The Role of Social Media in Promoting Organizational Brand: A Case of Telecommunication Organizations in Tanzania [1]

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Abstract

This study was conducted with the aim of exploring the role of social media in promoting organizational brand. The study had three objectives. The first objective is to determine the ways that telecommunication organizations in Tanzania use to promote organizational brands on Facebook. The second one is to find out the customers' perspective on the impacts of the telecommunication organizations' activities on Facebook. The last one is to unveil challenges that telecommunication organizations face in promoting the organizational brand on Facebook. The study used mixed methods research design. The content analysis was used to gather data from the Facebook pages of the four telecommunication organizations of Tanzania. The interviews and online questionnaire survey (OQS) incorporated participants who liked the Facebook pages of the four telecommunication organizations. Interviews were conducted to 16 participants while OQS was used to collect data from 100 respondents through Google Forms. The study was conducted under two theories; Theoretical Model of Corporate Branding in Social Media (TMCBSM) in industrial marketing and Cognitive Dissonance Theory. The study adopted the TMCBSM model for analyzing the Facebook posts of the telecommunication organizations while Cognitive Dissonance Theory was applied in measuring and revealing of the understanding of the OQS and interview participants on the organizational brands. Social media was found to play significant role in promoting organizational brand of the telecommunication organizations through creating organizational brand recognition and awareness to stakeholders. The study found that social media generate engagement and interactivity that build relationships between organizational brand and their stakeholders and create experiences for stakeholders which build organizational brands.

Keywords: *Social Media, Facebook, Organizational Brand, Organizational Communication, Telecommunication Organizations*

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Kurumsal Markaların Desteklenmesinde Sosyal Medyanın Rolü: Tanzanya Telekomünikasyon Şirketleri Örneği

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Öz

Bu çalışma, kurumsal markaların desteklenmesinde sosyal medyanın rolünü belirlemek amacıyla yapılmıştır. Çalışmanın üç amacı bulunmaktadır. İlki, Tanzanya'daki telekomünikasyon kuruluşlarının Facebook'ta kurumsal markalarını tanıtmak için kullandıkları yolları belirlemektir. İkincisi, telekomünikasyon kuruluşlarının Facebook'taki faaliyetlerinin etkilerine ilişkin müşterilerin bakış açısını ortaya çıkarmaktır. Sonuncusu ise telekomünikasyon kuruluşlarının Facebook'ta markalarını tanıtırken karşılaştıkları zorlukları ortaya çıkarmaktır. Bu amaçlara ulaşmak için çalışmada karma yöntem kullanılmıştır. Veri toplamak için hem nitel (içerik analizi ve görüşme) hem de nicel (çevrimiçi anket) araştırma yöntemlerinden faydalanılmıştır. Tanzanya'daki dört telekomünikasyon kuruluşunun Facebook sayfalarından veri toplamak için içerik analizi gerçekleştirilmiştir. Görüşme ve çevrimiçi anket sözü edilen dört telekomünikasyon kuruluşunun Facebook sayfalarını beğenen katılımcıları içermektedir. Görüşme, 16 katılımcı ile, çevrimiçi anket ise 100 kişi ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışma iki teori altında yürütülmüştür. Bunlar, Sosyal Medyada Kurumsal Markalamanın (TMCBSM) Teorik Modeli ve Bilişsel Uyumsuzluk Teorisidir. Çalışma, telekomünikasyon kuruluşlarının Facebook gönderilerini analiz etmek için TMCBSM modelini benimserken, çevrimiçi anket ve görüşme ile katılımcılarının kurumsal markalara ilişkin anlayışlarının ölçülmesi ve ortaya çıkarılmasında Bilişsel Uyumsuzluk Kuramı uygulanmıştır. Çalışma sonucunda sosyal medyanın, kurumsal marka tanınırlığı ve farkındalık yaratarak telekomünikasyon kuruluşlarının kurumsal markalarını desteklemede önemli bir rol oynadığı tespit edilmiştir. Çalışma, sosyal medyanın kurumsal markalar ve paydaşları arasında ilişkiler kuran katılım ve etkileşim yarattığını ve paydaşlar için kurumsal markaları inşa eden deneyimler oluşturduğunu ortaya koymuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Sosyal Medya, Facebook, Kurumsal Marka, Kurumsal İletişim, Telekomünikasyon Kuruluşları*

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Introduction

Social media is considered to be a fastest growing and popular digital channel in the modern world (Toppi et al, 2012, p. 5). Since its introduction, social media has attracted great number of users, especially through Social Network Sites (SNSs) due to their interactivity nature. This advancement has exponentially spread even to the third world countries. This development did not leave behind organizations. They use social media for various purposes (Parveen, Jaafar, and Ainin, 2015, p. 71; Zhang and Vos, 2014, p. 371-372) such as branding, marketing, public relations, and communication with their stakeholders. Social media use in the business arena has attracted attention from both practitioners and academics (Leek, Canning, and Houghton, 2016, p. 25). The attention of research focused on various aspects including situations, use, impacts and other contributions of social media to organizations.

In Tanzania, research studies in social media started to receive high attention in the past ten years. Most researchers focused on social media and interpersonal communication and/or relationships (Mpepo, 2017, p. 28), organizations and the use of social media (Mushi, 2016, p. 29; Mandari and Koloseni, 2016, p. 5), use of social media for learning (Pfeiffer et al, 2014, p. 183; Shembilu, 2013, p. 16; Sedoyeka, 2016, p. 94), and others. Therefore, this study was conducted with the aim to understand the role of social media, particularly Facebook, in promoting organizational brand and to add knowledge in the area of organizational communication and social media use from the third world country context, Tanzania.

Literature Review

The number of people who rely on SNSs for news seeking and communication with friends has been increasing worldwide (Pfeiffer et al, 2014, p. 178; Shih, 2011, p. 12). This was achieved through the massive advancement of science and technology that simplified the emergence of SNSs which is the effect of Web 2.0 (Mandari and Kolosine, 2016, p. 2; Bonson et al, 2012, p. 124) and the interactivity nature of the technology that allows discussion between the users (Toppi et al, 2012, 5).

Organizations have also been using SNSs for communication and PR (Reitz, 2012, p. 43), sales and marketing (Kwayu, Lal, and Abubakre, 2018, p. 447), and branding of products and organizational brands (Waters and Jones, 2011, p. 249). Social media provide benefits to organizations as they offer a chance to get direct and unfiltered feedback from the stakeholders through opinions, comments and regular interaction (Reitz, 2012, p. 45).

Social media use has been reported to rise every year in the developing countries including those in Sub Sahara Africa (Poushter, Bishop, and Chwe, 2018, p. 4). This marks the opportunity for organizations that operate in the area to use social media platforms to reach their stakeholders through varying social media channels. Telecommunication companies in Tanzania are not lagged behind in using social media to communicate and engage with their customers and other stakeholders. Kwayu, Lal and Abubakre (2018, p. 446) posited that, telecommunication organizations in Tanzania have social media accounts in every major social media platform such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram.

