this can be utilized in marketing implication for both big firms and Small and Medium Enterprises (Brown and Wyatt, 2010). Digital platforms are taken by many organizations as new experience which is used in different business industries.

Regardless of the benefits of internet marketing, most of the companies provide different services that are not adequately utilizing the benefits and opportunities of social media. According to Turban *et al.,* (2011), clear effectiveness in social media exists; however, companies are usually lacking competent personnel to utilize opportunities for social media. It is precisely that marketing through digital platforms is highly demanded for small and medium companies with an older customer base. According to Cisco System (2010), only one in seven companies has official procedure for using social digital platforms in their businesses and only one in five companies has developed a policy about the use of digital platforms. Inadequate formalized attention is unfortunately considering the risks and negative effects on business that are involved with social media. Moreover, using social media for marketing has brought negative impact on organizations such as the burden of the marketing

shift due to personal engagement with customers, increased customer power, tracking negative or misleading statements, unauthorized employees speaking on company's behalf and accidental release of confidential information. Limited use of digital platform has therefore created a question on whether digital platforms have enhanced the marketing communication of companies or not. In this regard, this paper examines the role of digital platforms on the effectiveness communication in the Telecom industry in Tanzania using evidence from Vodacom. Specifically, the paper focuses on the extent to which awareness of customers, customers' attitude and skills towards digital platforms influence the effectiveness of marketing communication.

Literature review

Digital Platforms Marketing

The digital world is embedded in hundreds of digital several platforms, which are seen and viewed globally. Some of the platforms available in the internet are; Facebook, Flikr, Twitter, Myspace, Pinterest, LinkedIn, google+, Live journal, slideshare, orkut, meetup, Whatsup etc. (Brown, 2008). This implies that, marketing through digital platform is accompanied by various numbers of channels. However, core purpose is to look for proper patterns that result into good communication and a better overall return on investment for the brand. These sites offer platforms to find influential partners in business, whether organization is looking for distributors, providers, or others. They are a meeting point and often negotiate amongst suppliers, manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers, retailers and be like usually within a well-defined area which is facilitated by internet (Ba and Pavlou, 2002). All these are achieved through social networks defined by Hersant (2011), as a wide spectrum of web based and mobile applications that facilitate social interaction across geographical boundaries mainly through developed content by the user. Recently, there has been an exponential growth not only in the number of social media networks but also in the socio-demographic attributes of their user base. According to Shet (2018) social media use is not limited to youth in that 72% of all internet users are now active on social media; 89% of people aged from 18 to 29 years of age use social media while 82% of people aged 30 to 49 years are active on social media. On the other hand, 65% of those aged 50-64 years use social media while those over 65 years of age 49% of them are active social media users. Marketers use social networks for improving conversation rates through the interaction with new, recent and old customers. Shared blog post, videos, images or comments on varied social media allows followers to react, visit the company website and become customers (Online Marketing Trend, 2012).

On the other hand, Smith (2009) defines social media marketing as tactics that lookup to social networks and platforms to initiate capacity building on the company brand alongside with promoting products/ services. Usually, social media marketing campaigns center on initiating a social media appearance on significant platforms, developing suitable content and advertisement as well as acquiring customer inputs throughout the campaign using surveys and contests. In the view of Akhtar, (2011), Social media marketing refers to the process of receiving attention through social platform sites hence involves a lot of efforts to convincing customers that products or services from a certain company are valuable where by all that is done is through online via various platforms. It is known as a more targeted type of advertising and is therefore believed to be very effective in developing brand awareness.

Effective Marketing Communication

Effective marketing can be defined as the relationship between work input such as monetary inputs in expenditure on an advertising campaign and the desired outcome, in terms of increase in sales and revenue (Social, 2011). In marketing a new brand that is trying to grow, it is important to find a balance between the cost and the results. The goal is to maximize return on investment, by looking for the effective strategies for the least amount of money (Aljifri *et al.*, 2003). Digital marketing has simplified the marketing tools to be the more affordable of which can be used even for small business. The use of effective digital marketing tools allows the business to realize effective time management by reaching more customers at a short time. It can therefore be oriented that, social media helps in reaching

huge number of customers from all over the world, in that once presence on the social media sites of one's choice is the potential for reaching influential clients is unlimited. Facebook can potentially reach every many clients with low cost as reaching local clients (Ba, 2002). Moreover, YouTube, LinkedIn, MySpace, Flickr and Digg have international users that can be targeted and reached with no any additional work or incur additional expenses.

