

**SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING FOR
CUSTOMER RETENTION AT TELONE
ZIMBABWE**

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**SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING FOR CUSTOMER RETENTION
AT TELONE ZIMBABWE**

BY

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ABSTRACT

Telecommunications companies, like TelOne, are strategically adapting to rapid technological advancements to remain competitive, with a significant focus on customer retention. Social media marketing emerges as a pivotal strategy to enhance customer relationships. This study delves into the impact of social media marketing on customer knowledge, engagement, satisfaction, and retention within TelOne, operating in Zimbabwe's dynamic telecommunications landscape. Employing a mixed-methods approach, primary data is gathered through close-ended questionnaires administered to both managerial and non-managerial TelOne personnel. Additionally, secondary data analysis draws from academic literature and company reports, offering nuanced contextual insights. This amalgamation facilitates a thorough exploration of how social media marketing can bolster customer relationship management. Findings unveil an overall positive sentiment among TelOne employees concerning the efficacy of social media marketing in enhancing customer engagement and relationship cultivation. TelOne employs various platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, and its self-service portal, to engage customers, elevate brand visibility, and nurture robust customer connections. Nonetheless, the study identifies challenges, such as privacy apprehensions and potential misuse of personal data, underscoring the necessity for strategic adjustments to mitigate risks and optimize benefits. Recommendations entail refining social media strategies, monitoring pertinent metrics, educating stakeholders on privacy concerns, and staying abreast of evolving social media trends. Furthermore, avenues for future research are delineated, encompassing a broader examination of social media marketing's impact on company performance within the telecommunications domain and comparative analyses across multiple firms. These prospective investigations promise to deepen comprehension of social media's role in fostering customer retention and offer actionable insights. In sum, this study affirms social media marketing's efficacy in customer acquisition, engagement, and retention at TelOne, underscoring its pronounced significance in the telecommunications industry. It validates the hypothesis that social media marketing is indispensable to effective customer relationship management, poised to maintain its pivotal role amidst ongoing sectoral evolution.

Keywords: social media marketing, customer engagement, telecommunications industry, customer retention

Declaration Page

I declare that this dissertation is my original work except where sources have been cited and acknowledged. The work has never been submitted, nor will it ever be submitted to another university for the award of a degree.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

CRM	Customer relationship management
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
POTRAZ	Postal & Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and background of the study

Telecommunications businesses as well as other institutions have been forced to make significant modifications because of the global technology breakthroughs that have occurred in recent years to stay competitive (Neuhofer, 2018). Telecommunication firms have taken extraordinary measures, such adopting technology, to retain existing customers as well as attract new ones (Muchira, 2015). Customer retention heavily relies upon the way an organisation leverages on its ability to manage its relationship with its customers. Customer relationship management (CRM) is a business technique for creating lasting, lucrative connections with customers. Through ongoing research on the goods and services customers are supplied, it assists the business in gathering and preserving client information (Asiedu, 2015). Systems for managing customer relationships are gaining traction in most industries and have become a crucial component of company plans in the highly competitive market of today. The use of relationship marketing creates opportunities for successful extensions, resistance to the promotional efforts of rivals, and hurdles to entrance for new competitors.

For businesses in the telecommunication sector, both the formation and maintenance of client retention are crucial. Due to several factors, the majority of local and worldwide telecommunications firms are struggling to keep their loyal customers, attract new ones, foster their confidence, and maintain solid financial performance in light of the shifting dynamics within the global telecoms industry (Ravi, 2016). The danger of replacement products and services, such the usage of

the internet and apps, and the requirement to reduce customer attrition in the telecommunications sector makes it increasingly harder to retain clients (Pelsmacker et al., 2015). Therefore, businesses must use social media marketing to efficiently manage connections with their clients in a bid to retain them. According to Howard (2002), businesses cannot escape the internet era unless they change the way they conduct their daily operations. The use of social media marketing has taken centre stage in business operations, and it is now being used more and more as a tool for customer relationship management, particularly customer retention. The rise and domination of social media, particularly websites like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp, has been reported to have caused significant seismic upheavals in the global economy at the beginning of the new century (Makwara, 2020). As a result, marketers in the telecommunications sector are now forced to capitalise on the multiple opportunities presented by social media by riding this wave. Many companies view social media as a completely new phenomena that necessitates the development of new business practises. In recent years, social media has become an increasingly important marketing tool. According to Berthon et al. (2007), customers may now participate in product creation as well as marketing via social media and are no longer only a passive aspect of traditional marketing. According to Howard (2002), maintaining a focus on fundamental business concepts while learning new business regulations is essential for success in the Internet era. Therefore, it is important to emphasise that both developed and developing nations now place a greater emphasis on telecommunications services.

Since customers have the ability to easily switch from one telecoms company to another due to a number of factors, such as the similar products and prices offered

by the telecommunication companies, customer retention is crucial as it increases the organization's success, especially in situations where acquiring new customers alone is insufficient to achieve the organization's long-term success (Madziwa and Sibanda, 2018). Because it costs more to attract a new client than it does to keep an existing one, maintaining higher levels of customer retention is essential to the success of any telecom firm (Pelsmacker et al., 2015). The ability to successfully retain customers is crucial because it encourages customers to choose to stay with a given service provider for an extended period and boosts the organization's profitability by reducing advertising and other marketing expenses (Kirigo, 2016). Being able to keep customers is frequently linked to a host of advantages for the business since they not only make additional purchases from it but also recommend it to their friends. Customer retention is therefore seen as a strategy that generates benefits for both the business and its customers (Neuhofer, 2018). Other advantages of client retention include an increase in the company's profit portfolio through greater purchase frequency as well as useful input for service development (Murugan, 2013).

TelOne is a significant participant in Zimbabwe's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector, and its network serves as the primary backbone network on which other firms base their operations. Even though Econet was founded after Telone, which later diversified into Netone, has monopolised the market and become the leading company in this sector through several strategies, including offering cutting-edge products and being able to draw in new business by establishing long-lasting relationships with existing clients. TelOne's brand preference is on the brink due to the swift realisation of other companies. TelOne has seen extremely low client retention since social media marketing became

widely used in Zimbabwe's telecom sector. The organisation is gradually losing its youthful enmity and acceptability because of social media marketing's declining usefulness.

TelOne has embraced social media marketing, which include running advertising campaigns on Facebook, Twitter, and Whatsapp (TelOne, 2018). The company began using social media in 2013 after its rivals Econet, NetOne, and Telecel, who had begun using it in early 2010. Econet later improved client involvement through social media platforms in 2011 (Makwara, 2020). TelOne is going through an amazing transition, but at the same time, there is more competition. Future rivals of TelOne, like ZOL, are quite active on social media and very creative when it comes to engaging customers through social media. The ZOL Facebook page had an increase of 11.4% in the number of new likes during the same week that TelOne saw a decrease of 25.6%. (Potraz, 2018). As a result, it is expected that heightened competition would affect the ability of Zimbabwe's service providers to retain customers. Therefore, a company must serve, go above and beyond the expectations of the consumer, to deliver a better quality in terms of products and services. Always keeping your word and refusing to make promises you can't meet is essential to giving good service (Ajaegbu et al., 2014). Since the client's experience during a specific service interaction has been thought to be the basis for measuring customer satisfaction. Given that service quality is a result of the services provided by service providers in organisations, including service consistency, prices, and responsiveness to inquiries, it is consistent with the idea that service quality (as well as these other factors) is a factor in determining customer satisfaction (Oliver, 1997). Consequently, TelOne's marketers who have used social media as a tool for customer retention into their marketing mix have done so (TelOne, 2018). This can

be partially explained by the observation that many internet-based businesses have failed because they were founded on models with little hope of ever turning a profit. Howard, (2002). (2002). According to Constantinides and Fountain (2008), social media offers businesses new chances and problems for connecting with and retaining their target market. However, businesses in the Zimbabwean telecommunications sector, including Econet, Net One, Telecel, and TelOne, have all started to recognise the wealth of opportunities that exist on social media and are now integrating and enhancing their marketing plans with social media (Madziwa and Sibanda, 2018). Due to the presence of these three main competitors, there is fierce rivalry in a variety of markets to draw new clients and retain existing ones. These businesses were thus compelled to create aggressive marketing plans with the goal of raising service levels, prices, and product selections to retain existing clientele and draw in new ones. Additionally, it has been highlighted that the multiple competitors in the telecommunications business are engaged in severe rivalry. Of notice is the dominance of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe, which has a larger market share (Madziwa and Sibanda, 2018). Due to this domination, TelOne and other minor firms in the telecommunications sector appear to take a backseat to these other big players. Considering this, TelOne has been pursuing customer retention tenaciously through the usage of social media platforms.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The development of social media marketing has sparked fierce rivalry in the telecom sector, which has had a detrimental effect on TelOne's client base. TelOne has seen extremely low customer refunds ever since Zimbabwe's telecommunications sector fully embraced social media marketing. Due to its ineffective use of social media marketing, the company has been gradually losing

its hold on customers. Three businesses, Econet, Telecel, and Netone, dominate the competitive Zimbabwean telecommunications market (Baloyi, 2014:6). Up until Econet Wireless joined the market in 1993 and established its network in 1998, it was essentially monopolised by a single national operator (TelOne). Customers often end connections that are not profitable for them and keep those that are. Following such an event, the three mobile network providers have concluded that they must quickly switch from transactional marketing to relational strategies. Despite the expansion of the mobile telecommunications sector in Zimbabwe, Econet now controls around 67% of the market (Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited, 2018). Additionally, it has developed into a multifaceted worldwide communication company that offers services in the mobile, fixed, satellite, and internet sectors. Due of this, the business is effectively a monopoly. In Zimbabwe, the network launched 3 G data services as the country's first operator in 2009. Econet started constructing a sizable fibre optic network and speeding up the implementation of other crucial network equipment in 2009. Additionally, it has been highlighted that TelOne has had difficulties including an increase in customer complaints, a weak network, consumers who are unable to use the self-service portal, inappropriate contact centre responses, and a lengthier turnaround time for fault repairs (Makwara, 2020). TelOne is thus losing clients who are choosing the offerings of its rivals. This is demonstrated by the company's declining client base and the rise in consumer complaints related to subpar service (POTRAZ, 2018). TelOne must ensure that its current customers return for it to remain competitive because of these reasons. Delays in accomplishing this goal may cause the company to lose market share to major companies in the sector, like Econet, who have been earning enormous profits while also gaining market share.

