



St. Mary's University

School of Graduate Studies

**APPLICATION OF THE
TOE(TECHNOLOGY,ORGANIZATION,ENVIROMENT)
FRAMEWORK TO ASSESS THE ADOPTION AND USE OF SOCIAL
MEDIA AS A MARKETING TOOL: THE CASE OF ETHIO TELECOM**

By:

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ADDIS ABABA

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
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ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

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APPROVED BY:

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare this thesis is my original work, prepared under the guidance of Zemenu Aynadis (Assist. Prof.). All sources of materials used for the thesis have been dully acknowledged. I further confirm that the thesis has not been submitted either in part or in full to any other higher learning institution for the purpose of earning any degree.

Name

St. Mary's University, Addis Ababa

Signature

June 2018

ENDORSEMENT

This thesis has been submitted to St. Mary's University, School of Graduate Studies for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

Advisor

Signature

St, Mary's University, Addis Ababa

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Abstract

Social media continues to grow rapidly, offering global consumers new and meaningful ways to engage with the people, events, and brands that matter to them. This study titled “Application of the TOE Framework to Assess the Adoption and Use of Social Media as a Marketing Tool: The Case of Ethio Telecom” set out with an objective of assessing the adoption and use of social media as a marketing tool at Ethio Telecom. Using the TOE framework, the study tried to assess the enabling contexts at Ethio Telecom. Using a mixed methods design, the study used a sample of 35 employees in the marketing department of Ethio Telecom to gather data using a survey questionnaire. Further interview was held with three of the managers in the department. The result indicated that Ethio Telecom have already adopted and is using social media as a marketing tool. However, its use is only limited to ‘posting’ messages which is not guided by an overall organizational policy for social media. Further, the TOE Framework has shown that ‘the technology context’ offers a positive capability that can be exploited by Ethio Telecom. The ‘organizational context’ has elements to be improved to enable social media marketing to flourish. The environmental context also showed that although competition is not a driving factor, customers offer an opportunity that can be exploited.

Key Words: Social Media, Social Media Marketing, TOE Framework

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the background of the study covering the basic concepts and current status of the practice before introducing the organizational context and the problem statement. The objectives of the study, its significance, and scope are also presented.

1.1 Background of the Study

Marketing as academic discipline and management activity has been the subject of substantial transformations during the last twenty years. Many scholars and practitioners agree that some of the old marketing tenets seem to lose ground while the popular in the 60s and 70's mass marketing approaches become less effective (Constantinides, 2006; Court, 2007). Media proliferation, market globalization and the emergence of a new generation of Information and Communication Technologies; the Internet being the most prominent of them; are changing the marketing rules and market dynamics by weakening the corporate competitive position while presenting individuals with many new opportunities and empowerment (Bush, 2004, Urban, 2005).

In light of such developments, the old debate on the need for a new marketing orientation has gained new momentum. What seems to emerge is a consensus on the need to re-define marketing approaches (Constantinides, 2006; Heaton, 2006; Thomas, 2007). Scholars have argued in the past for a relationship-focused marketing as an alternative marketing approach (Grönroos, 1994, Grönroos, 1997; Kumar, 2004; Gummesson, 2008) while others suggest a customer-focused paradigm based on openness, engagement, cooperation, co-creation and propensity to help customers rather than control them (von Hippel and Katz, 2002; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004; Urban, 2005; Deighton and Konrfield, 2009).

The growing size of internet user all over the world combined with the use of social media use, marketers cannot ignore the use of such media as a tool. For example,

according to Internet Live Stats (2018), the total internet users globally have reached more than 3.4 B1 users by the end of 2016. Similarly, the total number of social networking users worldwide is expected to reach some 3.02 billion monthly active social media users by 2021, around a third of Earth's entire population (Statista, 2018). Consequently, online social networks, as very popular destinations for many online visitors, take a large part in the internet craze of today.

Lenhart and Madden (2007), describe online social networks (SNS) as locations where users can create their personal profiles and connect with other people in order to create personal networks. They further argue that social networking sites offer people new and varied ways to communicate via the internet, whether through their personal computer or their mobile phone. Social networking sites have become an avenue where retailers can extend their marketing campaigns to a wider range of consumers.

The use of online social networking for marketing purposes is sometimes interchangeably referred to as social media marketing. Social media marketing refers to techniques that target social networks and applications to spread brand awareness or promote particular products (Weinberg (2009). Chi (2011) defines social media marketing as a "connection between brands and consumers, [while] offering a personal channel and currency for user-centered networking and social interaction."

Social media continues to grow rapidly, offering global consumers new and meaningful ways to engage with the people, events, and brands that matter to them. Social media and social networking are no longer in their infancy. For example, Starbucks, Nike, Coca-Cola and Dell (to name a few) successfully use social media to obtain customer feedback, create new products/offers, strengthen customer loyalty and engage in online dialogue with followers (Beuker, 2009; Gallagher and Ransbotham, 2010).

Research on the experiences of marketers adopting Social Media as part of their marketing strategies is still limited but some academic studies already indicate that marketers are in general positive about their experiences of Social Media marketing (Kim and Bae, 2008; Steinfield et al., 2009). Recently published studies from the practitioner's

quarters confirm these findings also. A report by Stelzner (2009) identified the main benefits of Social Media Marketing: 81% of the companies surveyed in this study indicate that their Social Media activities generated more market exposure, 61% of them observed increased customer traffic, in 56% of the cases Social Media marketing resulted in new business partnerships and 45% of the firms reported reduced marketing expenses.

In the changing marketing context, the role of Social Media has become crucial. For marketing strategists and practitioners, the message is simple: surviving in the age of the empowered customer requires less dependence on traditional mass-marketing tactics; understanding the role of technology in shaping the marketplace and more importantly engaging the Social Media as part of the marketing toolbox becomes a strategic imperative.

Ethio Telecom, formerly known as Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation is one of the oldest companies in Ethiopia. The company has gone through various re-organizations and re-structuring through out its years of operation following the broader political environment in the country. The latest re- organization saw the company, go through a management contract with France Telecom (Orange) as of December 2, 2011, up to December 1, 2013. Orange managed the company for two years before giving it its current structure and name 'Ethio Telecom'.

Currently, Ethio-telecom is organized under 12 divisions, namely, finance, legal, human resource, sourcing and facilities, residential marketing and sales, customer services, enterprises, internal audit, Program Management Office/security/public relation, quality and process, information system, and network divisions. Each division has its own chief officer. Ethio telecom's network coverage and type of services rendered are increasing from time to time. The same is true for its revenue. The annual gross profit growth rate is showing an increase from year to year.

In light of this, this study commenced with an aim of assessing the adoption and use of social media as a marketing tool. Taking, Ethio Telecom, one of the oldest, the largest companies in Ethiopia and the company behind the internet service we all in Ethiopia

use, this research assessed Ethio Telecom's use of social media using the TOE framework.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Marketing communication is aimed at delivering messages to inform or remind prospective customers about a particular product offering so as to attempt to persuade them to purchase or use it. Integrated marketing communications (IMC) is the guiding principle organizations follow to communicate with their target markets. However, the tools and strategies for communicating with customers have changed significantly with the emergence of the phenomenon known as social media (Mangold and Faulds, 2009).

Social media also known as online social networking can be a powerful platform for companies to reach out to their existing and potential customers. According to a Mangold and Faulds (2009), social media has two benefits. First, social media enables companies to talk to their customers, and second, it enables customers to talk to companies besides talking to one another. Social media has emerged as the medium for combating the problem of communication between businesses and their target markets thus providing an opportunity for direct marketing to customers. Several social media platforms are today in use by many businesses for various transaction purposes. The tremendous uptake of these platforms by businesses tends to suggest that they support the growth of business (Oji, Iwu, and Tengeh, 2017).

Marketers have responded to the fundamental shift in marketing communication landscape by increasing their use of digital marketing channels. In fact, the total spending on digital ad was estimated to reach 204 billion U.S. dollars in 2017 of which social media was expected to account for 34.5 % of the spend (Statista, 2018). Desktop social media ad spend is expected to amount to 8.94 billion U.S. dollars, whereas mobile to 23.39 billion. Thus, it is expected that future consumer marketing will largely be carried out in digital settings, particularly social media and mobile.

