

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON BRAND AWARENESS AND BRAND EQUITY.

A CASE STUDY OF BRAVO SHOES, UGANDA (LTD)

AALBORG UNIVERSITY, DENMARK



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Abstract.

Contrary to the past, today marketing has shifted towards a trajectory where branding is being used for instance as a way of gaining a competitive advantage, creating customer loyalty, adding value to what the firm offers to the market, for product and service differentiation, communicating value and long-term strategy as well as building brand equity. Consequently, to achieve all these, firms or brands must find a way of communicating and reaching out to their customers either through traditional communication channels or using digital platforms to build awareness and eventually achieve brand equity. However, social media as a digital platform has recently emerged as one of the strong forces through which brands reach out to the market to build brand awareness and eventually achieve brand equity.

Upon this background, this paper has investigated how social media as a digital platform influences brand awareness and brand equity and thereafter use the CBBE model to suggest how firms can establish themselves as a strong brand. This topic was investigated qualitatively using a single case study approach of Bravo shoes Uganda (Ltd). First, the relevant pieces of literature were reviewed and mainly focused on the keywords branding, brand awareness, brand equity, and social media. Primary data was obtained through a semi-structured interview with the CEO of Bravo shoes and the customers. To triangulate the process, primary data was further obtained from online observation. The paper also adopted social constructionism as a philosophy of science and a deductive method as a research approach.

The findings indicated that social media influences brand awareness through its ability to capture and reach more audiences, generating content that appeals to a different type of people or group, through reviews, comments, sharing, and resultant effects, and finally through co-creation. On the other hand, social media influenced brand equity through positive brand association, increased sales, price premium, and acting as an additional touch point. Finally, to build a strong brand, using the CBBE model, it was important for Bravo shoes to build resonance with the customers through establishing a strong identity, establishing brand meaning, eliciting a positive brand response, and eventually building a strong brand relationship.

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List of Abbreviations.

CBBE- Customer-Based Brand Equity.

CEO- Chief Executive Officer.

COVID/19- Coronavirus Disease 2019.

LTD- Limited.

MBPS- Megabits per second.

MTN- Mobile Telephone Network.

TV- Television.

JSTOR- Journal Storage

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CHAPTER ONE.

1.1 Introduction.

Unlike in the past when firms predominately derived a competitive edge from product and service offerings, today marketing is shifting towards a different trajectory where branding is being used for instance; as a way of adding value to product and service offerings, differentiating product and service offering as well as adding a symbolic and emotional dimension to meet the needs of the customers in a profitable way (Keller, K. L., 2013). In other words, branding is being used as a tool to gain a competitive advantage. Thus, a brand can be both tangible and intangible and creates awareness in the customers about a firm and its offerings which is an important element in marketing because a well-established brand in the customer's mind has the potential to build brand loyalty, repetitive purchase hence increased sales and profits (Ibid).

Therefore, for firms to build a strong brand and achieve brand equity, firms have to find a way how to effectively communicate and interact with their markets (Ibid). However, with the growing popularity of the internet, technology, and digitalization that is redefining how brands interact and communicates with customers and potential customers, there is still little or no consensus at all on the best possible strategy brands should use to communicate and interact with their customer and potential customers in the ever-changing marketplace (Buil, De chernatony and Martinez, 2013).

Important to note is that effective communication helps to demonstrate to the customer how the product is used and for what purpose it's made. The consumers of the product can learn about the firm that makes the product and what values they stand for. Effective communication also enables firms to associate their brands with a place, people, feelings, and experience. Customers can also be rewarded or given incentives through effective communication. Establishing the brand in the memory of the customers is also another important element of communication and lastly, effective communication can generate experience from both offline and online groups that can contribute to brand equity (Keller, K. L., 2013).

Therefore, brand management has become one of the important components in marketing with some scholars considering it as one of the most important assets a firm can have and use in the market to gain competitiveness (Ibid). Buil, de Chernatony, and Martinez (2013) assert

that most successful global companies such as Apple and Google among others built their success by developing a strong brand presence with a good brand image and clear brand identity which consequently led to brand equity. Therefore, with increased competition in the market facilitated by the internet, radical and incremental innovation as well as a more demanding customer base, it becomes necessary to investigate what factors influence a firm brand's success in the market.

With a growing adaptation to online platforms in marketing facilitated by the internet and the growing number of users, social media has been cited as one of the powerful digital tools redefining marketing today. According to Hinton and Hjorth, (2013), social media has progressed from being a platform where people used it for sharing their private lives, news, events, and pictures to becoming one of the most important tools firms use to derive economic benefits, communicate to their customers, interact with their customers, offer after-sales services, innovate their business process as well as improve their competitiveness in the market through building a strong brand.

Furthermore, Latif et al., (2014), assert that, in the modern era of marketing, building a strong brand presence through brand awareness and a positive brand image, is one of the cornerstones for building a successful and competitive business. Besides, one of the main purposes of a business is to generate revenue and profit through increased sales. Having a strong brand presence through brand awareness has the potential to increase sales because customers are more likely to buy a product that they can easily recall or are familiar with as long as it matches their expectations in terms of quality (Ibid). Therefore, it can be rightly said that building a strong brand presence in the market is very significant for firms to succeed in the market and social media is one of those platforms that firms can use to build that strong brand presence in the market (Hinton and Hjorth, 2013). Therefore, this paper will seek to establish how social media as a digital platform influences brand awareness, and brand equity and how firms can build strong brands or become strong brands.

1.2 Motivation for the topic.

Just like sales enablement, customer behaviour, value co-creation, eco-systems, Covid-19, and data among others, social media and how it is used in marketing has recently been cited as one of the contemporary issues in marketing today. Unlike in the past, today social media platforms have become one of the powerful tools' brands are using to reach out to their customers and widen their customer base. Despite the numerous benefits of using social media as a platform, they are not many publications compared to other topics in marketing on the role of these digital platforms, especially social media platforms. And even the few publications mainly focus on the big brands ignoring the small brands that the average consumer can afford to purchase.

Another motivating factor for this topic is the increased number of social media users. According to the New York Times, the number of people using Facebook worldwide increased from 845 million in the last half of 2011 to over 1 billion in 2012 with the numbers expected to go higher in the subsequent years (New York Times, 2013). On the other hand, the number of Twitter users increased from 200 million in the last half of 2011 to over 500 million in the last half of 2012 (Ibid). Consequently, social media is redefining how brands interact with their customers, build relationships, and facilitate other sales promotion activities, and yet they are few publications on this topic compared to other topics in marketing. Therefore, social media being among the most common activities consumers engage in online, there is a need to investigate this topic.

In addition, I desire to contribute knowledge to this field, especially by adding on and expanding on the literature. Marketing in the recent past has witnessed an increase in online presence. This increase in online presence was partly accelerated by the situation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, businesses had to increase their online presence to reach out to their customers and continuously offer services to them during the lockdown. The digital platform especially social media was key to reaching out to these online customers. Therefore, there is a need to study and find out the extent to which these social media platforms influence brands and other marketing-related activities. This will enable this research to contribute theoretical knowledge and practical examples of how social media influences marketing by focusing on less researched part of the world.

1.3 The status of internet and social media usage in Uganda.

Just like the case in other parts of the world, the number of internet users and social media users in Uganda has been on an upward trajectory. Uganda, with one of the youngest populations in the world with 50 percent of its total population below the age of 20, has witnessed not only her young population embrace internet and social media usage but businesses as well (Bibuli, J n.d). According to the statistics as of February 2022, Uganda's population stood at 47.77 million people, and of those 50.7 percent are female compared to 49.3 percent male. Furthermore, Uganda's population increased by at least 2.9 percent from 2021 to 2022 which translates to approximately 1.3 million people. Looking at the population density or demographics, 26.1 percent of Ugandans live in urban areas in cities, municipalities, and towns while 73.9 percent live in rural areas (Kemp, S, 2022).

In terms of internet usage as of January 2022, the statistics indicate that out of the total population of 47.77 million, only about 14 million used the internet which translates to 29.1 percent of the population. The statistics further indicate that the number of internet users increased by 15.1 percent from 2021 to 2022 which translates to an increase of approximately 1.8 million people. This, therefore, means as of January 2022, approximately 70.9 percent of Ugandans remained unconnected to the internet. However, the reports also suggest that during the period of COVID-19 lockdown, the number of internet users increased, and the number of users may be higher than what is reported (Kemp, S, 2022).

From the social media perspective, the statistics indicate that as of January 2022, there were 2.8 million active users on social media which is equivalent to 5.9 percent of the total population. Facebook is the most used social media platform in Uganda with 2.5 million users out of 2.8 million being on Facebook. However, the number on Facebook could have been more if the platform did not restrict the age of those who access the platform to 13 years since the majority of Ugandans are below the age of 20 years (Kemp, S, 2022).

Furthermore, two telecom companies MTN and airtel dominate as the leading internet service providers with the majority of Ugandans accessing the internet via their mobile phones. The internet speed and service have also gradually improved over the years. For instance, the mobile internet connection speed increased by approximately 4.54 Mbps which represents a

percentage increase of over 62 percent in speed (Ibid).

Besides, using social media for socializing, blogging and business has increased over the years. However, the government in Uganda sometimes restricts the use of social media, especially Facebook and Twitter citing security reasons thus infringement on people's right and freedom to use the platform to better their life and business. For instance, during the previous elections and protests, the government usually ask the Uganda communications commission, a government department charged with the responsibility to regulate the communication sector to switch off or restrict access to social media platforms especially Facebook and Twitter since the government believes they are used for mobilizing masses and this can go on for days and sometimes weeks (Bibuli, J n.d).

1.4 Problem area.

Brands around the globe have witnessed a changing trend in how they conduct their business in the ever-changing marketing environment. Some of the changes include how they reach out to their customers and potential customers. This has subsequently forced them to adjust how they generate their content and deliver it to their customers and change their communication and marketing strategies among others. In other words, in this changing marketing environment, brands have become unique in their ways of delivering products and services to their customers to compete favourably in the market (Chan and Mauborgne, 2003).

Even though digital platforms like social media have long existence just like the world wide web, it is of recent that it has become a strong force in marketing to the extent of allowing a one-on-one interface with customers, and quick feedback among others (Ryan and Jones, 2009). According to Turner (2010), some of the commonly used social media sites include Facebook, Twitter, Linked, Google, Instagram, and Pinterest. All these are platforms not only through which brands reach out to their customers, but also, platforms through which communities are built online which enable brands to build an identity with their customers but also an avenue through which online communities can support the brands in their marketing and social activities (Stern, 2010).

However, despite the numerous opportunities created by the different social media platforms, controlling and verifying the authenticity of some of the information that is being communicated remains a huge challenge that will need to be addressed in the future to make the information on the platforms more dependable and verifiable (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). Nevertheless, continuous engagement in these platforms by the brands and their online community continuously gives the brand opportunity to build a relationship, get feedback, entertain their audience, and demonstrate to them how they intend to provide value to them. The emotional connection with the brand through the platform, in the long run, draws the customer closer to the brand, and hence the brand becomes something a customer is proud to be part of which can be demonstrated by how willing they are ready to support the brand's social activities in the community as well as buy the brands product and service (Pine and Gilmore, 2011).

Therefore, due to the rising force of social media platforms as a tool of marketing communication, the traditional method of branding that focused much attention on mass media seems to become less influential than it used to be. This trend can partly be attributed to the more interactive platforms that the social media platforms provide and the massive information that customers and potential customers have access to about the brands through their different online communities on the social media platform. The number of online communities also keeps rising every single year and this becomes a fertile ground for brands to communicate and market their products (Ibid). In other words, a new stance is needed to understand branding and how brands reach out to their market in this dynamically changing marketing environment.

Despite all these changing trends, there is still very little or no consensus at all on how brands should develop the best branding strategy in this modern market influenced by social media. The extent to which the social media platforms influence branding in this modern interactive market that is yet to be exploited to its full potential is also another area of contention (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000). In this thesis, therefore, I have investigated not only how firms can build strong brands, but also how social media platforms influence brand awareness and brand equity.

Nevertheless, the importance of building a strong brand and having a branding strategy by a firm through its improved communication and marketing channels is associated with numerous benefits such as *“improved perceptions of product performance, greater customer loyalty, less vulnerability to competitive marketing actions and marketing crises, larger margins, more elastic customer response to price decreases and inelastic customer response to price increases, greater trade or intermediary cooperation and support, increased marketing communication effectiveness and additional licensing and brand extension opportunities”* (Hoeffler and Keller 2003) as cited in (Keller 2009, p-140).

But overall, continuous use of social media by brands has the potential of lowering the marketing cost since the platform is relatively cheap, easily accessible, and affordable. Sales are likely to increase due to the use of social media. For brands that intend to tap into the wider and international market, social media provides the platform to achieve that internationalization agenda. Through social media, brands can easily co-create and network

with other brands on the platform. Access to timely, real-time, and quick feedback is also possible on this platform among others (Business. gov. au, 2022).

However, attention should also be given to the dangers that one is likely to be exposed to as a result of using social media platforms for building brands and marketing in general. Such setbacks include reduced satisfaction due to less benefit and this can be due to the absence of a clear strategy. The platform requires daily updates which might need constant attention to reap the benefits. Social media even though it promotes brands, is sometimes difficult to control certain misconduct such as harassment and bullying. Hackers and con people have also taken advantage of conning people in disguise by acting on behalf of brands that delegate them (Business.gov.au, 2022).

This paper has therefore investigated social media and how it is used in marketing. To be specific, this paper has investigated how social media influences brand awareness, brand equity, and eventually how to build a strong brand. The topic was investigated using a case study approach of Bravo shoes Uganda Ltd which specializes in selling its branded footwear using its social media presence and its sales outlets within the city center.

1.5 Research Question.

How does social media influence brand awareness and brand equity? And how can firms build a strong brand?

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW.

2.1 Introduction.

To answer the research question posed in the first part of this paper, this chapter has reviewed the different relevant literature from the different authors about the topic of investigation and mainly focused on key concepts such as social media, brand, brand awareness, and brand equity. The review of this literature will not only be relevant in uncovering new insight and areas for future research but also advance new knowledge in this field of study for instance, by giving a real-life example (Webster and Watson, 2002).

Reviewing the literature helps to show the reader, the author's understanding of the topic of investigation and acts as an avenue through which the writer learns and gains more insights into the topic of study. This can be achieved through conducting a holistic critique of the reviewed literature. This perhaps helps to shed light on areas of weakness and strength by comparing the old literature with the new insight in study or current literature (Randolph, 2009).

Therefore, they are different types of literature reviews that can be used in academic writing. They include (a) meta-analysis literature review, (b) meta-synthesis literature review, (c) systematic literature review, and (d) narrative literature review. The narrative literature review has been selected mainly because it is the most pragmatic style of literature review among the four when it comes to developing and reviewing theoretical frameworks in academic writing. But also, the narrative style of a literature review is the most appropriate for generating a written account and subsequently developing frameworks around them to address the research question (Baker, J. D., 2016).

A literature review by its nature encompasses a holistic and critical assessment of the already researched and written down academic literature. It is one of the first tasks a researcher must conduct before proceeding to decide on the area to focus on in a research paper. By definition, a literature review can be described as the act of bringing together and summarising previously produced and published academic literature about a given topic. Alternatively, a literature review is a written down academic paper illustrating knowledge

and a deeper understanding of the scholarly literature on a given topic in a specific field or context (Baker, J. D., 2016).

In this thesis, therefore, the process of literature review began by reviewing different journals, books, and articles from the course about the topic of investigation and mainly focusing on the keywords, social media, brand, brand equity, and brand awareness. All these were done with the research question in mind. *“How does social media influence brand awareness and brand equity? And how can firms build a strong brand?”* All this searched literature was a literature that is written in English. In other words, there was no translation of literature from another foreign language to English. Using numerous search engines such as Google scholar, Emerald, JSTOR, and the Aalborg University library database, the relevant literature was searched using the keywords social media, branding, brand equity, and brand awareness.

Subsequently, the chosen literature was then selected according to its relevance to the research topic and the number of citations. Upon skimming and reading through the different relevant literature about the topic under investigation, the author was able to identify the relevant literature subjectively and objectively (Triangulation). Furthermore, the number of citations of different searched literature was also another factor. The more citation literature had, the more relevant and reliable the literature is presumed to be and therefore considered first (Tranfield et al., 2003). All this process was done to ensure that the literature that is used in this investigation is relevant but also adequate in answering the research question.

To contextualize the research, the relevant keywords; social media, branding, brand equity, and brand awareness are defined to ensure that the research has clarity and is within context. Occasionally, some words in research or academic writing carry different meanings. This process therefore will help to give clarity to the reader on exactly what the author means each time any of key words is mentioned in this paper. However, these definitions are not the only definition of the keywords in the literature but have been selected because the author presumed, they are the most relevant definition for this paper and because they have some consensus with other definitions as well.

2.1.1 social media: is a “...web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with

whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (Boyd, D. M, and Ellison, N. B., 2008, P-211).

2.1.2 A brand: The American Marketing Association defines a brand as a *“name, term, Sign symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or a group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition” (Keller, K. L., 2013, p-30).*

2.1.3 Branding: According to the American Marketing Association, *“Branding is the act of imprinting or engraving a brand name or a symbol onto a distinct individuality to the product” (Jain R, 2017, P-1).*

2.1.4 Brand equity: *“is a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name, and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and /or to that firm's customer” (Aaker, 1991, p-15).*

2.1.5 Brand awareness: This is the *“... ability to recall and recognize the brand under different conditions and to link the brand name, logo, symbol and so forth to certain associations in memory” (Keller, K. L., 2013, P-108).*

2.2 social media.