1.3 Research Objectives

- To evaluate how social media marketing contributes to enhancing customer knowledge and engagement at TelOne, with the aim of improving customer retention.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of social media marketing in fostering two-way communication channels at TelOne, aiming to enhance customer engagement and retention.
- To investigate how social media marketing influences customer satisfaction levels at TelOne, with the goal of enhancing overall customer retention.
- To determine the measures which can be adopted to improve the usage of social media marketing as a tool for customer retention at TelOne.

1.4 Research Questions

- How does social media marketing contribute to enhancing customer knowledge at TelOne?
- How does social media marketing facilitate two-way communication at TelOne?
- How does social media marketing influence customer satisfaction at TelOne?
- Which measures can be adopted to improve the usage of social media marketing as a tool for customer retention at TelOne?

1.4 Assumptions

Before fully undertaking this study, the researcher has the following assumptions:

- No major changes in the units of analyses will take place during the period of the research.
- The research methodology adopted will be appropriate.
- The economic and environmental context will remain unchanged.
- Participants and respondents will fully cooperate and responded to questions in a truthful and honest manner.
- Participants will have a sincere and genuine interest in participating in the research and will not have any ulterior motives.
- The data that the respondents provided will be free of bias as it will be accurate to the best of their knowledge.
- All the participants will have the sought-after information.

1.5 Significance of the Study

a. To the industry

This research is necessary as it may give the customer retention and CRM leaders within the telecommunications industry relevant information which they can reflect on and use in improving their customer retention practices using social media marketing and thus minimise customer defection.

b. To TelOne Zimbabwe

The results of the research may contribute towards an improvement in terms of customer retention practices using social media at TelOne Zimbabwe. The results from this study may also be useful in ensuring that TelOne Zimbabwe's managers and employees understand the importance of social media marketing as a customer retention tool at the firm. As a result, this will further lead to a reduction in the customer defection rate and will thus increase the optimal customer retention at TelOne Zimbabwe.

c. To the researcher

The research findings may assist the researcher to gain an insight on the social media marketing platforms utilised by TelOne Zimbabwe in customer retention. The research findings are further useful to the researcher in coming up with recommendations on improving social media marketing within the telecommunications industry.

d. To the customers

This study may assist customers in familiarising and embracing the social media marketing strategies utilised by TelOne Zimbabwe. It may also stimulate customers' purchase decisions.

e. To academics

The research can be used as academic reference by other researchers to facilitate further research on customer retention. The study also serves as a source of reference to fellow academics particularly the academic community in their bid to explore the subject matter further.

1.6 Delimitation of Study

The study will focus on examining the influence of social media marketing on customer retention within Zimbabwe's telecommunications industry, with specific attention to TelOne. Other factors that influence customer retention as well as other telecommunication companies in Zimbabwe will not be the focus of this study even though they will be mentioned purely for comparison purposes. The study will cover the period between 2020 to present.

1.7 Limitations

The respondents may have limited time to sit down on face-to-face interviews and answer the researcher's questions due to their busy schedules. The researcher will address this using telephone interviews and other electronic means of gathering data. The information obtained from the interviews may not have specific and accurate statistics. The researcher will counter this through making use of documentary search to supplement information that would have been obtained from interviews. In addition, there may be limited time to complete this study, the researcher will address this through carrying out and writing the study's chapters concurrently to meet the set deadlines.

1.8 Definition of terms

Customer relationship management - A strategic approach that enables organizations to use internal resources (i.e. Technology, people, and process) to manage the relationship with customers to create a competitive advantage and improve an organization's performance (Mohammed and Rashid, 2012).

Customer loyalty – might be characterised as an ongoing, fruitful partnership between a consumer and a company. It encourages recurring business and influences current clients to pick a business over rivals who are providing comparable advantages. It is a gauge of a customer's propensity to do repeat business with a firm, to put it simply.

Customer retention – is a company's or a particular product's capacity to keep customers over a predetermined time. It involves persuading current clients to keep utilising a company's goods or services. Thus, a company's capacity to turn clients into repeat customers and keep them from switching to rivals is key.

Marketing - Marketing is a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and value with others (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012). It is the process through which a company first anticipates consumer needs and then manages to satisfy those needs to achieve sales (George, 2001:2).

Social media - according to Chahal and Rani (2017), social media as an online tool that can be used by people to share information, ideas, and experiences.

Social media marketing - is a process of gaining website traffic or attention through social media sites (Trattner and Kappe, 2013).

1.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has acted as the introduction of the study. The chapter focused on elements such as the background to the study, the statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations, limitations, assumptions of the study as well as the definition of key terms. The following chapter presents the literature review.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The literature on social media marketing's effects on customer relationship management in the telecoms sector is presented in this chapter. The researcher will discuss findings from current literature in this chapter, including how social media marketing should be conceptualised, how it should affect consumer knowledge, how it should affect two-way communication at TelOne, and how it should affect TelOne customers' pleasure. In other words, the research will be led by the problem's research objectives to concentrate on the problems that the study aims to answer.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Psychological ownership theory

Asatryan and Oh (2008) used this model in the tourist sector based on their observations. It explains why former customers are permitted to share feedback via word-of-mouth. The article continues by talking about how customers develop strong emotional ties with the businesses they support. This enables people to express a sense of ownership as seen by their use of words like "my," "our," and "my" while making comments. A consumer would provide good feedback and convey negative comments to the company's owners or management, claims Mattalia (2001). When there is no loyalty, there is a desire to indirectly affect the business by providing both favourable and bad feedback to prospective customers. According to Pierce et al. (2003), customers who want to exert control over these relationships through reviews may experience feelings of accomplishment,

pleasure, and satisfaction on an intrinsic level because of helping others. Because the internet enables critics to voice their ideas, it is simpler to persuade not just close friends and family members but also complete strangers across the world. Because it demonstrates how social media marketing affects consumer purchase decisions and customer loyalty, this hypothesis is useful to our research.

2.2.2 The social feedback loop

According to the social feedback loop, social media is funnelled through consumer purchases. According to Evans (2008), a traditional purchase funnel comprises three stages: awareness, consideration, and actual purchase, all of which a marketer might utilise to sway a customer's choice. A current buying funnel differs from earlier ones by assuming the customer has no preconceived notions. The purchaser will purchase the item, utilise it, and then spread the word to others. The opinions will thereafter be disseminated online, influencing the purchase choices of other customers. Word of mouth and the usage, trial, and sampling of the product by the consumer both speed up the feedback loop. This is significant to our research because it shows how rumours on social media affect consumer decisions.

2.2.3 McLuhan's Media Theory

Canadian-born philosopher and educator McLuhan is well-known. He coined the expression "the message is media" (McLuhan 1995). He emphasised that individuals and society are changing because of the media. In essence, depending on the new medium, the material transmitted will vary, but the linkages and repetition of communication patterns will fundamentally change how consumers behave. Hence, media influence is greater than media content. He also separates the substance of the media into two categories: 'hot' and 'cool'. For cool media to be understood, the audience must pay attention and participate. Cartoons, television,

and seminars are all instances of this. Contrarily, "hot" media focuses on viewers' senses, therefore understanding it doesn't need much effort on their part.

2.3 Conceptual Clarifications

2.3.1 Social media Marketing

According to Dwived et al. (2015), social media marketing is a notion that enables both current and potential consumers to interact and communicate. Several researchers, such as Tuten and Solomon (2016), asserted that the main goal of social media marketing is to inform firms by connecting customer satisfaction and purchase intentions to brand loyalty and consumer sharing. Using mobile or stationary digital platforms is a need of social media marketing. Unlike conventional media, it is not a passive form of communication and calls for interactions with friends, family, or the wider public. Some characteristics of social media are participation, transparency, and conversation. Social media platforms include Facebook, WhatsApp, SnapChat, Instagram, and Twitter.

A study on the effect of social media on customer satisfaction in the communication business was carried out by Rootman and Cuup (2015). The study's objective was to ascertain how social media components—benefits, client trust, and content—affect customer retention and satisfaction in the telecom sector. A questionnaire was used in an empirical investigation to gather information from 30 managers and 150 clients. Numerous statistical analyses showed a strong correlation between advantages and trustworthiness as well as client happiness. The study's conclusions may assist companies in the communication sector in utilising social media to enhance customer relationship management.

Social media marketing is an advantageous instrument for managing current customer relationships while also cultivating new ones through online commerce,

connection, and communication, according to different research by Ramsaran-Fowdar and Fowdar (2013). This strengthens the case for using social media platforms to raise consumer satisfaction levels. The results showed that social media has a role in guaranteeing client pleasure. Another study by Muhammad and Abdul (2012), which showed that social media contributes to guaranteeing client pleasure, supports these conclusions.

Naidoo (2011) has carried out a second study on the efficacy of social media advertising in Gauteng. With an emphasis on Facebook as a social media, the study sought to identify significant connections and characteristics that influence the effectiveness of advertisements on the platform. The results of the study showed how social media, digitization, and globalisation are affecting advertising. According to the research, a lot of companies are increasingly utilising social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and You Tube to promote their goods.

According to a study on social media's effect on customer relationship management by Sueghwan and Dea-young (2020), social media is the foundation of contemporary communication. The survey also showed that most businesses used social media as a communication tool to keep customers informed as well as for branding, e-commerce, and research. The survey found that 83% of businesses tracked customer satisfaction through their online activity because most consumer complaints were posted on various social media sites.

2.3.2 Customer Relationship Management

Several definitions of customer relationship management are given in the existing literature. According to Berry (1983), customer relationship management is a strategy to entice, maintain, and strengthen client relationships. According to Parvatiyar and Seth (2001), customer relationship management is a comprehensive

strategy and approach for attracting, keeping, and collaborating with preferred clients to provide greater value for the company and the client. According to this definition, customer relationship management is an organisational strategy for building value with specific customers rather than just an IT function. Based on a thorough content analysis, Chakravarti (2006) defines customer relationship management as a business strategy wherein firms forge tight bonds with current and potential customers to increase organisational profitability. This concept also includes strategy as a fundamental idea to create beneficial partnerships. Greenberg (2010) defines customer relationship management as a philosophy and a corporate strategy supported by a framework and tools designed to improve interpersonal interactions at work. Customer relationship management's primary goal is to guarantee that an organisation develops and maintains positive connections with its clients.

Relationship marketing creates obstacles to entrance for rivals, offers resistance against the promotional demands of competitors, and presents a potential for successful extensions. Considering this, TelOne is steadfastly pursuing relationship marketing via the use of an internal customer database, customised print ads, an enterprise-wide management information system, and the internet. In addition, relationship marketing is being carried out by regularly sending clients messages—for instance, complimentary SMSs on their birthdays—and by giving them access to important information like health advice and programmes that raise awareness of cancer. sending pertinent information that gently advertises their goods, makes them seem likeable to customers, strengthens their brand, informs them, and fosters trust—all of which lead to devoted patrons.