Recently, several studies have focused mostly on the use of social media for marketing purposes. For instance, Castronovo (2012) found that social media were utilized to achieve business growth by creating awareness, affecting sales and building loyalty

thereby suggesting that social media offer effective marketing opportunity when integrated as a marketing channel. On the other hand, studies on the factors that could hinder the use of social media for marketing purposes suggest that attitude of business managers and or owners and their capability to successfully maneuver the application were some of the likely factors that could inhibit small businesses from using the platform (Kanchanatene, Suwanno&Jerernvongrayab,2014). Mangold and Faulds (2009) also argue that many managers lack a full appreciation for social media's role in the company's promotional efforts.

Ethio telecom, even though it is the sole provider of telecom services in Ethiopia, spends a significant amount on its marketing activity to expand its customer base and introduce new products. Joining the social media hype, Ethio telecom had also tried joined social networks; especially Facebook. Its Facebook account shows 356,465 likes and 356,674 followers. At the company's annual evaluative meeting held in Sep 2017 at Bishoftu, Ethiopia the Chief Marketing Officer of the company has communicated the decision to utilize social networks (social media) as a basic marketing tool while at the same time highlighting previous shortcomings.

Wisner (2005) claims that one cannot improve what one did not measure. In this regard, Ethio Telecom has so far conducted no evaluation of factors that could enable the effective use of social media or marketing purposes. The use of TOE framework to assess technology adoption in general and social media, in particular, are popular (Larosiliere, Meske, and Carter, 2015; Sharif, Rosli, and Ahmi, 2017; Parveen, 2012; Matikiti, Mpinganjira and Roberts-Lombard, 2018).

Further, despite the popularity of social networks in marketing and their potential to support brands (Christodoulides, 2009), research into SNS, particularly in an Ethiopian context is very limited. Hence, taking Ethio telecom as a case, this research conducted an assessment of factors that enable the adoption and use of social media as a marketing tool.

1.3 Research Questions

The central aim of the current study was to assess the factors that enable the adoption and use of online social networks as a marketing tool by looking at different contexts at Ethio telecom. In particular, this research tried to answer the following research questions:

- What was the level and purpose of social media usage at Ethio telecom?
- How was the technological factor enabling the adoption and use of social media for marketing at Ethio telecom?
- How did the organizational factors enable the adoption and use of social media for marketing at Ethio telecom?
- How enabling was the environmental factor to the adoption and use of social media for marketing at Ethio telecom?

1.4 Objective of the Study

1.5.1. General objective

The general objective of this study was to assess the adoption and use of online social networks as a marketing communication tool for Ethio telecom using TOE framework.

1.5.2. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives were:

- To assess the level and purpose of social media usage at Ethio telecom
- To examine the technological factor in the adoption and use of social media for marketing at Ethio telecom
- To identify what the organizational factor was in the adoption and use of social media for marketing at Ethio telecom

- To assess the environmental factor for the adoption and use of social media for marketing at Ethio telecom

1.5 Definition of Terms

Social Media: Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, which facilitates the creation and exchange of user-generated content.

Social Media Marketing: social media marketing is the process that empowers individuals to promote their websites, products, or services through online social channels and tap into a much larger community that may not have been available via traditional channels (Weinberg, 2009).

Integrated Marketing Communications: Integrated marketing communications attempt to coordinate and control the various elements of the promotional mix i.e. advertising, personal selling, public relations, publicity, direct marketing, and sales promotion to produce a unified customer-focused message and, therefore, achieve various organizational objectives (Boone & Kurtz, 2007).

1.6 Significance of the Study

Social networks are websites which allow users to communicate, share knowledge about similar interests, discuss favorite topics, review and rate products/services, etc. Even though social network marketing is still in its infancy, it holds a potential success for businesses if it is carefully integrated into the marketing mix. This study therefore, contributes to the limited literature on social media marketing especially in the Ethiopian context and serve as a reference. In addition, the findings of the study produced useful information for Ethio telecom to help improve their social media marketing practices. Moreover, the recommendations of the study are helpful in enabling proper and effective use of social media at Ethio Telecom. Above all, having a clear idea about the enabling context of social media adoption should help improve the understanding of the future of

these emerging technologies for businesses in Ethiopia in general and Ethio telecom in particular.

1.7 Scope of the Study

Research in the area of social media marketing cover various perspectives including its effectiveness, impact on organizational performance, barriers to social media marketing and other related issues. The scope of this study, however, was only limited to examining the adoption and use of social media for marketing at Ethio telecom. Further, only the contexts that are considered conducive to Social Media adoption and usage are assessed. In terms of budgetary and time constraints, the scope of the study was geographically limited to only cover 6 districts/zones/ of Ethio telecom in Addis Ababa.

1.8 Organization of the Study

The study is presented in five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction part, the second chapter reviews related articles about the study area, the third chapter will present the research methodology used to conduct the research. The fourth chapter discusses data analysis and interpretation. The fifth and final chapter will give conclusion and relevant recommendations based on the findings of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to critically review literature related to the theoretical concept of the topic of social networks and marketing tools. In this review both theoretical and empirical reviews are presented. The theoretical review will define the basic concept and goes on to explain the meaning and impact of social media marketing for firms. This section concludes with a presentation of social media adaptation framework. The empirical review covers main themes in social media marketing research and briefly discusses some previous findings.

2.1. Theoretical Literature

2.1.1. Marketing

Marketing is the management process through which goods and services move from concepts to the customers. Marketing is based on thinking about the business in terms of customer needs and their satisfaction. Marketing differs from selling because (in the words of Harvard Business School's retired professor of marketing Theodore C. Levitt) "Selling concerns itself with the tricks and techniques of getting people to exchange their cash for your product. It is not concerned with the values that the exchange is all about. And it does not, as market invariable does, view the entire business process as consisting of a tightly integrated effort to discover, create, arouse and satisfy customer needs." In other words, marketing has less to do with getting customers to pay for your product as it does developing a demand for that product and fulfilling the customer's needs.

The marketing mix is a familiar marketing strategy tool, which you will probably know, was traditionally limited to the core 4Ps of Product, Price, Place, and Promotion. The 4Ps were designed at a time where businesses sold products, rather than services and the role of customer service in helping brand development wasn't so well knowing. Over time, Booms and Pitner added three extended 'service mix P's': Participants, Physical evidence

and Processes, and later Participants was renamed, People. Today, it's recommended that the full 7Ps of the marketing mix are considered when reviewing competitive strategies. Thus, the businessman uses appropriate marketing mix for his product or services and prepare a marketing strategy using various combinations to reach out the customers.

2.1.2. Marketing Communication

The main purposes of marketing communication are to inform, persuade or remind the selected target audience of the market offering (Lamb et al., 2003). However, Bearden et al. (2007) emphasize that marketing communication's ultimate role is to influence the behavior of the target market, and not only to inform, persuade or remind the consumers.

Communication objectives, such as creating awareness of or interest in the marketing offer, are certainly not enough. Marketing communication should, in fact, lead to changes in the behavior of the target market in the purchase of products or loyalty towards the brand. Marketers can use the marketing communication strategy to convince the selected target market(s) that the products or services offered to provide a significant and competitive advantage over those of their rivals (Lamb et al., 2003).

Duncan (2008) acknowledges that marketing communication can add value for customers, because customers need to be informed on aspects, such as the features and potential benefits of a product, where it can be bought, and whether it is a well-known brand with a good reputation, or whether it has already formed a positive association in the minds of the consumers. In other words, marketing communication can influence the target audiences' perceptions of crucial features and symbolic associations that are superior to those of the competitors. Marketing communication can also add value to the company/advertiser by building brands and creating brand equity. Since marketing communication mainly occurs at the brand level, it can be used by companies to create popular, well-known or valued brands. Branding can also bring in economic advantages for companies, because of the potential to produce in vast quantities and to create barriers for new brands trying to enter the market.