Despite evidence provided by different scholars on the use of social media by the Tanzanian organizations and telecommunication companies in particular, there was no study that had focused its attention on how social media play the role of promoting organizational brand in Tanzanian context. Most studies focused on the presence (of organizations) in and the use of social media by the organizations (Mushi, 2016, p. 17; Mandari and Koloseni, 2016, p. 5), their effects and organizational performance (Kazungu, Matto, and Massawe, 2017, p. 146; Deus, 2013, 56), and sales and marketing (Kwayu, Lal, and Abubakre, 2018, p. 447).

Therefore, this research study explored how social media contribute to the promotion of organizational brand in Tanzania. This study was significant since, as Kwayu, Lal and Abubakre (2018, p. 440) stated, the studies that come from the environment with challenges of low purchasing power, unstable electricity supply and internet and still organizations invest in new technology like social media become to be areas of interest to understand issues facing organizations.

Social Media and Organizational Brand
Kotler and Armstrong (2012, p. 231) defined brand as "a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of these, that identifies the maker or seller of a product or service". Fifield (2008, p.287-288) clarified that, a brand is not just a physical perspective of a product.

Organizational brand is the image that one forms in the mind when he or she hears the name of the organization mentioned (Waters and Jones, 2011, p. 249). Such a brand includes organization's logo, color combination, or slogan. They further posit that, organizational brand does not end up on the visual and auditory message, it goes further to the individual experiences, mission and organization's activities, and the success stories (ibid).

Aaker (2004, p. 7) defined organizational brand as the brand that represents organizational association behind its (product) brand. It represents the credibility of the organization that is huge than the product brands the organization offers. The organizational brand consists of "rich heritage, assets and capabilities, people, values and priorities, a local or global frame of reference, citizenship programmes, and a performance record" (ibid). This study adopts the definition of Waters and Jones (2011) as its operational definition and in this study, as indicated by Aaker (2004, p. 6), organizational brand and corporate brand refers to the same meaning. Organizational brand is the master and significant brand beyond the product brand (Jones, 2010, p. 44; Aaker, 2004, p. 6). Toppi et al (2012, p. 3) argued that, corporate brand is formed through two components; organizational brand identity and organizational brand image.

Organizations can achieve different communication objectives by using different social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube. Contemporary businesses in the digital age can use social media to share different content, such as images, videos, and text, with stakeholders to communicate their latest activities. Social media popularity is unmatched in the present era of digitalization; currently, more than 3.8 billion people use social media worldwide. Moreover, the rate of social media adoption is on the rise (as cited in Gupta et al., 2021, p. 1218).

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p. 62) classified social media into six types; blogs, social networking sites (e.g. Facebook), collaborative projects (e.g. Wikipedia), content communities (e.g. YouTube), virtual game worlds (e.g. World of Warcraft), and virtual social worlds (e.g. Second Life). This study centers its analysis on social networking sites (SNSs), and Facebook as its focus social media platform. The study opted Facebook since, as supported by Shih (2011, p. 3), it is the social network site with the high number of users and its magnitude of users and uses are likely to increase in the coming years.

The advancement of internet-related technologies given birth to various online platforms such as brands' websites, brands' social media pages, where actual or potential customers can interact with the brand and have experience (Dwivedi et al., 2020 as cited in Khan, 2022, p.3).

In almost more than two decades, the environment of business changed due to the emerging of a new technology – social media (Shih, 2011, p. 11). Online sales and marketing, online advertising, organizational communication, public relations, and branding of both product and organizational brands in online platforms started to have massive attraction due to the social media presence. This is because, as Shih (2011, p. 11) asserted, "as companies…need to be where the customers are and communicate through the channels they prefer, and a growing number of people are preferring social networking sites".

Knowing this, Adrian Scott launched Ryze.com in 2001 to "help people leverage their business networks" (Boyd and Ellison, 2008, p. 215). The network was introduced to help business people to cooperate instead of competing. This was the first step of SNSs to focus on business, although the initiative did not receive positive actions.

Boyd and Ellison (2008, p. 216) further noted that, from 2003 onward, the number of SNSs increased with varying targets and interests. Social network sites for professionals and business people (LinkedIn, Visible Path, and Xing), religious (MyChurch), travelers connected to buses (Couchsurfing), and activists (Care2) were launched to connect people of the like interests. Facebook was first introduced as a platform for the college students but later on it was transformed into a corporate entity and started to accept registration of people from different places in 2006. Boyd and Ellison (2008, p. 215) insisted that Friendster, MySpace and Facebook "shaped the business landscape".

In business arena and for organizational communication, "the most commonly used platforms and services are Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube" (Leek, Canning, and Houghton, 2016, p. 25). As was it created in 2004 (Linke, 2014, p. 242; Boyd and Ellison, 2008, p. 218), Facebook introduced an important feature – Facebook Business Page – in November, 2007 (Linke, 2011, p. 5) that allows organizations, brands, and individual public figures to create pages of their organizations, brands or individual names or brands. This feature benefits the organizations in their organizational brands, product brands, public relations activities, marketing, and corporate communication. The feature allows organizations to communicate and interact directly with their customers and promote their organizational brands.

Research show that organizations are now turning to SNSs such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube for upholding their organizational brands (Waters and Jones, 2011, p. 250; Ferguson, 2008, p. 179). Social media, and SNSs in particular, provide features that allow organizations to interact with their stakeholders, share corporate level information, and promote their organizational brands through texts, pictures, videos, and even interactive applications and games.

With the need for clarification the role of communication with customers the social media helping target companies to better understand consumer, and helping spreading brand related contents (Al kharraz and Seçim, 2023, p.16).

Due to low levels of cost to access social media sites and nearly no barriers in transferring between sites, retaining users and promoting user loyalty and trust has become an important question for companies that use social media. Brand trust is important also because it directly influences users' decisions to visit the brand site, share information, disclose user information, make a purchase, and conduct networking activities on the site, as well as brand equity and brand loyalty (Dwyer, Hiltz and Passerini, 2007; Ebrahim, 2020; Lumsden and MacKay, 2006; Metzger, 2004; PSRA, 2002; Ulusu, Durmus and Yurtkoru, 2011 as cited in Zhang et al., 2022, p.1).

Some organizations, however, do not work directly on upholding their organizational brands through SNSs. In her study, Odhiambo (2012, p. 61) found that, despite their engagement in online marketing through Facebook, Itronic, a reseller company in Finland, did not invest in promoting its organizational brand through the network. This was due to selling of product brands that are strong which act as the organizational brand's introducing tool.

The reviewed literatures revealed the massive use of social media among the organizations. The literatures also confirmed that organizations use social media for the upholding of organizational brands. Few literature (e.g. Waters and Jones, 2011; Madsen, 2016) show the roles social media play in promoting organizational brands, however they deployed one research method and focused on multiple issues.