In this context, TelOne, which is now ruling the business, is assiduously pursuing relationship marketing has captivated the researcher, who wants to find out if Econet's devoted consumers are a direct consequence of this action. What piques the researcher's curiosity even more is that the bulk of the relationship marketing research studies were carried out in the western world especially in the service industry.

Most relationship marketing research studies were carried out in the western globe. especially inside the organisation A small number of investigations were conducted in other African countries, most notably South Africa, rather than in Zimbabwe.

The telecommunications sector is now expanding rapidly. The underlying trends of mobile broadband, M2M, cloud computing, OTT services, and big data management are driving the telecoms industry forward even though the operators could find it difficult to generate substantial revenue growth. With most nations now having national broadband network plans or policies in place, fixed broadband is also progressing. Global mobile penetration rates are still quite different. Users are adding more tablets, modems, and phones to their mobile devices in order to leverage cloud-based services and alternative communication methods, such as mobile internet access via 3G and now 4G/LTE networks. In the longer run, the volume of mobile data downloaded is probably going to at least double annually for the next several years due to the rise in connected devices and the greater availability of mobile devices like tablets and smartphones. In recent decades, wireless communication technology, especially cellular networks, has expanded quickly throughout Zimbabwe, becoming the primary means of communication in the region. The shift from analogue to cellular system phones, wherein the

percentage of analogue vs digital users has consistently declined, is one example of this.

Furthermore, there are now a significantly greater number of mobile phone service providers, including TelOne, Econet, Telecel, and other minor participants. Exploring the relationship between customer retention and the financial success of mobile service providers would be intriguing, especially considering the fierce competition within Zimbabwe's telecommunications sector. Hence, the purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that influence the customer retention rate of a specific mobile service provider. Additionally, a study of the correlations between the variables influencing the financial performance of the mobile service sector, as well as loyalty and satisfaction regarding market share, sales, and profit, is necessary. Nevertheless, relatively few research has been done in this field, despite Zimbabwe's mobile communication market's phenomenal expansion.

The beginning of the previous decade was a death knell for fixed telecom providers. During 2005 to 2014, TelOne's monopoly over voice telephony was decreased to less than 5% of the market share due to the emergence of the three mobile network carriers (Powertel, Liquid, and Zol). It goes without saying that an asset's worth is unaffected by how it is used. TelOne, the state-owned fixed telecom company in Zimbabwe, is a prime example of this. Emerging from the proverbial ashes, TelOne is now a formidable rival to the nation's top internet service providers (ISPs). This has required a significant identity shift from being a provider of fixed voice telephone services. Currently, the firm uses copper connections in homes to handle over 300,000 phone subscribers. TelOne has demonstrated far more dynamism than just leveraging its advantages with copper cabling in the past.

Research by Mutsiliwa (2013) examined the idea of relationship marketing in Zimbabwe's telecommunications industry, with a particular emphasis on the effect of relationship marketing on customer satisfaction in the lowveld region. The survey found that as organisations are growing more and more focused on the needs of their customers, they must also live up to those expectations. According to the report, social media plays a big role in assisting businesses in meeting customer expectations. The study was carried out using a descriptive survey, and the interview subjects were chosen using a convenient sampling technique. There are 110 participants in the research; 50 come from Triangle and 50 are from Chiredzi.

Braimah et al. (2013) carried out a similar investigation in the Ghanaian hotel sector. The study proved how crucial customer relationship management is to maintain a loyal consumer base. 300 surveys from Ghana's first-class, opulent hotels were filled out to get the data. The influence of six essential marketing practices—trust, competence, communication commitment, resolving conflict, and building relationships—on consumer loyalty was investigated using factor analysis and descriptive analysis.

Research by Wellbeck et al. (2013) examined how customer loyalty in Ghana's mobile business is affected by customer relationship management. Six relationship marketing strategies were used in the study: commitment, communication, skill in resolving conflict, trust, and customer satisfaction and loyalty. According to the study, there is a favourable association between client loyalty and each of the six relationship marketing methods. To collect data, a total of forty closed-ended questionnaires were employed.

2.4 The relationship between social media marketing and customer retention

The invention of mobile phones and social media has made information more available than ever. Consumers are frequently pushed to "like" companies on Facebook, "follow" them on Twitter, or "connect" with companies on LinkedIn. As a result, customers are growing closer to companies, more knowledgeable about available products, and more influential in interactions with buyers and sellers. In general, businesses aiming to strengthen their relationship with their consumers should consider integrating social media into customer interactions (Avlonitis and Panagopoulos, 2010). One of the newest forms of business is social media marketing (Barnes, 2018). According to Ryan and Jones (2016), interacting with clients on social media platforms enables a business to learn more about them personally and learn about their interests, all while providing a human touch that strengthens customer connections. Heinonen (2011) contends that for businesses to succeed, they must always be aware of consumer purchasing patterns and keep an eye on their attitudes and intentions regarding the goods and services they offer. Social media also guarantees that clients are aware of your brand. In order to increase brand visibility, brand awareness—which is viewed as a business or personal brand—is being linked with online networking activities or developing connections (Pietro and Pantano 2012).

The role of the internet in people's lives has grown. Web 2.0, Web 3.0, and Web 4.0 have established several firsts in a variety of spheres of human endeavour. Thanks to the development of the internet, users may now exchange information and blogs, as well as their emotions and ideas, and even engage in electronic commerce. Murphy et al. (2011) reported that 51% of workers are allowed to use Web 2.0 for business reasons at their place of employment, indicating that social media is becoming more and more relevant in the corporate sector. Murphy et al.

(2011) goes on to say that a range of platforms that enable information exchange between users make up the Web 2.0 phenomena. This makes it possible for businesses and customers to interact more.

By encouraging online conversation, social media marketing may help manage current customer connections and build new ones, according to Ramsaran-Fowdar and Fowdar (2013). This lends credence to the hypothesis that social media might boost customer retention and satisfaction. According to Anjum et al. (2012), social media marketing is crucial for companies looking to draw in and keep clients. Using social media as a marketing strategy increases customer happiness and retention, according to study by other researchers (Clark et al., 2012). It's been stated that customers are willing to interact with businesses on social media platforms if they thought it would help them. Social media platforms allow customers to interact with businesses in several ways, such as getting coupons or discounts, buying goods or services, reading product ratings and reviews, getting general or specialised information, and learning about new goods and services. They can also express their opinions about goods and services, get in touch with customer support, attend events and feel connected, submit ideas for new goods and services, and become a part of a community (Anjum et al., 2012).

According to Habibi et al. (2014), user-generated content (UGC) on social media refers to content produced by users that is freely accessible, simple to share, somewhat creative, and does not follow formal content production procedures. Gonzalez (2010) argues that although social media offers limitless channels for communication, people—not technology—act as the influencers. User-generated content gives marketers social value since it contributes to the definition of a brand. Building on this study, Zinnbauer and Honer (2011) defined social currency as the

mechanism by which consumers recommend a brand or share information about it. Their findings indicate that social currencies are often generated through consumer interactions and outside of a company's direct control.

2.5 The challenges experienced in utilising social media as a customer retention.

According to Madiwa and Sibanda (2018), there are certain advantages to utilising social media marketing to retain clients, but there are also some disadvantages. Dealing with privacy-related issues, which have been demonstrated to be tough for both clients and telecommunications companies, is one of the largest challenges. They focus on social media distrust, misuse of personal data, identity theft, and disclosure (Camilleri, 2018). Social media platforms have several technological difficulties in addition to worries about users' privacy, many of which have been steadily overcome as the use of social networks has grown. Examples include the rules for marketing and promotion, the level of secrecy, its authentication, and authorization, the architecture of data transmission, data encryption, and decryption, as well as security breaches (Manzini et al., 2016). Social media marketing has been linked to problems that make it less effective as a marketing strategy. Some of these difficulties "include internet users' privacy concerns as well as the potential for bad press and unfavourable customer experiences surrounding the companies' products/services to spread fast," according to Camilleri (2018). Moreover, Manzini et al. (2016) claim that customer privacy worries have been one of the main obstacles to social media's efficacy in terms of client retention. Customers were having at least three major issues with how telecommunications companies were using social media, according to a poll by Bhanot (2014).

On the other hand, e-commerce has received a lot of buzz. Buyers differ in terms of background, taste, and choice. Conversely, businesses differ in their capacity to cater to distinct segments of the population for a variety of reasons, such as the availability of resources, level of experience, and degree of rivalry, among other factors. To fend off competition and boost their commercial performance, Econet, Net One, and Telecel are utilising the idea of online product promotion.

According to Business Day (2014), the telecom sector had a 15% decline in income during the first quarter of 2014. However, Econet, the largest mobile provider in the nation, saw a 4.1% increase in its customer base. POTRAZ stated that the data market will be the next area of rivalry as the voice sector was almost saturated. involved in a fierce battle for market share in the relatively nascent field of mobile banking. Due to the voice market's saturation, mobile telecommunications operators are competing with one another for customers, which has resulted to a huge subscriber scramble.

Consequently, it should be mentioned that the significance of telecommunication services has grown in both developed and developing nations. Telecommunication is used in all a nation's social, economic, political, cultural, commerce, and commercial endeavours.

As a result, providing high-quality telecom services may contribute to the growth and long-term development of any nation, but providing poor-quality telecom services can slow down the nation's domestic and commercial activity (Carman, 1990).

TelOne has established public Wi-Fi at over 160 locations to increase its market share. The fixed telephone operator is fortifying its position at a time when mobile

network operators' voice call revenues are declining due to rate cuts made earlier this year and the rising popularity of internet-based platforms.

The Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe has issued an industry report that states that mobile network operators made \$188,5 million in revenue in the first quarter. "During the first quarter of 2015, TelOne introduced public Wi-Fi, which changed the game in the Wi-Fi broadband services industry." The corporation has endeavoured to meet the national broadband demand by making significant investments in the backbone infrastructure throughout the years. The majority of TelOne's more than 150 exchanges, which are dispersed throughout the nation's major cities, are connected by dependable, highly capable backbone links. The backbone infrastructure is designed to accommodate a range of services under three brands—broadband, satellite, and voice—to satisfy consumer expectations.

