

AFRICA UNIVERSITY

(A United Methodist Related Institution)

AN EVALUATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AT ECONET
WIRELESS PRIVATE LIMITED, ZIMBABWE.

BY

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO AFRICA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL
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Abstract

The research examined the effectiveness of social media marketing in the telecommunication industry, with Econet Wireless Private Limited Company Zimbabwe. 7Ps marketing mix model is the independent variable and AIDA model is the dependent variable in the conceptual framework. The research was based on quantitative research methodology as it focused on numbers and was based on positivism philosophy. Descriptive research design has been used for an in-depth understanding of social media marketing through Case study approach. Cross sectional approach was the time horizon used in the research. The population was obtained from Econet wireless records. Probability sampling through the use of simple random sampling was used in the selection of participants for the research. Data collection methods was through the use of interviews, questionnaires, analytics data and secondary data. Data analysis techniques was through descriptive statistics which was used to analyse data through calculation of mean, median, mode, standard deviation among others. Graphical presentation, tabular presentation as well as numerical presentation was used for data presentation. Z-testing was the inferential statistics design used in the research. Statistical data analysis was used for data presentation and analysis. Frequency analysis was used for data interpretation. The results of the research were that social media marketing is a significant marketing tool in the telecommunication industry. It provides brand awareness as well as influencing brand perception. There has been a significant relationship between social media marketing and purchasing intentions of different products and services at Econet Wireless. there are various factors which enhance social media marketing which includes political factors, economic factors, social factors, technological factors, environmental factors and legal factors. Various metrics can be used in measuring social media marketing such as using different metrics as well as Key Performance Indicators. Various challenges of social media marketing were also addressed. Recommendations include a shift in mobile telecommunication technology to 6G network, increased satellites systems so as to increase network connectivity, easy access to links for online markets, automation of customer services, improved cyber security as well as implementation Internet of Things.

Key words


Evaluation, Social, Media, Marketing, Wireless.

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 before, nor will it ever be submitted to another university for the award of a degree

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Student's Full Name

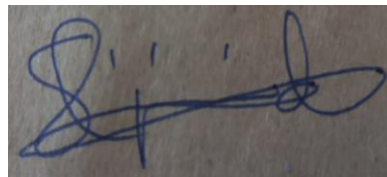


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Copyright Page

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Dedication Page

This special dedication goes to my parents who have always been my pillar of strength. It also goes to my family and my best friends Hazel Tandadzayi and Liberty Chataira who have always been there for me. I also dedicate this dissertation project to my supervisor Dr Shiripinda who assisted me during my research project.

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

HTML	:	Hyper Text Markup Language
IP	:	Internet Protocol
SEO	:	Search Engine Optimisation
SERP	:	Search Engine Results Page
TCP	:	Transmission Control Protocol

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions as well as objectives. It also provides significance of the study, assumptions, scope as well as limitations of the study.

1.2 Background to the study

Marketing can be defined as a process in which there is communication between suppliers who manufacture different products or services to clients or customers through which they offer solution to their problems. Marketing involves advertising, selling as well as delivering of either products or services offered by businesses to their different customers to enhance sales. Suppliers will be addressing the value of their products to the different users thereby influencing the purchasing intentions of the users. There are various roles that make marketing significant in business. This involves attracting attention so that the existence of product or service offered on market is known to both existing as well as potential customers. This motivates businesses to create innovative ideas which makes their marketing stand out against competitors, thereby increasing sales as well as profit.

Marketing can be categorised into two main groups which includes traditional marketing and modern marketing. Traditional marketing includes any form of marketing that is conducted offline for example through the use of billboards, newspapers, printed advertisements, radios as well as televisions. It has the benefit of physically engaging with target market in advertising the different products and services as well as reaching out to local areas. It promotes brand recall as well as

familiarity, memorability, visibility of the brand as targeted audiences can view the different products on billboards as well as other offline platforms. However, it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of customer engagement in offline marketing.

Modern marketing involves online marketing through engaging in personalised connections with individuals such as social media marketing, search engines, emails, websites and digital channels. It has the benefit of reaching out to massive audiences at low cost. Customer engagement can be measured on online marketing through different metrics such as measuring positive comments on the different online platforms. It improves brand loyalty. However, negative feedback negatively impacts different brands. It depends on the availability of technology such as internet connectivity for marketing to be effective.

Marketing process involves a systematic process of understanding the market, developing marketing strategies which are customer driven strategies based on established objectives to promote customer satisfaction. Analysing the different opportunities which are available in the market is the initial stage in the marketing process. It involves identifying the different wants and needs of the customers through comprehensive market research as well as customer segmentation. Understanding the environment is significant in marketing so as to understand different factors that affects customer behaviours such as political factors, economic factors, social factors, technical factors, environmental factors as well as legal factors so as to identify obstacles as well as opportunities which may benefit their businesses. Conducting competitor analysis thereby creating a unique value proposition that stands out from competitors, designing the marketing mix as well as creating branding strategy is of

significance in marketing. Developing as well as implementing marketing campaigns as well as monitoring and evaluating marketing activities is an important step in marketing.

Social media can be defined as platforms which are meant for online communication between different users. According to (Lutkevich, 2021), social media is a collective term for websites and applications that focus on communication, community based input, interaction, content sharing and collaboration. As a result, individuals use these social media platforms for interaction with family and friends as well as for business purposes. Social media marketing can be defined as use of social applications to market and promote different products and services as well as tracking customer concerns, (Lutkevich, 2021).

According to (Lutkevich, 2021), with social media business to consumer marketing, websites include social component such as comment fields for users, different tools to help businesses to track, measure as well as analyse the attention that the organisation gets from social media which includes brand perception as well as customer insights. This is through brand owners using their brand websites, magazines, Facebook pages, Instagram, twitter, televisions, radios, to advertise their products and customers responding through the social media platforms their feedback, views and comments on the advertised products and services thereby creating brand awareness as well as brand trust. This can be an effective tool for promoting customer relationships. According to (Addo, 2019), all over the world, the internet has provided extraordinary socioeconomic opportunities to businesses, governments, and individuals, but less developed countries still face numerous obstacles to maximise its potential.

Marketing is important in business as it forms a strong strategic framework for business to be profitable. It makes products or services offered by the business known to the users. It has the benefit of increasing Return on Investment (ROI) as it is a performance measure. It also has the benefit of connecting customers to the businesses as well as connecting businesses to the customers. Through connecting businesses to the customers, it has the benefit of businesses to understand what customers demand or need as well as what they value on the market so as to produce customers desires. This can be achieved through social media as they can advertise products as well as view that comments of the customers on the comment section so as to analyse whether products offered are satisfying customer needs. The goal of marketing is to improve sales through advertising to massive audience at low cost and this can be achieved through social media marketing through the different platforms that can be advertised thereby reaching to massive audiences.

There are various stakeholders in marketing. These includes the organisation that produces the products and services, the target market that comprises of the current customers, prospective customers, customers who are socially connected to the current customers as well as the different investors.

Although social media marketing is an effective tool to reach out to social media users, it has the disadvantage of limiting audiences that use other digital as well as traditional channels such as magazines, televisions, radios among others. Unlike traditional marketing strategies such as using posters to advertise different products of different brands, social media marketing has the disadvantage of negative comments which may tarnish the reputation of the organisation thereby reducing the attitude of customers to

purchase. It also has the negative effect of exposing the marketing strategies to competitors thereby reducing sales. According to (Dean, 2021), social media is being used by an estimate of 7.7 billion users around the world with 40% of all internet users' worldwide using social media for business purposes. In the United States of America, only 27% of people actively use social media in their jobs, compared with the highest by country in Indonesia at 65%, or the lowest at 13% in Israel, (Dean, 2021).

In most of African countries, they still have internet connectivity bandwidth as low as 64 kilobits which is in contrast with 270,000 megabits per second in the United States of America. According to (Dean, 2021), in 2020, data shows that downloading a 5GB movie took 734 minutes in the Republic of Congo, 788 minutes in Sao Tome, 850 minutes in Ethiopia, 965 minutes in Niger and 1,342 minutes in Equatorial Guinea with Singapore being the fastest, taking about 11 minutes and 8 seconds to download a typical 5GB high-definition movie. According to (Global Index, 2021), Yemen, Cuba, Turkmenistan and Sudan are the countries with the slowest internet connectivity.

Social media marketing has become a trend in Africa. According to (Nyambu E. , 2013), In Kenya, almost all business that deal with communicating with the consumers has social media as an integral part be it marketing, branding, public relations, customer service or any other function of a business that requires businesses to reach out. Social media plays a vital role with close 90% of marketers are using social media to market their businesses.

Econet wireless is currently the largest operating telecommunication in Zimbabwe and holds the highest market position. It was established in 1998 and it became listed in the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange in 1998, (Econet, Leading telecoms company , 2016).

Econet wireless provides a wide range of communication services to a wide variety of customers which encompasses Short Messaging Services (SMS), social media platforms, mobile calling, mobile transfer, mobile banking and internet connectivity among others. According to (Newsday, 2021), Econet Wireless was the first telecommunication company in Zimbabwe to launch 3G mobile data in 2009. Through the introduction of digital marketing, it was then able to allow its customers to communicate through digital platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Whatsapp among other social media platforms. According to when Econet Wireless was launched in 1998 it had around thirty two thousand subscribers using the Econet platform. Around 2003, it had increased to about one hundred and forty thousand subscribers which continued to increase up to present day an estimate of eleven million subscribers.

Econet Wireless is a privately owned company in Zimbabwe which is diversified and has investments as well as operations in Africa, Asia as well as Europe. It provides mobile telecommunication services which provides broadband with high capacity which masses of people can communicate as well as send messages at the same time. It also uses fibre optic for their internet which is a medium used to spread information from one place to another through sending pulses of light through optical fibre, (Econet, Leading telecoms company , 2016). According to (Muhamba, 2021), with Speed Checker, Econet Wireless Private Limited Company clocked 7.56Mbps download, 4.07Mbps upload which put it head and shoulders above NetOne which registered 6.50Mbps download and 3.08Mbps upload. In last place, was Telecel Zimbabwe with 1.97Mbps download and 1.14Mbps upload.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Various studies have been conducted about social media marketing around the world. This can be evidenced for example in a study conducted in China which involved innovative marketing strategies in China's telecommunication sector adapting to the digital age (Chang', 2023). In Zimbabwe, various studies have been conducted on social media marketing for instance the study conducted by (Makwara P. , 2020). on the use of social media marketing in the telecommunication business: an exploratory study of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited There has also been studies which linked social media marketing with other variables in Zimbabwe such as effect of social media usage in Zimbabwe's telecommunications industry and its impact on corporate reputation management (Moyo, 2024). It has also been linked with other variables for example on a study on The effect of social media on customer purchase behaviour in the mobile telephony industry in Zimbabwe (Makudza, 2020). These researches focused on the uses of social media marketing, how social media marketing impacts on other variables such as consumer purchasing behaviour as well as corporate branding. To the best of our knowledge, there is no study which critically analysed social media marketing as a factor in the tecomunication industry and this study attempts to fulfill the knowledge gap.

1.4 Research Objectives

- i. To investigate social media marketing platforms used by Econet Wireless.
- ii. To assess the effectiveness of social media marketing platforms implemented by Econet Wireless.
- iii. To analyse factors which lead to the effectiveness of social media marketing platforms.

- iv. Recommend measures to improve social media marketing strategies implemented by Econet Wireless.

1.5 Research Questions

- i. Which social media marketing channels are being implemented at Econet Wireless Zimbabwe
- ii. What are the effects of social media marketing platforms implemented by Econet Wireless?
- iii. What are the factors which lead to the effectiveness of social media marketing platforms?
- iv. Which recommendations can improve social media strategies implemented by Econet Wireless?

1.6 Assumptions/ Hypotheses

The assumption of the research is that employees Econet Wireless will participate and give accurate information that will provide assistance to the research study. The assumption is that customers who use Econet Wireless network will give accurate information as well as adequate suggestions of how they wish Econet can innovate its social media marketing strategies. The null hypothesis is that there is a relationship between social media marketing and Econet Wireless and. the alternative hypothesis is that there is no relationship between social media marketing and Econet Wireless.

$$H_0 = 34.4$$

$$H_1 \neq 34.4$$

1.7 Significance of the study

The study is significant in analysing challenges being faced by Econet Wireless as well as providing relevant information in solving the challenges. It is significant in providing assistance to other telecommunication organisations on effective measures to improve financial performance.