Also, the reviewed literatures were mostly conducted in developed countries. This study intended to add knowledge from the developing countries of Sub-Sahara Africa – Tanzania in particular. Therefore, this study provides a different context that was not previously worked on (Kwayu, Lal, and Abubakre, 2018, p. 440).
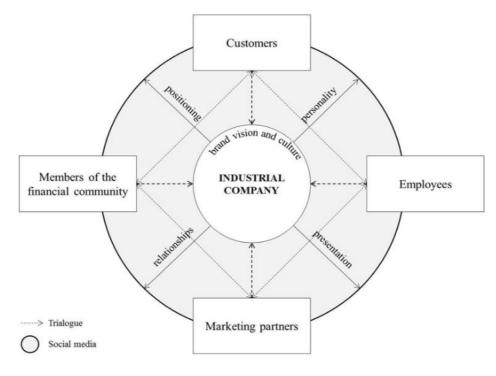
This study was conducted under two theories; Theoretical Model of Corporate Branding in social media in industrial marketing (TMCBSM) and Cognitive Dissonance Theory. These two theoretical models guided the undertaking of this research study. The analysis below connects the models with this study:

Theoretical Model of Corporate Branding in Social Media
The Theoretical Model of Corporate Branding in Social Media (TMCBSM) was designed and introduced by Toppi et al (2012). The Model illustrates the way organization operates in the social media environment to promote their organizational brand. This study adopted this model to study the role of social media in promoting organizational brand.

The proponents of the Model have presented three aspects that cover how social media can be used to uplift organizational brand- the stakeholders, message and interactivity (see Figure 1 below). On stakeholders, Toppi et al (2012, p. 3-4) argue that, corporate branding needs to address various stakeholders such as employees, customers, marketing partners and members of financial community instead of focusing only to the customers. The second aspect is message. The model offers six components of corporate brand identity as the key messages in promoting corporate brand. Such six components are brand vision and culture, positioning, personality, relationship, and presentation. Thus, in designing their communications messages, organizations need to rely on these key message areas to promote organizational brand.

And the third aspect is interactivity whereby the message delivered byl the brand should be interactive, two way communication. Interactivity, as indicated through dotted lines in Figure 1 below, provides 'trialogue' "discussion between the stakeholders with one another and with the company" (Toppi et al, 2012, p. 7), that can easily exist in social media platforms.

Source: Toppi et al, (2012, p. 7)

Figure 1. The Theoretical Model of Corporate Branding in Social Media

Dissonance Theory

The Cognitive Dissonance Theory was introduced by a psychologist, Leon Festinger in 1957 in his Book, "A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance". The theory was first used in the field of social psychology. But, later on, it started to be associated with mass communication and media effects, particularly it was used to show the limited effects of the media to the audiences through the selective abilities. As individuals receive various information from different sources, they are expected to eliminate some of them and retain others (Baran, 2014, p. 328; Sun and Guo, 2013, p. 134; Festinger, 1957, p. 18).

The theory was cemented on "three interrelated processes" of the receiver; (a) selective exposure, (b) selective retention, and (c) selective perception (Baran, 2014, p. 327-328). Selective exposure is the process when people choose to expose themselves to "information that support to existing cognitions", that is, attitudes and beliefs (Sun and Guo, 2013, p. 119). Selective retention means "people remember best messages that are consistent to their preexisting attitudes and beliefs" (Baran, 2014, p. 328). And selective perception implies people's interpretation of the messages will rely on their prior attitudes and beliefs. This theory is relevant in the social media contexts where there is massive messages from many sources delivered to many audiences. Social media users need to have selective abilities for them to retain some of the information. Therefore, this study applied this theory to test people's recognition and retention of the organizational brand of the telecommunication organizations of which they liked their Facebook pages.

Telecommunication Industry in Tanzania

Tanzania Telecommunication Company Limited (TTCL) was the first company to operate in the Tanzania's telecommunication sector. TTCL, which is owned by the government of Tanzania, enjoyed the market monopoly of telecommunications until mid- 1990s when the government adopted the market liberalization policies (Kwayu, Lal, and Abubakre, 2018, p. 445). Currently, with TTCL, other companies are (with famous

names in the brackets), Bhart Airtel (Airtel Tanzania), Vodacom Tanzania PLC (Vodacom Tanzania), Viettel Tanzania (Halotel Tanzania), Zanzibar Telecommunication Limited (Zantel), Millicom Tanzania (Tigo Tanzania), and Smile Tanzania.

Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) reported that, there are over 43 million telecommunication service (fixed line and mobile phone) subscribers in the country (TCRA, 2019, p. 3), 81% of the telecommunication reach in the country. These organizations provide voice, short message, internet, and mobile money services as their main products to their customers. They are the leading actors in the internet connection and data services provision to the market. The number of internet users in the country is more than 23 million, a 43% internet penetration (TCRA, 2019, p. 14).

Table 1
Tanzania Telecommunication Companies' Starting Year and Subscription

Company/Brand	Starting year	Subscribers	Percent
Vodacom Tanzania	2000	14,392,174	33%
Tigo Tanzania	2003	11,675,809	27%
Airtel Tanzania	2001	11,538,358	26%
Halotel Tanzania	2015	4,218,656	10%
Zantel	2006	1,206,913	3%
TTCL	1993	716,206	1%
Smile Tanzania	2003	970	0%
Total	-	**43,749,086**	**100%**

NB: The subscription stats are based on TCRA's June 2019 Operators' submissions (TCRA, 2019)

Kwayu, Lal and Abubakre (2018, p. 446) noted that, Tanzania's telecommunication organizations are the active users of social media, having presence on every major social media platform. This proposition is supported by Mushi (2016, p. 29) who found that, Vodacom Tanzania, as the research's case study, was using different social media for corporate communication. The major social media platforms that are commonly used by telecommunication organizations in Tanzania are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. This research opted telecommunication organizations as its case study since they actively participate on social media in their daily operations.

Social Media Use in Tanzania
Tanzania has witnessed the growth of social media use from time to time (Poushter, Bishop, and Chwe, 2018 p. 4; Kwayu, Lal, and Abubakre, 2018, 445). The use of social media in the country has gone further even to teenagers in the secondary schools (Pfeiffer et al, 2014, p. 183). As most of the internet users in Tanzania connect to internet with their mobile phones (TCRA, 2019, p. 14; Sedoyeka, 2016, p. 98), most of social media users rely on mobile phones to access their social media accounts (We Are Social and Hootsuite, 2019, p. 15). Majority of urban dwellers in Tanzania are using social media for different purposes (Mpepo, 2017, p. 42). Sedoyeka (2016, p. 102) identified that, most Tanzanians use social media for research and education, information seeking and sharing, networking, and personal communication. Social media use did not end up to individuals only. Government organizations (Mandari and Koloseni, 2016, p. 3), telecommunication

organizations (Kwayu, Lal, and Abubakre. 2018, p. 446; Mushi, 2016, p. 29), nongovernment organizations (Pfeiffer, 2014, p. 183; Deus, 2013, p. 49) microenterprise operators (Kazungu, Matto, and Massawe, 2017, p. 150) and news and media organizations and journalists (Bilal, 2014, p. 63) have been reported to have active social media accounts and pages that handle communication with their stakeholders. Mushi (2016, p. 29) found the widely use of social media for both internal and external communication in the telecommunication organizations in Tanzania.

Objectives of The Study

The main objective of this study was to explore the roles of social media in the promotion of organizational brand of the telecommunication organizations in Tanzania.