2.1.3. Integrated Marketing Communication

Integrated marketing communication (IMC) is a concept that has become a significant topic for both academics and firms from the beginning of the 1990s (Holm, 2006). According to Schultz, IMC is a process through which companies accelerate returns by aligning communication objectives with corporate goals (Schultz and Schultz, 2004). Duncan defined it as a concept that direct and coordinate the process of planning, implementing and supervising brand messages by which brand-customer relationship is built (Duncan and Ouwersloot, 2008). To applying this concept, various tools are used that their major specifications and applications are shown in Table 1.

Advertising is a paid, non-personal offer of products by a company (Kotler and Keller, 2006) via various types of print, outdoor, broadcasting and interactive media in order to create brand awareness and brand image and persuade the customer to respond (Boone and Kurtz, 2007). Sales promotion is a value-added short-term suggestion to motivate the customer to immediate response and product trial (Kotler and Keller, 2006; Duncan and Ouwersloot, 2008). Overusing this tool can damage the brand image and decrease the profit in the long-term period (Aaker, 1996). Direct marketing is a database driven, direct and interactive communication process that uses a wide range of media to stimulate a customer response. Because of the amount of intrusiveness, it can be seen as an annoying tool by the customer. To avoid this, decreasing customer defection should be considered as well as trying to increase profit (Kim, Song, and Kim, 2009).

Public relations attempt to create and control the brand news, announcements, and reminders that publish by public media without spending. Marketing managers take advantages of this MC to build and reinforce their brand (Robinson, 2006). Personal selling is an interpersonal relationship by which sales representative fulfill the customer needs to gain mutual benefits. Personal selling is the most effective and expensive MC tool. Therefore, sales force management is a very challenging matter for organizations (Fine, 2007). Especially for fast moving consumer goods (FMCG), packaging plays a critical role in brand identity like a miniature billboard, while delivering the last brand

message to the customer. It is estimated that almost 60-70% of purchase decision of FMCGs is not taken before arrival to the shop (Duncan and Ouwersloot, 2008).

Table 1: Applications of common MC Tools

MC tool	Main specifications	Main application
Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-personal • One-way • Paid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand awareness • Brand image • Encourage a response
Sales promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term • Encourage an immediate response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate the buying decision
Direct marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct and two-way • Data based • Using a wide range of media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling dialogue with the customer • Product and services customization
Public relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and control the brand news • No media spending • The most credible MC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The formal channel of communication with society especially in crisis management • Reinforcement and modify the brand image
Personal selling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face to face communication • The most effective and expensive MC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dominant tool for B2B and special products in B2C • Brand message personalization
Packaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Containing product information • Free medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand identity reinforcement • Delivering the last brand message
Events and sponsorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create, sponsor or participate in celebration, contests and trade fairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active involvement of customers • Brand public announcement and reinforcement
Customer service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing brand-customer interactive relationship • Company`s attitude and behavior toward a customer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer retention • Customer satisfaction

Companies utilize events for their MC objectives in three ways. They create events, participate in them or sponsor them. Companies sponsor a person, an organization or event to announce their brand publicity and associate with that subject in order to reinforce the brand (Masterman and Wood, 2005). Customer service as another MC tool is the process of managing interactive and two-way brand-customer experience. The purpose of customer service before, during and particularly after purchase is customer retention and his satisfaction (Duncan and Ouwersloot, 2008).

In their far-sighted note, Schultz and Schultz (1998) argued that marketing and marketing communications are in transition due to technological advances. Thus, an organization moves from one stage of IMC development to another as a result of the organization's ability to capture and manage information technology. It can now be observed that contemporary IMC elements include a wide variety of new options, such as online marketing, social media, cell phone marketing, buzz-marketing, viral-marketing, branded entertainment, product placement and guerrilla-marketing. These new marketing communication elements and online media have changed the interface between consumers and organizations, where there has been a shift in power between the media and the consumer, with consumer-generated media turning consumers into content creators (Valos, Habibi and Casidy, 2015).

2.1.4. Social Networks, Social Media, and SNS

Social networks originate from sociology and, in a business context, refer to two or more connected business relationships, where an 'exchange' exists between business partners (Pitt et al. 2006). The notion of a 'network' is based on the establishment of ties between individuals, groups of people, organizational departments or corporations, that leads to the creation of social networks. Social networks differ with respect to their size and heterogeneity (Garton, Haythornthwaite & Wellman, 1997). Smaller, homogeneous networks can be found in work groups (Lea et al. 2006), while larger, more

heterogeneous networks are typically more complex and are associated with more diverse social characteristics.

In general, social networks are beneficial and valuable for the network participants in that they promote activities and the use of resources (Gamunden, Ritter & Walter 1997). Within a commercial context, social networks offer significant benefits, including the enhancement of economic value for organizations (Stephen & Toubia, 2010). A number of studies have used social networking theory to study the social networks of firms in B2B environments (e.g. Björkman & Kock 1995). Further, Pitt et al. (2006) and McCarthy et al. (2007) used social network theory to examine internet links between B2B firms. Social networks are important for the survival of small firms and critical in competing with larger businesses (Pitt et al. 2006; Copp & Ivy, 2001).

Technological progress and innovation have altered the nature of social networks. In particular, while traditional social networks have involved personal interactions with humans over time (Kimball & Rheingold 2000), interactions are now mediated by computers, which suggests a more impersonal form of communication. These computer-mediated networks or online social networks are more complex and involve a greater degree of heterogeneity. Yet, the benefits associated with social networks are enhanced in an online environment, where the problems of time and geographical location become less significant. Members of an online network can exchange information and provide solutions from and to different locations across the world in a very short period of time (Lea et al. 2006).

On the other hand, Social Media is defined as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content” (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). Social media platforms include, but are not limited to, social networking tools (e.g. Facebook, Twitter), professional networking sites (e.g. LinkedIn), media sharing sites (e.g. YouTube, Instagram), commerce communities (e.g. Amazon) and blogs and discussion forums (Agarwal and Yiliyasi, 2010).

Social media has gained a lot of popularity over the past few years and as a result of this popularity, other traditional media have experienced a decline in both business and popularity. Palmer and Lewis (2009) argued that the mainstream media channels have faced many challenges in recent times that have led to closure with TV facing a downturn in their profits levels. Palmer and Lewis (2009) are correlating the performance of these traditional channels to the rise of social media in marketing and brand management. The benefits and opportunities presented by social media have meant that it is becoming integral to marketing strategy (Barnes, 2010). In the next section, the role of social media networks, social media marketing, and their benefits are discussed.

2.1.4.1. The Role of Social Media Networks

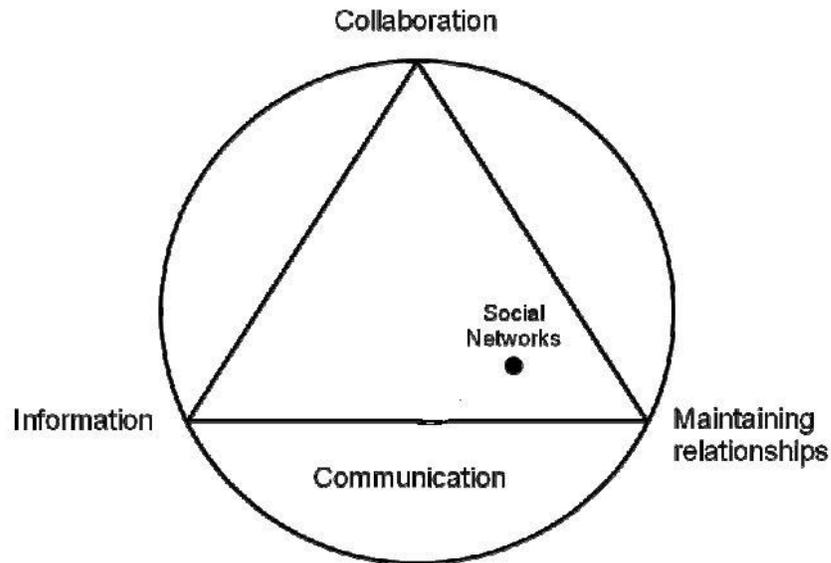
Social media network are applications that allow users to build personal websites accessible to other users for exchange of personal content and communication (Palmer and Lewis 2009). social media according to Palmer and Lewis can be characterized as online applications, platforms, and media which aim to facilitate interactions, collaborations and the sharing of content.