To the academia

The academia will benefit as the research adds to the body of literature on conceptual framework between social media marketing and financial performance.

To the community

To the community, it will provide the benefit of a clear illustration of the benefits they can get from social media marketing as well as the magnitude of their contribution through their comments and feedback on different social media platforms.

To the industry

To the telecommunication industry, it is significant in providing recommendations on how social media marketing can be improved as well as how the challenges encountered can be solved.

To the nation

The nation, the research is significant in enhancing financial performance in the telecommunication industry which in turn provides improved revenue to the nation thereby improving the economy of the nation.

To the researcher

The research is significant to the researcher as it explores new information on social media marketing that the researcher was not aware of. It provides a clear understanding of information and communication technology in social media marketing which provides knowledge to the researcher for future use.

1.8 Delimitations of the study

The research is based at Econet Wireless Private Limited Company Headquarters in Harare. Social media marketing department is the target population for the research. This is because it is the department within the digital marketing department which is responsible for formulation, implementation, monitoring as well as evaluation of social media marketing strategies within the organization.

1.9 Limitations of the study

The research encountered challenges of failing to get some information due to the entity's policies which regard some information as confidential.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on available relevant literature from various scholars and schools of thoughts on social media marketing in the telecommunication industry. Various studies have also been provided in this chapter on social media marketing. It provides theoretical models which forms the framework with which the research was based on.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Various researches have been conducted around the world on social media marketing. In a study conducted by (Teodor, 2020), in China on the Impact of social media marketing on consumer behavior, the study findings was that respondents are well versed with trends on social media marketing depending on their educational backgrounds as well as their work experiences. This shows that levels of education and work experiences has an impact in social media marketing.

In a study conducted by (Chen, 2024), in Korea on Social Media Content Marketing: An Empirical Analysis Based on China's 10 Metropolis for Korean Brands, the findings of the research was that through the theoretical framework of Uses and Gratification theory to social media, local social media use may positively affect foreign brand promotion. This shows that social media marketing has benefits not just locally but also benefits foreign brands.

In Ghana, a study conducted by (Antwi, 2020), on the impact of social media in the telecommunication industry to satisfy customers in Ghana- A case study of the Mobile Telecommunication Network (MTN) Ghana, the findings of the research were that

social media marketing is promoting brand awareness thereby influencing customer satisfaction.

In Kenya, a research conducted by (Nyambu E. , 2013), on the influence of social media marketing on performance on telecommunication firms in Kenya, the findings of the research were that social media improved performance through marketing platforms which are cheaper. It also observed that promotional campaigns boosted performance as it increased sales and revenue beyond promotion period. Findings were also that customer feedback enables firms to have a better understanding and meeting of customer needs thereby promoting customer loyalty.

In a research conducted in Zambia by (Mpuku, 2024), on the effectiveness of using social media for organizational reputation management in the telecommunication industry in Zambia: A case of Zamtel. The research findings were that the strategies used by Zamtel for reputation management includes increasing responsiveness to customer queries, enhancing brand image, online visibility, building brand awareness, creating engaging content mostly through Facebook. This shows that there are various factors that are associated with social media marketing in reputation management.

In a research conducted by (Makwara P. , 2020) in Zimbabwe on the use of social media marketing in a telecommunication business: an exploratory study of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe limited, the findings of the research were that Econet Wireless Limited is using social media marketing to communicate with its customers, for their brand to be visible and they also use it because it is an inexpensive way to promote their business with a possibility to reach a large number of people in a short space of time. To the best of our knowledge, there is no study which critically analysed social

media marketing as a factor in the telecommunication industry and this study attempts to fulfill the knowledge gap.

Telecommunication network technology has developed from first generation (1g) network to sixth generation (6g) network and in future, mobile development is expected to reach up to tenth generation (10g) network and beyond. In Asia, China has launched the implementation of the 6g network in 2022. According to (Tomas, 2024), Wang Zhiqin, the head of China's 6g promotion team noted that China began 6g technological experiments in 2022 and has been carrying research on 6g system architecture and technical solutions during 2023. The research on 6g developments has opened new application scenarios including combining communication and artificial intelligence, mass internet of Things based on integrated satellites and terrestrial mobile communication (Tomas, 2024).

Various trials for the 6g network have been conducted in China. According to (Masi, 2024), telecommunication companies in China which includes Shanghai Nokia Bell, Ericson, China Mobile, China Telecom, China Unicom, Huawei, ZTE and Vivo have participated in China's technical trials and tests in 2023. This has provided the implementation of the 6g vision framework. 6G network which could be up to 100 times faster than the peak speed of 5G.

In Korea, research is being done on the planned launch of the 6G network which is expected to be implemented by 2028. According to (Efe, 2024), Korea is seeking to develop software based next generation mobile network and bolster network supply chains. The implementation of the researches on the 6g network is expected to be based

on international standards and the Korean government is expected to finance the revenue for the implementation of the project. The 6g network is expected to bring unity between virtual and reality.

In Japan, 6g network researches are being conducted and the network is expected to be launched around 2030. According to (FOSTER, 2022), the Japanese are building their technological base and network and have experimented the first successful transmission of 1 Petabyte per second in a standard cladding diameter Multi-core Fibber. A number of telecommunication companies in Japan are putting to trial experiments on 6G network such as DOCOMO, NTT among others.

Canada telecommunication operators are investing in network upgrades and much of this work is being supported by regulatory efforts to ensure that operators have spectrum available to develop 5G services. According to (Lancaster, 2021), to improve internet connection speed and reduce the challenge of internet connectivity in rural areas, Network upgrade to 5G network has an estimate fast speed in internet connectivity of 3500MHz. According to (Lancaster, 2021), Canada's broadband penetration rate is several percentage points above the OECD average, with around 15.4 million subscriptions for fixed broadband and 30.9 million for mobile broadband in 2019. Government policy has encouraged the extension of broadband to rural and regional areas, with the result that services are almost universally available and the emphasis now is on improving service speeds to enable the entire population to benefit from the digital economy and society.

Brazil has improved their social media marketing strategy. According to (Correia, 2013), in Brazil, they use the marketing mix of social media marketing strategy through the use of affordable price, promotion through awareness campaigns, product through accessibility to network services, place through availability of telecommunication services. This ensures that all the elements in the marketing mix are achieved to ensure customer satisfaction in improving financial performance in Brazil. There is a challenge of lack of privacy in social media marketing. According to (Little, 2020), social media platforms in Brazil need to perform constant scrutiny of content to ensure information validity and take prompt actions in cases of non-adherence to the established terms and they need to install adequate measures to address data management and cyber security concerns.

In Denmark, they are competing more in the telecommunication industry in Europe. According to (Godlovitch, 2019), Denmark ranks highly in deployment of FTTH networks (with a comparatively high coverage of these networks in rural areas), however, there is a risk that the speed of FTTH roll-out might slow down and furthermore, the take-up of very high bandwidth connections remains more limited, which may be due to the fact that, notwithstanding recent progress in this area, a significant price gap remains between lower speeds and higher capacity Gigabit connections.

To compact internet speed, 99% of households in Denmark have access to 4G networks, although data on geographical availability of the 4G network shows that in some areas, availability of network is low. According to (Godlovitch, 2019), the demands of future smart applications, are likely to require high capacity connections

and associated 5G connectivity to be widely available not only to all households, businesses and public institutions, but also along highways and to remote locations such as farms, in relation to developing telecommunication infrastructure to 5G network, (Godlovitch, 2019), notes that Although 5G is still in its infancy and the rollout is far from complete, the next generation 6G is already being researched, and is expected to be introduced in 2030. This ensures that there is continuous development in network technology in telecommunications industry so that there is higher and faster connectivity in internet connection.

China has launched the implementation of 5G network as a marketing development strategy in its telecommunication industry. However, it is not achieving its expectations. According to (Xie, 2020), mounted on rooftops, utility poles and streetlights throughout China since last year are hundreds of thousands of high-tech wireless towers for 5G, a powerful sign of the country's ambition to lead in new technology, yet many of them are operational for only half the day as very few people are using them.

There is also a challenge of 5G network covering a shorter distance than 4G network. According to (Xie, 2020), to handle more data at higher speeds, 5G uses higher frequencies than current networks, however, the signals travel shorter distances and encounter more interference as the coverage radius of its base station is only about 100 meters to 300 meters, China must build a station every 200 to 300 meters in urban areas as the penetration of 5G signals is so weak, even indoor stations will have to be built in densely distributed office buildings, residential areas, and commercial districts and to reach the same coverage that 4G currently has, the carriers eventually need to install as many as 10 million stations across the country.

Egypt is launching the implementation of 5G network so as to improve network connectivity from 4G network. According to (Ahran, 2021), The National Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (NTRA) has been working on broadband optical fibres, which are necessary for the fourth industrial revolution, the centre said, adding that 5,300 government buildings were provided with fibre optic cables. This has been a major development in improving internet connectivity in an African country.

According to (Nyambu M. , 2013), In Kenya, almost all business that deal with communicating with the consumers has social media as an integral part be it marketing, branding, PR, customer service or any other function of a business that requires businesses to reach out and social media plays a vital role with close 90% of marketers are using social media to market their businesses.

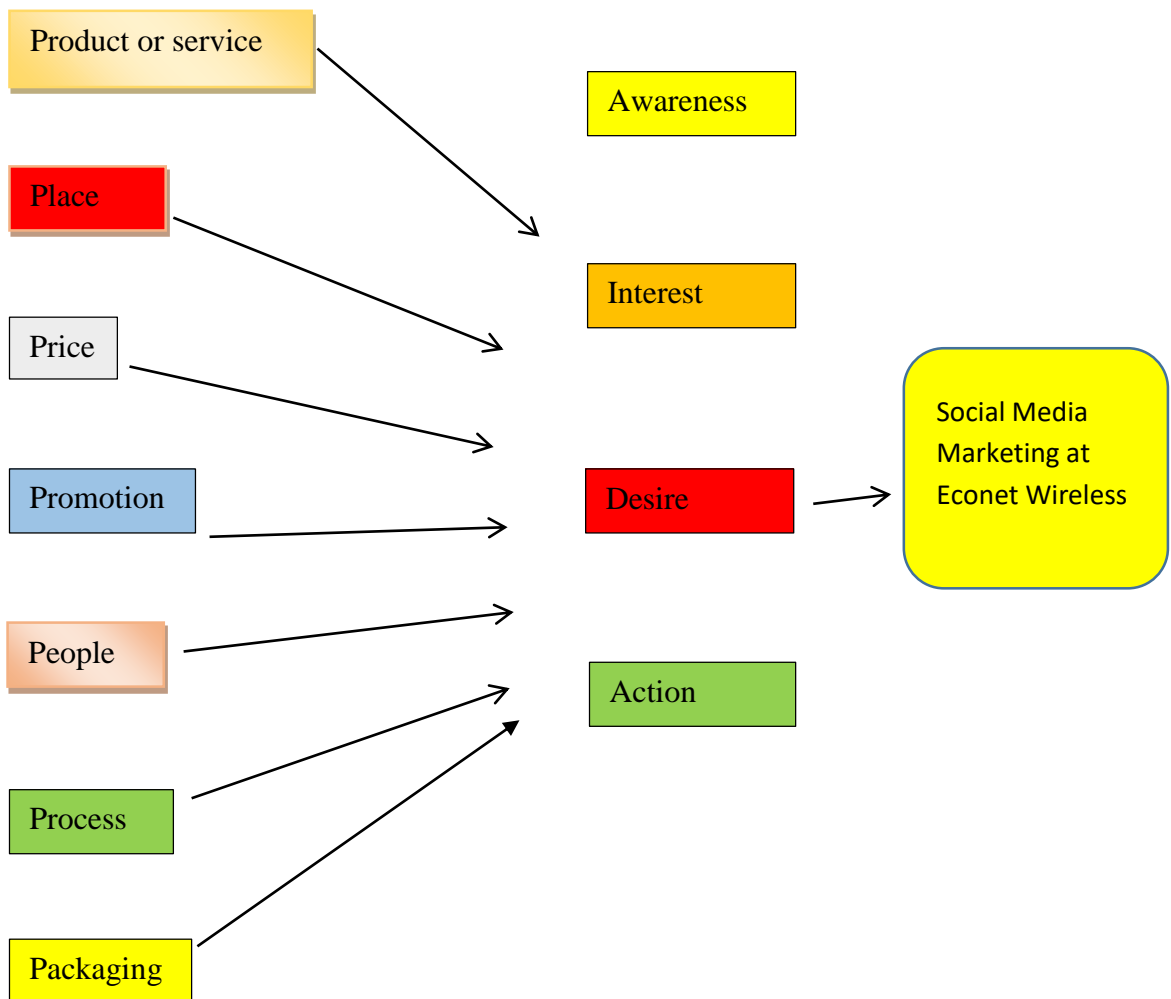
In Zimbabwe, Econet Wireless Private Limited Company has been chosen as the telecommunication company for the research as it is the leading telecommunication company in Zimbabwe and as a result has been used for the research so as to ensure that the results obtained represents the results for the other telecommunications organizations in Zimbabwe.

