

**THE INFLUENCE OF VIRAL MARKETING ON SALES.
PERCEPTION OF CUSTOMERS OF AIRTEL TANZANIA LTD MWANZA BRANCH.**

**BY
SWAUM S. TOFIKI**

**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT FOR AWARD OF THE
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Declaration

I Swaum S. Tofiki declare that, this work is my original work, submitted to the Mzumbe University as a dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Masters of Business Administration- Corporate Management and has not been submitted to any University whatsoever

.....
Supervisor

.....
External Examiner

.....
SWAUM S.TOFIKI
MBA-Corporate Management
Mzumbe University

Dedication

To my beloved Husband Mr Raymond M Costa, my Daughters Sabra Raymond and Cherise Raymond.

Acknowledgements

This report provides details of perceptions on influence of Viral Marketing on sales. Preparation and later planning activities started way back in March 2015, immediately after the committee of research and postgraduates studies of Mzumbe University has been satisfied with the research proposal

The technical support of Mr. Nicholas Tututuba from department of marketing and entrepreneurship, Mzumbe University Tanzania, is indeed invaluable, and to that I feel indebted to them for their expertise rendered in designing the study.

I appreciate tireless efforts of my fellow workers who in one way or another supported me in producing this report.

Finally, whereas the technical and network support contributed towards production of this study finding by professional and stakeholders are ever acknowledged with thanks, the shortcomings, in the report, shall remain my responsibility.

Certification

The undersigned certifies that has read and hereby recommend for acceptance by Mzumbe University, a research report entitled; The Influence of Viral Marketing on Sales;Perceptions of customers of Airtel Tanzania Ltd, Mwanza Branch, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Masters of Business Administration – Corporate Management at Mzumbe University

(Cordinator)

Mr. Nicholas Tutuba

(Supervisor)

Abstract

Though, the direction of previous studies on Viral Marketing strongly addressed its spread and adoption in developing countries like Tanzania, the ecosystem of Viral Marketing that is relevant to developing countries like Tanzania is not yet known and developed.

The general objective of this study was to assess the influence on the Viral Marketing on Sales; Perceptions of customers of Airtel Tanzania Ltd, Mwanza Branch. More specifically, the study identified the level of customers' awareness on the Viral Marketing, Airtel strategies of Viral Marketing and analyzed the influence of Viral Marketing on sales.

The study sample constituted by 68 Mzumbe evening class 2014 and 2015 Masters Students Mwanza Campus Airtel Customer and 8 Airtel staff. For combined respondents' male representation was 51.3 percent while 48.7 percent was female

The study found that, more than half Airtel customers awareness level of Awareness was above 80 percent

Viral marketing has great opportunity to win the market, communication companies like Airtel need to set better Viral marketing plan that enable good customers service delivery, in order to capture attention of more customers from different location in Tanzania, particularly rural areas. Airtel need to focus on conducting more marketing research and further investigate needs of customers towards the use of Viral Marketing to influence retention and growth.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This chapter describe the background of the study, study problem and study objective. It also explains significance, limitation, delimitation and variable of the study.

The purpose of this study is to assess customers' perception on the influence of Viral Marketing on sales. The study interviewed Mzumbe Evening class 2014 and 2015 masters students Mwanza campus who use Airtel for their communication and member of staff of Airtel Mwanza Branch.

Viral marketing, viral advertising, or marketing buzz are buzzwords referring to marketing techniques that use pre-existing social networking services and other technologies to try to produce increases in brand awareness or to achieve other marketing objectives (such as product sales) through self-replicating viral processes, analogous to the spread of viruses or computer viruses (cf. Internet memes and emetics). It can be delivered by word of mouth or enhanced by the network effects of the Internet and mobile networks (Hawarde, 2005). Viral advertising is personal and, while coming from an identified sponsor, it does not mean businesses pay for its distribution (Most of the well-known viral ads circulating online are ads paid by a sponsor company, launched either on their own platform (company webpage or social media profile) or on social media websites such as YouTube. Consumers receive the page link from a social media network or copy the entire ad from a website and pass it along through e-mail or posting it on a blog, webpage or social media profile. Viral marketing may take the form of video clips, interactive Flash games, advergames, ebooks, brandable software, images, text messages, email messages, or web pages. The most commonly utilized transmission vehicles for viral messages include: pass-along based, incentive based, trendy based, and undercover based. However, the creative nature of viral marketing enables an "endless

amount of potential forms and vehicles the messages can utilize for transmission", including mobile devices (Wilson, 2012).

The ultimate goal of marketers interested in creating successful viral marketing programs is to create viral messages that appeal to individuals with high social networking potential (SNP) and that have a high probability of being presented and spread by these individuals and their competitors in their communications with others in a short period of time.

The term "VRL marketing" has been used pejoratively to refer to stealth marketing campaigns marketing strategies that advertise a product to people without them knowing they are being marketed.

1.1 Background of the Study

The consumers have increasingly resisted to traditional forms of advertising such as TV or newspaper advertisements, hence marketers have turned to alternate strategies, including viral marketing. Viral marketing exploits existing social networks by encouraging customers to share product information with their friends (Leskovec et al. 2007).

The history of viral marketing was brief compared to most other forms of advertising emerged on early 1990s, when the Internet became accessible for commercial purposes (Wampole, 2012). There are close relationship between viral marketing and word – of – mouth advertising. Some scholars consider these two aspects as the same (Phelps, 2004; Woerndl, 2008; Sudarevicetal.2013 :) but others consider them differently since viral marketing takes place via online platforms whereas word-of-mouth advertising was accomplished through interpersonal communication (Wampole, 2012).

Viral marketing is defined variously as a technique which utilizes the Internet to transmit and spread messages among individuals who will filter and forward the messages their peers, who may be potentially interested in the message's content (Woerndl et al. 34). It was termed as a marketing strategy which focuses on transferring information and opinions about a product or service from person to person, especially by using unconventional means such as the Internet or email (Wilson, 2012). Hence generally we can compress it as strategy that encourages individuals to pass on a marketing message to others, creating the potential for exponential growth in the message's exposure and influence.

The recent studies conducted have revealed that viral marketing is highly practiced by various corporate due to the influx of internet services through social media such as face book, twitter, instagram, whatSapp, LinkedIn, individual blogs and alike. The increasingly adoption of this advertising techniques is positive and negative return towards the company. For instance Wilson (2012) identified that the word viral marketing is perceived as offensive such that, if one calls himself a viral marketer people will take two steps back. On side of merits the strategy was perceived as contributing factors on creating corporate brand reputation and increasing sales (Lekhanya, 2014 &Carida et al. 2013).

The telecoms, audio-visual media distribution and internet infrastructure sectors are the fastest growing sectors in Tanzania. Tanzania has the second largest telecoms market in East Africa, behind Kenya (Mkonoet al.2014). There number of telecom companies operating in Tanzania such as Bharti Airtel Tanzania, MIC Tanzania Limited ('tiGO'), Tanzania Telecommunications Company Limited ('TTCL'), Vodacom Tanzania Limited and Zanzibar Telecom Company ('ZANTEL') a part of Etisalat of the United Arab Emirates (Kalage et al.2012, Mkono et al. 2014). These companies competes each other to capture the mobile market and gain substantial customers base. These mobile network operators are the big internet service provider in the country but the service

itself was challenge of being unreliable due to regular disconnection, data corruption during big downloads, blocked access to certain services, and slow or limited internet connections, especially in rural areas where mobile network coverage was poor (Kalage, 2012). Under such condition it was doubtful whether the viral marketing can yield the expected return in Tanzania environment as compared to other countries where it has been observed to be effective due to the growth of social media.

The role of viral marketing in business was clearly highlighted by studies conducted by Carida (2013) and Lekhanya(2014). However these literatures reviewed on viral marketing reveals a thriving spread of contributions on the effectiveness, importance, diffusion and application of the VMC as the general findings, spatially with the lack of specificity, currently; there is a lack of empirical evidences that evaluate the influence of Viral Marketing on sales specifically to Airtel Tanzania products. This deficiency was expected to be filled by this particular study that entails to examine the influence of viral marketing on sales – a case of Airtel Tanzania, Mwanza region.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Viral Marketing as growing marketing strategy is considered to have grand contributive aspects towards firms' performance as whole. Masden, 2007, Burman, 2012 and Cheng, 2014 have tried to define parameters for measuring and evaluating success of viral marketing campaigns, however their findings are somewhat incoherent. According to Helm (2000), the primary purpose/objective of viral marketing was to maximizing reach. Cruz and Fill (2008) who conducted a research on viral marketing evaluation state that the approaches used to measure and evaluate the relative success of viral marketing communications are many and varied. They propose a framework which starts with defining a Viral Marketing campaign's goal as being either cognitive (reach, awareness, knowledge), behavioral (hits, downloads, dissemination rate) or financial (ROI, brand equity developments as a result of the campaign). In Tanzania environment particularly the understanding and practicability of Viral marketing was not yet exhausted as

justified by mobile money delivery that “One-third of Vodacom M-Pesa, Airtel Money and TigoPesa registered users performed their most recent transactions with their regular agents. Fourteen percent said they did not have an agent they used regularly. Most chose an agent based on either seeing an advertisement or convenience (e.g., agent was nearby), and about one-quarter of registered users went to an agent they already knew”. (InterMedia, 2013). Though, the direction of previous studies on Viral Marketing strongly addressed its spread and adoption in developing countries like Tanzania, studies on influence the Viral Marketing was not yet studies exhaustively. There is a need to understand the ecosystem of Viral Marketing and even developing a model that might be relevant to developing countries like Tanzania. However, this study only assesses the perceptions of customers on influence of viral marketing on sales. How they perceive it and how it influences them to purchase products and services.

