

The Role of Internet in Corporate Reputation Management



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CIIT/FA13-RPM-055/CVC

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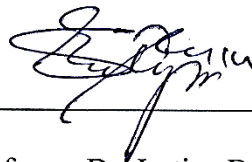
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Declaration

I Muhammad Nauman Shahid CIIT/FA13-RPM-055/CVC hereby declare that I have produced the work presented in this thesis, during the scheduled period of study. I also declare that I have not taken any material from any source except referred to wherever due that amount of plagiarism is within acceptable range. If a violation of HEC rules on research has occurred in this thesis, I shall be liable to punishable action under the plagiarism rules of the HEC.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to three important people in my life who have taught me most important lessons of life. To the memory of my father who gave me the thirst for new knowledge and the potential to seek it; to my wife, whose love is the greatest gift of my life and whose commitment, support, and patience are true models for all; and to my daughter, I. Z., who inspires me to grow and who will always be a continual source of pride and enlightenment.

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the significance of the use of social media platform by the mobile telecommunication companies (MTCs) of Pakistan. It also questions that how MTCs cater their consumers and stakeholders' inquiries to manage their corporate reputation on the internet. The top three Pakistani MTCs with their Twitter feeds were selected to examine how the mobile telecom sector use Twitter to build consumer relationships. And how do they provide quality of service for a more progressive internet reputation.

A content analysis of the tweets was conducted to determine the most frequent usage of Twitter in connection with the quality of services provided on the internet. The results show that customers use Twitter to find answers about the product specific questions. They also use it as a source of expressing their thoughts and emotions about a product/service offered by the telecom mobile operator.

Above all, Twitter is serving as a hub for real-time communication between MTCs and their consumers, performing similar tasks as traditional communication media. The results show that the mobile telecom companies should carefully plan time to reach out to their customers through this platform. This can help them to sufficiently manage and restrain from negative online publicity; which can be achieved by making and maintaining positive relationships with their clients.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CMC	Computer mediated communication
CM Pak (Zong)	Chinese MTC operating under brand name Zong
eWOM	Electronic word of mouth
Mobilink (Jazz)	Well-known mobile services provider in Pakistan. Jazz is a prepaid brand.
MTC	Mobile telecommunication companies

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Evolution of Internet

The modern internet standard Web 2.0 is a successor of Web 1.0 which initiated in 1995-96, with an initial composition of more than 0.2 million websites and approximately 4.8 million users across the globe. Technically, the original system architecture was capable of messages that were pushed out with partial answering mechanisms. However, in the last decade, Web 2.0 (a highly usable form of the internet) has established with almost 80 million websites and approximately over a billion users (Argenti & Barnes, 2009). It has brought new opportunities with its expansion especially for exchanging information over the internet.

The vast expansion of the Web 2.0 technology has triggered the interest of individuals, entrepreneurs, students, and businesses from a variety of domains. The role of the internet has vastly grown mainly with the evolvement of the social media. This new media technology impacts on users, modern business models and above all the corporate reputation have become a focal point of concern McQuail (2005).

The significance of new media mechanism is that it provides advanced features of information exchange and intense interactivity for societal communiqué such as the massive collection and variety of the available sources, the outlook of public reach and its universal nature.

1.2 Modern Media and Corporate Sector

The social media plays a vital role in modern society especially in building the reputation of business community positively, and it may adversely affect the reputation if not managed properly. Communication has remained an important aspect of business reputation on the internet and companies use their human resource to manage and develop it further. An article states that companies should invest approximately 42% in developing their businesses Web 2.0 infrastructure (McKinsey, 2007) while about 24% respondents say that they would have got more success if they had invested in technology earlier (Argenti and Barnes, 2009).

Since 2006, online advertising has ascertained a growth of more than 3.10 billion dollars capturing about 13% of overall online advertising spending. This increase is increased to 58% more than it was in 2010 which was equal to 2.0 billion dollars (Indvik, 2011). The

public value of the brand achieved through online advertising is more cost effective, is 26.9% more efficient than that of conventional advertising tactics which deliver 2.3% brand value (Hayes, 2009). Participants of the study also revealed that excellent efforts of the companies help them consistently read positive reviews, comments of existing users, and statements of the company increase their self-assurance in particular company (Hayes, 2009).

The fast growth of modern communiqué has also impacted the communication and marketing strategies of the companies. In old times, there used to be a one-way style of communication such as media advertisements and publicity, but nowadays, customers are more and keener to interact in a two-way form of communication such as in social media (Argenti & Barnes, 2009). The large mobile telecommunication companies in Pakistan, who are using social media industry for their marketing and advertising campaigns, experienced tremendous growth in the last couple of years.

The MTCs are facing difficulties installing their hardware especially after the auction of 3G and 4G spectra in Pakistan. The slow fulfilling of the enormous demand for 3G & 4G internet services among the masses and the technical delays in widening the services coverage is collectively increasing public unrest. Therefore, the corporate reputation of such companies is greatly at risk. Companies have different internet based reputation management resources available in which one of the way is through interaction and communication with the public on their favorite social media platforms. Social media present excellent opportunities for reputation management. However, companies should understand the importance of information that is shown online. Additionally, the way they interact with the public on these online social platforms is also of great importance.

The presentation of the content invokes unlike consequences on the distinct stakeholders plus significantly shakes the reputation of the company (Heldal et al., 2004). Hence, the companies rely more and more on their communication, development of messages and engaging their stakeholders through marketing creativities to direct their act via commitment (Argenti & Barnes, 2009). Apart from social networking websites, there are vast opportunities on the internet to drive opinions to the desired direction through social media blogs, forums, small blogs, video sharing websites and regular internet sites. However, all of them may be counted to the entire growth of the users of social media which can interpret to

the vast acknowledgment of companies and their services, high merchandise disclosures, besides inferences of customer's decision in buying through an online presence.

Social Media is a concept used “to describe the progress of the Internet starting a stable atmosphere concentrated on single sided receipt and delivery of information (Web 1.0), to a collaborative public where users can express, post, share, blog and create posts instantly” (Brennan).

Social networking websites are online communities that cater to social needs of the people, their interests, and their needs to interact with family, individuals and businesses. The context of this quest defines a social media website as an online-based platform shows member profiles; allows business and individuals to share their thoughts and feelings on their favorite subjects; offers the services to search for people, groups and businesses based on chosen parameters; and allows subscribers to exchange opinions and views with others.

The most favorite internet based social platforms on the internet are Facebook (founded 2004) with more than 1.59 billion active users per month (Statista, 2016), Twitter (founded 2006) has more than 305 million active users per month (Twitter, 2016), and LinkedIn (founded 2002) has more than 400 million users (LinkedIn, 2016).

Nielsen (2016) states that 18% of the users of the social media use social networking websites to find and filter the desired information because they have faith in whatever is told to them by their friends and relatives. Hence, social networking is also serving as a tool to filter information. The on-line sources of information have a level of reliability and credibility for the customers, therefore, researching on how the companies should interact with them to manage their reputation on networking websites is of utmost importance to greater customer satisfaction. Additionally, highly ethical communication mechanisms are essential for the on-line company to customer interaction.

The modern communication tools of the businesses have increased public awareness to decision making and has urged the companies to invest directly in favorite public interaction platforms to control the way their reputation builds up. However, a broad number of communication factors have increased uncertainties among the companies, and their

reputation has become susceptible especially in terms of disgraces and rumors which every now and then rattle the public's confidence in enterprises (Argenti & Barnes, 2009).

Mobile telecommunication companies are concerned to cater the need of their customers through social media. Therefore, they started using social media websites to raise their good will for their clients who is always assumed to be right. The fierce competition among the telecom sector to capture a significant number of the market remains several high times a year. After the inception of 3G and 4G services, the consumers enter and leave the services of a company quickly based on their needs and desires. The telecommunication companies interact with their customers through social networking to get their views on a prospective product or service which help them continually customize as per the socially available momentum for it. The businesses have understood what is the importance of social media to public? And have started finding techniques to use it for their publicizing and connections.

There are certain levels of advantages for the companies to be available on social websites. These levels are derived from their need and the needs of their customers. However, the potential risks that involve in their online presence are still undecided. The companies could have two types based on their risk motivation; conservative and non-conservative. Traditional companies are dubious about their presence and interaction with their customers on social media and many other companies still have to understand how social networking could be an effective means of building and managing their corporate reputation. Due to the fast advancement of technologies, the companies have shifted their communication mechanisms to on-line systems (Altschuller & Benbunan-Fich, 2010). This development has stressed the companies to build their customer engagement and marketing strategies in accordance with the on-line interaction of their clients. The interactional behavior of the customers could affect positively or negatively on the on-line reputation of the company.

Argenti and Barnes (2010) shows that inactive spectators of corporate bodies have once translated to becoming influential stakeholders, and in addition, the customer liaison management is forced to adapt to new challenges in the last couple of years. Nowadays, companies have no control over the content, its scope and intensity or on the individual who is publishing that content. Any type of support customer issues of an organization, its services, products, and strategies could go viral when posted on the social websites or the

internet. The results could have an adverse inference on what is supposed or infer about the organization in the minds of the audience.

Barnes and Argenti (2009) also concluded that variations in the online era have stressed on the integrity of the companies to look augmented analysis on a universal position by partners, customers, stockholders and workers. Hence, enterprises of all types including telecommunication companies have to remake their strategy to manage their products while maintaining the trust of their consumers.

