

**SOCIAL MEDIA AND BRAND PROMOTION: CONTRIBUTIONS, CAPABILITIES,
AND CHALLENGES: A CASE OF TOP DELIVERY COMPANIES IN UGANDA**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM, COMMUNICATION,
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Declaration

I, **MWEBAZA LORNA**, a student at Uganda Christian University pursuing a Master of Arts Degree in Strategic Communication, hereby declare that the work submitted is my original work. Where other people’s work has been either cited from an article, online journal, video, or other sources, the referencing has been done according to the APA 7th Edition.

Signature..........Date **04/30/25**.....

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Approval

This is to certify that this dissertation has been done with my supervision and is ready for examination.



Signature: Date 30...../04...../25.....

Professor James Kiwanuka-Tondo

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my family who have played a very instrumental role in my studies financially, emotionally, and in prayer.

Acknowledgment

I hereby acknowledge that this work would not have been possible without the help of the Almighty God.

I extend special thanks to my supervisor, Professor James Kiwanuka-Tondo, for his invaluable guidance, insight, and support throughout this research.

I also hereby acknowledge the support of my friends and family and I want to extend my appreciation to them, may God bless you.

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to examine the contribution of social media on brand promotion among top delivery companies in Uganda. Additionally, the study explored the relationship between social media and brand promotion—its contributions, capabilities, and challenges—using a case study of Jumia Uganda, Glovo Uganda, and Kikuubo Online. A qualitative approach based on hermeneutic tradition was adopted, using semi-structured interviews with purposively selected key informants. Key informants were selected based on the following criteria: Inclusion (professionals directly involved in social media management and brand promotion but excluding staff not involved in branding or marketing). The Honeycomb theory of communication was used to explain how social media is used to promote brands using the seven building blocks. A thematic data analysis technique was used to find important themes that emerged from the coded data. These themes were then analyzed to draw findings. Through the interviews with the selected key informants and with insight from the reviewed literature guided by the theory, the study was then able to present its findings on the contribution of social media on brand promotion among the selected top delivery companies in Uganda. The significance of this study was to explain the multifaceted impact of social media on brand promotion, encompassing its contributions, competencies, and potential challenges encountered by businesses while employing social media strategies for brand enhancement. Key findings revealed that social media plays a crucial role in increasing brand visibility, enhancing customer interaction, and building brand identity. The findings also highlighted the importance of developing social media competencies, creating engaging content, and effectively managing challenges such as algorithm changes and negative feedback.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter presented the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study, justification and theoretical framework.

1.1 Background to the study

Today, social media is considered a powerful tool in people's lives and an engine used daily in various social, political, and economic aspects of people's lives (Tsimonis, *et al.*, 2014; Erdoğan, *et al.*, 2012 & Laroche, *et al.*, 2013). On social media, information is searched, shared, and stored by different people and organizations daily (Hinton & Hjorth, 2013). Kaplan and Haenlin (2010) also claim that social media has evolved from being a mere tool for sharing people's private lives, feelings, events, or news to a vital tool for companies that want to generate economic benefits through innovative communications, interactions and engagement with people of different social classes as well as other companies.

This growing influence of social media in the business arena has been attributed to easy accessibility through the Internet (Cawsey & Rowley, 2016; Scolere, Pruchniewska & Duffy, 2018). As a result of this influence, Töllinen and Karjaluoto (2011) as well as Castronovo and Huang (2012) argue that social media has changed the field of marketing communications. Their argument is further cemented by Csordás, Markos-Kujbus, and Gáti (2014) who note that the field has shifted from the traditional one-way communication to two-way, peer-to-peer, and multi-way communication. In this context, a multi-dimensional brand communication environment has been created in the marketing industry (Berthon *et al.*, 2008). Thus, it is believed that the rapid development of social media assisted by the availability of digital communication technologies and their popularity across space as well as their accessibility to

both individuals and companies has aroused scholarly debates on the role of social media on brand promotion (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015).

This indicates that creating and enhancing brand awareness and promotion is one of the main opportunities that social media provides to companies (Bruhan, Schoenmueller & Schäfer, 2012; Nisar & Whitehead, 2016). Social media now plays an important role in modern marketing, and its ability to create and promote strong brand visibility is said to generate a competitive advantage for companies that have embraced this social platform on the market (Vukasovic, 2013). In the long-run, strong brand visibility is said to result in people embracing the companies leading to reputation and credibility growth (Latif, et al., 2014). For this reason, Martin, Swayne, and Dodds (2011) acknowledge that the primary focus of every business enterprise is to make profits, which can be accomplished through increasing sales. Having a brand that stands out can be achieved through comprehensive brand promotion strategies results in a higher organizational reputation and credibility (Bruhn *et al.*, 2012). This factor helps the company to position itself among potential customers (Nikolinakou & Phua, 2020). In today's digital environment, scholars have documented that a company that has lagged in embracing social media risks its brand being overtaken by competitors (Blazeska & Ristovska, 2019; Cesaroni & Consoli, 2015; Praganas, Anagnostopoulos, & Chadwick, 2017; Can & Cetin, 2017; Clerk & Black, 2017).

With such strong attributes rendered to social media by scholars and marketing communication researchers (Blazeska & Ristovska, 2019; Cesaroni & Consoli, 2015; Praganas, Anagnostopoulos, & Chadwick, 2017; Can & Cetin, 2017; Clerk & Black, 2017), it has become a common reality that using the platform to create and promote a strong brand presence is the sure path for a successful company. (Fatima, Alqahtani, Naim, & Alma'alwi, 2022; Rimadiaz, Alvionita, & Amelia, 2021).

According to (Ansari, Ansari, Ghori, & Kazi, 2019; Monica, & BalaĀŸ, 2014; Scolere,

Pruchniewska, & Duffy, 2018; Mangold, & Faulds, 2009; Helal, Ozuem, & Lancaster, 2018), from the studies conducted on social media and brand promotion, few scholarly materials have specifically discussed the aspect of social media and brand promotion regarding its contributions, capabilities, and challenges in top delivery companies in Uganda and therefore, this study sets out to fill that gap.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The world has undergone strategic development witnessed by the advancement of new communication avenues and has led to greater, more inclusive, persuasive, and participative ways of information exchange. (Wise, & Shorter, 2014; Lee, Son, & Kim, 2016; Biały, 2017; Helal, Ozuem, & Lancaster, 2018; Chen, & Wei, 2020). This new phenomenon in the communication and marketing communication industry has coerced companies to adapt by changing, designing, and implementing marketing communication strategies that could position the brand in the consumers' minds. (Tsimonis, & Dimitriadis, 2014; McCarthy, Rowley, Jane Ashworth, & Pioch, 2014; Dubbelink, Herrando, & Constantinides, 2021).

Based on this widely taken conception, specialists such as the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science of the Government of Australia Report (2018) remarked that to effectively harness its advantages, companies should first understand the pros and cons of social media, such as its ability to reduce marketing costs, increasing traffic and improvement of ranking on search engines. On the other hand, the failure to have clear marketing or social media strategy, its immediacy and need for daily monitoring among others as cons. (DIPIISGAR, 2018). This implies that brand management is a key marketing strategy which if well managed, brings high marketing performance to a company through resilience against competitors, sales growth, market share gains, and profit growth (Kotler & Armstrong, 1996).

The same scholar suggests that delivery companies have over the years made tremendous efforts to improve brand awareness through increased advertising, spending, online

marketing on website, and social media platforms. Top delivery companies in Uganda like Jumia, Glovo, and Kikubo online among others posted their strongest online brand presence in the 2019. In spite of all the above efforts, some of the companies have experienced decline in sales, and profits, leading some to close operations. For example, the Uchumi shopping store despite its online presence closed, and recently, Jumia announced that it would be closing fast foods delivery operations despite its prominent online presence. This trend is happening despite Ehrenberg (1993) assertion that market share is the best measure of a firm's brand presence.

Should this course of events continue, without any intervention, top delivery companies stand to lose their brand dominance as competitors will overtake them, and their brand presence in the market will come under threat. Despite the growing popularity of social media in business marketing, its specific contribution to brand promotion among Uganda's delivery companies remains under explored. While companies like Jumia, Glovo, and Kikubo Online have invested heavily in online marketing and advertising through social media platforms, questions persist about the effectiveness of these efforts in enhancing brand visibility and loyalty.

Although prior research has addressed brand promotion and social media in general, there is limited academic work focused specifically on delivery companies in Uganda. This study addresses that gap by exploring how social media contributes to brand promotion, the competencies needed to run effective campaigns, and the challenges these companies encounter. The findings are particularly relevant at a time when some delivery companies face operational setbacks despite a strong social media presence—raising critical questions about the effectiveness of their online brand strategies.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the contribution that social media has on brand promotion among selected top delivery companies in Uganda. It aimed to explore the extent to which social media tools and strategies are being used to enhance brand visibility,

engagement, and loyalty, and to identify the competencies and challenges associated with these efforts.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the role of social media in promoting the brand of selected top delivery companies in Uganda.
2. To examine the competencies that top delivery companies need to run successful social media brand promotional campaigns.
3. To examine the challenges of using social media in brand promotion

1.5 Research Questions

1. What is the role of social media in promoting the brand of selected top delivery companies?
2. How do social media competencies contribute to the effectiveness of brand promotional campaigns?
3. What are the challenges that the selected top delivery companies face in using social media for brand promotion?

1.6 Scope of the Study

As per the geographical scope, the study was conducted in selected top delivery companies in Kampala, Uganda and for the time scope, the study was conducted in a space of six months after the validation of the proposal. Finally, for the content scope, the study was to establish the impact of social media on brand promotion in top delivery companies in Uganda. The subject scope was social media (Independent factor) and brand promotion (dependent factor).

1.7 Justification of the Study

While social media is widely recognized as a powerful tool for brand promotion, there

is limited empirical evidence focusing specifically on delivery companies in Uganda. This study fills that gap by providing insights into how these companies use social media, the competencies required to run effective campaigns, and the challenges encountered. The findings contribute to both academic knowledge and practical strategies for companies seeking to optimize their social media branding efforts.

1.8 Significance of the Study

This study was important to explain the multifaceted impact of social media on brand promotion, encompassing its contributions, competences and potential challenges encountered by businesses when employing social media strategies for brand enhancement. The findings will serve as a valuable resource for enterprises, furnishing them with actionable insights to strategically harness the potential of social media in the service of brand promotion.

Chapter Two

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.0 Overview of the Chapter

This chapter of the study presented literature about from different sources such as journals, project reports, the internet, newspapers among others. The review will follow the study's objectives that is to say;

2.1 Social Media Marketing Communication

Social media is understood as web-based services that allow individuals, communities, organizations, and companies to collaborate, connect, and engage through the use of user-generated content that is accessible to all the parties involved (Sloan & Quan-Haase, 2017; Castronovo, & Huang, 2012). The platform enables parties to create, co-create, modify, share, and engage with user-generated content that is distributed via many social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Email, among others (Kane, Alavi, Labianca, & Borgatti, 2014; Voorveld, Van Noort, Muntinga, & Bronner, 2018). Additionally, this content can be distributed in several formats such as blogs, discussions, concept notes, images, text, films, and audio among others (Kane, Alavi, Labianca, & Borgatti, 2014).

Social media networks have emerged as the most influential and dependable marketing communication platforms in the 21st Century (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). On these platforms, interactions between companies, communities, and individuals are facilitated (Leimeister, Sidiras, & Krcmar, 2006). The advent of social media has offered companies, individuals, and communities an alternative path to build and maintain social networks, create relationships, share information, create and edit content, and participate in social movements through social platforms ((Lorenzo-Romero, Constantinides, & Alarcóndel-Amo, 2011). According to Ryan and Jones (2009), interactions between members on social media can take the form of text,

images, audio, video, and any other type of communication format. Meanwhile, Fuchs (2008) acknowledges that virtual communities on social media enjoy the advantage of continuous voluntary interaction on shared interests, and topics in a manner that incorporates formal and informal conventions, global dimensions, and speed which enables relationships to grow quickly (Fuchs, 2008:239-240).