1.3 Study Objectives

The objectives of the study include:

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to identify customers’ perception on the influence of Viral Marketing on sales, a case of customers of Airtel Tanzania, Mwanza Branch

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To identify the level of customers awareness on Airtel Mwanza branch Viral Marketing.
- ii. To identify the Airtel strategies of Viral Marketing.
- iii. To analyze the influence of Viral Marketing on sales.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. What is the level of customer awareness on the viral marketing?
- ii. What are the perceived Airtel Viral Marketing Strategies?
- iii. How the Viral Marketing is perceived to influences sales?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study expects to add value on understanding of influence of viral marketing on sales. The findings act as a basis of further research studies, decision making to improve viral marketing, enabling telecommunication company sustainability through improved viral marketing strategies.

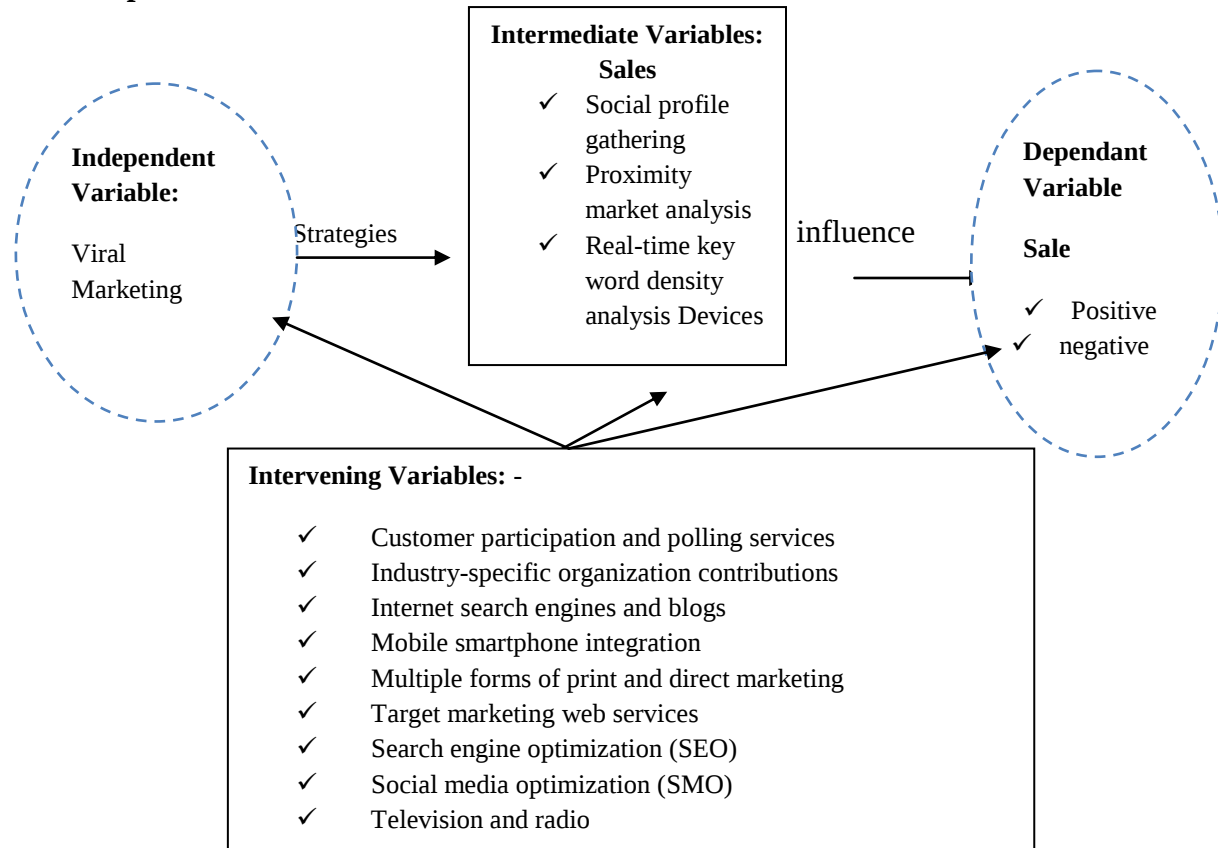
1.6 Limitation of the Study

This study encountered limitation in terms of customers' willingness to respond to questions. 205 Questionnaire were administered but only 120 questionnaires were returned.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

Viral marketing, or word-of-mouth marketing, is based on the idea that consumer discussions about a product are more powerful than traditional advertising. One way to encourage positive word-of-mouth is by distributing reduced or free products to target consumers who will then discuss the product with their friends and encourage those friends to buy the product. However, who to seed with these initial products in order to maximize the amount and rate of product adoption is not obvious. Given an arbitrary social network and a limited seeding budget, choosing the optimal seeding locations has shown to be a critical problem. By putting an assumption that the product was beneficial and that seeded consumers are inclined to speak positively about it, seeding more consumers will increase the speed of product adoption ultimately increases sales. The relationship between viral marketing and sales is diagrammatically presented on Fig.1 below.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



This framework entails to reflect the relationship between independent and dependent variable. The viral marketing strategy has been taken as an independent variable that is assumed to influence sale (dependent variable). Sales parameters offered by Airtel Tanzania include voice and text, internet services, Airtel money, promotions and sales of devices such mobile phones and other accessories. Under normal circumstances there are factors which should be kept constant as intervening variables. Viral marketing strategy in its practices is influenced by issues like the prevailing policies, business environment and the role of competitors in the industry.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This particular chapter is designed for the review of relevant theoretical perspectives of service particularly on viral marketing. The entire stuff gives out the reflections on the definition, the elements and the origin of viral marketing. Also the literature gathered reveals the advantages and disadvantages of viral marketing with a complement of one successful story of viral marketing. The stuff also provide the understanding of the profile of Airtel Tanzania and its particular services and products offered by this company and finalized by empirical literature reviews.

2.2 Definition of Viral Marketing

Viral marketing can either target a specific group of consumers, or broad audiences. The content of viral messages typically utilizes humor, entertainment, edgy/trendy, sexual, or other related attention grabbers that will entice individuals to view and share the message (KHNK, 2005). The viral objects commonly passed around include: video clips, images, text messages, email messages, blogs, web pages, branded software and apps, and so on (KHNK, 2005). To date, some of the most common transmission vehicles for viral messages have been: pass-along based, incentive based, trendy based, and undercover based (KHNK, 2005). However, due to the creative nature of viral marketing there are an endless amount of potential forms and vehicles the messages can utilize for transmission.

According to Wilson (2000), the six elements of a viral marketing strategy include: “gives away products or services, provides effortless transfer to others, scales easily from small to very large, exploits common motivations and behaviors, utilizes existing communication networks, and takes advantage of others resources” (9). However,

Wilson (2000) states that “a viral marketing strategy need not contain ALL these elements, but the more elements it embraces; the more powerful the results are likely to be” (4). The benefits of viral marketing can be vast if utilized effectively. Some of the benefits include: low cost, far reach, and high credibility. Some of the disadvantages include: failed campaign, lack of control, and message misinterpretations.

In the late 1990’s, Hotmail.com was one of the first business’s to achieve a great deal of success using viral marketing, and is now referred to as “the classic example of viral marketing” (Wilson, 2000, p.5). “Hotmail was able to sign up 12 million users in 18 months by inserting the tagline “Get your free e-mail at Hotmail” at the bottom of every e-mail sent out by its customers” (the internet encyclopedia). At the time this was historically the fastest growth of any user based media company (Subramani, Rajagopalan, p.1). By the time Hotmail reached “66 million users”, the company was establishing “270,000 new accounts each day” (Subramani, Rajagopalan, p.1).