2.2.1 Conceptual Framework

7Ps Marketing mix model is the independent variable and AIDA model is the dependent variable in this research. Based on the hypothesis of this research study, the conceptual framework will be as follows;

7Ps Marketing Mix Model

AIDA MODEL



2.2.2 7Ps Marketing mix

Product or service

This involves the different products or services to the customers. It is of significance to analyse the products or services desired by the target market as customers are mainly concerned about the benefits that the products or services offered to them helps in solving their problems. Products with good quality helps in attracting more customers. Econet Wireless Private Limited Company offers different products and services in social media marketing. This involves advertising of products such as cellphones as well as mobile wifi modems. Services offered are a wide variety of services advertised

to customers on social media platforms such as e-banking, ecosure, mobile internet access, and mobile money and payment solutions. It offers products and services under several brand names, including Econet Broadband, Econet Solar, EcoCash, EcoSure, EcoHealth, EcoSchool, Buddie, Ownai, and EcoFarmer.

Place

It involves a clear analysis of the target market as well as where they are mostly located so as to be able to reach out to massive audiences. Social media marketing on internet platforms such as whatsapp, youtube, twitter, instagram among others is the place through which Econet wireless markets its products and services to different customers. It involves use of internet connection to upload messages, videos as well as images as a way of advertising to different subscribers who use social media platforms.

Price

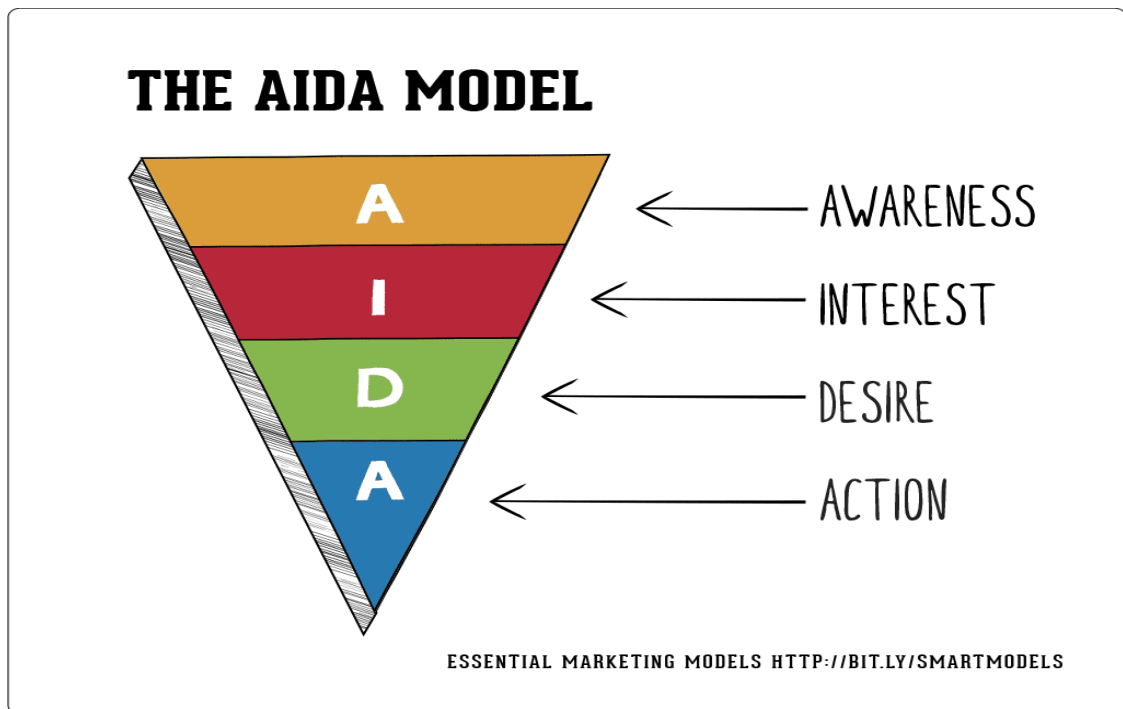
There are different prices offered for different products and services. These prices range from low prices to high prices depending on what the different customers can afford. This can be noted for example on social media services, there are different prices such as daily, weekly, monthly bundles for subscribers to purchase so as to be able to connect to social media platforms as interact as well as be able to view the different advertisements as well as upload views and comments for feedback purposes.

Promotion

Different promotions are offered in social media marketing by Econet wireless. This targets different subscribers on social media platforms for example they may be

promotions on using ecocash, promotions on subscribing to ecosure, promotions on participating and sharing views on social media platforms among others.

2.2.3 AIDA model



Source (Hanlon, 2023)

AIDA model is a model that stands for Awareness, Interest, Desire and Action in marketing. It represents the different stages through which an individual encounters during the process of purchasing a product or a service (Team, 2024). Attention is the first stage in the AIDA model. This involves attracting the attention of the customer to the different products or services offered on the market. The purpose of attention is for the customers to know the existence of the product. It involves use of different marketing strategies to attract customer such as advertising through colourful images, flyers, sending messages to targeted audiences.

Interest is the second stage in the AIDA model. This involves creating interest of the product or service to the attracted customers. This can be achieved through the use of making the advertised information easier to understand for example when ecocash was introduced by Econet Wireless, various channels were used for advertising such as making video advertisements on youtube so that customers get a better understanding of what the product was all about. It also involves a clear illustration of the benefits of the product so as to gain interest of the product offered on the market.

Desire is the third stage in the AIDA model. It involves making the customers desire to have the product through presenting interesting information about the product as well as the benefits of the product. It also involves presenting instances where the product has been used as well as how the product has benefited the users. Strategies used in creating desire for the product may include advertising such as through the use of celebrities using the product. Audiences can also be convinced of the desire to have the product through creative situations that add value to the product.

Action is the last stage in the AIDA model. This involves getting customers to take action in purchasing the product. This can be achieved for example through the use of free trials so that the customers understand the benefits of the product. It involves the use of urgency so that the customers can be urged to purchase the product immediately for example free trials for a stipulated period of time so as to attract more customers in a short space of time. This can be evidenced for example through promotional messages that can be advertised by Econet Wireless for different products.

2.3 Relevance of the Theoretical Framework to the Study

The theoretical framework was significant to the study as it provided background to relevant literature that were previously conducted in other countries as well as other

areas in Zimbabwe so as to provide guidelines to the researcher. It presented social media marketing in different countries around the world so as to highlight what other countries are experiencing with social media marketing as well as to present suggestions on how social media marketing can be enhanced in Zimbabwe. It also provided framework for hypothesis testing as well as the results that were obtained in previous researches conducted.

2.4 Social media marketing platforms.

Different social media marketing channels have been used by Econet Zimbabwe for the purposes of social media communication. This involves online platforms using online channels to communicate with different customers. This promotes communication between customers as videos, images as well as messages can be used to describe products as well as services provided for example, when Econet introduced ecocash, it advertised videos online using youtube channel so as to explain to different customers the new service they were introducing to the market, benefits of the new service as well as how the new service can be used.

With the current shift in technology, social media networks have become effective component for marketing of different organizations. Social networks can be defined as online applications which allows customers to connect, create profiles as well as interacting with other users to share information as well as common interests. Customers can share their profiles with other users, family and friends, as well as sharing videos, images, texts as well as audios of the different products and services offered by different brands.

Facebook is a platform for social interaction which can be used for advertising different products. According to (Kusumasondjaja, 2018), in a study conducted in

Indonesia, they discovered that Facebook worked better with interactive entertainment posts. This is because most of the people regard Facebook platform as mostly for entertainment purposes. Econet wireless uses Econet Zimbabwe Facebook account to communicate with different customers. Facebook has the advantage of communicating with massive clients at a particular time, as well as exchanging information which is through the use of different questions and answers. It also has the benefit of allowing interaction between brand owners such as Econet wireless and different customers. As a result, businesses can then be able to access real life activities that will be happening through different Facebook pages thereby providing valuable market insights.

Like Facebook, Whatsapp allows Econet Wireless to interact with massive groups of people at once thereby being able to address different challenges faced by individuals using their products and services. It also allows customers to get help through sending direct personal messages to Whatsapp customer services provided. Econet wireless uses Whatsapp customer care number +263777222150 for customers to interact with the chat board 24 hours a day about resetting pin, reversing transactions, requesting statements as well as making different payments online. This saves time rather than searching for agents or visiting Econet shop when transacting. However, some of the customers have been complaining of their messages taking a very long time to be responded to as well as some complaining of their messages not being responded to at all.

Instagram is an online application that is used to share pictures and it can be used to transform images into memory. Econet Wireless uses Econet Zimbabwe (@econetzimbabwe) as an interactive Instagram account. It is a visual applications where short videos can be shared as well as editing of images. Econet Wireless uses

Instagram as an online platform to share their products as well as services as well as attaching videos to explain how the products and services can be used.

Micro blogs are a form of service provider that allows users to send audios, videos, images and texts which are not more than 140 characters in length. It has the benefit of allowing quick and transparent interaction with customers. Econet uses twitter platform for microblogs communication. Twitter is an online micro blog platform that limits the number of words to be posted in different messages. Econet wireless uses @econetzimbabwe for communication with different customers on twitter. It allows customers to connect and follow and be updated of current products and services that are being offered or upgraded. It also provides a platform for customers to review as well as make suggests on how they think products and services can be improved. A blog is a form of website through which users or bloggers can publish different posts displayed and the most recent posts appearing first. Blogs encompasses pictures, videos as well as texts. It consists of an online platform created for discussion purposes.

Videos can be defined as slow motion movement of pictures and sound uploaded and shared online by users. Econet Zimbabwe mostly uses youtube to upload videos to its customers. According to (McLaughlin, 2021), YouTube is a free-video hosting website that allows members to store and serve video content. Econet Wireless uses Econet Wireless to upload on YouTube. It can share videos through a wide variety of links or through using HTML code to view different videos. Videos viewed on Youtube can either be pre-recorded or live streaming videos to consumers. According to (Ang, 2018), drawing on social impact theory, firm-initiated digital social viewing strategies (live streaming versus pre-recorded) influence consumer viewing experiences and consequential behavioural intentions. Live streaming enhances

authenticity of the advertised products thereby increasing positive attitude of consumers to purchase the products.

Business networks can be defined as networks that provides benefits to brand owners as well as customers. It helps in building relationships as well as attracting new customers. LinkedIn is the most popular business network used by Econet Zimbabwe. LinkedIn is a social media channel which is used by businesses so as to build professional networks with different businesses and clients and has a maximum of 140 words limit which is to be used to promote business relationships. Econet Wireless uses Econet Wireless Zimbabwe LinkedIn account. It also has the benefit of helping different business to learn what other businesses strategies are being implemented in other organizations. Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited uses LinkedIn to educate potential as well as existing customers on their products and services, raise brand awareness and promote career opportunities.

Electronic mail is a social media marketing platform whereby regular updates of the products or services offered by Econet Zimbabwe are advertised to different customers through their emails. According to (Anderson, 2021), email was the first form of digital marketing where advertisements were communicated directly to customers. Econet Wireless uses @econet.co.zw email address. Personalised messages can be sent and communicated directly to different targeted customers. In return, customers could respond and send feedback to the products and services advertised through email.