Theoretical perspectives

In order to explain theoretically the role of digital platform on marketing communication, two theories namely McLuhan's Media Theory and Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) are adopted.). McLuhan (1995) in McLuhan's Media Theory argues that, apart from the uploaded content in social Medias, users can be changed by the media itself. According to him, content that users are exchanging will not vary from the existing Medias. Interaction of new communication channels can convert user's behavior forever. Apart from content developed, social media has high impact in the society. McLuhan divided media into two parts namely *hot* and *cold*. The "hot" one need users to allocate a lot of effort in understanding the content while the "cold" refers to medias that influence ones' sense, so the users do not need to apply much efforts, such as films, radio, and photography. Hence, both developed content and pattern of communication in social media may change user's behavior if it will be properly used.

In business, managers and consumers are supposed to understand behavioral change and how it aligns with usage of existing social media and embrace changing attitude in accepting technology change. Despite of this, Contractor (2009) suggests that, more studies are needed in data mining and data modeling on the web with behavioral frameworks. According to him this should be through capturing generated social media and existing data information on current social media websites, like Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. Acquiring several social network analysis in studying online social networks and knowledge networks could result into more deep understanding of the society and inform social media marketing conduct for businesses. This theory supports the paper due to the fact that organizations ought to focus on the development of appropriate contents that can be comprehended by the targeted users of information regarding a particular brand. Moreover, the organization ought to be sensitive to a chosen platform taking into account the strengths of the 'Hot' and 'Cold' media if they are to enhance the effectiveness of marketing communication. It is also important to communicate desired content by taking into consideration the users' awareness and skills in accessing the desired appropriate social media platforms.

Furthermore, to predict, explain and understand customers' acceptance or rejection of a certain information systems; researchers need to initiate and use *TAM* for understanding user's acceptability of the information systems, hence Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by Davis (1989) is used as a second theory to guide this paper. TAM is one of the most popular research models to predict use and acceptance of information systems and technology by individuals. Various scholars referenced the model which used to unveil factors affecting user's motivation in accepting and acquire new information system (Ali, 2011) or rejecting it. The model posits that users' adoption of a technology for normal use is dependent on its perceived usefulness (i.e., enhances task performance) and perceived ease of use (i.e. extent to which a technology requires effort.)

Empirical literature review

Extant literature shares empirical studies that are related to digital platforms use in varied environments and outcomes. Howe (2006) conducted a study in the US on the role of social media and found out that digital platform as the tool for marketing communication allows people to share the companies' news by informing consumers about the company's products they offer. It also helps to provide identity about the company's products and services they offer. Han *et al.,* (2011) also conducted a study in the US to look on user's willingness to pay on social network sites. It was found out that, customers are willing to participate in sharing and conversation on the social media sites at any cost. A study conducted by Gutiérrez *et al.,* (2018) in Columbia assessed the influential factors for social media on

the purchasing decisions. The findings indicated that, there is a growth in social marketing adoption and that through information consumers' purchasing decisions can be influenced. However, through social media, customer behavior can be shaped towards changing purchasing attitude. A study by Marina (2013) was conducted on social media contribution to the marketing of sport events in Vienna. The findings revealed that, social media is important for the pursuit of an unquestionable high social desire for users to feel part of the group and made it simpler to interact than reaching out several groups of fans. Kiran (2014) on the other hand conducted a study on social media and changing communication patterns. It was found out that, social media is going to be a next big challenge for the different aspects of customers' social and personal lives. Social media is creating a new kind of social order and strengthening social network but weakening inter-personal relations.