Today, a decade after Hotmail’s success, as more and more businesses are having trouble reaching consumers through traditional advertising, many of them have turned to alternative marketing methods such as viral marketing. Some of these companies had success while others have failed. Research conducted by Millward Brown (2010) concluded that “fewer than one in six video ads achieve high viral viewing”. A few of the successful blue chip companies have included: “Old Spice, Audi, Coke, E-Trade, and Google” (Brown, 2010).

Old Spice’s latest viral marketing campaign which focused on promoting the company’s body wash gained widespread popularity, and has become one of the more famous viral marketing campaigns. How it worked was Old Spice collected fan questions and then created direct video responses to the questions featuring NFL player Isaiah Mustafa that were posted on Youtube.com. Latest figures state that the video responses “attracted

over 35.7 million unique views”, and “sales of the body wash jumped 55%” in the three months following the viral campaign (Leggatt, 2010).

2.3 The elements of Viral Marketing Strategy

According to Wilson (2012) and Lekhanya (2014) some viral marketing strategies work better than others. However, these elements are not simultaneously applied by all organizations since each organization will apply them depending on their set up and goals. The basic elements of viral marketing are elaborated as follows:

- **Give away products and service:** Most viral marketing programs give away valuable products or services to attract attention.
- **Easy transfer to others:** A viral marketing message must be easy to transfer and replicate via email, website, graphic, or software downloads.
- **Scalability from small to very large:** To spread like wildfire, the transmission method must be rapidly scalable from small to very large.
- **Exploit motivation and behaviours:** Clever viral marketing plans take advantage of common human motivation.
- **Take advantage of other’s resources:** The most creative viral marketing plans use others’ resources to get the word out.
- **Utilizing existing communication networks:** A person’s broader network may consist of scores, hundreds or thousands of people, depending upon his or her position in society.

2.4 The Origin of Viral Marketing

According to Wampole (2012) the origin of Viral Marketing is traced back from 1997 from the Netscape newsletter founded by Steve Jurveston. At the time, Jurveston was describing his promotional methods for Hotmail, his internet based email program. Instead of using expensive, standard means to raise awareness of Hotmail, Jurveston relied on early adopters of the email program to spread the message of Hotmail to other people in their network. Specifically, at the bottom of each email message sent was the

tagline, “Get your free Web based e-mail account at Hotmail.com”. Thus, those people who received an email message could then easily click on the hyperlink and open their own Hotmail account (Maxwell 55). The Hotmail message was concise, easily transferrable and relied solely on current users spreading the message of Hotmail. In essence, the message spread amongst internet users much like the way a virus spreads throughout the human body, hence how it became known as viral marketing. Still to this day, Hotmail is recognized as the first company to engage in internet word-of-mouth marketing by creating the first successful viral marketing strategy.

2.5 Advantages of Viral Marketing

There are numerous advantages for companies utilizing viral marketing techniques in their advertising campaigns. For instance one important benefit is that viral marketing is relatively inexpensive in comparison to many other forms of advertising and marketing campaigns (Dobele, et al., 2005, Kaikati&Kaikati, 2004, Welker, 2002). The other major benefits relate to the positive diffusion characteristics: viral marketing can, for example, reach audiences within a short period of time (Kaikati&Kaikati, 2004) as messages spread exponentially at a fast speed (Helm, 2000, Welker, 2002). MindComet (2008) asserts that VM is much more cost efficient than traditional forms of advertisements, viral marketing can reach and impact larger audiences than any television commercial, radio spot, or newspaper article. In an increasingly global economy, companies can utilize viral marketing strategies to connect with audiences worldwide for very little capital. Viral marketing strategies also reach audiences at a faster rate than any other form of advertisement. When it may take weeks for a targeted consumer to see a television ad, or days to receive a catalog by mail, it only takes seconds for a targeted consumer to receive and open an email containing details on company promotions.

Another benefit of the viral marketing approach is that consumers receive information and recommendations about specific products from people inside their own network.

Therefore, they trust and are much more likely to try the product than if it was pushed on them by company's paid advertisement. Most importantly, when implementing a viral marketing strategy, companies can use data mining tools to specifically target narrow groups of consumers with products that match their preferences. For example, these tools allow companies incomparable filtering capabilities which then provide them with the necessary information to create customized messages and promotional offers.

2.6 Disadvantages of Viral Marketing

MindComet (2008) provides that there are a few disadvantages to implementing a viral marketing strategy as oppose to a traditional form of advertising. One of the main issues that can arise due to the large scope of viral marketing campaigns is spam. For instance, when viral marketers send their messages to mass audiences indiscriminately, some consumers receive the same message more than once and it becomes labeled as spam or junk mail.

Thus, when companies' messages become spam, their reputation and relationships with customers are at stake. Additionally, effective viral marketing campaigns can sometimes be easily mimicked by competitors because the plans usually don't require expensive resources to launch. Therefore, in certain circumstances, companies' viral marketing strategies do not provide them a sustainable competitive advantage.

Furthermore, as several companies have experienced when using viral marketing strategies, online users do not always have positive opinions about companies to share with their network online. Thus, companies using viral marketing strategies risk negative word of mouth when they open the conversation to the online community.

In addition, the online platform of viral marketing does not restrict competitors from diluting the brand image through negative publicity. Unlike traditional forms of advertising in which companies have direct control over the marketing message, with

viral marketing, audiences have control over what message is shared with others about the company, and it may not always be positive.

One concluding disadvantage of viral marketing strategies is that it can be challenging for marketers to create content that is interesting enough to generate buzz on a consistent basis.

2.7 The profile of Airtel Tanzania

The company was founded in 2001 and is based in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Airtel TANZANIA LIMITED was formerly known as Zain Tanzania Ltd. and changed its name in November 2010. The company is among other mobile phone operators which provide telecommunication services to individuals and businesses in Tanzania. Its services include GPRS services, such as Internet, WAP, and MMS; mobile top ups; SMS information services; prepaid plans; postpaid plans; international roaming; local and international text messages; customer care center services; and value added services. The company offers its services and mobile phones through a network of shops and dealers.

2.8 Services/Products offered by Airtel Tanzania

Airtel Tanzania Ltd provides various services and products such as voice services and text, internet, airtel money, promotions and devices. (Airtel Tanzania website). The voice and text services include call waiting, airtel classifiers, call tunes, dakasalio, fax services and register your line. Internet services involve OMG bundles; switch on 3.75G, internet access and home WiFi. Promotions offered by airtel Tanzania do change over time especially nowadays the pick promotion is “*yatoshazaidi*”. The devices which are physical products offered by airtel include smartphones, blackberry and sumsung at a discountable price but with internal connections of airtel software and sometimes with special conditions of only subscribing to airtel mobile services upon the use of such devices.

2.9 The successful story of Viral Marketing

The Blair Witch Project, released in 1999, is recognized as the best social media campaign of all time by Forbes (Business to Community). The movie was created on a \$300,000 budget and it grossed over \$250 million in ticket sales, making it the largest budget to earnings ratio of all films in history (Sanjay). It was not the enormous marketing budget or the well known actors that persuaded movie-goers; the film lacked both. It was the creative grassroots marketing campaign that attracted consumers. The Blair Witch viral marketing strategy consisted of the design of a fictitious story that was intended to precede the film and convince audiences that The Blair Witch movie was actually real footage that was shot three years ago and discovered by the producers of the film. The nearly free marketing ploy was an instant hit as it buzzed around targeted supernatural entities and movie message boards and quickly flooded mainstream. The Blair Witch Project's viral marketing strategy was effective for several key reasons. First, the marketing campaign focused on selling a story, not a product. The story was entertaining and it wasn't perceived by audiences as advertising. Additionally, the viral marketing strategy sought a specific audience that enjoyed the supernatural and didn't advertise to the niche audience through the standard and accepted outlets. For instance, the marketing campaign targeted horror movie fans through online message boards and websites when online surfing wasn't as common as an activity as it is today. Furthermore, the marketers were careful not to give consumers too many details; they always left them wanting to learn more, keeping them searching to find answers. The two filmmakers created a website for the film that was more advanced than their competitors' websites that consisted of pictures and facts. The Blair Witch Project's website was interactive and continuously updated to keep audiences' interested in the film (Business to Community). Thus, by persistently sparking consumers' curiosity and need to understand more, the filmmakers of The Blair Witch Project successfully utilized viral marketing to make the movie one of the most profitable of all time.

2.10 Empirical Literature Review

MindComet (2008) has justified that “viral marketing is best used not as a one-off tactical end in itself, but as an integrated strategic part of the overall marketing mix. It is a means to an end whereby it not only generates buzz, but also provides ongoing, quantifiable brand benefits, such as increased awareness, peer-to peer endorsement and ultimately more sales.” Through the study conducted in New York about brand benefits on the Trojan Game Viral Marketing, the consumer survey revealed that 77% recalled the Trojan brand after seeing the campaign, 73% positive rating of the overall impression of the campaign, 80% perceived the campaign to be unique and 50% would be more likely to consider the Trojan brand after seeing the campaign.