In order to achieve the above mentioned objective, this study sought answers of three research questions presented below:

1. Which ways do telecommunication organizations in Tanzania use in promoting organizational brand on Facebook?

2. How do customers perceive the telecommunication organizations' activities on Facebook in their recognition of the organizational brand?

3. What challenges do telecommunication organizations face in promoting organizational brand on Facebook?

The study was conducted in Dar es Salaam where the telecommunication organizations' headquarters offices are located and limited to organizational brand only.

Data Collection: Methods and Tools

This study was conducted under the mixed methods research design as presented by Creswell (2015). As highlighted by Creswell (2015, p. 36-37), the qualitative and quantitative data in this study were collected and analyzed separately, and then the results were integrated and presented herein under. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches to understand well the role of social media in promoting organizational brand (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011, p. 48). A mixed methods research design is also supported by Neuman (2006, p. 14), as he argued that, a researcher can use both approaches "in complementary way". The study deployed content analysis method to collect data from the Facebook Business Pages of the four telecommunication organizations under scrutiny. Another method that was used is interview. The interview was conducted to collect information from the people who liked the Facebook pages of the four telecommunication organizations involved in this study and the intent was to study their understanding of those four organizations' social media activities and the contribution of such activities to organizational brand. The last method was online questionnaire survey (OQS) that was applied to get knowledge from people who liked the Facebook pages of these four telecommunication organizations on their understanding of organizational brand image and organizational brand identity.

Within the scope of this study, ethics committee permission was obtained from Anadolu University Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Council dated 14.02.2020 and protocol number 14506.

For this study, a population consists of people (human sample) and social media posts. Population can be subjects, variables, concepts, or phenomena (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011, p. 87). Purposive sampling technique was applied in this study to get the sample for data collection. Purposive sampling is the sampling

process of selecting samples basing on "specific characteristics or qualities, and eliminates those who fail to meet these criteria" (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011, p. 94). Neuman (2006, p. 222) stated that purposive sampling is applied when the population members are of "difficult-to-reach" and/or "specialized to reach".

The study featured 116 respondents from among the Facebook users who liked the Facebook pages of the four telecommunication organizations mentioned above. The respondents were picked up and involved in the study basing on their active participation on Facebook pages of the telecommunication organizations in focus. The respondents were considered to be active when they interacted with the Facebook posts of the telecommunication organization.

Content analysis is "the technique for gathering and analyzing the content texts" (Neuman 2006, p. 322) "in a quantitative or qualitative manner" (Bhattacherjee (2012, p. 115). This study analyzed the Facebook posts of the telecommunication organizations in a qualitative manner. Bhattacherjee (2012, p. 115-116) suggested three steps in conducting research through content analysis method. First, the researcher begins by sampling a selected set of texts from the population of text for analysis. Second, the researcher identifies and applies rules to divide each into segments or chunks that can be treated as separate unit of analysis. And third, the researcher constructs and applies one or more concepts to each utilized text segment in a process called coding. This research followed these steps in collecting and analyzing the data from Facebook pages of the four telecommunication organizations. Also, the researcher needs to understand the meaning of coding themes before conducting content analysis (Neuman, 2006, p. 326). For this reason, the researcher read different literatures regarding organizational brand and chose the coding themes as; types of post content, vision, mission, logo, slogan, core value, corporate representatives, engagement, website/news link, others (contacts, brand color, success stories). This study used Facebook pages' post as the unit of analysis (Bilal, 2014). Content analysis was used to answer research question one and complement on the other questions. As stated by Wimmer and Dominick (2011, p 159), "content analysis alone cannot serve as the basis for making statements about the effects of content on an audience", this study, therefore, deployed other research methods – interview and online questionnaire survey (OQS) – to understand well the role of social media in promoting organizational brand.

This study included four telecommunication organizations from Tanzania. They were selected basing on; (a) the highest number of subscriptions, (b) the active participation in social media, especially Facebook, and (c) the highest number of people who liked their Facebook Business pages. For these criteria, a researchers conducted a prior analysis of the websites and social media pages of all telecommunication organizations, and found Airtel Tanzania, Halotel Tanzania, Tigo Tanzania, and Vodacom Tanzania having qualified for the study (Table 2).

Table 2

Tanzania Telecommunication Facebook Pages' Information

Company/Brand	Presence on Facebook (since)	Page Likes
Airtel Tanzania	15 June 2011	1164099
Halotel Tanzania	8 May 2015	684371
Smile Tanzania	31 October 2012	119880
Tigo Tanzania	23 May 2011	1522568
TTCL	18 March 2010	70645
Vodacom Tanzania	1 October 2010	917112
Zantel	28 June 2011	501201

Source: Facebook Pages of the organizations reviewed on February, 2020

The study reviewed contents of 922 Facebook posts, out of which 52 posts were excluded because they concentrated on SIM Card registration campaign that was organized by the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA). Therefore, this study considered 870 posts of the Facebook pages of the four telecommunication organizations in focus from January 1st to June 30th 2019, a period before the start of the research. The researchers reviewed all Facebook posts that were published on the week days (Monday to Friday) to understand the role of social media in promoting organizational brand. The study considered the Facebook posts that were shared on week days only because most of the posts shared on weekends concentrated on entertainment than business matters. In the 870 Facebook posts, the types of the post contents were dominated by photo and text (647 posts) and video and text that were 168 posts (Table 3).

Table 3
The Types of Post Contents in Reviewed Posts and their Percentage

Nature of the post	Number of posts	Percent
Photo and text	647	74.4%
Video and text	168	19.3%
Video only	13	1.5%
Photo only (Photo or cover photo)	32	3.7%
Text and link	8	0.9%
Text only	1	0.1%
Link only	1	0.1%
Total Posts	**870**	**100%**

Source: Research data

Interview was also used to collect data for this study. The interview was a structured one with standardized questions that guided the researchers to conduct the interviews. The follow-up questions (follow-up time, brand identification criteria, recognition of a brand, efforts promoting the organization's brand) were used by the researchers when clarification was necessary. The researchers interviewed 16 people who liked the Facebook pages of the four telecommunication organizations in the focus. The interviews were recorded through a professional tape recorder and note taking was conducted through notebooks. The recorded interviews were then transcribed into text for data analysis. The interview was used mainly to answer research question one (to confirm the content analysis data), research question two and complementing parts of research question three.

Finally, this research employed **online questionnaire survey** to measure the understanding of people who liked the Facebook pages of the telecommunication organizations in Tanzania on the organizational brand of the telecommunication organizations in focus. The researchers prepared the questionnaire in the Google Forms and shared the link of it to the respondents through Facebook Messenger. The questionnaire consisted of 9 close-ended questions and 3 open-ended questions (follow-up time, coming the mind first, thinking organization promotes its brand, recognition of organisational brand) to limit the respondents to stay in the topic. The researchers conducted a pilot study that involved 10 respondents (10% of the expected questionnaire participants) and refined the tool before starting the data collection exercise. The questionnaire was used to find out how challenging is the exercise of promoting organizational brand to answer research question three. As this is a mixed methods study, the analysis of data was conducted through both qualitative and quantitative techniques to understand the role of social media in promoting organizational brand. The qualitative data of this study were analyzed and presented in the thematic approach. The researchers first transcribed all the

interviews and then read through all the transcripts and coded the themes and ideas that prevailed in the interview transcripts. Data from content analysis were coded based on the messages and key aspects of the organizational brand revealed in the collected data. On the other hand, statistical analysis of quantitative data was made by using Google Forms tools that analyze the collected data once respondents have started submitting their responses. The results and findings of the study were presented basing on the themes, and by using description, tables, and figures for them to be well unders.