The first keyword in the literature review of this thesis is social media. This concept was rigorously discussed to generate data. First, the background of social media has been discussed, and the most popular social media sites mentioned. Furthermore, how social media works, as well as its functionalities, have been elaborated on. Social media marketing strategies used by firms and how to make social media attractive have also been discussed. Lastly, the six steps model of using social media was the final discourse in this part. The remaining parts of the literature review have discussed branding but specifically looked at brand awareness, brand equity, and the customer-based brand equity model (CBBE).

The concept of social media, its origin, and how it is used have been discussed by Neti (2011). According to Neti, social media is a web-based technology that utilizes the service of the world wide web to transfigure or modify simple communication into an interactive

communication and dialogue where online communities can be formed. The word social media emanates from two words “social” and “media” which carry relatively different connotations but are inter-connected. Therefore, the word “social” refers to the form of interchange and interaction that occurs between or among individuals through their groups or communities online. On the other hand, “media” is the process of conveying ideas or communicating information through channels in the form of advertisements or publications to convey a message to the audience (Ibid).

For that reason, the whole idea of social media can be summarised to indicate and express different forms of publication and communication platforms that are developed and sustained online through interaction and interpersonal relationships on various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pokémon Go, and Amazon among others (Ibid). Social media can also be described as an internet-based platform where communities are built online based on the technological advancement of the world wide web which allows the users to generate content and share it in their online communities (Kaplan and Hoenlein, 2010).

2.3 The most popular social media sites.

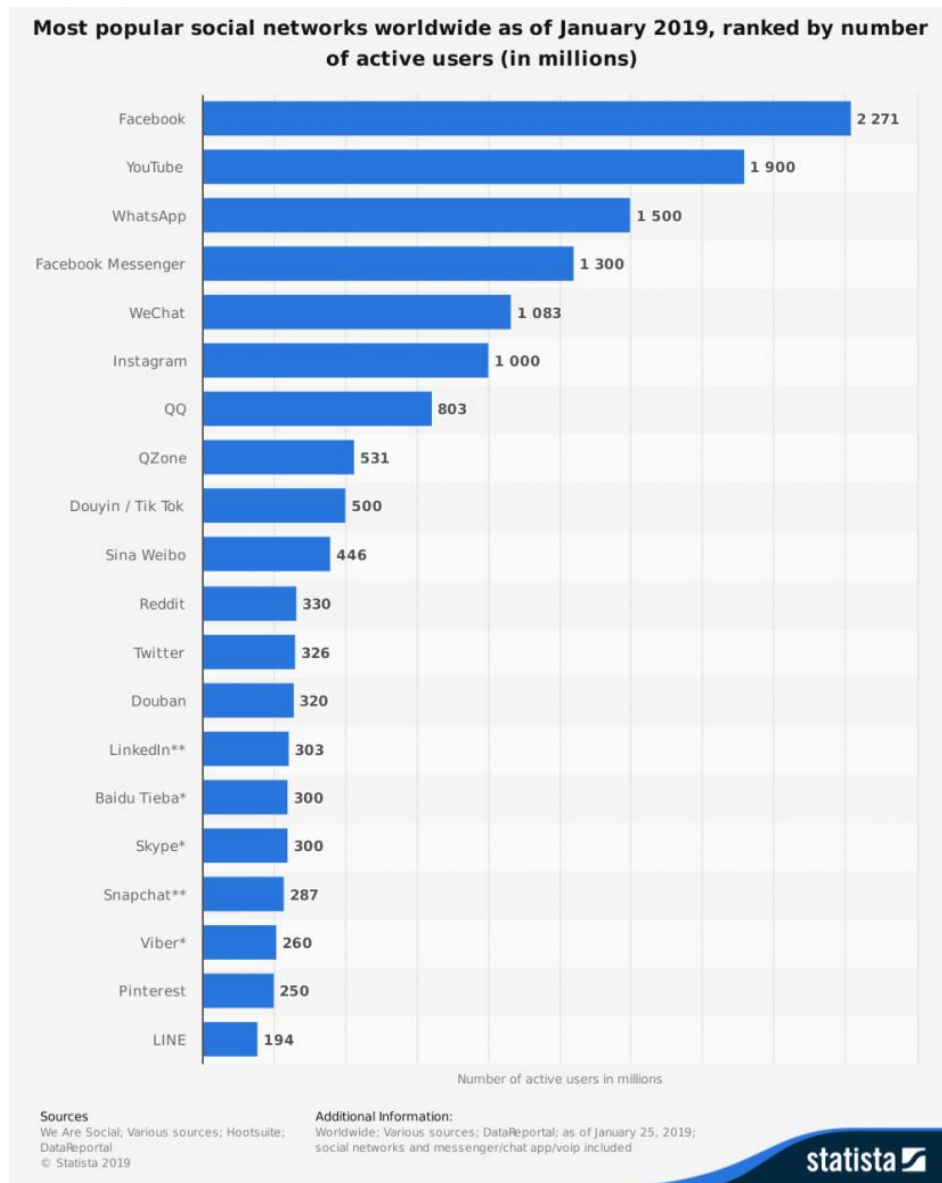
According to Statista 2019, the most popular social media site as of January 2019 is Facebook with approximately 2.27 billion active users. This is closely followed up by YouTube with close to 2 billion active users. Instagram is next with 1 billion active users among others. Important to note is that there is a positive correlation between the popularity of the social media platform and how they influence marketing or consumer purchasing behaviour. For instance, Facebook is the most popular social media platform with the most active users compared to other social media platforms. Its influence on marketing and consumer behaviour is higher compared to other social media sites (Hinton and Hjorth, 2013).

To explain the influence of social media on consumer behaviour, De-Gruttola, (2017), reviewed different findings from different studies. Some of his reviews indicate that 81% of consumers' decision to purchase was triggered by their friend's social media post and over 70% of purchase was based on a referral from social media. Furthermore, Facebook the social media giant accounted for approximately 64% of total revenue generated on all social media

platforms at the same time, half of all the referrals through social media platforms were through Facebook (Ristova, C, 2019, pp-30-31).

In terms of consumers who are looking for new items to purchase, 31% indicated that they are utilizing the services of social media to shop and window shop for new items. Among the young adulthoods in the new century, over 80% of them suggested that the content on social media from unknown people influence what they buy and over 50% of consumers become aware of companies' product through their Twitter page and 48% of those consumers went ahead to purchase (Ristova, C, 2019, pp-30-31).

Furthermore, close to 80% of consumers suggested that social media post from different brands influenced their decision to purchase and the post is most likely to even influence their purchasing decision further if it includes pictures or other forms of graphics. Again, shopping for a particular item through social media is most likely to increase by over 100% if consumers or buyers read positive reviews from those who have previously purchased and used the product or service. In addition, over 50% of the online and offline purchase in 2015 was influenced by Facebook. But overall, in 2015, the total revenue through social media hit the 30-billion-dollar mark (Ibid). Below is a graph showing the most popular social media site based on the number of active users or subscribers.



Source: (Statista, 2019).

2.4 How does social media work.

Unlike the traditional ways of communicating, social media compounds the creation and sharing of content among persons as well as executives. It is a complete turnaround from the traditional way how people used to communicate to the use of tools, channels, connections, and communities online. In other words, to access social media, one needs to be on the digital platform using a smart gadget or a computer. The primary purpose of being on social media is to interact with other users as well as participate in activities on the platform. To put it in another way, social media is a technological advancement in communication (Manning, 2014).

The users on social media begin by registering and later create their profiles either as individuals, companies, businesses, or even a brand itself. This will then give the registered person or business access to the social media platform where users can share, like, create and review content on the platform. However, it is important to note that although they are numerous social media platforms, they have some minor dissimilarities. Users need to choose the right social media platform among the many based on their purpose of joining or creating their profile since they all have different functionalities (Ibid). However, despite the difference, most social media platforms have similar functionalities with only some slight differences in how users generate and create content on them (Kotler, Hollensen, and Opresnik, 2019).

Therefore, social media platforms can be divided into clusters or zones based on the functionalities of the platform and the purpose they intend to serve. The audience for whom the content on the platform is being created falls in one of the four clusters. The four clusters include the following (a) social community, (b) social publishing, (c) social commerce, and (d) social entertainment (Tuten and Solomon, 2018).

2.4.1 (A) Social community: Social community is a cluster where like-minded individuals come together to create a community or relationship where every individual member has a common interest for mutual benefit. The main activities here are sharing content, socializing with the community, and conversing to share experiences among others. The main goal of users coming together is to interact, build relationships, and collaborate for future benefit. The communication and interaction in this cluster are either two-way or multi way with wikis, fora, and other social network sites as channels for communication and interaction (Tuten and Solomon, 2018).

2.4.2 (B) Social publishing: Unlike the previous one, social publishing permits the audience and the creators of the content to co-create what is on the platform. In other words, the users or the audience also generate content that is also shared via social media sites which is also known as user-generated content. Social publishers can be brands, media houses, professionals in their respective fields of specialization, or even individuals. The difference with the previous cluster is that whereas social publishing is more skewed towards creating knowledge and sharing it, the social community is more centered on networking and building relationships for mutual benefit (Ibid).

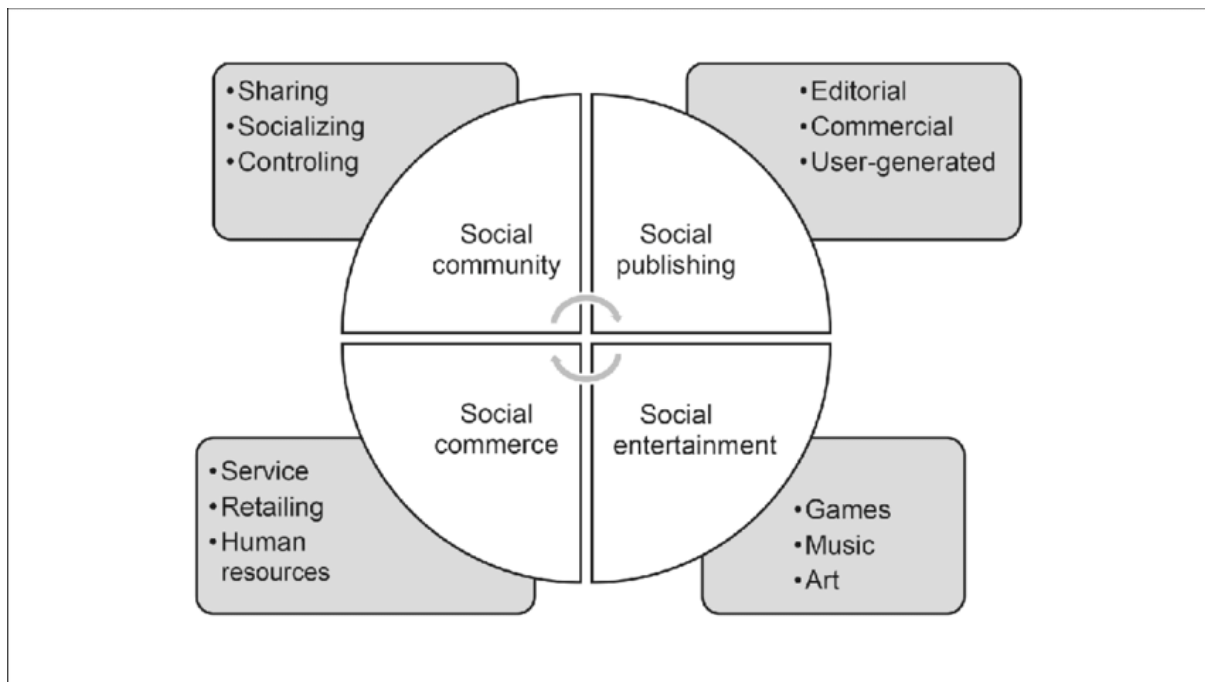
2.4.3 (C) Social commerce: As the name suggests, social commerce is associated with using social media for commerce which entails buying and selling products and services online.

Wang, C., and Zhang, P (2012), define social commerce “...as a form of commerce that is mediated by social media and is converging both online and offline environments” (P-106).

Unlike the previous two clusters, the social commerce cluster provides sellers and buyers the opportunity to come together and trade online. The social media platform is a marketplace where buyers and sellers meet. These platforms include social shopping, social marketplaces, and other hybrid tools among others (Tuten and Solomon, 2018).

2.4.4 (D) Social entertainment: This zone is different from the first three in terms of what it intends to give the audience. The activities here are meant to facilitate entertainment and enjoyment including pleasure that is created online and shared through social media platforms. The dissimilarity with social publishing is that whereas social publishing focuses on sharing content and knowledge, social entertainment compounds sharing of content and entertainment however, more of the content is skewed towards entertainment. The social media platforms for social entertainment include YouTube and Spotify which are the most common ones. However, other social entertainment channels include social music, social games, and social television among others (Ibid). All this is illustrated in the diagram below.

2.5 The Zones of social media.



Source: Tuten, T. & Solomon, M. (2018).

2.6 Understanding the functionalities of social media platforms.

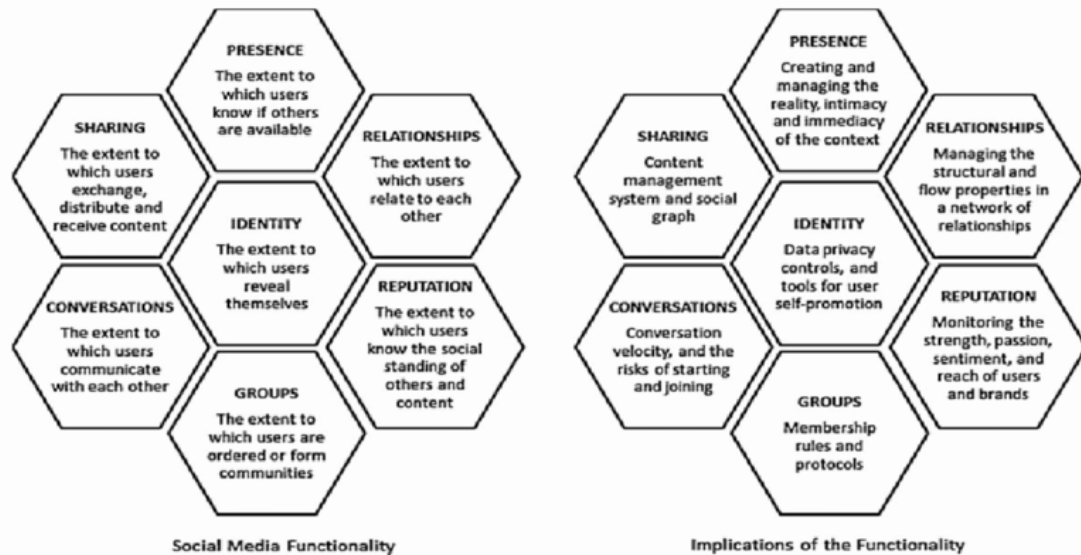
Firms or brands that intend to engage their audience through social media need to understand not only the functionalities of social media but understand their audience in terms of who they are, and what is their expectations and interest on social media. This will then help the firms to choose the right functionality or functionalities of social media to engage them with to bring the best possible outcome. In other words, engaging an audience through social media does not end with creating the account and profile but also with the understanding of the purpose (Kotler, 2019).

To understand the functionalities of social media, Kietzman, Hermkens, and McCarthy, (2011) using the “*honeycomb framework*” advanced seven (7) different components of the framework to explain the functionalities of social media which include: (a) identity, (b) conversation, (c) sharing, (d) presence, (e) relationships, (f) reputations, and (g) groups.

These functionalities according to the framework helps the firm to identify which segment of the audience to concentrate on by selecting the most appropriate functionalities that suit its intended purpose on the social media platform. Furthermore, comprehending the functionalities helps the firms to know more about social media, their numerous

classifications, and most importantly, make sense of the interaction across the different social media platforms (Ibid).

2.7 Understanding the functionalities of social media. The honeycomb of social media.



Source: Kietzman, Hermkens and McCarthy, 2011, p-243

2.7.1 (a) Identity: concerns how much the users on social media can identify themselves by revealing their identities for instance name, gender, age, profession, where they live, their hobbies, and their likes and dislike among others. This information is very important since it helps the firm to target their audience much better using the information, they provide about themselves (Kietzman, Hermkens, and McCarthy, 2011).

2.7.2 (b) Conversation functionality: concerns how users on the social media platforms communicate with each other which can be in the form of text messaging, audio messaging, comments, likes, dislikes, or even favourite posts among others. Therefore, for brands or firms intending to market their product via social media, they must understand this, especially how much private messaging as opposed to public communication their audience use. This will help brands come up with a marketing strategy but also inform them on the most appropriate way to interact with their audience and which mode of communication to use (Ibid).

2.7.3 (c) Sharing functionality: this entails how the users or audience on the social media platform prefer to share content that they come across which can be in the form of video, text,

links, and images among others. It is vital to pay attention to such details as it helps to know what form of information on social media the audience is interested in and willing to be a part of. Sharing information by the audience on social media indicates that the audience is interested in it. This information helps brands develop a content management system and other important statistical data (Ibid).