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is a social media marketing platform. (Interaction Design Foundation, 2021), defines search engine optimisation as a process of improving visibility of a website or webpage on a search engine results page (SERP) so as to make a company's website more discoverable and as a result driving more

traffic to the company's webpage and therefore increasing sales. Econet Wireless uses different online platforms such as www.econet.co.zw/services/bundles for inquiries. It involves ensuring that the brand is at the top of the list when people search for brand, products or services related to your brand for example when searching for telecommunication organisations in Zimbabwe, Econet Wireless appears top of the list. It involves competitor analysis so as to access what the brand is offering as well as what the other competitors are offering to the targeted audiences. Brands tend to be more authentic and objective through search engine optimisation as it creates content with which people will be actively searching for on different platforms.

Content marketing is a social media marketing platform whereby text, pictures as well as multimedia is created and distributed to different customers. This may include social media posts, videos as well as blog articles, reports, webinars. Pay per click is also a social media marketing platform .with which advertisers will pay a fee each time one of their advertisement is clicked which therefore means that they will be buying visits to their site rather than earning those visits (Wordstream, 2020). It has the benefits of reducing the cost of paying per click as customers who click are usually committed to buy the products or services offered. Econet Wireless uses www.topup.co.zw as there pay per click account.

According to (Elsevier, 2021), consumers personal characteristics and psychological drivers in the form of self-esteem, life satisfaction, narcissism and need to belong, seem to play an important role in consumers sharing intention on social media platforms, therefore, there are different social media channels to cater for the different needs of the customers. The choice of media platforms to use depends on the target population as well as the marketing strategy to be used. Below are the social media networks used by Econet:

2.4.1 Evolution of telecommunication technology

1G Network

Telecommunication technology in the telecommunication industry such as Econet Wireless began with first generation (1G) network connection. This involved the use of analog form of wireless telecommunication technology. It encompasses the use of short messaging service as a way of communication to different individuals. It is a form of wireless telecommunication which only supported voice only as a way of communication. With this network, individual users could not send or receive messages on their mobile devices. Its maximum speed was 2.4 kilobyte per second (kbps). It used technologies such as Nordic Mobile Telephony (NMT), as well as Total Access Communication System (TACS).

2G Network

Mobile telecommunication technology upgraded from 1G network to 2G network. This involved a shift from analog to digital technology in mobile telecommunication. It involved the use of short messaging service, pictures as well as mms as a way of communication. It uses technology such as the Group Special Module (GSM) which was later accepted as Global System for Mobile Communication. It was less static and with clear voice than the first generation network. However, it was a mobile network that could not handle high speed data transfer and it was vulnerable to hacking as well as to interference.

2.5G Network

It used General Packet Radio Service mobile wireless technology. It was an extension of the second generation network and involved packet switched data

transmissions. It introduced new data services and applications in the telecommunication industry. However, it had lower data rate and was developed to 2.75G which encompassed the use of Enhanced Data Rates for GSM evolution.

3G Network

3G wireless technology provided development of mobile telecommunication technology from 2G network. It encompassed the use of mobile broadband which involved the use of mobile internet as well as video calling. According to (Fendelman, 2021), the maximum speed of 3G is estimated to be around 2 Mbps. It used Universal Mobile Telecommunication System. Services were able to be offered to an increased number of subscribers as well as with better quality. Individuals could connect to the mobile network anywhere and anytime thereby making it flexible, secured as well as efficient. However, it had slower data speeds as more time could be taken to connect or download to the internet.

4G Network

It involves a shift from 3G Network to a higher speed network. It had better downloading speed and higher bandwidth than the third generation network. It is efficient through the use of radio frequency spectrum and has lower latency. Unlike 3g network, 4g has higher capacity for data transfers as well as higher peak bits rates and wider channels frequency bandwidth. It introduced better multimedia services in the telecommunication industry.

5G Network

It involves transition from 4G network to 5g network. It has higher network connection speed than the 4g network and can reach up to 20 Gigabits per second as well as 100+

Megabits per second. It introduced advanced technology such as robotics, Artificial Intelligence systems. It carries data faster through the use of higher radio frequencies as well as input and output antennas. It has introduced the Internet Of Things.

6G Network

it is a more advanced network connection which is expected to be faster, with higher frequencies as well as more reliable than the 5G network. It is more advanced in technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI). It is expected to have greater capacity than 5G network thereby connecting more devices on the network as well as not affecting the speed or connection of the internet. There is expected to be great reduction in latency of 1000 times lower than 5G. . .

Devices connected to the internet transfer information to each other in electronic packets and a packet is simply a unit of data, everything done online relies on the transfer of these packets from the internet to a device and vice versa (Armstrong, 2021). Several packets per second are required for smooth internet connection. Internet speed is expressed in megabytes per second (Mbps), kilobytes per second (Kbps) and gigabytes per second (GBPS). According to (Ned, 2021), the different technologies are used to provide internet connections to customers include broadband, voice and satellite.

2.5 Criteria for assessing social media marketing effectiveness.

Analysing the effectiveness of social media marketing is significant so as to assess on whether the intended mission, vision and goals has been achieved. This can be analysed in different metrics for example if the organisational main goal was focusing on brand, awareness, then the criteria for assessing can be through analysing the impressions of the audiences for example tracking how much the product is being

mentioned about on the social media platforms, the number of searches about the product as well as referral customers.

Building community can also be the main goal of social media marketing. This can be achieved through various metrics such as analysing the growth rate of existing as well as new followers, viewing the targeted audiences who share their likes, clicks, comment as well as recommend the products. It shows the rate at which audiences are engaged and have gained interest in the product or service. However, it is important to analyse on whether the high rate of followers are providing positive comments or negative comments, if comments are negative then it may tarnish the image of the brand.

Click Through Rate (CTR) is a metrics used in assessing the effectiveness of social media marketing. It involves analysing on return on investment through assessing the input that was put in marketing as well as how much profit was obtained. It analyses how many people clicked through the advertisement or the link which would have been posted. A high CTR may indicated high interest of the product from the audiences and a low CTR may indicate that the targeted customers are not so much interested in the product offered

Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT) is a metrics that measure the effectiveness of social media marketing through analysing how satisfied the customers are satisfied with the product as well as the probability of repeated purchases as well as the risk of getting a loss from the product sales. It is calculated through dividing the total number of customers by the total number of responses multiplied by one hundred so as to get the percentage of customer satisfaction. .

2.6 Factors enhancing the effectiveness of social media marketing

Social media marketing presents different benefits to brand owners and to customers. Customers have the benefit of getting information easily on a particular product which they may wish to know more information about at any particular time. Some of the benefits of social media marketing in businesses are illustrated below. Social media marketing has the benefit of creating brand awareness to its customers as there is direct engagement as well as involvement of different customers so that they express their opinions as well as need for illustrations in areas that they may need explanations. It is also used to increase the visibility, authenticity as well as reliability of the business as it engages with many customers with some of which who make repeated purchases. This is promoted through the two way communication channels through which the users are given an opportunity to express their views on different social media channels on what they prefer rather than being passive consumers of products and services.

Businesses believe that social media marketing as a marketing strategy increases sales revenue of a business as there is less cost of advertising the different products. The moment that the different products are posted on a social media channel, different individuals become aware of its existence and as a result, there is low costs in advertising which reaches to massive people. Some of the social media platforms offer free advertising services to business which therefore gives a wider opportunity of Econet wireless to advertise their products and services for free.

There are various factors as to why social media marketing was implemented. It aims to improve customer satisfaction. According to (Elsevier, 2021), organisations seek to identify the needs of members of online communities, create special offerings that accommodate those needs and effectively communicate with members to increase the satisfaction levels of online communities. The attitude of consumers towards social media will then contribute to their attitude towards the brand.

It has become a trend for different consumers to search for different products and services online rather than depending solely on walking into different shops to seek different products available. According to (Elsevier, 2021), consumer behaviour has significantly changed due to technological innovation and ubiquitous adoption of hand-held devices, directly contributing to how consumers interact and use social commerce to make decisions and shop online and the increasing use of digital marketing and social media has positively influenced consumer attitudes toward online shopping with increasing market share for electronic commerce centric organisations

According to (Elsevier, 2021), the increasing number of shopping channels has also influenced consumer behaviour thereby, creating a more diffused consumer shopping experience as mobile channels have become the norm and are now embedded within consumer's daily lives via the use of mobile tools, shopping apps, location-based services and mobile wallets - all impacting the consumer experience

However, there is need to limit the products and services advertised so as to reduce irritation to customers, for example, with short messaging services (SMS), there is need to limit the number of messages that are advertised as customers end up ignoring some of the messages as they are massive and end up irritating such that they may tend to ignore some of the messages. There is also need to motivate customers through introducing short messaging services platforms where different users can choose area of services which they wish to receive regular messages on. For example, an individual may prefer to receive regular update of Ecofarmer service while other individuals may prefer to receive regular update on Ecosure life insurance or Ruzivo services as people have different interests as well as different preferences in their lives.

2.7 Factors inhibiting social media marketing

Social media marketing has several challenges associated with it such as cyber-crime. This can be evidenced for example, an individual may hack into the Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Limited social media platform and post damaging messages which may damage the reputation. There is also risk of competitors copying marketing strategies on social media as every post which is sent on social media channels can then be viewed by everyone and Econet has not control on who views their posts.

There is also risk of launching new products or services with which customers may not necessarily develop much interest in. This creates a negative financial performance which may affects the profit levels of the organisation. Therefore, there is need for clear assessment as well as investigation of the needs of the majority of the social media marketing users in the telecommunication industry.

Negative feedback from different customers which as a result may create negative reputation of the organization. This may be contributed by individuals who will be following the social media platforms without any interest in business. It can also be contributed by hackers who will be committing cybercrime on social media. Negative feedbacks may also be competitors who may want to attract more subscribers to their channels at the expense of Econet Wireless. However, some of the negative feedback may be from the personal experiences of the users on the products and services offered by Econet wireless therefore creating room for improvement as well as creative ideas which may be implemented to improve financial performance.

Social media marketing is a marketing strategy which is a long term investment and returns on investments cannot take a longer time to be achieved. This is because a certain percentage of the budget of the Econet Wireless Private limited company is allocated to social media marketing to finance the social media marketing process such

as promotions offered to users, incentives as well as awards of competitions to be conducted as a way of attracting consumers to Econet web pages. Although these promotional marketing strategies may provide financial benefits to the organisations, they take time to generate funds as users may need time to be motivated to participate in such programmes.

The emerging trend of making use of targeted personal advertising in social media marketing has led to an increase in privacy concerns from consumers. (Acodez, 2020), found that invasiveness, privacy control, perceived usefulness and consumer innovativeness, directly influenced consumer behaviour intention relating to privacy concerns. As a result, companies should therefore be sensitive to privacy and the concerns of consumers when developing advertising strategies so as to build long-term customer relationships.

2.8 Effects of social media marketing on marketing strategies

Social media marketing has brought about a paradigm shift of marketing strategies from traditional marketing of relying on marketing strategies such as word of mouth, televisions, radios and newspapers to use of online platforms. It has lead to the emergence of new technologies such as Web 2.0.

Social media marketing has positive influence on marketing strategies as customers are no longer passive consumers of products and services provided by different brands such as Econet Wireless but are now also given different platforms to provide feedback as well as to make suggestions of the products and services with which they wish to be provided with. This is unlike in the past traditional marketing strategies whereby advertisements would be broadcasted on televisions, radios and newspapers and

therefore it was a one way communication whereby there was little or no feedback from the general public.

Social media has influenced positive marketing strategies as there is improved transparency as well as accountability as brands advertise their products as well as explaining how the products can be used as well as the benefits for example, different innovation strategies that are being introduced by Econet Wireless are being explained to the general public for example videos of how to use Ecocash were explained on youtube channels. However, terms and conditions as well as negative effects of different products are hardly addressed to the general public.

Social media marketing has improved marketing strategies and enhancing business to customer relationship. Need discovery through regular feedback provided by the customers on different brands, it has influenced businesses to recognise the different needs of different customers. This is through the interaction that the sales personnel conducts with different customers so as to identify the different wants and needs of customers. This enhances sales as customers will achieve needs that they desire.

Sales follow-up as well as follow up on customer satisfaction is an effective measure in enhancing financial performance in the telecommunication. This includes addressing issues and suggestions of customers as well as following up on the effectiveness of the solutions to the challenges faced by the customers. It also contributes to the knowledge of customer needs as well as gathering information of how other competitors are dealing with the same challenge that the customers are facing.