The Event Marketing Institute (2007) developed a consumer questionnaire to gauge the viral impact of experiential marketing programs. The Event Marketing Institute contracted David Van Nuys, Ph.D., of e-Focus Groups, a California-based market research firm, to conduct a survey based on the questionnaire.

To explore this issue, 10,000 U.S. members of an online opt-in panel were approached to participate in the e-survey. A total of 1,168 panelists completed the survey. Of these, 566 had attended a company-sponsored marketing event in the past year. The sample skewed heavily toward women, with 78 percent being female, versus 22 percent being male respondents. Moreover, 76 percent of respondents were 50 years of age or younger. Of that group, 38 percent were between the ages of 24 and 37.

Addressing the question of purchase decision Influencers the study depicted justified that that people are more than willing to share their event experiences— both good and bad—with others. To establish the base the respondents were asked: How effective are an individual’s words in swaying the purchase decision of others? What other factors come into play when a consumer selects one brand over another or none at all?

To get to the bottom of the issue, it examined respondents' willingness to sample new products or services and what influenced their purchase decisions in their everyday lives. When asked what persuaded them to buy a new product or service, overall, the top five reasons survey respondents cited were: "personal experience trying the product," "recommendation from friends/family," "TV commercial," "ad in magazine," followed by "ad on the internet."

A closer examination of the data reveals some striking differences across age and gender. The youngest demographic, ages 24-37, said a mix of magazine ads and email ads swayed their purchase decisions. More than half (52.2%) bought a product based on a magazine ad, while 49 percent said they were influenced by ads sent via e-mail. Radio commercials were the third most important purchase influencer for this age group (45.8%).

The middle demographic group in that survey (38-49 age group) -- were most influenced by traditional media, with 41 percent selecting "ad in newspaper" as their top reason for purchasing a new product or service. However, new mediums such as e-mail and the internet were nearly as influential with this age group, with 41 percent of respondents in this group most influenced by ads via e-mail, and 40 percent wooed by internet ads.

Not surprisingly, the oldest demographic group, respondents aged 50-65, tended to favor "old-school" media, with about a quarter of respondents being persuaded by newspaper advertisements (26%) and radio ads (24%). Still, 23 percent of survey respondents in this age group relied on their own instincts based on their personal experience with a product. In nut shell the findings revealed that recommendations from trusted friends/family and third-party sources carry the most weight with people considering a purchase.

The recent study by Lekhanya (2014) was done with the focus - to analyze and evaluate the use of viral marketing and the impact it has on the reputation of corporate branding

of South African companies. The study was conducted in four South African provinces. The sample consisted of 75 companies, selected using a stratified sampling method, with respondents completing a five-point Likert scale questionnaire with the assistance of an interviewer. The results revealed that the majority of respondents were either neutral or disagreed that people make positive comments about their companies via viral marketing since that 33 percent of the respondents disagree and 36 percent strongly disagree that information and brand reputation about their companies have increased due to the use of viral marketing. While 15 percent of the respondents were neutral, 9 percent strongly agree 7 percent agreed.

Another study by Carida et al. (2013) conducted in Italy aimed to contribute to the theoretical debate on the Viral Marketing Communication (VMC). It investigated the effects a VMC campaign produces on performance of brand and company. The study was based on a qualitative research method and case study methodologies. Specifically, the study analyzed the mechanisms and dynamics that govern a viral marketing campaign highlighting the different impacts such as cognitive, behavioral and economic benefits. The major findings on the side of financial and economic goals showed that viral marketing communication increased sales by 15%.

2.11 Knowledge Gap

The empirical literatures aiding this study have mainly focused on the general adaptation and perceptions of viral marketing and a few addressed the impacts of the same on the line of cognitive, behavioral and financial aspects. The majority of viral marketing studies were conducted outside Africa and slightly one study found to be done in South Africa. Furthermore, there is no study specifically conducted to examine the impacts of viral marketing on sales in its fullness. This indicates that there is lack of knowledge evidence on influence of viral marketing on sales in Tanzania. Hence this study has been undertaken on that line of adding knowledge evidence on influence of viral marketing on sales by assess the influence of viral marketing on sales of Airtel products and services in Mwanza Region Tanzania

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.8 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology that used in the research. It specifically examines the research methods including the research design, the study setting, population and sampling procedures and data collection instruments. The chapter also discusses techniques for data analysis and presentation, and ethical consideration related to the study.

3.9 Research Design

A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the study purpose with economy in procedure (Kothari 2008, p.31). It is the overall plan or strategy for conducting the research.

Different research design was conveniently described if we categorize them as Exploratory, Descriptive and Causal design. In this study, descriptive research design was used. It provided a tool for describing particular phenomena (population), collection of statistical observation and information (Sekeran, 2003).

Kothari (2008) explains that qualitative research is diverse in its form and in theoretical framework which provides a guide for the actual research process. In this respect, within the descriptive research design the study used the qualitative approach to gather information on the factors affecting senior entrepreneurs in establishing their business.

3.10 Area of Study

This study focused on the the assessment of influence of viral marketing on sales. It focused on two areas. The area Viral marketing and the area of sales. The first area of Viral marketing the study assessed customers' perceptions of viral marketing and strategy of viral marketing employed by Airtel (T) Ltd. The second area of sales the study assessed the influence of Viral marketing on sales. It assessed type of products that customers were influenced to by more dues to be induced by viral marketing. The study was conducted in Mwanza City which is located in the southern shores of Lake Victoria; it is also one of the largest cities in Tanzania. The city covers 425 square km dry land and 900 square km water. Mwanza city is composed of two Districts, Nyamagana and Ilemela. The main economic activities taking place in Mwanza City are commercial activities, tourism. The city was selected due to its proximity to the researcher.

3.10 Target Population.

Population is defined as all the existing members of the group from which sample is drawn for which conclusion is made (Aryet *al.*, 2002). Target population (reference population): Is that population about which a researcher wishes to draw a conclusion.

When looking at data, it is important to clearly identify the population being studied or referred to, so that a researcher can understand *who* or *what* are included in the data. The population needs to be clearly identified at the beginning of a study. The study should be based on a clear understanding of who or what is of interest, as well as the type of information required from that population. According to Finn et al (2000), the specific nature of population depends on the purpose of research. In this study, the target population included 90 masters' students of Mzumbe University, Mwanza campus who are airtel customers and 8 Employee of Airtel Mwanza Branch.

3.11 Sampling Frame

Kothari (2008, p.153) defines sampling frame as a list containing all such sampling units. Thus sampling frame consists of a list of items from which the sample is to be drawn. The sampling frame operationally defines the target population from which the sample is drawn and to which the sample data was generalized. Therefore the sampling frame of this study is all masters students of Mzumbe University Mwanza campus who are customers of Airtel (T) Limited and Employee of Airtel (T) Limited, Mwanza Branch.

3.12 Sample Size

A sample refers to the number of items to be selected from the universe to constitute a sample (Easwaran and Singh, 2010). The size of sample should neither be excessively large, nor too small. It should be optimum. An optimum sample is one which fulfils the requirements of efficiency, representativeness, reliability and flexibility.

While deciding the size of sample, the study determines the desired precision as also an acceptable confidence level for the estimate. There are several ways of obtaining a sample size. The most popular includes the use of mathematical formula.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(\alpha)^2}$$

Where: n is the sample size

N is the sample population

α is the margin of error

The number of Airtel customers is volatile which means it change over time (+-) that qualify to infinite population conditions. In such situation a formulae method was recommended to determine the sample size.

Given

Mzumbe University Airtel Customer= 82

From $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(\alpha)^2}$

Where n= sample size

$N = \text{Population} = 82$ $n = \text{sampling error} = 0.05$

Therefore: $n = 82/1+82(0.05)^2$

$N = 82/1+82(0.0025)$

$N = 82/1.205 = 68.049 = 68$

Airtel Mwanza Employee Customer = 8

Therefore the total sample size will be 76 units i.e(68 masters students of Mzumbe university who are customers of Airtel +8 employee of Airtel Mwanza branch)

3.13 Sampling Techniques

Sampling is that of statistical practice concerned with selection of individual units intended to yield some knowledge about the population of concern especially for the purpose of statistical inferences (Kothari, 2008). There are two major categories of sampling techniques; probability random sampling (random sampling, stratified sampling and cluster sampling) and non probability sampling (purposive, convenience, judgmental and snow ball sampling). The study employed convenience sampling procedures for selecting Airtel staff to be included in the sample. This is because the population for Airtel staff was only 8 and therefore since they are very few, they all constituted the sample. In case of Airtel customer the sample was chosen based on systematic sampling formulae as explained above.