Zimbabwe's economic progress has benefited greatly from the telecommunications industry. New communication methods, the development of 3G and 4G networks, and the promotion of a healthy, competitive marketplace for consumers are some of the elements that contributed to this growth. POTRAZ (2014). The purchase and usage of smart phones and phone service plans increased significantly because of these reasons Algahtani, (2011). This implies that mobile service providers have greater opportunities to grow their customer base. Furthermore, data services provide mobile operators a new window of opportunity. One of the difficulties that mobile service providers have is creating internet for everyone, which requires creating large networks and adding infrastructure to handle heavy traffic. Following the completion of this network, TelOne, Zol, and Powertel—Zimbabwe's three primary mobile service providers—will compete with one another. Therefore, it is

expected that heightened competition would affect the ability of Zimbabwean service providers to maintain customer loyalty.

However, TelOne, which has been unable to use its mobile telecommunications licence granted in 2011 due to financial constraints, hopes to ride on the back of the nation's second largest mobile network operator, which has 3,3 million subscribers, because of increased competition in the telecommunications industry (2014). To make this attainable, several important methods, like providing superior customer service, competitive pricing, delivering higher-quality services than rivals, customer relationship management, and other promotions, must be developed and put into practise.

In 2020, TelOne TelOne is the top provider of fixed telecoms and multi-media services in Zimbabwe, linking individuals and companies. Value Added Services (VAS), broadband, data transmission, and fixed voice (landlines) are among the products we offer. TelOne wants to be an agile, customer-focused company whose primary goal is to make broadband available to everyone in Zimbabwe. To cater to various market sectors, the company is logically divided into three divisions: TelOne Wholesale, TelOne Retail, and TelOne Centre for Learning.

Zimbabwe's telecom market is expanding at a very quick pace. Globally, there is a convergence of technologies resulting in shared networks for many services and applications (Makura, 2013). Thanks to the efforts of Telone Pvt Ltd and other private businesses that have been providing services in Zimbabwe, including Netone, Econet, Telecel, and Liquid Telecom, telecommunications services have continued to improve over time. While not entirely present in isolated locations, particularly in rural areas, Telone Pvt Ltd operates in all of Zimbabwe's provinces.

Despite the rivalry, mobile businesses have been developing new goods and services to turn a profit. The general global shifts and the evolving needs of companies have significantly influenced the global advancements in the communications sectors (Gillwald and Mureithi, 2011). These days, factors including the expanding market, rivalry in the communications services, and pressure from across the world are utilised to ascertain consumer wants, which are then met by offering high-quality goods and services that both please current clients and draw in new ones.

Telone (Pvt) Ltd is fully owned by the government and was established in Zimbabwe in accordance with Chapter 24:03 of the Companies Act. Voice, data, and internet goods and services are its primary business activities (Telone Client Service Charter, 2012). In the Southern African region, the company runs the second-largest fixed line network. Telone Private Limited has not performed well in this area throughout the years. Telone is facing difficulties in gaining back its current clientele due to disgruntled clients.

According to Giese and Cote (2002), customer satisfaction is the subjective perception of happiness or dissatisfaction brought about by comparing the services that an organisation provides to an individual with respect to the individual's expectations. Since it plays a major role in keeping clients, service providers usually place a high premium on customer happiness. According to Giese and Cote (2002), a happy consumer is more likely to stick with a business longer and make further purchases from it. One way to think about customer satisfaction is as either cumulative satisfaction or transaction specific satisfaction. A customer's assessment of their interactions with a particular organisation is known as transaction specific

satisfaction. Customers' total assessment of their complete patronage experience from the beginning to the present is known as cumulative satisfaction.

Effective and efficient strategies are necessary in today's fast-paced and fiercely competitive global market to survive and generate revenues that can support the expansion of the company (Kaplan and Norton, 2001). Telone customers, however, are finding it extremely difficult to use the self-service interface to pay for their subscription. It's one of those awful times when a brand loyalist finds that they are unable to pay when they want to. Furthermore, network issues and the length of time it takes to fix errors are bad for consumer satisfaction. Increasing sales while lowering expenses is one method to maximise profits, and surpassing customer happiness is one way to do it (Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler 2008).

Customers today have very high expectations, and if a business can't meet them, they will simply find another, usually for less money. For a business to remain in operation and turn a profit, it must both grow its clientele and draw in new ones. Companies are forced to deliver exceptional service that goes above and beyond what customers anticipate meeting their needs and increase customer satisfaction. Maintaining constant integrity and refraining from making unfulfilled promises is crucial to offering excellent service.

Given that customer satisfaction has historically been determined by the customer's experience with a specific service encounter, it makes sense that service quality also influences customer satisfaction, as it is derived from the results of services rendered by organisations' service providers.

As the only supplier of fixed landline services in Zimbabwe, TelOne has a vast network distribution and infrastructure located practically everywhere in the nation.

After Telkom South Africa, TelOne's network has expanded to become the second biggest fixed line network in the area. Due to the increasing value of networking, TelOne has had to come up with ways to both attract new business and keep its current clientele through the usage of social media. Marketing is heading towards Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), where customers have more and more control rather than brand marketers. It's simpler than ever for consumers to ignore communications that don't align with their perceived demands since they are growing pickier about businesses and their messaging (Gensler and Lobschaf, 2012). IMC aims to coordinate messaging across marketing, public relations, and corporate communication; yet, connecting with consumers is becoming a more challenging task. Effective one-on-one connection with customers is essential to IMC success (Kitchen Burgmann, 2010). Consumer expectations have grown more complex in this dynamic, ever-changing world, necessitating that businesses modify their messaging to meet the unique needs of each individual customer. The most effective method to achieve this is through social media. For consumers to connect with a brand and develop confidence in it, brand managers must have a thorough grasp of brand awareness through social media activities.

Three businesses—Econet, Telecel, and Netone—dominate Zimbabwe's competitive telecommunications market. Before Econet Wireless joined the market in 1993 and started operating a network in 1998, the business was once essentially controlled by one national operator (Telone). In accordance with sections 3 and 4 of the Telecommunications Act, POTRAZ, a governmental organisation, is responsible for regulating the telecommunications industry. Mobile phones are the main driver of this industry. This is demonstrated by the ongoing increase in mobile

users as well as rising profits and market share. The industry's task is to modernise operations and diversify the range of goods and services provided to stay up to date with ever evolving consumer demands and technological advancements. As a result, several telecom mobile firms, like Econet, have introduced cutting-edge solutions, like Ecofarmer, to stay up to date with the rapidly evolving demands of technology. Moreover, the fierce rivalry among mobile network providers to attract and keep clients has caused the sector to enter a more thorough process of developing connections with their clientele. Even more intriguing is the fact that most consumers have several ties with these mobile network providers because of having multiple lines from each of the three service providers. Consumers typically break off connections that don't make them money and stick with those who do. Following this kind of situation, the three mobile network providers have come to the realisation that they must soon switch from transactional to relational marketing strategies.

In Zimbabwe, the mobile telecom sector is growing, but only accounts for around 67% of the user base, according to the Econet Integrated Annual Report (2014). Additionally, it has developed into a multifaceted international communication firm with activities on the internet, satellite services, fixed line networks, and mobile phone markets.

Young people all around the world are fascinated with digital devices, especially mobile phones, which has given telecom marketers a chance to promote to this demographic. Most people who use cell phones have a personal connection to their devices. They now see them as essentials for daily living rather than just a luxury. As a result, selecting a reliable mobile service provider becomes crucial to phone ownership. Because of this, keeping their present clientele is crucial for mobile

service providers to thrive in the face of fierce market competition. Examining the effect of customer retention on financial performance is crucial for the business to withstand the fierce competition in the telecom sector. TelOne needs to ensure that its current clientele stays loyal to remain competitive, given the sharp decline in the use of landlines. If this goal is not accomplished soon enough, major companies in the market like Econet and Telecel will outcompete you since they are profitable.

2.6 The implications of utilising social media in customer retention.

The introduction of social media has strengthened two-way communication (Tuten, 2008). By establishing a two-way communication platform, social media provides the opportunity for two-way conversation. This ushered in a new era of business communication by pushing businesses to engage with their stakeholders (Nekatibeb 2012). According to Gillin (2009), traditional one-to-many marketing communication should be supplemented with collaborative communication platforms. He further stated that, using this collaborative communication media to communicate messages to potential customers will be more effective and competitive.

Social media, when used properly, creates a new channel for two-way communication and presents opportunities for more advantageous exchanges between buyers and sellers. Using social media, non-selling activities and relationship elements like prospecting and post-sale follow-ups are promoted by extending sales interactions in a way that promotes two-way communication. This makes it simpler for potential consumers to ask questions or express their demands, as well as making it easier for salespeople to find additional possibilities to close

deals, monitor client behaviour, and naturally share success stories (Andzulis et al 2012).

Organizations may gain deeper insight into their consumers through two-way communication. For instance, an organisation may use social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to ask questions of its followers and gather feedback. This may be a rather straightforward method of obtaining important data. Therefore, a company will have a better understanding of the opinions, concerns, and ideas of its customers, which it can then employ to enhance both its goods and customer service (Andzulis et al 2012). Additionally, two-way communication fosters better transparency and trust. Brands anticipate being able to engage with consumers since social media has brought them closer together. A company might lose its clients' confidence by refusing to communicate with them. Two-way communication helps humanise brands. Compared to contacts in the workplace, conversations on social media are often warmer and more casual. Brands interact with customers to reveal the people who created them. Lastly, everything has a positive effect on how people see the brand and how satisfied customers are.

Moreover, consumer satisfaction may be impacted by social media. Due to increased contacts and communication with companies, power is moving from the vendor to the customer (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004). Due to greater buyer-seller collaboration and co-creation of knowledge and value, buyers and sellers have become more equal (Greenberg, 2010). Consumers could thus have greater expectations for these interactions, compelling companies, and customer service agents to adapt (Winklhofer and Temerak, 2012) or run the risk of alienating or losing clients. Harris Interactive research found that 82% of customers had discontinued doing business with a company because of a negative encounter (Right

Now Technologies, 2010). Social media may give a way to better enable good experiences that satisfy the consumer base's expectations.

Information sharing on social media helps guarantee client pleasure. Information sharing is one of the key behaviours that must be maintained to keep consumers happy, according to Right Now Technologies (2010). Rising client expectations, an abundance of information that salespeople may access, and the difficulty that certain salespeople may have focused on providing essential information are all acknowledged by Jones et al. (2005). By giving customers this information, salespeople may improve their happiness and customer relationships. Consumers have high expectations for replies; thus, we predict that ensuring customer happiness will depend heavily on response time.