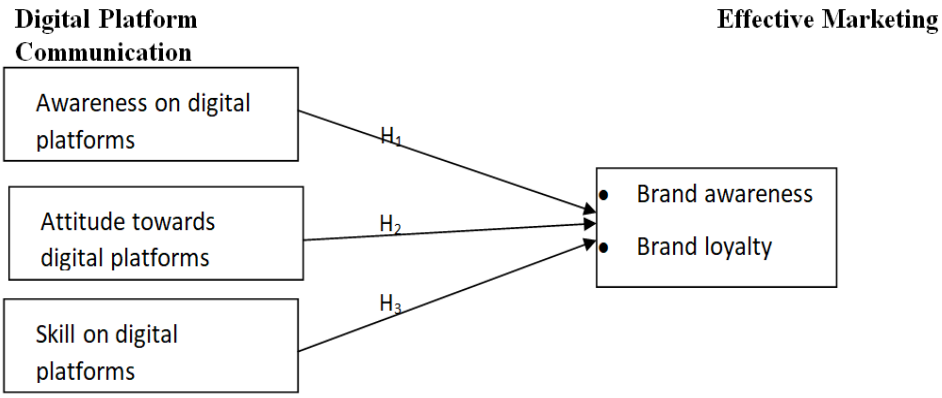
Another study by Msia (2014) examined the role of new and social media in Tanzanian hip-hop production. The findings revealed that social media also helps to spread information. While social media sites have become mainstream, there remains a problem of visibility of information in social media as users of social media tend to be bombarded by massive information daily. Furthermore, Constanze *etal* 2014) conducted a study on use of social media among adolescents in Dar es Salaam and Mtwara regions, Tanzania. It was found out that social network sites are constantly changing in terms of popularity and functionality and require high flexibility by practitioners and organizations in general. It was highlighted that, the use of internet and social media, especially through mobile phones among a sample of school-going, urban Tanzanian youth, is generally high.

From the above studies it can be argued that despite recognizing the contribution of social media on marketing activities by organizations, limited studies have been conducted in ascertaining as to what it takes in the digital platforms to have effective influence on marketing activities. This triggers a need to examine the extent to which awareness, attitude and skills on digital platforms would influence effective marketing.

Conceptual Framework of the Paper

Figure 1 conceptualizes the concept of this paper on the role of digital platforms on the effectiveness of marketing communication in the telecom industry in Tanzania with the support from Vodacom Company

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Source: Synthesized from the Literature

The conceptual framework behind the paper focuses on the independent three variables namely peoples' skills, awareness and attitude towards digital platforms as they are conceived to have influence on effective communication as the dependent variable. In order for the telecommunication industries to have effective marketing communication the organization should adopt new information and communications technology by looking on the skills, awareness and attitude that people have on digital marketing instead of traditional marketing or analogy. Digital platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and You Tube have advantage of having wide coverage and having direct engagement with customer or product. Moreover, it allows conversation. Effective communication by using digital platforms saves cost and time to reach a huge mass population of customers. All of these lead to increased brand awareness and brand loyalty, which are indicators for effective marketing communication.

It was therefore hypothesized that

H_1: *Awareness of digital platforms has a positive impact on the effectiveness of marketing communication*

H_2: *The attitude of digital platform's users has a positive relationship with effectiveness of marketing communication*

H_3: *Skills of people on digital platforms have a positive influence on the effectiveness of marketing communication*

Methodology

The study was conducted at Vodacom Tanzania in Dar es Salaam headquarter located in Kinondoni District. Vodacom was chosen due to the fact that it is a leading Telecommunication Company in Tanzania with more experience in marketing and sales. The customers of Vodacom were considered as the respondents of this study. Because, it was not practical to consider all customers, a convenience sampling technique was used to select 390 customers. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) a rule of thumb given by $N \geq 104+m$ (Where N is the sample size and m is the number of independent variables) can be used for determining the sample size. Given our 3 independent variables the minimum acceptable sample size will be 107 Moreover Sivo et al (2006) proposes a critical sample size of 200 respondents. Since a large sample size is said to be generally good for controlling bias a sample of 390 was chosen. Out of 390 questionnaires distributed to respondents; 365 questionnaires were properly filled and returned, 15 incomplete questionnaires were returned and 10 questionnaires were not returned at all. This makes the response rate of 93.6% which is acceptable for continuing with data analysis. According to Client Heartbeat, (2018) contacting wrong participants and not gaining cooperation from the right participants can result in low response rate. This study was however freed from this anomaly. The study mainly used primary data, which were collected through structured questionnaires. The questions were in a 5 point Likert scale form and this was important because structured questionnaires require lower cognitive load on the respondent and therefore reduces the amount of thinking that a respondent needs to undertake to complete the task. This generally has leads to higher response and more accurate data.