2.9 Summary

This chapter focuses on theoretical perspectives of different authors on social media marketing in enhancing financial performance in telecommunication industry.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design as well as data collection methods. It also presents data analysis methods as well as population and sampling which was used for the research. Key design choices are also presented in this chapter.

3.2 Research Design

The research is a quantitative research as it focuses on numbers. It was based on the positivism research philosophy which is of the view that researcher can observe reality objectively. The research was based on deductive research as the researcher formulated a hypothesis and used statistical analysis to test and confirm the stipulated hypothesis. Descriptive research design has been used in the research to gain an in-depth understanding of social media marketing phenomenon through the use of Case study. Cross sectional was the time horizon used for the research as data was collected at one point in time. Probability sampling was used for data collection through simple random sampling method. Data collection methods used involved interviews, questionnaires, analytics data and secondary data. Data analysis techniques used included the use of descriptive statistics through calculating mean, medium, mode, standard deviation among others. Graphical presentation, tabular presentation as well as numerical presentation was used for data presentation. Z-Testing was the inferential statistics method used for the research. Frequency analysis was used in data interpretation.

3.3 Population and sampling

Population can be defined as the entire set of people or entire set of objects which are directly affected by the research. The study area was Econet Wireless Headquarters

which is located in Harare, Zimbabwe. The marketing department which is only located at Econet Wireless in Harare was the target population as it is responsible for implementing as well as monitoring social media marketing. It has a population of 29 employees. Econet Wireless has a population of around 12 million Econet Wireless subscribers. Econet wireless subscribers which uses social media marketing platforms was the target population as they are the customers through which social media advertising is directed to.

The number of employees in the marketing department at Econet Wireless is 29. Using statistical sampling table and a 95% confidence and a 5% margin of error, 28 employees from the total population was selected for sample population for the study and they represented the characteristics of the entire population of social media marketing employees at Econet Wireless Headquarters. Econet Wireless has around 12 million subscribers. Using statistical sampling table and a 95% confidence and a 5% margin of error, 375 respondents were the sample population. However, because of budgetary constraints, the number of respondents was reduced to 43 respondents which were randomly selected for the sample to represent the views of the entire population. Respondents from Econet Wireless marketing department was reduced to four participants due to organizational regulations. The sampling framework of the respondents selected for the sample was that they should be above 18 years of age and below 60 years of age.

Sampling technique involves selecting a number of participants within the population so as for their characteristics to reflect the total population. Probability sampling techniques has been used for the research sample. Simple random sampling has been used for the research which gives all employees and Econet subscribers an equal chance of being selected for the interview.

3.4 Data collection instruments

This research used both primary as well as secondary data collection methods. Both methods have been used as a way of validation as well as complimenting the results collected from primary as well as secondary data collection methods. Use of primary and secondary data collection also helps in reducing errors as well as getting information from different sources so as to improve the authenticity of the research results. It also helps in verifying the accurateness of the results obtained from the research that has been conducted. Interviews as well as observations will be used in collecting data for the research. Primary data collection was used as data collection method in this research. This involves collecting data from the participants who are employees of Econet Wireless Private Limited Company in Harare, Zimbabwe. It was conducted through telephone interviews. It also involved collecting data from Econet subscribers.

Secondary data collection method was used for collecting data in this research. This involves the use of available literature from different researches that were previously conducted in relation to this research. It is an effective data collection methodology as it provides historical information to the researcher which can assist in providing background framework for the research as well as providing prior research supporting the stated null or alternative hypothesis of the research. Secondary data collection can also be used as a measurement tool for comparison of the results between the current research being conducted and previous researches that have been conducted. It can also be used as a comparison measure between primary data collected as well as the secondary data collected so as to show consistency as well as reliability of the results collected.

Apart from secondary data providing a measurement tool for comparison, it is also an effective data collection tool that provides framework to guide the researcher on areas for further studying. However, some secondary data may be different from the objectives of the researcher thereby failing to establish the framework that will provide guidelines to the researcher. In relation to different objectives between the current research and secondary data, there is also a challenge of the secondary data being outdated and failing to fit into the ever changing environment. In this research, secondary data used includes journals, textbooks, annual financial reports, as well as previous literature researches.

3.5 Data collection procedure

Interviews was conducted from the 2nd to the 3th of September 2023. Questionnaires were conducted on a duration of 4 days from the 5th of September to the 9th of September 2023 and data was recorded. A time frame of twenty minutes was allocated to each participant such that 11 participants were accommodated in a day. Data analysis was conducted on the 18th of September 2023.

Interview was used for data collection. This involved preparing guidelines of the interview questions which was used in collecting data. It provided a link between the different variables so as to ensure that they are broken down and easier to understand to the respondents so as to ensure that maximum information is gathered. The questionnaires prepared for the interviews involved the focus of the research, the date and time of the research, ethical considerations that were considered for the research as well as the duration of the interview. Each participant signed the consent form provided for the ethical considerations of the research before the research was

conducted. Confidentiality of the information provided was guaranteed by the researcher.

3.6 Analysis and organization of data

Interview responses collected was checked to ensure that all the questions had been addressed. Data collected was recorded as well as transcribed for future analysis as well as presentation of data collected. After data was collected, the researcher used digital platform of an email to officially thank the participants as well as the manager of social media marketing for their time as well as the information that they had provided to the researcher.

Data analysis commenced after all the data for the research had been captured. Closed ended questions in the questionnaire was analyzed using nominal scale into mutually exclusive categories and frequencies by employing descriptive statistics using the statistical package for social science (SPSS). Open ended questions was then analyzed using conceptual content method of data analysis.

The data analysis was presented using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Hypothesis testing in this study was that there is a positive relationship between social media marketing and Econet Wireless. Hypothesis was tested and verified using the Z-testing method. This involves checking if there is a difference between observed value and expected value. Frequency analysis is used in data interpretation.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in this research involved the researcher giving a brief outline of the research objectives, as well as assurance that the information that the participants provided in the research was confidential. Voluntary participation as well as the right

to withdraw from the research when they feel necessary to withdraw was guaranteed to participants. Also, the researcher assured participants of no harm that would occur to them during the research. Informed consent was ensured from the participants before the research was conducted. No form of manipulation through the form of deception or oppression was guaranteed during the research.

3.8 Summary

This chapter focused on methods within which data was collected as well as timeframe for data collection. It also focused on research design, population and sampling, as well as research ethics. Data presentation methods were addressed in this chapter.

Chapter 4 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on presentation, analysis and interpretation of data collected in Chapter 3. Descriptive statistics was used for data presentation. Graphical presentation, tabular presentation as well as numerical presentation was used for data presentation. Z-Testing was the inferential statistics method used for the research. Frequency analysis was used in data interpretation.

4.2 Data presentation and analysis

4.2.1 Gender of Econet Wireless subscriber respondents

43 respondents from the Econet Wireless subscribers were randomly selected for sample population for the study. Simple random sampling was used for selection. Of the 43 respondents, 25 were female participants and 18 were male participants.

Table 4.2.1.1: Statistics

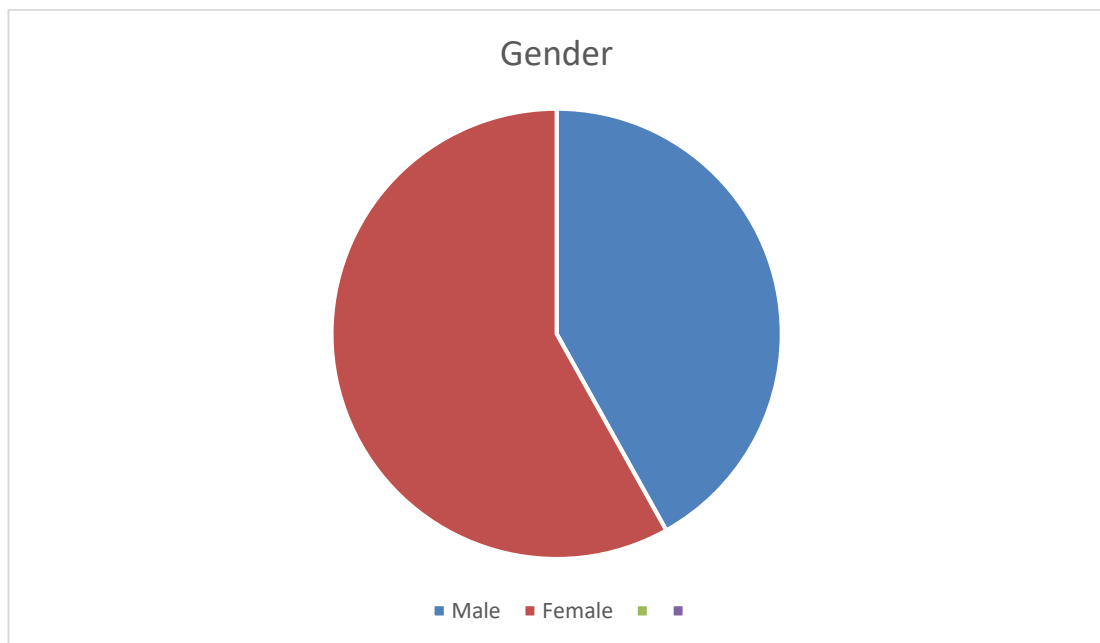
Gender

N	Valid	43
	Missing	0

Table 4.2.1.2: Gender

	N	%
Female	25	58.1%
Male	18	41.9%

Fig 4.2.1.3: Gender



From the data interpretation, it shows that no data was missing during data collection as all the respondents of both gender participated in the research. Females had higher frequency in participation with 58.1% than male with 41.9%.

4.2.2 Gender of Econet Wireless marketing department respondents

All the four respondents of Econet Wireless marketing department participated in the research. The interview survey guide was conducted using electronic mail system. It comprised of two male participants as well as two female participants.

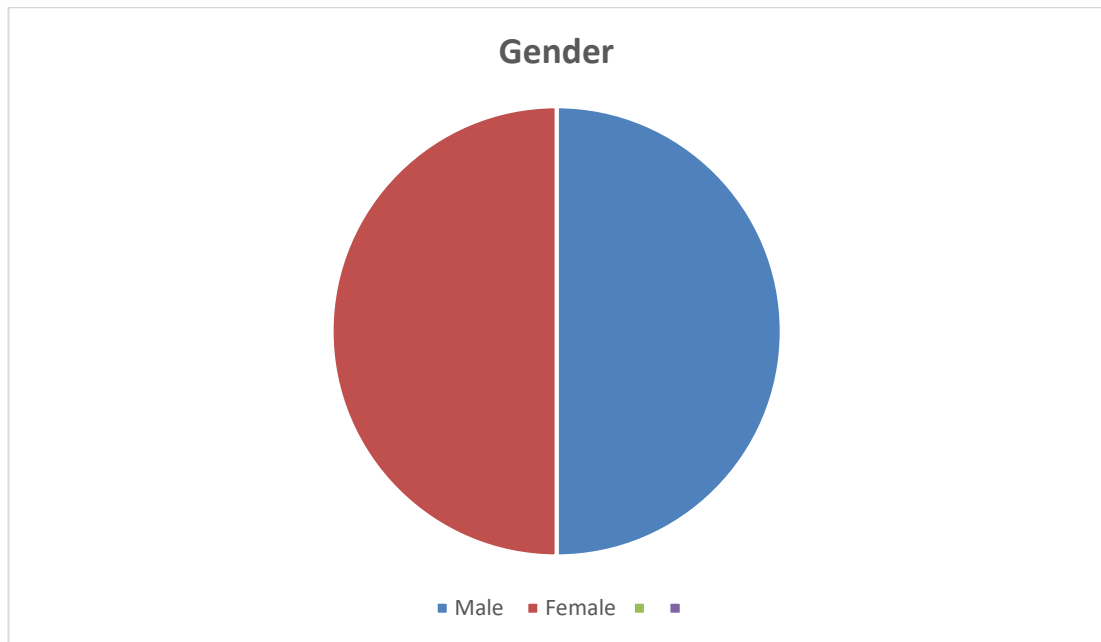
Table 4.2.2.1: Statistics

N	Valid	4
	Missing	0

Table 4.2.2.2: Gender

	N	%
Female	2	50%
Male	2	50%

Fig 4.2.2.3 Gender



4.2.3 Age groups of Econet wireless employees respondents.

2 male respondents who participated in the research ranged from the age groups of 25 to 35 years. 2 female respondents who participated in the research ranged from the age groups of 35 to 45 years.