Today, social media is considered the most important communication platform for both individuals and companies because it helps maintain existing social ties, encourages the formation of new friendships among users (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Nielsen, & Schröder, 2014; Patino, Pitta, D, & Quinones, 2012). It is believed that these platforms have overtaken traditional marketing communication platforms as the most interactive medium that allows the development of direct and personalized communication between the company, existing clients, and prospects with geographical limitations (Musa, Rahim, Azmi, Shibghatullah, & Othman, 2016; Xu, 2020). In the same arena, social media networks are credited for their ability to make possible different types of interactions between a company and customers through advertising and information presales, order configuration, purchases, and after-sales services to mention (Kim & Ko, 2012). Communication between companies and their customers, has become bi-directional and businesses can take advantage of these social marketing tools to build relationships with their clients in a more direct, effective, and controllable way hence resulting in brand promotion (Sashi, 2012).

2.2 Social Media Usage in Marketing Communications

Upon realizing the growing importance and popularity of social media among customers, companies have adopted them in their marketing and communication strategies (Harris & Rae, 2009). The rapid adoption of social media by business entities and conglomerates has been attributed to the platform's low-cost advantage and popularity (Christodoulides, 2009). Thus, companies are using these platforms to build brands, increase

awareness, and measure their reputation and customer relationships (Christodoulides & Michaelidou, 2010). In addition, Jansen, Zhang, Sobel & Chowdury, (2009) agree that social media is a perfect tool for brand management and promotion, although Jansen, Zhang, Sobel & Chowdury, (2009) in another study also comment that there are different ways to use social media in the business environment such as obtaining data from user's natural behavior and activity which allows companies to explore individual consumer behavior patterns like requests, follows, likes, preferences to mention (Hogan, 2008). In this way, companies have the chance to approach customers quickly and directly at a relatively low cost with greater efficiency than traditional marketing communication tools (Hogan, 2008).

It is therefore important to note that in the social media environment of user-generated content, businesses are finding it easy to share and promote their brands, the quality of their products, location (Hennig-Thurau, Malthouse, Friege, Gensler, Lobschat, Rangaswamy, & Skiera, 2010). Accordingly, Harris and Rae (2009) contend that there is no doubt that social media plays a key role in marketing and brand promotion confirming Lindgreen, Palmer, and Vanhamme's (2004) a ground-breaking study which anticipated that electronic and interactive marketing as well as network marketing will dictate developments in in the marketing and communications industry for many years to come. However, Otto and Simon (2008) warn that not everything related to social media is positive because issues of brand privacy and data security remain pertinent suggesting that social networks require structural controls to increase their attractiveness, credibility, and content value. Despite the negative side of social media, Öztamur and Karakadılar (2014) clarify that their importance in online marketing and brand promotion remains cardinal to new and existing brands. They further assert that companies have to be present where the customer is and carry out their brand promotion activities (Öztamur and Karakadılar, 2014). In this context, social media brand promotion activities represent a dramatic, but beneficial change when it comes to searching for and purchasing

goods and services regardless of where the company is located, customers still make decisions on their terms, relying on trusted networks to form opinions on a brand (Paquette, 2013).

Therefore, Katona et al., (2011) state that companies must have a professional presence on mainstream social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and X whose main objective is not to sell products and services, but to provide brand exposure to the public, creating a community of users with an emotional link to the brand ((Iankova, Davies, Archer-Brown, Marder, & Yau, 2019). In the same way, Lorenzo-Romero *et al.*, (2011) contend that the main goal of social media for companies' brand promotion activities is to convert strangers into loyal friends, friends into customers, and customers into brand evangelists. For this reason, social media has become an excellent brand promotion tool for business because Katona et al., (2011) mentions that creating an account on social media requires no investment, though businesses can still find paid advertising within social media platforms if they wish to.

2.3 Brand

A brand refers to a name, term, sign, symbol, design, or a combination of all incorporated to identify the maker or seller of a product or service (Keller & Kotler, 2005:549). This definition by Keller and Kotler (2005) implies that a name, sign, or symbol is used to represent a business product or service from competitors of the company as it incorporates the intangible and tangible values that are a source of reputation in the market (Keller and Kotler, 2005). Furthermore, Keller and Kotler (2005) explain that a brand is different from a service or product because products and services can be anything that the company gives to their customers and these can change according to the demand, time, and market trends are of use to customers who obtain satisfaction from them. In this context, Doyle and Stern (2016) affirm that brands have a different value from the business and a different value from the product. However, they emphasize that branding is necessary from a customer's perspective as it helps them to have a basis on which to make decisions as they make considerations.

2.4 Brand Promotion

In marketing communications, brand promotion refers to the strength with which the brand is communicated to the consumers (Pappu, Quester, & Cooksey, 2005). It occurs when there is an association between the brand and the type of product the customer is made aware of its presence to make them recognize and associate with the brand as members of a certain product category (Hakala, Svensson & Vincze, 2012). With this in place, brand promotion simply means all efforts made to make people aware of the brand and have the memory of the product to make it dominant in the market (Aaker, 1992).

Although many marketing practitioners do not consider this as brand promotion, Aaker (1992) contends that many companies already see this dimension as important in brand promotion. It is also important to note that brand promotion has been studied extensively by many authors who recognize that the more your brand is communicated, the more the intended audience will know it and the more they will draw closer to it (Rossiter, 2014; Gustafson, & Chabot, 2007).

Although a plethora of literature exists on social media and brand promotion among companies, business enterprises, and conglomerates, (Pappu, Quester, & Cooksey, 2005; Hakala, Svensson & Vincze, 2012; Aaker, 1992; Rossiter, 2014; Gustafson, & Chabot, 2007), very little literature exists specifically on social media and brand promotion in top delivery companies. This study will strive to bridge that gap.

2.5 Summary of Literature

This section has covered literature on social media marketing communications noting that the platforms play an important role in enabling communities, individuals, and companies to collaborate, connect and engage through the use of user-generated content that is accessible to all parties involved (Sloan & Quan-Haase, 2017; Castronovo, & Huang, 2012; Kane, Alavi,

Labianca, & Borgatti, 2014; Voorveld, Van Noort, Muntinga, & Bronner, 2018; Kane, Alavi, Labianca, & Borgatti, 2014; Voorveld, Van Noort, Muntinga, & Bronner, 2018). From the literature, it has also been observed that social media networks have emerged as the most influential and dependable marketing communication tools in the 21st Century (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010) because they offer interactions between companies, customers, and potential customers (Lorenzo-Romero., Constantinides., & Alarcóndel-Amo, 2011; Ryan & Jones, 2009; Fuchs, 2008). It has also been revealed that today, social media is considered the most important platform for businesses because it helps maintain existing business and social ties and encourages the formation of ones (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Nielsen, & Schröder, 2014; Patino, Pitta, D, & Quinones, 2012; Musa, Rahim, Azmi, Shibghatullah, & Othman, 2016; Xu, 2020; Kim & Ko, 2012; Sashi, 2012).

The study also reviewed the literature on social media usage in marketing communications and found out that upon realizing its importance, companies have adopted social media to communicate and promote their brands (Christodoulides, 2009; Jansen, Zhang, Sobel & Chowdury, 2009; Hogan, 2008; Harris & Rae, 2009; Vanhamme, 2004). Literature on brands found that a brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, design, or a combination of all incorporated to identify the maker or seller of a product or service Keller and Kotler, 2005; Doyle & Stern, 2016), while the literature on brand promotion found out that brand promotion refers to the strength with which the brand is communicated to the consumers to make them aware (Hakala, Svensson & Vincze, 2012; Pappu, Quester, & Cooksey, 2005; Rossiter, 2014; Gustafson, & Chabot, 2007; Aaker, 1992).

From the above literature, the study observed that scholarly materials and academic research specifically dedicated to social media and brand promotion among top delivery companies are minimal if not lacking. The study therefore sought to examine the contribution of social media on brand promotion among top delivery companies in Uganda and as well

fill the gap by making recommendations to improve companies' online brand awareness efforts.

2.6. Theoretical Framework

This study was grounded in the honeycomb model/theory of communication, developed by Kietzmann, Hermakens, McCarthy, and Silvestre (2011). The honeycomb model/theory of communication identifies seven functional building blocks of social media marketing and branding (Kietzmann, 2011). These blocks include; identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation, and groups (Kietzmann et al., 2011). According to Keller (2013), these building blocks help researchers, and social media strategists understand how social media use and functionalities are used, and manipulated in order to build a strong product/service brand.

Guided by the understanding of the seven blocks, Kietzmann (2011) asserts that, identity in social media brand building and promotion is the extent to which individuals or organizations make their identity public by disclosing personal or corporate information such as name, age, gender, profession, and location in a social media setting. It is on this basis that Keller (2013) notes that brand identity/promotion on social media is all about the impact that identity may or will have on brand awareness. In this sense, Machado et al., (2016) articulate that, companies and individuals establish their brand identities by answering the question as to who their brands are. Additionally, Kietzmann et al., (2011), and Kietzmann (2011) admit that conversation is the extent to which consumers communicate with one another via social media, and in this context, Trainini and Torres (2015) note that the main purpose of most social media platforms is to facilitate conversations among individuals, and interest groups. Thus, customers use tweets, blogs, status updates to share information, and make contact with new like-minded people, build self-esteem, or establish one's self as an influencer (Kietzmann, 2011). Similarly, Kudeshia, Sikdar, and Mittal (2015) agree that, other people engage in conversations on social media as a way of making information heard, and making an impact on subjects ranging from

humanitarian causes, to discussions on politics, business among others. In relation to the current study, organizations use social media to make customers aware about their brand (Kietzmann, 2011).

The third building block, that sharing is the extent to which individual's exchange, distribute, and receive information via social media (Babac, 2011). According to Laroche (2013), consumers follow brands or join brand communities on social media in order to fulfill their needs of being identified with groups, as well as symbols they think are desirable, or which they wish to associate with. In their discussion, Mangold and Faulds (2009) assert that consumers are more interested in connecting with others that share the same interests and desires, and this is the reason they join brand communities that share similar interests, and values.

It is from this understanding that, Baird, and Parasnis (2011) acknowledge that consumers use social media platforms to interact with brands, and that are driven by the desire to feel that the company is trustworthy, and they are getting honest information. This belief is based on Soufiyan et al., (2016) understanding that the loyalty of online consumers is based on transparency and that companies that do not present themselves as transparent are considered as manipulative, and counterfeit. Thus, Augere-Granier (2016), implores that customers talk more about the company and its products when they feel that the information they have is genuine.

Based on this block, brand promotion in Uganda via social media requires top delivery companies like Jumia, Glovo, Kikuubo Online, among others to give honest and sufficient information about products, and services. This is because Kietzmann et al., (2011) advises that the sharing block of the honey comb theory has two implications for companies that promote their brands via social media. The first implication is that companies need to understand what objects of sociality their users have in common, or to identify new objects that can mediate shared interests (Kietzmann et al., 2011: 244). The second implication that companies need to

evaluate the degree to which the object can or should be shared (Kietzmann et al., 2011: 245).