Findings and Discussion

The respondents were asked to indicate their age basing on the age groups mentioned in the OQS. The findings, as presented in Table 4A, show that most of the respondents were youth between 18 to 34 years (85%). The respondents with more than 45 years were only 3 (3%). The findings reflect the reality that social media mostly attract youth who frequently establish communication with their peers.

Table 4A

The Age of OQS Respondents

Age (years)	Female	Male	Total
18 – 24	7	11	18
25 – 34	14	53	67
35 – 44	2	10	12
45 and above	1	2	3
Total	**24**	**76**	**100**

In addition, all the interviewees were youth in the 18 to 34 years age group (see Table 4B below). This was affected by the availability of the respondents, which was influenced by the network of the respondents who participated in the study.

Table 4B

The Age of Interview Participants

Age (years)	Female	Male	Total
18 – 24	4	10	14
25 – 34	0	2	2
35 – 44	0	0	0
45 and above	0	0	0
Total	**4**	**12**	**16**

The study sought to understand the level of education from both the online questionnaire survey participants and the interviewees. The results show that many respondents of the OQS were either university students or graduates (77%), followed by the other colleges (certificates and diploma) and elementary level that each had 8 respondents which form 16% of the respondents. High school level had the lowest number of respondents (7%).

The interviewees' education level, was dominated by the university students who were 13 (81.25%), one Bachelor Degree holder (6.25%), one Diploma graduate (6.25%) and one high school student (6.25%). This sample was affected by the way respondents were picked up for the study that is through participants' network.

This study also asked respondents to offer information regarding the networks they use for communication. The results, as seen on Figure 2 below, show that Tigo Tanzania and Vodacom Tanzania had high number of users with 66 and 63 out of 100 OQS participants and 10 for each out of 16 interviewees respectively. Halotel Tanzania had the lowest use with 36 out of 100 OQS participants and 8 out of 16 interviewees. The respondents have the tendency of using more than one SIM cards for communication which is influenced by the product offered, the network availability and purchasing power of the subscribers.

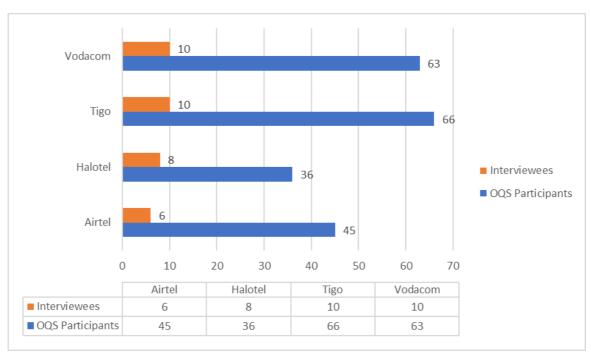|	Airtel	Halotel	Tigo	Vodacom
■ Interviewees	6	8	10	10
■ OQS Participants	45	36	66	63

Figure 2. The Mobile Use of the Respondents

In addition, most of the OQS respondents (90%) have been following the Facebook pages of the telecommunication organizations for at least one year (see Figure 3) and only 10% of the respondents had less than a year during the data collection. While 14 interviewees (87.5%) had at least a year since liking pages of the telecommunication organizations and only 2 participants (12.5%) had less than a year during the interviews.
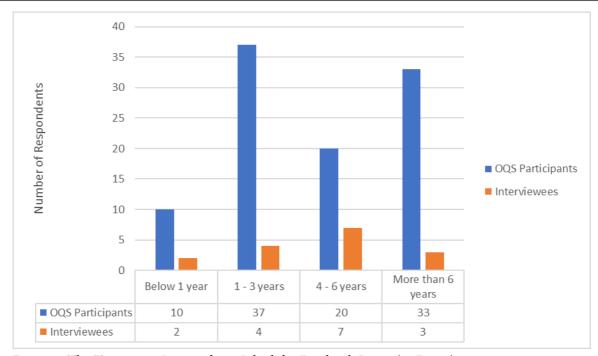
Figure 3. The Time since Respondents Liked the Facebook Pages (in Focus)

Interviewees were asked to mention the criteria that make them to identify a brand and differentiate it from other brands of the same product or service (see Table 5 below). Logo was highly mentioned (10 times) while the least identified criteria were branding and advertising (4), brand color (4), experience (4), and outlook of the brand (4).

Table 5
Brand Identification Criteria

Brand presentation criterion	How many times appeared
Logo	10
Slogan	7
Name	5
Color	4
Branding and Advertising (Strategies)	4
Experiences (Quality, Opinion of Others, Services)	4
Outlook (Labeling, Packaging)	4

Ways of Promoting Organizational Brand

This study sought to understand and unveil the ways telecommunication organizations use to promote the organizational brand on Facebook. The researchers conducted a thorough review of the contents of the Facebook pages of the four telecommunication organizations from Tanzania and the following ways were found:

First, customers' engagement. The results show high engagement activities in the pages of the telecommunication organizations. In all posts reviewed, every post at least received reactions (post-likes, comments or shares) from the customers. The companies lead the engagement activities by sharinging posts

that influence customers to interact with them by using hashtags, tagging, prompting and action words, and links that grab customers' attention. Customer service and support to the stakeholders was also offered. Customers' engagement is reflected in the interview transcripts too. Respondent 3 noted that, "on the pages people are allowed to share their opinions". This was emphasized by Respondent 10 as he stated, "they visit the pages and ask questions. Then they receive answers and services basing on their queries from the organizations". In addition, the customer-to-customer (C2C) interaction was also spotted.

Second, the use of logo. Data show that, in most of the posts that contained images or videos (98%), logo appeared consistently. The logo was mostly placed at the same side of those images and videos and each organization having its preferable area of putting them. Respondent 15 in the inteviews confirmed that, telecommunication organizations use logos in their posts that promote the identity of the organizations. He said that, "they (the posts) make me recognize the organizations as brands because…there is the logo of a specific company…that act(s) as the identity of the organization".

Third, focusing on the mission. The results from the posts reviewed show that the contents were crafted basing on the mission statements of organizations concerned. With excluding 51 posts that dragged customers' attention, the mission statements of the telecommunication organizations prevailed in 819 posts that were shared on Facebook. On top of that, the organizations have been consistent to their core values as in all posts they were adhered.

Fourth, the vision. The study's findings from content analysis demonstrate that, the organizations create their Facebook posts with visions of the organizations. The Facebook posts of the telecommunication organizations contained the concept and direction of what the organizations wanted to achieve. Vision appeared in almost 821 Facebook posts. The vision emerged even in the interviewees' responses. Respondent 16 stated that, telecommunication organizations prepare their posts basing on their objectives. He posited that, "there is an experience from (organization mentioned) network that is a standalone company, works for its aims and objectives which are viewable in their Facebook posts".