Fausser et al. (2011) argue that although communication is the core dimension of social media networks, not all platform categories are equally suitable for all marketing objectives because most of the platforms are not equally well suited for information, collaboration, and even for cultivating relationships (Fausser et al. 2011). the purpose of social networks is primarily for communication and exchange of ideas of interest among peer groups or communities. according to Gummesson (2002) however, it is through frequent communication initiated by the marketer on the interactive social networks that a long-term friendship can be developed and maintained between the business and the customer (Gummesson, 2002). Janal (1998) on the other hand, insinuates that the information provider (marketer) are the ones creating their own communities with their social network constructs, hence staffers and vocal members of these constructs lead the discussion.

In this way, a collaboration between the marketer and the online consumer/or prospect is developed. this means that without information flow within the communities and the brand which in this case is the business, they would be no serious engagement amongst

the online communities. the figure below, for example, gives a picture of the kind of interaction that takes place within the confines of the social sphere.

Figure 1: The dynamics of social in the social network sphere



Source: Adapted from Fauser et al 2011

However, the dilemma facing companies planning to interact with social networks is how to control communication environment within the network, in an effort to make sure that their brand image is protected. Palmer and Lewis (2009) therefore conclude that a true social network should give members a feeling, a sense of ownership of the community and if that is not perceived there is potential for network members to be resentful. therefore, for companies to be successful in using social technologies, the first step would be to prepare and align internal roles, processes, policies with the business objectives.

2.1.4.2. Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing is a new marketing strategy which almost every business is adapting to reach their consumers on the virtual networks. Entertainment companies were the first to adopt the social media as a promotional tool. Weinberg (2009) has defined social media marketing as the process that empowers individuals to promote their

websites, products, or services through online social channels and tap into a much larger community that may not have been available via traditional channels. It does not stop here but organizations also inform the potential customers of happenings in the organization, the launch of the new model or product and latest news about the organization through social media applications. Gordhamer (2009) has related social media marketing to the relationship marketing where firms need to shift from “trying to sell” to “making connections” with the consumers. This explanation of social media marketing take us to the other side of marketing, where building relations with the potential consumers is the key to repeated purchases and enhanced brand loyalty.

Social media is an innovative tool that organizations use for creating a very strong public relation with the customers on the virtual networks (Jan and Khan, 2014). Maintaining public relations through social media has become easy because a large number of potential consumers are available on the virtual networks and making a connection with consumers using social media is only some clicks away. Today’s customers are more powerful and busy; therefore, companies should be reachable and available in every social media communication channel such as Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, Forums at any time (Gordhamer, 2009). Exploiting the opportunities provided by the social media communication channels is important for every organization.

2.1.4.3. Benefits of Social Media Marketing Benefits

Social media marketing campaigns provide businesses with new ways of online marketing that no longer relies primarily on traditional online advertising with large budgets, such as banner and campaigns and paid search advertising, to build brand awareness and drive website traffic. The main benefits of a social media marketing campaign are:

Increased Brand Awareness. A social media marketing campaign creates brand visibility and builds brand-awareness from viral messages that travel throughout the social web. Whether from content that virally travels or from active participation in the target communities: establishing a brand power of authority and online reputation.

More Web Site Traffic and Links. Social media marketing campaigns generate links and website traffic from profile pages on social media websites, web widgets, social network applications and the contents that travel virally throughout social media news and bookmarking websites. More links result in higher rankings of web pages in the organic search at Google, Yahoo, Bing and others (Tapscott and Williams, 2006).

Improved Customer Relationships. Social media marketing, through social networking profiles, Blogs, podcasts, wiki's, forums and other social media tools can improve customer relationships and user engagement. They are accomplished by developing a deeper, two-way communications channel with the customer base, wherein the business can take part in the discussions, receive feedback and build trust (Palmer and Lewis 2009).

2.1.5. Organizational Readiness for Adopting Social Media

Social media marketing is usually based on a company's social media strategy. Parsons (2013) pinpoints the importance of having a communication strategy for each social media tool that the company uses. It is vital to be active, interesting, humble, less formal and honest. Being present is not enough, instead, the company must figure out how to attract readers and how to communicate with them. It is important to think beforehand what the company wants to achieve and what kind of a message to send out to readers. In addition, each social media network has a different purpose and target group and therefore it is vital to choose the right tools. The company cannot adopt the same strategy for all, instead, it must personalize its message for each network. As Solomon stated (2008), companies must think globally but act locally because the cultures and the needs and wants are different in every country. The same strategy will most likely not work everywhere (Parsons, 2013; Solomon, 2009).

Today big and small organizations understand the need to utilize social media marketing. The big question, however, remains 'how?'. Brito (2010) recommends that organizations make ready what he calls the three pillars; people governance and technology. People (employees) need to endorse an open communication culture while the governance structure needs to make sure the necessary processes and social media training are in

place. The technology, on the other hand, needs to make sure the necessary social media platforms are ready for use.

Another framework applicable in readiness assessment is the **Technology-Organization-Environmental (TOE)** framework. TOE is a widely-accepted model for studying IT adoption in organizations, including SMEs. It was first developed by Tornatzky, Fleischer, and Chakrabarti (1990) as a theoretical framework to predict the adoption of various forms of IT innovation. Subsequently, it has been extended and developed by further studies such as Oliveira and Martins (2010); Srivastava and Teo (2010); Yee-Loong Chong and Ooi (2008); Pan and Jang (2008); Kuan and Chau (2001); Chau and Tam (1997). TOE has broad applicability and possesses exploratory power that is useful in order to study a wide range of technologies (Baker, 2012). It has been viewed as an ideal theoretical framework for predicting and explaining the adoption of any given technology (Ndekwa and Katunzi, 2016; Yeboah-Boateng and Essandoh, 2014; Ramdani, Chevers and Williams, 2013). Similarly, TOE has also been used in assessing social media readiness assessment as well as to develop further modified model for social media adaption (Parveen, 2012; Omosigho and Abeysinghe (2012).

TOE has three contexts: technology; organization; and environment (Rahbi, 2017). It is noteworthy that some of the factors are heavily discussed reflecting their extensive examination in the IT adoption literature. Each of the context and their corresponding factors are briefly presented.

Technology context. This context describes existing technologies in the organization as well as the pool of technologies available in the market. A consideration of existing literature on IT adoption using TOE shows that the impact of characteristics of the technology has long been recognized. The technological context can also denote the relevant skills required to use that particular technology (Matikiti, Mpinganjira & Roberts-Lombard (2018). Many researchers have argued the importance of a set of technological features in the adoption process. Rogers (2010) identified five attributes of technology that may have an influence on the decision to adopt or reject a given technology in organizations: relative advantage; complexity; compatibility; trialability;

and observability. In this study, the technological context was described as the technical knowledge required to implement social media marketing.

Organization context. Organization characteristics, the second set of determinants in the TOE framework, have, through a considerable number of studies, been found to impact the adoption of new technologies. The characteristics of a business have been examined to identify their potential role in the adoption of new technologies. The ‘organizational context’ includes ‘resources of the firm, linking structures between employees, intra-firm communication processes, firm size, and the amount of slack resources’ (Oliveira & Martins, 2011). Specifically, it describes the size and scope of an organization and the structure of management (Oliveira and Martins, 2011). Other studies also classify organizational context into organizational size; top management support; CEOs’ innovativeness; and prior IS experience (Rahbi, 2017). Previous experience in the case of social media could be familiarity with other Internet-based technologies (such as websites and e-forums) can have a direct influence, facilitating social media adoption.

Environment context. The environment context represents the third set of factors in the TOE framework that has been identified to impact the adoption of IS innovations. In fact, it is believed that the arena in which an enterprise operates represents a primary stimulus for the adoption of innovations as organizations respond to changes in the external environment (Alshamaila, Papagiannidis, and Li, 2013). What happens in the external environment can affect the adoption of social media marketing. For instance, if an organization’s competitors are adopting or have adopted social media marketing, it will be forced also to adopt it to remain competitive (Wamba and Carter 2014). Several environmental factors have been identified as affecting an organization’s decision to adopt new technologies, including; competitive pressure; industry type; market scope; external IS support; and customer pressure.