2.7.4 (d) Presence: concerns how often or frequently individuals or brands present online on social media and how often are other audiences aware of their online presence on social media. Some social media platforms make users' presence on the platform private while others for instance Facebook makes it public for other audience to know. Having this information helps the brand to target their audience with marketing information since they are aware of the time, they are present online, and this helps to create intimacy with them via social media (Ibid).

2.7.5 (e) Relationship: These concerns how the audience on social media are related to each other which can range from couples, siblings, distant relatives, cousins, friends, or even total strangers who follow each other on the platform. Knowing the kind of relationship will inform whether they communicate to each other privately or publicly for instance couples who want to make their relationship life public on social media. Firms can then decide what kind of relationship they would like to build with a such audience and find the best medium or way to communicate to them (Ibid).

2.7.6 (f) Reputations functionality: concerns what the audience knows about their reputation and the reputation of the others via their social media platforms. Indicators such as a blue tick on the account in the case of Facebook, multiple connections, and a huge number of following shows a high reputation. This will direct brands to ask questions such as how does our reputation compare with other brands? This will provide brands with the agility to improve their reputation or take the necessary action (Ibid).

2.7.7 (g) Groups functionality: concerns how users form communities and set rules to regulate group activities. Brands that manage to engage successfully with online groups, can capitalize on them by turning them into the market for their product and services (Ibid).

However, understanding all these functionalities and their proper utilization does not shield the firms from the dark side of social media such as the infringement of people's privacy on the platform, the risk of spreading fake news, and the danger associated with it, witch-hunt and cyberbullying which has become one of the most common crimes on social media today. Furthermore, social media provocation or trolls, and addictive use of the social media platform among others (Baccarella, C. V et al., 2018). Nevertheless, understanding the functionalities and their proper utilization can provide firms with a unique platform to market its product and services to potential customers. In addition, by addressing customer concerns, inquiries, recommendations, and suggestions, the firm can tailor its product and services to meet their needs (Neti, 2011).

Furthermore, understanding the functionalities and social media marketing has the potential to help the firm easily identify influencers and other social media users with a big following. These influencers can become brand ambassadors who can influence their followers towards knowing about the firm and its products (brand awareness). Lastly using social media as a platform to market your products and services is less costly compared to other platforms used in marketing and therefore understanding the functionalities help to target your audience even much better at a minimum cost or budget (Ibid).

2.8 Social media marketing strategies.

social media marketing is not only about firms or brands creating their profile on social media and maintaining their online presence. It encompasses firms using the social media platform to persuade customers or the audience that what they offer is of quality and standard. Therefore, for brands that are considering social media marketing as one of their marketing strategies, they must first determine what they intend to achieve with it or what they intend to improve on with the new platform which might be to increase their sales, or they intend to use the platform to serve better the market they already have by adding another service point among other reasons (Neti, 2011).

To market their products and services on social media, brands use online communities, social networks, and blogs among others to draw the attention of their potential customers. Unlike the traditional marketing strategies that do not use digital or online platforms, social media marketing requires firms to develop strategies on how to manage and go about the online

process. This is because social media marketing is more demanding, and more complex compared to the traditional method of marketing (Neti, 2011).

Contrary to the traditional methods of marketing and advertising that uses mass media or mass advertisement to reach their target audience, social media marketing strategies are more personalized or tailored to individual, groups, or online communities. The firm identifies such individuals and groups and later develops products and services that serve the needs of such groups or individuals with the groups having an input on the final product. In other words, the strategy encourages co-creation since it is easy for the customers to give their suggestions and get quick feedback on how they intend the product to be so that it can serve or meet their needs better (Ibid).

Another strategy of social media marketing is the use of influencers. Influencers are individuals or organizations with huge online following or knowledge about a subject or product and can use that influence to attract potential customers through their online presence and action. Influencers through their actions and endorsement of a brand product, lure their followers to buy in the idea of using the same product they use. In other words, their actions lead to online individuals or groups knowing about the brands' products and eventually buying them (Ibid).

For firms to succeed in their attempt to use social media marketing, they must constantly create content that is not only attractive but content that is relevant and appealing to their target audience. This content can be in form of videos, posts, reviews, updates, text, photos, graphics, and links among others. They are numerous brands outside there who use social media to market their products and services. With this comes multitasking where the audience on social media will switch between different online platforms and social media pages. For a brand to stay in front of the rest, the content they generate on its social media platform must be appealing and attractive to the audience so that they are not distracted by the content of competitors while browsing the internet (Ibid).

In addition, the content that is shared despite being appealing and attractive should be able to generate further action by the customers or the target audience. For instance, how to order the product, read reviews, product descriptions, and features of how recommend the product to

an individual or online communities. In other words, links to where and how to order the product should be visible and easy to use (Ibid).

2.9 Social media goals and how to make the platform appealing for brand awareness.

Building brand awareness in marketing is very vital and this extends to marketing strategies that use social media platforms as well. Brand awareness enables the customers to remember and easily recognize a brand product and this is likely to lead to a purchase (Keller, L, 2013). In 2018, Forbes magazine issued an article in which they shared expert and practitioners' insight on social media goals and how to make social media attractive and enticing to their target audience.

2.9.1 (A) Educate users: One of the strategies to make content on social media attractive is by putting out content that educates the audience and this can be achieved through sharing useful tips and applications on how to use a product or service better.

2.9.2 (B) Test and learn: social media is still evolving and will continue to do so in the future with new features and other changes emerging to it as well. Therefore, it is important to keep testing new methods and features to see which one brings a better outcome. This will make social media not only attractive but also evolve with the new trends.

2.9.3 (C) Establish thought leadership: Through showing leadership on issues in society or within their industry and giving popular opinions that resonate with their audience. This can be illustrated through posts that show concern on the matter affecting society and give the audience useful insights into what works within the industry.

2.9.4 (D) Communicate our core values: Sharing with the audience the firm's core values and principles as opposed to focusing on only posts that inform the audience about the discount and other promotional offers.

2.9.5 (E) Show off our culture of pride, innovation, and social responsibility: This will include a strategy that will promote innovation and social responsibility while at the same time engaging the workforce to reflect those values in their work. Important to note is that employees are the face of every organization and therefore this must be reflected in them as well.

2.9.6 (F) Be Useful: This will include making sure that every activity on your social media page adds value or makes sense so that the audience keeps following.

2.9.7 (G) Build cross-channel brand consistency: Being consistent entails having a plan or a mission that walks the talk and its progress is visible to the audience. This will require demonstrating what is being done in the present as well as projecting what should be expected in the future.

2.9.8 (H) Complement our PR and lead generation efforts: Firms usually have public relations department or officer. As a way of making social media pages attractive, public relations messages can be posted on the social media pages so that the messages are widely shared with the audience.

2.9.9 (I) Drive conversation between our brand and consumers: Social media posts or content should not only generate likes, shares, and comments. In an actual sense, to make the page even more attractive, the firms should be able to use them to address customers' grievances in real time and listen to their suggestions.

2.9.10 (J) Measure engagement to measure the value of our message: This entails assessing whether the message you are putting across social media is generating the value you desire. Once the message generates value, it will be in a position to attract even more audience.

2.9.11 (K) Share knowledge and experience: With the numerous challenges that individuals and businesses face, sharing knowledge on how to address those challenges or just providing useful information about how the challenges can be addressed will not only add value to your social media but attract more audience.

2.9.12 (L) Create and reflect a lifestyle: Often the audience will decide to associate themselves with a brand because they believe the brand reflects their lifestyle. Therefore, it is necessary for the brand to constantly engage the audience to ensure that the content they create still reflects the lifestyle of their audience but also adds value to them.

2.9.13 (M) Provide timely and consistent responses: One of the channels through which brands communicate with the customers or customers reaching out to the brand is through social media. To keep the audience attracted, engaged, and experience value, the firm needs to provide timely feedback and effective services.

2.9.14 (N) Create a loyal fan base: Creating awareness is one reason why brands engage the audience on social media through their posts, blogs, and videos. Therefore, to continuously engage them and even attract more, the firm needs to have a section of loyal fans whom they can count on and in turn influence others too through their positive reviews and comments.

2.9.15 (O) Delivering on our brand promise: In other words, the brand should be able to walk the talk. Many times, brands create their brand message with a promise of what they intend to deliver to the market however, that is sometimes not reflected in their actions. Therefore, to make social media appealing to the audience to increase brand awareness, the brands should be able to deliver to the market what they promise to them.

2.9.16 (P) Build our brand reputation: One way through which brands can benefit from social media is to use the platform to build brand awareness through active participation by constantly creating content that will attract reaction from the audience through shares, likes, reviews, and hashtags among others. By constantly creating content on the social media platform that attracts massive reactions from the audience, the brands can not only attract more audiences but also make the platform the preferred choice.

2.10 The six-step model of using social media.

Today social media has emerged as a powerful tool that is shaping marketing today. However, social media is constantly evolving with new features and new platforms emerging. Since there is not any single agreed-upon formula that has generated consensus on how to use social media in marketing, analysing how it is used and constantly improving how to engage the audience becomes necessary (Manning, 2004). Therefore, the content must be planned with specific goals to achieve the intended objective and keep the audience glued (Forbes communication, 2018). Kotler, Opresnik, and Hollensen, (2019) advanced a six-step model that can help firms using or intending to use social media to market their product and services to successfully implement a workable strategy. The six steps include the following:

2.10.1 (A) Have a purpose: Before even thinking about implementing social media marketing, firms should first determine what they want to achieve by adding this platform to their marketing strategy. After determining the objective, then it will be easy to determine the measures and strategies to use to achieve their objective. The objectives can either be to attract more customers, increase or build customer loyalty, increase sales, increase brand awareness, and help them in their internationalization agenda among others. In addition, the set objective should be SMART implying “*specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound*” (Kotler, Opresnik, and Hollensen, 2019).

2.10.2 (B) Scrutinize or assess your social media: At this stage, the firm has already established its social media platform and defined its objectives and measures to achieve them. This evaluation should help determine who are the audience on the firm’s social media platform, which other brands can we partner with on the platform, what is the outcome of using the social media platform and what can we improve upon. This audit should then help the firm redefine its plan by evaluating how each platform performed and help in reaching its intended target (Ibid).

2.10.3 (C) Go with the most pertinent platform: After conducting the audit or assessment, the firm should be in a position to determine which social media platform is more relevant and most influential in achieving its mission and objective. The next phase is to abandon those social media platforms that are not generating results and move with those that are most relevant to the firm. The relevance of this is to enable the firm to concentrate its synergy and resources on platforms that can move them forward in achieving its social media marketing objective (Ibid).

2.10.4 (D) Learn from others: Firms especially those that are still new to social media marketing find it challenging to constantly generate content for the public or their target audience that will keep them glued or interested in their social media page. However, they can take inspiration from industry leaders and competitors by imitating them or trying to do something that is like them. This will not only make their social media page interesting but also help them attract more audiences to their page (Ibid).

2.10.5 (E) Plan and time your social media message: Every social media post or blog should have an intended purpose and objective it intends to achieve. Therefore, depending on what the firm wants to achieve, the firm must carefully prepare and design its messages to resonate with what the audience expects and at the right time. This is because every social media content will generate a review, comment, like, share, and reply among others. In addition, the content should be developed with a specific target for instance to generate reviews and target more audiences among other reasons. And lastly, every social media platform and the content it generates in terms of comments and reviews should be evaluated to assess if the intended outcome is achieved (Ibid).

2.10.6 (F) Experiment, assess, and make changes: After completing the evaluation, it is important to adjust your social media plan depending on the outcome of the evaluation. Important to note is that social media is evolving and will continue to do so. Therefore, it is important to periodically assess yourself and adjust accordingly to avoid being obsolete. This assessment will also help the firm to determine which social media platforms and tools the firm will continue to use in the future and which ones to drop. In other words, a firm will probably have a higher chance to succeed with its social media marketing if they have a plan before its Implementation (Kotler, Opresnik, and Hollensen, 2019).

2.11 BRANDING.

Branding is not new in the literature. This concept existed in the literature even before the 20th century. One of the oldest forms of branding was by the craftsman who used stamps on their pottery to identify them while the buyers too looked for those stamps to identify the source (Keller, L. K., 2013). Although a brand is both tangible and intangible, the commonly recognized form of branding is the tangible one which includes brand elements such as logo, name, symbols, tones, taglines, and visual expressions in form of colours among others. These features, lead to brand identity which enables customers and potential customers to differentiate one firm and its offerings from another firm. These features ought to be easily recognizable, meaningful, distinct, and flexible (Jain R, 2017).

In terms of definition, the American Marketing Association defines a brand as “...*a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of these, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or a group of sellers and to differentiate them from competitors*”. On the other hand, “*branding is the act of imprinting or engraving a brand name or a symbol onto a distinct individuality to the product*” (Jain R, 2017, p-1). Sources of brand identity include symbols, logos, logotypes, icons, slogans, and signature tunes. Some of the most popular brands include Apple, McDonald’s, Sony, Mercedes-Benz, Coca-Cola, Adidas, and so forth (Ibid).

Therefore, branding is a continuous process that the firm should aim to use to frame a positive perception about themselves but also their offerings which entail products and services. Branding helps to communicate the value the firm intends to offer to the market and eases the process of buying and selling in the long run. However, branding sometimes can also create a negative perception about a firm in case the process is not handled well. Besides, branding provides firms or businesses the opportunity to identify and uniquely distinguish themselves from other similar types of businesses through their different branding activities (Brassington and Pettitt, 2006).

Although branding is sometimes narrowly perceived as just the superintendence of brand image, Holt, (2003) asserts that it should be looked at beyond the general intuition perceived by the customers or potential customers. Sammut-Bonnici, (2015) also maintains that Branding should communicate the long-term strategy and plan of any given business and

should include other different marketing activities of the firm such as product innovation and marketing communication activities that the firm intends to implement.

Branding also provides an opportunity for firms to educate their customers and potential customers on how the product works or how it is used. With a clear brand identity, a firm can conveniently provide superior products and services that uniquely identify them among the crowd. The customers can learn what value is the product to them, and for whom is the product made. And lastly what makes the firm different to usher in interest in what they offer? For branding to bring about value to the firm (brand equity), the customers should be satisfied and persuaded by the brand that what they offer is unique from what others are offering in terms of the value they create, quality, or other attributes (Kotler and Keller, 2006).

In addition, branding also lowers the price elasticity of demand which entails that a firm will be able to increase the price without significantly affecting the demand. In a market where products have substitutes, a price increase will significantly affect the demand since customers will resort to buying the substitute product or will buy from competitors. With branding, competition is no longer on price but on other attributes of the marketing mix and this has the potential to improve the profitability of the firm hence brand equity (Kotler and Keller, 2006). Other brand aspects include.

“Branding is a strategic point of view, not a select set of activities.

Branding is central to creating customer value, not just images.

Branding is a key tool for creating and maintaining competitive advantage.

Brands are cultures that circulate in society as conventional stories.

Effective brand strategies must address the four distinct components of brand value.

Brand strategies must be “engineered” into the marketing mix” (Holt D, 2003 p-1).

2.12 Building Brand Awareness.

Brand awareness is one of the components of branding that firms need to pay attention to achieve brand equity. Creating brand awareness involves increasing the level of exposure of the brand elements to the market so that the customers and potential customers become familiar with the brand. Besides, one of the major objectives of being in business is to generate revenue and make a profit which is achievable through sales of goods or services the

firm offers. Brand awareness, therefore, creates that conducive atmosphere for repetitive purchases and attracts new customers (Keller, K. L. 2013).

According to Keller, K. L. (2013), Brand awareness is “... *ability to recall and recognize the brand under different conditions and to link the brand name, logo, symbol and so forth to certain associations in memory*” (p-108). Brand awareness encompasses all those activities that are targeted toward making consumers aware and familiar with the firm’s products and services. Brand awareness is a form of a marketing campaign aimed at increasing the awareness of the brand in the market. For a firm to have brand awareness, it implies that the brand is easily recognized, well known, famous, and can easily be differentiated from others. Some of the strategies firms use to build brand awareness include radio and TV advertisements, online campaigns, use of influencers, referral programs, giving personality to a brand, and creating videos among others (Ibid).

Brand awareness can also be clustered into two broad categories which include “*brand recognition*” and “*brand recall*” Brand recognition usually occurs at the point of sale. For instance, when the customers are in the store looking for a product category to buy, will they recognize the brand as one they have used before and decide to purchase it? On the other hand, brand recall usually occurs away from the point of sale. For instance, when a customer decides to purchase a product category, will they be able to remember the brand from their memory before reaching the store? Important to note is that both brand recognition and brand recall are important in building brand awareness which will eventually lead to brand equity (Ibid).

However, if it so happens that most of the consumers' decisions to purchase take place at the point of purchase or upon physical contact or visualization of packaging material engraved with brand logo and brand name, then it implies that brand recognition is more relevant, and the firm should pay more attention to it. On the contrary, if consumers' decisions to purchase are made away from the point of sale or before they come to the store to purchase, then brand recall will be more significant, and the firm should pay more attention to it as opposed to brand recognition. Nevertheless, both are significant when it comes to consumer brand evaluation (Ibid).