1.3 Mobile Telecommunication Companies and Social Media

The telecom industry in Pakistan is regulated and governed by the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA). The industry has achieved several benchmarks in Pakistan since its inception in 1947 with Pakistan Posts and Telegraph department which later turned Pakistan Telephone and Telegraph Department in 1962. The mobile telecommunication started its business in Pakistan in 1990 with Mobilink as the first mobile services operator followed by Ufone in 2001 which was a state-owned mobile telecom company of Pakistan Telecommunication Limited.

The mobile telecommunication industry of Pakistan worth \$1.001 billion (Pakistan telecommunication authority, 2016) and has tremendously grown to 131.41 million (Pakistan telecommunication authority, 2016) subscribers in the last decade. The competition among the mobile operators is closely marginal and cannot be easily compared. This intense competition among the mobile telecommunication stresses companies to depend on reputation and services. Reputation is the consumer beliefs or opinions for the company and service is all those entitled benefits that the company offers. The services can may be perceptible or imperceptible. Management prevails provided that the entity has formed a decent reputation. The aim of managing a company's reputation through better on-line interaction is to ensure that the corporation's brand is living up to mark. The customer appraisals are necessary to ensure MTCs that the products and services that are being delivered will keep their consumers, stakeholders and investors, faithful to the brand.

The mobile telecom companies are trying to interact with their customers online through their products and services on social media. The company's communication mechanism and their interaction are therefore accounted for by the social communities and the web surfers

who are looking for an established brand or a particular service to subscribe. When a consumer decides to make an announcement on Twitter or Facebook, it has all the available dimensions to attain a large group of people fastly with minimum effort, which sometimes can be a hindrance for enterprises. In Lasswell (1948), the action of communiqué can be demarcated by responding to the subsequent questions such as Who Says; What he Said; Which Communication Channel he used; Whom he Said and What Effect.

As soon as organizations discuss with public about their initiatives, it bears eminence that they not merely pay attention to their internal corporate perfection rather, they should adhere to the institutional demands as well as be often referred to as important allies in society (Morsing & Chouliarki 2010). Another study states reputation management means a company with an excellent reputation with sustaining strength (Nakra, 2000). Argenti and Barnes (2009) express that blog websites and social networking groups stand out as most impactful in sparking the rejuvenation of company communication especially in terms of organization's publicity, revenue, and entire corporate reputation. Tele-mobile companies should stick to their vision and corporate image, and continuously protect it even when they are entering into new publicity platforms, similar to social media.

The significance of corporate reputation among the target audience is high because it is directly affected in either positive or a negative way. So, it is the most important part of public relations of the company. The history of telecommunication industry of Pakistan is filled with a lot of outstanding benchmarks and achievements on a global level. In Pakistan, the different services offered by mobile telecom companies have a deep down effect on the lives of people and whatever they offer determines their customer's need and financial capabilities. Since the internet has become an important mechanism of interaction for organizations and consumers, mobile telecommunication corporations are expecting that their brand awareness will increase on social media through capitalization and it will generate more money and brand awareness which consequently will enhance customer preservation (Rapport, 2010). The web arena nowadays is no more just an aid to stay well offline; rather, it has developed into a community forum where life is present (Simpson, 2011). The market behavior have become complicated nowadays, and the scientific innovations continue to go up, customers are offered much more information and various options than their handling

power. The company's reputation streamlines purchase decisions of customers and serves as a key to the company's trademark or merchandises (Nakra, 2000).

Reputation is how people can differentiate amongst each organization's distinct characteristics. The facts that the companies present on the internet is not merely about quality of their product, but it also includes the care of customers, showing that how their concerns are answered and how they are resolved up to their contentment (Karakaya & Barnes, 2010). The studies show that web is an influential way for making new customer to organization relationships, and it also enhances the level of satisfaction of the customers (Yoon et al., 2008).

When assessing the on-line corporate reputation of a company, its brand recognition and the power to deliver are the most important factors. Companies achieve reputation awareness by utilizing these elements within and outside of the enterprise. The customers, on the other hand, perceive a company's reputation for being the extent it is dependable, famous, bad or good, consistent, honest and credible (Caruana, 1997).

The companies view the internet as a mode of communication but not as an important factor to maintain their reputation. This reputation phenomenon on the internet is important because the social media create a reputation for companies through narrative certainties (Aula, 2010). Mobile telecommunication corporations consistently use social media. However, there is a need to translate this on-line presence to reputation potential management. Additionally, it is highly eminent to build consumer relationships through internet (Rapport, 2010).

The companies use internet to get useful facts and opinions of the customers towards their products and services and helps to build strong associations (Yoon et. al, 2008). Most of the mobile companies are quick to adapt to the social media momentum of their brand and image, however, on the other side, companies who adapt this phenomenon later are surrounded by potential worries that internet has for their reputation and brand. The bottom line is that telecom companies face problems that involve careful forecasting and critical thinking because there is a scarcity of research on the best and worst practices of using social media for reputation management. The smallest error seriously damages the company's hard earned reputation especially if it becomes viral online. As for this, there is a high gap for research in practical and theoretical standpoint.

The social media discussions are a composition of rumors and evidence which forecast the development of the internet and tend to press companies to participate in building relationships with their clients online. The companies should engage their online consumers under high priority with their marketing strategies. The users between the age group of 22 to 50 are ideal and online potential customers because they are actively searching the web for shopping, real estate, new mobile phones, latest and cheap mobile data solutions, and used cell phones. These customers are attractive because they are adding financial value to the online total transactions in Pakistan. The websites such as daraz.pk and tcconnect.com have real numbers of online daily sales. The variety of products, ease of choosing between the available options and modes of delivery are the factors that keep these customers loyal to the online means of shopping. Similarly, the companies, on the other hand, keep them updated and resolve their concerns and queries in less time which in turn keep their online reputations to a positive side. A recent study has revealed that these very opinion precise and technically qualified customers' value and trust the social websites they frequently use to share their experiences of customer support (Barnes & Karakaya, 2010). Hence, to gain trust and confidence of the customers, an excellent online management and engagement is necessary.

The research was conducted about how the online customer support affects the brand reputation of a company (Nora Barnes, 2008). The sample of the study comprised of individuals who were between the ages 25-60 years and more than half of them were university and college students. One-third of them had an annual income of rupees 10 million and 20% of them had less than rupees 6 million. The outcomes of the study are shown below:

- 70% of the people responded that they use social media to get acquaintance with the customer support of a company before a final buying decision of its products or services.
- 84% of the people responded that they use social media to know "what is the quality of customer care of a company?"
- The people also showed that they share their views and thoughts about a product or service of a company to help others in their decision-making process for the same or similar product.

The study showed that consumers get information from social networking websites such as Twitter and Facebook to support their decision making. Moreover, they also share their experiences by positively or negatively posting to these social micro-blogs. This is a signal for the companies to be visible and available on these social platforms for managing their reputation and coming within easy reach of their customers.

A reputable online statistical analysis company states that users spend on average 6.5 hours daily on Facebook and Twitter which is 84% high then that of 2010 statistics when on average people spent three hours (Nielsen, 2016). These statistics show that the potential customers can be easily tracked through using social media, and the users can start debates about the products and services of a company within their community of friends and relatives.

The regularity and time spent on social networking websites are leading the organizations to think that their customers are addicted to using this mode of communication to translate their reputation positively or negatively. The companies should weigh all the possible social networking ways and means to reach out to their customers to build long lasting reputation friendly relationships. Companies should try to manage their reputational differences in the minds of their customers through good relations and excellent communication. Social networks, video-sharing websites, blogs, search engine optimization and marketing, news portals and business websites are all good examples of social engagement. These means of interaction have been incorporated and realized by the most active, advanced organizations while others have overlooked them at their own risk (Argenti & Barnes, 2009). See figure 1.1 (Nielsen, 2016)

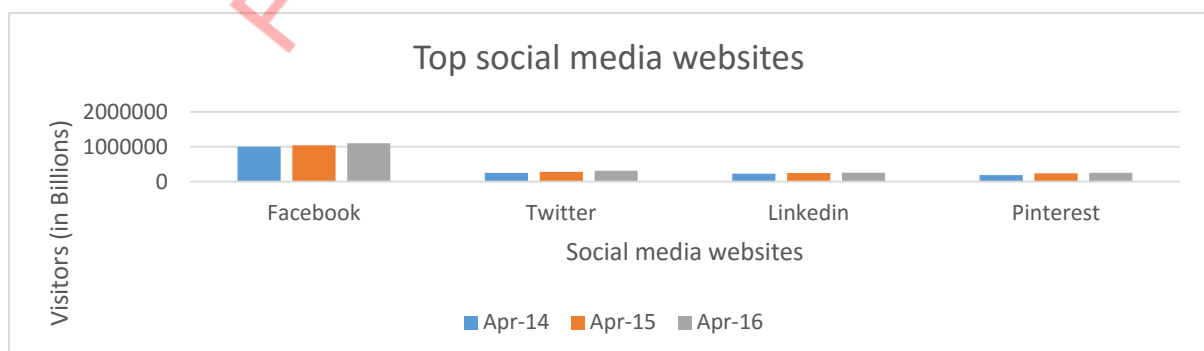


Figure 1.1 Social Media Usage Trends

Evidence and expectation are a necessary concentration to build a strong reputation (Walsh, 2002). The inheritance of the company can last, provided that, its online reputation has been established in the minds of the people. The web medium has the power to keep long bad and good memories in the form of data which may affect a company reputation positively or negatively and businesses normally exclude it from their websites (Walsh, 2002). If anything like this occurs, the act can cause uncertainty in a company from a customer's viewpoint. Likewise, reputation based on probability exists, realistic or not. If the client's hopes are not fulfilled, then reputation is devastated (Walsh, 2002). Therefore, it is vital for the firm to focus on these two proportions of reputation.