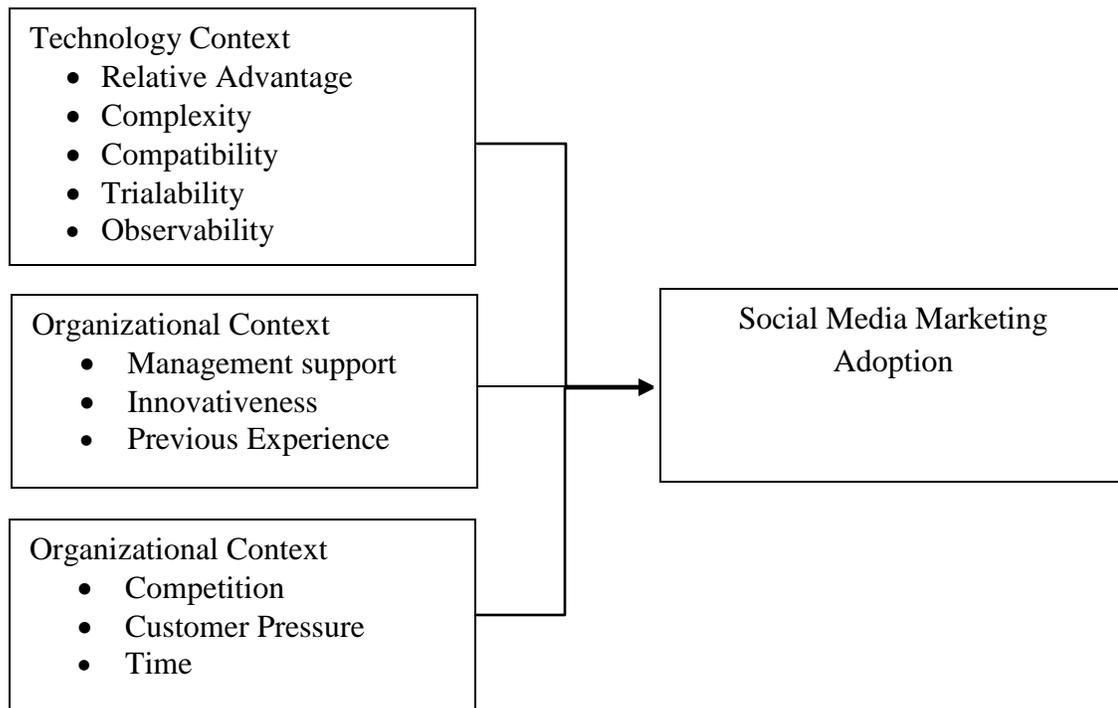


Figure 2: Theoretical framework(source Internet)

2.2. Empirical Review

Research into social media, and specifically SNS, is still at an embryonic stage however there has been studies that explored the applicability of social media (Neti, 2011), Wright and Hinson (2008), effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool (Bashar, Ahmad, and Wasiq, 2012; Kallio,2015), challenges and barrier in social media adoption (Oji, Iwu and Tengeh, 2017).

Wright and Hinson (2008), for example, studied the use of social media for internal and external communication among public relations executives in America. Their study indicated that 61% of the respondents agreed that Facebook and other social network sites had enhanced public relations communication between organizations and their clients. The platform thus influences news output more than the traditional media system; similarly, social media helps organizations to respond immediately to their clients, at a minimal cost.

In another survey, Neti (2011) found that 52% of businesses and corporate organizations surveyed in India used social media tactics to reach out to customers, because of the exponential growth potential. It helped to expand the social media network of customers who could discuss, comment, participate, share and create the same business ideology that would lead to business growth. Moreover, the survey revealed that social media platforms had been deployed by small business brands and public relations businesses for corporate organizations, and that small business were the biggest beneficiary that utilized social media platforms.

In addition, Jagongo and Kinyua (2013) found that the social media offered huge market access, which resulted in the significant return on investment (ROI) for small businesses. In a related study in South Africa, Khan and Karodia (2013) revealed a high rate of positive response about the usefulness of social media from respondents: 51% of these brands agreed that Facebook was an effective channel for marketing, 70% of respondents agreed that the platform was used for public relations, 62% of the respondents suggested it was used for marketing, and 43% agreed that it was useful for customer relations.

Notwithstanding the glowing benefits of social media for small businesses, there are obstacles to their optimal utilization. Some of these obstacles pertain to lack of ability and time to use the platform (Michaelidou, Siamagka & Chistodoulides, 2011). Other obstacles include the lack of knowledge of what is appropriate for clients in terms of posts. For instance, Koshy (2013) reported that failing to transmit 'culturally' correct material on the internet could lead to drastic consequences by the United Arab Emirates government. The implication of a condition such as this is that businesses have to invest ample time to understand their clients so as not to offend them by posting inappropriate material.

Parveen (2012) used an integrated model with TOE framework as a base to assess the social media usage and its impact on Malaysian organizations. The results of the analysis showed that technological factors such as interactivity, relative advantage, compatibility, as well as environmental factors like the institutional pressure had a positive effect on using social media. Similarly, the usage of social media had a stronger, positive impact on organizational performance.

Larosiliere, Meske, and Carter (2015) did a comparative analysis of determinants of social network adoption using the TOE framework. The study utilized cross-sectional data from 130 countries and found that social network adoption, at the country level, is positively influenced by the technological maturity, public readiness as an organizational context, and ICT-laws sophistication as an environmental context. In the study, technological, organizational, and environmental factors account for 67% of the variance in social network adoption.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design and Approach

The principal aim of this study was to assess the adoption and use of social media as a marketing communication tool by Ethio Telecom. To this end, the research was designed as a mixed method research utilizing both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative research focuses on collecting numerical data to explain the phenomena. The data is collected through surveys and the sample size is much bigger than in qualitative research. The questions are designed in such a way that they can be handled and analyzed statistically. On the other hand, qualitative research includes an “array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world.” (Cooper and Schindler, 2014).

With an aim of gaining a more holistic understanding of the research problem, this study used a mixed method approach as suggested by Creswell (2003). Mixed methods research is a combination of qualitative and quantitative data. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2010) define mixed methods as ‘research in which the investigator collects, analyses, mixes, and draws inferences from both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or a program of inquiry’.

Therefore, the overall intent of choosing a mixed method design, in this study, was to have the qualitative data help explain in more detail the initial quantitative results. Accordingly, it involved collecting survey data first, analyzing the data, and then it was followed up with qualitative interviews to help further explain the survey responses.

3.2. Population, Sampling and Sample Size

3.2.1 Population

The population of the study constituted the marketing department of Ethio telecom. This Department is responsible for developing the marketing strategy of the company and its

components including social media. This is therefore why the department is the right population for the study.

3.2.2 Sampling and Sample Size

Whenever the entire population is accessible and have a manageable size, using the population of a study avoids the issue of representativeness as well as eliminates any potential bias occurring through sampling technique. The department currently contains about 47 employees (40 staff and 7 managers). Given the mixed method design, the quantitative data was collected from the staff using a survey instrument followed by the qualitative data from the management members that further explained the results of the quantitative phase. For the qualitative interview, three of the manager were used for the interviewed.

3.3. Instrument and Data Collection Methods

In this study, primary data was used. The primary data was collected from the marketing staff at the department through questionnaire and personal interview with the management members. For the quantitative phase, a survey instrument was used. The survey instrument developed consisted of five sections. The first section included five questions intended to measure respondents' demographic characteristics. The second section consisted six questions aimed an identifying current usage and perceptions of social media marketing. The remaining three sections were taken from Rahbi (2017) that covered questions developed based on the TOE framework. The three sections covered the technology context, organizational context and environmental context associated with social media adoption. For the personal interview, open-ended question seeking further explanation on the same issues covered in the quantitative phase were used.

The data collection procedure followed a sequence in which exploration was followed by quantitative measurement, which was in turn followed by a qualitative analytical phase. In the quantitative phase, a survey questionnaire was distributed to the staff in the marketing department and collected. Subsequently, the interview was carried out with the management members of the marketing department to collect the qualitative data. The

interview questions were refined based on the analysis of the quantitative phase as the aim of the interview was to gain further understanding and explanation.