The presence block of the honeycomb theory of communications documents that the ability of one user to know the presence of others is important when promoting brands on social media (Kietzmann et al., 2011). In this context, Kietzmann (2011) notes that the presence dimension in brand promotion includes information about where each user/individual is in the virtual community, or in the real world. For example, Kietzmann (2011) says that in the virtual world peers can know where others are through status lines available or hidden, and that on Facebook, users click on chat buttons to indicate if they online, and available, or do not wish to connect with other users (Kietzmann, 2011: 245). Similarly, Cheung and Leung (2016), and Kietzmann (2011) assert that the presence dimension acts as a bridge that connects the virtual and the real realities. It is in this context that, Ramsaran-Fowdar, and Fowdar (2013) claim that organizations should by all means know that a greater social media presence is likely to attract more attention from their target customers, thus increasing brand loyalty. The implication of this block on the current study is that top delivery companies in Uganda should always pay attention to the importance of user availability, and user location (Kietzmann, 2011). It is on this note that Kietzmann et al., (2011) further clarify that to effectively promote brands via social media, firms should endeavor to investigate if users have the desire for selective presence, where one can be visible to some people, while staying hidden to others (Kietzmann, 2011: 246). This block is closely tied to the conversations and relationships block in the honeycomb theory so top delivery companies in Uganda ought to realize that social media presence is influenced by the intimacy and immediacy of the relationship, and that a greater social presence is likely to make conversations more influential leading to brand amplification.

The relationship amplifies that understanding that people are connected on social media platforms (Machado et al., 2016). As put by Hollenbeck, and Kaikati (2012), Buil, and Chernatony (2012) in social networking sites, consumers use brands in order to create a self-

identity, and that when they like a brand via any social media site, they create an impression on others (Shu & Chuang, 2011), thus improving their involvement and desire for the brand (Schau & Gilly, 2003). This means that social media uses can identify their family members, and make notes of mutual friends between users, and this relationship with each other on social media means a form of connection that enables them converse, share objects of sociality, meet up, or list each other as a friend or fan (Kietzmann, 2011:246). Thus, if top delivery companies in Uganda are to promote their brands, they should always engage with their fans or friends and build relationship.

This is because Hudson et al., (2016) advises that, when a company interacts with its fans/friends/customers by replying to comments, solving problems, and inviting them to participate, they feel a higher level of relationship quality which in the long run creates a feeling of connection with the brand.

The reputation building block of the honeycomb theory of communication relates to the ability of users to identify the standing of others, including themselves within social media platforms (Kietzmann et al., 2011; Kietzmann, 2011). For example, Kietzmann (2011: 247) asserts that users of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp among others like certain content, and are compelled to comment on it. According to Kudeshia, Skidar, and Mittal (2015), online reputation is an important element for the success of a brand because online presence allows companies to understand their customer's feelings about the brand and as well avails the opportunity to avoid any negative thoughts (Kudeshia, Skidar & Mittal, 2015:15- 16).

Based on the above understanding, Kietzmann et al., (2011) point out that reputation management is important for online community marketers and brand promoters. According to Baxi, Panda, and Karani (2016), any negative comment about the company social media platforms paints a negative picture to their audience. It is from this background that Mazman, and Usluel (2010) comment that restricting negative impact and giving quick responses to every

negative comment are required. The current study thus understands that, to promote their brands, top delivery companies in Uganda should build their reputation.

The last block in the honeycomb theory of communication is the groups, which Parsons (2013) describes as the capacity of users to form virtual communities and sub-communities. According to Kietzmann (2011:247), when social media users like the same brand, they form a community and start sharing information about the brand. For example, Vargo, and Lusch (2008) add that Facebook users can form communities by organizing their friends into different groups through which they discuss, and share information about the brand. According to Machado et al., (2016), and Daugherty, Eastin, and Bright (2008) social interactions are very important for the creation of user-generated content, and it is through this content that consumers connect with each other, experience a sense of community, and feel important.

Thus, by interacting with a brand through social media platforms, consumers feel an interpersonal interaction, and an intimacy feeling (Hudson et al., 2016). In this sense, the fan/customer pages of top delivery companies depend on engagement with the brands.

2.6.1 Application of the Theory

Top delivery companies in Uganda such as Jumia, Kikuubo Online, Glovo and Mobile Shop Uganda among others are service and product providers whose interactions with customers and potential customers is done online. Among their clients are young people and elite adults looking for quick foods (Alento, 2019) in order to promote their brands online, they need to employ the elements of honeycomb theory of communication to effectively engage their target audience. This theory was relevant because it helped the study to investigate whether top delivery companies in Uganda are efficiently and effectively harnessing the power of online identity, online conversations, online sharing, online presence, online relationship, and online reputation. Additionally, it helped online groups to amplify their unique proposition and brand visibility as advised by Kietzmann et al., (2011) and to promote their brands via social media.

The theory also helped the study to identify the contributions, capabilities, and challenges of these components in enhancing brand promotion via social media.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1 Chapter Overview

This section presented the appropriate methods that the study used. It presented the sampling techniques, source of data, data collection method, reliability, and validity as well as limitations

3.2 Research Design

Kumar (2014) asserts that a research design is required to determine the answers to the research questions or problem and a one-shot research design is that in which a single group is observed. This is the design that the study took. Marketing communication researchers were called upon to be knowledgeable about philosophical undertakings (Duberley, Johnson, Cassell, 2012). The authors further argue that deterring the research design has a significant impact on the actions and understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. According to Duberley, Johnson, and Cassell (2012), on account of the non-physical nature of the topic under investigation which relates to social media and brand promotion, contributions, capabilities, and challenges, this study is closely related to the ontological idealism as compared to ontological materialism. For this reason, the research took on interpretivism which is a sociological method in which an action or event is based on the beliefs, norms, and values of the culture of the society where it takes place.

3.3 Research Paradigm

This research explored the contribution of social media to brand promotion among top delivery companies in Uganda. Grounded in ontological idealism, the study adopted an interpretivist perspective, emphasizing the socially constructed nature of brand promotion and the importance of understanding context (Duberley, Johnson, & Cassell, 2012). A qualitative approach was employed, recognizing the complexities of social media's influence and the subjective experiences of marketing professionals (Gillan & Pickerill, 2012). A hermeneutic lens was used to interpret the meaning and context of social media's role (Atkins, 1998).

The research utilized a one-shot case study design (Kumar, 2014), focusing on specific companies at a single point in time. An inductive strategy guided the research, moving from interview data to broader themes. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were the primary data collection method, chosen for their ability to elicit rich, descriptive information (Sankar & Jones, 2007). Purposive sampling was used to select knowledgeable participants (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

Through Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework, data analysis followed involving transcription, coding, and theme development. This systematic approach ensured a rigorous analysis of the interview data. Ethical considerations were paramount, with informed consent, confidentiality, and data security prioritized. Necessary institutional approvals were obtained.

3.4 Research Approach

The study adopted a qualitative approach. The aim of the study was not to find the right or wrong answers because there are no right or wrong answers in social research (Gillan, & Pickerill, 2012). The study additionally took the hermeneutic approach which is an approach closely linked to the qualitative approach. (A hermeneutic approach is research that deals with intangible things such as social

media) since its purpose was to examine the contribution that social media has on brand promotion among top delivery companies in Uganda. This is because Gillan & Pickerill (2012) note that the hermeneutic approach is most appropriate for studies that focus on understanding the context of ideas thoroughly in actions of groups such as businesses. In other terms, this approach is based on the meaning of human beliefs and actions and the results of them (Atkins, 1998), a concept that is related to this research topic. Through a qualitative approach, the views explained why top delivery companies either made or didn't make use of social media for brand promotion and how it has worked or not worked for them.

3.5 Research Strategy

As stated by Andrews and Bourcier (2000), three unique strategies would be adopted to achieve the intended purpose of the study. These include the deductive approach where research goes from the general law to a specific case to test the developed theories, the inductive approach which proceeds from facts toward theory, and lastly, the adductive approach which strives for a suitable hypothesis to be matched against a phenomenon. For this study, the inductive approach was chosen to achieve the intended goal by testing the developed theory to obtain conclusions.

3.6 Research Method

This study used a qualitative research method, relying on in-depth, semi-structured interviews to collect rich, descriptive data. This approach was chosen to explore the lived experiences, perspectives, and insights of marketing professionals in the selected top delivery companies in Uganda.

The focus was not on testing variables or hypotheses, but on understanding how social media contributes to brand promotion, the competencies involved, and the challenges

experienced(Amaratunga, Baldry, Sarshar, & Newton, 2002). The qualitative method aligned with the hermeneutic approach, enabling the researcher to interpret meaning within the social and organizational contexts of the respondents (Kinsella, 2006).

3.7 Target Population

The target population for this study was selected personalities working in key positions concerned with marketing communications, branding, and advertisement among others in the selected top delivery companies in Uganda.

3.7.1 Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted before the main data collection phase. It involved three participants from delivery companies not included in the main sample but operating in similar sectors. The goal was to assess the clarity and relevance of the interview guide, test the flow of questions, and identify any ambiguities or gaps. Findings from the pilot study helped refine the questions and improve the overall structure of the interview guide, ensuring that the final tool would elicit clear and meaningful responses from key informants in the selected top delivery companies.

3.8 Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants for this study. According to Etikan, Musa & Alkassim (2016). The purposive sampling technique is an ideal method for qualitative studies. The authors further contend that the method helps to select participants who have the necessary and much-needed information to address the research problem. Since this study sought answers on the contribution of social media on brand promotion among top delivery companies in Uganda, purposive sampling was suitable to select the participants for this study.

3.9 Data Collection Procedure

The primary source of data for this study was the views and responses obtained from the purposively selected participants. Thus, in-depth interviews were adopted to gather data for this study. Semi-structured interviews were used as Sankar and Jones (2007) emphasize that the advantages of semi-structured interviews are many especially when conducting qualitative research. The responses were recorded to aid the process of transcription in the data analysis phase. The data was collected from purposively selected participants. In-depth interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide. These interviews allowed for flexibility while maintaining a consistent structure. An interview guide ensured that all participants were asked about the same key topics, but allowed for follow-up questions and exploration of individual responses. Interviews were audio-recorded to facilitate accurate transcription for subsequent analysis.

Some of the sample questions asked were: "Do you as a company have a social media policy for branding and what measures have you put in place to utilize social media to enhance your brand?" This example illustrates the type of open-ended questions used in the interview guide to gather in-depth information from participants. Purposive sampling helped the study to obtain rich and meaningful data.

3.9.1 Data Collection Tool

A semi-structured interview guide was used to gather data from the selected respondents. According to Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson, and Kangasniemi (2016), an interview guide is a document that enables the researcher to structure the way interviews will be conducted. It was helpful to know what was asked about to ensure that all the respondents were asked the same questions. Since Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson, and Kangasniemi (2016) further contend that it is a better tool for qualitative research the study used an interview guide to conduct interviews and gather the necessary needed to address the research questions. Questions were asked and the participants' answers were recorded to aid the transcription

process in the data analysis stage.

Data saturation was achieved after ten interviews. At this point, no new themes, patterns, or insights emerged from subsequent interviews, indicating that additional data collection would not yield significant new information. This approach to saturation is consistent with Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006), who suggest that in qualitative research, saturation often occurs within the first 6 to 12 interviews, particularly when participants share similar roles or expertise, as was the case in this study.

3.10 Data Analysis

As put by Eliot, Hulme, Lewin, and Lowden (2011), data analysis is the most important part of the research process. To avoid falling short of the needed evidence, this qualitative study was adopted and a thematic data analysis method was proposed by Braun and Clarke, (2006). Thematic analysis was the most suitable to use in this study considering that it is a common technique used by qualitative researchers in studies where interviews are used as primary data collection tools (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Using this method, recorded responses were transcribed by first listening and re-listening to capture the responses. Thereafter, transcriptions were written on paper verbatim (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Afterward, common words were located to clarify the similarities and differences in empirical data. Once the most important themes are identified, the study used the theory to finish the analysis and come up with conclusions.