3.14 Data collection instruments

These are various tools that are employed in data collection. In social science these include: Observation, interview, questionnaire, documentary reviews, in-depth interview and observation check list. These tools vary due to research topic, disciplines, time, and funds.

The study used both interview and questionnaires .A combination of these methods helped in obtaining methodological triangulation so as to maximize the quality of the data collected. Denscombe (1998), using more than one specific method enables the researcher to cross-validate information and data collected from a variety of sources

(i) Questionnaires

Questionnaire is the list of question written on the paper for the purpose of capturing data on a particular theme. Questionnaires involve a set of questions intending to capture respondent's attitudes, feelings or reactions to the problem under study. It was divided into open ended and closed ended. The former gives respondents chances to ask some more questions but the latter does not. Kothari (2004) added that in general, the questionnaire is an economical method of data collection in terms of time and has a great coverage as well as being free of researcher bias. The study administered questionnaire to 68 Students of Mzumbe University Mwanza Campus and 8 employee of Airtel (T) Limited

(ii) Interview

An interview was described as a conversation with a purpose (Cohen *et al*, 2000). The technique was suitable for an intensive investigation and useful for tapping information about attitudes, likes and dislikes that are revealed by a respondent's verbal behaviour. It also allows a researcher to get first-hand information. This study conducted interview to validate some questions in the questionnaires employee of Airtel Mwanza Branch

3.15 Reliability and Validity of the research

There are several tests used for testing the quality of any empirical research. Kothari (2008) identifies two broad categories used: reliability and validity.

(i) Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which the scale produces consistent results over time if the repeated measurements are done (Emory, 1991). A measuring instrument is reliable if it provides consistent results. The reliability tested by considering the following: the degree to which a measurement given remains the same, the stability of the measurement remains the same and the similarity of measurements within a given period of time.

(ii) Validity

Validity is “establishing correct operational measures for the concepts being studied” (Yin, 1994, p.8). It is the degree to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure and whether it measures the concept accurately. There are three types of validity: construct validity, internal validity and external validity.

3.16 Data Analysis

Oso and Onen (2008) observe that, data analysis entails separation of data into constituent's parts or elements, or an examination of data to distinguish its components parts or elements separately and in relation to the whole. In this study, data was analysed in terms of tables, percentages and figures.

3.17 Ethical Consideration

Despite the high value of knowledge which was gained through research, knowledge cannot be pursued at the expense of human dignity (Oso and Onen, 2008). Thus, the issues of ethics are very important in any research undertaking. The major ethical issues of concern for this study are privacy and confidentiality, informed consent, and researcher's responsibility.

With regard to privacy and confidentiality, the participants had the right to keep from the public certain information about themselves and that all data to be collected are used for the purposes of the study.

There is also the factor of informed consent. It is important that the researcher get the participants' consent before he can proceed with his study. It is important that the participants decide on their own and voluntarily to participate in the study. To ensure voluntary participation in the study, the researcher provides the respondents with information on:

- The purpose of the study
- The expected duration of participation and the procedures to be followed

- Any benefit to the subject or participant
- The extent of privacy and confidentiality.

3.18 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the methodologies which used in this study, the target population, sample size and sampling technique to be used to obtain the sample. It has also discussed qualitative methodology, study population and sampling procedures and data collection methods. It has discussed the methods of data sources and collection instruments. It highlighted the strategies for meeting validity and reliability of data. Approaches to the presentation and analysis of data were also discussed. Finally, ethical issues relating to this study were presented and discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter details analysis and discussion of the findings. On the basis of the sample, the findings largely represent views, perceptions and experiences of Masters Students of Mzumbe University, Mwanza Campus on influence of Viral Marketing on sales. The structure or composition of the sample is largely determined by the mixture of judgment, convenient, purposeful and systematic random sampling techniques. Sample characteristics include Masters Students of Mzumbe University, Mwanza campus and Staff of Airtel (T) Limited, Mwanza branch living under different social-economic conditions. Respondents had equal chances of being targeted and selected for interviews. The inference drawn from respondents' collective view is believed to represents Tanzanian's public consensus on the influence of Viral Marketing on Sales. Combinations of qualitative and quantitative data are analyzed to establish the findings represented in this report. The margin of error is plus or minus 5 percent at a 95 percent confidence level. Variables analyzed and discussed include the following:

- ✓ The demographic Characteristics of the sample
- ✓ The level of customers awareness on the Viral Marketing
- ✓ The Airtel (T) limited strategies of Viral Marketing
- ✓ Statistical analysis of the influence of Viral Marketing on sales.

Given the different roles played by respondents, the questionnaire probed the same questions to Master students and Airtel staff. The information extracted from the respondents underlies the basis for the analysis of the findings presented in this chapter, policy recommendations and lessons learned presented in chapter five.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

4.2.1 Gender Category of Respondents

Table 1: Gender of Respondents

Type of Respondents		Gender of Respondent		Total
		Male	Female	
Mzumbe students Airtel Customer	Count	36	32	68
	% of Total	47.4%	42.1%	89.5%
Airtel Staff	Count	3	5	8
	% of Total	3.9%	6.6%	10.5%
Total	Count	39	37	76
	% of Total	51.3%	48.7%	100.0%

Source: field data, 2015

Table 1 gives the picture of the gender distribution of the respondents. For the combined respondents, male representation is 51.3 percent while 48.7 percent is female. This means that, in this study male constitutes more respondents than female. This can be generalizing that 51.3 percent of population of Airtel customer are male while 48.7 percent of the population of Airtel customer are female. This percentage is almost half male and half female. However, Airtel (T) Limited needs to establish Viral Marketing strategies that sustain motivation of male customer while maintaining viral marketing strategies that maintaining royalty of female customers.

4.2.2 Ages Category of Respondents

Table 2: Age category of Respondent

Type of Respondents		Age of Category Respondent			Total
		18-27 yrs	28-37 yrs	38-47 yrs	
Mzumbe students Airtel Customer	Count	1	32	35	68
	% of Total	1.3%	42.1%	46.1%	89.5%
Airtel Staff	Count	0	6	2	8
	% of Total	0.0%	7.9%	2.6%	10.5%
Total	Count	1	38	37	76
	% of Total	1.3%	50.0%	48.7%	100.0%

Source: Field data (2015)

Table 2 represents the age distribution of the respondents, for combined respondents the age group between, 18-27 years counts for 1.3 percent. The largest age group representation in the sample is 28-37 years, which counts for 50.0 percent. The second largest group representation in the sample is 38-47 years, which counts for 48.7 percent. This can be generalizing that more than half of the Airtel Customers population is in the age group above 27 years. Therefore, the Airtel (T) Ltd should employs viral marketing strategy that focus more to customers that have the age above 27 years while maintain viral marketing strategies that is between 18-27 years.

4.2.3 Education Category of Respondents

Table 3: Education of Respondent

Type of Respondents	Education of Respondent			Total
	First Degree	Post Graduate Degree	Master Degree	
Mzumbe students	17	1	50	68
Airtel Customer	22.4%	1.3%	65.8%	89.5%
Airtel Staff	3	0	5	8
	3.9%	0.0%	6.6%	10.5%
Total	20	1	55	76
	26.3%	1.3%	72.4%	100.0%

Source: Field data (2015)

The overall picture of education category is analyzed in table 3. 26.3 percent of respondents are graduate with first degree, 1.3 per, cent have post graduate degree and 72.4 percent of respondents have masters' degree. This means that more than half of the population of Airtel Customers has post graduate degree. Therefore, the Company needs to critically evaluate their viral marketing strategies because most of the customers are educated and critically analyze each viral messages send to them.

4.2.4 Occupation Category of Respondents

Table 4: Occupation of Respondent

Types of Respondents		Occupation of Respondent				Total
		Self Employed	Business Person	Civil Servant	Employed by Private Company	
Mzumbe students Airtel Customer	Count	6	21	38	3	68
	% of Total	7.9%	27.6%	50.0%	3.9%	89.5%
Airtel Staff	Count	0	0	0	8	8
	% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.5%	10.5%
Total	Count	6	21	38	11	76
	% of Total	7.9%	27.6%	50.0%	14.5%	100.0%

Source Field data (2015)

The representation of occupation category of respondents on Table 4 shows that 7.9 percent were self-employed with their private companies, 27.6 percent business person, 50.0 percent civil servants and 14.5 percent employed in private sector. This finding shows that half of the population is civil servants. Therefore, this means that the company needs to intensify viral marketing strategies that maintain motivation of civil servants to use Airtel products and services.