To ensure content validity of the data collection instrument it was considered appropriate to pilot the data collection instrument to 10 users to comment on the representativeness and suitability of the questions and allow some suggestions to be made on the structure of the questionnaire (Rose, 1995; Hair, et al, 2003). Some few corrections were made out of the responses to improve clarity of the instrument before it was finally vetted by one expert for final use. Coefficient of reliability was measured by using Cronbach's Alpha. Al-Eqab and Adel (2013) reveal that, most favourable way of measuring internal consistence and data collection tool is done through Cronbach's Alpha. To be considered as acceptable, the scale should be 0.7 and above (Gutiérrez et al, 2018). Variables used in the study showed that they are all reliable since the results of Cronbach Alpha are at least 0.7 as shown in table 1 above.

Table 1: Variables Cronbach Alpha

Variable Description	Cronbach Alpha
Marketing Communication Effectiveness	0.789
Awareness	0.737
Attitude	0.716
Skills	0.879

Findings, Analysis and Discussion

Data were analyzed by using descriptive and multiple regression analysis. Specifically, the descriptive statistics were used to summarize the profile of the respondents. Furthermore, Chenhall (2003) suggests that, with regression analysis, it is possible to access the advantage and strength of variables in a non-random relationship.

Profiles of the Respondents

The profiles of the respondents were examined using age, gender and education. The results on age groups revealed that majority of the respondents were youth of the age between 18 – 25 years as they were 139(38.1%) of the respondents. Moreover, 64(17.5%) of the respondents were of the age between 26 – 36 years, 87(23.8%) of the respondents were of the age between 37 – 47 years, 43(11.9%) of respondents were of the age between 48 – 58 years and 32(8.7%) respondents were above 58 years. These findings seem to reflect the social media use trend in the world as per age categories (Shet, 2018). With regards to sex, the results show that 156(42.7%) of the respondents were males while 209(57.3%) of the respondents were females. This implies that, females were more accessible for the study than males. In the view of Guadagno (2018) social media platforms are gendered depending on the options in use; Men and women engage in different types of social media they also use and consume different types of social media as a function of gender.

Additionally, a study by Kisahara (2017) supports that, gender differences occur within social media sites. In the study, snapchat and Instagram both had significantly more females using those sites than male. The respondents' level of education revealed that, 106(29 %) of the respondents had below secondary education level, 149(40.8%) respondents had above secondary education level and 110(30.2%) of the respondents had college education or above. These results show that, the majority of the respondents 259(71%) had education level of above secondary education.

Digital Platforms and Effectiveness of Marketing Communication

The objective of the study was to assess the role of digital platforms on the effectiveness of marketing communication. The findings are presented through a Model Summary, Correlation analysis and Multiple Regression analysis.

Model Summary

The model summary provides information about the regression line's ability to account for the total variation in the dependent variable. Table 2 provides a model summary for the:

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.523[a]	.274	.246	.29095

a) Predictors: (Constant), Awareness, Attitude, Skills.

b) Dependent Variable: Effectiveness MC

The results on model summary in Table 2 show the overall influence of all the three variables on the effectiveness of marketing communication. To measure the strength of the relationship between digital platforms and effectiveness of marketing communications, Pallant (2001), suggested the use of R squared, which always varies between 0 to 100%. In this study the model indicates R squared to be 0.274, which signify that, 27.4% variation in effectiveness of marketing communication is explained by the variation on indicators of digital platforms and the remaining 72.6% is explained by other variables not included in this study. Furthermore, Pallant (2010) suggested the use of adjusted R square to measure the strength of the model, because it considered different predictors which are in between 1 and R square. As per the model summary, adjusted R square is 0.246, which means that, awareness, attitudes and skills towards digital platforms explain the variation of effectiveness of marketing communication by 24.6%. Apart from the adjusted R square, the regression analysis model summary reveals the accuracy of the sample in representing the population of the study through the standard error of estimate. Moreover, as the estimation of standard error gets smaller, population representation of the study becomes higher. Table 2 reveals the standard error of estimate to be 0.2909 which is smaller and is regarded to show that, the sample of the population represents the population of the study (Pallant, 2010).