Furthermore, research should be done first to know the firm eco-system which includes the competitors, conditions in the market or industry, and the behaviour of consumers. This study should be done before establishing what strategy to adopt to build brand awareness because the right strategy increases the chances of purchase by the consumers. Again, building brand awareness can facilitate a firm's effort in building a niche because customers will easily respond to the marketing activities (Ibid). The other question is what next after the firm has built strong brand awareness through brand recognition and brand recall?

According to Keller, K. L. (2013), it is a very uncommon situation in the market to find consumers loyal to one brand. In most circumstances, the consumer will have more than one brand that they are loyal to. In such circumstances, therefore, it is very necessary for the firm to continuously create marketing campaigns to maintain the level of awareness or even increase the level of brand recognition and brand recall at the same time. This will require constantly evaluating the effects of their different marketing campaigns to ensure that the marketing campaigns are creating a positive impact and minimize the chances of creating a negative impact on brand awareness. In the end, the evaluation should also be able to suggest new and innovative ways to improve brand awareness (Ibid).

Brand awareness positively influences brand image and brand association. For a firm to create a positive brand image, the brand must first be in the memory of the consumers which later will influence brand association. A positive brand association, in the long run, will lead to positive and emotional feedback from the customers that will in turn make the customers prefer your products and services instead of your competitor's product. Secondly, brand awareness creates a considerable advantage. In most circumstances, consumers have two or three brands in their memories whenever they decide to buy a product intended to satisfy their needs. Therefore, increasing brand awareness increases the chances or the likelihood of the customer considering your brand in their memories. Again, brand awareness positively influences the consumers' decision to buy a product even when it has no brand association in their minds. The decision to purchase will therefore be influenced by the familiarity with the product and the constant exposure. In other words, consumers buy brands that are well established and known (Ibid).

2.13 Brand Equity.

Brand equity is one of the most important resources an organization can have and use it to its advantage including gaining a competitive advantage. The first publication on the topic of brand equity is believed to have first appeared in the literature around the 1980s and since then the topic has received remarkable attention which has seen the publication of different books and articles from different scholars (Aaker and Keller, 1990). However, it's important to note that since the 1990s, the topic of brand equity has evolved to what it is today. For instance, in 1990, most research focused on how to measure brand equity. In the early 2000s, attention shifted to finding the repercussion of brand equity. Today, most research on brand equity seems to be skewed towards the consequences and new antecedents in brand equity (Sze, 2012).

By definition, brand equity *“is a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/ or to that firms customer”* (Aaker, 1991, p-15). Alternatively, brand equity is *“the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand”* (Keller, 1993, p-2). From the definitions, it can be noted that brand equity is an asset to the firm as well as a liability. Firms, therefore, try to minimize the negative effect (liability) and maximize the positive effect (asset) to become more competitive in the market. They achieve this through differentiation strategy, association as well as brand protection (Sammut-Bonnici, 2015).

Brand differentiation occurs when a brand makes a deliberate effort to differentiate itself from other brands to stand out and, hence attract new customers. This can occur through creating imagery, logos, and other marketing communication channels. On the other hand, the brand association occurs when a brand deliberately associates itself with an already established and successful brand in the market which enables the firm to position its product and services alongside that of the already existing and successful brand. Lastly, brand protection encompasses guarding or protecting the brand intellectual property and other associated features of the brand against infringement, counterfeits, and copyrights. Brand protection can be done by obtaining copyright and obtaining patent rights to a brand's trademark (Sammut-Bonnici, 2015).

In terms of brand positioning, identification of a brand in the market space is key to achieving competitive advantage as well as consumer perception of the brand. If a brand is well positioned in the market and consumers have a positive perception or association with the brand, it becomes much easier for the brand to communicate what it stands for, determining the unique selling point in the market becomes easier as well as how the brand is overlapping with other brands in the market. However, the experience shows that branding has moved beyond customers' perception to customer satisfaction which can be noticed through customer retention capabilities by the brand (Ibid).

To measure brand equity, two broad approaches can be used qualitative and quantitative. Qualitatively by looking at customers' positive response to the firm branding activity as well as looking at the customer retention rate and repetitive purchases among others. On the other hand, measuring brand equity can also be done quantitatively by looking at the financial value that accrues to the firm. For instance, by deducting the tangible assets that accrue to a firm due to its branding activities from the overall value of the firm. The difference is what is referred to as brand equity. Alternatively, by calculating the price difference between a branded product and one that is not branded and taking the difference and multiplying it with the total sale volume. Market leaders in any given industry are most likely to possess' higher brand equity compared to non-market leaders or smaller brands (Ibid).

Important to note is that despite the numerous dimensions and views about brand equity and how it can be measured, it is viewed differently. For instance, from the firm's perspective, managerial perspective as well as a consumer perspective. From the firm's perspective, brand equity is *"the future discounted value of the profit stream that can be attributed to the price premium or enhanced loyalty generated by the brand name"* (Aaker and Biel, 1993, p-2). From the managerial proposition, brand equity assimilates brand loyalty, brand association, brand awareness, perceived brand quality as well as other related brand assets. From the consumer perspective, brand equity is the additional functional services or additional benefits from a product that are associated with the brand name (Ibid).

Therefore, brand equity is associated with the added value that accrues over time due to the brand name or association with the brand. The importance of brand equity lies in the fact that once a firm develops sufficient brand equity, the firm's revenue grows because more and more consumers are likely to buy the firm's product or services. Consequently, as the brand

awareness and recognition in the market grows, the firm is likely to persuade the customers to a higher level of loyalty or commitment towards the brand and its product which in the long run will lead the customers to prefer the firm's product over those of the competitors (Keller, 2009).

2.14 How to build a strong brand through the CBBE model.

Building a strong brand requires the firm to go through a process from brand salience up to the last stage of brand resonance. The sequence of each building block is dependent upon the successful completion of the previous one. According to Keller, L. K (2013), building a strong brand is a long-term process that can only be accomplished upon successful completion of some steps in the customer-based brand equity model pyramid (CBBE). Keller one of the international brand management scholars developed one of the most recognized brand management models. The model describes how a firm can grow the value of its brand, enabling customers to develop not only loyalty towards the brand but also repetitive purchase. This model also facilitates the brand to evaluate itself in terms of market share (Ibid).

To build a reputable and competitive brand, the model suggests that the firm needs to create a perception in the market or among the targeted audience and later every point of sale or touch point should work towards that goal. Important to note is that every brand will develop and grow through associations, performance, emotions, and connections. According to the customer-based brand equity model, one cannot build brand equity without creating or building sufficient brand awareness. Besides, brand equity is dependent upon the brand knowledge that is held by the consumers (Ibid).

Customer-based brand equity is *“the differential effect that consumer knowledge about the brand has on their response to marketing for that brand”* (Keller, K. L., 2013, p-69). In other words, for customer-based brand equity to be realized, the consumers must not only be familiar with the brand but must also hold a strong, unique, and favourable brand association with the brand. Important to note is that a brand can have either a positive customer-based brand equity or negative customer-based brand equity depending on how the consumers respond to the brand marketing activities (Ibid).

Positive customer-based brand equity occurs when consumers respond in a beneficial or complimentary way to the brand marketing activities. On the other hand, negative customer-based brand equity occurs when consumers respond in an unfavourable way to the marketing activities of the brand. The goal should be to get a positive customer-based brand equity response. Therefore, brands need to make a deliberate effort through their marketing and communication programs to build massive brand awareness to realize brand equity. The four steps in building a strong brand are (a) brand identity, (b) brand meaning, (c) brand response, and (d) brand relationships (Keller, K. L, 2013).

2.14.1 (a) Brand identity: Addresses the question, who are you as a brand? It also entails features of the brand such as product benefits and product class which the customers keep in their mind about a specific brand. Brand identification can also include product design, colour, and logo which identify and differentiate the brand in the consumer's mind (Ibid).

2.14.2 (b) Brand meaning: Seeks to answer the question what are you as a brand? In the broader sense, it looks at the intangible and tangible brand associations that are held in the customer's mind. Brand meaning conveys the message of what value are you in the market, and why should the audience care about you. Why should the audience prefer you instead of your competitors and how different are you from the competitors? (Ibid).

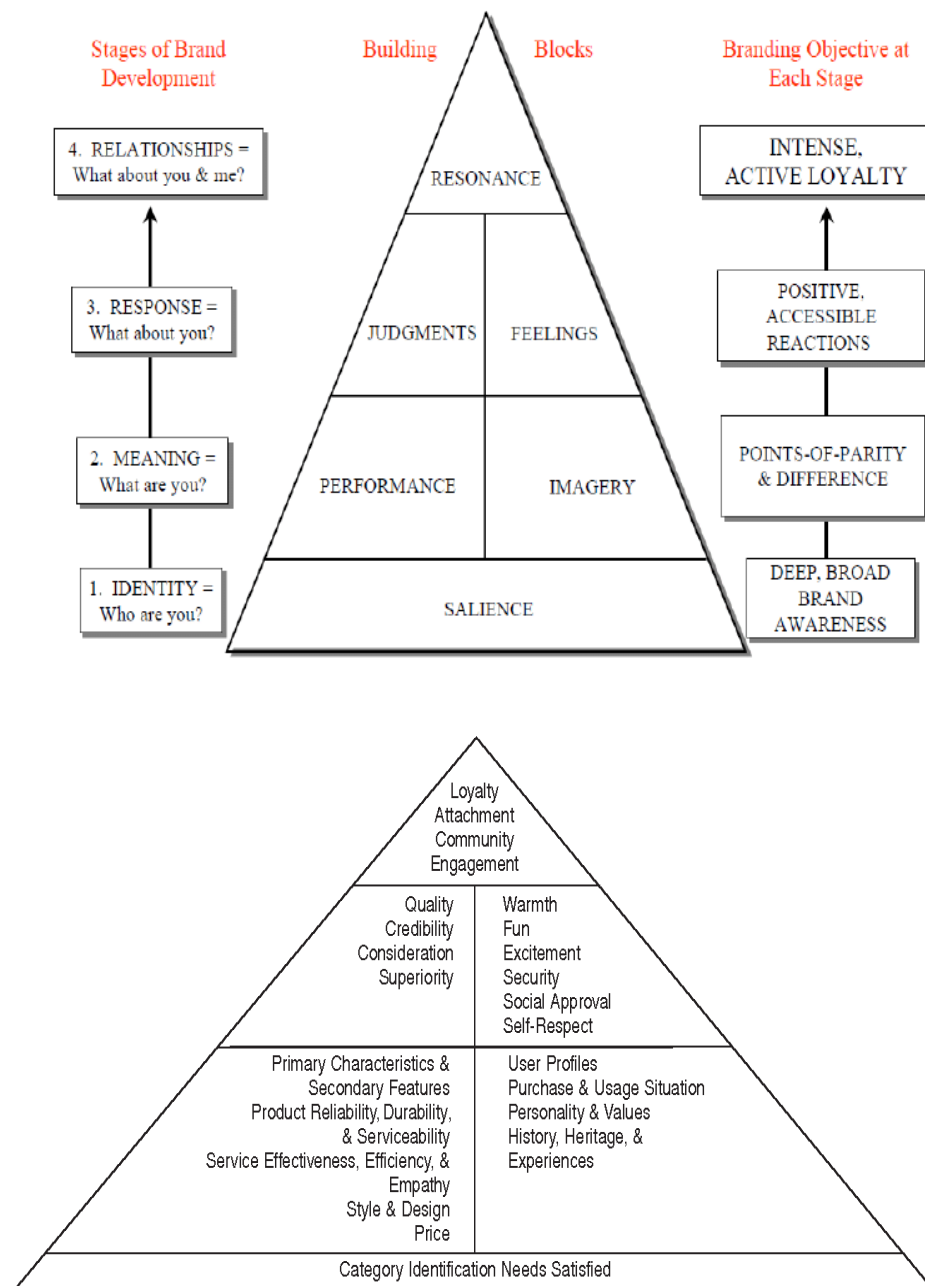
2.14.3 (c) Brand response: This entails how the audience is responding to your branding messages. How does the audience feel about you? (Ibid).

2.14.4 (d) Brand relationship: This describes the level of relationship with your audience and whether the audience resonates with your brand. How connected are you with your audience? Do they associate and identify themselves with your brand? (Ibid).

Positioning is also key in a customer-based brand equity model because establishing the right brand identity and brand image and later developing beneficial reactions from the consumer can help the brand stay ahead of the rest. Brand positioning encompasses how to set up a competitive advantage in the marketplace which is achievable through point-of-difference hence giving consumers more reason to consider your product or service. On the contrary, point-of-parity does not give the brand a competitive edge over other brands. It simply

implies that the product or services a brand offers are not unique but the same or similar to what others on the market are offering. Therefore, for brands that aim to achieve brand equity and reach brand resonance level, they should strive to have point-of-difference (Keller, K. L., 2013).

2.15 The Brand Resonance pyramid.



The customer-based brand equity model pyramid (Keller K. L., 2013, p-108).

The figures above, demonstrate the stages through which a brand will go through to achieve brand resonance. The pyramid consists of six building blocks which are all significant for

building a strong brand (Brand resonance). They include (a) brand salience, (b) brand performance and brand imagery, (c) brand judgment and brand feelings, and lastly, (d) brand resonance. To achieve brand resonance, the sequence of each building block ought to be followed before moving on to the next one. For instance, to achieve brand performance and imagery, brand salience ought to have been built. In the same way, brand judgment and feeling cannot be established before a brand performance and brand imagery. And lastly, brand resonance cannot be achieved before judgment and feelings are established (Keller, K. L., 2013).

From the above figures, it is also possible to notice that the customer-based brand equity model pyramid is a duality model. In other words, it's a model that has two sides. For instance, the left-hand side of the model explains how the brand can be built (stages of brand development) from identity, meaning, response, and finally relationships. On the contrary, the right-hand side of the pyramid shows (the branding objective at each stage) of the emotional journey of building a brand. Therefore, to build a strong brand that is competitive in the market, the target should be to reach the apex of the pyramid which is achievable by going through the six building blocks (Keller, K. L., 2013). Each stage of the building blocks is described below.

2.15.1 Brand salience.

Brand salience is the starting point of building a strong brand even though having brand salience alone is not adequate to develop a strong brand. By definition, brand salience is the extent to which a brand is thought of or noticed by the consumers. Without brand salience, consumers will not be in a position to select your product or brand where they are other similar product categories. Strong brands are said to have a high brand salience compared to weak brands that have low brand salience. In addition, a salient brand must have both depth and breadth of brand awareness. Depth of brand awareness encompasses how faster customers can recognize and recall a brand. On the other hand, the breadth of brand awareness looks at the consumption and purchase situation by the consumers. Therefore, a brand with a high salience is composed of depth and breadth of brand awareness (Keller, K. L., 2013).

Therefore, the first question in the pyramid regards who you are. (Brand identity). To establish who the brand is, the brand needs to create brand awareness to establish brand

salience with the audience. The objective here is not only to make the customers aware of which of their needs the brand intends to satisfy but also to make sure that the audience is familiar with the product category of the brand and maybe later be able to identify the other products or services of the brand among from similar brands. Furthermore, the other objective here is also to achieve a deep depth and broad breadth of brand awareness so that not only does the audience think about the brand, but also make a sufficient purchase (Ibid).

2.15.2 Brand performance and brand imagery.

The second steps in the customer-based brand equity model are “brand performance” and “brand imagery”. Brand performance looks at how the product is satisfying the needs of the customers, especially the functional needs. Important to note is that the product or the offerings of the firm is the main reason why customers keep clued to the brand and its therefore important that it does not only meet their needs but also exceeds their expectation to create a competitive advantage (point of difference) hence leading to brand loyalty (Ibid). According to the model they are majorly five attributes of brand performance which include “(a) primary characteristics and supplementary features, (b) product reliability, durability, and serviceability, (c) service effectiveness, efficiency, and empathy, (d) style and design, and (e) price” (Keller, K. L., 2013, p-108). All these features are intrinsic properties of the brand.

Brand imagery on the other hand looks at the extrinsic features of the product the brand is offering or the messaging and appearance of the brand. Things that one can smell, taste, touch and listen to about the brand. This includes how the product is satisfying customers' psychological and social needs. To achieve or contribute to achieving brand equity, brand imagery should be able to induce strong, favourable, and unique brand associations. They are four categories of brand imagery which include “(a) user profiles, (b) purchase and usage situations, (c) personality and values, and (d) history, heritage, and experiences” (Keller, K. L., 2013, p-108).

Under this category, the question that the model seeks to address is what are you? (Brand meaning). For a brand to have a brand meaning, it is important to define what the brand stands for, create a brand image different from others, and differentiate yourself in terms of product performance. It is important to note that the type of brand image and association related with a brand positive or negative is determined by the customers and this can be after

sales promotion activities, advertisement, word of mouth, or after the customers' personal experience with your product and service (Ibid).

2.15.3 Judgements and feelings.

The third level in the model consists of brand judgments and feelings. Important to note is that the branding objective at this stage is to bring about a positive accessible reaction from the consumers. Brand judgment entails opinions and evaluation of the brand in question by the consumers who use the product or service. Consumers' judgment includes evaluating brand performance as well as brand imagery and associations. According to the model, there are four types of judgment that are necessary for this evaluation (a) quality, (b) credibility, (c) consideration, and (d) superiority. Depending on how the consumers choose to judge the brand, what is most important at this level is that the judgment should not be negative (Keller, K. L., 2013).