3.4. Validity and Reliability

It is well recognized that reliability and validity are two important dimensions of data quality in any research. To assure the validity of the data collected through the questionnaire, adopting questions from previous studies is an acceptable and encouraged practice (Blair, Czaja and Blair, 2013). Accordingly, this research deployed a survey instrument developed based on Rahbi (2017) using the well-established TOE framework in technology adoption research.

The reliability, on the other hand, describes how far the survey will produce similar results in different circumstances assuming nothing else has changed (Roberts and Priest, 2006). Simply, it refers to the repeatability of the survey and is concerned with the level of internal consistency of each factor included in the measurement instrument (Heale and Twycross, 2015). Cronbach’s alpha (Cronbach’s α) is one of the most popular statistical tools used to measure the reliability of the research constructs (Heale and Twycross, 2015). Cronbach’s alpha was calculated for the survey instrument used and resulted in alpha values higher than 0.75 confirming the reliability of the instrument used.

No.	Corresponding Questions	Constructs	Reliability (Cronbach's alpha)
1	Q1 - Q14	Technology	0.877
2	Q15 – Q22	Organization	0.789
3	Q23 – Q31	Environment	0.751

Table 2: Test of Reliability

3.5. Method of Data Analysis

In analyzing the quantitative data, descriptive statistics was used to assess the how participants evaluated the constructs given. Regarding the analysis of demographic information, frequency count, tables, and charts are used to present the observations. The

primary analysis of assessing the elements of the TOE framework however was done using mean values and standard deviations. On the other hand, the qualitative data from the interview was recorded, transcribed and summarized to derive meaning.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

During the course of administering the questionnaires, names and any identifying remarks were not used. The confidentiality of the responses collected was also kept. The data used in the analysis was purely based on the questionnaires and interview of respondents and by no means involved the researcher opinion and input. Hence, any result or meaning arrived at is solely based on the data gathered.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the data collected and the analysis carried out based on the methodology described in chapter 3. The results are presented sequentially starting with the quantitative survey followed by the qualitative interview. The discussion is then presented combining the results of the two.

4.1 Demographic Variables

S. No.	Items	Frequency	Percent
1	Gender		
	Male	23	65.7
	Female	12	34.3
2	Age		
	18 – 25	2	5.7
	26 – 35	28	80.0
	36 – 44	4	11.4
	45 and above	1	2.9
3	Level of Education		
	Diploma	-	-
	BA/BSC Degree	20	57.1
	MA	14	40.0
	Other	1	2.9
4	Work Experience with Ethio Telecom		
	Less than three	6	17.1
	3 – 6 years	8	22.9
	7 – 9 years	4	11.4
	10– 13 years	13	37.1
	14 and above	4	11.4
	Total	35	100

Table 3: Demography of participants

The assessment of different contexts suitable for social media adoption was done using the marketing department of ethio telecom which had 40 employees and seven managers. Out of the 40, 35 (87.5%) of them returned a complete questionnaire used to make the analysis presented.

Table 2 below shows that the majority of participants 23(65.7%) were male while females were only 12(34.3%). Regarding age, '26-35' age group was the largest with 28(80.0%) followed by the age group 36-44(11.4%). Only two of the employees in the department were aged 18-25 and only one above 45 years. The data shows that participants were young professionals between 26 -44 years. In terms of education, 20(57.1%) of them BA/BSc, 14 (40.0%) had a graduate level education.

The participants work experience showed that about 13(37.1%) had worked with Ethio Telecom between 10-13, 8(22.9%) worked between 3-6 years for Ethio telecom. It is also possible to see 6(17.1%) had worked for less than three years. It can be noted that work experience is fairly distributed across different groups.

Social media usage by participants showed that 34 (97.1%) of the 35 employees in the marketing department use social media. Looking at for how long those employees have used social media, 16 (45.7%) have used social media for more than eight years while 9 (25.7%) have used it between 6-8 years. Those who have used social media between 4-6 years were 7 (20%). It was only 3 of the employees who have indicated that they have used social media for four years or less. This indicates that participants of this survey have enough experience with social media.

Overall, the demographics of the survey participant indicate that age-wise the department contains young professionals likely to be familiar with current trends in technology and can learn fast if required. This is also supported by the level of education within the department which should be capable enough to handle adoption and usage of social media. In terms of experience within the department, the department has employees with enough experience with the company to generate enough content which can be complemented by the fact that majority have been using social media for a long time personally.

S.No.	Duration of use	Frequency	Percent
1	Less than 2 years	2	5.7
2	2-4 years	1	2.9
3	4 -6 years	7	20.0
4	6 - 8 years	9	25.7
5	More than 8 years	16	45.7
	Total	35	100.0

Table 4: Years of social media usage by participants

4.2 Social Media usage by Ethio Telecom

The second section of the survey included questions related to Ethio telecom’s use of social media. The questions included asked if Ethio telecom was on social media, which type of social media and for what purpose Ethio telecom is using social media at the moment. All the thirty-five participants indicated that Ethio telecom uses social media. When asked to indicate all of the social media services Ethio telecom uses, 33 of the 35 participants indicated that Ethio telecom uses ‘Facebook’. In addition to Facebook, six of the participants indicated that Ethio telecom uses ‘twitter’ along with Facebook while two of them added LinkedIn and YouTube along with the other social media service.

The participants were also asked the purposes of social media use Ethio telecom. This question was structured as multiple solution questions where participants were asked to identify all the purposes as applied to Ethio telecom’s use of social media. The purpose ‘advertising and promotion’ were mentioned by 31 (88.6%) of the participants followed by ‘information sharing and search’ mentioned by 27 (77.1%) of the participants. Receiving customer feedback was the third highest mentioned purpose of social media usage by Ethio telecom with 17 (4%) of the participants. Conducting market research, customer service activities reaching new customers were the least identified purposes of social media usage by Ethio telecom where they were mentioned by 1 (2.9%), 5(14.3%) and 8(22.9%) of the participants.

	Purpose of use	Frequency	Percentage
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1	Information sharing and search	27	77.1%
2	Branding	11	31.4%
3	Advertising and promotion	31	88.6%
4	Conduct market research	1	2.9%
5	Reach new customers	8	22.9%
6	Getting referrals	11	31.4%
7	Develop customer relations	9	25.7%
8	Customer service activities	5	14.3%
9	Receive customer feedback	17	48.6%

Table 5: Purpose of Social media usage by Ethio telecom

4.3 Enabling context for Social Media marketing adoption and usage

As presented in the literature review section, the enabling context for adoption and usage of social media as a marketing tool can be seen using the TOE framework. The survey questionnaire covered the three contexts technology, organization, and environment at Ethio telecom.

4.2.1 Technology Context

The technology context was assessed using fourteen questions that were further grouped into the five sub-elements of the technology context (see table 6). The first element was ‘relative advantage’ of adopting or using social media as a marketing tool. This item included issues such as ‘better communication’, ‘cost savings’, ‘increasing profitability’ and ‘ability to get timely information’. The mean score of the ‘relative advantage’ therefore was 4.06 suggesting that participant agree that the use of social media offers a relative advantage.

Similarly, the complexity of adopting social media was also measured using items ‘easiness of getting social media to do what Ethio telecom wants’, ‘ease of use’ and ‘easy to Ethio telecom employees to use’. The mean value o this element was also 4.00

confirming that employees of Ethio telecom think social media marketing is not complex to adopt or use.

Compatibility was another sub-item measuring the technology context. The compatibility of social media marketing with existing IT infrastructure, with business processes and operations as well as existing systems like a website were used to measure the level of compatibility. Participants tend to agree that the use of social media marketing is compatible with Ethio telecom scoring a mean value of 3.69. Trialability measured the possibility of properly try out social media marketing before use and experiment with various capabilities also checked. Participants once again showed their agreement with trialability of social media with mean 3.60. Observability also scored a mean of 3.6 and was measured by ‘the ease of sharing/telling to others.