Correlation

Correlation is used to quantify the association between two continuous variables (e.g., between an independent and a dependent variable or between two independent variables. Cohen (1988) and Hair et al. (2010) show that, the relationship amongst the variables of a given assessment is conducted through Pearson's correlation. For any correlation at 0.01 levels, it implies that at 99% assurance, correlation amongst the variables is not random.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Coefficients

	MC Effectiveness	Awareness	Attitude	Skills
MC Effectiveness Pearson Correlation	1	.469**	.878**	.283**
Awareness Pearson Correlation	.469**	1	.426**	.269**
Attitude Pearson Correlation	.878**	.426**	1	.537**
Skills Pearson Correlation	.283**	.269**	.537**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table 3 reveals that, all the study variables were significant at significance level of 0.01. These findings signal that there was multicollinearity problem, which was solved through multiple regression analysis where variance inflation factor was computed.

Hypothesis Testing

This part tests the hypotheses related to the 3 digital platforms constructs and a marketing communication variable. The regression results are presented in table 3 .

Table 3: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.310	.215		6.097	.000
Awareness	.116	.041	.130	2.816	0.06
Attitude	.859	.047	.968	18.408	.000
Skills	.371	.068	.271	5.485	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Effectiveness Marketing Communication (MC)

The Multiple Regression results presented in table 3 shows the coefficient values of independent variables. Specifically the coefficients show the direction of relationships together with contribution of unit change for individual variables to the change in marketing communication constructs. The first hypothesis states that awareness of digital platforms has a positive impact on the effectiveness of marketing communication. The results summarized in Table 3 shows that, there is a positive but insignificant relationship between awareness of the digital platform and the effectiveness of marketing communication at the $P \geq 0.05$ level of significance. This indicates that, there is enough evidence to support the hypothesis (H1), that awareness of digital platforms does not significantly influence the effectiveness of marketing communication even at 95% level of confidence since the $P \geq 0.05$.

The second hypothesis stated that attitude of digital platform's users have a positive relationship with effectiveness of marketing communication in Tanzania. The results summarized in the table 3 reveals that, the attitudes of users towards digital have a positive and significant relationship with effectiveness of marketing communication at significance level of 95%. The result indicates that, the attitude of digital platform's users as an independent variable has a positive and significant influence on Effectives Marketing Communication (MC) since the $P \leq 0.05$. In the last hypothesis, it was stated that, skills of digital platform users have a positive relationship with effectiveness of marketing communication. . The results as summarized in the table 3 , indicates that, Skills of digital platforms users and effective of Marketing Communication have positive and significant relationship, since $P \leq 0.05$

Discussion of the findings

The findings of the study revealed that, user's awareness of digital platforms has a positive but insignificant relationship with effectiveness of marketing communications. According to World Wide Worx (2012), companies are increasing their budgets for marketing in digital platforms so as to inform users about their products and services. In the views of Howe (2006), digital platform are effective tools for marketing communication as it informs consumers and provide identity about the company's products and services that they offer. This was found to be working if customers are aware of the

media. Further contrary to the findings of the study of Hans *et al*(2011); Celine (2012) and Msia, (2014) found that user's awareness of digital platforms have a positive relationship with effectiveness of marketing communication. Moreover, on the side of theories, McLuhan's Media theory through his ideas on the effects of the new media on society, such as his hot-cool media dichotomy contends that apart from the uploaded content in social media, users can be changed by the media itself. It seems that the nature of the media matters in enhancing awareness and therefore usability of the media in question. Contents that users are exchanging will not vary from the existing Medias. Nevertheless, the interaction of new communication channels can convert user's behavior forever (McLuhan, 1995). This means that, as long as users are aware of the presence of the media, then the media such as digital platforms transforms the whole communication structure including how effective marketing communication is.