On the other hand, brand feelings are related to consumers' emotional reactions toward the brand. These feelings are triggered by the branding program of the firm such as sales promotion and other forms of advertisement. These feelings vary and can range from mild to intense feelings. The feelings can also be either positive or negative. There are six types of feelings that can be evoked according to the model, and they include (a) warmth, (b) fun, (c) excitement, (d) security, (e) social approval, (f) and (g) self-respect. The question the model seeks to answer at this stage is what about you (Brand response). The response varies depending on how the marketing or branding activities influenced the consumers toward the brand feeling and judgment. The emotions induced by positive brand judgment and feelings can influence the consumer's purchasing decision (Ibid).

2.15.4 Brand resonance.

The last stage of the model entails brand resonance which focuses on strong relationships the consumers build with the brand. *“Brand resonance describes the nature of this relationship and the extent to which customers feel that they are ‘in sync’ with the brand”* (Keller, K. L., 2013, p-120). For instance, brands like Apple, eBay, and Harley-Davidson are said to have achieved this level. Brand resonance is classified into four clusters which include (a) Behavioural loyalty, (b) attitudinal attachment, (c) a sense of community, and (d) active engagement. The branding objective at this level is aimed at building intensive active loyalty from the customer which can be demonstrated by repetitive purchases by the customers but

also other engagement with the brand that is not related to the purchase of the brand's product (Ibid).

Brand resonance is also described in terms of intensity or the level of the psychological bond the customers have developed with the brand over time. At this level customers actively engage with the brand and become loyal to the extent of participating in the events organized by the brand as well as seeking to know more about the brand. The relationship at this level has two sides which include consistency of using the brand as well as repurchase of the brand and lastly engagement with activities that are not linked with purchase or consumption. The question here regards what about you and me? (relationship)? Which entails the nature and level of relationship between the brand and the customers as described above. But more importantly, how the customers feel towards the brand are in harmony with the brand (Ibid).

CHAPTER THREE

PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

3.1 Introduction.

This chapter has mainly focused on explaining to the reader how knowledge in this paper was arrived at by explaining the philosophy of science applied in the research. The chapter began by clarifying the chosen philosophical perspective of the research as well as the ontological and epistemological view and the reasons behind their choice.

3.2 Philosophical stance.

Taking a philosophical stance in research is one of the fundamental things to perform when conducting research in any field. This is partly because a philosophical stance will later inform the choice of data collection and processing, research strategy as well as method of analysis among others (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Philosophy of science is a systematic presentation of the researchers' thoughts conferred within a reliable knowledge field that can be obtained through a systematic analysis (Durbin, 1988).

In other words, a philosophy of science entails the methods of how the researcher is going about constructing knowledge in the research which entails both ontology and epistemology (Durbin, 1988). *"... world view that guides the investigation, not only is choice of methods but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways"* (Saunders et al., 2012, p-106). Put it in another way, the philosophy of science *"explains different types of social behaviors using a set of constructs, proposition, boundary condition, assumptions and underlying logic"* (Bhattacharjee, 2012, P-30). Although they are other paradigms or classifications of philosophy of science that have been acknowledged and applied in studies, Guba, and Lincoln (1994) clustered them into (a) positivism, (b) post-positivism, (c) critical theory, and, (d) constructivism.

This research, therefore, adopts the social constructionism perspective since it aligns with the objective of the research and what the researcher intends to achieve in this research. Social constructionism is a theoretical framework widely applied in social science, sociology, and communication among other fields. It is premised on the assumption that, other than depending on already established norms, knowledge should be socially and collaboratively constructed to represent world views. It entails how social interactions between humans and

the world around them confer meaning to otherwise reality that would not be recognized (Crotty, 1998).

According to the constructionism view, the world is in a constant motion of revision and being shaped and reshaped by world views and opinions. For instance, different individuals might encounter the same situation but differ in opinion or viewpoint. *“...knowledge, and therefore all meaning reality as such is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context”* (Crotty, 1998, P-42). For example, in this thesis, I have interviewed the CEO of Bravo shoes and their customers. I aimed to find out how social media influences brand awareness and brand equity and how firms can build strong brands. The views from the interviews are subjective since everyone gave their own opinion of how they perceived it. Later the views were interpreted and out of their interpretation, the process of constructing knowledge commenced.

3.3 Ontology and Epistemology of the research.

Ontology is a branch of philosophy that seeks to explain how knowledge is arrived at. In other words, ontology looks at the classification and clarification of the subject of investigation. An example to explain ontology can be when researchers cluster their studies or finding to have a better interpretation of them (Creswell et al., 1988). Ontology can broadly be categorized into objectivism and subjectivism. Objectivism ontology is independent and is not affected by external factors (Bryman, 2012). On the other hand, subjectivism ontology asserts that they are multiple realities where *“... categories are not only produced through social interaction but that they are in a constant state of revision”* (Bryman, 2012, p-33). This research adopts the subjective ontology since knowledge in this research will be socially constructed.

On the other hand, epistemology is a branch of philosophy of science that deals with how knowledge is interpreted. *“Epistemology is concerned with providing a philosophical grounding for what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate”* (Crotty, 1998, p-8). They are two types of epistemologies, positivism, and interpretivism. Positivism *“believes that human experience of the world reflects an objective, independent reality and that this reality provides the foundation for human knowledge”* (Weber, 2004, p-4). The positivism lens looks at the world independently

with measurements and interpretations that are not influenced by human interpretations (Myers, M. D, 1997a). In other words, positivism takes a neutral stance and is centered on scientific measurements (Ormston et al., 2014).

On the other hand, interpretivism is premised on the notion that human beings are key in the investigation since they can subjectively express themselves about a subject matter (Kaplan and Maxwell, 1994). It also entails multiple realities where different groups interpret occurrences uniquely. Furthermore, interpretivism has its own beliefs, values, and assumptions which have a repercussion on the outcome of the research (Ibid). In other words, it is premised “...upon the view that a strategy is required that respects the differences between people and the objects of natural science and therefore requires social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action” (Bryman, 2012, p-30).

Interpretivism studies a phenomenon in its natural setting without a predetermined mindset where the researcher's feeling forms part of the research (Kaplan and Maxwell, 1994). “*Interpretive studies assume that people create and associate their own subjective and inter-subjective meanings as they interact with the world around them. Interpretive researchers thus attempt to understand phenomena through accessing the meanings that participants assign to them*” (Orlikowski and Baroudi, 2002, p-55). Therefore, this research adopts the interpretivism stance since it assumes that the world is not static, and it allows the researchers feeling to be expressed. But on the other hand, using the positivism stance would limit the investigation since it does not take into consideration the social, political, and cultural aspects.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.

4.1 Introduction.

Unlike the previous chapter that discussed the philosophical stance or the philosophy of science in this paper, this chapter has mainly focused on the research methods that were applied in the paper. The chapter has discussed the research approach, research methods, research strategy, the nature of data used, and the method for their collection. Furthermore, the chapter has also introduced the case to the reader and highlighted the sampling technique as well as how the interviews were conducted. The last part of this chapter concluded with the discussion of the validity and reliability issues relating to the research, ethical considerations as well as the method of analysis that was applied to draw conclusions and answer the research question.

4.2 Research Approach.

When conducting research, a point of contention arises regarding the research approach. Whether knowledge in the research will be arrived at the beginning of the research or the end. Furthermore, whether the research or the researcher will end up developing a new theory or the contrary. The type of research approach is also contingent on the relationship between the research and the type of literature or theory. They are two types of research approaches that can be applied to research that is inductive approach and the deductive approach (Bryman, 2016).

With the inductive approach, the ultimate objective of the research is to develop a theory. The research is then preceded by testing the different hypotheses in the study. The research begins by collecting data and other empirical findings, later the collected data is clustered into a theme which is later contextualized and analysed to come up with a new theory (Esterberg, Kristin G, 2002). In other words, the inductive approach is a down, upward approach from specific themes to general information

On the other hand, with the deductive approach, the research moves from reviewing literature or theory and tries to find out if those facts are supported by empirical findings. The researcher starts the research with what they already know and moves to what they want to find out while using a clear literature review or theory in their mind (Esterberg, Kristin G.,

2002). Unlike the inductive approach, deductive approach the researcher's objective is not to come up with a new theory but rather to use already known concepts and theories to either uncover new findings or substantiate the theory based on the findings of the research study as well as redo the process to verify concepts or theory (Creswell, 2014).

This research, therefore, has adopted a deductive approach since the research is not skewed towards developing a new theory but rather uses the reviewed literature about social media and branding specifically brand awareness, brand equity, and the customer-based equity model to answer the research question which states that *"How does social media influence brand awareness and brand equity? And how can firms build a strong brand?"* This research question will be tested using the collected data and analysed using both the collected data and reviewed literature to conclude the topic of investigation.

4.3 Research methods.

For any research to be able to explain, describe and analyse data, a research method is necessary to achieve that. They are two types of research methods and that is quantitative research method and qualitative research method. Quantitative research in the early days was mostly used in natural science to study the natural occurrence, especially those that involved numerical data and required laboratory procedures and survey among others (Myers, 1997a). According to Creswell (2014), the quantitative research approach is *"an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analysed using statistical procedures"* (p-4).

On the other hand, qualitative research *"...involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them"* (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p-3). In other words, qualitative research is mainly suitable when the research adopts an interpretive stance and data, or the analysis doesn't in cooperate with a numerical figure. Furthermore, qualitative research is also suitable when the method of data collection involves an in-depth interview, observation, group discussion, participant observation, and ethnographic studies among others (Saunders et al., 2009). This research, therefore, adopts the qualitative research method since it does not involve numerical

data but also this method of research is suitable when the research adopts the interpretivism stance.

4.4 Research Strategy.

They are different research strategies that can be used in a qualitative research study ranging from a case study, ethnographic studies, survey, grounded theory, and action research among others. All these strategies are relied upon the philosophy of science adopted in the research, the amount of time allocated for the studies, the level of resources, the level of knowledge, and the research objective (Saunders et al., 2009). In this research, a case study has been chosen as a research strategy. A case study is *“an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident”* (Yin, 2014, p-16). Or *“A method of intensively studying phenomenon over time within its natural setting in one of few sites”* (Bhattacharjee, 2012, p-93).

With a case study, the inquiry needs to investigate the phenomenon in its natural habitat with little or no hindrance and disruptions at all. Furthermore, with a case study, the study must adopt a comprehensive investigation by studying all the elements in the case where samples can be drawn to ensure that the inter-relationships and interconnectedness of what is being studied can be investigated without isolating some important components or groups in the study (Oates, 2006). In addition, the researcher has an important role to play in that, the researcher is fully in charge of explaining all the complexity, processes, and relationships of the study and drawing boundaries of the sample size or the case being investigated (Creswell, 2013)

Another common characteristic or important thing to note about a case study is that it can be applied to studies that adopt both positivism and interpretivism epistemological stances (Yin, 2012). For instance, in the case of positivism, the investigation commences with quantifiable estimates and other variables in the studies to test the hypothesis (Darke et al., 1998). On the other hand, with interpretivism, the investigation sets out to study the whole phenomenon without setting limits to the boundaries, and testing the hypothesis is not required (Orlikowski and Baroudi, 2002). It can also be adopted in both qualitative and quantitative studies (Myers, 2013).

Furthermore, with studies that adopt a case study as a research strategy, one must decide whether to investigate the topic using a single case study or multiple case study approach. A single case study is a type of research strategy where the research focuses attention on an isolated setting without looking out to other indistinguishable or similar surroundings. On the other hand, with a multiple case study research strategy, the researcher studies the topic by drawing samples or inquiries across numerous organizations or settings where comparisons can be made if necessary, during the investigation (Saunders et al., 2009).

This research adopts a single case study as a research strategy. A single case study has been adopted because the researcher finds it the most appropriate method of studying the topic given the time frame allocated for this study and the resources. Aware of the fact that the interviews with the customers of Bravo shoes (case company) were conducted by telephone given the distance the author will have to travel if a face-to-face interview was to be conducted, a single case study approach was the most appropriate method. Secondly, a single case study allows the study to focus on all the synergy and allows in-depth studies with rich content of data (Yin, 2003). Furthermore, this study is not intended or designed to make a comparative case analysis which also makes a single case study to be preferred.

4.5 Data and how it was obtained.

In a research study, they are broadly two types of data that can be used which include primary and secondary data. The process of obtaining primary data commenced with a face-to-face interview with the CEO of Bravo shoes. In April 2022, the researcher travelled to Uganda for a short vacation and spared some time to have an interview with the CEO of Bravo shoes. This interview was semi-structured and exploratory. The idea was to get to know the history, motivation, and story behind the Bravo shoes apart from the information we see on social media and their website. The interview also inquired about branding specifically what it means to them, its importance, and what works for them in terms of branding strategy. Upon return to Denmark, ten (10) semi-structured telephone interview with the customers of Bravo shoes was conducted to obtain more primary data that was later used in the analysis.

Primary data was also obtained through online observation. Although they are some computer-based software programs that can be used to electronically retrieve, store, analyse and disseminate information from social media accounts, this service was not utilized in this

investigation since the researcher was not familiar with the use of these software programs. Therefore, the information from online observation was obtained by reviewing comments on Bravo shoes' social media pages for the entire period of the research, and screenshots of those comments, reviews, and feedback on the page were captured. This was done through checking posts uploaded relating to the product they sell as well as other community programs the brand is engaged in but intended to promote the brand. Online observation also involved reading comments under each post both new and old posts.

On the other hand, secondary data in this research was also obtained from numerous sources. These sources include journal articles, books, and other online resources related to the topic of inquiry. All these were retrieved through google scholar, Emerald, JSTOR, and the university database or online resource at Aalborg University. In other words, it is right to say the research adopted a triangulation method in data collection in both primary and secondary data.

4.6 Sampling strategies.

When conducting research whether in qualitative studies or quantitative inquiry, the issue of sampling takes center stage. Sampling is a technique in research where the researcher instead of collecting data from each character in the group, the researcher selects a few characters to represent the entire group (Merriam, 2009). They are broadly two types of sampling techniques in research which include *the “probability sampling”* technique and *the “non-probability sampling”* technique. The probability sampling technique is a more scientific method of sampling and involves mathematical calculations and numerical figures. The process of probability sampling can be duplicated or repeated during the investigation and all members in a group have an equal chance of being considered (Ritchie et al., 2014). This method is most suitable when the research adopts quantitative research methods (Bryman, 2016).

On the other hand, the non-probability sampling technique is a method of sampling where individuals in a group have an unequal chance of being part of the sample. The criterion for selecting samples is dependent upon the researcher using other selection criteria other than scientific calculations (Ritchie et al., 2014). This sampling technique is more suitable when the researcher adopts qualitative research methods and the chances of using numerical statistical data in the investigation are very minimal (Bryman, 2016). Ritchie et al., (2014)

assert that given the nature and purpose of conducting qualitative research which is to gain more knowledge and insight into what is being studied, the probability sampling technique might not achieve the intended research objective.

Therefore, this research adopts a non-probability sampling technique. However, under the probability sampling technique, there are also different categories that can be adopted which include (a) purposive sampling, (b) theoretical sampling, and (c) convenience sampling (Ibid). Purposive sampling also known as judgmental sampling is a method where the researcher relies on certain features such as demographics, physical location, or socio-economic that he or she considers being relevant to the study (Bryman, 2016). In other words, the researcher's judgment plays a big role in determining the characters to consider in the research. Under this category, the researcher can choose to either take into consideration all the characters while choosing the samples or to address diversity among the characters while sampling (Ritchie et al., 2014).

Theoretical sampling on the other hand is a method of non-probability sampling where the sampling takes place in sequences. The researcher retrieves data and analysis it. The next data to pick and analyse is dependent on the outcome of the previous analysis. The outcome of this process is to develop a theoretical framework for the studies (Ritchie et al., 2014). Lastly, convenience sampling is a method of non-probability sampling where the researcher picks the samples or characters to study based on the ease with which to reach the sample and is most common when conducting pilot testing (Creswell, 2013).

This research, therefore, adopts the purposive sampling method since the researcher finds it to be the most appropriate method of the three. Theoretical sampling could not be adopted because the researcher is not interested in developing theoretical frames. On the other hand, convenience sampling could eliminate some important elements and is suitable for conducting pilot testing which is not the intention of this research.

4.7 Introduction to the case.

Bravo shoes limited also known as Bravo shoes is a well-known and well-established fashion brand in Uganda that specializes in selling its branded leather shoe products that comes with a 100 percent guarantee for customers who purchase them. These branded shoes mainly target school-going children. The founder of the brand being one of the underprivileged kids

during his childhood, who went to school without a shoe, shared a vision of ensuring that kids go to school comfortably in footwear. Some of their products on the market include back-to-school casual shoes for both boys and girls, formal shoes, boy's leather belts, and Diabetic shoes meant for Diabetic patients. In total, the brand has over the years sold over 40 different types of shoes to its customers. The brand is registered under the registrar of companies with registration certificate number 188815 and license number 169612 (Source: bravo-shoe.com)

The name Bravo emanates from its founder and CEO “Yesigye Brian Bravo”. Their main shop is located on plot 12, Luwum street, at the city complex building, first floor, shop number B-6, Kampala, Uganda. Its vision as a brand is *“To provide the best quality shoe and create value for money in all communities”* The brand's core values are *“Respect, integrity, passion, quality, smartness, empowerment and customer focus.”* Bravo shoe mission is to *“...have a personal relationship with our shoe. They tell the world who we are, make us feel great, and inspire us to be our authentic selves. That is why Bravo shoe's mission is to inspire self-expression and confidence”* (Source: bravo-shoe.com).