Table 4.2.3.1 Age groups of Econet wireless employees respondents.

Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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Valid	27	1	25	25	25
	34	1	25	25	50
	35	1	25	25	75
	42	1	25	25	100.0
	Total	4	100.0	100.0	

4.2.4 Age groups of Econet wireless subscriber participants.

18 male respondents who participated in this research ranged from the age group of 19 to 51 years. 25 female participants who participated in the research ranged from the age groups of 21 to 58 years. The age group of 27 and 38 had the most number of participants with a record of 9.5% respectively.

Table 4.2.4.1 Age groups

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	19	1	2.3	2.3	2.3
	20	1	2.3	2.3	4.7
	21	2	4.7	4.7	9.3
	24	1	2.3	2.3	11.6
	25	3	7.0	7.0	18.6
	26	1	2.3	2.3	20.9
	27	6	14.0	14.0	34.9
	29	1	2.3	2.3	37.2
	31	1	2.3	2.3	39.5

33	1	2.3	2.3	41.9
34	3	7.0	7.0	48.8
35	1	2.3	2.3	51.2
36	2	4.7	4.7	55.8
37	1	2.3	2.3	58.1
38	6	14.0	14.0	72.1
39	1	2.3	2.3	74.4
40	1	2.3	2.3	76.7
41	3	7.0	7.0	83.7
42	1	2.3	2.3	86.0
43	1	2.3	2.3	88.4
45	1	2.3	2.3	90.7
47	1	2.3	2.3	93.0
51	1	2.3	2.3	95.3
56	1	2.3	2.3	97.7
58	1	2.3	2.3	100.0
Total	43	100.0	100.0	

From the data collected, it can be interpreted as middle aged participants of the age groups of 27 and 38 had higher frequency of 14.0 percent. This involves the middle aged population with fresh minds to bring new innovative ideas on marketing strategies which can bring positive change to the organisation,

Table 4.2.4.2 Statistics

Age groups

N	Valid	43
	Missing	0
Mean		34.40
Median		35.00
Mode		27 ^a
Std. Deviation		9.251
Variance		85.578
Skewness		.481
Std. Error of Skewness		.361
Range		39
Percentiles	25	27.00
	50	35.00
	75	40.00

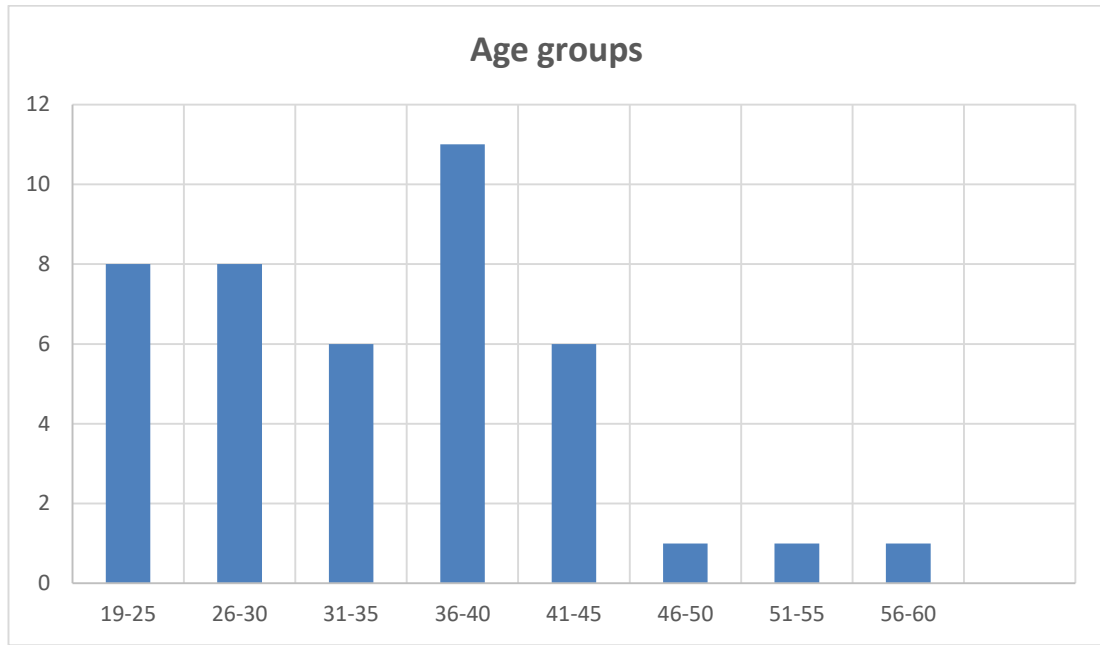
- a. Multiple modes
exist. The smallest
value is shown

4.2.5.1 Marital status

80% of the total respondents were married and 20% of the total respondents were single individuals in the research. This had the benefit of providing information

which was balanced from the opinion of both those who are married as well as those who are single.

Fig 4.2.6 Histogram



The histogram shows that the data is positively right skewed as most of the values are on the left side and decreasing data is on the right side of the graph. The mean, mode and median values are on the left of the graph with mode close to the peak.

4.2.7 Hypothesis Testing

The research has been carried out on a 95% level of significance. The population mean was above 30 and standard deviation has been calculated and is known to be 9.251, therefore, z-testing has been used to calculate hypothesis testing. Two tailed testing has been used in calculations as the hypothesis testing used the equal to sign.

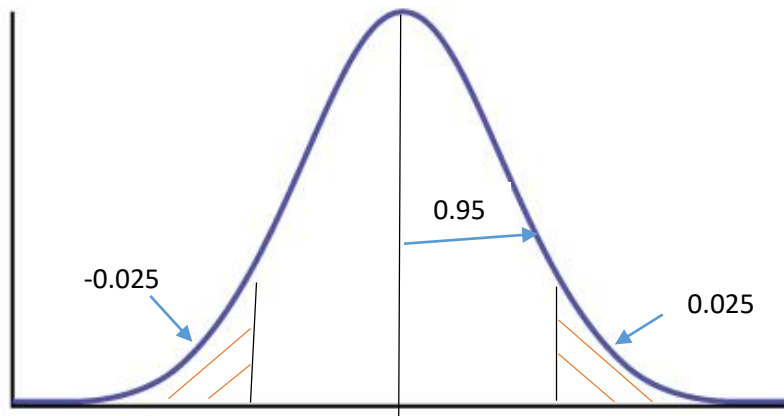
$$H_0 = 34.4$$

$$H_1 \neq 34.4$$

4.2.7.1 Z-testing

$$Z = \frac{\bar{x} - \mu}{s/\sqrt{n}}$$

Fig 4.2.7.2 Z-Testing



$$\mu = 48$$

$$\bar{x} = 34.40$$

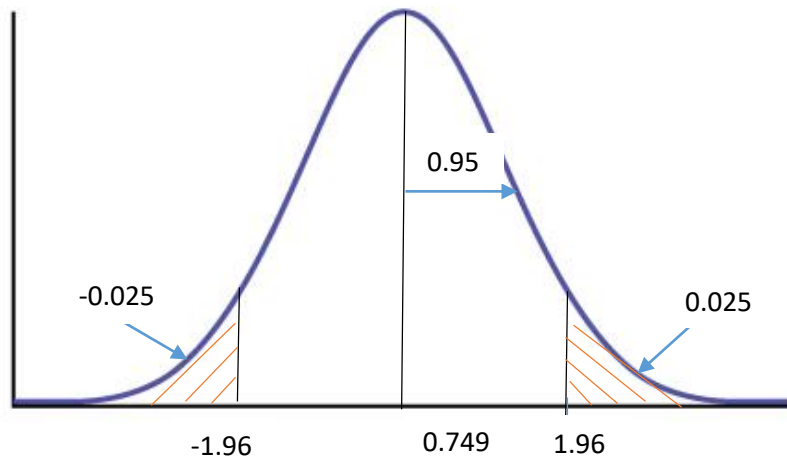
$$s = 9.251$$

$$Z = \frac{34.40 - 33.40}{9.251/\sqrt{48}}$$

$$Z = \frac{1}{9.251/\sqrt{48}}$$

$$z = 0,749$$

Fig 4.2.7.3 Z-Testing



From the above calculation, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected as 0.749 is in the acceptance region than in the rejection region. Therefore, the hypothesis testing failed to reject the null hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between social media marketing and Econet Wireless Private Limited organisation in Zimbabwe.

4.3 Discussion and interpretation

Product branding

75% of the respondents of Econet wireless marketing respondents were of the view that Econet wireless uses various branding types in branding their products. This involves branding such as corporate branding, product branding as well as service branding. 25% of the respondents were of the view that this has the benefit of creating brand identity, brand culture and brand image. This helps in creating familiarity of the brand to the customers against competitors.

Brand awareness

100% of the Econet Wireless marketing respondents were of the view that they ensure that customers are aware of existing brands through a number of factors. This includes advertising on social media platforms on regular basis about the products or service

offered. It also involves making calls to customers selected at random and asking them if they are aware of the exiting new products and services as well as ensuring that they understand what the product is all about. It encompasses using videos as a way of showing illustration of the product or service in use such as through public platforms such as YouTube. Using influencers and celebrities as a way of advertising promotes brand awareness. Regular campaigns on public platforms also promotes brand awareness. Campaigns are also strategies for increasing brand awareness. This is similar to a research conducted by (Antwi, 2020), in Ghana which is of the view that brand awareness is an effective strategy in promoting social media marketing.

Product performance.

100% of the respondents were of the view that Key Performance Indicators (KIPs), are the performance indicators used to measure performance in achieving the set objectives and targets. It encompasses the use of various metrics and statistics for measuring performance. It also involves analysing on overall profitability, service quality, followers and comments on social media platforms as well as revenue market share. This is similar to a study conducted by (Nyambu E. , 2013), in Kenya which stipulated that measuring performance is effective in analysing the effectiveness of social media marketing.

Price structure

75% of the respondents were of the view that the pricing system at Econet Wireless is based on a budget that is designed by the marketing department. It is also guided by prevailing inflation rates thereby regularly affecting the pricing system. 25% of the respondents stipulated that strategies used for pricing includes penetration pricing where prices are low to attract customers, skimming whereby prices are established at

high rate to make high profit and loss-leader were prices are low to attract customers. Strategies for pricing also includes cost-based pricing, market-based pricing, value-based pricing, dynamic pricing among others.

Social media platforms

100% of the participants stipulated that Econet Wireless mostly uses public platforms for advertising purposes such as on Facebook, YouTube to advertise different products were massive audiences can view the products at once. Platforms such as Whatsapp are mostly used for personal communication with customers such as when customers have queries that they might need to be addressed on Whatsapp rather than making calls on customer call centres.

Promotional strategies

100% of the participants expressed the view that promotional strategies involves a persuasive way of convincing customers to purchase the different products offered. Econet Wireless uses various promotional strategies to convince customers such as offering bonus airtime, free trials, winning packages among others.

Econet SIM card

30% of the respondents have been using Econet SIM card for less than two years. These were mostly between the age groups of less than 25 years of age. 15% of the population have been using Econet SIM card between 3 to 5 years. 55% of the population have been using Econet SIM card for more than 6 years. This showed the level of loyalty that customers have to the brand.

Product purchasing platforms

65% of the population prefer purchasing Econet Wireless products online. This includes buying products such as airtime online such as through using online platforms like Ecocash or using online banking. They were of the view that buying airtime online has the advantage of saving time rather than searching for Econet shops or agents to buy scratch cards. However, online purchasing has the disadvantage of being affected by network connection. 35% of the population preferred purchasing products such as airtime offline as they preferred using hard cash rather than depositing their money to the bank as well as to the Ecocash wallet for purchasing airtime.

Product purchasing preference

85% of the respondents were of the view that they are most likely to purchase products advertised online through customer engagement platforms which includes USSD self-care platforms, Yemurai Chatbot platforms and web self-care platforms among others. This gives customer's easy access to information online as well as platforms to send enquires about different products so as to have a better understanding. 5% of the respondents were of the view that they are less likely to purchase products advertised online as they are illiterate, cannot read and cannot understand products advertised in English language. 5% of the respondents were of the view that they are less likely to purchase products advertised online as they are ignorant, and some prefer to follow trends like entertainment on social media marketing rather than products advertised.