So questions arise that why companies should pay attention and invest to enhance online reputation? The answer is that reputation is a night mare to keep for a long time (Walsh, 2002).

The idea of overall financial standing of a company and its credibility is often related to the marketing (Casalo et al., 2008). The records of the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) shows that following three mobile telecommunication companies are top performers in the 2014-15 market:

- Mobilink (Jazz)
- Telenor
- CM Pak (Zong)

The companies should pay attention to developing their brand value which should remain stable and balanced in changing economy because it is a key indicator of the reliability of a company. It is often noted that products or brands of a company develop their own character which has an effect on the people who decide if it complies with their desires; so reputation often drives along with this character (Herbig & Milewicz, 1993). The brand also ensures a sense of security that the telecommunication company has made excellent efforts to improve and maintain their reputation among their customers which ultimately leads to customer loyalty. Apparent reputation may be seen as a result of the relations between an organization and its atmosphere (Casalo, 2008). Telecommunication companies especially need to make

products that are tailored, well researched and up to the expectations of their consumers. This is the only way to which they remain in the race of reputation online.

The advanced service features, modern hardware infrastructure, and everyday innovations in communication technology have diversified the requirements of the customers ultimately adding to the growth of the industry. GSM technology, Multimedia messaging, 3G and 4G high-speed data services were not possible a few years ago. These services require 24/7 online customer support. This emerging trend has urged the current companies to adopt the Internet, which has made the competition even tough (Yang et al., 2004). In spite of this incredible progress, social media still is a new sensation. There is a space for much work to help companies understand its importance.

1.4 Problem Statement

The telecommunication mobile companies in Pakistan does not take in to account the factor that good customer support is a key to managing and building corporate reputation on the internet.

1.5 Research Objective

This research would benefit mobile telecommunication companies by helping them to understand, improve and manage their corporate reputation on the web.

- To examine the relationship between the existing observations which explain reputation at corporate level and the online customer support.
- To take a detailed look at the behavior of the customers in relation to the way they use social media websites.

1.6 Research Questions

Research Question No. 1:

How mobile telecommunication companies provide customer support services on social media websites to manage their reputation?

Research Question No. 2:

Is there any difference among top three mobile telecommunication companies in Pakistan in using social media websites?

Research Question No. 3:

How can be the usage of social media websites helpful in managing online reputation of mobile telecommunication companies?

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Chapter 2

Literature Review & Theoretical Framework

2. LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Concepts and definitions

The opinion of the customers online or offline can be a huge advantage or disadvantage for telecommunication companies. The entire youth of Pakistan is 60% of its population. And as a reliable estimate, about 43% of them are active or semi-active users of the social media. It is also eminent that people on social media websites believe on the sayings of their friends and relatives, so they believe on the website which helps them share and exchange information (Nielsen, 2009). A typical trend on the social media sites indicates that users deliberately share their benefits and apprehensions while exchanging information with the public on the internet. This is a great opportunity for those companies who are looking for these specific demographics to communicate with their consumers by being perceptible on these social websites. The ability to articulate in social media websites and the facility to view other connections of a particular individual can help build new relationships that would not be possible otherwise (Boyd & Ellison, 2008).

The companies nowadays have no power or control over the content that is being posted on social networking which may affect their reputation positively or negatively. Moreover, they cannot limit the use of social media by any means making it more challenging for the companies to manage their reputation and keep the customer relationship strategies always to work for them. A study (Utz 2009) shows that consumers on the social media websites convey their experiences on a selflessly because they are interested in helping people around them in these online communities.

In the case of mobile telecommunication companies, reputation building, and brand awareness is at top priority because the customers switch and react quickly to the services that are not as per their expectations and the prospects of the communities where they have an influence. The companies, therefore, need to keep a close eye on what is happening on the social media and should interact quickly in order to keep themselves up in the corporate sector and the consumer market. The apprehension then develops under the sayings of others keeping constricted screening and continuous conservation. This regular idea of monitoring is an effort to avoid any defacement of their existing reputation.

On one side the social media is an excellent tool for the companies to build and maintain their reputation online but on the other hand they are afraid of losing grip of their brand; that their competitors and people will intentionally damage their trademark; that their social media team will waste time with online customers; that that may face legal inquiries; that overall infrastructure and human resource required to run social media campaigns successfully will cost them hundred thousands of rupees; they may float too much of information to the public which may affect their stock exchange shares (Ochman, 2009). These apprehensions, analysts believe are the factors that why companies are afraid of using social media sites as an interaction and business development scheme.

In today's competition world, social media is playing a key role in companies' market branding. For telecommunication companies, the outdated way of piloting customer support has changed. Previously, the client's support was attained through their franchises, authorized retailers or help line. Nowadays, internet's popularity has urged a huge transition of customers to social media to express their experiences and ask queries. This section of the study will examine supporting research work and the entire context of a general reputation of companies as it narrates to online corporate reputation.

2.2 Critical Analysis

2.2.1 Importance of brand reputation and online customer support relationships

Online Interaction is vital for all telecommunication companies. The way companies interact with their clients both offline and online marks important differences in how their reputation is perceived. Mobile telecommunication companies of Pakistan nowadays are not only worried about the fierce competition but also of managing their online reputation; they also have high concern about their customer support services online. The telecommunication sector has invested a substantial amount and variety of useful resources to help manage their reputation, and the affective consumer relationships is the only key to success online.

Generally, the reputation of a company is supposed as the active customer relationship management and positively contributes to success of an organization (Omar & Williams, 2006). Managing and keeping this relationship is a challenging task because internet communication can sometimes be misleading, inadequate or considered insufficient. If a customer does not understand information correctly, then he can become unsatisfied with the

services and could be vulnerable because they get an ability to express their thoughts about the particular departments of a company. The most unfortunate part is that the information they will share online have the capacity to influence millions of people in a short span of time.

Telecommunication companies have little control over their consumers of what they will say and how their way of saying will affect the business to what levels of damage. Equally, they have little control over the exposure of their customers to the varying types of information available on the internet. Due to the acute absence of micro-management of these situations, the reputation of a company becomes a hot favorite aim of the angry consumers. Any efforts by companies to manage or respond to their customer postings are critical to balance bad online publicity.

The problem, however, is that it is not easy to identify a reasonable method to work for them as a high customer support service online. The telecommunication sector is still learning because they use social media websites to engage their clients to get an answer to what they feel would help cope with the problem, but doing this alone is not sufficient to find a way that can work publicly. It is also not easy to build an excellent online customer relationship because companies do not find enough chances to understand reasons behind a wrong perception. The greatest that corporations can do today is to respond to its customer's concerns and inquiries quickly, and this can be only done in a real-time communication environment.

The previous studies reveal that people contribute their thoughts and perceptions due to reputation and reciprocity factors. When contributions of an online customer are reciprocated to other clients eliminating the fact of original contributor then they are called as generalized reciprocity (Utz, 2009). This principle of reciprocity shows that humans have a nature to “give and take” (Wolfe, 2008). A similar principle applies to the online business environment. A company whose reputation and customer relations are a vital factor in its public relationship building, then an act of kindness from a consumer can be beneficial to the enterprise. This factor is even more operative if the act of kindness was initiated by the business through excellent customer support, being dependable and straight, etc. Hence, if

the companies are kind to their clients in their services, then the consumers will reward back by person to person marketing and individual recommendations.

The companies have a pressure of what consumers think about them and this factor leaves them with the only choice, “to be well-organized in their way of communication”. A brand of a company is developed over a long time through consistent and positive customer experience (Abimbola, 2009). Through this sequence of actions, the organization’s primary purpose for communication becomes the necessity to defend or express a point of view in the framework of the organization, which, on the internet like social networking can support the management of its reputation (Aula, 2010).

Modern marketing principles and advertising mechanisms on social media websites use familiar phrases such as “follow us on Facebook”, “follow us on Twitter”, and “Subscribe us on Youtube” are some of the most well-known sentences often used on their websites, pamphlets, brochures, and multimedia kits. The Twitter site (<http://www.twitter.com>) promotes tagline “follow us on Twitter” to help customers and users to realize that their favorite company has a solid connection with Twitter. Telecommunication companies often use this phrase on their pamphlets, handouts, brochures, media advertisements, new sim card covers, hoardings, blogs, and text messages. This is a valid proof that how social media has revolutionized the traditional way of building customer relationships and doing business. This study, keeping in view all aforementioned facts, will use the concepts of computer-mediated communication to assess if social media websites such as Twitter.com can be a good source for customer support services and relationship building. If yes, then does it have the ability to help manage a company’s reputation? The statistical evidence should provide answers to the aforementioned questions along with some suggestions as to how mobile telecommunication companies should honor social media websites in this arena of corporate reputation.

2.3 Abstracting the context of corporate reputation

Corporate reputation is a phrase that has been used in many subjects. It has been studied from various viewpoints of effectiveness, corporate social responsibility, national demonstrations, risk management, and financial successes (Aula, 2010). Such type of numerous perspectives offers a variety of ways to describe, classify and measure the central concept. A company’s

identity involves the collection and displays its capability, competence, assets and hierarchy which allows it to generate creatively, develop and keep its brand and manage its reputation (Abimbola, 2009).

