Social Media Use and Participatory Politics among Students in Universities in Nairobi

A critical examination of political use of social media

by university students in Nairobi

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Master of Arts Degree in Communication Studies of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work attained through research, learning and with the full support of my project supervisor Dr. George Nyabuga.

Sign …… Date ……..

Mbetera Meyo Felix

Declaration by the Supervisor

This thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as a University Supervisor.

Sign …… Date ……..

Dr. George Nyabuga

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my father Tarcisius Mbetera and my mother Sarah Ayieta for their constant support and the sacrifices they made for me to succeed academically. May they be blessed abundantly.

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ABSTRACT

This study assesses the use of social media for political purposes in Kenya. It departs from the idea that social media offer 'new' platforms for communication, participation and inclusion, and political engagement. It contends that the youth in universities are increasingly appropriating and utilising social media as a way of engaging with the political leadership in Kenya although the levels of use, and political efficacy is determined by individual levels of use. Its main objective was to investigate the political use of social media by students in universities in Nairobi. Specifically, it sought to: assess the factors informing social media use; to determine modalities of social media use for political purposes; and determine the effects of political use of social media by students in universities in Nairobi. Using data collected from a sample of 385 students mainly from four public and private universities in Nairobi, key informant interviews with experts and political actors and visual analysis of social media pages that are politically related, this research reveals that while social media has become an important source of information and platform for political engagement, its efficacy depends on modalities of individual use. In other words, mere access and use do not contribute to success. Efficacy is affirmed by online political activities the youth engage in as a result of their belief, faith and trust that their actions will influence political affairs and the actions of the political actors. The study shows that the youth with regular use express their political and policy preferences by engaging themselves and political actors directly through social media platforms. They are able to post their opinions and contribute to political discourses. As result, they not only enhance their political knowledge but also expand the democratic space in Kenya and in the process contribute to and influence public opinion and consequently political behaviour. However, the efficacy of various political engagements is determined by individual modalities of use and preferences, and thus social media utilities and effects are not homogenous.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

DN - Daily Nation

ICT - Information Communications Technology

IEBC - Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission

MCK - Media Council of Kenya

NGO - Non-Governmental Organization

NTV - Nation Television Network

UK - United Kingdom

US - United States

USIU - United States International University

SPSS - Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter offers a brief background on the uses of social media in participatory politics. It also includes a problem statement and highlights the purpose and the objectives of the study, the research questions, rationale and justification as well as the significance of the study.

1.1 Background

The effects of social media have been felt in many fields including politics, public relations, advertising and communication even though it is a relatively recent innovation that is still evolving (Husain et al., 2014). According to Abercrombie and Lognhurst (1998), people keep in touch with family and friends, express themselves and discuss various issues of their lives on social media. Thus, they tend to present different aspects of their lives in every social group they belong in. In the end, Papacharissi (2012) postulates, the more the interaction, the more they develop different aspects of themselves. The relational use of social media with family and friends, as argued by Gil de Zuniga along with Moyneux and Zheng (2014), may lead people to politically express themselves thus end up on a pathway to political participation. The interactive features of social media may also amplify the impact of people's expression when shared with many people simultaneously (Gil de Zuniga et al., 2014). The impact is aided by the minimal cost and instantaneity of social media making it easier for expressions of average citizens to be viewed around the globe (Lupia and Sin, 2003).

The 44th president of the United States, President Barack Obama's journey to the White House was aided by the interactive Web 2.0 technologies like Facebook, Twitter and

YouTube as well as other modern social networking systems (Cogburn and Vasquez, 2011; Fraser and Dutta 2009). Obama is quoted to have praised the internet as having served his campaign in unprecedented ways (Balz and John, 2009). In fact, as a Senator, Obama did not just announce his candidacy via online video, but also opted to forgo public funding as he anticipated to raise sufficient campaign finances by fundraising through the social media (Cogburn and Vasquez, 2011; Hasen, 2008). In the US, internet transformation has been associated with the connection of citizens among themselves as well as the government and political institutions thus broadening political participation (Chardwick, 2008; Howard, 2006; Norris 2001). The transformation has also opened political space to disadvantaged and marginalized communities that are perceived to be removed from centre of politics due to various dynamics (see, for example, Catinat and Vedel 2000; Coleman and Gotze, 2001). The online discussions that raise interest in electronic democracy are also seen to be broadening citizen participation not only in public affairs but also to promote better accountability of governments and public debates (Catinat and Vedel, 2000; Coleman and Gotze, 2001).