Furthermore, the current study findings revealed that, the user's attitude towards digital platforms, have a positive and significant relationship with effectiveness of marketing communication. This is similar to what Insight Express (2004) revealed, that, the attitude of digital platform users toward the media is the key in determining the effectiveness of marketing communication. That is, if their attitude is positive towards that digital platform, then, it will also bring positive results on the effectiveness of MC, as they will be interested in using that media. Corollary to this, Highley, (2010), Kiran (2014) and Flórez *et al.,* (2017) indicate that, customers are setting the pace in this race and are willing to participate in sharing and conversation on the social media sites at any cost. This translates into the view that, the company with their marketing strategies that can keep up with the customer will share the winners' circle in that as long as users have positive attitude towards that digital platforms, other factors are not much important, hence attitude will bring positive results to the effectiveness of Marketing Communication. TAM depicts that, apart from other external variables, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use determine the attitude of users towards the digital platform. In turn, the attitude of users toward the systems determines the readiness of users to use the provided digital platform. This means that, the positive attitude of users towards digital platform gives marketers a better channel for communicating their marketing efforts. Hence, user's attitude towards digital platform and effectiveness marketing communication are positively connected as the findings from this study and TAM reveals.

It was also found out that, skills of users of digital platform have a positive and strong relationship with the effectiveness of marketing communication. This concurs with the findings by Howe (2006) and Highley (2010), which revealed that, without user's skills on how to use the available digital platform, any marketing communication efforts will not yield the expected results. It was indicated that, for effective marketing communication, skill on how to use digital platforms is the very important element although for any user to gain or find a skill, it largely depends on his or her attitude towards that digital platform. Han *et al* (2011), Msia, (2014) and Kiran (2014) found that, education and training on how to use the available digital platform is positively linked to the effectiveness of marketing communication. It was explained that, when users are trained and educated about the available digital platform, it gives them a positive attitude towards that digital platform. Moreover, via education and trainings, users gain skills to use the available media and it becomes easier for marketers to effectively communicate their marketing efforts. I McLuhan's Media theory, portrays that, apart from the media being the message, but without skills on how to use the available media, then it is useless. Corollary to this TAM theory suggests that, the ease of use represents the skills of using the provided digital platform. If the digital platform is not ease to learn and develop skills on using it, users attitude towards that system will be negative and hence failure for marketers to communicate their marketing efforts.

Conclusions and recommendations

This study assessed the role of digital platforms on the effectiveness of marketing communication in the telecommunication Industry in Tanzania. From the findings of the study, it may be concluded that all independent factors hypothesized to have positive influence on effectiveness of marketing communication. Specifically, it was found that, user's awareness about the digital platform has a

positive but insignificant influence on the effectiveness of marketing communication, which fulfills the first objective of the study. On the other hand, the second objective of the study intended to establish the extent to which attitude of customers on digital platforms influences the effectiveness of marketing communication. It was found that, the attitude of users of digital platforms to have strong and significant positive influence on the effectiveness of marketing communications. The third objective of the study assessed the influence of user's skills on digital platforms on effectiveness of marketing communications. It was found that user's skills and effectiveness of marketing communications have a strong and positive significant relationship. From these conclusions, the following recommendations are set forth:

- The importance of the effectiveness of marketing communication in any organization cannot be undermined. The organization's management has to take the best side of it, as the failure to do so will lead to the failure in marketing efforts and it will cost the organization in terms of money.
- Without user's skills on how to use the available digital platform, any marketing communication efforts will not yield the expected results. For effective marketing communication, skills on how to use digital platforms are an important element. However, for any user to gain or find a skill, it largely depends on his or her attitude towards that digital platform. It is up to Telecommunication Company such as Vodacom to use traditional media in the meantime to communicate and sensitize awareness and positive attitude towards use of digital platforms.
- Moreover, these digital platforms have been changing every day and speedy of change is the competitive advantage in this contemporary world. Managements have to be awake each time to these changes, as lagging behind will leave them outdated.
- Furthermore, to enhance effective operations in business settings, marketers have to exploit the opportunities available in the digital platforms,. The Digital Company's management should do best by capitalizing on people's skills and attitude in enhancing effectiveness on marketing communication.

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