Brian Bravo Yesigye's journey to establishing his business started by vending or hawking clothes for his employer on the streets of Kampala the capital city of Uganda way back in 2000. He later saved money from his job and invested it in his own small business. With a capital of about US dollar 100, he decided to quit his job and invested his savings into his own small business where he continued to sell clothes and shoes (Source: Interview with the CEO and bravo-shoe.com).

It was not until 2006 that he decided to go into full-scale branding establishing Bravo shoe as a brand on the market after growing both his capital and business line both within and outside the city. In the same year, he decided to specialize in selling footwear for school-going children after noticing the gap and the challenges parents were going through in buying genuine and affordable shoes for their school-going children. He also believed that for him to have a connection with his brand, his name needed to be reflected on the brand *“when something is connected to you, you work so hard to ensure it doesn't fall”* (Source: Interview with the CEO).

Besides the Bravo shoes that he started, Brian Bravo is also the Director of the Diabetic footwear organization in Uganda an umbrella body that brings together and ensures that

Diabetic patients have footwear that matches their health condition. He is also the executive director of Stress-free investment club a platform that he started during the COVID-19 lockdown to bring together Ugandans from different parts of the globe such as the United States, United Kingdom, Abu Dhabi, and Canada among others to help other small business back home survive the COVID-19 situation (Source: Interview with the CEO).

Bravo shoes also run a community support organization or charity known as “*Bravo shoes community support*”. This is a non-profit making initiative where Bravo shoes partners with the government, and their customers both online and offline to provide support to underprivileged kids to give them the necessary tools and support to ensure that they go to school and have a bright future. They also empower the parents of these kids to ensure that they can support and sustain their families for a better future. Thanks to the support of Bravo shoes customers (community) who support this initiative through their donations (Source: Interview with the CEO and bravo-shoe.com).

The Bravo shoes community support has a vision and envisions “*A world where children are nurtured and loved, given the necessary support they need to live to their full potential*”. Through this vision, Bravo shoes community support has supported hundreds of school-going kids and families and the most notable ones being Fresh kid, Felister, Henry Ssuubi now an engineering student at Makerere University, and the most recent one Sam Bright Muhindo who is now double as the brand ambassador of Bravo shoes. Furthermore, the Bravo shoes community support mission is to “... *work to create conditions in which every less privileged child can flourish and thrive no matter their challenging circumstance*” and “...believe in hope, dignity, creativity, and accountability” as their core values (Source: Interview with the CEO and bravo-shoe.com).

Bravo shoe is present on almost all the popular social media platforms. According to the CEO, “*we are on all social media platforms Linked, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram... we cannot do away with social media, it is the new norm, everyone has brought their eyes off the TV to their phones, we need to move with the current time... the world is moving into digital space, and you cannot keep analog*” (Source: Interview with the CEO, 08:30). A look at their social media page, on Facebook they have 130,000 followers and 67,736 likes. On Twitter, they have 256 followings. On Instagram, they have 6,173 posts with over 13,000 followers.

According to the CEO, comparing this to the developed world despite Uganda having a big population, the number of people on social media in terms of percentage is still low however it is still growing and presents them a huge opportunity to sell their products and build their brand.

“Population on social media is not so much compared to the total population... majority are not yet on social media like to the extent in developed countries... we also have a big number that is there, and we are trying to capture them” (Source: Interview with the CEO 10:18).

4.8 The interviewees.

As mentioned earlier, 10 semi-structured interviews with Bravo shoes customers were conducted to obtain primary data. But earlier, an interview was also conducted with the CEO of Bravo shoes and this interview too was semi-structured and exploratory. For anonymity, the real names of the 10 interviewees are not captured in this thesis but have been identified as described below.

A1, is a 39-year-old male adult who is formally employed.

A2, is a 28-year-old female adult. Her source of livelihood is farming. In other words, she is a farmer.

A3, is a female athlete but uses social media for business and setting up start-up businesses.

A4, is an accountant by profession and a father of three school-age-going kids.

A5, is a businesswoman but also a mother.

A6, is a 32-year-old female. Her major source of livelihood is trade which involves buying and selling merchandise.

A7, is a female and a mother of 3 kids one girl and two boys. She is formally employed and works with a telecom company called Airtel Uganda.

A8, is a 31-year-old male adult who lives in Nebbi district and is a businessperson.

A9, is a social entrepreneur who lives in Kampala. Her major role is working with street children and trying to resettle them and unite them with their families.

A10, is a 30-year-old female who lives in Adjumani district in the west Nile region of Uganda. she is a gender expert.

4.9 Method of analysis.

Unlike quantitative data analysis which has well calculated and formulated data analysis procedures, qualitative data analysis has numerous data analysis procedures that can be followed by researchers depending on the type of data and what they intend to achieve with it. According to Spencer et al., (2014), the idea of generating formulas for analysing qualitative data did not yield much fruit not until the 20th century when scholars started publishing articles, journals, and books about the procedures to follow in analysing qualitative data. Consequently, there are several qualitative data analysis methods that can be used including thematic analysis, narrative analysis, ethnographic, life history analysis, conversation analysis, content analysis, discourse analysis, grounded theory analysis, analytic induction, and interpretive phenomenological analysis (Ibid).

In this research, thematic data analysis was used. According to Spencer et al., (2014), thematic analysis is a method of analysing qualitative data which entails the researcher looking out for patterns among the different data sources to facilitate the analysis. In the process, the researcher selects, codes, interprets, and develops themes to facilitate the analysis. This is in line with this research. For instance, after conducting semi-structured interviews with the customers and CEO of Bravo shoes, the interviews were recorded on an audio device. The next step was to transcribe the interview which meant converting it from audio recording to written (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009). After transcription was done, the next stage was to code the transcribed interview. *“Coding involves attaching one or more keywords to the text segment in order to permit later identification of the statement”* (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009, pp-201-202). This process was significant because it helped the researcher identify areas from the transcribed interview that were relevant to the analysis.

The next stage after coding was condensing the meaning of the coded text. This was done to ensure that the text had better structure and meaning without altering the original meaning of the text. Condensation *“... an abridgment of the meanings expressed by the interviewees into shorter formulations”* (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009, p-205). Then finally the interpretation of the meaning of the text. At this stage, the process of analysing the data partially commenced. The researcher indulged in the in-depth interpretation of the meaning of the words from the interviews to simplify further analysis and interpretation. *“...Interpretation of the meaning of the interview goes beyond a structuring of the manifest meaning of what is said to deeper and more critical interpretation of the text”* (Ibid, p-207).

Furthermore, online observation was another method of collecting primary data. This involved observing the communication between the customers and the brand on the brand's social media page. Data were retrieved from comments, reviews, shares, and likes. Screenshots of such interchange were obtained to generate data for the analysis. The whole idea behind this was to triangulate the process of data collection so that more themes can be identified to better the analysis. Therefore, all the information from the screenshots was used to gather more evidence.

4.10 Validity and Reliability.

The issues relating to validity and reliability of research findings are significant when conducting research and these two notions test how methods of research have been applied to arrive at the findings. Furthermore, these conceptualizations help to determine the quality of the research findings (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). In terms of definition, Validity pertains to how correct and accurate a tool or a method measure and produces results that can be depended on. A method or a tool is said to be valid if it measures and produces the outcome it was meant to measure. Put it in another way, validity pertains to “...*the correctness, and the strength of a statement. A valid inference is correctly derived from its premise*” (Ibid, p-36).

On the other hand, reliability is how accurate the results are and if the same or similar results can be realized if the procedure is repeated. In a nutshell, “*Reliability pertains to the consistency and trustworthiness of research findings; it is often treated in relation to the issue of whether a finding is reproduced at other times and by other researchers*” (Kvale and Brinkmann, p-245). In summary, validity pertains to how accurate the method is while reliability concerns the consistency of the method. In this research, the following steps were taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the research findings.

Reasonable sample size: One area that this research relied upon to ensure reliability and validity of the findings is to have a reasonable sample size for primary data collection. According to Saunders et al., (2016), Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research does not have a specific sample size for a study to meet the criteria for validity and reliability. However, different scholars have attempted to provide figures. According to Creswell (2013), a sample size of between 5 to 30 should be sufficient for qualitative research. Saunders (2012) recommends a sample size of between 5 to 25. In this research, therefore, a total of 11

interviewees were sampled for primary data collection including 10 Bravo shoe customers and the CEO. Besides, Richie et al., (2014) assert that having a big sample size during the investigation has the risk of generating unmanageable data given the time frame allocated for the study and the quality of the data can be compromised.

The triangulation method was also applied to ensure the validity and reliability of the research. Triangulation is a method used in research where the researcher instead of using a specific method in the investigation, the researcher instead uses multiple methods that strengthen and complements each other (Kimchi et al., 1991). Silverman (2011) asserts that using multiple data sources is the most frequently used method of triangulation in qualitative research. Furthermore, during the process of investigation, the researcher can argue for validity and the reliability of the findings when numerous findings or data point in the same direction (Ibid).

In this research, both primary and secondary data were used during the study. Primary data was obtained through interviews and online observation. On the other hand, secondary data was also obtained not only from multiple sources but sources that are credible and reliable for instance from Aalborg University electronic library database, JSTOR, Emerald, and google Scholar among others. Besides the process of obtaining data was done systematically and carefully executed using techniques that have been cited many times and applied in other similar studies as well.

Conducting semi-structured interviews was also another way of ensuring the validity and reliability of the research findings. When collecting primary data using the interview method, a researcher must decide whether to conduct a structured interview, a semi-structured interview, or an unstructured interview (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). This investigation adopted a semi-structured interview because this method ensures that detailed and quality data is obtained through the interviewer. Furthermore, asking the interviewees leading questions depending on how they responded to the questions. Besides the semi-structured interview has the characteristics of both structured and unstructured interviews. For instance, the questionnaire makes the interview more skewed toward a structured interview while the option to ask leading questions or questions outside the questionnaire drifts the interview more towards an unstructured interview.

4.11 Ethical considerations.

when conducting research, ethical standards ought to be observed. Ethics in research revolves around issues like information consent, the confidentiality of certain information, anonymity of interviewees, and voluntary participation in the research among others (Bryman, 2012). Furthermore, Israel and Hay, (2006), assert that in research studies that adopt the qualitative method, quantitative method, or mixed methods, three ethical issues arise during the research process (a) anonymity and confidentiality, (b) the way literature is reported. In other words, credibility, (c) a researcher directly employed. The following ethical issues were considered.

Before the interview with the CEO of Bravo shoe, the researcher wrote a formal letter addressed to the CEO of the company asking the company to be part of this research. This letter was hand delivered by the researcher to the company premises directly to the CEO since the researcher was in Uganda at that time. Furthermore, the intention and purpose of the research study were all highlighted and the researcher presented all identification documents to ensure that the organization knows exactly the person they are dealing with.

Concerning the interviewees' participation, all the participant or customers of Bravo shoes who were interviewed did it voluntarily. The researcher contacted these interviewees and introduced himself, explaining why they were being contacted and the purpose of the research studies. However, not all the customers who were contacted were willing to participate in this research citing among other reasons having a fixed schedule while others cited, that they are not confident to have the interview in English but rather in the local language. Therefore, the customers who were interviewed were those who voluntarily accepted to participate in this investigation.

Another ethical issue that took center stage during the investigation was the issue of anonymity of the interviewees. During the interview with the customers of Bravo shoes, the interviewees introduced themselves using their real names. However, during the report writing, these names were coded with other signs and symbols to keep them anonymous. This was intentionally done to ensure that the interviewees are kept anonymous during the report writing. Furthermore, to ensure that this process of data collection did not interfere so much with the interviewee's daily routine, the interviewees decided the time and date of the interview.

In the case of data that was collected from online reviews, posts, comments, and shares among others, the researcher also got permission from the organization to use such information. Some sections of the customers on social media were also informed that they might be contacted by a student from Denmark who is researching a topic relating to the branding. This was all done to ensure that it becomes easy to get their consent regarding the data collection and use some of the reviews on the social media time lime.

CHAPTER FIVE.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS.

5.1 Introduction.

This chapter has focused on presenting the research findings and the analysis thereafter. The intention of all this is to answer the research question that is divided into two parts. The first part of the research question that this chapter has answered is, *“How does social media influence brand awareness and brand equity?”*. The second part of the research question is *“how can firms build a strong brand?”*. In a nutshell, the research question that this thesis has answered is *“How does social media influence brand awareness and brand equity? And how can firms build a strong brand?”*

To answer the research question, the relevant pieces of literature were reviewed, and later primary data was collected. Consequently, primary, and secondary data were analysed using a thematic method of analysis. In logical order, first, the interviews were recorded on an audio device. The next step was to transcribe the interviews which were later followed by coding the interviews. Later, the meaning of the coded interview was condensed before interpretation commenced. Furthermore, primary data was also obtained through online observation. This primary data (online observation) was a social media communication interchange between Bravo shoes and their social media customers or audience on the different social media platforms. The brand generates the content and posts it on their social media pages and the customers or audience react to the content. Screenshots of the communication between Bravo shoes and their social media customers were obtained. Later patterns and themes or repeated patterns that aided the analysis and answering the research question were extracted. This is in line with the thematic method of analysis (Spencer et al., 2014).

Therefore, the analysis is structured in a way that the essential parts of the primary data that are insightful in understanding a phenomenon in the case and the reviewed literature were extracted and marked in italic for further interpretation but also easy identification by the reader. The source of the citation from the interview including the minutes and date of the interview is stated. This is in line with the thematic data analysis procedure and is done to aid the process of answering the research question (Spencer et al., 2014). Furthermore, the interviewees' identity is kept anonymous. The 10 interviewees (customers) have been

identified as A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7, A8, A9, and A10. This sequence of identification is dependent on who was interviewed first during the data collection. For instance, A1 was the first to be interviewed and A10 was the last to be interviewed. And finally, using an interview guide, all the interviewees were asked the same or similar questions.

5.2 COMMON PATTERNS FROM THE INTERVIEW WITH THE CUSTOMERS.

5.2.1 Facebook is the most popular social media platform.

Facebook was cited as the most common and popular social media platform. Although the interviewees mentioned that they were also using other social media platforms for instance Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, and Twitter among others, all the interviewees alluded to the fact that they were following updates from Bravo shoes predominantly through Facebook. This implies that even though Bravo shoes is present on the other mentioned social media platforms, Facebook is the most common, most used, and had the most interaction, comments, reviews, and shares. Below is a sample from the interview.

“The social media platform I use the most is Facebook and WhatsApp” (Source: Interview with A1, 12-07-2022, 01:48).

“I mostly use Facebook, Instagram, and sometimes YouTube. I had a Twitter account, but I stopped using it” (Source: Interview with A4, 13-07-2022, 02:07).

“I am specifically using Facebook and Instagram” (Source: Interview with A2, 13-07-2022, 01:34).

5.2.2 Majority came to know about Bravo shoes through social media (Facebook).

Out of the 10 interviewees, 8 confirmed that they became aware of Bravo shoes through social media and Facebook to be specific. The remaining 2 became aware of Bravo shoes through a referral from a neighbour and a friend respectively before starting to follow them on Facebook.

“I came across a post about a child, the CEO Brian Bravo offered the boy school fees, the kid is called Fresh Kid and since then, I started following Bravo shoes” (Source: Interview with A2, 13-07-2022, 02:31).

“I came to know about them through Facebook, actually one time I wanted to buy shoes for my son and a friend told me you get to Bravo shoes social media platform, they have nice shoes...” (Source: Interview with A6, 15-07-2022, 02:07)

“I knew about Bravo shoes through social media and Facebook to be précised” (Source: Interview with A7, 17-07-2022, 02:26).

“It was through social media and that is Facebook... when kids are going back to school, they advertise a lot on their Facebook” (Source: Interview with A5, 15-07-2022, 02:48).

5.2.3 Following news, updates, socializing, online business, and following other brands were commonly cited as the reasons for being on social media.

The majority of the interviewees mentioned that they were using social media for updates and to become current with what is happening in the world. Socializing with friends and family was also another common pattern in the interview. Using social media for online business and following what other companies are offering was also another common pattern that was mentioned.

“Am using social media to be current and updated with what is happening in the world. Secondly, for online business... getting to know what other companies like JUMIA are offering through Facebook” (Source: Interview with A1, 12-07-2022, 03:20).

“One of the reasons why I am on social media is because I easily get information... I live in Nebbi, but I can know what is happening in the world through social media... I also buy clothes and shoes through social media” (Source: Interview with A8, 17-07-2022, 02:29).

“Am on social media for various reasons, one, social media is a source of entertainment for me. Secondly, it is educative. Thirdly, I get to interact with and meet new people. I also connect with my old friends through social media. When it comes to Bravo shoes and their social media account, they always post about their sales and new products” (Source: Interview with A4, 13-07-2022, 04:30).

5.2.4 Being on social media is the most popular or common activity during free time.

The interviewees were asked on a scale of 1 to 10, what would be the chances that they would be using social media in their free time. 9 out of 10 interviewees gave a scale of 6 and above. Only one gave a scale of 4.