In countries like Egypt, Tunisia and Libya during the 2011 Arab spring, social media use was seen as a tool for democracy and liberalization as it empowered and gave voice to the masses (Anderson, 2011). It has also been used to organize protests and actions of civil disobedience around the world, specifically in Brazil and Turkey (Konnektiv et al., 2014), in London during the 2011 youth demonstrations due to the high level of unemployment among young adults and during the Iranian protests in 2009 against the re-election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (Carlisle and Patton, 2013). The power of social media in mobilizing people and creating political pressure was also witnessed in Burkina Faso in 2014 when President Blaise Campaore was prevented from changing the constitution to run for another term

(Nolle, 2016). In addition Ndlela (2016) argue that during the 2013 elections, most Kenyans on social media used network platforms to monitor the elections.

However, the internet has also been considered to be disruptive to both social and political structures through the promotion of terrorism, racism and other problems like paedophilia (Conway, 2005; Reilly, 2006; Ronczkowski, 2007). Although Sardar (1996) dismissed the concept of cyber-democracy as illusionary and misconceived, Kenski and Stroud (2006) argue that exposure to political material through social media increases political participation and research has also shown that the youth may be abandoning traditional modes of citizen participation in favour of personalized politics that is aided by digital networking (see Amna and Ekeman, 2013; Bang, 2005; Bennett, Wells and Rank, 2009; Bennett, Wells and Freelon, 2011; Dalton, 2008; Loader, 2007; Xenos and Bennett, 2007).

1.2 Problem Statement

The conceptualization of the internet as the "new public sphere" has been advanced by several scholars as a phenomenon of significant political potential albeit dependent on the individuals, institutions and societies that use them (see for example Castells, 2009; Fuchs, 2014; Nyabuga, 2007; Papacharissi, 2012). The right to access government information and transparency are internationally regarded as essential in democratic participation, building trust in government, preventing corruption, making informed decisions and provision of accurate information to the public, companies, journalists and other relevant institutions (Cullier and Piotrowski, 2009; Mulgan, 2007; Shuler, Jaeger and Bertot, 2010).

With the improvements in the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), social media has been seen to be cost-effective and convenient in promoting openness and transparency as well as reducing corruption (Bertot et al., 2010). For example, some scholars

(see, for example, Muntean, 2015; Vitak et al., 2011) have argued that the internet may encourage political participation and research has already shown that social networking sites increase traditional offline engagements. However, research has also shown that social networking sites, though important, are not all linked to higher levels of political participation (Baumgartner and Morris, 2010).

Baumgartner and Morris (2010) have also argued that little attention has been focused on how young adults use social media to engage in politics. According to Baumgartner and Morris (2010), young people are now exposed to politically related subjects within their social networks. The question raised here is to what extent do they use the platforms to engage in politics both online and offline? There is need for an in depth analysis to ascertain the true nature and extent of social media use in politics and the resultant outcomes specifically among young people especially in developing countries like Kenya.

1.3 Research Objectives

The main objective of this study was to investigate the use of social media in participatory politics among the youth in Nairobi universities.

The specific objectives of the study were:

i. To assess the factors informing social media use in participatory politics among the youth in Nairobi universities.
ii. To assess modalities of social media use for political purposes among the youth in Nairobi universities.
iii. To determine the effects of social media use in participatory politics among the youth in Nairobi universities.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions guiding the study were:

i. What are the factors informing social media use in participatory politics among the youth in Nairobi universities?
ii. To what extent do the youth in Nairobi universities use social media for political purposes?
iii. What are the effects of social media use in participatory politics among the youth in Nairobi universities?

1.5 Rationale and Justification

This was an academic research whose main objective was to contribute to knowledge on how social media is used for political purposes among the youth in Nairobi universities. In addition, it aimed to promote the utilisation of social media in the consolidation of democracy in Kenya.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to knowledge specifically on social media use in politics. It provides current evidence and information on the status of political use of social media specifically among the youth in Nairobi universities. Furthermore, the findings of this study will act as a point of reference for professionals in politics, civil society, government and communications along with public policy makers who intend to target the youth through social media. The findings of this study also adds to the body of knowledge on how social media can contribute to political participation and civic engagement especially among the youth not only in Kenya but in other developing countries.