Also, by saving clients' time and money on trip, social media can guarantee customer pleasure. Social media platforms may be used for product presentations, saving time and money on travel, logistics, and other expenses. Consumers can browse through information that has been gathered and placed online about a service or product (Ryan and Jones, 2016). For instance, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Ltd has a section on its Facebook page devoted to frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the product. Customers may do this to save time and get all the information they need about a product. After utilising the product, customers can share their experiences and give rapid feedback. Sales and promotion may now be combined in ways through social media marketing that were previously difficult to accomplish through conventional sales and promotion techniques (Econet, 2018). This will ultimately lead to increased client satisfaction.

Social media may be used to attract new consumers, boost client happiness, and raise customer retention rates (More and Ghouri, 2012). Customers spend far more time engaging with businesses' internet marketing initiatives, such as learning about products, watching ads, and making purchases online, than they do with any other marketing channel (Baird and Parasnis, 2011). (Ramsaran-Fowdar and Fowdar 2013). Yet, compared to other, more established marketing sectors and channels, the literature on social media as a marketing channel is scant (Clark and Melancon, 2013). Businesses, especially those in the telecommunications sector, require information that may help them promote effectively through social media platforms, improving customer satisfaction and retention (Chigamba and Fatoki, 2011).

Improved performance will result from higher rates of customer retention and satisfaction, which will help businesses stand out and acquire a competitive edge (Rizan et al., 2014; Clark and Melancon, 2013; Muhammad and Abdul, 2012). Several academics have stressed the significance of customer happiness and retention to a company's profitability and performance, as well as the multiple advantages that retained consumers bring (e.g., Du Plessis, 2010, Kheng et al. 2010, Gan et al. 2006, Sim et al. 2006). (Du Plessis, 2010). Social media is widely used by consumers and businesses, thus it's important for businesses to understand it. Around 70% of internet people utilised social networking services in 2013. (PewResearch 2019). Globally, Facebook has more than 1.2 billion users, according to McMillan (2013). Twitter gains 135,000 new users per day (StatisticBrain 2014). In the USA, 86 percent of the top 1000 firms use social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and blogs, according to study by Decpa and Deshmukh (2011). Also, research demonstrates that clients who communicate with

businesses on social media are more devoted and spend more money with them (Nadeem 2012).

Nonetheless, others have forecast the demise of social media despite its significance. Cannarella and Spechler (2013) predict that by 2017, Facebook's peak user base will have decreased by 80%. Their study uses epidemiological models, which are used to explain the development and recovery of infectious disease, to explain the adoption and abandonment of social media platforms. In response to this study, Lamberson (2014) from the Kellogg School of Management said that Cannarella and Spechler's (2013) model does not take into consideration an alternative to Facebook and that users will need a reliable substitute before quitting the social networking site.

2.7 Empirical Review

To better understand how social media affects customer satisfaction in the communication sector, Rootman and Cuup (2015) performed research. The study's objective was to ascertain the effects of social media's advantages, client trust, and content on customer satisfaction and retention in the telecommunications sector. A questionnaire was used in an empirical investigation to gather responses from 150 clients and 30 managers. The results of statistical analyses showed a strong correlation between client happiness and both advantages and reliability. The study's findings may enable businesses in the communications sector to use social media to enhance customer relationship management.

A study on the effects of social media on customer relationship management by Sueghwan and Dea-young (2020) shows that social media is at the heart of all contemporary communication. The study also showed that most businesses used

social media as a communication tool to keep customers updated as well as for branding, e-commerce, and research. According to the report, 83% of businesses' online operations tracked customer satisfaction because most consumer complaints were sent via various social media platforms.

Social media marketing is a useful tool for managing current customer relationships as well as for cultivating new ones through online commerce, connection, and communication, according to research by Ramsaran-Fowdar and Fowdar (2013). This strengthens the argument that social media platforms may be used to raise consumer happiness. The results showed how social media contributes to assuring consumer happiness. Another study by Muhammad and Abdul (2012), which showed that social media helps to ensure consumer happiness, supports these findings.

Naidoo (2011) also did another study on the efficiency of Gauteng's social media advertising. The study focused on Facebook as a social media platform and sought to identify significant correlations and factors that influence the performance of advertisements there. The results of the study showed that globalization, digitization, and social media are transforming advertising. The results demonstrate that several companies are now promoting their goods on social media sites including Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and YouTube.

Research by Mutsiliwa (2013) in Zimbabwe looked at the idea of relationship marketing in the country's telecommunications industry, concentrating on the effect of relationship marketing on customer satisfaction in the lowveld region. According to the report, organisations must meet consumer expectations since they are becoming increasingly customer centric. The survey found that social media has a

key role in assisting businesses in meeting customer expectations. The study was conducted using a descriptive survey, and interview candidates were chosen using a practical sampling strategy. There are 110 participants in the research; 50 are from Chiredzi and 50 are from Triangle.

Braimah et al. (2013) carried out a comparable study in the Ghanaian hospitality sector. The study showed how crucial customer relationship management is to maintaining client loyalty. 300 surveys from first-class luxury hotels in Ghana were completed to get the data. The influence of six essential marketing practices—trust, competence, communication commitment, conflict managing communication, and relational bonds—on client loyalty was examined using descriptive analysis and factor analysis.

A study on the effect of customer relationship management on customer loyalty in the Ghanaian mobile business was undertaken by Wellbeck et al. in 2013. The research used six relationship marketing strategies, including commitment, skill in addressing conflicts, trust, and communication. The study showed a favourable association between each of the six relationship marketing strategies and client loyalty. 40 closed-ended questions in all were utilised to collect the data.

2.9 Chapter summary

This chapter presented literature on conceptual definitions, the theoretical framework, the impact of social media on customer knowledge the impact of social media on customer satisfaction and the impact of social medial on two-way communication. The next chapter presents the study's methodology.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the research approach employed in this study. The chapter discusses the methodology and data collection methods, population and sample procedures, questionnaire administration, methods of data analysis, validity, and reliability, as well as the ethical aspects. The study further utilises an exploratory research approach. This study makes use of a quantitative research approach. Since the study is quantitative in nature, it relies on a questionnaire as the main research instrument. The sample method that was employed is simple random sampling.

3.2 Research Philosophy

The basis for this study is the positivist philosophy because of the topic under study which sought to assess issues revolving around the utilisation of social media marketing by TelOne for the purposes of retaining customers. The positivist approach is quantitative, logical, and includes controls that make it easier to test a hypothesis using a structured technique (Blanche et al., 2006). The goal of this approach is to offer explanations pertaining to the informal correlations between variables. The positivist approach was chosen owing to the quantitative nature of the research being pursued. The type of information necessary to effectively fulfil the study's objectives in analysing the influence of social media marketing on customer retention at TelOne also played a role in the researcher's selection of research methodology. Working with visible social reality is what positivism means, and among its benefits are the facilitation of independence and freedom from the observer. Cooper and Schindler (2014) provide an additional case that

positivism emphasises objectivity and numerical analysis. Since this research is influenced by positivism, a quantitative methods approach will be used. Furthermore, positivism will be employed in this study to generate numerical data concerning the factors surrounding the influence of social media marketing on customer retention at TelOne. Therefore, positivism will be used in this study because it is trustworthy and makes it easier to replicate results.

3.3 Research approach

The research adopted the deductive approach. This will be because, the positivist approach is quantitative and is thus deductive as it seeks to proffer explanations regarding the casual association which exists amongst variables and employs controls which play a part in terms of facilitating the testing of a particular hypothesis using a structured methodology (Babin et al., 2012). The sort of data required to appropriately handle the research study's challenges affects the researcher's decision on research technique (Saunders et al., 2009).

3.4 Research Design

A research design is described by Burns and Bush (2010) as a planning process that explicitly outlines the methods and steps to take while gathering and analysing the required data. A research design is a sequence of decisions made in advance that, when combined, form a picture of how the inquiry will be carried out (Bryman, 2008). It is a detailed strategy of how a researcher intends to carry out a study. A research design, according to Kumar (2011), consists of a framework for the selection of the how, where, when, and what to measure and analyse data for the research. An exploratory research design will be employed in this study. The objective of the exploratory research design is to investigate a particular study phenomenon to comprehend the root causes of certain occurrences occurring in a particular context in great detail (Saunders et al, 2009). Exploratory research will

be used in the study because it helps the researcher comprehend the problems related to TelOne's use of social media marketing as a strategy for boosting client retention. The exploratory research design had a part to play in any study as it ensures that the proper research methods are employed to reach the objectives set out in the first chapter. Exploratory research will be employed in the study because it enabled the researcher to reply to the research questions as plainly as feasible (Kothari and Gaurav, 2019). This approach has an advantage in that, it solves logical problems.

3.5 Research Strategies

Quantitative information will be acquired for this investigation. The researcher will be able to gather, classify, and organise data using quantitative analysis to prepare it for statistical analysis. A hypothesis is generated and then methodically examined through quantitative research, which makes the process more impartial. Quantitative research uses measurement that is valid, trustworthy, and capable of being generalised with a clear understanding of cause and effect (Blanche et al., 2006). Since it allowed the researcher to create a hypothesis and test it using organised procedures, quantitative data will be gathered for this study. Also, this method assisted the researcher in avoiding bias when collecting and outlining information about the problems associated with the use of social media marketing as a technique for fostering customer retention at TelOne. Furthermore, the researcher will use this strategy because, in their opinion, measurement in quantitative research is valid, dependable, and capable of being generalised with clear predictions of cause and effect (Blanche et al., 2006). The researcher will be able to gather, classify, and organise data using quantitative analysis to prepare it for statistical analysis. This strategy, however, works better when a study has to quantify clear cause and effect connections between pre-selected and discrete

variables. Quantitative research may be more thorough in its application, but it is rigid and does not allow for unexpected discoveries for the development of new theories. Quantitative data will be gathered using questionnaires.

3.6 Methodology and Data Collection Methods

Secondary sources of data will be used in this study. Bryman (2008:509) states that the advantage of secondary sources of data is that they allow for findings to be cross-checked. The secondary methods that will be utilised by the researcher include, documentary review such as academic books, journal articles and research articles on social media marketing as well as TelOne company reports. Additionally, primary sources of data will be consulted in this study. According to Kothari and Gaurav (2019), primary data are facts that are gathered especially for a research study and are meticulously prepared to achieve the research objectives. Since the research utilised a quantitative methods approach, the researcher made use of close-ended questionnaires and documentary search (triangulation).