4.2.5 Types of Mobile service provider Category of Respondents

Table 5: Type of Mobile Service Provider

Type of Respondents	Type of Mobile Service Provider	Total
	Air Tel	
Mzumbe students Airtel Customer	68	68
Airtel Staff	8	8
Total	76	76

Source: Field data (2015)

Table 5 indicates that types of mobile service provider of respondents. Combined responses indicate that all 100 percent of respondents were all using Airtel mobile service provider. This means that the finding of this study apply to users of Airtel

Service provider. However, the findings can be generalized to all users of mobile service providers such as Vodacom, Tigo and Zantel.

4.3 The Level of Customers Awareness on the Viral Marketing

The first objective was to assess the customer awareness on viral marketing. The awareness variables assessed include: awareness on Airtel Free Software programs, Airtel Short Messages, process of sending Airtel SMS to social network, Motivation of Airtel SMS products/services description,

4.3.2 Awareness on Airtel Free Soft Ware Programs

Table 6: Awareness on SMS describing Airtel free soft ware programs

Type of respondents		I receive SMS describing Airtel free soft ware programs		Total
		agree	Strongly agree	
Mzumbe students Airtel Customer	Count	44	24	68
	% of Total	57.9%	31.6%	89.5%
Airtel Staff	Count	6	2	8
	% of Total	7.9%	2.6%	10.5%
Total	Count	50	26	76
	% of Total	65.8%	34.2%	100.0%

Source: Field data (2015)

The first and foremost condition for viral marketing requires customers understanding of free software programs provided by the service provider. Table 7 presents awareness of the Airtel customers on free software programs provided by Airtel(T) Limited. For combined responses 65.8 percent agreed and 34.2 percent strongly agreed that they received SMS describing Airtel free software programmes. On average 100 Percent of combined response agreed that they received SMS describing free soft ware programs. Therefore, based on the respondents' responses it seems that 100 percent of Airtel customers are aware on Airtel free software programs.

4.3.3 Understanding on Airtel Short Messages

Table 7: Clear Understanding of Airtel Short Messages

Type of Respondents				I Always understand Airtel SMS Clearly				Total
				Strong Disagree	Disagree	agree	Strongly agree	
Mzumbe students	Airtel	Count		3	19	34	12	68
Customer		% of Total		3.9%	25.0%	44.7%	15.8%	89.5%
Airtel Staff		Count		0	1	4	3	8
		% of Total		0.0%	1.3%	5.3%	3.9%	10.5%
Total		Count		3	20	38	15	76
		% of Total		3.9%	26.3%	50.0%	19.7%	100.0%

Source: field data (2015)

Table 9 summarizes respondents understanding of Airtel short messages. Responses indicated that 3.9 percent strongly disagreed, 26.3 percent disagreed that they always understand Airtel SMS Clearly while 50.0 percent agreed and 19.7 percent strongly agreed that they always understand Airtel SMS Clearly. On Average 30.2 percent of respondents disagreed while 69.7 percent responses agreed that they always understand Airtel SMS Clearly. Therefore, from these responses it can be inferred that 69.7 Percent of Airtel customers understand clearly Content of short messages sent to them by Airtel, while 30.3 percent do not understand contents of Short Messages sent to them by Airtel. While it is good news for Airtel (T) Ltd to have 69.7 percent of the customers who understand the messages sent by the company, on other hand 30.3 percent of their customers are do not understand the content contained in the short messages send to them. This imply that Airtel (T) Ltd should improve the content contained in the short messages in order to enable this 30.3 percent of the population to understand the content contained in the short messages.

4.3.4 Awareness on process of Sending Airtel SMS to social network

Table 8: Sending Airtel SMS to social network group

Type of Respondents				I Always send Airtel SMS to group				Total
				Strong Disagree	Disagree	agree	Strongly agree	
Mzumbe students	Airtel	Count		4	12	42	10	68
Customer		% of Total		5.3%	15.8%	55.3%	13.2%	89.5%
Airtel Staff		Count		0	0	5	3	8
		% of Total		0.0%	0.0%	6.6%	3.9%	10.5%
Total		Count		4	12	47	13	76
		% of Total		5.3%	15.8%	61.8%	17.1%	100.0%

Source: Field data (2015)

Table 8 summarizes the respondents' awareness on process of sending Airtel SMS to social network. Combined responses indicates that 5.3 percent strongly disagreed and 15.8 percent disagreed that they always send Airtel SMS to social network group while 61.8percent agreed and 17.1percent strongly agreed that they always send Airtel SMS to Social network group. On Average 21.1 percent of respondents disagreed that they always send Airtel SMS to social network group while 78.9 percent respondents agreed that they always send Airtel SMS to social network group. Therefore, based on the respondents responses above, it can be inferred that 78.9 percent are aware on the process of sending Airtel Short messages to social network group while 21.1 percent are not aware on the process of sending Airtel short messages to social network group. Therefore, the company needs to improve motivation strategies that increase awareness of sending Airtel viral messages to social network.

4.3.5 Motivation on Short Messages describing Airtel products/services

Table 9: Motivation of Airtel SMS products/services description

Types of Respondents	I am always motivated by Airtel SMS products/services				Total
	Strong Disagree	Disagree	agree	Strongly agree	
Mzumbe students Airtel Customer	Count 12	33	23	0	68
	% of Total 15.8%	43.4%	30.3%	0.0%	89.5%
Airtel Staff	Count 0	0	5	3	8
	% of Total 0.0%	0.0%	6.6%	3.9%	10.5%
Total	Count 12	33	28	3	76
	% of Total 15.8%	43.4%	36.8%	3.9%	100.0%

Source: Field data (2015)

Table 9 summarizes respondents' awareness on motivation of short Messages describing Airtel products and services. The question probed whether Airtel customers were motivated by Airtel short messages describing product and services. Based on the response rate, 15.8 percent strongly disagreed and 43.4 percent disagreed that they were always being motivated by Short Messages describing Airtel Product and Services. While 36.8 percent agreed and 3.9 percent strongly agreed that they were always being motivated by Short messages describing products and services provided by Airtel. On Average 69.2 percent of respondents disagreed that they are always being motivated by short messages describing product and services provided by Airtel while 30.7 agreed that they are always being motivated by short messages describing Airtel products/ service. Based on these respondents' responses, it can be inferred that 69.2 percent of respondents are not being motivated by short messages describing Airtel Product and services while 30.7 percent of respondents are being motivated by short messaged describing Airtel Product and Services. Therefore, the company needs to improve viral marketing strategies that contain motivation strategies to accommodate these 69.2 percent of the population.

4.3.6 Sharing of Airtel SMS in social network

Table 10: Sharing Airtel SMS in social network

Type of Respondents				I am always free to share Airtel SMS in my social network				Total
				Strong Disagree	Disagree	agree	Strongly agree	
Mzumbe students Airtel Customer	Count	30	33	3	2	68		
	% of Total	39.5%	43.4%	3.9%	2.6%			
Airtel Staff	Count	0	0	5	3	8		
	% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	6.6%	3.9%			
Total	Count	30	33	8	5	76		
	% of Total	39.5%	43.4%	10.5%	6.6%			

Source: Field data (2015)

Table 10 shows respondents' response rates on state of sharing Airtel Messages in social network. The respondents responses indicate that 39.5 percent strongly disagreed and 43.3 percent disagreed that they always feel free to share Airtel SMS in their social network. While 10.5 percent agreed and 6.6 percent strongly agreed that they were always free to share Airtel SMS in their social network. On Average 82.8 percent of respondents disagreed while 17.2 percent responses agreed that they were always free to share Airtel SMS in their social network. This means that the 82.8 percent of the respondent are not sharing Airtel Message in their social network while only 17.2 share Airtel Messages in their social network.

4.3.7 Happy with graphics attached to Airtel SMS

Table 11: Happy with graphics attached to Airtel SMS

Type of Respondents		I am happy with graphics attached to Airtel SMS				Total
		Strong Disagree	Disagree	agree	Strongly agree	
Mzumbe students Airtel Customer	Count	9	25	17	17	68
	% of Total	11.8%	32.9%	22.4%	22.4%	89.5%
Airtel Staff	Count	0	0	5	3	8
	% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	6.6%	3.9%	10.5%
Total	Count	9	25	22	20	76
	% of Total	11.8%	32.9%	28.9%	26.3%	100.0%

Source: Field data (2015)

Table 11 shows that 11.8 percent strongly disagreed and 32.9 percent disagreed, that they were happy with graphics attached to Airtel Short Messages while 28.9 percent agreed and 26.3 percent strongly agreed that they were happy with graphics attached to Airtel Short Messages. On Average 44.7 percent of respondents disagreed while 55.3 percent responses agreed that they were happy with graphic attached to Airtel short messages. This means that the 55.3 percent of the respondents are influenced by graphic attached to Airtel Short messages while 44.7 percent are not influenced by graphics attached to Airtel Short messages. Therefore the company needs to understand reasons why this 44.7 percent of the customers are not influence the graphics attached to Airtel short messages and design viral marketing strategies that might improve the influence of the graphics attached to Airtel short messages.