Lastly, the study read from the interviews to find codes to develop different themes from the responses (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The themes were then used to create a heading that covered the codes and themes as a whole to ease interpretation by the reader. These headings were used in the analysis chapter to help the reader understand (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is the thematic analysis procedure the study undertook as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). The study started with thorough familiarization with the data and all recorded

interviews were transcribed verbatim. This meticulous process involved multiple listening's to ensure an accurate capture of participant responses, including nuances of speech and emotion. The transcribed data was meticulously examined to identify significant features, patterns, and concepts. This involved identifying keywords, phrases, and sentences that reflected participants' experiences, beliefs, and perspectives.

The identified codes were then reviewed and grouped into potential themes. Themes were developed by identifying commonalities and patterns across the data. This process involved continuous refinement and adjustment as new insights emerged. The identified themes were carefully reviewed to ensure their accuracy and relevance to the data. Thereafter, from the themes, sub-themes were identified and with these details, the findings were presented in a clear, concise, and organized manner.

3.9.1 Ethical Considerations

All ethical considerations were adhered to in this study. First and foremost, authorization was sought from Uganda Christian University because this study required clearance from the institution. Permission was also sought from the managers of the selected top delivery companies before data collection. The study ensured that the privacy of the participants was prioritized respondents would take part voluntarily and a window to withdraw from participation if they felt uncomfortable would be given. Furthermore, informed consent was obtained for both the pilot study and the main data collection process, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

3.9.2 Validity.

Validity is the extent to which a research instrument can measure what it is intended to measure (O'Leary, 2009). He also states that validity is based on the assumption that what is being studied can be measured and captured. Furthermore, validity is also viewed as truthfulness and is a measure of how well a conceptualized idea about reality matches the

actual reality (Bolarinwa, 2015). Based on the above understanding, the study used content validity to make sure that the instrument deliberated the required phenomenon (Sangoseni, Hellman & Hill, 2013). The same scholars said that for an instrument to achieve content validity, it had to undergo a rational analysis by experts who were familiar with the academic scope of the study. The study sought counsel from the supervisor, and academic experts to ascertain that the concepts present in the research instrument were justified with evidence from literature.

Additionally, the study undertook a comprehensive literature review to identify relevant content areas and ensure that, the research instrument's items revolve around the research questions. Face validity was also used as a measure of the study validity. According to Bolarinwa (2015), face validity is a judgment made based on a scientific approach on whether the indication used to measure the required research problem is equal to the task. To achieve this, the study presented the research instrument to the supervisor, and various stakeholders in the social media, and the organizational branding industry to assess whether the items in the research instrument are relevant to measure the study items. The supervisor and key stakeholders evaluated the instrument in terms of readability, clarity of language, and consistency of style, as well as format. They also helped to confirm whether the items in the research instrument were right or wrong, and if any anomaly was detected, changes were made to suit the required standard.

Lastly, the data collection instrument would be put to a pilot test. According to Kothari (2004), and Breimann (2015), a pilot test is the replica and rehearsal of the main study, and it brings to light the weakness of the interview guide and the sampling technique. Furthermore, Gall, and Borg (1996) point out that the number of participants for a pilot study should be between 9%-10% of the sample population. A total of three top delivery companies with similar characteristics and modes of operation to those that would participate in the study.

They would be used since the sample population would have three companies selected purposively. The pilot test data was analyzed, and results were used to modify and improve the interview guide before rolling it out to the entire sample population for the actual study.

3.9.3 Reliability

According to Juan, and Ong'ondo (2011:141), reliability is the extent to which a researcher provides adequate detail, and clarity of the research's entire process in a way that makes it feasible for a reader to visualize, and appreciate, and for a researcher to replicate the study if necessary. Reliability is about testing the results making it the most important test in qualitative research is testing the quality in generating understanding. As emphasized by Lincoln, and Guba (1985), dependability in qualitative research corresponds to the notion of reliability in quantitative research. However, Yin (2003) gives reasons for reliability in the case study: "to be sure that if later, another investigator followed the same procedures as described by an earlier investigator, the later investigator should arrive at the same findings and conclusions".

Therefore, the goal of reliability in research is to minimize the errors, and biases in a study. To ensure dependability in a case study, clear, and detailed descriptions of the steps followed will be indicated as prescribed by Yin (2003).

To achieve credible and defensible results, the study would use triangulation. According to Creswell, and Miller (2000), triangulation is a procedure where the researcher searches for convergence among multiple sources of information to form themes or categories of data in a study. A semi-structured interview guide, observations of natural occurrences during the interviews, and recorded interviews will be used for data collection. This enabled the study to seek a deeper understanding of the research phenomenon. Furthermore, the constructivist dimension of research views knowledge as socially constructed and that, knowledge changes depending on circumstances (Golafshani, 2003), a construct that leads to

diverse constructions of realities. This implies that the reality of the interviewees may be different thus indicating multiple or diverse constructions of reality. By triangulating data from different sources, the study would have made efforts to ensure reliability.

3.11 Limitations of the study.

A few key informant interviews were conducted with the purposively selected respondents. Therefore, the study obtained their views on the issue of social media and brand promotion. The study interviewed clients to see if they agreed with the views of key informants, the study would be more interesting and richer in content. This time factor and resources to conduct as many interviews as possible would limit the findings of this study to only the views of key informants. Additionally, this study specifically focused on top delivery companies thus, the findings did not have a concise answer as to which social media platform is better for a particular organization in their brand promotion effort.

The study suffered limitations in the transferability of findings. The setting, the companies, the respondents, and the social media tools used by different product and service delivery companies as well as the context and time in which the research was conducted may differ from other situations making it difficult to apply the findings of this study to other situations even when exposed to the same conditions. Recall bias was experienced in this study. Realistically, some respondents may not be able to recall information on previous social media branding campaigns they have conducted. Since only one data collection method was used, there was no chance for data triangulation.

Chapter Four

Data Analysis and Presentation of Results

4.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the findings from the thematic analysis and the emergent themes from the original research questions are presented in chapter five. The individual themes and sub-themes are presented and summarized with excerpts from the interviews provided to illustrate. To ensure anonymity, participants' names were not listed but instead assigned numbers. At the end of the analysis, 24 codes were created across the 10 transcripts. The results display different levels of themes, main themes, and sub-themes within them. Themes are defined as capturing "...something important about the data about the research questions, and they represent some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set." (Braun & Clarke, 2006:82). On the other hand, sub-themes are "...themes-within-the-themes." (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 92) which give structure to larger themes.

4.2 Overview of the Major Themes

Research question one sought to examine the role of social media in promoting the brand of top delivery companies in Uganda. Two themes emerged out of the analysis of the data related to the first research question which is social media as a marketing tool, and building brand identity. The sub-themes that emerged out of these main themes include: increasing brand visibility and enhancing customer interaction.

4.3 Theme 1-Social Media as a Marketing Tool (Research Question 1)

The use of social media was labeled and characterized by participants' experiences of interacting with their customers, potential customers, and prospects, including incidents of disseminating information about products and services, and how customers and prospects responded to such information throughout the entire product/service introduction, engagement, and acceptance, ordering and purchasing cycle. The theme also included views or feedback about the product/service from customers, as well as their experiences, tastes, and preferences.

This highlights the level of interaction top delivery companies in Uganda have with their customers and prospects and the level of exchange of information about goods and services they offer. The data for this theme is organized into one sub-theme, which is explained in more detail below.

4.3.1 Sub-theme 1-Increasing Brand Visibility

Several participants indicated that their companies had formal social media policies in place. These policies served as comprehensive frameworks for content creation, audience engagement, branding tone, and risk management. The core elements of these policies included: brand voice and messaging consistency, customer engagement protocols, crisis communication guidelines, employee advocacy and content-sharing rules as well as data security and confidentiality guidelines. These policies were cited as essential in maintaining a coherent brand identity across platforms and ensuring professionalism in digital communication. However, a few participants admitted that their companies lacked formalized policies, instead relying on informal or reactive approaches—highlighting a significant gap in social media governance.

Many of the participants gave examples of social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, X formerly Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok among others giving them a 24-hour opportunity to engage with customers and prospects by giving them information about the products, and services their companies offer. They also shared that social media helps them to invite customers into company marketing groups where information about the product such as quality, price, location, and delivery opportunities are discussed as well as customer feedback received and acted upon. Although this seemed to vary according to the company, there were common ways of ensuring customers knew what was taking place in the company, such as a new product being launched, discounts offered, and delivery services available to mention but a few. Participants mentioned that such opportunities offered by social media help them market

their products/services more efficiently and effectively.

“Our company has a social media policy/framework to ensure consistent branding, messaging, and tones across all our social media platforms, as well as to guide employee social media use preventing misinformation, and ensuring compliance by protecting the company’s reputation and maintaining professional online presence. This helps us to market our products, and maximize reach.”

(Participant 1 – Objective 1: Role of social media in brand promotion)

“Our social media policy on marketing and branding has the components that we take so seriously in our company’s social media marketing engagement. For example, the policy dictates that all social media marketing activities should align with company values, that the team should be respectful of our audience, maintain confidentiality of the company’s essential information, and must follow all social media marketing communication protocols as recommended.”

(Participant 2 – Objective 1: Role of social media in brand promotion)

“Our social media marketing policy outlines the guidelines for content creation, social media activity, disclosure of affiliation, standards for tone and language and encourages the use of employee advocacy to company branding and messaging, as well as marketing.”

(Participant 5 – Objective 1: Role of social media in brand promotion)

This portrayed that some companies had gone as far as putting in place a social media policy for consistent branding, messaging, and tone of messages across all social media platforms, as a measure to guide employees’ social media use, maintain a professional online presence, and streamline their marketing activities online.

4.3.2 Sub-theme two- Building Brand Identity

As far as research question one is concerned, the second sub-theme that emerged related to social media is building brand identity. Participants also reported that social media platforms had helped them build the brand identity of their companies, products, and services. They reported that through social media, they post information, and pictures of the products which help their customers, as well as prospects quickly identify their products/services from those of competitors, and also make their company names, and household names in the houses of their customers.

“Absolutely yes, social media has played a significant role in growing our company’s brand by allowing us to increase brand awareness, build customer relationships, drive

website traffic, improve customer insights, enhance brand reputation, and keep us competitive with industry trends.”

(Participant 2 – Objective 1: Role of social media in brand promotion)

Participants also mentioned that social media platforms support them by helping them overcome the barriers to engaging with their customers as one post reaches thousands through comments, re-tweets, sharing, and re-posting, a feat that was difficult to achieve using mainstream media platforms.

“Social media has broken all the barriers that once existed by offering us maximum reach to our target audiences through posts, re-tweets, comments, re-posting, and sharing of our marketing information by our friends, customers, well-wishers, and prospects. This has helped us maximize brand reach and visibility.”

(Participant 6 – Objective 1: Role of social media in brand promotion)

4.3.3 Sub-theme 2: Enhancing Customer Interaction

There was positive recognition of social media as an avenue for enhancing customer interaction. Participants noted that through social media platforms, companies can interact with customers daily, listen to their views, and get feedback in real-time

“Engagement metrics such as likes, comments, shares, and mentions give us a direct insight into how our audience interacts with our content. We have been experiencing high engagement rates which is an indicator that our content resonates well with your audience.”