3.6.1 Questionnaire development

For the purposes of this study, a questionnaire with closed-ended questions will be employed. The survey that will be utilised in this investigation had a 5-point Likert scale. This questionnaire will be chosen because it is easier to standardise responses. Additionally, the researcher utilised this type of questionnaires because it is easy and quick to create and interpret. The researcher made use of self-administered questionnaires to get information from participants, i.e. both managerial and non-managerial employees at TelOne. Questionnaires have an advantage in that the absence of the researcher does not intimidate the responses by the participants, but it gives them time to think about their answers and give honest responses. Also, the questions are easy to standardize thus making the results more reliable which in turn facilitated the easier presentation, analysis, and discussion of

findings. However, questionnaires have a weakness in that they offer rigid responses and where the researcher cannot probe further the study's subjects.

3.6.2 Population and sampling techniques

A population was described by Bless and Higson-Smith (1995) as the total group of the people and things the researcher wished to examine. The variables that the researcher wants to study are all present in a population. According to Polit and Hungler (1993), it is crucial that the researcher carefully defines and describes the population and specifies the requirements to be included in the population. This research's unit of analysis will be TelOne. To give this researcher clear parameter of operation in this study, the researcher targeted the population consisting of all the employees at TelOne's headquarters in Harare.

In terms of sample sizes, the researcher will utilise a sample since the study population will be too large and thus cannot be entirely studied within the required time frame. According to Kothari and Gaurav (2019) sample size is the number of items (people or things) that must be included in a drawn sample to provide acceptable representation of the given target population. The target population of 110 managerial and non-managerial employees will be used in determining the size of the sample. The table below shows the study's sample size.

Table 1. Sample size.

Respondent group	Sample Size
Managerial Employees	10
Non-Managerial Employees	100
Total	110

Source: Researcher, 2022

3.6.3 Sampling methods

Sample selection, according to Turner (2003:3), entails selecting certain study subjects from a wider population. The two basic types of sampling strategies employed in research are probability and non-probability procedures. A probability sampling approach gives each unit a known chance of being included in the final sample. Probability sampling strategies include stratified random sampling, basic random sampling, and systematic random sampling. Non-probability sampling is a technique where the selection of each sample unit is a secret. Non-probability sampling techniques include convenience sampling, judgemental sampling, quota sampling, and snowball sampling. Since this will be a quantitative study, the researcher chose the study's participants using a simple random sample procedure. Simple random sampling, a probability sampling strategy, ensures that each member of the target population and each prospective sample of a given size has an equal chance of being picked. A simple random sampling method will be used to choose a sample of managerial and non-managerial at TelOne. Each member of the population had an equal chance of being picked using a simple random sampling approach, which produced a sample size that correctly mirrored the whole population.

3.6.4 Methods of data analysis

The study gathered quantitative data, necessitating the use of a quantitative approach to data analysis. The social sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel will be employed to analyse the collected primary data. As part of the data analysis for this study, descriptive statistics will be calculated to offer an overview of the replies from the participants. After being gathered from the field, the information will be examined for consistency, accuracy, completeness, and relevance to the study's stated research problem. After analysis, the data will be compiled and sorted into

manageable, user-friendly forms that will be obtained using questionnaires and other secondary sources. The gathered information will be displayed textually, graphically, and in tables, pie charts, and graphs. Microsoft Excel and SPSS Version 27 will both be utilised to analyse the quantitative data. To analyse the qualitative data in this study more carefully, content and topic analyses will be performed.

3.6.5 Ethical Considerations

The ethical issues will be carefully considered in this study. In addition to abiding by the rules and other pertinent policies of the Midlands State University and any other institutions that will be consulted during the research, such as TelOne, all aspects of what right or wrong behaviour will be upheld. The general ethical issue here is that the research design shouldn't put the research population through harm, embarrassment, or any other kind of material disadvantage, according to Saunders et al. (2009:160). As a result, crucial factors like informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity will be considered. Respondents received assurances from the researcher that all data would be treated in strict confidence. No identification will be needed to complete questionnaires to comply with this requirement. To ensure that the study is based on voluntary participation, the researcher first asked the participants for their consent. The researcher attained this by outlining the study's objectives, in this case its academic goals, and then soliciting willing participation from the respondents. Additionally, no social media platforms or the press will be given access to the information that will be gathered.

10. Work plan

Activity	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov
Problem Identification						
Writing Research Proposal						
Submission of Research Proposal						
Further Literature Review						
Data Collection and Documents Review						
Distribution of questionnaires and interviews						
Data Analysis						
Submission of Draft Research						
Revision of Draft Research						
Final Submission						

11. Proposed budget

Item	Cost
Laptop	USD\$ 700.00
Voice Recorder	USD\$ 50.00
Stationery	USD\$ 20.00
Wifi and Data	USD\$ 200.00
Airtime	USD\$ 150.00
TOTAL	USD\$ 1120.00

3.7 Chapter Summary

The study's research methodology was presented in this chapter. The chapter covered the population, sample, sample size, sampling techniques, data sources, research instruments, and data collection process. It also covered the research design and approach. The study adopted a quantitative methodology. A straightforward random sampling technique was used throughout the research. The primary data collection tool was a closed-ended questionnaire. The study's results are presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the study's methodology. This chapter presents the analysis of data which was gathered from both the structured interviews. This chapter analyse, present, and interpret findings of the study based on responses from the study participants. To that effect the chapter will first look at the respondent rate and then the respondent demographics before delving into the major themes that emanated from the findings of this study. Tables, charts, and narrative presentations of the data are used. SPSS and Excel were used to record and analyse the data that is provided in this chapter, which was gathered using questionnaires. The recommendations and findings in chapter five are based on this chapter. The chapter is structured in accordance with the study's objectives as set out in the first chapter.

4.2 Response rate

The primary information obtained through questionnaires. The secondary data was obtained through published material such as journals and other publications. The researcher targeted 10 managers as well as 100 Non-managerial Employees at TelOne's Headquarters in Harare. Table 2 below represents the response rate of the questionnaires.

Table 2. Distribution of Questionnaires

Respondents	Questionnaires Distributed	Questionnaires Returned	Percentage
Managerial Employees	10	8	80%
Non-managerial Employees	100	90	90%
Total	110	92	84%

Source: *Survey (2023)*

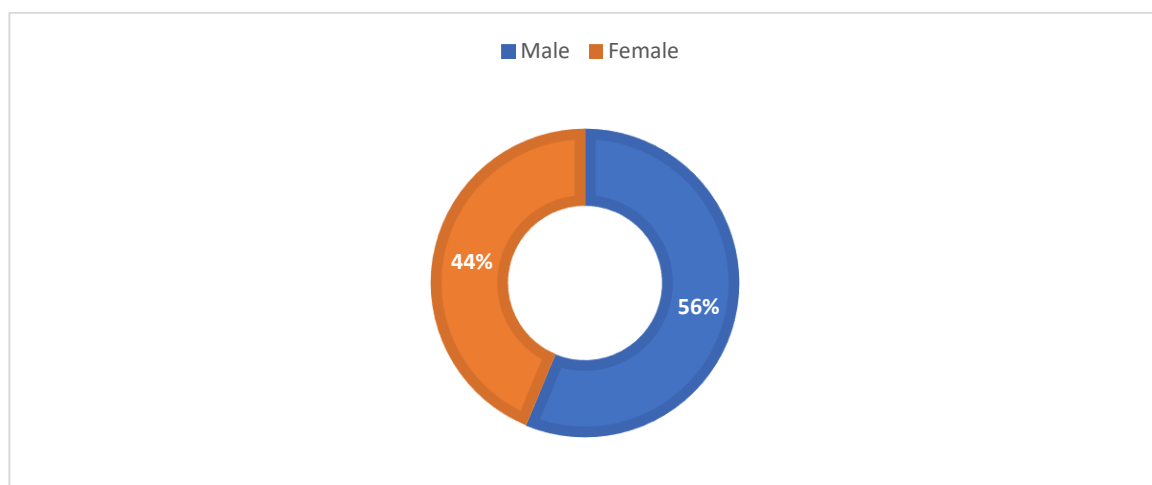
A sample of 110 respondents was selected and questionnaires were distributed to them. A total of 92 questionnaires were returned. The response rate was 84% with 95% of valid responses and 5% of spoilt questionnaires. A total of 12 questionnaires were never returned. According to Saunders et al. (2016), a response rate of over 60% is generally considered to be representative of the population, with a response rate of less than 60% being viewed as biased and not fully representative of the entire population. Based on this belief, the researcher believed the response rate to be a suitable representation of the population and used it as the basis for data analysis. Returned and completed questionnaires were the base for computing the results. Data collected was then analysed using SPSS and Excel. All the quantified responses were then presented in percentage form, tables, charts, and graphs. The questionnaires were structured in such a way that research objectives were answered in their correct order.

4.3 Demographic Characteristics

This section sought to understand the demographic information of the respondents for the research to establish the level of knowledge that they have with regards to research subject of matter.

4.3.1 Gender Distributions

Figure 1. Gender Distribution of Respondents



Source: *Survey (2023)*

According to the study's findings, 44% of respondents were women and 56% were men. Hence, men made up the bulk of research participants. This possible indicates to the fact that there are more male employees at TelOne Headquarters in Harare. According to Palgrave (2017), it is vital that modern studies are gender sensitive to give balanced perceptions and this further enables the researcher to proffer a range of responses that reflect gender balance.

4.3.2 Respondents' Age

Table 3 Age of Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 25	42	38
26 – 30	28	25
31 – 40	19	17
41 – 50	12	11
51 +	9	8

Source: *Survey (2023)*

According to the study's findings, 38% of respondents were under the age of 25, 25% were between the ages of 26 and 30, 17% were between the ages of 31 and 40, 11% were between the ages of 41 and 50, and 8% were among those aged 51 and above. Hence, it is clear from the study's findings that most of the respondents who took part in this survey were under the age of 25. This is since young people make up the bulk of the workforce at the organization. This means that the responses obtained by the researcher in this study represented more the views of a youthful population.

4.3.3 Period of Association with the TelOne

The duration of the respondents' relationship with TelOne was another goal of the study and the results are indicated below.

Table 4. Period of Association with TelOne

Number of Years	Number of Respondents
Less than 1 year	25%
1 – 5 years	38%
6 – 10 years	22%
More than 10 years	15%

Source: Author

From the above presented data, it can be noted that 25% of the respondents had been associated with TelOne for Less than 1 year; 38% for between 1 to 5 years, 22% for between 6 to 10 years and 15% for more than 10 years. This finding shows that most respondents that took part in the study had been with the company long enough for them to have adequate knowledge on how the company operates.