There's no explicit, and collectively acknowledged definition of the term corporate reputation (Gotsi, & Wilson, 2001). Therefore, to generalize the concept, an explicative research can help to make it universal and comprehensive. The variables such as brand, trust, reliability, commitment, loyalty and customer relationship management have high significance in building and managing a company's image and reputation. In simple words, an organization's general outlook is dependent on these variables for success.

During this research it was found that Chun (2005) established a collectively put together model of approaches which explicate corporate reputation in light of provisions found in different disciplines to understand the resourcefulness of the concept. She outlined them as follows:

- Under the regulation of business and accountancy, reputation is an intangible asset, and it should be given an economic worth.
- Economics defines reputation as a perception that is made by or exists among the permanent stakeholders of a company.
- Marketing defines it as the manners or behavior of an organization to its customer while launching or advertising a new product.
- The organizational behavior defines reputation as the perception or experiences of the internal employees of an organization.
- The subject of sociology sees it as a cumulative valuation of a firm's performance comparative to expectation and standards in a proper context.
- Lastly, strategy defines reputation as assets and mobility barriers.

The preceding Para shows that reputation has different definition in each discipline, so it is quite obvious how much the idea has contributed to the many different domains of study and what is a genuine importance of the concept. This shows that corporate reputation has no definite definition due to complex concept that is universally applicable to all disciplines.

The interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary nature of study into reputation and its management is clearly terminological (Chun, 2005).

Corporate reputation has been defined as the perceptual illustration of an organization's historical actions and forthcoming prospects that describes the company's total plea to all of its main constituents when associated with other significant competitors (Healy & Griffin (2004); A shareholder's perspective of reputation is that a company's actions and/or a comparison with that of its primary competitors are in direct linearity to that of shareholder's perception which is based on his direct involvements with the corporation or any other form of communication and representation (Gotsi & Wilson, 2001); the result of a reasonable procedure in which firms signal their essential characteristics to constituents to maximize social status (Caruana, 1997); the viewers' collective findings of a company in terms of economic, social and ecological impacts attributed to the company over time (Barnett et al, 2006) and as the approximation of the reliability over time of an characteristic of an entity (Omar & Williams, 2006). This estimate is based on the preparedness and aptitude to do an activity frequently in a similar manner, and an aspect is some precise part of the entity-price, quality and advertising skills (Omar & Williams, 2006). It has also been defined as identical with company's image (Caruana, 1997).

In view of given definitions, a mutual assumption is that reputation does not exists without customers, time, stakeholders, action, corporate important communication, and a brand that is in line with company's social status. In an online context such as social media and the internet, reputation means how to show sufficiently the rapid variation and discussion that symbolizes business messaging in the forthcoming decade (Walsh, 2002). Presently, corporate reputation cannot exist without the Internet, and interaction (in this case, the relations established between companies and the people).

Another study shows that organizational reputation is collectively dependent on various factors for example if a stakeholder feels that services of a company are poor then it is likely that the corporation will be weak in other areas Aula (2010). Customers are led by their habits and they relate their involvements with their total valuation of the enterprise, be it negative or positive. Thus, if they are pleased with a service or product, they will keep you recommending to others and will keep giving business. It does not matter then of you are

considering organizational reputation offline or online. The main difference is the medium by which they received statistics about the firm.

2.4 Internet (online) reputation

In today's fast growing world organizations need to respond quickly to the latest developments in the online world. Their internet reputation matters to them similar to that of offline. Telecom companies of Pakistan have invested a lot of capital and various resources to build their organization's reputation and brand. The offerings of a particular brand involve not only traditional fundamentals of building a brand reputation but in addition it includes factors based on the features of the firm behind the brand. Customers nowadays are internet-savvy and have easy access to the information on the internet through websites, microblogs, word of mouth, tech news, social media sites and so on that influences what they consider as valuable to them (Abimbola, 2009).

In what way internet reputation can be developed (Walsh 2002)? Seen as a vortex, reputation in a networked world is highly dynamic and requires the strength of three key factors (identity, image and performance) which shall work in different directions with variable intensities and at different times to create a swirl of communication that shows modern ways of fast, real-time and compressed communication between the stakeholders and companies. Reputation vortex is redefined by Walsh (2002) as quick, real-time, dynamic, multidirectional (broadcast of messages to and from several points), interactive, cheap, anarchic, uncertain and irrational.

A company's online reputation is developed by the customers as stories that are formed and spread by clients and stakeholders and spread through and within the network (Aula, 2010). Bronn (2007) defines reputation as a relationship concept propagated to the audience in a simple way. There is a high demand among customers for traditional services through common channels even if they choose web based suppliers with primary customer support services (Yang & Fang, 2004) which are why it is imperative to have an understanding of the concept of how to have effective online customer support. The internet will continue to grow bigger in the coming decades and consumers will naturally want to use it more. Therefore, capabilities of the companies to retain clients and build new and existing relationships online

will not only save money to the telecom companies but serves as a vital tool in business planning models.

An established company going online to manage its reputation involves building, sustaining, defending and entirely undoing its already existing reputation (Walsh, 2002). In the context of social networking, this factor is necessary for the companies to make it a priority because their stakeholders and consumers are online with a good level of information on what is being said and done online. Excellent services and good quality increase a company's overall brand liking and its profitability (Fang & Yang, 2004). Mobile telecommunication companies especially can benefit from this understanding because they always tend to manage and protect their reputation with their superior customer support services.

The level of quality may differ online than offline because companies are afraid of social media activities that reliability is crucial in actual. It is paramount that a company's online image should correspond to their general image in physical world (Heldal et al., 2004). In context of telecommunication sector, it means that they should build quality customer relationships on their websites through micro-blogs and on social media through real-time communication, and they should do it in a similar way as they do it offline in a conventional system of customer support. Having a client services agent communicate to a customer or stakeholder over the phone in a support center can translate into writing a consumer back online. According to Walsh (2002), the Internet has not changed the concept of reputation; except the way it is shaped and the sphere in which it exercises influence are different.

2.5 Computer Mediated Communication Theory

Social media has created a space for its applying theory for the companies. It can be difficult to cope up with the customers with ordinary means of applying. However, Computer-Mediated-Communication (CMC) approach offers excellent space for studying this modern way of communication. A social network is created when many different people and companies connect with each other through internet; CMC is all about how different individual users are linked to each other through their computers; how people interact with each other on the web or how communities or groups function on the internet (Garton et al., 2006).

So how we can define Computer-Mediated-Communication? A type of human communication that involves the use of computers and internet; it can be described in other words as a method of human communiqué via computing technology, involving individuals, located in particular contexts, and using available means to form media for a range of purposes; or as human communication that takes place via the information and computing technology (Thurlow et. al., 2004). CMC is a scheme defined to study media content over the internet, and it is particularly valuable when one tries to understand how companies and people communicate online.

Nowadays, media is quickly transforming itself into various modernized forms such as social media. Therefore, it is important to study its latest forms of communication. How the businesses and people communicate on the internet is based on the available content on the social media. The archives of the internet that are meant for the companies and the people are of great concern to them. The content of the media is the foundation of its impression (Shoemaker & Reese (1996)). It is eminent that media plays an important role for us to conclude about new and hidden content that is not very visible or open to us as it is open and visible to companies or people who generate that content, or about the company's internal and traditional situations that add to its making (Shoemaker & Reese (1996)).

Content plays a vital role in reputation online management. The way the companies interact with its customers is searchable on the internet to anybody having the interest to know. Therefore, developing a safe and reliable notion is vital for high customer retention and generating new business. Research shows that the clients are interested in brand names because brand names are key players to help make a buying verdict because it is of high scope that has inferences for widespread attributes mostly it is regarded as an adequate source for product decision (Adaval, 2003). Online reputation and branding via social networking are all about staying on the internet and passing correct object at the right time. CMC theory here stresses us reconsider what communication actually is with these new technologies and emphasizes on how it is changing the way things were always done.

The best explanation of Computer-Mediated-Communication is given by Thurlow (2004) as follows:

2.5.1 Computer

It is explained to be the basis of modern communication nowadays because some way or the other everything that is performed is mediated by computers (p. 19).

2.5.2 Mediation

CMC states mediation as the process or means by which information in the form of a note, feeling, and the sound is transmitted through a medium (where a result is formed). For communication, it is always dependent on and channeled by, its perspective for meaning. Therefore, it is mediated through our connections with other persons, and by following different channels of communication such as linguistic (or symbolic), social (or cultural), psychological (or mental), or material (or technical) (p18-19).

In order to deal with online customers, a company had to constantly aware of what their customers and other people are saying about them. Theorists of negative dominance say that positive statements have a lesser influence than negative statements (Rowitz, 2006). The state and set of mind of the people are also critical because a negative dominance occurs when one is under stress, and they have a high tendency to communicate with negative ways so, corporate communication needs to be carefully stated with such a dominance of people because they tend to increase the value in those negative words (Rowitz, 2006). In a nutshell, this theory explains that even if a company had 100s of good things to say but a single bad thing could be detained on to by the community.