(Participant 4- Objective 1: Role of social media in brand promotion)

4.4 Main Theme 2: Developing Social Media Competencies and Effective Social Media Management (Research Question 2)

Research question two explored the competencies that top delivery companies need to run successful social media promotional campaigns, and the themes that emerged out of this exploration were the need to develop social media competencies and effective social media management. Participants reported that effective social media promotional campaigns demand an able social media management team with the desired competencies to execute their duties. Participants also revealed that effective social management is a cornerstone of successful social media brand promotional campaigns.

“Yes, I lead a team of dedicated social media professionals who work together to

monitor and manage our brand's online presence. Our team consists of a content creator, a customer manager, a social media analyst, and brand ambassadors. This is because effective social media promotion campaigns demand an effective team with all the competencies needed to run promotional campaigns and social media management activities."

(Participant 7- Objective 2: Social media competencies and campaign effectiveness)

The data for this theme is organized under two sub-themes that is to say creating engaging content and leveraging analytics for improvement. The participants noted that to have a team with excellent social media competencies, and management skills, they should be in a position to create engaging brand promotional content and leverage analytics for improvement of all social media marketing and brand promotional activities.

4.4.1 Sub-theme 1: Creating Engaging Content

Participants described that creating engaging content is very paramount for successful social media brand promotional campaigns. They noted that social media marketing and branding should engage that target audience, with content that ensures high brand performance, brand imagery, brand judgments, brand feelings, and brand resonance. Participants also noted that engaging social media content should possess all the characteristics of consumer reactions to the brand which include favorable judgments, desired responses to the brand, engagement with the brand, and the community of brand users, among other attributes. With these in place, they not that companies can run successful brand promotional campaigns.

"We post a variety of engaging branding content on our social media platforms, including company news, and updates, milestones, and achievements, product showcases, customer testimonials, brand insights, behind-the-scenes activities, brand stories, user-generated content, educational content, promotions and offers, and engagement driven content with all the attributes of brand performance, brand imagery, brand judgments. This is intended to arouse positive responses, and engagements."

(Participant 9- Objective 2: Social media competencies and campaign effectiveness)

"Our engaging branding content includes phrases like 'Unrivaled Chips made at Cafe Javas', 'Awesome Food in a Relaxing environment', 'Welcome to CJ's, where quick-casual dining meets unforgettable flavors', 'Get ready to spice up your taste buds with

tender buffalo chicken, fresh veggies, and a kick of tangy buffalo sauce, all wrapped up in a soft, warm tortilla. It's the perfect blend of flavor and convenience' and 'Come in and try it today.' These are fully packaged with all the characteristics of a call to action."

(Participant 6- Objective 2: Social media competencies and campaign effectiveness)

4.4.2 Sub-theme 2: Leveraging Analytics for Improvement

Furthermore, participants described the importance of leveraging analytics for the improvement of social media brand promotional campaigns. A participant mentioned that social media analytics and metrics allow top delivery companies to track the performance of their marketing and promotional campaigns effectively. Another participant acknowledged that by monitoring metrics such as reach, impressions, engagement rates, conversions, and click-through rates social media teams can measure campaign success and make data-driven adjustments needed for improvement.

"We have witnessed a lot of growth in our company's visibility since we started using social media for brand communication. Some key metrics that demonstrate this growth include; an increase in followers, engagement rates, website traffic, brand mentions, and customer inquiries, conversions, and reach."

(Participant 8- Objective 2: Social media competencies and campaign effectiveness)

"Social media brand promotion campaigns can only get better and better if the team effectively uses analytics to measure performance which leads to implementation of data-driven strategies for improvement. This can be achieved by collecting and analyzing data from social media platforms to inform promotion and marketing strategies."

(Participant 10- Objective 2: Social media competencies and campaign effectiveness)

It seems that by interpreting metrics and analytics, top delivery companies gain valuable insights into their target audience's behavior, preferences, and engagement with the marketing and promotional content. Through interpreting these metrics, businesses can gain valuable insights into their audience's behavior, preferences, and overall engagement with their content.

4.5 Main Theme 3: Overcoming Social Media Challenges and Mitigating Risks (Research Question 3)

Research question three sought to understand the challenges top delivery companies

face while using social media for brand promotion. Two themes emerged from this analysis and they include overcoming social media challenges and mitigating risks. Participants reacted that social media marketing and brand promotion have many challenges that the teams must be ready to face and provide mitigating solutions. For example, one of the participants mentioned that they face challenges such as content overload, negative feedback, resources and budgets, and staying up-to-date with emerging trends in the delivery business. The participant further noted that all these desire solutions for companies to have successful marketing and promotional campaigns.

“We face several challenges while using social media to enhance our brand, these include; algorithm challenges, content overload, negative feedback, authenticity and trust, resources, and budgets, staying up to date, balancing promotion, and engagement content, encouraging employees as advocates.”

(Participant 5 – Objective 3: Challenges in social media brand promotion)

“We take all customer feedback seriously, including negative comments on social media through acknowledging and promptly responding to negative comments as quickly as possible, posting a follow-up response, as well as investing and resolving the issue and if required we take off the negative comment.”

(Participant 3 – Objective 3: Challenges in social media brand promotion)

From the analysis of this sub-theme, it was evident that like any other marketing and brand promotion activity, social media marketing and brand promotion activities also have their fair share of challenges. However, the respondents articulated that the problems are not the challenges, but how the social media marketing and brand promotion team handles these challenges. Effective handling of challenges results in successful campaigns and the same can be said for ineffective solutions to challenges. Within main theme three, there emerged two sub-themes, whose data is analyzed separately in the following sections.

4.5.1 Sub-theme 1: Adapting to Algorithm Changes

Participants acknowledged that social media algorithms are a powerful ally in growing a company’s online audience as they match users with content that suits their interests. This

means that top delivery social media and brand promotion teams must at all times adapt to the dictates of algorithms rules and calculations in terms of content distribution, discovery, and consumption.

“Social media platforms are continuously refining their algorithms to improve user experience and management. This means that social media management teams in companies that deliver goods/services to the doorstep of their customers must adapt their strategies to stay relevant and effective in a competitive market environment.”

(Participant 2 – Objective 3: Challenges in social media brand promotion)

4.5.2 Sub-theme 2: Managing Negative Feedback

Participants also noted that negative feedback can produce positive or negative results for the company based on how they are handled. It was also noted that it is very important for social media marketers to handle negative feedback efficiently, and effectively in a timely and responsive manner. Participants further acknowledged that responding to negative feedback is important in fostering trust and loyalty and that when top delivery companies acknowledge negative feedback, it shows how much they value their customers’ opinions which results in mitigating risks that would have affected the company’s brand negatively.

“Negative comments are part of our social media strategy and we address them through acknowledging and responding to them as quickly as possible, assuring our customers that we are working on their queries, posting a follow-up response to address client concerns, as well as investigating and resolving the issue and if required we take off the negative comment.”

(Participant 2 – Objective 3: Challenges in social media brand promotion)

“We take all customer feedback seriously, including negative comments on social media through acknowledging and promptly responding to negative comments as quickly as possible, posting a follow-up response, as well as investing and resolving the issue and if required we take off the negative comment.”

(Participant 2 – Objective 3: Challenges in social media brand promotion)

“We treat every comment that appears on our social media pages with a keen interest, including negative comments on social media through acknowledging and promptly responding to negative comments as quickly as possible, posting a follow-up response, as well as investing and resolving the issue and if required we take off the negative comment.”

(Participant 4 – Objective 3: Challenges in social media brand promotion)

This implies that adapting to algorithms and addressing negative feedback in social

media marketing and brand promotion is important in overcoming challenges and offering mitigating solutions in social media brand promotion for effectiveness and efficiency of reach and influence.

4.6 Discussing Emerging Themes

In the analysis of the three research questions, themes emerged as participants voiced their opinions about the topic under discussion in this study. These themes include developing a social media strategy and planning success, creating engaging content and curating relevant content, as well as building a social media community, and encouraging engagement. Data for these themes is discussed separately in the following sections.

4.7 Emerging Theme 1: Developing a Social Media Strategy and Planning Success

In the data analysis process, participants mentioned that developing a social media strategy and planning success helps top delivery companies in Uganda to define their goals and objectives. They acknowledged that by setting specific and measurable social media marketing and brand promotion goals, top delivery companies focus their efforts on achieving those objectives. For instance, one participant mentioned that any top delivery company's social media marketing and brand promotion activities should aim at increasing brand awareness, driving website traffic, generating leads, and boosting sales. They agreed that with these goals, a strategy can help the team create content and campaigns that align with their objectives and measure their success using social media analytics.

“Yes, we have a comprehensive social media policy and framework that guides our branding operations. Our policy outlines the purpose, scope, and guidelines for social media use, including content creation, engagement, and crisis management. We have a designated social media team responsible for content creation, monitoring, and responding to customer inquiries and feedback. Our framework includes brand guidelines, tone, language, and consistency across all our social media platforms.”

(Participant 1-- Objective 1: Role of social media in brand promotion)

“Yes, we have a social media branding policy to guide our online marketing and branding activities.”

(Participant 9-- Objective 1: Role of social media in brand promotion)

“Yes, our social media framework guides our company's approach to social media

marketing and all brand promotion activities.”

(Participant 7-- Objective 1: Role of social media in brand promotion)

“Yes, we have a social media policy to guide our branding operations because gone are the days when merely a Facebook page or an X account formerly Twitter was enough Businesses today need a comprehensive social media policy/framework or strategy to align organizational goals and safeguard reputation.”

(Participant 6- Objective 1: Role of social media in brand promotion)

This means that a social media marketing and brand promotion strategy is important in aligning organization goals and objectives, and also helping the company in planning success by helping the team create engaging content, implement campaigns that align with company marketing goals and objectives, as well as measure the success of these campaigns using social media metrics to achieve brand promotion and visibility. This emerging theme 1 came with sub-themes within it which included setting clear objectives and allocating resources effectively. Data for these sub-themes follows in the sections below.

4.7.1 Sub-theme 1 of Emerging Theme 1: Setting Clear Objectives

During analysis, participants reported that stating clear objectives for social media marketing is very important for brand promotion. They based their argument on the fact that clear objectives provide a focus for promotion campaigns by offering a roadmap that social media marketers use to prevent aimless efforts. Participants further mentioned that clear objectives guide content creation leading to more engaging communication with the target audience, and enable targeted resource allocation which minimizes wastage on non-aligned promotional campaign activities. Furthermore, participants acknowledged clear objectives enable goal-driven strategies that encourage the incorporation of feedback which creates a dynamic cycle of continuous improvement and increased audience interaction, which also increases campaign reach and brand visibility.

“Setting clear objectives is important because it guides the creation of content that effectively resonates with the target audience leading to genuine organizational engagement with target audiences.”

(Participant 5- Objective 2: Social media competencies and campaign effectiveness)

“Clear objectives enhance a deeper understanding of audience tastes and preferences

which helps to build relevant content, authentic connections, enhance targeted resource allocation, selection of platforms to use for brand promotion, and ensure that the marketers optimize the platforms for brand promotion activities.”

(Participant 9- Objective 2: Social media competencies and campaign effectiveness)

This implies that setting clear objectives for social media creates abilities for top delivery companies in Uganda to create tailored information, select channels that suit the target audience, and optimize their use with information that resonates with peoples’ tastes and preferences thereby enhancing the brand, and promoting visibility and sales.

4.7.2 Sub-theme 2 of Emerging Theme 1: Allocating Resources Effectively

Under emerging theme 1, participants also mentioned that effective social media brand promotion requires effective allocation of resources, both human and financial resources. Participants reported that resource budgeting plays a crucial role in helping top delivery companies set financial targets, allocate resources effectively, and monitor and control spending in brand promotion campaigns. One of the participants mentioned that their company allocates financial resources effectively by prioritizing brand promotion initiatives that offer the highest cost-effectiveness. The respondent further intimated that they identify the most important social media brand promotion needs and allocate resources accordingly, ensuring that they align with the marketing and promotion financial targets set during the budgeting process.