4.4 To assess the relationship between social media marketing and customer retention at TelOne.

The researcher sought to examine the relationship between social media marketing and customer retention at TelOne. To answer this question, the researcher distributed a questionnaire which asked the following questions: Is there a relationship between social media marketing and customer relationship management at TelOne? Does social media marketing influence customer knowledge at TelOne? Is social media marketing significant for promoting customer retention at TelOne? and What are the most common forms of social media marketing that are used at TelOne. The responses obtained from the questionnaires that were distributed by the researcher are depicted in table 5 below.

Table 5. The relationship between social media marketing and customer retention at TelOne.

Questions	Response (%)				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Is there a relationship between social media marketing and customer relationship management at TelOne?	43	31	12	8	6
Does social media marketing influence customer knowledge at TelOne?	45	29	8	10	8
Is social media marketing important in terms of promoting customer retention at TelOne?	46	27	10	12	5

Source: *Survey (2023)*

The researcher sought to find out the perceptions on respondents on whether there is a relationship between social media marketing and customer relationship

management at TelOne. The data collected from questionnaires showed that, 43% Strongly Agreed, 31% Agreed, 12% were Neutral, 8% Disagreed, and 6% who Strongly Disagreed. The study also aimed to determine whether social media marketing indeed affects customer knowledge at TelOne. From the responses obtained from questionnaires, it was revealed that 45% Strongly Agreed, 29% Agreed, 8% were Neutral, 10% Disagreed and 8% Strongly Disagreed. Respondents were also asked their opinions on if social media marketing is important in terms of promoting customer retention at TelOne. The results show that, 46% Strongly Agreed, 27% Agreed, 10% were Neutral, 12% Disagreed and 5% Strongly Disagreed. This shows that, most of the respondents believed that, indeed there is a relationship between social media marketing and customer relationship management at TelOne. Results of this study indicated that social media marketing is a beneficial tool that can be implemented for the purposes of managing existing consumer relationships while also fostering new ones by promoting online dialogue. Additionally, participants in the current study highlighted the significant role of social media marketing in influencing customer knowledge. Results from the study further indicated that, TelOne has been effectively using several social networks to promote brand awareness, to improve a brand's image and secure customer knowledge. Some of the social media marketing strategies that were mentioned include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp and the TelOne self-service portal. Therefore, using social media pages like Facebook and Twitter companies can be able to effectively know what our customers want and what they need from the services they offer.

Therefore, the results from the study showed that all participants agree that social media marketing has been effective in promoting products and engage with their

customer base to establish a firm ground for customer knowledge. In addition to those participants, indicated how Facebook, Twitter and Instagram can be utilized as an effective tool on enhancing corporate image participants agreed that Facebook publicity messages can change their attitude and perceptions towards a company. These findings are in line with the literature reviewed which showed that businesses aiming to strengthen their relationship with their consumers should consider integrating social media into customer interactions (Avlonitis and Panagopoulos, 2010). Additionally, it has been noted that, interacting with clients on social media platforms enables a business to learn more about them personally and learn about their interests, all while providing a human touch that strengthens customer connections (Ryan and Jones, 2016).

4.5 To assess the challenges experienced in utilising social media as a customer retention tool at TelOne.

The study also sought to assess the challenges experienced in utilizing social media as a customer retention tool at TelOne. To answer this question, the researcher distributed a questionnaire which asked the following questions: Are there any challenges experienced in using social media marketing as a tool for customer satisfaction at TelOne? Do the challenges encountered in utilizing social media marketing affect customer satisfaction at TelOne? and What are the most common challenges experienced in utilising social media marketing as a tool for customer retention at TelOne? The responses obtained from the questionnaires that were distributed by the researcher are depicted in table 4.5 below.

Table 6. Responses to perceptions on the challenges experienced in utilising social media as a customer retention tool at TelOne.

Questions	Response (%)				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Are there any challenges experienced in using social media marketing as a tool for customer satisfaction at TelOne?	43	31	12	8	6
Do the challenges faced in implementing social media marketing affect customer satisfaction at TelOne?	46	27	10	12	5
What are the most common challenges experienced in utilising social media marketing as a tool for customer retention at TelOne?	44	30	9	10	7

Source: *Survey (2023)*

The researcher sought to find out the perceptions on the challenges experienced in utilizing social media as a customer retention tool at TelOne. The data collected from questionnaires showed that, 43% Strongly Agreed, 31% Agreed, 12% were Neutral, 8% Disagreed, and 6% who Strongly Disagreed. This shows that, most of the respondents believed that, indeed there are challenges experienced in using social media marketing as a tool for customer satisfaction at TelOne. Respondents were also asked for their opinions on whether they believed that the challenges encountered in using social media marketing affect customer satisfaction at TelOne. The results show that, 46% Strongly Agreed, 27% Agreed, 10% were Neutral, 12% Disagreed and 5% Strongly Disagreed. Hence, it is clear from these data that most respondents believed that there exist challenges experienced in utilizing social

media as a customer retention tool at TelOne. The researcher further sought to find out the responses pertaining to the most common challenges experienced in utilising social media marketing as a tool for customer retention at TelOne. From the study's findings, it was revealed that there are several challenges which include privacy-related issues, social media distrust, misuse of personal data, identity theft, and disclosure. These findings are in line with the literature reviewed which showed that, there are certain advantages to utilising social media marketing to retain clients, but there are also some disadvantages (Madiwa and Sibanda, 2018). It's further been noted that, social media platforms have a number of technological difficulties in addition to worries about users' privacy, many of which have been steadily overcome as the use of social networks has grown and Examples include the rules for marketing and promotion, the level of secrecy, its authentication, and authorization, the architecture of data transmission, data encryption, and decryption, as well as security breaches (Manzini et al., 2016).

4.6 To determine the implications of utilising social media in customer retention at TelOne.

Additionally, this study sought to determine the implications of utilising social media in customer retention at TelOne. This was done through asking the following questions: Are there any notable implications of utilising social media in customer retention at TelOne? Do the implications of utilising social media marketing affect customer retention at TelOne? And are these implications of utilising social media marketing as a tool for customer retention well-known to both customers and employees at TelOne? The responses obtained from the questionnaires that were distributed by the researcher are depicted in table 7 below.

Table 7. Results on the implications of utilising social media in customer retention at TelOne.

Questions	Response (%)				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Are there any notable implications of utilising social media in customer retention at TelOne?	35	17	5	29	14
Do the implications of utilising social media marketing affect customer retention at TelOne?	38	25	13	19	5
Are these implications of utilising social media marketing as a tool for customer retention well-known to both customers and employees at TelOne?	40	26	10	14	10

Source: *Survey (2023)*

The goal of the study was to determine the implications of utilising social media in customer retention at TelOne. According to the results, 5% were neutral, 17% disagreed, and 14% strongly disagreed, with 35% strongly agreeing and 29% agreeing. Consequently, the opinion that there are notable implications of utilising social media in customer retention at TelOne was shared by the majority of respondents. The researcher also wanted to know if the implications of utilising social media marketing affect customer retention at TelOne. According to the results, 38% of respondents strongly agreed, 25% said they agreed, 13% said they

were neutral, 19% disagreed, and 5% strongly disagreed. As a result, most respondents shared the opinion that the implications of utilizing social media marketing actually do affect customer retention at TelOne. In addition, the researcher sought to find out if these implications of utilizing social media marketing as a tool for customer retention well-known to both customers and employees at TelOne. From the study's findings, 40% Strongly Agreed, 26% Agreed, 10% were Neutral, 14% Disagreed and 10% Strongly Disagreed. Therefore, it is apparent that, most respondents agreed that the implications of utilizing social media marketing as a tool for customer retention are well-known to both customers and employees at TelOne. Therefore, findings in this regard show that, there exists some notable implications of utilizing social media in customer retention at TelOne.

From the findings of this study, it is apparent that social media can be an effective tool which can be used to gain new customers and increase customer satisfaction. The use of social media platforms for marketing enables customers to get all the relevant information and services they require about a product at the same time saving the time they would have spent while physically interacting with the services provider. These findings are in line with the literature reviewed which showed that the introduction of social media has strengthened two-way communication (Tuten, 2008). It has further been noted that, a company will have a better understanding of the opinions, concerns, and ideas of its customers, which it can then employ to enhance both its goods and customer service (Andzulis et al 2012).

4.7 Statistical Analysis

4.7.1 Reliability test

The researcher ran a reliability test on the study equipment to ensure internal consistency. Cronbach's Alpha, often known as the dependability coefficient,

measures how effectively the research materials are positively related to one another.

Table 8. Reliability test

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.984	

Source: Survey (2023)

The Cronbach's Alpha value should be 0.70 or higher for the instrument to be reliable. The table above is showing a Cronbach's alpha value of **0.984** which indicates a relatively high internal consistency for the instrument with the study sample.

4.7.2 The relationship between social media marketing and customer retention at TelOne

The following was a regression model on the relationship between social media marketing and customer retention at TelOne.

Regression model at 95% confidence interval

$$\text{Work-life balance} = a + B(\text{employee productivity}) + e$$

a = the alpha of the regression equation

B = is the beta coefficient which measures how the percentage change in the independent variable would change the dependent variable

e = the regression error term which how work-life balance and employee productivity at TelOne was not included in the equation because they were not quantifiable

Table 9. Regression of social media marketing and customer retention at TelOne

P value	0.04
Coefficient	-4.46
R square	0.69

R square, which was the coefficient of determination, was found to be 0.69 which was a positive correlation ship. P was 0.04, and coefficient was -4.46. Variables are considered not related when the coefficient the coefficient of determination is zero.

The results of the regression indicated a negative relationship between social media marketing and customer retention at TelOne. The use of social media marketing resulted in increased customer retention. Findings from literature reviewed confirmed the regression model. The findings postulated that a decrease in social media marketing resulted in decreased customer retention by 4.46%. this meant that, improving the use of social media marketing is a crucial factor in improving customer retention at TelOne.

4.7.3 Hypotheses Conclusions

H0: Social media marketing influences customer retention at TelOne.

H1: Social media marketing does not influence customer retention at TelOne.

It's a 2 tailed test and testing at 5 % significance level.

Testing at 5% significance level

$\alpha = 0.05$ (5%)

$X^2 \text{ - critical} = X^2_{(\alpha)(df)}$

The study thus accepts the hypothesis that:

Social media marketing influences customer retention at TelOne.

4.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided a presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data collected in this study. It can be noted that the thematic approach was implemented to analyse the major themes and related sub-themes that emanated from this study as guided by the research objectives. The chapter gave a clear discussion of the findings of the study. To that effect, the major themes that were analysed in this chapter include: the relationship between social media marketing and customer retention, the challenges experienced in utilising social media as a customer retention and the implications of utilising social media in customer retention. The following chapter presents the study's conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the research findings, the conclusions and the recommendations based on the findings of this study. In this final chapter the researcher discusses the findings and review the issues that emerged from the study, at the same time highlighting the relation of the findings to previous studies. The chapter also highlights and gives the contribution of this study to the existing body of literature and draw possible conclusions. In addition to that the chapter will also highlight the recommendations to future studies.