Lastly, Communication, in Computer-Mediated-Communication, has a dynamic nature, because it is suitably assumed as a procedure in which the meaning of messages are not contained only in words rather, it's more concentrated and dependent on context which continuously shifts from individual to individual, place to place, and from instant to instant (p. 17). The online misinterpretation can happen very quickly. Therefore, a company should have the ability to manage, and protect their brand and reputation if a consumer was to jot an adverse opinion or was to misinterpret a business's statement.

In some research articles, communication is seen as transactional in its nature. The conventional idea of communication is the interchange of messages among senders and receivers on the internet. However, it is really about the compromise of meaning between people. It always changes as two (or more) people interpret each other's messages and are

inclined by what the other says. In, CMC, communiqué is also realized as multifunctional because it consciously or unconsciously influences attitudes of the people, their levels of information, tends to exert control on the other people, assisting or impeding people or even amusing or pleasing them (p.18). Finally, communication is also known as multi-pattern because it can influence through verbal or non-verbal messages (p.18). With this in-depth information of the Computer-Mediated-Communication theory, and how the principle of reciprocity and negative dominance theory affects communication between companies and people online, we are in a position to realize how it appeals to interactions on the Internet.

2.6 Other concepts of reputation

The CEOs of the companies, the advertising managers, marketing officials, the media, and stakeholder audiences define reputation as perceptions of the people (Walsh, 2002). Engineering researchers and tech consultants have confirmed that firms with a good reputation have good market performance (Nakra, 2000). Various other research shows that a company with overall good reputation owns a valuable asset (Caruana, 1997) it is catalytic to generate goodwill for the enterprise, so there is a need to maintain, and manage it despite its delicate and extremely hard to restore nature (Omar & William, 2006).

There are a number of small factors that affect the company's reputation, and the companies need a little look at them in order to manage the reputation well. As stated earlier, the three crucial internet reputation factors i.e. identity, image, and performance can thus be summed up into a more comprehensive concept of reputation, where they work for or against each other (Walsh, 2002). The corporate identity of the organization denotes a way an organization or brand is envisioned; the way it translates its values to its consumers and how they tend to express them to their consumers, therefore; they are not developed on their own (Walsh, 2002). Reputation is a key that shows a company's care and loyalty to their consumers (Casalo et al., 2007). Additionally, studies show that companies who respond to their customers quickly online or through social media might be referred to as the organization's concern for building relationships with their hard earned customers (Yoon et al., 2008). Customers are very interested to know that how companies care for them and their intended or expressed needs so any chance which can prove the companies to be loyal and caring could leave them satisfied. Similarly, a typical image of the company or a brand is a

key to be seen by the customer and the stakeholders. Alternatively, the image of a company is protected by identity, and the consumers will perceive it in a bad or a good way (Walsh, 2002). So how the company advertises and communicates its status is extremely vital. Finally, the performance of a company is based on its interactions with customers, actions in a particular situation and dealings both within and beyond a company's bazaar. It includes the quality of products, delivery, service, its market performance and other reputational drivers (Walsh, 2002).

So the question is how to achieve online reputation? Most of the research shows that it is made through factors such as reliability, credibility, trust, and web based words-of-mouth and so on to guarantee a good relationship with customers, stakeholders, and companies. Reputation is conveyed on the web through messages, the content and eminence of its revelation, and the medium in which it is conveyed (Walsh, 2002). The personal message of the corporate sector in a real-time communication has brought them much closer to their stakeholders. Exposure within The reputational disclosure within the organizational context is multidirectional and multidimensional. If it were not a multidimensional and multidirectional, it would have been easy to accomplish the statistics about a business or corporate, the direction its interest was going and how it is perceived. (Walsh, 2002). Companies engage different ways to develop, maintain and enhance their associations with their patrons and in return expect loyalty from their clients.

Previous research supports that the customers nowadays look for information on the websites, blogs and social media relevant to a company's goods and services as well as their brand reputation and rating, and share their experiences to help the public. The source of information is critical for it to be credible and it often depends on the perception of the receiver to that of sender's reliability and knowledge (Karakaya & Barnes, 2010). The credibility of a company is dependent on its intention to positively use previous actions to predict future behavior. A competitor first must achieve credibility to develop its reputation which can then be translated to the fact that credibility impacts reputation only through the final result (Herbig & Milewicz, 1993). Studies have also joined trustworthiness to online credibility. Credibility is to believe; a site's trustworthiness and capability have remarkable

belongings on the acceptability, and thus supposed credibility of a website (Toms & Taves, 2004).

Growing evidence is showing that online judgment tools impact consumers when making a purchase; the concept of electronic word of mouth evolves (eWOM) (Karakaya & Barnes, 2010). The vitality of WOM generates another fact that private sources of information of the people are more trustworthy for them than any other sources (Hong & Yang, 2009). People are always interacting with their family members, communities, friends and colleagues, and their activities suggest that e-WOM can be as influential as old-style WOM. The relationship of WOM and a company's reputation is proportional to favorable perceiving of a company's reputation by their consumers. They will identify this favorable perception in the business and are likely to involve in positive WOM intentions (Hong & Yang, 2009).

The sales of the company and its favorable reputation are directly linked to the increase in the movement of information from one user to another. Customers have a mindset that names of the brand is a signal of the product's worth and assessment and serves as repositories for a company's reputation (Herbig & Milewicz, 1993). The more appealing the services of the company are, the sturdier the product becomes, and the highly positive goes the reputation of the enterprise (Abimbola, 2009). Equally, there is a direct relationship between a company's investment and the stakeholder's trust in the enterprise. This concept has also proved strong commitment to the business (Yoon et al., 2008).

Loyalty is a fundamental element in managing corporate reputation. It is termed as a systematic conduct, to be expressed over time and depends on psychological processes and closeness to brand commitment (Casalo et al., 2008). The loyalty of the customer seems to be based on trust, relationship and the ability of the advertiser to produce a confident emotion assurance to their brand (Pitta et al., 2006). Confidence and determination may also be understood in the context of establishing longstanding associations amongst customers and companies (Casalo et al., 2007), which is the main aim of organizations. It is also eminent that businesses could have higher future purchase with a constructive word-of-mouth (Casalo et al., 2008). These factors are essential for mobile telecommunication companies to retain and attain new customers. On the web and social media, companies may get assurance from their clients through trust and loyalty that will not express bad remarks on them but instead

will post positive things because they are gratified and have developed a healthy relationship with them.

In the context of public relations, we can define relationships as the case in which actions of a company or its consumers impact the economic, cultural, political, and social happiness of the other entity; links consists of the communication including interchange of assets between organizations and nonstop routine patterns of behavior of individuals as related to their involvement with a company...many social media and online relationships exist in line with offline relationships and thus are part of the overall business-public relationship (Kelleher & Miller, 2006) including of course the reputation of the organization.

Link quality is the most significant part of relationship management which is reflected by a group of different factors such as trust, commitment, and relationship satisfaction. It not only suggests the best valuation of association strength but also provides insights into exchange performance outcomes (Palmatier et al., 2006). Efficiency in performance can be achieved through dimensions of quality customer support or reputation factors such as credibility, reliability, receptiveness, capability, rightness (Fang & Yang, 2004), affinity and tactfulness within an organization. Once a company achieves these dimensions among their internet clientele, client gratification is accomplished, and good reputation is gained. Satisfaction can be stated as an evaluation of a global collection of features that build up the client relationship (Casalo et al., 2007).

Studies have shown that the internet provides an excellent opportunity for relationship building which in turns provides ways to manage their online reputation (Yoon et al., 2008). So, retaining old customers and making new customer should be the goal of the companies. Relationship ensures stimulation and motivates customers to act (Yoon et al., 2008) therefore if the company is successful in achieving a positive correlation then loyalty should prevail.

Good corporate reputation has a lasting effect on the overall business performance of the firm and ensures that the company will use all its resources to manage and retain it (Omar & Williams, 2006). The internet provides abundant opportunities for interaction which brings enormous responsibility for the companies to manage and keep their reputation which in turns helps them maintain an active relationship with their online consumers. Identification of the company is built on its reputation (Hong & Yang, 2009). The customer of companies

prefer to use the internet and social media for their interaction with each other, organizations, therefore, must be organized to be contemporary for them on these sites to be viewed and heard in order to manage and keep their reputation online and offline. Assuming this as our basis of research, subsequent study questions were developed that will be answered in this study to comprehend how integrating variables such as credibility, trust, and eWOM (electronic word of mouth) in association to corporate reputation and relationship development can help mobile telecommunication companies realize the importance of being present on social networking sites to manage their reputation.

2.7 Conclusion

The perspective that internet can affect the reputation of a company is a method to help them start preparing for the future of social media for them. According to a reliable estimate of Twitter, six thousand tweets are sent every second. Therefore, companies use Twitter to connect with their online customers. They get a chance to enhance their customer relationship management, branding, and online reputation. Information flows faster through social media websites like Twitter than other traditional sources of media. The web technology has made it possible to access loads of information in a quick way. Therefore, businesses need to adapt to this modern media age to reach their customers in less time, effort, and money.

Chapter 3

Research Design/Methodology

3. RESEARCH DESIGN/METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methodology

The study examines how mobile telecommunication companies of Pakistan use social media as a way to building and maintaining customer relationships to managing their online reputation. The constant concern of the companies on customer support allows their analysts to communicate with their clients in a best possible way to keep maintaining their reputation. In this study, the online and offline reputation will be assumed same and content analysis of the twitter pages of the top three mobile telecommunication companies which are publicly available. The variables of reputation are predictable to be existing in the framework of web communications between mobile telecommunication companies and the people on social media websites. The analysis was used to gather variables of reputation and customer support. The report will answer the study's research questions. The major three mobile telecom companies will be analyzed on the basis of their brand ranking within Pakistan.