“Our company allocates financial resources effectively by prioritizing brand promotion initiatives that offer the highest cost-effectiveness. We identify the most critical brand promotion needs, and allocate resources according, ensuring alignment with the financial targets set during the marketing and branding budgeting process.”

(Participant 7- Objective 2: Social media competencies and campaign effectiveness)

This goes a long way to explain the importance of effective resource allocation in social media brand promotion among top delivery companies. To achieve success, brands must identify critical areas, and allocate funds accordingly in alignment with the financial budgets set. This helps them to achieve cost-effectiveness, and maximum results in their social media

promotion efforts.

4.8. Emerging Theme 2: Creating and Curating Engaging and Relevant Content

During data analysis, the study found that in the dynamic world of social media marketing, content is the king, and therefore participants recommended that creating, and curating high-quality content is essential in building a strong and engaging social media brand presence. One of the participants mentioned that effective content not only captures the attention of the target audience but also establishes the brand as a trusted authority in a competitive social media marketing environment. Participants also said that content creation and curation are an integral part of social media marketing and this can be achieved by understanding the audience, developing a content strategy, creating engaging content, and curating valuable resources, as well as leveraging data. Participants reported that when these are put in place, top delivery companies establish their brands as trusted market leaders, and connect with their audiences on a higher level.

“In today’s competitive marketing environment, content creation, and curation is an integral part of social media marketing and brand promotion. What has made our company successful is our ability to create engaging content, and curate valuable resources which has enabled us to emerge as a trusted brand in the delivery business.”

(Participant 4- Objective 1: Role of social media in brand promotion)

Out of this theme, two sub-themes emerged as participants explained that creating and curating engaging and relevant content, requires top delivery companies in Uganda to use visual content and share user-generated content in their social media marketing and brand promotion efforts. Data from the sub-themes is discussed in the sections below

4.8.1 Sub-theme 1 of Emerging Theme 2: Using Visual Content

Participants mentioned virtual communities are visual beings, and for that reason, online consumers retain less of the information they read or hear about. One of the participants mentioned that one read information is paired with visual elements, the amount retained by the target market is so high. In this context, participants agreed that top delivery companies have

been able to create a lasting impression of their brands in the minds of the target audience because have been able to leverage the power of visual content in their brand promotion activities. For example, they said that Facebook and WhatsApp posts and tweets with images get more retweets and reposts than those without, thus managing to engage as many as possible.

“Incorporating visual elements into our brand's social media marketing strategy, you have helped us create a stronger connection with our audience and make them feel a part of our brand's journey. This has also helped humanize our brand and make it more relatable to the target audience.”

(Participant 1-- Objective 1: Role of social media in brand promotion)

4.8.2 Sub-theme 2 of Emerging Theme 2: Sharing User-generated Content

Participants agreed that social media marketing dominates the delivery business in Uganda because it is cost-effective. While using social media for branding, participants acknowledged the emergence of user-generated content as a force to reckon with in the arena of social media marketing. One of the participants said that no top delivery company has been left behind in recognizing the unquestionable benefits of using content that is created by their customers. This includes authentic testimonies about the quality of the brand, and captivating visuals of customers associating with the brand, and such kind of content offers opportunities for companies to engage with the audience and drive brand growth and reach.

“Users sharing content about our products and services has created a sense of belonging and community among our audience. This communal engagement has strengthened brand loyalty and encouraged more users to contribute their content thus creating a virtuous cycle of engagement and connection online which has helped our brand to grow in terms of usability and reach.”

(Participant 5- Objective 2: Social media competencies and campaign effectiveness)

With this explanation, it seemed that top delivery companies in Uganda were now more and more using user-generated content to engage customers, and potential customers, rather than depending only on their own generated content. User-generated content, and using visual elements emerged as important aspects of social media branding. Marketers appreciated its power in enhancing engagement and connections with the audience.

4.9 Emerging Theme 3: Building a Social Media Community and Encouraging Engagement

Building a social media community and encouraging virtual engagement emerged as a theme during data the analysis process. Participants said that social media communities do not only give those numbers or help them reach wide audiences, they are important platforms for top delivery brands to not only increase their visibility but also engage with their audience on a deeper level. They further agreed that this kind of engagement leads to significant business growth through fostering connections, providing value, and nurturing loyalty. From the analysis, the study found that social media communities are a powerful tool for enhancing brand awareness and customer engagement.

Participants also said that as social beings, humans are always looking for connections and togetherness and that today more and more of their customers' lives and friendships revolve around online communities. They mentioned that from Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and YouTube to Twitter, social media platforms are providing incredible opportunities for top delivery companies in Uganda to bring people together through community engagement. Participants further mentioned that platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram are offering them excellent opportunities to increase community engagement on social media and they are a great avenue for people to know about the different brand products of top delivery companies.

“You know, this era has made us understand that people are social beings and are always looking for connections and togetherness to keep them engaged. Social media platforms have allowed them to engage with people far and beyond in virtual communities of interest. As a top delivery company, we utilize these communities to amplify our brand name and engage with people.”

(Participant 7- Objective 2: Social media competencies and campaign effectiveness)

The study understood this to mean that online virtual communities promote a high level of engagement between people with a community of interest which enables messages shared to have a wider perspective in terms of reach. Not to be left behind, top delivery companies

have penetrated these communities with information about their brand, the type of products and services they offer, and locations. This has helped them grow their brand.

4.10 Summary of Results

Overall, the results of this study can be viewed in five overarching categories, role of social media in brand promotion, competencies for successful social media promotion, challenges of using social media in brand promotion, social media strategy, and planning, content creation and curation as well as social media engagement and community building. It can be seen that social media has a role in brand promotion and that organizations should develop competencies to implement successful social media brand promotions even when there are known challenges of using social media in brand promotion. On the other hand, results also indicate that social media strategy and planning, content creation and curation as well as social media engagement and community building are critical to effective brand promotion among delivery companies in Uganda.

Chapter Five

Discussion of Findings

5.1 Introduction

This study provides insights into the perceptions and opinions of managers, social media managers, and communication and media personnel of top delivery companies in Uganda regarding the role of social media and brand promotion. This chapter discusses the meanings and implications as outlined in Chapter Four above. The first part of the chapter is organized under the relevant research questions for purposes of aiding the research findings. Furthermore, findings for each theme are discussed in the existing literature. This is because the study needed to relate the constructed reality of the participants with an alternative form of reality that had been produced before this research as advised by Sloan and Quan-Haase (2017). From this, the limitations of the study are considered, and areas for further research are identified. Apart from the constructed reality of the study participants, and the alternative reality obtained from the literature reviewed, this Chapter will also account for the theoretical observations emanating from the theory that informed this study.

5.2 Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore the contribution of social media in brand promotion among top delivery companies in Uganda and contribute to existing literature on the same. Three research questions were asked:

1. What is the role of social media in promoting the brand of top delivery companies?
2. What competencies do top delivery companies need to run successful social media brand promotional campaigns?
3. What are the challenges that top delivery companies face while using

social media for brand promotion? This Chapter discusses the findings of this study about the above three questions, the themes that emerged from them, the literature reviewed, and the theoretical observation.

5.3 Themes that emerged from the research question of the role of social media in promoting the brand of top delivery companies in Uganda? (RQ1)

The findings discussed in this section directly respond to Objective 1: To examine the role of social media in promoting the brand of the selected top delivery companies in Uganda. Examining how top delivery uses social media to enhance brand promotional campaigns provided insight into social media aspects that may act as drivers for brand promotion. Understanding whether top delivery companies have a social policy framework to guide their branding operations can give a picture of the purpose, scope, and guidelines for social media use. The themes in the findings were identified using the thematic analysis method proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Two themes were identified on the role of social media in brand promotion. In general, participants viewed social media as a marketing tool for top delivery companies in Uganda, and as a tool for building brand identity. Examples were provided of how social media supports the marketing efforts of these companies, which the participants valued and appreciated. However, there were also other areas in which further investigations may be required, particularly issues of access by some segments of the target audience. The findings are discussed in terms of the themes as detailed in the following sections.

5.3.1 Social Media as a Marketing Tool

The use of social media as a marketing tool varied from company to company, although participants had positive experiences with social media as a marketing tool. The theme highlights how top delivery companies in Uganda value social media platforms and want their companies to adopt a comprehensive social media policy framework to guide their online brand promotion and marketing activities. Participants recognized the role of social media platforms

in availing them of the opportunity to reach wide audiences with information about their brand. They expressed the desire for companies to invest more into social media to maximize reach and visibility, as they acknowledged that these platforms help them to reach and interact with wider audiences which they would not be in a position to reach using conventional or mainstream media channels. As highlighted in the literature, this finding emphasized the cardinal role of social media in reaching wider audiences with information about company brands. It suggests that companies in the digital era need to adapt to the current digital communication technologies to leverage their brands and position themselves amidst cutthroat competition (Christodoulides & Michaelidou, 2010; Hennig-Thurau, Malthouse, Friege, Gensler, Lobschat, Rangaswamy, & Skiera, 2010; Öztamur and Karakadılar, 2014; Paquette, 2013; Iankova, Davies, Archer-Brown, Marder, & Yau, 2019). These findings also align with the Honey Comb theory construct which emphasizes the impact of social media on brand promotion, brand identity, and customer engagement where Keller (2013) notes that the brand identity/promotion construct on social media is all about the impact that identity may or will have on brand awareness.

Additionally, the positive experiences of social media and brand promotion of top delivery companies were expressed by participants, suggesting that the relationship between social media and brand is to scale all efforts of making people aware of the brand and have the memory of their products to make them dominant in the market. This relates to studies conducted by different scholars concluding that social media stands out as a platform that can make this happen because of its ability to reach wider audiences and allow immediate feedback (Kietzmann et al., 2011; Trainini & Torres, 2015; Kudeshia, Sikdar & Mittal, 2015; Baird & Parasnis, 2011). Therefore, by implementing a social media framework, and investing in the development and use of different social media platforms, top delivery companies have leveraged their brands to reach wider audiences and maximize their online presence for their

customers to get used. Although many examples were given by the participants indicating the significant role social media is playing in promoting their brand as well as a plethora of existing literature on social media and brand promotion among companies, businesses, enterprises, and conglomerates (Pappu, Quester, & Cooksey, 2005; Hakala, Svensson & Vincze, 2012; Aaker, 1992; Rossiter, 2014; Gustafson, & Chabot, 2007), very little is found specifically on social media and brand promotion among top delivery companies. This appears to be an area that requires further development, not only in Uganda but globally.

5.3.2 Building Brand Identity

Despite being a marketing tool as highlighted in the previous themes; social media was also expressed as a tool for building brand identity. This theme was named to address the fact that companies may use social media for marketing activities, which may not translate into brand identity. This is because Keller and Kotler (2005) assert that brand identity is the combination of the name of the company, overall look and feel, what the company does, and what makes it stand out in the market. Participants equated brand identity to an elevator pitch that a company wants its community to give on its behalf. The strategies marketers use to build a brand identity on social media were identified as identifying company purpose, mission, vision, and values and aligning them with the target audience to tell the brand story on social media, developing a brand identity with visual brand elements and a consistent voice on all social media platforms, creating a social/digital media brand management strategy and style guide, and putting in place a social media brand management resource for teams. These were identified as strategies top delivery companies use to build and establish their brand on social media. Understanding these strategies can help companies, social media managers, and teams to prioritize them and invest resources in implementing them to maximize their online branding efforts, a fact that is supported by Hakala, Svensson and Vincze (2012), Pappu, Quester and Cooksey (2005), Rossiter (2014) and Gustafson and Chabot (2007) in the literature reviewed

by this study.