4.3.8 The Influence of Airtel SMS on buying decisions

Table 12: Influence of Airtel SMS on buying decisions

Type of Respondents				Airtel SMS have influence on my buying decisions				Total
				Strong Disagree	Disagree	agree	Strongly agree	
Mzumbe students	Airtel	Count		12	6	19	31	68
Customer		% of Total		15.8%	7.9%	25.0%	40.8%	89.5%
Airtel Staff		Count		0	0	2	6	8
		% of Total		0.0%	0.0%	2.6%	7.9%	10.5%
Total		Count		12	6	21	37	76
		% of Total		15.8%	7.9%	27.6%	48.7%	100.0%

Source: Field data (2015)

The overall picture of Airtel SMS influence on buying decisions is shown in table 12. The respondents responses indicate that, 15.8 percent strongly disagreed and 7.9 percent disagreed that Airtel SMS influence on their buying decision while 27.6 percent agreed and 48.7 percent strongly agreed that Airtel SMS have influence on their buying decision. On Average 23.7 percent of respondents disagreed while 75.1 percent responses agreed that Airtel SMS have influence on their buying decisions. This finding indicates that more than half of the population of Airtel customers is influenced by the short messages to make buying decisions. Therefore the company needs to maintain

Viral Marketing strategies that enable this influences while designing others that might influence the rest of 23.7 percent of the population of Airtel Customers.

4.3.9 Airtel SMS alert charges are expensive

Table 13: Airtel SMS alert charges is expensive

Type of Respondents				Airtel SMS alert charges are expensive				Total
				Strong Disagree	Disagree	agree	Strongly agree	
Mzumbe students Airtel Customer	Count			12	21	21	14	68
	% of Total			15.8%	27.6%	27.6%	18.4%	89.5%
Airtel Staff	Count			0	0	7	1	8
	% of Total			0.0%	0.0%	9.2%	1.3%	10.5%
Total	Count			12	21	28	15	76
	% of Total			15.8%	27.6%	36.8%	19.7%	100.0%

Source: Field data (2015)

Table 13 shows respondents' responses on charges of SMS alert. The response rates indicates that, 15.8 percent strongly strong disagreed, 27.6 percent disagreed that Airtel SMS Alert charges is expensive. While 36.8 percent agreed and 19.7 percent strongly agreed that Airtel SMS alert charges is expensive. On Average 43.4 percent of respondents disagreed while 56.6 percent responses agreed that airtel SMS alert charges are expensive. This means that 56.6 percent of Airtel Customer perceives SMS alert charges to be expensive. The expensiveness of SMS alerts might reduce motivation of customers to pay attention on the content attached to the messages and hence affect their buying decisions. This in turn reduces sales. Therefore the company needs to reduce charges attached to SMS to motivate their customers to read the content attached and therefore make informed decisions.

4.3.10 Airtel SMS time saving

Table 14: Airtel SMS Time Saving

Type of Respondents				Using Airtel SMS saves me shopping time				Total
				Strong Disagree	Disagree	agree	Strongly agree	
Mzumbe students	Airtel Count			3	6	32	27	68
Customer	% of Total			3.9%	7.9%	42.1%	35.5%	89.5%
Airtel Staff	Count			0	1	5	2	8
	% of Total			0.0%	1.3%	6.6%	2.6%	10.5%
Total	Count			3	7	37	29	76
	% of Total			3.9%	9.2%	48.7%	38.2%	100.0%

Source: Field data (2015)

Time is an important resource in business. Table 14 indicates respondents' response rates on time saving. The response indicates that, 3.9 percent strongly strongly disagreed and 9.2 percent disagreed that using Airtel SMS saves their shopping time while 48.7 percent agreed and 38.2 percent were strongly agreed that using Airtel SMS saves their shopping time. On Average 12.1 percent of respondents disagreed while 86.9 percent agreed that using Airtel SMS save their shopping time. Therefore, it can be inferred that Airtel SMS saves shopping time by 86.9 percent

4.3.11 Airtel SMS money Savings

Table 15: Airtel SMS Money Savings

Type of Respondents				Using Airtel SMS saves me transport money				Total
				Strong Disagree	Disagree	agree	Strongly agree	
Mzumbe students	Airtel Count			30	14	19	5	68
Customer	% of Total			39.5%	18.4%	25.0%	6.6%	89.5%
Airtel Staff	Count			0	0	5	3	8
	% of Total			0.0%	0.0%	6.6%	3.9%	10.5%
Total	Count			30	14	24	8	76
	% of Total			39.5%	18.4%	31.6%	10.5%	100.0%

Source: Field data (2015)

Table 17 shows respondents responses on money savings. The responses indicate that 33.9 percent strongly strong disagreed and 18.4 percent disagreed that Using Airtel SMS Save their money spends for transportation costs. While 31.6 percent agree and 10.5 percent strongly agreed that Using Airtel SMS saves their money spend for transportation

costs. On Average 57.9 percent of respondents disagreed that using Airtel SMS saves their money spend for transportation while 42.1 percent of respondents agreed that using Airtel SMS save their Moenes spend for Transportation. This means that more than half of the population of the Airtel customer perceives that Airtel SMS does not save their transportation costs. This can reduces influence of Airtel SMS on sales because it perceived not to add financial value as far as transportation costs is concerned. The company theirfore needs to find out why more than half of the population does not perceive Airtel SMS to save transportation costs.

4.4 The Strategies that Airtel should implement to improve Viral Marketing

Table 16 strategies should Airtel (T) do to improve Viral Marketing

Type of Respondents		What strategies should Airtel (T) do to improve Viral Marketing?						Total
		training customers on SMS management	Improve network coverage	Reduces SMS transaction fee	Improve Airtel help desk support	provide motivational messages	intensify sales and marketing promotion	
Mzumbe students	Count	4	18	16	28	1	1	68
	% of Total	5.3%	23.7%	21.1%	36.8%	1.3%	1.3%	89.5%
Airtel Customer	Count	2	1	2	1	1	1	8
	% of Total	2.6%	1.3%	2.6%	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%	10.5%
Airtel Staff	Count	6	19	18	29	2	2	76
	% of Total	7.9%	25.0%	23.7%	38.2%	2.6%	2.6%	100.0%
Total	Count							
	% of Total							

Source Field data (2015)

The second objective of the study was to asses strategies that Airtel should implement in order to improve the influence of viral marketing on Sales. The respondents were asked to mention one important strategy that Airtel should implement in order to improve the influence of viral marketing on sales. 6 Strategies were identified. This include Training Customers on SMS management, Improve network coverage, reduces SMS transaction fee, providing Motivational messages, and intensifying sales promotion and marketing.

The respondent responses are indicated in table. On total the strategy of improving Airtel help desk support ranked the first with a score of 38.2Percent followed by improving network coverage which scored 25.0 percent. The strategy of reducing SMS transaction fee ranked the third with a score 23.7 percent and training customer on SMS Management strategy ranked the fourth with a score of 7.9 percent. The fifth strategy was providing motivational messages and the sixth strategy was intensifying sales and marketing promotion with score of 2.6 percent respectively.

Therefore in order for the Airtel (T) Ltd to improve the influence of viral marketing on sales it should first and foremost improve the helpdesk support. While asked why Airtel needs to improve help desk support the respondents responded that the staff responsible for help desk support lack customer care techniques. They do attend customer query promptly, they are not certain when providing answers to customer and some time the just ignore picking up the phone. The key for products descriptions are somewhat mixed and therefore customers misunderstand what exactly code and key to apply in case of needs of clarification. Therefore, help desk staff needs to be equipped with customer care, equipments, sales techniques, business language, telephones management and general customer management skills.

Network coverage in another important strategy that the Airtel (T) limited needs to improve. Respondents perceived that due to frequent network cutoff and sometime unreachable has led to many customers missing important viral messages that describe Airtel products and services. Therefore for enhancing the influence of viral marketing on sales, the Airtel (T) Ltd needs to improve the network coverage.

It is also important for Air tel to reduce transaction fee. Respondents perceived that reduce transaction fee charged on requesting information on different products and services provided by Airtel will motivate the customers to inquire from time to time information about different products and hence use the services. Services that were not

to have high transaction fees were sending and receiving Airtel Money, Funds transfers, balance inquiries, purchase of different utilities and purchasing of YATOSHA products. Intensifying sales promotion and improving motivation messages is another important strategy that was noted by the respondents. Sales promotion through viral messages, graphics and competitions increases awareness of different products and services and hence influence on sales.