“If you say on a scale of 1 to 10 the chances that I will be using social media during my free time, you rather put it 10 because am on Facebook all the time during my free time” (Source: Interview with A1, 12-07-2022, 05:56).

“I use social media most of the time in my free time, I can say 7 out of 10” (Source: Interview with A7, 17-07-2022, 04:19).

“On a scale of 1 to 10, I think 9 because when am free am always on social media, seeing what is happening around...” (Source: Interview with A8, 17-07-2022, 04:20).

5.2.5 Reviews or positive reviews influence the decision to purchase.

During the interview, the customers were asked if the reviews on social media would influence their decision to purchase. 8 out of 10 affirmed that reviews are very important and would not consider buying a product if it has so many negative reviews. One of the two interviewees who said reviews don't influence her decision asserts that some reviews or most reviews might not be genuine.

“When am following on Facebook, I first go to the comment section of how people have been using the product and once I find many positive reviews, I also try to get the product” (Source: Interview with A1, 12-07-2022, 07:45).

“...especially those that have good reviews and people talk well about, at least those one I can be interested in them” (Source: Interview with A7, 17-07-2022, 03:47).

“Yes, before I buy through social media, I check how many stars (Rating) they have. When I see they have 5 stars and good reviews, it increases my chances and trust to buy the product. So, reviews are very important. They make one have either a high trust or a low trust about the company and its product. Review is important in judging whether the product is genuine or not” (Source: Interview with A4, 13-07-2022, 09:57).

5.2.6 They all spoke positively about Bravo Shoes, especially their community support program.

When asked to comment about what they think about Bravo shoes in general and the products they offer, all of those interviewed spoke highly about Bravo shoes and their community support.

“I would say elegant design, strong and long-lasting, that is how I can describe their product” (Source: Interview with A3, 13-07-2022, 08:14).

“Well I think it’s a very good initiative and if I have the opportunity, I would support the initiative because it’s worth my support because I believe access to education by a child should not be seen as a privilege but should be seen as a right...” (Ibid, 08:34).

“What I would say, they are the best quality, they are authentic leather, very comfortable, they are durable. The ones I bought I had to buy for the second time because kids grow otherwise the old ones are still in shape. All I can say, their product is of high quality” (Source: Interview with A2, 13-07-2022, 11:33).

“The community support has been the best and given the chance, we would like to continue to support them... To see a brand helping other people, I have very positive prospects towards them, and we would like to support in any form when they need us for that charity” (Ibid, 12:49).

5.2.7 Challenges of using social media.

Another pattern that was common or mentioned by almost all the interviewees was the challenges of using social media in Uganda. The interviewees did mention the challenge cost of internet which they say is high and technical challenges, especially the poor internet connectivity. Furthermore, they alluded to the challenge of censorship of social media by the government as another biggest challenge.

“I would say the most difficult part of it is the censorship of social media. I must say up to date, our social media is not free. We must use VPN to be able to access social media. It is also costly in terms of data bundles...yet most of the information we get is from social media...” (Source: Interview with A2, 13-07-2022, 15:17).

“Since we are living in a third world country, we have a challenge of the cost of internet. The cost is so high that not all can afford to be on the internet all the time. Secondly, social media also has certain restrictions like age brackets from 18 plus and has limited many people” (Source: Interview with A4, 13-07-2022, 17:13).

“They are also bad verses on social media like scammers and sometimes your details like bank account might not be safe. We also have hackers, fake middlemen who post items they even do not have in stock” (Ibid, 18:58).

5.3 HOW SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE BRAND AWARENESS.

Using empirical findings obtained through semi-structured interviews and online observation, this section has illustrated how social media influences brand awareness. Examples were drawn from the case to illustrate the influence of social media. Therefore, social media influences brand awareness and brand equity in the following ways.

5.3.1 Ability to capture and reach more audiences.

social media is a platform that can be accessed from anywhere and anytime. From the numerous findings for instance Statista, 2019, the number of people using social media worldwide is on an upward trajectory with millions of subscribers joining the different social media platforms every single year. In Uganda for example, the statistics indicate that as of January 2022, the number of those using social media stood at 2.8 million with the number expected to grow in the subsequent years (Kemp, S, 2022). This implies that the branding messages and brand awareness campaign is most likely to reach more audience due to the rising number on the different platforms.

Important to note is that brand awareness is created when the audience or the market can easily recognize the brand and link its features to certain associations in their mind and memories which includes brand recall and brand recognition. This can be achieved by constantly exposing the brand elements to the target audience (Keller, 2013). As already indicated from the empirical finding obtained through the interview, it is evident that being on social media is one of the most popular activities during leisure time and therefore, the chances that the brand awareness message through social media will reach the audience is high.

It is therefore not by accident that 8 out of 10 of the interviewees mentioned that they came to know about Bravo shoes through social media and Facebook to be specific. This implies that the brands can use social media to not only reach the growing number on the social media platforms but also the chance that the brand awareness message will reach the audience is high since they are on social media most of the time, especially during leisure time.

“On a scale of 1 to 10, the chances that I will be using social media in my free time is 10 because I spend most of my free time on Facebook” (Source: Interview with A1, 12-07-2022, 05:56).

“I would say on a scale of 1 to 10 the chances that I will be using social media is 7” (Source: Interview with A2, 13-07-2022, 06:35).

“On a scale of 1 to 10, I can say 8, ...I work so hard and when I come back home and am with the kids while they watch television, am on my phone using social media... the world has changed and it's the new trend” (Source: Interview with A4, 13-07-2022, 07:20)

5.3.2 Content that appeals to different audiences.

According to Neti, 2011, for brands that intend to use social media to market themselves, they should first determine what they intend to achieve with the platform and then create content that appeals to the target audience. As mentioned earlier, the audience on social media prefers a different type of message or content that appeals to them. To build brand awareness, brands must determine which content most appeals to a specific target group and then later create the content that suits that audience (Ibid).

Consequently, the content that is created through social media comes in different forms such as pictures, videos, blogs, life stories, live video and chat, discount messages, and sales promotions among others (Ibid). Therefore, to create brand awareness, the message, or the mode of delivery of the message needs to not only appeal to the targeted audience but needs to attract them to consider the brand as one they can trust (Kotler, 2016). From the empirical findings obtained through the interview, it is evident that the preference of the content that appealed to the customers varied. This, therefore, implies that social media influence brand

awareness through creating content that appeals to all or most of the audience but even more importantly this will positively influence the audience towards the brand if the message and the content resonate with them.

“I love the blogs, for example, when am purchasing shoes for my kids, I normally go in for the blogs and watch what they say about the shoes...is it about the comfort? Is it about durability? If they could do more of that and guide us on the blogs on how best to buy fitting shoes...” (Source: Interview with A2, 13-017-2022, 10:02).

“For me, it is always the pictures because I would love to see more pictures... but also some short video clip will also do...” (Source: Interview with A6, 15-07-2022, 06:16).

“...It is not the videos but for me, it’s the pictures that I like the most...” (Source: Interview with, A1, 12-07-2022, 06:58).

5.3.3 Reviews, comments, and shares.

social media is designed in a way that allows individuals on the platform to communicate with each other and get feedback. In other words, communication on social media is a two-way model or sometimes multiple ways (Tuten and Solomon, 2017). Unlike other methods of communication such as word of mouth, social media provides other different features where users on the platforms can write reviews after experiencing a service or using a product. They can also comment on a post or blog and share the post with different groups on the platform (Manning, 2014). As already indicated in the empirical findings obtained through the interview, 8 out of 10 of the interviewees alluded to the fact that reviews through social media play a big role in them deciding to purchase an item. The positive reviews positively influenced their decision to purchase. This is most likely to influence brand awareness and brand equity by attracting more people to purchase because of the positive reviews but the likelihood that they will become loyal customers in the future is created (Neti, 2011).

Furthermore, social media provides the users with a chance to share content from the company’s social media page to their wall which becomes available to other users on the platform. Or share the post to different groups which becomes available to members in those groups (Neti, 2011). This has a multiplier effect of creating brand awareness in the sense that the content becomes available or known to a new or different audience. From the finding

obtained through the interview, the interviewees stated that they are most likely to share content about sales and discounts. In addition, the interaction and comments through social media enable the brands to have a close relationship with the audience and the brand becomes aware of what they like and dislike and then be able to create content and products that do not only appeal to them but also products that they are likely to purchase (Ibid).

5.3.4 Co-creation of content between the brand and users on the platform.

Through social media, small brands that are trying to establish and build strong brand awareness and brand equity can co-create content with other users on the platform. This content can range from easy-to-create videos on mobile, to links and ads among others that capture trending topics or addresses some of the commonly searched topics. Consequently, there is a likelihood that such content will not only reach a wider audience but the impact of the content in terms of brand awareness is bigger since the content emanates from numerous co-creators (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2012). Besides, social media has been described not only as the most reliable source of information for marketers in this day and age, but also quick and conceivable platform for information sharing (Karakaya and Barnes, 2010).

From the findings obtained through the interview, besides sharing content, loyal customers are also creating content about Bravo shoes which they share in their network. However, such content the company may not be in the know and therefore cannot have control over such user or customer-generated content. However, co-created content that emanates from a formal collaboration or from the brand itself is under the supervision and control of the brand where it originates (Godes and Mayzlin, 2009). Therefore, according to Smith et al., (2012), such a co-creation process whether done informally or formally between the brand and the users is likely to not only multiple the brand communication messages to the audience but also the rate of customer exposure to the brand message is accelerated.

“...we have been able to do marketing for them... among my peers, I try to promote Bravo shoes asking them to buy from Bravo shoes... sometimes I create a short video and send them... because this company is doing something good in the community” (Source: Interview with A4, 13-07-2022, 16:24)

5.4 INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON BRAND EQUITY.

According to Keller, (2013), the starting point of building brand equity is by creating brand awareness. Brand equity, on the other hand, is the differential effect that accrues to a brand because of its brand awareness including how the audience perceives the brand and responds to its marketing information whether positively or negatively (Ibid). In other words, brand awareness influences brand equity and one cannot build brand equity without establishing brand awareness. Therefore, from the findings, social media influences brand equity in the following ways.

5.4.1 Positive brand association, increased sales, price premium, and additional touch points.

Using social media as a platform especially Facebook, Bravo shoes has been able to build a community online to support its initiative the *“Bravo shoes community support”* with members on the platform coming from both within and outside Uganda *“I am from Nigeria, but I will love to support this project. Service to humanity is service to God”* (Appendix 3). Because of this charity where the Brand identifies needy children and families to support especially with education and ensuring the kids have decent accommodation, the brand has been able to leverage positive brand association from the audience through social media who identify themselves with the initiative and contribute financially to support the project of helping the needy children.

“Thanks, Bravo, for taking the lead in tracking the boy and for accounting for the support provided. More is yet to come and surely that boy will have a better future. I also promise to come pick up some pair for my little boys” (Appendix 4).

“Bravo shoes are one of the best in Uganda for anyone looking for school shoes. They have an outstanding customer care, and they ensure you get the best as a customer” (Appendix 5)

Furthermore, through the community support project with the support of the social media audience, Bravo shoes have sold more of its footwear because some of the support comes directly in form of money intended to buy school shoes for needy kids and the footwear is purchased from Bravo shoes. Thanks to social media platforms through which such a community is built online and mobilization of funds is made possible.

“Get me details of that boy, am buying him a pair of school shoes” (Appendix 6).

In addition, the brand can sell despite its shoe price being above the average price of what an ordinary person in Uganda can afford “...*the shoe price is a bit high for the common man at the grass root...*” (Source: Interview with A3, 13-07-2022, 07:03). According to Sammut-Bonnici, (2015), once a customer develops a positive brand association and loyalty, the brand can sell above the average price in the market without significantly affecting the number of sales because the customers esteem and loyalty towards the brand are high. Kotler and Keller, (2006) assert that, with strong branding in place, competition in the market is no longer based on price alone but on other elements of the marketing mix. This, in turn, has the effect of lowering the price elasticity of demand, and consequently, sales are likely not to be affected and profitability is likely to increase. Again, the positive reviews on the social media platform from those who have used the products or experienced the services before are likely to not only attract new customers but also sales are likely to increase.

“They mind about quality which some of us prefer. I don’t care about the price as long as I have something genuine” (Appendix 7).

“Customer care at its best and offers high-quality leather shoes. I would recommend them anywhere, anytime” (Appendix 8).

Besides social media platform is another selling point for customers to purchase products from Bravo shoes. Through social media, Bravo shoes have increased the number of its touch points. Through different social media platforms, customers can place orders for items and later make payments and have the shoes delivered to their doorstep. According to Neti, (2011), the content that is shared by brands through social media should not only be attractive to the audience but should generate further actions that can generate brand equity for instance how to order an item, how to write a review, product description, and instruction on how to use the product, and how to recommend the product to other people among others.

“I need a pair of shoes” (Appendix 9)

“I need a pair for my daughter” (Appendix 10)

“Send for me your WhatsApp number, I need 6 pairs of shoes” (Appendix 11)

5.5 HOW CAN FIRMS BUILD STRONG BRANDS?

According to Keller, (2013), establishing a strong and reputable brand is the ultimate objective of most businesses and therefore, firms try all avenues and methods through which they can grow stronger to achieve brand equity. On the other hand, achieving brand equity comes with numerous benefits to the firm such as less susceptibility to competition, improved customer loyalty towards the brand, improved profit margins, positive response to the firm's marketing activities, reduced sensitivity to a price increase, more support and cooperation from the customers as well as improved marketing communication and effectiveness of the branding message among other benefits.

Consequently, one of the most popular models that have been used to help firms not only build strong brands but also measure the effectiveness of their branding message or strategy is the customer-based brand equity model (CBBE). According to the model, building a strong brand is a long-term process that entails following some sequence that includes, (a) building proper brand identity, (b) establishing appropriate meaning, (c) inducing the right brand response, and (d) establishing a proper brand relationship with the audience (Keller L, 2001). To put this in another way, to build a strong brand, the firm needs to build both breadth and depth of brand awareness and then go as far as eliciting strong, favourable, and unique associations which in turn induce a positive response from the audience towards the brand and its marketing activities and finally build a strong relationship with the customers. Important to note is that the response to the brand's marketing activity from the customers is dependent upon the brand knowledge that the customer holds (Keller, K, 2001).

Therefore, brands that are said to be strong are those brands that customers or consumers are so passionate about and attached to them to the extent of getting involved in activities of the brand which are even beyond buying their product and services. In addition, building a strong brand encompasses addressing all the components of the four building blocks. On the other hand, the four building blocks in the customer based-brand equity model can be interpreted into six building blocks that must all be achieved to establish a strong brand. The six building blocks are (a) brand salience, (b) brand performance, (c) brand imagery, (d) brand judgments, (e) brand feelings, and (f) brand resonance. Important to note is that the most valuable of the six building blocks are brand resonance. The strong brands or the strongest brands according to the model have achieved all the six steps in the model up to brand resonance which implies

that customers demonstrate a high level of loyalty towards the brand since their wants, needs, desires, and expectations are met (Keller, K, 2001).

To answer the last part of the research question which states, “*how can firms build a strong brand?*” And relate this to Bravo shoes on how they can establish themselves as a strong or stronger brand, first these 3 pertinent questions will be discussed which include

- (a) *why do certain brands fail to achieve resonance despite being considered strong brands?*
- (b) *what causes the decline in brands that were once strong?*
- (c) *What drives a brand to become strong online?*

5.5.1 (a) Why do certain brands fail to achieve resonance despite being considered strong brands? For a firm to be considered a strong brand according to the customer-based brand equity model, that brand must have gained resonance with the customers. Unlike certain industries such as the fashion industry where strong brands with resonance can be easily identified, in certain categories of industries for instance the airline industry and sometimes the financial sector especially banking, one can hardly mention brands that have attained resonance with customers. Such brands despite being relatively successful, are unable to bring forth with them strong, unique, favourable association with their audience and consequently fail to achieve resonance despite being one of the leaders in their industry. Therefore, brands in such categories need to build meaningful brand associations with their customers and create different sets of emotions, imagery, and feelings and eventually be able to gain loyalty from customers in the long run. However, it is important to note that certain industries are potentially possible and relatively easier to achieve resonance compared to other industries (Keller, L, 2001).

5.5.2 (b) What causes a decline in brands that were once strong: In the recent past we have witnessed brands that were once very powerful and dominated the market in their industry fail and are unable to maintain the same level of dominance. Such brands did not only command a strong brand awareness but also had a strong, favourable, and unique brand association. Examples of such brands include Miller Lite and Kodak among others. According to the customer-based brand equity model, such a decline may have been due to environmental changes including changes in technology, competitors’ actions, and changes in

consumers' tests and preferences which eventually altered the type of brand association that the customers held before such setback occurred. Alternatively, such brands may have a decline in performance in terms of products and services they offered to the market which affected their brand image and consequently affected the consumer's judgment and feelings towards the brand hence a decline in market share and resonance (Keller, L, 2001).

5.5.3 (c) What drives a brand to become strong online: Unlike in the past, online branding or branding through digital platforms including social media has increased tremendously. According to the customer-based brand equity model, building a strong online brand doesn't come without proper planning. For one to establish a strong online brand presence, they need to go through a sequence of steps that will ensure the brand establishes resonance with the customers. The quicker it takes a brand to establish brand awareness online, the lesser time the brand will take to establish itself as a reputable and strong brand hence brand equity. Likewise for consumers to develop favourable feelings towards the brand, brand knowledge through brand awareness is very vital. In a nutshell, to establish a strong online presence or brand resonance, the six building blocks must be established solidly and persistently to evoke both emotional and psychological feelings towards the brand (Keller, L, 2001).