Fifth, the brand name and repeated references to it. The findings of the study reveal that, telecommunication organizations have the tendency of using brand name – mentioning and making references to it regularly. This was found in the interview transcripts whereby all respondents admitted to find a brand name or a reference to the organization on the Facebook posts of the telecommunication organizations. Respondent 2 indicated that, telecommunication organizations mention the brand names particularly when they introduce their products. He said that, "I have found such posts (that refer to brand names) at times. Those posts unveil different organizations' steps on social media. Through Facebook, (the mentions appear) sometimes when they introduce their products like the packages, changes or the possibility of sending and receiving money". The brand name is mentioned or referred to by the organizations to show possession and the presence of organization behind the offered services.

Sixth, the presence of slogans. The results of the study indicate that, telecommunication organizations use slogans to boost their organizational brand on Facebook. The slogans were noticed in 208 Facebook posts. The slogan was also highlighted in the interviews as Respondent 8 noted that, "the slogans they (organizations) use have great positive impacts (on the organizational brand portrayal)". This suggests that, organizations use slogans purposely to uplift their organizational brand.

Seventh, the corporate leaders. Leaders, as the corporate symbol of organizations, were also used by the telecommunication organizations to promote their organizational brand. The findings show that,

organizations use leaders in their posts, both in the images and videos. Leaders appeared in the 94 Facebook posts of the telecommunication organizations out of 870 posts. The appearance of leaders is confirmed in the interview results whereby 12 (75%) respondents indicated to see the corporate leaders of the telecommunication organizations at least once in their Facebook posts while 4 (25%) respondents denied to have ever seen them. Also, 68% of OQS respondents admitted to encounter posts that included the senior leaders of the telecommunication organizations while 32% of the OQS respondents reported otherwise. Appearance of leaders on the social media posts is associated with significant functions of organizations as illustrated by Respondent 9 of the interview, "When the telecommunication companies' leaders appear, (they) offer information about the happenings or introduce a new product".

Eighth, the use of brand color. The study show that, telecommunication organizations widely apply the brand color in their Facebook posts to promote organizational brands. The study found 859 Facebook posts (images and videos) that had color combination relevant to the brands of the telecommunication organizations. This consistency of color combination of the brands promotes the remembrance of the brand easily to the stakeholders. Other ways that were found to be applied by the telecommunication organizations to promote organizational brand are the use of (outsourced) public figures, consistency of the information shared on social media and those on mainstream media, sharing of communiucation contacts of the organizations, and the use of timing (planned schedule) to share the posts as two organization shared their posts only in day time while the orther two uploaded their posts day and night.

Impacts of Social Media in Promoting Organizational Brand
This study also intended to find out how social media bring about the impacts in promoting organizational brands of the telecommunication organizations in Tanzania. This was assessed through the interviewees' responses regarding their perception on the activities conducted by the telecommunications organizations on Facebook. The findings are presented below:

The results demonstrate that Facebook activities promote the recognition of the organizational brands. Most of the interviewees perceive positively the posts shared and interaction done by the telecommunication organizations in the Facebook pages. Respondent 2, for instance, posited that, "I recognize the organizations as brands because the posts they share on Facebook talk directly about the organization…that performs a particular matter and that matter targets the society and the posts shared are based on the particular organization". This is supported by the Respondent 15 who noted that:

> "When you review the posts of (a telecommunication company) there are various indicators that make one to recognize that those activities are conducted by the organization. There are people (public figures) who are commonly used in their advertisements. So, when you find such people in their posts and the messages they deliver about the products, the use of their logos and other stuffs, you get the picture in mind that, this came from the organization" (Respondent 15).

Also, the study found out that social media offer a playground to the organizations for sharing information that raises awareness about them. The findings indicate that, telecommunication organizations disseminate various information on Facebook and such information generate curiosity of getting more knowledge about the organizations among stakeholders. This is demonstrated by Respondent 1 of the interviews when she remarked that:

"The posts they share help them to be recognized (as brands) since they bear the company's name. Also, the posts show how their products are good for customers. Thus, people become more curious to find out (more) about the company" (Respondent 1).

Therefore, Facebook activities have great impact to organizations' corporate brand as it creates demand to familiarize about the organizations to stakeholders.

The study further found out that, the Facebook posts bring about good experience to stakeholders. Interviewees reported to have good experiences from the posts shared and interaction offered by the telecommunication organizations on their Facebook pages. Respondent 11 stated that, the posts that talk about services and products and the engagements offer good experience to customers. She argued that, "those who run the Facebook pages and promote their product and services, and their regular engagement with customers on social media offer a good experience that these are big brands (organizations) before the customers". Thus, the organizations' activities on social media portray the positive images and identities of the organizations.

However, data show that, some of the activities of the telecommunication organizations on Facebook raised discouraging impact to the stakeholders. The presence of posts that are not relevant to business and organizations, which were also found in the content analysed (51 posts), created some unwanted reactions to customers. This is put forward by Respondent 7 who complained that, "some posts on social media are shared just to draw customers' attention (to the pages) and they do not directly touch customers' interests". This shows disagreement of the stakeholder on what the telecommunication organizations perform in their Facebook pages.

Challenges of Promoting Organizational Brand on Social Media
This study further intended to determine the challenges telecommunication organizations face when they promote organizational brand on Facebook. The study found a number of challenges that arose in the data collected as presented hereunder:

Less use of success stories in the regular posts
The findings show that there is low use of the success stories of the companies and their employees by the telecommunication organizations on their Facebook pages. From the 870 reviewed posts from the four organizations, only one post was found to present the success story of the organization. The organizations put their emphasis only on the current projects and forgetting to narrate their stories on the achievements of the organizations and their employees.

Uncontrolled customer-to-customer communication
The results show the existence of customer-to-customer interaction and communication within the Facebook pages of the telecommunication organizations. Despite high engagement activities by the organizations, there is still a gap that leaves customers to have their own conversations that may damage the organizational brand of the organizations. Only one organization had a good intervention strategy of getting in when customers start developing their own conversations on the post of that organization. Other three organizations had less and ineffective control of the customer-to-customer interactions.

Some stakeholders are not aware of the organizational brand
The study further found that there is a number of people who do not recognize the organizational brands of the organizations. The results of the study from OQS demonstrate that, one-third (33%) of the respondents

showed disagreement that telecommunication organizations do not promote organizational brands through social media. Lack of knowledge of the organizational brand to some stakeholders is caused by the dominance of the posts that promote products and services than organizational brand. Also, when OQS respondents were asked about what comes first in their mind when they come across with the telecommunication organizations' Facebook posts, 71% of the respondents indicated products and services while 29% chose organizational brand.

Inappropriate comments and language
The findings of the study demonstrate that, there are customers who interact with the telecommunication organizations' posts in their Facebook pages and comment issues that are not relevant to the context. The posts reviewed show the presence of comments that also contain inappropriate language which in one way or another deteriorate the companies' images and drag away some stakeholders from participating in those conversations as some of the comments attack the organizations directly.