3.2 Research Hypothesis

If telecommunication mobile companies provide effective customer support then they can build and manage their reputation effectively.

3.3 Design

Content analysis is used to examine chats on Twitter among the top three mobile telecommunication companies in Pakistan and their clients between the periods of April 2nd, 2016 to April 14th, 2016. One of every four tweets randomly selected for analysis. The pages of Mobilink (Jazz), Telenor, and CM Pak (Zong) were evaluated for this study. The tweets of the public and the company that showed consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the products of the three companies were examined to determine how reputation is managed through customer service or association building features.

On social media websites like Twitter, the context of the message is critical. In this study, the content analysis is used to make exchangeable and valid references from the data to its context. The systematic procedure for the content analysis invented to inspect the content of logged information is useful. Content analysis can be defined as a systematic process to inspect the content of recorded information; and a technique of analyzing and studying

communication in an orderly, impartial, and numerical manner for the purpose of measuring variables (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006).

3.4 The Sample

The selection of sample was carried out by selecting the top 3 mobile telecommunication companies of Pakistan. Their social pages on Twitter were examined and these companies were chosen based on their annual cellular subscribers. See table 3.1 (Pakistan telecommunication authority, 2016)

Table 3.1 Mobile Telecommunication Company Subscribers & Ranking

Sr. No	Company Name	Year	Total Subscribers*	Rank**
1	Mobilink (Jazz)	2014-15	33,424,268	1
2	Telenor	2014-15	31,491,263	2
3	CM Pak (Zong)	2014-15	22,102,968	3

*Total no. of subscribers include prepaid, postpaid, 3G, and 4G subscribers

**Rank is determined on the basis of the total no. of subscribers

Each company's contact us/help page remained a principal focus for this study because the level of customer support provided can be observed through the content of tweets. The members or visitor of the page on Twitter can view the content posted on it. There is a shortage of content analysis that have been conducted on Twitter especially in relation to the mobile telecommunication companies of Pakistan. There is a high scope of research in communiqué, therefore, analyzing how Twitter is used as consumer support mechanism to manage positively corporate reputation is necessary to understand this social medium of communication further. Particularly, Twitter has transformed its original intention of the medium and nowadays it is used to engage consumers, stakeholders, and the general public in discussions and chats and asking their thoughts on different issues, new, and existing projects (Wigand, 2010). Previous studies that used content analysis were mainly intensive on campaign investigation and occurrence of conversation on a particular topic.

Twitter messages (tweets) are 140 characters in length and can reach to the followers of a particular community or tag in a flick of a second. The re-tweet function of Twitter provides an option to tweet other person's tweet by adding content to it. Similarly, hash tags allows

the user to categorize conversations using a prefix such as a phrase or a word with a hash symbol #, such as #Mobilink. People can follow a particular group or community to keep up with their latest updates regularly. Private messages are sent between the two parties by direct message functionality whereas; @reply function can be used to send community memos to any other person irrespective of association or relationship. See figures 3.1 and 3.2 (Mobilink, 2016) for example



Figure 3.1 Characteristics of a MTC Twitter Page



Figure 3.2 Example of a Twitter Conversation with Customer

The subscriber can look for the individual or any company which he intent to interact with by searching or following on Twitter. The different characteristics that can be seen on a Twitter page are as follows: The total followers of the company, the profile photo or logo, the number of updates or tweets posted to date, and the frequency of the company's hashtag or name has been recorded by others. Publicly accessible accounts are necessary to follow

conversation/tweets. People enable privacies on their accounts and hide from a search which prevents their appearance in public discussions/conversations.

During the period of April 2nd to 14th, 2016, a total of 449 tweets with communication/replies were visible on the official pages of Mobilink (Jazz), Telenor, and CM Pak (Zong). Out of these 114 tweets, using a coding system of counting every fourth tweet from the start of the week of analysis, were analyzed over a period of 13 days. Each mobile telecommunication company's conversation was explained starting on a different day during the 13 days for a total of eight days of analysis.

3.5 Coding

To answer the devised questions, the study first measured the tweeted conversations based on a sequence of issues coded to create references to customer support and relationship building. The outcomes of the research will show inferred organizational reputation in the context of provided services online.

In relation to the publicly viewable statements of the companies found on their Twitter pages, under mentioned topics and variables will be used to analyze them. See table 3.2 (Twitter, 2016)

Table 3.2 Characteristics of MTCs Twitter pages

Tele-Mobile Company	Page Verification	Company Logo	Visual Layout	Diversity	Important Notices/Announcements
Mobilink (Jazz)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Telenor	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
CM Pak (Zong)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

3.6 Types of tweets

1. Public/Corporate: Openly viewed conversations that took place between a customer and the mobile telecommunication company.

2. Re-tweets: Tweets that were instigated by the customers/general public and were posted by the mobile telecommunication company on their official page so that it is visible to others who are not followers of that individual.
3. Informational/General tweets: Tweets by the mobile telecommunication company that is not part of a series of conversation, instead, the tweets may be an advertisement, a photo, a video, a link, or a tip or advice.
4. Private: Tweets those are visible to people with special privileges.

3.7 Tweet topics

1. International roaming (in Pakistan): Tweets by the customers/public who are in Pakistan and have problems to activate/deactivate or availing roaming services within or outside Pakistan.
2. International roaming (outside Pakistan): Tweets by the customers/public who are not in Pakistan and have service issues.
3. Balance drop/overcharge/billing: Tweets of clients in which they express to have faced issues with their services such as balance deduction, overcharging and billing.
4. Coverage: The cellular coverage of the company in a particular area or a town including 3G and 4G data coverage.
5. Connectivity: The signal drop, weak signal strength, unlocking service codes, and distortion issues of a service faced by tweeting customer.
6. Data services: The tweets relevant to new data packages on the offer, opinion on previous data packages, settings, activation/deactivation, and views about future offerings.
7. Value added services: Service subscriptions of short informational messages from the company such as cricket updates, weather updates, breaking news, top headlines, horoscope and similar other.
8. SMS complaints: Tweets relevant to SMS packages, activation/deactivation, settings, blacklisting hidden messages, etc.
9. Buy New Number/Mobile Number Portability (MNP): Inquiry to buy a new number/service of the company. Switching from one mobile telecommunication company to other keeping the same number, port out/port in problems, charges, settings, etc.

10. Scratch Cards: Problems loading amount through scratch cards, easy load services, etc.

11. Feedback: Positive or negative opinion on particular or general services.

3.8 Emotions of customers expressed in tweets

1. Satisfied: Customers show appreciation towards a particular product or service.
2. Angry: Customers express frustrated reactions to a product or service of the company.
3. Unsatisfied: They expressed disappointment and unhappiness on a product/service of a company.
4. No emotions (Inquiry): They do not express any feelings; could be a statement or inquiry about a product/service.

3.9 Co-tweets of companies

1. Acknowledgment/ Appreciation: Company's acknowledgement of consumer's tweet about their service or product.
2. Empathy/Apology: Company's answer is showing their care for the customer and regret for the inconvenience caused.
3. Product/Service is not offered: The Company is incapable to resolve the issue or concern.
4. Contact us (DM/Helpline/Franchise): The Company's request to send a DM (direct message), visit franchise or business center for further assistance.
5. Company's contact to the customer: The Company is committing to solve the issue or concern by contacting the customer.
6. Reply to Inquiry: Universal response of the company to a client's tweeted inquiry or concern.

3.10 Result of twitter communication

1. Problem solved/solution provided: The Company's closing tweet of conversation which indicated that the concern/problem of the customer has been resolved.
2. Unsettled/unreceptive statement: The tweet shows the issue or concern of the client is not resolved, or pending. It could be an automated message.

3.11 Time

The initial time a company took to respond to the customer was recorded which ranged from same day to one-two days.

3.12 Characteristics of the company's Twitter page

1. Verified: The official authentication of Twitter on a company's page which is shown by a confirmation symbol that indicates to the user/public that this page is truly the company's page.
2. Followers: Number of people who can view the tweets of the company.
3. Following: Number of individuals whom the company is following which shows that the corporation is involved in seeing tweets of the people.
4. Company logo: The logo of the enterprise.
5. Important Notice: Any notice from the business on the page to prove it is authentic and legally the company's official page.
6. Diversity: The amount of information, the rapid conversations, the overall look and feel of the page, and other factors that show the company works with and hires anybody regardless of their religion, sex, race or orientation.

3.13 Coding and reliability

Appendix-I shows a list of questions that have been used in this study for coding. The author coded the entire data. Therefore, inter-coder reliability cannot be provided.

3.14 Methodology of data analysis

The entire coding was conducted in two parts. The tweets were analyzed based on the coding methods attached as Appendix I & II. The outcomes of the tweets were analyzed using the statistical software application R for classification and analysis of data.

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Chapter 4

Results & Discussion

4. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The tweets of the top three mobile telecom companies were analyzed on their Twitter pages for eight days. The pages of Mobilink (Jazz), Telenor, and CM Pak (Zong) were coded.

As per the official record of the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), Mobilink is on top of all other companies, followed by Telenor and CM Pak (Zong) on second and third position based on their total number of subscribers.