5.3.3 Conclusion of the role of social media in Brand Promotion

Encouraging organizations/companies to have a comprehensive social media policy framework is important to enable companies and businesses to maximize reach and visibility efficiently, and consistently (Hakala, Svensson & Vincze, 2012; Aaker, 1992; Rossiter, 2014; Gustafson, & Chabot, 2007). Findings from participant interviews are that a comprehensive social media policy framework outlines the purpose of the company, the scope of operations, and guidelines for social media use. The policy underscores content creation, engagement, management, and leadership in all social media branding communications. If these are implemented, this research suggests that top delivery companies may increase their reach, visibility, and brand promotion and identity (Doyle & Stern, 2016; Rossiter, 2014; Gustafson, & Chabot, 2007).

However, this research suggests that the use of social media in brand promotion can only be implemented by those top delivery companies who have invested in social media infrastructure, have a social media marketing and branding strategy, have the right human resource team to monitor and evaluate success as well as the financial resources to implement the strategy (Doyle & Stern, 2016). This is not always the case with many companies especially those beginning their businesses in the delivery industry. Therefore, steps need to be taken by top delivery companies to increase their social media budgets, seek, and employ professional personnel in the field of social media marketing and branding, and develop and implement the right social media marketing and branding strategies and approaches. Some of these areas require further development, especially among delivery companies operating in remote, and semi-urban areas.

The findings of the current study reflect previous literature on social media and brand promotion which suggests that upon realizing the growing importance and popularity of social

media among customers, companies have adopted them in their marketing and communication strategies (Harris & Rae, 2009), and that the rapid adoption of social media by business entities and conglomerates to aid their marketing and branding efforts is attributed to the platform's low-cost advantage and popularity (Christodoulides, 2009). Therefore, top delivery companies in Uganda are using social media platforms to build brands, increase awareness, and measure their reputation and customer relationships (Christodoulides & Michailidis, 2010). However, from the participants' perspective, this social media and brand promotion seems to be prioritized by established or top delivery companies, leaving out beginning or small companies which is a pointer that to harness the advantage of social media in brand promotion, there are aspects that companies should fulfill for them to adapt social media fully, some of these cannot be afforded by starter, or small companies.

5.4 Themes that emerged from the research question of competencies needed to run successful social media promotional campaigns? (RQ2).

This section addresses Objective 2: To analyze how social media competencies contribute to the effectiveness of brand promotional campaigns in the selected top delivery companies. Similar to the first research question, the themes in the findings of the second research question were identified using the thematic analysis method (Braun and Clarke, 2006), with two themes identified: developing social media competencies, and effective social media management. The themes are now discussed in more detail below.

5.4.1 Developing Social Media Competencies

The element of social media competencies was found to inform the overall success of top delivery companies' brand promotion. Examples of how social media management teams need to have the required maximum skills to implement the company's social media marketing and brand strategy were highlighted by the study participants. As the study literature has highlighted, companies need to invest in recruiting staff who have the necessary professional skills and competencies to run effective social media campaigns (Harris & Rae, 2009). These

skills were identified by participants as creativity, excellent communication, writing ability, content curation, relationship building, virtual community management, video editing, and graphic designing among others. These skills can be attained through undertaking professional courses in social media marketing communications or by following industry leaders, influencers, and peers on social media platforms and seeing what they are doing, how they are communicating, and what results they are getting (Hogan, 2008; Hennig-Thurau, Malthouse, Frieger, Gensler, Lobschat, Rangaswamy, & Skiera, 2010; Iankova, Davies, Archer-Brown, Marder, & Yau, 2019). As reflected in the participants' results, these competencies can also be developed by internally managing and sharing knowledge about social media marketing and branding.

Participants also agreed that incidents of consulting, managing, and sharing social media skills and competencies bring positive results, and initiatives like these enable all staff to acquire and use these competencies, thus providing more opportunities for brand reach, visibility, and identity on social media. Previous literature states social media marketing and branding competencies should be built around a team or even all staff of top delivery companies rather than individuals for continuity (Katona et al., 2011; Lorenzo-Romero *et al.*, 2011), and that these competence-sharing interactions should be valued by companies to empower all staff with skills needed to run successful social media promotional campaigns. These assertions also resonate with the dictates of the Honey Comb Theory of social media (Kietzmann, 2011), whose fourth block emphasizes the need for companies to develop the skills and knowledge base required to use social media for marketing and branding.

5.4.2 Effective Social Media Management

Participants felt that effective social media management is very critical for companies looking to expand their audience, sharpen brand recognition, generate valuable customer and competitor insights, and build lasting connections that foster brand trust and loyalty.

Participants mentioned that effective social media management does not only require a generation of creative content and timely publishing, but also monitoring engagement, overseeing community growth, and effectively analyzing the outcomes of social media marketing and branding efforts. Social media management is credited as a skill required to implement effective social media marketing communication campaigns (Sloan & Quan-Haase, 2017; Castronovo, & Huang, 2012). This includes all staff adopting social media management skills, which some participants noted is lacking in some of the top delivery companies in Uganda.

Participants noted that when staff adopt social media management skills, they provide support to the social media marketing and branding team. However, it was evident that this support is not planned but rather arises when specific demands of brand promotions are needed. Therefore, for this to have an impact, the development of staff social media management skills should be planned to provide collective support. When this is done, research suggests that there are positive results in brand promotion (Kane, Alavi, Labianca, & Borgatti, 2014; Voorveld, Van Noort, Muntinga, & Bronner, 2018)

5.4.3 Conclusion of competences needed to run successful social media promotional campaigns

Participants interviewed recognized the potential impact of effective competencies in social media marketing and branding. They expressed the desire to acquire more skills in managing social media promotional campaigns, although they felt the frustration that more staff who are not directly employed within the social media marketing and branding team do not show interest in acquiring these competencies yet if acquired, they would go a long way to support the company's branding and visibility efforts. However, there seemed to be a contradiction of participant views with some believing that whoever has a digital gadget and can click the button to post something online has the competencies needed to support the

company's branding efforts. Despite the positive experiences with competencies in executing campaigns, participants were cautious and acknowledged that effective social media branding and promotion campaigns require personnel who are trained communicators, and content creators.

5.5 Themes emerging from challenges top delivery companies face while using social media for brand promotion (RQ3)

This section relates to Objective 3: To examine the challenges faced by the selected top delivery companies in using social media for brand promotion. There were several areas arising from key informants on the problems and challenges online marketers and branding specialists face. These findings also corresponded with literature relating to social media marketing and branding. As Kane, Alavi, Labianca, and Borgatti (2014) highlighted, social media marketing and branding seem to take place in today's information-saturated society, where everyone is a producer, and as such subjected to distortion of facts. Therefore, the challenges of social media branding come due to the nature of the media itself, and the people that use it. Using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), this research question yielded two related themes, that is overcoming social media challenges, and mitigating risks. Data from the two themes is discussed below

5.5.1 Overcoming Social Media Challenges and Mitigating Risks.

The results of the study highlight an avalanche of challenges top delivery companies face while using social media for marketing and branding. Findings from key informants indicated that they face several challenges including but not limited to negative feedback, content overload, authenticity and trust, resources, and budgets, staying up to date with industry trends, and encouraging employees to act as advocates among others.

Content overload, negative feedback, authenticity and trust, resources, and budgets, staying up to date, balancing promotion, and engagement content, and encouraging employees as advocates. This is in line with Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) who identify similar challenges

as bottlenecks to social media marketing and branding. However, Nielsen and Schröder (2014) argued that like any other media, social media branding is not an exception to challenges, but how marketers address them is what matters. This formed the basis of naming this theme ‘Overcoming social media challenge’. Respondents also recounted that the teams that address the challenges have a high likelihood of succeeding in online brand promotion. This narrative resonates with the honeycomb theory construct of recognition of social media complexities and risks to enhance success. Therefore, this study concluded that despite the many challenges, it does not remove the fact that social media is playing a big role in promoting the brands of top delivery companies in Uganda.

5.6 Strengths and Limitations of the Research

In chapter three, highlights were given and discussed on how the research would ensure quality. In this section, the strengths and limitations of the research are discussed in terms of the sample, data collection, and analysis methods.

5.6.1 Critique of the Sample.

The study acknowledges that the sample used was small. However, the focus of this study was to enlist individual experiences of the participants and thus, the concept of representativeness of the sample, and generalization of the results are not in focus. The study allowed voices of top delivery communication, and social media managers, managers, and other officers from the selected top delivery companies to be reported which can allow stakeholders to consider strategies for further improving the role of social media in brand promotion. Despite all this, the study recognizes that there are some implications if the findings are to be generalized. This study was carried out in Kampala, an area with high rates of online users, and sellers. Therefore, the experiences of the sample participants may not be the same in other parts of Uganda, particularly semi-urban and rural areas.

5.6.2. Critique of the data collection methods

The use of an interview guide allowed participants to openly share their opinions and experiences regarding social media and brand promotion among top delivery companies in Uganda. Also, the interview guide was prepared, and questions were arranged by the researcher, the method allowed participants to discuss certain aspects they felt were critical to the study but not covered in the interview guide.

5.6.3 Critique of approach to analysis

Using thematic analysis allowed for the identification, analysis, and reporting of patterns within the data set. Due to its independence from theory, it can be applied to various research paradigms. However thematic analysis has been criticized for being vague or poorly defined (Holloway & Todres, 2003). Some believe that the data collection and analysis stages are blurred (Attride-Stirling, 2001) and that the method allows researchers to select extracts to support themes the researcher would like to see, therefore lowering the validity of the research. However, as the analysis was inductive and aimed to understand subjective human experiences rather than forming hypotheses about what might be found, the findings were data-led. This allowed the researcher to understand the participants' versions of the truth (Moret et al., 2007).

5.7 Conclusion.

This study explored the role of social media in brand promotion among top delivery companies in Uganda. Through in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, it was revealed that social media serves as both a marketing tool and a vital platform for building brand identity. Companies leverage these platforms to reach wider audiences, communicate their brand story, and engage with customers.

Successful social media brand promotion necessitates a strong foundation of competencies within the organization. These include creative content creation, strong communication skills, effective community management, and the ability to adapt to evolving trends. Furthermore,

effective social media management is crucial, encompassing activities like monitoring engagement, analyzing campaign performance, and adapting strategies based on the insights gained.

The study also identified several challenges, including managing negative feedback, navigating content overload, maintaining authenticity and trust, and securing adequate resources for social media marketing. While this research provides valuable insights, it acknowledges limitations such as the relatively small sample size and the focus on a specific geographic area. Despite these limitations, this study contributes to the existing literature by providing a nuanced understanding of the role of social media in brand promotion within the delivery sector in Uganda. The findings can inform the development of effective social media strategies, enabling companies to enhance their brand visibility, build customer loyalty, and achieve sustainable growth.

Chapter Six

Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents recommendations based on the findings of this study, which explored the role of social media in brand promotion among top delivery companies in Uganda. The recommendations are categorized into practical recommendations for top delivery companies, suggestions for policymakers and regulatory bodies, and areas for further academic research. These recommendations aim to address the challenges identified in the study and leverage the opportunities presented by social media for brand promotion within the delivery sector.

6.2 Recommendations for Top Delivery Companies

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

6.2.1 Develop and Implement a Comprehensive Social Media Policy.

Companies should formalize their social media policies, incorporating brand voice guidelines, content creation protocols, crisis communication plans, and employee conduct rules.

5. ****Encourage Cross-Department Collaboration:**** Social media branding should be a coordinated effort involving marketing, customer service, and executive leadership to ensure message consistency and strategic alignment.