5.6 How can Bravo shoes establish itself as a strong brand?

As already mentioned, for a brand to be strong or become strong, it ought to have achieved resonance with the customers which means achieving or going through the six building blocks of the customer-based brand equity model. Therefore, to address this question, using the information obtained from the case study, Bravo shoes will be taken through the six building blocks to establish where the brand is at in terms of achieving resonance with the customers, and recommendations or strategies will be suggested on how they can achieve or try to achieve resonance.

From the case, it is clear to see that Bravo shoes are a small brand that is trying to grow in the market, and given the changing times, the brand is trying to move with the changing trend as far as using digital platforms such as social media to not only create brand awareness but sell products as well. From the findings through the interview, social media is playing a bigger role in creating brand awareness and brand equity because 8 out of 10 of the interviewees alluded to the fact that they became aware of Bravo shoes through social media and Facebook to be specific. Bravo shoes also have another digital platform (App) that can be

downloaded from the google play store and App store but only one out of the 10 interviewees mentioned using the app. However, notwithstanding, Bravo shoes is a known brand in Uganda both online and offline.

5.6.1 Brand salience.

Brand salience is the starting point to establishing a strong brand and this process involves establishing brand awareness and brand identity. This includes the ability of the market to be able to recall and recognize the brand under different circumstances and how extensive is the brand awareness message reaching the target audience (Keller, L, 2001). Even though Bravo shoes has created awareness in the market about what they offer and what type of need they stand to address, more awareness campaigns will still go long a way to improve the status quo. The goal is to have a high brand salience (Ibid).

For Bravo shoes to achieve high brand salience, the brand might consider evoking emotional reaction towards the brand by telling unique stories of how the brand was birthed, what the brand stands for, where it wants to go, and its long-term objective. In addition, expanding its customer base through rigorous and intensive brand awareness campaigns most especially through social media platforms since this method seems to have created more brand awareness than any other type of brand awareness campaign. The goal here is to ensure that every time the parents think of buying shoes for their children going back to school, Bravo shoes will always come to their mind. Furthermore, social media is not static and new methods and features are emerging every year consequently, continuous learning of new and better methods of how to create brand awareness will go a long way in achieving the objective of starting to build a strong brand (Forbes communication council, 2018).

5.6.2 Brand performance and brand imagery.

Brand performance looks at how the brand through its product is trying to satisfy the needs of the customers, especially the functional needs. It is important to understand that the product itself or the service is the primary reason why the customers engage the brands. Therefore, brand performance will encompass the design of the product, the quality of the product, and how the product will be delivered including other functional services. Furthermore, the design, price, service offered, and service effectiveness need to not only meet customers' expectation but surpass it (Keller, L, 2001). From the interview, the customers talked positively about the quality of the footwear Bravo shoes offers on the

market. However, a section of them were unhappy with how long it takes for the shoes to be delivered in some instances. This is an area in terms of performance that Bravo shoes need to improve on by using a better and quicker delivery mode. Brands through their brand awareness messages create a brand promise and therefore to ensure brand performance, they ought to deliver on the promise by providing better products and services (Forbes communication council, 2018).

Brand Imagery on the other hand is another element of brand meaning that needs to be addressed in an attempt by the brand to achieve resonance. It involves how the brand is meeting customers' social and psychological needs. According to the model, imagery includes purchase and usage situations, personality and values, user profiles, history, heritage, and experience (Keller, L, 2001). From Bravo shoes' perspective, the imagery seems to be mostly built from their community support program which the interviewees seem to have identified with. However, to make this more effective, the brand should consider bringing on board a more similar program or expanding on the existing one to even create better imagery. According to Kotler, Opresnik, and Hollensen, (2019) when using social media to build a brand, one needs to take stock of the methods that work and those that do not and then build on those that seem to generate more outcomes. In the case of Bravo shoes, the community support program seems to be generating more positive outcomes in terms of brand imagery.

5.6.3 Brand judgment and feelings.

This stage concerns how consumers respond to the branding messages and how the brand can ensure the customers respond positively to those activities intended to promote the brand. These judgments range from looking at quality, credibility, consideration, and superiority. From the interviews, most of the interviewees held a positive judgment towards Bravo shoes in terms of the quality of their footwear. Credibility especially trusts and consideration emanates from their community support program (Keller, L, 2001). However, superiority over other similar brands wasn't evident nor mentioned. This, therefore, implies that the brand has only created a point of parity and now needs to move a notch higher by establishing a point of difference that can push the brand towards resonance. This can be achieved by getting more creative with communication especially using more appealing videos, and pictures and doing more blogs.

On the other hand, brand feelings relate to customers' emotional reactions towards the brand. In other words, what kind of feelings is evoked by the brand or its branding messages? These feelings range from fun, security, warmth, excitement, security, social approval, and self-respect (Keller, L, 2001). From the information obtained both through the interview and online observation, some of these feelings were evident although some were lacking which implies that Bravo shoes will need to do more especially regarding warmth, excitement, and fun. However, in terms of security, it was evident since the customer felt they are dealing with an authentic and genuine brand that offered not only comfortable footwear but quality as well. There was also social approval and self-respect because of the community support program. Therefore, the brand needs to expand the community support program to create more impact but also innovative content that will bring warmth, excitement, and fun.

5.6.4 Brand resonance.

For a brand to reach this level, all the other previous steps must have been achieved which implies that the customers are not only in agreement but correspond positively to their branding messages and participate fully in them including those that do not even concern with the product and service they offer on the market. Consequently, the brand reaps the benefit of loyalty from customers, customers seeking to know more about the brand, and repetitive purchases among others. Furthermore, resonance can be classified into behavioural loyalty, Attitudinal attachment, sense of community, and active engagement (Keller, L, 2001). From the interview or primary data collected, some level of resonance was evident from the statement of some interviewees although these were not sufficient, especially by looking at their response to the Bravo shoes community support program. Therefore, creating a point of difference by offering more innovative services that will invoke more positive responses and build an intensive and active relationship through their community support program will go a long way in working towards achieving resonance with the customers.

“...we have been able to do marketing for them... among my peers, I try to promote Bravo shoe asking them to buy from Bravo shoe... sometimes I create a short video and send them... because this company is doing something good in the community” (Source: Interview with A4, 13-07-2022, 16:24).

To sum it up, from the findings, it is no doubt that Bravo shoes are a reputable brand in the Uganda market. The brand has over the years tried to build resonance with some sections of

its customer base, especially through social media. For the brand to become stronger or to build a stronger brand, Bravo shoes need to have a long-term plan that is carefully thought out. In addition, intensify its brand awareness campaign which encompasses brand knowledge, especially through social media since this platform seems to have had more impact in terms of creating brand awareness (Kotler, Opresnik, and Hollensen, 2019). Again, the community support program is another area the brand needs to focus on more, and this will give the brand more meaning and even response because the customer seems to identify themselves with the brand through their community support program.

However, from the experience of once strong brands that have declined and lost both their loyal customer base and market, Bravo shoes need to pay attention to changing trends especially changes in customer tests and preferences and be able to adjust accordingly. Furthermore, the brand should endeavour to continuously provide better quality footwear and other services since this is the main reason the customers are engaging the brand. Lastly, Bravo shoes should also be mindful of the changing technology, environmental changes, and competitors' action and be able to take appropriate actions that will ensure that the brand doesn't decline or slide backward (Keller, L, 2001).

5.7 Conclusion.

The major goal of this thesis was to provide answers to the research question on how social media influences brand awareness and brand equity and later suggest ways or strategies of how a brand can better itself to become a strong brand. All this was achieved by conducting a comprehensive literature review of the relevant topics and keywords. Later primary data was obtained from the customers of Bravo shoes the case study of this thesis. From the case study, it is evident that the branding messages are not only focusing on swaying the audience towards buying but also on establishing brand identity and brand values for instance the community support program that is intensively being advertised or promoted on their socials.

Another point to note is regarding the communication, especially the feedback. Already aware that social media communication is a two-way or a multi-way either (private or public communication) which implies two or more people sustaining a conversation or exchanging messages (Tuten and Solomon, 2017). From the screenshots obtained through online observation, it was evident that the reply or feedback from Bravo shoes on their social media page in response to social media comments and inquiries from the social media followers especially on Facebook was a bit too late. In some instances, with 30 minutes time gap or even more between the comment or inquiry and feedback message from Bravo shoes. To keep the audience engaged, Bravo shoes need to address this challenge by promptly replying or giving feedback within the shortest time duration possible.

5.8 Research reflections, Limitations, and areas for future research.

social media is evolving every day with new platforms and new features on the already existing platforms emerging every single year. Even the role, impact, and usage of social media in our daily life and business are growing each day. This implies that to cope with this trend, researchers must constantly update the information on this topic to avoid being obsolete with outdated data or information. Furthermore, there is so much data (literature) or information concerning social media with little or no consensus on some of the literature. During the period of this research, a simple search on google or google scholar for instance “how to make social media attractive?” or “social media marketing strategies” one is confronted with different literature or data and some of them have little or no consensus at all

on some of the points. Therefore, there is a need for researchers to harmonize some of the pieces of literature about social media.

Concerning the limitations, it is important to point out that this research has limitations. First, the research is limited in the scope and therefore the findings are limited to the case organization although the findings in this research can be applied in other similar studies or can be used as a reference by other future researchers investigating a similar topic. The research is also qualitative and therefore did not capture numerical data. Furthermore, primary data was obtained through a semi-structured telephone interview and online observation. Consequently, during the data collection, the researcher faced technical challenges, especially the poor telephone network connectivity which occasionally interrupted the telephone conversation.

And lastly, from the semi-structured telephone interview with both the CEO of Bravo shoes and the customers, they were able to identify some challenges they face in accessing social media and some of the challenges include the high cost of internet or data bundle, poor internet connectivity and censorship of social media by the Ugandan government citing security reasons as some of the challenges they face as they access social media in Uganda. Therefore, future research especially in Uganda to be specific or in any other part of the world with similar challenges regarding the use of social media should focus on the challenges of using social media and how these challenges are influencing or affecting branding through social media or marketing in general. This is because digital platforms have increasingly become powerful tools in marketing today and therefore such areas of research cannot be ignored.

CHAPTER SIX.

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Facebook- [Bravo Shoes](#).

Instagram- [bravo_shoesug](#)

YouTube- <https://bit.ly/2SuQbz1>

Twitter- <https://twitter.com/yesigye>

TikTok- <https://bit.ly/3vmT0ke>

LinkedIn-<https://www.linkedin.com/company/74086419/>

Bravo Shoes Community Support- www.bravoshoescommunitysupport.org

World Wide Web- <https://bravo-shoes.com/>

Email-info@bravo-shoes.com

CHAPTER SEVEN.

APPENDICIES.

7.1 Appendix one: Interview Guide for interview with CEO Bravo shoes.

- 1) Briefly introduce yourself, Name, education, age?
- 2) Tell us about Bravo shoe? When did you start? How long have you been in business?
- 3) What is Bravo mission and vision?
- 4) What really motivated you to start this shoe brand?
- 5) And the name Bravo shoe, what inspired the name?
- 6) What products or even services do you offer here apart from what we see physically?
- 7) What type of shoe do you self?
- 8) Tell me about Bravo community support?
- 9) What is your target market?
- 10) How many outlets do you have in Kampala and outside Kampala?
- 11) What are some of the major challenges do you really encounter?
- 12) Which social media platforms are you currently using?
- 13) What is the main motivation for engaging so much on social media platform?
- 14) What value or how important is your social media to your brand?
- 15) Apart from marketing your products, how else are you using social media?
- 16) What type of content on your social media generates the most comments, view, likes and reaction?
- 17) Do you have other digital platform apart from social media you are using?

Branding.

- 1) What is the importance of branding to you? Why spending much time and resources on branding?
- 2) What are some of your favourite marketing or branding campaign both on social media and offline?
- 3) Apart from social media, what other ways do you create brand awareness?
- 4) What value does social media add to your branding campaign or marketing campaign in general?
- 5) How often do you receive orders through your social media platform? Or marketing information?
- 6) To the audience outside there especially on social media, how would you like them to identify or perceive Bravo shoe?
- 7) How would you describe the relationship with your audience on social media? How do they react to your marketing programs?
- 8) Have you tried celebrity endorsement as a branding strategy?
- 9) What has been the impact of community outreach program?
- 10) Who are some of your competitors?
- 11) How different are you from your competitors?

7.2 Appendix two: Interview Guide for a Semi-structured interview with the customers of Bravo shoes Uganda.

- 1) What is your name?
- 2) Which social media platforms do you use?
- 3) How long have you been a customer of Bravo shoe? Or how long have you been following Bravo shoe social media page?
- 4) How did you come to know about Bravo shoe? Through a friend or social media?
- 5) Which social media page do you follow Bravo shoe? Facebook, YouTube, twitter, Instagram etc
- 6) What are other reasons why you are using social media platform?
- 7) Do you also follow other companies on their social media platforms?
- 8) What is the benefit or advantage of following companies on their social media page?
- 9) Have you ever been interested in a product or service after reading about it on social media?
- 10) On a scale of (1 to 10), what are the chances that you will be using social media in your free time?
- 11) Which social media content is more appealing to you? For instance, pictures, videos, blogs, celebrity endorsements, discounts sales, stories, reviews, and sales promotion etc?
- 12) Would you consider buying a product after reading positive reviews about the product on social media?
- 13) Would you recommend a product to a friend or relative after reading positive reviews about it on social media?
- 14) Have you ever used social media or any other online platform to search for a new product you want to buy?
- 15) As a customer of Bravo shoe, what type of message would you love to see more on Bravo shoe social media account?
- 16) Which type of content on social media are you most likely to share on your social media pages from Bravo shoe or any company on social media page?
- 17) How would you describe the products from Bravo shoe?
- 18) Have you ever contributed to the Bravo shoe community support? And why do you think it's worth your support or contribution?

19) In the recent past some people have reportedly been scammed through social media and other online platforms. On a scale of (1-10), how do you trust information you see on social media?

20) What challenges or setbacks have you faced as you use social media?

7.3 Appendix 3



Bravo Shoes Community Support -
Every child, Every chance, Every day
bravoshoescommunitysupport.org

9 w Like Reply 2 



Jane Karanja replied · 2 replies



Edidiong Bongo Akpan
I am from Nigeria  but I will love to support this project. Service to Humanity is Service to God.

8 w Like Reply 2  



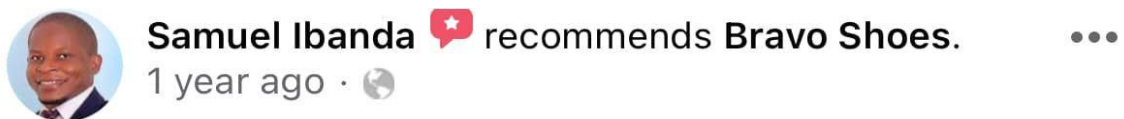
 Author
Bravo Shoes Community Support
Edidiong Bongo Akpan We are humbled
 

8 w Like Reply

7.4 Appendix 4



7.5 Appendix 5

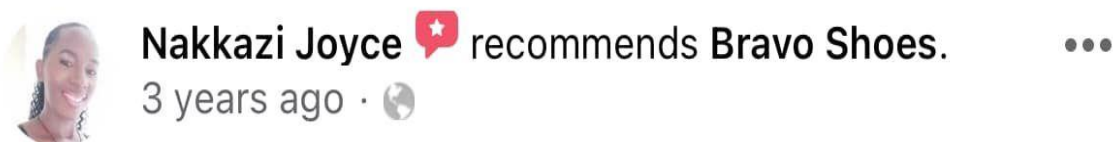


Bravo Shoes are one of the best in Uganda for anyone looking for school shoes. They have outstanding customer care and they ensure you get the best as a customer.

7.6 Appendix 6



7.7 Appendix 7



they mind abt quality which some of us prefer . I don't care abt the price as long as I have something genuine

7.8 Appendix 8



Lydia Kemi recommends **Bravo Shoes**.

4 years ago ·



Customer care at its best. And offers high quality leather shoes. Would recommend them anywhere anytime

7.9 Appendix 9

Most relevant ▾



Flavia Alqhtani
I need a pair of shoes

1 y Like Reply

1



Author

Bravo Shoes

[Flavia Alqhtani](#) hello Flavia..WhatsApp number

0704931932,0701931932,0701744644

1 y Like Reply

"Most relevant" is selected, so some replies may have been filtered out.

7.10 Appendix 10



Annet Kabahaguzi

I need a pair for my daughter

1 y Like Reply

1



Author

Bravo Shoes

[Annet Kabahaguzi](#) ohhh sure

Thank you for picking interest in our products, Bravo Shoes is located at City Centre Complex, 1st Floor Shop No. B6-B7, Plot 12 Luwum Street.

Tel. 0414342333, 0701744644, 077243872

6, 0701931932, 0701931932

TOLL FREE LINE: 0800111045

1 y Like Reply

7.11 Appendix 11



Turyakira Enid

Send for me your what's up number I need 6 pairs of shoes

1 y Like Reply

1



Author

Bravo Shoes

[Turyakira Enid](#) Ohhh sure

1 y Like Reply