To answer the research questions, in-depth observation of the official Twitter pages of the three companies is imperative. The table information was collected from the pages of each company. This brief report shows characteristics of each business and how they use their Twitter pages. The data obtained was encoded for each of the following. See table 4.1 (Twitter, 2016)

Table 4.1 Characteristics of MTCs Twitter pages

Tele-Mobile Company	Page Verification	Company Logo	Visual Layout	Diversity	Important Notices/Announcements
Mobilink (Jazz)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Telenor	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
CM Pak (Zong)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

A page of a company on Twitter includes a logo, a verification symbol, a cover photo, disclaimer or critical notices, and depicts their standards including diversity. The check symbol is an indication for the customer that they are conveying their message to the intended company. It also offers a sense of security to the clients that they can comment and ask questions in a real-time environment. Having a logo and cover photo shows a sense of relatedness with the enterprise. Having a cover photo also substantiate diversity of the company.

Finally, disclaimer and informational notices differentiate a firm's actual social media page from fake or identical pages. See table 4.2 (Twitter, 2016)

Table 4.2 Twitter statistics of Pakistani MTCs

	Mobilink (Jazz)	Telenor	CM Pak (Zong)
Tweets	27K	13K	18.2K
Following	21	785	1770
Followers	411K	251K	185K
Likes	1385	3341	11
Lists		3	

The statistics presented in Table 4 shows the number of followers who are the users that are interested in following the company. The “following” shows how much the company is interested in tweets of their customers. Twitter provides two-way communication and following, which further provides the company an opportunity to interconnect secretly with their followers over a safer medium. This minimizes the risks of sharing private information publicly. The listed categories also show the level of interest of the company to communicate with their clients and shareholders. The registered categories indicate that the firm has chosen few of their followers as a priority or with an attached classification.

4.1 Collection of Data

An overall of 449 tweets were available on the official Twitter pages of all the three companies. Out of 449, 114 tweets were examined from a selection of every one in four tweets. The 114 tweets that were tested were selected over a period of eight days on the corresponding Twitter page of the company. Of the total tweets, 46 were from Mobilink (Jazz) in the date range from April 05 to April 12th. Telenor provided 22 tweets in the date range from April 07 to April 14th, and CM Pak (Zong) produced a total of 46 tweets in the date range from April 02 to April 09th.

There were some private and informational/general tweets with no emotions, so out of 114 tweets, the total became 102 that were finally analyzed. The corresponding break down for Mobilink (Jazz) became 42, 17 for Telenor, and 43 for CM Pak (Zong). So these tweets showed following answers to the research questions:

RQ #1: How mobile telecommunication companies provide customer support services on social media websites to manage their reputation?

Customer support is delivered on Twitter by managing the response time and response effort. Response effort means the time that the company took to acknowledge the client's statements and concerns. Offering help to the customer whenever demanded is a good indicator of active customer support. Of all the tweets, it is noted that a quick response time of the company was appreciated by the customers. On average, the customers expressed happiness and satisfaction when the company responded empathetically. See table 4.3 and 4.4

Table 4.3 Response time of the companies

Response Time	Mobilink (Jazz)	Telenor	CM Pak (Zong)
Same day	100%	82.35%	97.67%
1-2 days	0.00	17.65%	2.33
3-4 days	0.00	0.00	0.00
5-6 days	0.00	0.00	0.00
1 week	0.00	0.00	0.00
More than 1 week	0.00	0.00	0.00

Table 4.4 Help response of companies

	Mobilink (Jazz)	Telenor	CM Pak (Zong)
Offered help	54.76%	58.82%	44.19%
Not offered help	0.00	0.00	0.00
Neutral (no help required)	45.24%	41.18%	55.81%

RQ #2: Is there any difference among top three mobile telecommunication companies in Pakistan in using social media websites?

Yes. There are differences in the way companies use social media irrespective of the fact that the appearance of the social media pages of the companies was similar. For example, they included their brand slogans, new TV commercials, and products and services as and when they are expected to be announced officially, however, they all used Twitter uniquely. Mobilink (Jazz) responded to its customers by tweeting them with their username, the welcome message of the company, and showed the overall strong will to help them. Their interest to help them was dominant in tweets. This trait brought a diverse activity on their

Twitter page instead of the regular liveried answer tweets of the company. Telenor, on the other hand, being the second largest subscriber base is found a little slower in their tweets and sometimes at all ignore the original intention of the customer behind their message. They even missed official welcome messages and saw off greetings on the successful execution of queries. The overall activity on their page was very limited. They did not show tweets on weekends, but they have a high percentage of offering help to customers irrespective of the fact if they are actually helping their clients efficiently or not. The CM Pak (Zong) showed rapid and energetic responses and were good in encouraging activity through customer engagement on topics of interest. They were unique in positively responding to the request of their active customers to follow them on Twitter. This was the best trait of all of the three companies. But they also missed saying welcome greetings in their conversations a number of times and their trend of offering help to customers appeared to be lowest in the examined tweets. But this lastly, they were found successful in sharing tips with their clients. The companies' show different approaches to communicate with their consumers and stakeholders. See table 4.5

Table 4.5 Mobilink (Jazz) Twitter responses

S. No	Tweets	Percentage of Response
1.	Acknowledgement/Appreciation	2.44%
2.	Empathy/Apology	7.32%
3.	Product/Service is not offered	19.51%
4.	Contact us (DM/Helpline/Franchise)	17.07%
5.	Company's contact to the customer	9.76%
6.	Reply to inquiry	43.90%

As shown in the table, Mobilink (Jazz) responded 43.90% directly to their customer tweets. The table also indicates that they encouraged the customers to send them a direct message through Twitter to ensure the security of information. The table also shows 7.32% apologetic responses which are an indication of angry customers despite good, same day response system of Mobilink (Jazz). See table 4.6

Table 4.6 Telenor Twitter responses

S. No	Tweets	Percentage of Response
1.	Acknowledgment/Appreciation	5.88%
2.	Empathy/Apology	11.76%
3.	Product/Service is not offered	23.53%
4.	Contact us (DM/Helpline/Franchise)	11.77%
5.	Company's contact to the customer	0.00
6.	Reply to inquiry	47.06%

The Telenor also shows a similar trend of 47.06% direct replies to their customers. Whereas, 23.53% were responded with the products that were not offered, so these customers have a high tendency of portraying bad reputation for Telenor. In fact, Telenor showed a most top trend of saying “we do not provide the product/service” in their tweets. Only 5.88% of clients showed appreciation which is still greater than Mobilink which is a good sign as it has a second largest customer base in Pakistan. See table 4.7

Table 4.7 CM Pak (Zong) Twitter Responses

S. No	Tweets	Percentage of Response
1.	Acknowledgment/Appreciation	19.05%
2.	Empathy/Apology	2.38%
3.	Product/Service is not offered	9.52%
4.	Contact us (DM/Helpline/Franchise)	19.05%
5.	Company's contact to the customer	0.00
6.	Reply to inquiry	50.00%

CM Pak (Zong) showed interesting responses where 50% were direct replied to the customers. It also showed 19.05% appreciation which is an indication of satisfaction of its clients. In 19.05% cases, the company requested the customers to share details through direct messages. And apologetic responses were also very minor at 2.38% which shows the

customers are satisfied with their services; the reputation is being developed and managed in an excellent way.

RQ #3: How can be the usage of social media websites helpful in managing online reputation of mobile telecommunication companies?

Yes. The reason is that consumers use Twitter to direct their concerns to their mobile telecom service providers and to ask them questions that are relevant to products and services being offered. Moreover, they are confident in sharing their personal information via direct messages, and it becomes a very handy tool to communicate from the palm of your hand ensuring ultimate satisfaction that your information is safe and that you will be promptly answered free of cost. Moreover, the consumers need not to wait to get assistance through calls made on customer helpline numbers and need not pay extra money for these calls. For example, they do not hesitate to share their concerns over the quality of services, bundle packages, and sim queries. Therefore, telecommunication companies shall know this modern way of communication and especially in the case of reputation management through customer service/ relationship management; they need to be organized and managed effectively to maintain their reputation well especially when a client is angry. Mobile telecommunication companies are a center of discussion in a country like Pakistan where the awareness of and use of information technology and mobile data services is growing at a fast pace. Therefore, businesses cannot manage to pay for a consumer's bad tweet on their page; reach thousands of people without addressing their apprehensions. There exists a fast diffusion of information on Twitter (Kwak et al. (2010). To prove this point, re-tweets were examined from a perspective of corporate reputation. A study which examined the effect of retweets on Twitter shows that any retweeted tweet has the aptitude to reach thousands of users on average irrespective of the total followers of the original tweet (Kwak et al. 2010). See table 4.8 to 4.11

Table 4.8 Trends in topics Mobilink (Jazz), Telenor, and CM Pak (Zong)

S. No	Topic	Mobilink (Jazz)	Telenor	CM Pak (Zong)
1.	International roaming (in Pakistan)	2.38%	0.00	0.00

2.	International roaming (outside Pakistan)	0.00	0.00	0.00
3.	Balance drop/overcharge/billing	2.38%	5.88%	4.65%
4.	Coverage	14.29%	17.65%	6.98%
5.	Connectivity	14.29%	11.77%	11.63%
6.	Data services	33.33%	41.18%	20.93%
7.	Value added services	7.14%	5.88%	11.63%
8.	SMS complaints	4.76%	5.88%	4.65%
9.	Buy New Number/Mobile Number Portability	14.29%	0.00	4.65%
10.	Scratch cards	0.00	0.00	0.00
11.	Feedback	7.14%	11.76%	34.88%

Table 4.9 Customer emotion trends per company

Emotion	Company	Percentage of Tweets
Satisfied	Mobilink (Jazz)	61.91%
	Telenor	47.06%
	CM Pak (Zong)	51.16%
Angry	Mobilink (Jazz)	16.66%
	Telenor	17.65%
	CM Pak (Zong)	20.93%
Unsatisfied	Mobilink (Jazz)	21.43%
	Telenor	35.29%
	CM Pak (Zong)	27.91%

Table 4.10 Combined emotional trends

Emotion	Percentage of Tweets
Satisfied	54.90%
Angry	18.63%
Unsatisfied	26.47%

Table 4.11 Retweets by companies

Tweet	Frequency
Retweeted	1.96%
Not retweeted	98.04%

4.2 Discussion

The telecommunication companies of Pakistan use social media as an interactive source of communication with their customers and public. They get valuable feedback, help them resolve their concerns, and it is a way to build efficiently and uphold the reputation of the company. This study shows that Twitter offers a two-way communication mechanism to manage reputation online. The Computer-Mediated Communication theory lets us associate conventional forms of communication with online means of communication grounded on the arguments and outline used in the communication. It also regulates the way the process of communication occurs online and helps to decode messages.