Clearly define the purpose, scope, and guidelines for social media use within the organization by establishing clear roles and responsibilities for social media management. Additionally, ensure that the policy is communicated effectively to all employees.

6.2.2 Invest in Social Media Skills Development.

Delivery companies should prioritize staff training in areas such as content creation, audience engagement, social media analytics, and community management to enhance campaign effectiveness.

6.2.3 Build Strong Brand Identity on Social Media.

Develop and maintain a consistent brand voice and identity across all social media platforms. Tell compelling brand stories that resonate with the target audience and utilize social media to build relationships with customers and foster brand loyalty.

6.2.4 Leverage Data Analytics

Monitor key performance indicators (KPIs) like website traffic, social media engagement, and customer sentiment. Analyze data to identify trends, identify areas for improvement, and refine social media strategies.

6.2.5 Address Challenges Proactively

Develop strategies for managing negative feedback and online reputation and stay informed about emerging social media trends and best practices. Allocate adequate resources for social media marketing and brand promotion activities.

6.3 Recommendations for Policymakers and Regulatory Bodies

From the findings the study has presented, here are the recommended steps for the policymakers and regulatory bodies.

Promote Digital Literacy. Support initiatives that promote digital literacy among the general population, including businesses and individuals, and encourage the development of educational programs on social media marketing and digital communication.

Create a Supportive Regulatory Environment. Develop and implement policies that support the growth of the digital economy, including the delivery sector. In addition, addresses

the concerns related to data privacy, cybersecurity, and consumer protection in the digital space.

Foster Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing. Facilitate collaboration between industry stakeholders, academia, and government agencies to share knowledge and best practices. Organizing workshops and conferences to discuss the challenges and opportunities of social media in the delivery sector can also be helpful.

6.4 Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this study revealed that there are still more areas for the topic that need further study including:

Comparative studies of social media usage and brand promotion strategies across different regions within Uganda, including rural and semi-urban areas can be conducted. Utilizing quantitative methods, such as surveys, to collect data from a larger sample of respondents, allows for more statistically significant findings.

Tracking the evolution of social media usage and its impact on brand promotion over time and conducting in-depth studies on the effectiveness of specific social media platforms (e.g., TikTok, Instagram, YouTube) for brand promotion within the delivery sector. Investigating the impact of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and augmented reality on social media marketing and brand promotion within the delivery industry.

6.5 Conclusion

This study demonstrates that social media plays a transformative role in brand promotion for the selected top delivery companies in Uganda. While its potential is widely recognized, the effectiveness of social media branding is shaped by the presence of strategic competencies, formalized policies, and proactive adaptation to challenges. By addressing gaps

in policy and expertise, companies can leverage social media not only as a communication tool but as a strategic asset that strengthens brand identity, builds customer loyalty, and drives business growth. The findings contribute to the broader understanding of digital branding in emerging markets and offer practical insights for both practitioners and scholars.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DELIVERY

ORGANISATION MANAGERS /OFFICERS

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview, and contributing to my research study

of the overall aim of the study is to explore the contribution that social media has on brand promotion, specifically the contribution, capabilities, and challenges. All information given will be strictly confidential. This interview is structured in three sections, under the following sub-titles: Background, Communication media, social media strategy, and content. Kindly, if you feel uncomfortable with questions within the course of the interview, you are free to pull out of the interview.

Questions

1. Do you as a company have a social media policy/framework for branding operations?
2. What measures have you put in place to utilize social media to enhance your organizational brand
3. As a social media manager/officer, do you have a social media team to monitor your brand communication?
4. Has there been growth in your company's visibility since you started using social media to communicate your brand?
5. How do you address negative comments from customers on social media?
6. Do you have any virtual customer forums/groups through which you interact with your clients?
7. What type of branding content do you often post on your social media platforms?
8. Do you think your brand visibility has increased since you started using social media?
9. What challenges do you face in your effort to enhance your company's brand on social media?
10. Do you think social media platforms have helped you to grow your brand?

APPENDIX B: CODEBOOK

CATEGORIES	LIST OF CODES	THEMES	SUB-THEMES	THEORETICAL OBSERVATION
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Role of Social Media in Brand Promotion	Social Usage Brand Awareness Online Presence	Social Media as a Marketing Tool Building Brand Identity	Increasing Brand Visibility Enhancing Customer Interaction	Social media plays an important role in promoting the brand of top delivery companies in Uganda, aligning with the Honeycomb Theory's emphasis on social media impact on brand identity, and customer engagement
Competencies for Successful Social Media Promotion	Content Creation Engagement Strategies Analytics Monitoring Team Collaboration	Developing social media competencies Effective Social Media management	Creating engaging content Leveraging analytics for improvement	Top delivery companies in Uganda need to develop specific competencies to run successful social media promotion campaigns, supporting the Honeycomb theory's focus on social media skills and knowledge.
Challenges of Using Social Media in Brand Promotion	Algorithm changes Content overload Negative feedback Resources Constraints	Overcoming social media challenges Mitigating Risks	Adapting to algorithm changes Managing negative feedback	Despite the benefits of social media, top delivery companies in Uganda face challenges that can impact brand promotion efforts, consistent with the Honeycomb Theory's recognition of social media complexities and risks
Social Media Strategy and Planning	Content calendar Target audience Engagement goals Budget allocation	Developing a social media strategy Planning for success	Setting clear objectives Allocating resources effectively	Top delivery companies in Uganda need a well-planned social media strategy to achieve their brand promotion goals, aligning with the Honeycomb theory's emphasis on strategic planning
Content creation and curation	Content type Content source Content scheduling Content engagement	Creating engaging content Curating relevant content	Using visual content Sharing user-generated content	Top delivery companies in Uganda need to create and curate high-quality content to engage their audience and promote their brand, supporting the Honeycomb theory's focus on content creation
Social media engagement and community building	Engagement metrics Community growth Customer support Influencer collaboration	Building a social media community Encouraging engagement	Responding to customer inquiries Collaborating with influencers	Top delivery companies in Uganda need to foster a sense of community and encourage engagement on social media to build strong relationships with their customers, a fact consistent with the Honeycomb theory's emphasis on social media's role in building strong virtual communities.



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SCHOOL OF RESEARCH & POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

DISSERTATION CORRECTION COMPLIANCE REPORT BY THE CANDIDATE (POST VIVA FORM)

Date: 23/4/2025

Name of Candidate: Lorna Mwebaza

Reg. No: RS21M54/004

Title of Dissertation: Social Media and Brand Promotion: Contributions, Capabilities, and Challenges - A Case of selected Top Delivery Companies in Kampala

SN	COMMENTS BY EXTERNAL EXAMINER	ACTION TAKEN	INDICATOR
1	There are plenty of editorial issues to address	I have taken time to go through the document and address all the editorial issues.	Whole document
2	It is also good academic enterprise to be able to appreciate or acknowledge supervisors without whom the document wouldn't have	I have added my supervisor's name to the acknowledgment page.	Acknowledgment Page

	been ready for examination. Consider acknowledging your supervisor.		
4	Abstract: the study presents data from select top companies in UG but no names are given. Was there a hindsight to their omission throughout the document? The key selected informants are also mentioned in a pedestrian way. What kind of individuals were these? Why were they chosen? What was the selection criteria? What was the inclusive and exclusive criteria?	I have listed the company names and I have clearly outlines the selection criteria for informants	Abstract page
5	Introduction bit has a disturbing statement ‘Scholars emphasize that the gap in this study is in understanding how social media contributes to brand promotion..’ and this is to be the knowledge gap, one wonders which scholars emphasize the gap of the study? Shouldn’t the author demonstrate the gap that she hopes to fill?	I have clearly addressed the knowledge gap that the study is filling.	Abstract page
6	The study sought to examine the contribution that social media has on brand promotion among top delivery companies in Uganda. The connotation one gets from this purpose statement is that the select delivery companies in Uganda have considerable use of social media for brand promotion and that the author is seeking the extent of use. However as one reads on the objective number two states , to examine the competencies that top delivery companies need to run successful social media brand promotional campaigns. I wondered whether the objective was to check for what is already	I have edited objective two to fit the advice given by the examiner.	Page 5

	established or what the select companies had, rather than what they ought to have! In my opinion objective two should have examined the contributions of social media to brand promotion looking at the select companies that are nameless to this point.		
7	Chapter three on method and methodology needs further clarification. So, the author collected data from key informants of the top companies, and that the data was recorded and later thematically analyzed. All good, but at what point did she know the saturation had reached? The data is silent on what point the data was enough? This leaves a gap in comprehension on what really happened, what data was collected from which company and how that answered the objectives.	I have clarified the method and methodology section I have clarified the data saturation issue	Page 24
8	The document also has quantitative language such as variables. I also thought more literature on brand promotion would have strengthened the document	I have clarified this- all quantitative variables	Whole document
9	On page 35, the author speaks of a pilot study that would be done, there is no mention whether it was ever done and why it was necessary to do it.	I have included a section to clarify the pilot study	Page 22
10	There is a mention of presence or encouragement of a social media policy in the select companies, I wonder what the contents of the policy are? Whether the policy contains how to contribute to brand promotion and the like. There needed to be inference from the quotes and linkages to research objectives.	I have included information about the polices in the findings section	Page 31

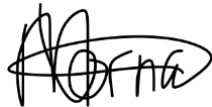
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SN	COMMENTS BY INTERNAL EXAMINER	ACTION TAKEN	INDICATOR
1	There is an inordinate number of typographical errors in the document.	I have run the document through a thorough spelling and grammar checker system. (Grammarly). I have also read through the work line by line.	Whole document
2	The gap in the literature could also be better articulated.	I have made the gap in the literature more clear.	Page 12
3	There is a mix-up between the justification and the significance	I have made the distinction between the significance and jurisdiction	Page 5-6
4	One more round of editing in the chapter four is needed to read more smoothly	I have re edited the entire document	
5			

SN	COMMENTS BY VIVA VOCE PANNEL	ACTION TAKEN	INDICATOR
1	Theoretical framework and Literature review	I have revisited the two sections and made corrections accordingly. I have also consulted my supervisor on ways to make this section clearer.	Chapter 2 Page 7-12
2	The gap in the literature could also be better articulated.	I have made the gap in the literature more clear.	Page 12
3	The empirical part needs more clarity, can you make your methods and analysis more transparent	I have articulated my methods and analysis more clearly	Chapter 5(findings)
4	Currently, the findings and discussion sections are not clearly distinguished.	I have made a clear distinction between chapters 4 and 5 (Findings and discussion)	Chapter 4 and Chapter 5
5.	Why were only 10 people interviewed?	I selected only ten interviewees because after this, I reached saturation. This study was qualitative in nature and	Sample, methodology, data collection method

	<p>Was the sample purposively selected?</p> <p>Do you believe 10 participants are enough to reach saturation and generate meaningful findings?</p> <p>Why were only delivery brands selected for the study?</p> <p>What is the rationale behind choosing this specific sector over others?</p>	<p>focused on the depth and quality of the results over the number of respondents</p> <p>I selected only top delivery brands due to the time period within which the study has been conducted. People do a lot of online transactions and this has made the use of delivery companies more prominent. This is a very relevant field to the digitized era we are living in today.</p>	<p>and scope (CHAPTER 3)</p>
6.	<p>What does your research reveal about how social media contributes to or enhances brand promotion?</p>	<p>There is need for policies and regulations to be put in place so that there is a standard these brands can follow and adhere to, in order to effectively sell their products on social media</p>	<p>Chapter 6 (Recommendations)</p>

Lorna Mwebaza
Candidate's Name



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Signature

Professor James Kiwanuka-Tondo



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Supervisor's Name

Signature