No.	Elements	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Relative Advantage	4.06	.723
2	Complexity	4.00	.889
3	Compatibility	3.69	.894
4	Trialability	3.60	.735
5	Observability	3.60	.627

Table 6: Elements of the technology context

4.2.2 Organizational Context

The organizational context looked at what the internal organizational context offered or the adoption of social media marketing. Eight questions that were further divided into three items were used to assess the organizational context. As can be seen in table 7, the first item was 'top management support' which was assessed using items 'managements enthusiastic support', 'interest' and 'allocation of adequate resource'. the mean rating for this dimension was found to be 2.99 which merely suggested that participants do not feel the management support.

No.	Elements	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Management support	2.99	.887
2	Innovativeness	3.63	.717
3	Previous Experience	3.66	.591

Table 7: Elements of the organizational context

Innovativeness tried to see the openness to new ideas as well as the wit to try to master a new idea. this dimension was assessed using items 'experimenting with new technology', 'being the first to try new technology', and 'interest to try new technology'. the mean rating for innovativeness was 3.63 which showed participants tend to indicate there is a level of innovativeness at Ethio telecom.

The other element of the organizational context was 'previous experience' with a similar type of technology. her two questions were asked to see if Ethio telecom had previous experience with similar technology and if it felt familiar to use social media. A mean value of 3.66 showed that participants have a tendency to agree with the exitance of previous experience at Ethio telecom.

4.2.3 Environmental Context

The environmental context refers to the external arena within which the company operates. The main elements of this context are the competition and the customer pressure. Here the competition was measured with three questions looking at 'the possibility of losing out to the competition if social media is not used' and 'if it is a strategic necessity for competition'. The overall mean of 3.2 shows that participants do not think' competition is a pressure or a stimulus at this point.

The customer pressure, on the other hand, was assessed looking at if participants believe 'customers are ready to do business on social media', 'if customers are demanding the use of social media', 'if the surrounding community (friends and family)think social

media should be adopted'. The mean rating for customer pressure was 3.5 slightly suggesting that participants agree customers are ready to engage on social media.

S.No.	Elements	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Competition	3.20	1.170
2	Customer Pressure	3.51	0.621

Table 8: Elements of the environmental context

4.4 Qualitative Findings

An interview session was organized with three managers from the marketing department with an aim of complementing the observations made in the quantitative analysis. The interview was guided by a semi-structured set of questions aimed at confirming and shading more light on the findings of the previous phase.

The first questing asked was ‘does Ethio telecom have an official presence on Social Media?’ As confirmed by the managers, Ethio telecom has a presence on social media, particularly ‘Facebook’. A follow-up question was that if ‘Facebook’ is being used, did it imply that Social Media has been officially incorporated into Ethio telecom’s marketing mix. The interviewees indicated that social media has been incorporated into the mix.

The availability of guiding policy and specific work processed designed for social media usage was the next point of discussion. Participants indicated that although there is no policy at the moment, there are processes in place to guide its everyday usage.

One observation from the quantitative phase was that from the three contexts in the TOE framework, Ethio telecom is well suited to adopt social media from a technology context perspective. The organizational context, particularly management support was lacking. The question asked to clarify this observation showed that there was a lack of perception by management that social media was meant for individual use. One interviewee indicated that “there was a tendency to overlook social media role as a marketing tool by taking it as only for individuals”. However, the participants indicated that Ethio telecom is trying to remedy that by setting up a dedicated Facebook team composed of employees

from Customer service division (CSD), Corporate communication and Marketing divisions.

Interviewees were also asked if Ethio Telecom feels any competitive pressure or a demand from its customers to use Social Media. Interviewees indicated that Ethio Telecom being the sole telecom operator in the country, competition is not a significant concern in all marketing communication efforts including social media. Regarding customers, however, Ethio Telecom intends to reach or disseminate its messages to reach as broad segment as possible. Accordingly, the management believes social media is an ideal mechanism to reach the young generation.

Finally, in a question aimed at clarifying Ethio telecom's intentions for social media usage in immediate future, the participants indicated that "announcing offers, making posts related to customers and communication" was what the management had in mind.

4.5 Discussion of Findings

According to the survey results, Ethio Telecom is currently using social media or marketing communication purposes. Participants in the survey indicated that 'Facebook' was used by Ethio Telecom as well as other social media platforms like 'Twitter', 'LinkedIn' and 'YouTube'. However, the interview with the management indicated that 'Facebook' is the official social media platform in use. This could imply 'unofficial' and 'uncoordinated' use of social media by employees in the name of Ethio Telecom.

In terms of the purpose of use, 'advertising and promotion' and 'information sharing' was the standout purposes identified. This was also confirmed by the interview with the management which showed that social media is currently being used to 'post announcements and new offers'. This indicates that the level of Ethio Telecom's social media use is limited to a one-way communication.

Looking at the contexts suitable for social media adoption and use, the technology context measured by the 'relative importance', 'complexity', 'compatibility', 'trialability' and 'observability' is positive at Ethio Telecom. A positive technology context, as shown by many research, is a fertile ground upon which the adoption and use of social media

can flourish (Larosiliere et al (2015); Sharif, Rosli, and Ahmi, 2017). This suggests that Ethio Telecom can take advantage of a positive technological context.

Compared to the technology context, the organization context at Ethio Telecom offers a mixed result. 'Management support' tends to draw an almost neutral opinion from survey participants while 'innovativeness' and 'previous experience' show a relatively positive opinion. This finding was also confirmed by the interview which showed that 'misperceptions by management' have limited the management's support for social media usage. This goes against findings elsewhere that showed organizational context was key to social media adoption. Parveen (2012) in his study of Malaysian business firms have shown that element of the organizational context, top management support is very important in social media adoption. Similarly, Matikiti, Mpinganjira, and Roberts-Lombard (2018) also showed managerial support and managers' level of education are the two main internal factors which influence attitude towards the use of social media marketing in South Africa.

The third element in the TOE framework was the environmental context. The result of the survey showed that participants do not believe 'competition' is not a concern while 'customers pressure' is slightly positive. The interview indicated that since more and more of Ethio Telecom customers are using social media, getting on board is an ideal way to reach this segment. Although many other researches have indicated that the environmental context was a determinant in social media adoption (Matikiti et al., 2018; Parveen, 2012; Rosli, and Ahmi, 2017) those researches were done in an open competitive environment. Ethio Telecom's response to the environment should, therefore, be understood as a realization of the need to adopt social media to reach the generation that is using social media and not a response to an environmental pressure.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDING, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary of Findings

- the majority (about 85%) of the survey participants were young professionals aged between 18 -35 while about 90% had BA degree or more
- about 13(37.1%) of the participants have also worked for Ethio telecom between 10-13 while 8(22.9%) worked between 3-6 years for Ethio telecom
- the participant's usage of social media shows 16 (45.7%) have used social media for more than eight years while 9 (25.7%) have used it between 6-8 years. Those who have used social media between 4-6 years were 7 (20%).
- Ethio Telecom currently has adopted and is using social media, particularly 'Facebook' to make posts and announcements to its customers
- The element of TOE framework, technology measured using the 'relative importance', 'complexity', 'compatibility', 'trialability' and 'observability' is positive at Ethio Telecom
- The organization context at Ethio Telecom offers a mixed result where 'Management support' tends to draw an almost neutral opinion from survey participants while 'innovativeness' and 'previous experience' show a relatively positive opinion. Management interview has also shown management support was lacking due to misconception.
- Regarding the third element in the TOE framework was an environmental context. The result of the survey showed that participants do not believe 'competition' is not a concern while 'customers pressure' is slightly positive. This was also confirmed by the interview with the management

5.2 Conclusions

This study began with the aim of assessing Ethio Telecom's adoption and use of social media for marketing purposes using the TOE framework. Particularly, it looked at the level and purpose of social media usage as well as saw what the technological, organizational and environmental context are offering Ethio Telecom to adopt social media as a marketing tool. Accordingly, based on the findings and discussions above, the following conclusions are made:

- Ethio Telecom has already adopted and is using social media as a marketing tool particularly, 'Facebook' to post and share announcements and new product offers. One can conclude here that Ethio Telecom is at the early stage of social media usage where its use is only limited to 'posting' which is a one-way communication. This doesn't take advantage of social media's capability to collaborate and further create relationships with customers. Further, the lack of a guiding policy for social media marketing practice could lead to an uncoordinated effort by individual employees that will not accomplish any clearly defined objectives.
- Looking at the technology context according to the TOE framework, Ethio Telecom has a positive context where the perceived relative importance of social media, its complexity, compatibility, trialability, and observability are good. The technology context, therefore, offers Ethio Telecom a resource that can be exploited in social media marketing effort.
- The organization context at Ethio Telecom, on the other hand, shows a mixed review where 'Management support' tends to lack while the level of 'innovativeness' and 'previous experience' are conducive to use of social media marketing. Any initiative in an organization can succeed without the management support which makes the lack of support regarding social media marketing efforts could drag its effectiveness and future improvement behind.
- The environmental context of the TOE framework, on the other hand, showed that 'competition' is not a driving factor for Ethio Telecom while 'customers pressure' was seen to be slightly positive. The interpretation of this, however, needs a

careful consideration as Ethio Telecom do not operate in a traditional type of competitive environment. The fact that majority of Ethio Telecom's customers are on social media, however, makes it an enticing environment.