5.2 Discussion of results

The primary objective of this study was to evaluate the influence of social media marketing on customer retention, with a focus on the case of TelOne. To that effect this study sought to assess the relationship between social media marketing and customer retention at TelOne. The study further sought to assess the challenges experienced in utilising social media as a customer retention tool at TelOne. Finally, the study went on to inquire to determine the implications of utilising social media in customer retention at TelOne. It is important to note that the research was quantitative in nature and therefore questionnaires were used for data collection. TelOne employees addressed and emphasized various issues pertaining to the influence of social media marketing on customer retention, particularly focusing on the TelOne case.

5.3 Summary and Conclusions

This section presents the summary and conclusions of this study.

5.3.1 The relationship between social media marketing and customer retention at TelOne

This study sought to assess the relationship between social media marketing and customer retention at TelOne. From the study's findings in this regard, it was revealed that, indeed there is a relationship between social media marketing and customer relationship management at TelOne. It was noted that social media marketing is a beneficial tool that can be implemented for the purposes of managing existing consumer relationships while also fostering new ones by promoting online dialogue. Moreover, the study observed that social media marketing plays a significant role in influencing customer knowledge. As a result, TelOne has been effectively using several social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp and the TelOne self-service portal to promote brand awareness, to improve a brand's image and secure customer knowledge. Some of the social media marketing strategies that were mentioned include. Social media marketing has been effective in promoting products and engage with their customer base to establish a firm ground for customer knowledge. Therefore, this study concludes that there is a strong relationship between social media marketing and customer retention at TelOne.

5.3.2 To assess the challenges experienced in utilising social media as a customer retention tool at TelOne.

The study sought to assess the challenges experienced in utilising social media as a customer retention tool at TelOne. The study's findings revealed that, there exists challenges experienced in utilizing social media as a customer retention tool at TelOne. It was also noted that there are several challenges which include privacy-related issues, social media distrust, misuse of personal data, identity theft, and

disclosure. This study therefore concludes that, there are several challenges experienced in utilising social media as a customer retention tool at TelOne.

5.3.3 To determine the implications of utilising social media in customer retention at TelOne.

The study also sought to determine the implications of utilising social media in customer retention at TelOne. It was noted that, there are notable implications of utilising social media in customer retention at TelOne. The study further revealed that, the implications of utilizing social media marketing do affect customer retention at TelOne. In addition, the study showed that, the implications of utilizing social media marketing as a tool for customer retention are well-known to both customers and employees at TelOne. Therefore, findings in this regard show that, there exists some notable implications of utilizing social media in customer retention at TelOne. It was also noted that social media can be an effective tool which can be used to gain new customers and increase customer satisfaction since the use of social media platforms for marketing enables customers to get all of the relevant information and services, they require about a product at the same time saving the time they would have spent while physically interacting with the services provider. This study therefore concludes that there are several implications of utilising social media in customer retention at TelOne, as outlined above.

5.4 Recommendations

The development of social networks has transformed the communication landscape; companies are no longer co-creators of marketing information as consumers have been empowered to share their experiences with several online peers. This has enabled companies to maintain positive consumer relations however this is a very

important and new phenomenon as such it against this background that the researcher recommends the following:

- From a company perspective there is a huge potential in the social media and with the vast resources within the telecommunications industry, they should consider expanding their social media strategies to include online surveys and Blogs for product reviews, for example writing opinionated content on the blogs would enable the company to initiate conversation which will enhance the level at which people would want to engage with the brands.
- Telecommunications companies should measure their social media marketing metrics, for example if they want to measure brand awareness and customer satisfaction, they will need to monitor growth, likes, subscribers and reviews.
- In addition, there is need for more business owners to gain an awareness of the benefits to using social media strategies to help them grow their businesses and determine which of those platforms would be best for their target audience.
- There is need for business owners to keep abreast of social media trends and learn how to use the platforms as a strategy that will business owners ahead of their competitors.

5.5 Recommendations on future studies

The focus of this study was to evaluate the influence of social media marketing on customer retention, with a specific focus on the case of TelOne. During the research

process on the effects of social media marketing on consumer relationships, the researcher identified a need for further exploration into the role of social media marketing in company performance within the telecommunication services sector. Future studies can examine how social media marketing affects other factors such as company performance. As this study only looked at TelOne, which is one entity, a comparable study looking at other entities within the telecommunication industry on Zimbabwe may be conducted. This will allow the study's conclusions to be fully generalised and used throughout the telecommunications sector.

5.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has served the purpose of concluding the entire research project. In so doing it managed to discuss the findings of this research, while comparing them with the findings of preceding studies in the same area. The last chapter relatively managed to reveal the necessary recommendations to this study as well as the recommendations for further study.

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APPENDICIES

APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire Survey Instrument

My name is Blessing Nengomasha, I am a master's student at Africa University, and I am conducting research entitle, **ANALYSING THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON CUSTOMER RETENTION AT TELONE**. Therefore, I am kindly requesting for your participation in completing the below survey questionnaire. The data gathered will be used strictly for academic purposes and all your responses will be held with confidentiality. Your participation will be greatly appreciated.

Participant instructions:

- **Please select an answer in Section A by circling the appropriate response.**
- **For other responses in this questionnaire, please indicate your response by ticking the appropriate box.**
- **For some questions more than one response may apply, kindly select by circling as many responses as capture what you want to say.**
- **Please write comments in the spaces provided.**

Section A

1. Gender

- a. Male
- b. Female

2. What is your age group?

- a. 18-25
- b. 26-35
- c. 36-50
- d. 51+

3. How long have you been working/ associated with TelOne?

- a. Less than 1 year
- b. 1-5 years
- c. 6-10 years
- d. More than 10 years

Section B: To assess the relationship between social media marketing and customer retention at TelOne.

4. Is there a relationship between social media marketing and customer relationship management at TelOne?

Strongly Agree	
Agree	
Neutral	
Disagree	
Strongly Disagree	

5. Does social media marketing have an influence on customer retention at TelOne?

Strongly Agree	
Agree	
Neutral	
Disagree	
Strongly Disagree	

6. Is social media marketing important in terms of promoting customer retention at TelOne?

Strongly Agree	
Agree	
Neutral	
Disagree	

Strongly Disagree	
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7. **What are the most common forms of social media marketing that are used at TelOne**

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SECTION C: To assess the challenges experienced in utilising social media as a customer retention tool at TelOne.

8. **Are there any challenges experienced in using social media marketing as a tool for customer satisfaction at TelOne?**

Strongly Agree	
Agree	
Neutral	
Disagree	
Strongly Disagree	

9. **Do the challenges experienced in using social media marketing affect customer satisfaction at TelOne?**

Strongly Agree	
Agree	
Neutral	
Disagree	
Strongly Disagree	

10. **What are the most common challenges experienced in utilising social media marketing as a tool for customer retention at TelOne?**

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SECTION D: To determine the implications of utilising social media in customer retention at TelOne.

11. Are there any notable implications of utilising social media in customer retention at TelOne?

Strongly Agree	
Agree	
Neutral	
Disagree	
Strongly Disagree	

12. Do the implications of utilising social media marketing affect customer retention at TelOne?

Strongly Agree	
Agree	
Neutral	
Disagree	
Strongly Disagree	

13. Are these implications of utilising social media marketing as a tool for customer retention well-known to both customers and employees at TelOne?

Strongly Agree	
Agree	
Neutral	
Disagree	
Strongly Disagree	

SECTION E: To proffer recommendations for improving the use of social media marketing as a tool for customer retention at TelOne.

14. Can the use of social media marketing can be used to improve customer retention at TelOne.

Strongly Agree	
Agree	
Neutral	
Disagree	
Strongly Disagree	

15. Which measures can be adopted so as to improve the use of social media marketing as a tool for customer retention at TelOne?

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END OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank You for taking time to fill out this Questionnaire.

APPENDIX 2: INFORMED CONSENT GUIDE

My name is Blessing Nengomasha, a final year (EMBA) student from AU. I am carrying out a study on Analysing The Effect of Social Media Marketing on Customer Retention at Telone. I am kindly asking you to participate in this study by answering the questionnaires and the interviews.

The purpose of the study is to see what social media marketing has on customer retention. You were selected for the study because the sampling method used to identify individuals was to pick 20 managerial employees and 100 non managerial employees to make a total of 120 participants.

If you decide to participate you will contribute to the research that I am taking and help in gather data for my research and future research. It is expected that this will take a month to for all the participants to take part.

We will maintain the confidentiality of the information you provide during this study. Personal information that can identify you, such as your name or where you live, will not be shared beyond the study team. All data collected will be stored securely and only accessible to authorized members of the research team. Procedures for safeguarding personal information, maintaining confidentiality, and de-identifying (anonymizing) data will be followed, especially in relation to data archiving and reuse.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to refuse to answer any questions and to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. Your decision to participate or not participate will not affect your relationship with the researchers or Telone in any way.

Before you sign this form, please ask any questions on any aspect of this study that is unclear to you. You may take as much time as necessary to think it over.

If you have decided to participate in this study please sign this form in the space provide below as an indication that you have read and understood the information provided above and have agreed to participate.

Name of Research Participant (please print)

Date

Signature of Research Participant or legally authorised representative

If you have any questions concerning this study or consent form beyond those answered by the researcher including questions about the research, your rights as a research participant, or if you feel that you have been treated unfairly and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, please feel free to contact the Africa University Research Ethics Committee on telephone (020) 60075 or 60026 extension 1156 email aurec@africau.edu

Name of Researcher -----

APPENDIX 3: RESEACH APPROVAL NOTE



ACADEMIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

A UNITED METHODIST-RELATED INSTITUTION

P.O BOX 1320, MUTARE, ZIMBABWE – TEL: (263-2020)60075/60026/61618 – CELL: +263 712 609 487 - VOIP: +263 8688002151 – EMAIL: aa@afriau.edu – WEBSITE: www.afriau.edu

May 29, 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This letter serves to confirm that Blessing NENGOMASHA, student number 221006, is a student at Africa University in the College of Business, Peace, Leadership and Governance. His studies in the Executive Master in Business Administration degree programme began in August 2022 and he is expected to complete them by the 30th of June 2024. The language of instruction throughout the programme is English

Any assistance given to him will be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,