4.5 Analysis of the Influence of Viral Marketing on Sales

Table 17: Influence of Viral Marketing on Sales

Type of Respondents		What products have you purchased because of SMS product alert from Airtel?											Total
		Buy Air time	Buy Airtel Money	Buy Yatosha	Buy internet bundle	Making international calls	Paying utilities bills	Mobile banking transactions	Making Fund transfer	Making Savings	participating in bating	Buying Music call tune	
Mzumbe students	Count	17	7	10	5	3	8	4	3	5	4	2	68
	% of Total	22.4%	9.2%	13.2%	6.6%	3.9%	10.5%	5.3%	3.9%	6.6%	5.3%	2.6%	89.5%
Airtel Staff	Count	3	0	2	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	8
	% of Total	3.9%	0.0%	2.6%	1.3%	0.0%	1.3%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.5%
Total	Count	20	7	12	6	3	9	5	3	5	4	2	76
	% of Total	26.3%	9.2%	15.8%	7.9%	3.9%	11.8%	6.6%	3.9%	6.6%	5.3%	2.6%	100.0%

Source: Field data (2015)

Objective three of the study was to analyze the influence of Viral Marketing on sales. The study inquired from the respondents about the products that they purchased because of Short messages alert from Aitel explaining features of the product. Respondents were asked to mention only one product. The response rates are as indicated in table 17. The overall picture shows that 26.3 percent were influenced to buy airtime, 15.8 percent Yatosha, 15.8 percent internet bundle, 11.8 percent to pay utilities bills, 9.2 percent to buy Airtel money, 7.9 percent to make international calls, 6.6 percent to make Mobile banking transactions, 6.6 percent to Save funds , 5.3 percent to participate in bating, 3.9 percent to pay utilities bills, 3.9 percent to make Fund transfer, and 2.6 percent for buy Music call tune.

Basing on these respondents responses we can infer that viral marketing has influence sales on air time by 26.3 percent, Yatosha 15.8 percent, internet bundle 15.8 percent, paying utilities bills by 11.8 percent, Airtel Money 9.2 percent, making international calls 7.9 percent, mobile banking 6.6 percent, saving funds 6.6 percent and bating .3 percent.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The general objective of this study was to assess the customers' perception on the influence of Viral Marketing on sales. The study interviewed Mzumbe Evening class 2014 and 2015 masters students Mwanza campus who use Airtel for their communication and member of staff of Airtel Mwanza Branch. The study found the following

5.1.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The sample constituted by 68 Mzumbe Evening class 2014 and 2015 Masters Students Mwanza Campus Airtel Customer and 8 Airtel staff. For combined respondents' male representation was 51.3 percent while 48.7 percent was female. The largest age group representation in the sample was 28-37 years, which counts for 50.0 percent. The second largest group representation in the sample was 38-47 years, which counts for 48.7 percent. The age group between, 8-27 years counted 1.3 percent. 26.3 percent of respondents were graduate with first degree, 1.3 percent had post graduate degree and 72.4 percent of respondents had masters degree. 7.9 percent were self-employed, 27.6 percent business person, 50.0 percent civil servants and 14.5 percent farmers. 89.5 percent used Airtel as the only service provider, 5.3 percent Airtel and Tigo, and 5.3 percent Airtel and Zantel.

5.1.2 The Level of Customers Awareness on the Viral Marketing

The first objective was to assess the customer awareness on viral marketing. The awareness variables assessed include: awareness on Airtel Free Software programs, Airtel Short Messages, process of sending Airtel SMS to social network, Motivation of Airtel SMS products/services description. On average 100 percent of Airtel customers are aware on Airtel free software programs. Only 69.7 Percent of Airtel customers

understand clearly Content of short messages sent to them by Airtel, while 30.3 percent do not understand contents of Short Messages sent to them by Airtel. 78.9 percent were aware on the process of sending Airtel Short messages to social network group while 21.1 percent were not aware on the process of sending Airte short messages to social network group. 69.2 percent of respondents were not being motivated by short messages describing Airtel Product and services while 30.7 percent of respondents were motivated by short messaged describing Airtel Product and Services. 82.8 percent of the respondent did not share Airtel Message in their social network while only 17.2 shared Airtel Messages in their social network. 55.3 percent of the respondents were influenced by graphic attached to Airtel Short messages while 44.7 percent were not influenced by graphics attached to Airtel Short messages. 23.7 percent of respondents were not influenced by short messages describing products and services in their buying decisions while 75.1 percent were influenced by short messages describing products and services on their buying decisions. 12.1 percent of respondents shopping time were not saved because of airtel short messaged while 86.9 percent of respondents shopping time were saved due to use of ng Airtel short messages.

5.1.3 The Strategies that Airtel should Implement to Improve Viral Marketing

The second objective of the study was to asses strategies that Airtel should implement in order to improve the influence of viral marketing on sales. The respondents were asked to mention one important strategy that Airtel should implement in to improve influence of viral marketing on sales. 6 Strategies were identified. This include Training Customers on SMS management, Improve network coverage, reduces SMS transaction fee, providing Motivational messages, and intensifying sales promotion and marketing. The respondent responses are indicated in table 16 and figure 16. On total the strategy of improving Airtel help desk support ranked the first with a score of 38.2 percent followed by improving network coverage which scored 25.0 percent. The strategy of reducing SMS transaction fee ranked the third with a score 23.7 percent and training customer on SMS Management strategy ranked the fourth with a score of 7.9 percent. The fifth

strategy was providing motivational messages and the sixth strategy was intensifying sales and marketing promotion with score of 2.6 percent respectively

5.1.4 Analysis of the Influence of Viral Marketing on Sales

Objective three of the study was to analyze the influence of Viral Marketing on sales. The study inquired from the respondents about the products that they purchased because of Short messages alert from Aitel explaining features of the product. Respondents were asked to mention only one product. The response rates are as indicated in table 17 and figure 17. The overall picture shows that 26.3 percent were influenced to buy airtime, 15.8 percent Yatosha, 15.8 percent internet bundle, 11.8 percent to make mobile banking transactions, 9.2 percent to buy Airtel money, 7.9 percent to make international calls, 6.6 percent to make Mobile banking transactions, 6.6 percent to Save, 5.3 percent to participate in bating, 3.9 percent to pay utilities bills, 3.9 percent to make Fund transfer, and 2.6 percent for buy Music call tune.

5.2 Conclusion

The general objective of this study was to assess the influence on the Viral Marketing on Sales; Perceptions of customers of Airtel Tanzania Ltd, Mwanza Branch. More specifically, the study identified the level of customers' awareness on the Viral Marketing, Airtel strategies of Viral Marketing and analyzed the influence of Viral Marketing on sales.

Based on inferential analysis, Customer awareness on viral market was more than half. This means that more than half of the population is aware about viral marketing. The findings showed that more than half of the respondents perceived that service under Viral marketing was fair and high-quality, which proved to bring positive reaction of Aitel performance due to improved customer goodwill. Also, the viral marketing has an advantage as messages spread quickly to large population in the network and hence reduce advertisement time and cost.

It was further observed that the spillover of Viral marketing to population improved customer's as well as the Airtel personnel ability to make wide variety of choice, improved customer trust confidence and loyalty and therefore influences sales.

5.3 Recommendation and Implications

With increasing competition in most service institutions as well as rising customer expectations and their demand for superior services at the right time, there is a need to strengthen all the facets of competitiveness. This means the service environment is increasingly becoming important. The services quality, expectations is the locus of customer-provider interactions. The more conducive the interaction environment, we argue the greater the opportunities for customer and employee satisfaction, the more likely the future Viral marketing patronage and the less likely the complaints such like security on the services to avoid financial risks and equipping itself through. According to Fournier and Mick (1999) the satisfaction process often has a strong social dimension. They argue that there is a need for a substantial research on satisfaction to prevent narrow and potentially spurious conceptual and operational boundaries. They note that transaction-specific assessments of satisfaction are likely to be incomplete, if not misleading and unreliable.

Viral marketing has great opportunity to win the market due to its services. Many communication companies in Tanzania need to develop this type of marketing. Therefore, setting better Viral marketing plan that enable good customers service delivery, may encourage more customers from different location in Tanzania, particularly rural areas.

Airtel need to focus on conducting more marketing research and further investigate needs of customers towards the use of Viral Marketing to influence retention and growth. As the study reveals that more customers are attracted and forced to retain due to convenient of the services offered. Customers are mostly attracted by balance enquiry,

money transfer, and bill payments as there is no need to queue and can be accessed at the finger tips.

Customized alerts and different payments via Airtel money are the new error, financial institutions that can capitalize on this will be better positioned to increase revenue, obtain and retain customers. (DeCastro 2009)

5.4 Area of Further Research

- ❖ The impact of Viral Marketing on mobile banking
- ❖ The contribution of Viral Marketing on Business growth
- ❖ Inclusion in Viral Marketing: issues, options and strategies

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