Product recommendation to other social media users

75% of the respondents were of the view that they mostly recommend different products and services offered by Econet Wireless to other social media users when they realise the benefits of the products or services that will be on offer so as to make other users aware of the existing products or services. This can be noted for example

subscribers of Ecosure can recommend the service to other users when satisfied with the services offered on funerals. 25% of the respondents were of the view that they would most unlikely recommend products or services recommended due to various challenges such as disruptions in network connectivity thereby affecting services such as ecocash.

Social media marketing channels

95% of the respondents are aware of the existing social media marketing channels which includes Whatsapp, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, email, websites amongst others. 5% of the respondents are not familiar with other social media platforms such as Twitter, Blogs, and emails. These were mostly of the age groups of above 50 years. This is similar the research conducted by (Antwi, 2020), which was of the view that age influences social media marketing in terms of brand awareness.

Social media channels mostly used

80% of the respondents are of the view that they use social media channels which includes Whatsapp, Instagram, Facebook as well as YouTube. 20% of the respondents went on to say they also use other social media channels such as Twitter, Blogs, websites as well as emails.

Brand awareness

65% of the respondents are aware of the different brands offered by Econet wireless through the different platforms. 35% of the respondents were of the view that they are not aware of the different brands offered by Econet Wireless as they get frustrated by so many messages that they receive from Econet Wireless thereby tending to ignore some of the brands offered.

65% of the respondents understand the different brands offered by Econet Wireless as they take time to follow on trends, read messages as well as viewing pictures or videos concerning Econet Wireless. 25% of the respondents were of the view that they do not understand the different brands offered by Econet Wireless. 10% of the respondents were of the view that they get frustrated by so many messages that they receive from Econet Wireless thereby tending to ignore some of the brands messages offered.

Effect of comments on social media platforms on purchasing decisions

75% of the respondents were of the view that they are motivated with positive comments on social media platforms to purchase the different products advertised online. They are also positively influenced when the products are advertised using influencers as well as celebrities. Testimonies of those who would have used the product as well as have benefited from the product also influences their positive purchasing decisions. 25% of the respondents' most unlikely purchase the products which would have been positively commended on due to various factors such as level of education, income level as well as marital status. This is similar to a study conducted by (Teodor, 2020), in China which stipulated that purchasing decisions is affected by level of education and income level.

Customer satisfaction on social media marketing strategies

97% of the respondents were satisfied by social media marketing strategies offered by Econet Wireless such as self-care services. 3% of the respondents are less satisfied as they complain that their queries take longer period to be responded to as well as low internet connectivity sometimes.

Area of interest in social media platforms.

90% of the respondents prefer using social media platforms to follow trends, for business as well as for entertainment purposes. 10% of the population use social media for educational purposes, health, tourism and hospitality as well as for agriculture and mining.

Bulling or harassment on social media platforms.

80% of the respondents have not been bullied on social media platforms. 20% of the respondents have been bullied on social media platforms such as Whatsapp groups, Facebook among other platforms.

Reporting on harassment

100% of the respondents who have been bullied or harassed on social media platforms have not reported as they are not aware on where they are supposed to report. Therefore, there is need for awareness campaigns so that the general public are aware of where to report.

Age

Age is a demographic factor which affects social media marketing. 75% of the total respondents above the age groups of 45 have less interest in much social media platforms. As people grow older, their use of different social media platforms tend to decrease. Different age groups tend to have different interests, values, purchasing patterns as well as income levels. This tends to affect their purchasing patterns thereby affecting social media marketing.

Gender

Gender is a demographic factor which affects social media marketing. 45% of male respondents are more interested in purchasing products advertised online and 60% of the total female respondents prefer purchasing products advertised online. This shows that female customers tend to purchase advertised products more than male customers. Gender also affects social media marketing as male customers tend to have different purchasing decisions than female customers due to various factors such as differences in income levels, socialization, differences in upbringing. In some instances, male tend to prioritise quality of products before purchasing and females tend to prioritise both product quality as well as prices of different products.

Marital status

Marital status is a demographic factor that affects social media marketing. 80% of the total population of ladies who are single tend to purchase products advertised online more, especially advertised products which are more of luxury. 90% of total married females tend to purchase products that are more productive rather than luxurious. 60% of total single men tend to have more interest in purchasing classic products. 45% of total married men tend to have more interest in product quality rather than luxury. This intend shows that there is difference in interests in purchasing decisions.

Level of education

Level of education has an effect in social media marketing. This is because individuals who have higher education levels tend to have a better understanding of advertised products and services rather than those with lower education levels. This results in individuals with higher education purchasing products more than individuals with low levels of education.

Political factors

Political factors has an impact on social media marketing. This involves the various government policies, such as tax policy which affects the pricing systems of the different products and services offered. Environmental regulations which tends to affect the products produced. Trade restrictions and reforms, tariffs as well as political instability which tends to affect production of products thereby affecting the social media marketing process.

Economic factors

There are various economic factors that has an impact on social media marketing. This involves factors such as inflation which tends to affect pricing systems as prices will increase in regular bases to cope up with the rising inflation rates. This intends to affect the purchasing power of customers especially those with lower income as they will be having difficulties in purchasing decisions due to constant increase in prices.

In relation to inflation, income rate as well as unemployment are also economic factors that affects purchasing decisions. Customers with low income as well as those who are unemployed tend to have low purchasing power in purchasing the advertised products and services advertised on different social media platforms.

Social factors.

Social factors has an effect on social media marketing through shaping the different perceptions of individuals on their wants as well as their needs. People in the same social classes may have same interests and needs unlike individuals in other social classes. Religion and beliefs also affects social media marketing as some religions prohibit the purchasing of some particular products to individuals thereby affecting the purchasing power of individuals. Families also have an impact in social media marketing as the buying habits, lifestyles, perceptions of families as well as

communities tend to affect individuals purchasing decisions. Individuals tend to purchase products which will be related to their cultures.

Technological factors.

New technology as well as technological development has an impact on social media marketing. This is through various strategies such as increase satellite systems so as to improve internet connectivity. However, technological advancement is affected by the economy as it requires much revenue to implement the advancement project such as the introduction and implementation of equipment to shift to advance network such as 6G network

Environmental factors.

There are various environmental factors that affects social media marketing. This involves climatic variations which affects factors such as internet connectivity. Power outages is also an environmental factor that affects internet connectivity. It also involves making a critical analysis of external environment such as competitor analysis, customer desires so as to enhance social media marketing.

Product or service

This involves products or services advertised online in different social media platforms. Marketing processes such as production, pricing as well as distribution of products will be online. Online products have the benefit of being able to be measured in terms of performance through different metrics.

Geographical location

Internet connectivity is affected by the geographical location of different customers. This encompasses higher internet connectivity in urban areas and low internet

connectivity in rural areas. However, this affects businesses as well as individual customers who might want to use high speed internet connection to advertise their different products as well as being able to reach a wide variety of customers on social media platforms in a timely and effective manner.

4.4 Summary

In conclusion, this chapter focused on presentation and analysis of data collected in chapter 3. It also analysed the benefits, challenges as well as impact of social media marketing in financial performance.

CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on conclusion of the research that was conducted. It also presents recommendations of data presented in chapter 4. It also presents areas of further research as guided by shortcomings of the research.

5.2 Discussion

Social media marketing is an important part of digital marketing in the telecommunication industry. Various organisations around the world are making use of social media marketing to advertise their different products to massive audiences without boundary restrictions. Whatsapp, Facebook, YouTube, twitter as well as blogs are the main social media platforms that are being used by Econet Wireless.

Econet wireless has implemented social media marketing as a less expensive marketing strategy which reaches out to millions of internet users without being restricted by boundaries. This has been an effective measure in ensuring that areas which were difficult to reach are now reachable through the use of different online platforms.

Millions of online users have different interests. Therefore, the use of different online platforms by Econet wireless has been an effective marketing measure so as to be able to cater for the different needs of different customers so as to provide the products as well as services with which they desire through market segmentation. This can be categorised into different age groups for example, the younger generation are more interested in entertainment therefore, Econet wireless uses this opportunity to advertise products and services that are informative as well as entertaining so as to address the

needs of the younger generation. Market segmentation can be considered through various factors such as gender, level of income, level of education and marital status as individuals in societies have different interests.

Various metrics can be used in measuring performance in social media marketing such as measuring the number of followers on different platforms, measuring the number of followers who click through the product as well as analysing the different comments made about the product from different customers. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) is an effective tool in measuring performance. This is effective in analysing on whether the targeted customers have gained interest in the advertised products or services.

5.3 Conclusions

Social media marketing has brought about a paradigm shift of marketing strategies from traditional marketing of relying on marketing strategies such as word of mouth, televisions, radios and newspapers to use of online platforms. It has lead to the emergence of new technologies such as Web 2.0.

Customer engagement in social media platforms is a way in which a two way communication is encouraged to customers so that they become involved in brand building as they are the users of the products. This promotes loyalty of the customers as their suggestion are put into consideration through the products as well as services offered to the market. This is unlike in the traditional marketing strategies whereby customers were passive in a one way communication and there was no feedback on the products and services offered thereby reducing sales as there was low motivation as well as low satisfaction from different customers. Brands could not tell the number

of people who were following their products and services besides the sales that were recorded from purchased items.

Social media marketing department is responsible for advertising different products to different consumers online on different social media platforms. However, there may be negative comments posted on social media platforms which may create a negative reputation of the organisation.

Social media marketing has the benefit of generating new ideas. For example, through the different social media platforms such as LinkedIn. Organisations such as Econet Wireless Private limited can interact and get information from other professionals as well as other organisation on new social media marketing strategies which they can implement and improve performance of their organisation. They can also get information on other professionals on technologies that they can use to monitor, control as well as improve their service delivery to different customers.

Social media marketing has the benefit of brand owners analysing the personal profiles of their customers so as to have a better understanding of what the customers are mostly interested in so as to ensure that they create products which the majority of the population are interested in for example, customers love communication on social media channels such as Facebook, therefore Econet uses this opportunity to offer social media bundles at affordable prices which then motivate individuals to use social media channels at low cost. As more people will be able to afford to social media platforms, so will performance be improved from the purchasing of data to the purchasing of different products and services advertised.

Social media marketing has the benefit of promoting brand visibility as well as awareness of the different products as well as services available which the brand offers to the market. As a result consumers become aware of the products and service through which they can purchase using online platforms rather depending on walking into different organizations to look for different products and services.

Promotions can also be used as a measure to increase performance. This can be through the increase in traffic of consumers who will be following Econet Wireless social media channel to participate and make a follow-up as well as participate in the promotion offered. This increases the number of subscribers to the web page, thereby increasing sales. This promotes brand awareness of the customers on the products offered. Live streaming of competitions offered as well as users who would have won the promotions as well as competitions increases authenticity of the brand as well as loyalty of customers to brand through operational transparency.

Apart from promotion attracting more users to the web pages, it has the advantage of creating a competitive advantage. This is through attracting more customers to the brand as different users are interested in promotions whereby they gain incentives as well as awards for using that specific service which is on offer. It also creates competitive advantage through the users referring their family and friends to participate in the promotions so as to get the same awards that the users would have achieved. As a result, there will be increase in subscribers, increase in revenue generated from buying the social media bundles as well as increase in performance from the revenue generated through increase in target market visibility.

Number of subscribers who participate during live streaming of different products is also a measure of social media marketing. This is through analysing the number of

subscribers who will be viewing live streaming sessions so as to assess whether the users are interested the product or service. It shows the number of users who are not just following the social media platforms, but who are also interested in doing business with Econet wireless private limited. It also provides indicators, to analyse which types of promotion live streams have more followers and which live streaming have less followers so as to improve the live streaming sessions that have less followers. The comments as well as queries that users will be posting on live streaming sessions is also a measurement tool to access areas that needs improvement. Negative comments, though it may damage the reputation of the organisation, is a measurement tool on what needs to be improved as well as the attitudes and emotions of users.

It was also implemented to maximise business financial performance at a low cost and at a higher magnitude of informing consumers of the products available. It can be used to track how many different users on social media platforms are making use of Econet products and services as well as their experiences as well as attitude from using such products. This can be used in analysing level of satisfaction for example if the magnitude of satisfaction is high, there is therefore, high chances of repeated purchases of the product or service. However, of satisfaction magnitude is low, there is a higher probability of negative feedback as well as low sales thereby affecting financial performance of the organization.