Presence of posts that do not touch customers' interests
Telecommunication organizations were found to have a tendency of sharing posts that are not about products, services, or organizations, but to cater for interaction and capture stakeholders' attention. The number of such posts (51) is high which affects the image of the organizations and discourage some customers. This leads to the discontent from some of the stakeholders who show it openly as Respondents 7 in the interviews. He remarked that, such general posts do not touch customers' interest. Dissatisfaction of the stakeholders create a bad experience that affect organizational brand.

Discussion

The findings of the study show that, social media play significant roles in promoting organizational brand of the telecommunication organizations of Tanzania. Social media provide benefits both to organizations and their stakeholders (Reitz, 2012, p. 45). In the study, the respondents reported to have a good level of recognition of the organizational brand that resulted from the organizations' activities on Facebook. This means that, what organizations do on social media platforms has great impact to the organizational brand image and brand identity. Also, the study found that, Facebook offers a room for the telecommunication organizations to share information regarding the organizations' mission, vision, and even products and services. The findings are consistent to what Waters and Jones (2011, p. 259) found on their study that non-profit organizations were sharing information of programmes, services and mission of the organizations on their YouTube videos. They also revealed the appearance of missions and core values in the videos of non-profit organizations which was also found in the Facebook posts of the telecommunication organizations in Tanzania.

The study further shows that, Facebook provides to organizations a chance to get direct and unfiltered feedback from the stakeholders as the telecommunication organizations engage with them through posts and even in their message boxes. This is a benefit to the organizations as Reitz (2012, p. 51) noted that through social media organizations can get benefits through feedback and other discussions. The interactivity as a way of promoting organizational brand was also found by Vernuccio (2014) who conducted an exploratory study that involved organizations from different developed countries. Vernuccio's study presented the views that, organizations use social media with the aim of building corporate brand through interactivity (p. 227). Waters and Jones (2011, p. 252) confirmed that, "images of the brand and organizational identity in the social media realm are largely shaped through conversations and interactions with individuals outside the organization through shared information and word-of-mouth efforts." Thus, the organizations-stakeholders' interactivity has far greater results to the promotion of the organizational brand.

On top of that, the study found that Facebook creates variety of experiences to the stakeholders of the organizations. The presence of engagement and interaction between organizations and their stakeholders and among stakeholders themselves through the Facebook pages of the organizations offer good experiences to stakeholders. The engagement also offers chances to employees, as among the stakeholders, to participate in creating and building the organizational brand images of their respective organizations in online environment. The contribution of employees to the organizational brand image was also found by Madsen (2016, p. 216). However, her study involved internal activities of the organizations, employees had positive contribution to the organizational brand images. The engagement of stakeholders builds relationship between organizations and their stakeholders that adds value to the organizational brand. Parveen, Jaafar, and Ainin (2015, p. 75) asserted that, social media are highly used by the organizations to "develop a good relationship with customers" and to ensure organizations have the "effective communication" with their stakeholders. In brief, organizational brand "brings the stakeholders together both internally and externally" with one vision (Jones, 2010, p. 55).

Also, less use of success stories prevailed in the data of this study. Only one post out of 870 posts presented success story of organization. This finding is similar to what Waters and Jones (2011, p. 261) found in their study whereby non-profit organizations were not sharing information regarding the success stories in the managerial level on their YouTube videos. This consistency demonstrates the tendency of organizations of avoiding to share their success stories on social media.

The study, however, supports both theories that were used in the theoretical framework. On the Theoretical Model of Corporate Branding in Social Media in industrial marketing, the study's findings show that, the posts of the telecommunications organizations were crafted to target varying stakeholders of these organizations such as customers, marketing partners, employees, and financial community. Also, the organizations created their contents with all message aspects outlined by the model's proponents. Toppi et al (2012, p. 7) proposed that, the message of the organizations should consist of brand vision and culture, positioning, personality, relationship, and presentation which were common in the posts of the telecommunication organizations.

Moreover, the posts of the telecommunication organizations were interactive and supported the 'trialogue' – conversations of organizations with stakeholders, and stakeholder to stakeholder were clearly seen in the posts of the telecommunications organizations on Facebook. Therefore, "social media offer an interactive platform for dialogue between users, including individuals and companies" (Zhang and Vos, 2014, p. 371).

On the other hand, the study also supported the Cognitive Dissonance Theory. Despite the presence of numerous information on Facebook, the stakeholders applied their selective abilities as proposed in the theory. The stakeholders liked the Facebook pages of the telecommunication organizations (selective exposure), opted to be following their posts and remembering the significant matters regarding the organizations (selective retention) and associated those posts of the telecommunication organizations with the organizations concerned and their personal lives (selective perception). Therefore, the two theories were compatible with this study.

In summary, the findings are consistent to the previous studies despite this study being conducted in the third world country's context. This consistency implies that, the activities of the organizations in the social media are more or less the same on the promotion of organizational brand.

Recommendation for further Research

As this study had small sample, further research is required to be conducted with the involvement of more posts for content analysis, the use of more interview participants and survey respondents with a control and balance of gender and age of the participants. The results of such study will offer a more implication of the results of this study. Also, the future study could address this issue with involvement of the workers of the telecommunication organizations by gathering and revealing their insights on the role of social media in promoting organizational brand.

As this study was conducted only on Facebook, another area where research may be focused on by considering the activities of these organizations (or other organizations) on other social media platforms and making a comparative analysis to find out which social media platform has far greater impact in promoting organizational brand. Also, as this study incorporated companies with huge capital and ability to have all the expertise to operate in social media, the future study can be conducted to understand the role of social media in promoting organizatioOnline nal brands of small organizations, companies with small capital for operations, and non-profit organizations in third world countries. Such research will be of interest and will bring a new perspective on the area of organizational communication.

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Amaç
Bu çalışma, sosyal medyanın kurumsal markaların tanıtımındaki rolünü ortaya çıkarmak üzere gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmanın üç amacı bulunmaktadır. Bunlar, Tanzanya'daki telekomünikasyon kuruluşlarının Facebook'ta kurumsal markalarını tanıtmak için kullandıkları yolları belirlemek, telekomünikasyon kuruluşlarının Facebook gönderilerine ilişkin müşterilerin değerlendirmelerini ortaya çıkarmak ve bu kuruluşların Facebook'ta kurumsal markalarının tanıtımı yaparken karşılaştıkları zorlukları belirlemektir.

Araştırma Deseni ve Yöntem
Çalışmada, hem nitel (içerik analizi ve mülakat) hem nicel (çevrimiçi anket) araştırma yöntemlerinden oluşan karma yöntem kullanılmıştır. Tanzanya'nın dört telekomünikasyon kuruluşu olan Airtel Tanzania, Halotel Tanzania, Tigo Tanzania ve Vodacom Tanzania'nın Facebook gönderilerine içerik analizi uygulanmıştır. Analiz, telekomünikasyon kuruluşları tarafından Ocak 2019'dan Haziran 2019'a kadar paylaşılan 870 Facebook gönderisini içermekte olup, Cumartesi ve Pazar günleri paylaşılanlar ile SIM kart kayıt kampanyalarını içerenler hariç tutulmuştur. Google Forms aracılığıyla 100 katılımcıdan veri toplamak için çevrimiçi anket (OQS) kullanılırken, 16 katılımcıyla mülakat gerçekleştirilmiştir. Mülakatlar ve çevrimiçi anket, araştırmada yer alan dört telekomünikasyon kuruluşunun Facebook sayfalarını beğenen katılımcıları içermektedir.