The use of social media especially Twitter is growing at a fast pace which urges the companies to use it as a source of online communication. This is a reason that companies should build their online presence in line with the pace of growth of social media. The customers on Twitter show angry attitude if their demands and concerns are not answered correctly. For example, CM Pak (Zong) has the highest number of angry customers which propagate a bad reputation for the company, so there is a need to attain their satisfaction by addressing all the reputation loss factors discussed earlier. However, the observed tweets may not be used for a crisis analysis because the emotions expressed by the customers are nearly lined up with the existing tendencies in real-time communication; to have a method of networking with your clienteles and shareholders on a site like Twitter is important. Based on statements taken from earlier research shows that retweets affect reputation online, an actionable plan therefore is in place as a provision in the case the tweeted communication should go intolerably wrong and viral.

The tweets examined in this research were self-coded; therefore, partialities cannot be easily eluded, however, based on the corporate practices observed by the top mobile telecommunication companies of Pakistan that were analyzed, most of the favorite topics among social media users can be determined before time. For example, when the companies

launch a new product or service, equally strong human resource is vital to communicate with their online clients. Businesses that were casual in their conversations should understand that these repetitive responses can have a very unreceptive effect on their clients. For example, in the case of Telenor, it's evident that just giving an incomplete or tiresome answer to your clients can cause communiqué obstructions between companies and their stakeholders. Consumers will repeat identical queries if they are pursuing a discussion online especially if they do not get a satisfactory response to a previously asked similar question.

The outcome of this research expresses the need to interact with customers on Twitter effectively in line with the articulated factors. Although the tweets were observed on a limited time scale, however, a general understanding is developed on how communication takes place between companies and customers and the associated factors that help businesses to manage their reputation. To conclude, the influence of undesirable conversation between the two sides can be disadvantageous to an organization's total reputation.

4.3 Conclusion

4.3.1 Summary

The ongoing research on the role of internet particularly social media is essential in managing their corporate reputation because people are using digital means of communication nowadays to conduct their routine activities. With the help of mobile gadgets and palm devices, people and their lives are changing with the pace of technology; high-speed internet and social media websites; information is accessible at any time. People nowadays prefer to make product and service inquiries online because they find less time to visit franchises of the mobile telecommunication companies which is not only cumbersome process, in addition, it incurs additional cost. The intention of this research is to spread the argument that various businesses should take advantage of social media to efficiently manage their reputation on the internet.

Findings of this study show that the emotions that are mostly demonstrated by the customers on the Twitter involved a sign of customer dissatisfaction with the product or service being provided. The collected data shows that out of the 102 coded tweets, 46 were outraged and unsatisfied tweets. These numbers show that a big number of people use Twitter to communicate to and get their questions/problems addressed. Overall tweets indicate that

consumers use Twitter to contact mobile telecommunication corporations. Therefore, it is great strategy of a company to direct their online efforts in a way to effectively manage their reputation through active customer services and branding which results in high brand value. The nutshell idea of social media is free, convenient and fast way of communication for all with great value for both consumers and companies.

4.4 Recommendations

The MTCs Zong and Telenor can improve their reputation by improving the response time and response effort. The help response needs improvement up to 90% for a better control on the reputation and support mechanism. The percentage of replying to inquiries of the customers is an important factor which needs to be enhanced beyond 50% to show commitment and concern.

Except Mobilink, all other companies have zero percentage of contacting a customer directly therefore, it should be improved to at least 30%. Appreciation of the customers is another factor which helps in managing corporate reputation on positive scale. The appreciation levels for Mobilink and Telenor are lower than that of CM Pak (Zong). Both of them shall bring them equal to that of CM Pak (Zong).

4.5 Limitations

Although this research was done to analyze the role of the internet in reputation management through customer support and relationship building between mobile telecommunication sector and customers on social media websites, however, the method of data collection showed its own challenges. A few of the limitations of content analysis is the lack of straightforward results; they typically make broad rather than narrow differences of their measures (Weber, 1985). In this research, one of the limitations of content analysis was the lack of ability to find genuine emotion behind the feeling of a customer towards a particular topic or issue. This is explained in Weber (1985) of how interpretation problems that arise due to content analysis involve the interpretation knowledge and how human beings and computers use it. When assessing how computers use it and the way data is provided for content analysis, has its own issues when social media is considered as a unit of analysis. For example an observer may face issues such as convenience, and limited accessibility of

information; when doing this research, the dates of collecting data were determined by the company's Twitter page gave limitation of only accessing particular times every business.

While coding, the observed conversations may have or may not have the particular point discussed before or after the interval it was coded. This concludes another point that since Twitter functions in a real-time environment, so evaluating a conversation after the most up-to-date trend can be challenging. For example, while observing a conversation in real-time, the entire thread can be analyzed and accessed. Because sometimes a customer make a number of tweets present a particular inquiry and the company continues to reply in real-time to reach a conclusion, so the conversation cannot be considered as one entity. They are divided into individual conversations which mean that coding can occur either at the start or at the end.

4.6 Future Research

For future research, it will be useful to narrow down the approach of the research to a particular area for a good understanding of sentiments of a customer in a specified trend. A longer study to predict consumer behavior on Twitter is also recommended for future research. Generally, the data presented in this study strongly supports the argument that the behavior of customers show that they use Twitter to communicate with mobile telecommunication companies somewhat as a franchise to get solutions to their questions and concerns.

Secondly, further investigations will be necessary to observe the impact of social media. The results of the study also predict the influencing role of social media on the internet reputation of the mobile telecommunication sector of Pakistan in the future dominantly. As companies are expected to increase their investments in earned media, including social media, it is recommended to do a similar study to compare the effect of the high budget of social media activities. If such a study shows more remarkable effects of social media on the online

reputation of the company, the justification for the high spending on social networking media would be justified.

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Chapter 5

References

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APPENDIX

Appendix-I (Social media study coding sheet)

Q1. Tweet No. (1-XXXX) _____

Q2. Name of company from which tweet originated?

1: Mobilink (Jazz) 2: Telenor 3: CM Pak (Zong)

Q3. Type of coded tweet?

1: Public/Corporate 2: Re-tweet 3: Informational/General tweets 4: Private

Note: If Retweet, complete the rest of the coding sheet according to what the customer said and skip questions # 7-9 / if informational, skip questions # 6-13/if private skip #5-13

Q4. Published Tweet Date/Month

1= April, 2016

Q5. What is the Topic of the tweet?

1: International roaming (in Pakistan) 2: International roaming (outside Pakistan)

3: Balance drop/overcharge/billing 4: Coverage 5: Connectivity

6: Data services 8: Value added services 9: SMS

complaints 10: Buy new number/MNP 11:

Scratch cards 12: Feedback

Q6. Choose emotions expressed by customer in the tweet?

1: Satisfied 2: Angry 3: Unsatisfied 4: No emotions

Q7. Was the tweet of the customer re-tweeted?

1: Yes 2: No

Q8. What is the company's co-tweet?

1: Acknowledgement/Appreciation 2: Empathy/Apology 3:

Product/service not offered

4: Contact us (DM/Franchise/Helpline) 5: Company's contact to customer 6:

Reply to inquiry

Q9. If any suggestion provided if product/service not offered?

1: Yes 2: No 3: N/A

Q10. If contact us then contact information provided?

1: Yes 2: No 3: N/A

Q11. If the question was an inquiry or something relevant to inquiry, did company offered help?

1: Yes 2: No 3: N/A

Q12. What if the initial response time of the company?

1: Same day 2: 1-2 days 3: 3-4 days 4: 5-6 days 5: 1 week 6: More than 1 week

Q13. What was the result of coded tweet?

1: Problem solved/solution provided 2: Unsettled/unreceptive statement

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Appendix-II (Social media study coding sheet)

Q14. Company Page Characteristics

Select company

1: Mobilink (Jazz) 2: Telenor 3: CM Pak (Zong)

Verified Site

1: Yes 2: No

Followers

1: Yes 2: No Number of followers _____

Following

1: Yes 2: No Number of following _____

Company Logo

1: Yes 2: No

Important notice/disclaimer

1: Yes 2: No

Diversity

1: Yes 2: No

---THE END---