5.4 Implications

Social media marketing has the disadvantage that the targeted customers through which the advertised products are intended to reach may not necessarily be interested in purchasing the products or services offered. Negative feedback from customers on the comment section in the different social media platforms may influence the

purchasing decisions of other customers thereby withdrawing interest of the product from other customers.

Live streaming of videos which may be used by Econet Wireless Private Limited for example in launching new products to the market may be affected by low internet connection. This may bring interruptions to the audiences which may then create a negative attitude. Social media marketing has a disadvantage of massive messages which may need to be responded to concerning queries from different customers. This may bring forth an overwhelming load to social media marketing personnel who, apart from responding to different messages, need to advertise different products as well as to monitor and control the social media platforms.

5.5 Recommendations

Age

There is need for age demographics segmentation so as to target different categories of customers based on their age groups. This involves conducting an in-depth analysis of the different interests of the different age groups so as to be able to provide goods and services that provide solutions to their problems. It is also of significance to analyse the pricing system of the different products and services depending on the different income levels of the different age demographic segments.

Gender

There is need for gender demographics segmentation as priorities are different between male and female customers. Therefore, it is significant to analyse the different interests of both male and female customers so as to cater for their different needs. It is significant to conduct customer segmentation in terms of marital status, income levels as well as level of education so as to be inclusive of all the individual needs of target

customers. This is similar to the research conducted by (Teodor, 2020), in China with findings that respondents are well versed with trends on social media marketing depending on their educational backgrounds as well as their work experiences.

Product or service.

It is of significance to offer products and services which meet as well as exceed customer expectations so as to improve social media marketing against competitors as well as ensuring that products offered are the right products that meets customer demands at the right time. This is similar to a research conducted by (Makwara P. , 2020), with research findings that social media marketing promotes brand visibility to the target market. It is also significant to ensure that there is easy access to product purchasing processes. Product prices should reflect customer's perceived value of the different products offered in line with the stipulated budget as well as taking into consideration competitors in the social media marketing. Customer engagement to improve customer satisfaction is also of vital importance so as to analyse on whether the different customers are aware of the existing products as well as to measure on whether the customers have gained interest in purchasing the different products and services as not all customers automatically gain interest in the different the products or services advertised online.

Feedback on social media marketing platforms needs to be critically taken into consideration as it addresses the different views of customers concerning the offered products. Price structure should be analysed in terms of inflation rates so as to ensure that Return on Investment is positively achieved. There is need for regular promotional strategies as well as free trials for new products to improve customer interest in the different products so as to improve their purchasing decisions as it creates familiarity

of the new products. This is similar to research conducted by (Chen, 2024), in Korea which observed that local social media marketing can promote foreign brands.

Implementation of Artificial intelligence

As a way of enhancing internet speed, the researcher recommends the implementation of 5G network form of wireless mobile telecommunication. It involves the use of advanced technology. This involves implementation of 5G network, there is need to implement mobile networks in the market so that they are available to Econet users in the population which need mobile communication with faster speed of around

Implementing Validated Scales

These are scales that are used to analyse the degree to which social media usage will be contributing to purchasing behaviour by consumers. This will make it easier to analyse to what magnitude social media marketing will be contributing to financial performance.

Implementing 6G network

Apart from introducing mobile cell phones in the market with technology to encounter 6G network, there is need to carry out awareness campaigns in social media platforms so as to provide awareness of the general public to the benefits of using 5G mobile technology. These will make it easier for individuals to make use of 5G cell phones in an effective manner. 6G network has the advantage of providing higher speed in communication in both uploading as well as downloading different media in social media marketing. It enhances higher service quality to customers. It also has the benefit of introducing new spectrum bands which are more advanced than the 5G network. It also tends to have ultra-low latency functions which are expected to be up

to 1000 times more than the 5G network. It focuses on enhancing energy efficiency as well as improved network reliability. It is more advanced network system thereby giving rise to new architectures in terms of technological advancements.

Increasing satellites

This involves installation of more satellites around the country to improve connectivity for example in rural areas where network connectivity is low as well as in urban areas with high population where demand for network connection is high. It also involves increasing back-up systems for power supply such as installing solar systems so as to ensure that there is smooth flow of internet connectivity even when there is ZESA electricity power outages.

Automation of customer care call centres.

At an estimate of around 12 million Econet customers, there has been a challenge of customer queries taking a long time to be responded to due to high volume of requests from different customers. As a result, the researcher advocates for automation of call centres to reduce pressure on employees for example automation machines to respond to queries on social media platforms such as on Whatsapp, Facebook among others. Apart from Econet automating its call centres, businesses contacting social media marketing should also automate their different websites so that if they are any queries from customers, the queries are quickly responded to in a fast as well as efficient manner that will improve profitability to businesses.

Determining social media channels with greater users

It is important for social media employees to investigate and research media channels that have the most users. This has the benefit of increasing social media marketing

performance as more users contribute to more subscribers to Econet web pages, thereby promoting increase in performance. This can be researched through identifying social media channels with the most subscribers who participate in social media marketing. It is also important to identify customer preferences in the different social media platforms so that they are catered for.

Easy access to links for online markets

Econet wireless should provide ease in doing business with customers. This involves the use of links in social media platforms whereby customers can access different links online to purchase different products directly online so that they do not have to walk in to Econet shops to purchase different products such as cell phones. This has an effect of improved service delivery as customers will be purchasing products offered by Econet Wireless at the comfort of their homes as well as offices without restrictions of geographical locations. This has an effect of increasing social media subscribers as well as competitive advantage as Econet Wireless will be offering basically everything that the different consumers may need from communication channels, to different products and services, to electronic commerce.

Response to customer queries

Regular response to customer queries can be an effective measure to customer satisfaction of Econet wireless service delivery. This will provide motivation for Econet subscriber to repeatedly make purchases as well as to make referrals to their friends and family on the best service delivery provided.

Promotional strategies

There is need to increase promotions on social media marketing platforms whereby winners who are social media users can win something so as to encourage social media users that social media marketing is not a waste of time but is something that they can benefit from.

Negative comments

There is need to increase the number of dedicated staff who will be monitoring social media conversation as well as quickly erasing negative comments that may damage the reputation of the organisation. However, if the negative comments are productive and can improve the products, then they must be addressed. Econet wireless has introduced a deliberate strategy through which the Chief Executive Officer, Strive Masiwa will be participating in social media marketing so as to influence customers to be convinced as well as to inspire confidence in social media public use.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

As new social media platforms are being developed and implemented, there is need to continuously research on these social media platforms in order to analyse on what way they benefit businesses as well as the challenges encountered with implementing the novel social media platforms to businesses.

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Appendix 1: Interview Survey Instrument

My name is Kudakwamwari Samunyayi and I am a Masters student at Africa University. I am conducting a research dissertation submitted to Africa University in partial fulfilment of Master's Degree in Business Administration. I am kindly requesting that you fill this interview to the best of your knowledge and ability. The data collected will be treated with confidentiality and will only be used for academic purposes only. Thank you for cooperating.

1. Gender

Male ☐

Female ☐

2. Age group

25 and below ☐

26-35 ☐

36-45 ☐

46-55 ☐

56 and above ☐

3. How do you brand different products?

.....

.....

.....

4. How do ensure brand awareness of customers to the different products?

.....
.....
.....

5. Which strategies are used for assessing product performance?

.....
.....
.....

6. Which price structure is used for different products?

.....
.....
.....

7. Which social media platforms are mostly used for advertising?

.....
.....
.....

8. Which promotional strategies are mostly used for different products?

.....
.....
.....

Appendix 2: Questionnaire Survey Instrument

My name is Kudakwamwari Samunyayi and I am a Masters student at Africa University. I am conducting a research dissertation submitted to Africa University in partial fulfilment of Master's Degree in Business Administration. I am kindly requesting that you fill this questionnaire to the best of your knowledge and ability. The data collected will be treated with confidentiality and will only be used for academic purposes only. Thank you for cooperating.

1. Gender

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Age group

25 and below	<input type="checkbox"/>
31-35	<input type="checkbox"/>
36-40	<input type="checkbox"/>
41-45	<input type="checkbox"/>
46-50	<input type="checkbox"/>
50 and above	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Marital Status

Single	<input type="checkbox"/>
Married	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. How long have you been using Econet Sim card?

1-2 years

3-5 years

6-8 years

9-10 years

11 years and above

5. Do you prefer purchasing products online or offline

Online

Offline

6. How likely are you to purchase products advertised online?

Most likely

Less likely

Most unlikely

Less unlikely

7. How often do you recommend different products and services offered by
Econet Wireless to other social media users

Most often

Less often

Rarely

8. Which social media marketing channels are implemented at Econet Wireless

.....

.....

.....

9. Which social media channels do you mostly use

.....

.....

.....

10. To what extent are you aware of the different brands offered by Econet
Wireless?

.....

.....

.....

11. Do you understand the different brands offered by Econet Wireless?

.....

.....

.....

12. How often do you view different advertisements online?

.....

.....

.....

13. Is your purchasing decision affected by the positive comments on social media platforms?

.....

.....

.....

14. Is your purchasing decision affected by the negative comments on social media platforms?

.....

.....

.....

15. To what extent are you satisfied by social media marketing strategies offered by Econet Wireless?

.....

.....

.....

16. What is your area of interest in social media platforms?

.....

.....

.....

17. Have you ever been bullied or harassed on social media platforms and on which platforms?

.....
.....
.....

18. Have you reported on harassment and what has been done?

.....
.....
.....

Appendix 3: AUREC Approval Letter



"Investing in Africa's future"

AFRICA UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (AUREC)

*P.O. Box 1320 Mutare, Zimbabwe, Off Nyanga Road, Old Mutare-Tel (+263-20)
60075/60026/61611 Fax:*

(+263 20) 61785 Website: www.africau.edu

Ref: AU 3389/24

May, 2024

KUDAKWAMWARI P. SAMUNYAYI

C/O Africa University

Box 1320

MUTARE

RE: **EVALUATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN THE
TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY AT ECONET ZIMBABWE**

Thank you for the above-titled proposal that you submitted to the Africa University Research Ethics Committee for review. Please be advised that AUREC has reviewed and approved your application to conduct the above research.

The approval is based on the following. a) Research proposal

- **APPROVAL NUMBER** AUREC 3389/24
This number should be used on all correspondences, consent forms, and appropriate documents.
- **AUREC MEETING DATE** NA
- **APPROVAL DATE** May 15, 2024
- **EXPIRATION DATE** May 15, 2025

- **TYPE OF MEETING:** Expedited
After the expiration date, this research may only continue upon renewal. A progress report on a standard AUREC form should be submitted a month before the expiration date for renewal purposes.
- **SERIOUS ADVERSE EVENTS** All serious problems concerning subject safety must be reported to AUREC within 3 working days on the standard AUREC form.
- **MODIFICATIONS** Prior AUREC approval is required before implementing any changes in the proposal (including changes in the consent documents)
- **TERMINATION OF STUDY** Upon termination of the study a report has to be submitted to AUREC.



Yours Faithfully

M. Chinzou

MARY CHINZOU

ASSISTANT RESEARCH OFFICER: FOR CHAIRPERSON

AFRICA UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Appendix 4: Econet Wireless approval letter.



ECONET WIRELESS (PRIVATE) LIMITED
No. 2 Old Mutare Road
Msasa
Harare, Zimbabwe
Tel: +263 4 486121/6
Fax: +263 4 486120/486867
Email: info@econet.co.zw
Website: www.econet.co.zw

6 May 2022

Kudakwamwari Samunyayi

C/O Econet Wireless

Harare

Dear Kudakwamwari Samunyayi

RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITHIN ECONET WIRELESS

Thank you for your interest in conducting research within Econet Wireless. We are glad to inform you that your request has been approved.

You will be expected to provide the final copy of the research document which is duly stamped by the receiving institution and summary of findings (3 pages maximum) covering executive summary, research findings and recommendations.

Kindly get in touch with me to give you guidance on how to proceed.

Yours Faithfully

Calvin Nhari

Head-Talent and Organizational Development

Email: Calvin.Nhari@econet.co.zw