In conclusion, Ethio Telecom has already adopted and is using social media as a marketing tool. However, its use is only limited to 'posting' messages which are not guided by an overall organizational policy for social media. Further, the TOE Framework has shown that 'the technology context' offers a positive capability that can be exploited by Ethio Telecom. The 'organizational context' has elements to be improved to enable social media marketing to flourish. The environmental context also showed that although competition is not a driving factor, customers offer an opportunity that can be exploited.

5.3 Recommendations

As depicted in the conclusion above, Ethio Telecom has already adopted and is using social media as a marketing tool. However, its use is only limited to 'posting' messages which are not guided by an overall organizational policy for social media. Further, the TOE Framework has shown that 'the technology context' offers a positive capability that can be exploited by Ethio Telecom. The 'organizational context' has elements to be improved to enable social media marketing to flourish. The environmental context also showed that although competition is not a driving factor, customers offer an opportunity that can be exploited.

With this in mind, the following recommendations are given to enable Ethio Telecom to improve its use of social media for marketing.

- The most important measure for Ethio Telecom to take at this point is to improve its management's perception of social media usage. With clarity in the minds of its top management, the following further actions can be taken to improve the overall performance and productivity.
- Ethio Telecom needs to set a clear goal for its social media adoption and use. It also needs to develop a social media policy

- Develop a customer segmentation and develop clear target customers
- Creating compatibility between social media strategy and the existing business functions
- Make sure those in charge of social media marketing get specialized training. Ethio Telecom should not rely on the personal experience and understandings of its employees to make sure social media marketing is done the right way and brings results
- Develop social media matrix for effective assessment and assuring results

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ANNEX

A. QUESTIONNAIRE

Research Questionnaire

Dear respondents,

I am a student at St. Mary's University, School of Graduate Studies (MBA PROGRAM). I am currently conducting a research entitled **“Assessment of the applicability of online social networks as a marketing tool: the case of Ethio Telecom”**.

The research is required as partial fulfillment for the completion of the Masters of Business Administration (MBA) at St. Mary's University. In this regard, your candid response will provide me with reliable information to the best of your knowledge so that the findings from the study would meet the intended purpose.

The general purpose of this study is to assess the applicability of online social networking (Social Media) as a marketing communication channel in the current Ethiopian context. So, you are kindly requested to give dedicated responses to each question, because your response is very important to the effectiveness of the study. Be assured that all information you provide will be treated with strict confidentiality and it will be used only for educational purpose.

Thank you for your cooperation in advance.

Note:

- you are not required to write your name
- Please mark ✓ in the boxes available for your responses.

SECTION A: Background Information

Here general questions regarding the participant's profile are given. Please indicate your choice by marking (✓) against your choice.

1. Gender
Female Male
2. Age 18-25 26-35
 36-44 45 & above
3. Highest educational level obtained:
 Diploma MA
 BA/BSC Degree Other
4. Years of service at Ethio telecom
 1-3 7-9
 4-6 10-13 Above 14
5. Are you familiar with social media?
 Yes No
6. Personally, how long have you used social media?
Less than two years 4-6 years more than 8 years
2 – 4 years 6-8 years

SECTION B: Social media related questions.

The aim of this section is to explore the use of social media by your company (Ethio telecom).

1. Is Ethio telecom present on social media (Facebook, twitter, Instagram, ...)?
 Yes No
If your answer is "no", please go to question number 4 and 5.
2. Please indicate which of the following platforms Ethio telecom is present on?

- Facebook Skype LinkedIn You tube
- Twitter Tagged Hi 5 My Space
- I do not recognize any of them others please specify_____

3. Currently, for what purpose does Ethio telecom use social media? (choose more than one if applicable)

- Information sharing and search
- Branding
- Advertising and promotion
- Conduct market research
- Reach new customers
- Getting referrals (word of mouth via likes, shares, etc...)
- Develop customer relations
- Customer service activities
- Receive customer feedback

4. Which of the following best describe Ethio telecom's intention with regards to social media?

- Intend to adopt social media platforms
- Do not intend to adopt social media platforms soon

5. If you do not intend to use social media for Ethio telecom, please identify the reasons from the following. (choose all that apply)

- The company doesn't feel that it will gain any benefit from using social media
- Social media is a risk for information security
- Not enough skills to implement social media
- Not enough time to use social media
- Not enough (monetary) resources
- The company does not know how to best utilize social media in business
- Fear of critique or negative feedback
- Bad experience of social media
- The company can do well without social media

SECTION C: Technological Factors

The aim of this section is to explore your opinion as a marketing professional about the extent of the technological factors in the adaptation of social media at Ethio telecom.

Please answer the following questions using this 5-points scale.

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neither agree nor disagree 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

S. No.	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	Social media allow us to better communicate with our business partners and customers					
2	Social media allow us to cut costs on our operations					
3	Implementing social media increases the profitability of our business					
4	Adaptation of social media will provide timely information for decision making					
5	We believe that it is easy to get social media platforms to do what we want them to do					
6	Overall, we believe that social media platforms are easy to use					
7	Learning to use social media platforms are easy to us					
8	Using social media is compatible with existing IT infrastructure					
9	Using social media is compatible with our business processes and operations					
10	It is easy to integrate social media with our existing systems (e.g. website)					
11	Before we use social media applications, we were able to properly try it out					
12	I have a great deal of opportunity to try various social media capabilities					
13	We would have no difficulty telling others about the results of using social media applications					
14	The result of using social media applications are apparent to me					

Section D: Organizational factors:

The aim of this section is to explore your opinion as a marketing professional about the extent of organizational factors in the adoption of social media in your company:

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neither agree nor disagree 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

S. No.	Items	1	2	3	4	5
15	The manager enthusiastically supports the adoption of these new technologies					
16	Top management shows a lot of interest in social media marketing					
17	The manager has allocated adequate resources to adoption of these new technologies					
18	If I heard about new information technology, I would look for ways to experiment with it					
19	Among my peers, I am usually the first to try new information technologies					
20	I like to experiment with new information technologies					
21	Overall, our company has extensive technical knowledge about technologies similar to social media					
22	Social media are a familiar type of technology to use					

Section E: Environmental factors:

The aim of this section is to explore your opinion as a marketing professional about the extent of the external (environmental) factors in the adoption of social media in your company:

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neither agree nor disagree 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

S. No.	Items	1	2	3	4	5
23	We believe we will lose our customers to our competitors if we do not adopt these new technologies					
24	We feel it is a strategic necessity to use these technologies to compete in the market place					
25	We know our customers are ready to do business over the social media applications					
26	Our customers are demanding the use of social media in doing business with them					
27	My friends and family members think we should adopt social media at my company					
28	Those in my social circle think we should adopt social media in my enterprise					

Interview Questions Used

The following are open ended question designed to mediate an interview session with the management of the marketing department at Ethio Telecom.

1. Do you have an official presence on Social Media? If yes, which ones?
2. We have a policy to govern the use of Social Media as a marketing tool?
3. Have you incorporated and integrated Social Media into our normal marketing mix?
4. Looking at the technology context, Ethio telecom is well suited to adopt social media. But the organization context particularly management support seems weak. Can you explain this?
5. What is the external environment in terms of ‘competition’ and ‘customer demand’ offering in order to use Social Media?
6. What is your immediate plan with social media marketing?