Çalışma, Sosyal Medyada Kurumsal Markalaşmanın Teorik Modeli ve Bilişsel Uyumsuzluk Teorisi (SMKMTM) olmak üzere iki teori altında yürütülmüştür. Telekomünikasyon kuruluşlarının Facebook paylaşımlarını analiz etmek için SMKMTM modeli benimsenirken, çevrimiçi anket ve mülakat katılımcılarının kurumsal marka anlayışının ortaya çıkarılmasında Bilişsel Uyumsuzluk Teorisi'nden yararlanılmıştır.

Bulgular
Tanzanya telekomünikasyon kuruluşları, Facebook paylaşımlarında kurumsal markalarını tanıtmak için çeşitli stratejiler kullanmaktadırlar. Bunlar, logo, misyon, vizyon, slogan, marka ismi, marka rengi kullanımı gibi stratejilerdir.

Çalışmada ele alınan kurumsal markaları daha iyi bir duruma getirmek için kullanılan diğer stratejiler ise, müşteri katılımı, kurumsal liderler ve lider mesajlarının yer alması, ünlü kişilerin kullanılması ve farklı paydaşlar için uygun iletişim biçimlerinin tercih edilmesidir. Araştırmada ele alınan kuruluşlar Facebook gönderilerini organize bir şekilde yürütmekte ve paylaşım davranışları bir plan/programı takip etmektedir.

Çalışma ayrıca, telekomünikasyon kuruluşlarının sosyal medyadaki paylaşımlarının, bu markalar üzerinde büyük etkisi olduğunu göstermektedir. Bulgular, bu kuruluşların Facebook paylaşımlarının markanın tanınmasına yol açtığını, paydaşlarda markalar hakkında daha fazla bilgi edinme yönünde merak yarattığını ve müşterilerin kuruluşlarla olan deneyimlerini geliştirerek kurumsal markaları yücelttiğini göstermektedir.

Ayrıca, çalışmanın sonuçları, telekomünikasyon kuruluşlarının kurumsal markalarını tanıtma konusunda çeşitli zorluklarla karşılaştıklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Kurumlar, uygunsuz dil ve yorumlar, başarı hikayelerinin daha az kullanılması, müşteriden müşteriye kontrolsüz iletişimin varlığı, müşterilerin ilgi alanlarına yönelik olmayan paylaşımlar ve telekomünikasyon kurumlarının Facebook sayfalarını takip etmesine rağmen kurum markasından habersiz müşterilerin varlığı ile karşılaşmaktadır.

Sınırlılıklar

Sosyal medyanın kurumsal markaların tanıtımındaki rolünü ortaya çıkarmaya ilişkin olan bu çalışma, bazı sınırlılıklara sahiptir. Öncelikle çalışmada sosyal medya mecrası olarak Facebook gönderileri incelenmiştir. Dolayısıyla, çalışma Facebook ile sınırlıdır. İncelenen telekomünikasyon şirketi sayısı dört ile sınırlıdır. Görüşme ve çevrim içi anket uygulanan katılımcılar, bu şirketlerin Facebook sayfalarını takip edenler ile sınırlıdır.. Çalışma bir yüksek lisans tezi kapsamında gerçekleştirildiğinden zaman sınırlamasına da sahiptir.

Sonuç (Teorik, Pratik ve Sosyal)

Bu çalışma, sosyal medyanın kurumsal markanın tanıtımındaki rolünü belirlemek amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmada, nitel ve nicel araştırma yaklaşımlarının bir arada kullanıldığı karma yöntem benimsenmiş, Tanzanya'daki telekomünikasyon kuruluşlarının sosyal medya paylaşımları aracılığı ile nasıl iletişim kurdukları ortaya çıkarılmıştır.

Bulgulara dayanarak, bu çalışma ile Tanzanya örneğinde, kurumsal iletişim alanında daha fazla sayıda araştırma yapılması önerilmektedir. Bundan sonraki araştırmalarda, örneklem sayısı, içerik analizinde incelenecek gönderi sayısı, anket ve mülakat katılımcısı sayısı artırılabilir. Katılımcıların cinsiyet ve yaşları dengelenebilir. Ayrıca, gelecekte telekomünikasyon kuruluşlarının çalışanlarının katılımıyla bu çalışma yenilenebilir ve çalışanların kurumsal markanın tanıtımında sosyal medyanın rolüne ilişkin görüşleri ortaya çıkartılabilir.

Bu çalışmada, sosyal medya mecrası olarak sadece Facebook ele alınmıştır. Bundan sonraki çalışmalarda, telekomünikasyon şirketlerinin kullandıkları diğer sosyal medya platformlarındaki gönderileri de değerlendirilerek, hangi sosyal medya platformunun kurumsal markanın tanıtımında daha büyük bir etkiye sahip olduğunu ortaya çıkarmak için karşılaştırmalı bir analiz yapılabilir.

Gelecekte yapılacak bir çalışma, üçüncü dünya ülkelerindeki küçük sermayeli şirketlerin ve kâr amacı gütmeyen kuruluşların kurumsal markalarını tanıtmada sosyal medyanın rolünü anlamaya yönelik olarak gerçekleştirilebilir. Böyle bir araştırma kurumsal iletişim alanına yeni bir bakış açısı getirecektir.

Özgünlük

Sosyal medya, ortaya çıktığı günden bu yana insan iletişiminin büyük bir bölümünü kaplamaktadır.

Bu durum hem kişisel hem de örgütsel iletişimde karşılık bulmaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu çalışma, son yirmi yılda ortaya çıkan ve hızla gelişerek bugünkü seviyesine ulaşan bu yeni iletişim alanına odaklanması açısından önem taşımaktadır. Çalışma, öncelikle, incelenen literatüre dayanarak, Tanzanya başta olmak üzere üçüncü dünya ülkelerinde kurumsal markanın tanıtımında sosyal medyanın rolü konusunda herhangi bir çalışma yapılmamış olması nedeniyle önem taşımaktadır. İkinci olarak, bu çalışmanın bulguları özellikle kurumsal iletişim ve kurumsal marka ile sosyal medya ve kurumsal iletişim alanlarındaki bilgi birikimine katkıda bulunmaktadır. Üçüncü olarak, bu çalışmanın bulguları, Tanzanya bağlamında bulunanların benzerliklerini ve farklılıklarını görmek için dünyanın başka yerlerinde yapılan diğer çalışmaların bulgularıyla karşılaştırmalı olarak analiz edilmiş ve tartışılmıştır; bu da bilgi birikimine farklı bir bakış açısı katmaktadır.

Araştırmacı Katkısı: Faridi Abdallah MNAKATU (%60), Çağlar GENÇ (%40).