1.7. Scope and Limitations

This study was limited to university students in four universities within Nairobi County between the ages of 18 and 35 years and had access to social media. The universities included two public (The University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University) and two private (United States International University and Strathmore University). There were limitations that were encountered while conducting this research. One major limitation was that not all youth in universities in Nairobi could participate in the survey due to the large number of students in all the sampled universities. Some youth may also not have been truthful when answering the questions by rushing to complete the questionnaires to continue with their personal studies and activities. Another challenge was that there was no equal proportion between male and female respondents as the sampling method used was simple random where all students had a chance of being selected. Similarly, the study had to contend with a small sample size as the research was conducted with limited financial abilities. It was also difficult to authenticate whether the social media accounts cited were authentic or pseudo accounts. In addition, the researcher could not authenticate if the posts were by university students in Nairobi. The findings of this study will however be beneficial to the political actors in the country.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter has given an overview of what this study is about. The background holds that the effect of social media has been felt in many spheres including politics. It further argues that social media has played a major role in modern politics in developed countries. This chapter has also presented the problem statement identifying the three variables, and the issues that will be core to this study. This study examined a number of factors that influence political activities the youth engage in on social media. For example, how do the youth

develop their civic skills, political knowledge and participation through social media? Do they truly use social media for political participation? And if they do, how do social media enhance their participation and what strategies do political stakeholders employ on social media? In addition, what are the specific political activities and how do the youth perceive the influence of this particular avenue in political participation? With research and development being key to any field, the findings of this study contribute to social media and political communications field. The next chapter reviews existing literature on social media, youth and political participation. It also discusses theoretical arguments relating to social media and politics.

1.9 Operationalization of Terms

Social media: Online interactive platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, Blogs and Wikipedia which enable users to create personal or group profiles and tweet, post, like, share content or information and socialize with others users.

Youth: University students in Nairobi County between the ages of 18 and 35 years and have access to social media.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

This chapter critically reviews existing literature on the uses of social media for political purposes with a special focus on participation among the youth. First and foremost, it contextualizes social media and political participation as argued by different scholars particular in western democracies. Secondly, it looks at political information, political knowledge, political interest and policy satisfaction which are four factors of cognitive engagement theory that are key in understanding political communication and participation. Also, this chapter looks at political participation through social media and how social media relates to mobilization, political deliberations, digital divide and political participation among the youth. Finally, the chapter looks at the key theoretical framework guiding the study, the different arguments that have been advanced by different scholars and objectivism which is a philosophical assumption that the study is anchored on.

2.1 Social Media and Political Participation

Social media are online interactive platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, Google+, Wikipedia and Blogs that enable users to create profiles, post content, share information, and socialize with others (see Flynn, 2012; Knight and Cook 2013; MCK, 2016). Storsul (2011) argues that social media enables people to access information, express their political views and discuss issues with other people in their network. In addition, social media is perceived to be a vehicle that develops communicative communities in a virtual public sphere as it enables people to get together (Grönlund, Strandberg and Himmelroos, 2009; Segaard, 2015). According to Hill and Lashmar (2013) and Hermida (2012), some

characteristics of social media are participation, openness, conversation and community participation. This assertion has been advanced by other scholars like Effing, Hillegersberg and Huibers (2011) who argue that participation is a key factor of Web 2.0 and social media.

Participation, according to Grönlund (2009:12), is "the specific activity of doing things together" while political participation is seen as the "behaviors aimed at shaping governmental policy, either by influencing the selection of government personnel or by affecting their choices" Xie, Bo and Jaeger (2008:1-15). The classical definition of political participation as offered by Verba and Nie (1972:2) refers to those activities that private citizens more or less "engage in with the aim of influencing the selection of government personnel and their actions". However, this is not entirely true. Individuals, whether private or public, engage in political participation and not necessarily to influence government processes. Scholars, for example, have argued that political participation can connote a variety of activities through which individuals seek to influence the decision-making processes that shape and determine their lives (see for example, Fox, 2014; Lamprianou, 2013; Luhrmann, 2013). In addition, Flinders (2012) and Flinders and Buller (2006) also argue that the influence can be in private, public and third sector organization.

Participation can either be formal or informal. Formal participation is where individuals engage in official forums and processes, for example, the election of representatives and direct involvement in public meetings and political parties (Fox, 2014; Lamprianou, 2013; Luhrmann, 2013). Informal participation (see Lamprianou, 2013; Wagenaar, 2014; Wehling 2012) refers to activities that are set outside official settings. These activities may include, for example, online activism and petitioning, discussing political issues with family and friends as well protest and resistance (Cunningham, 2015; Curtice and Ormston, 2015*;* Luhrmann,

2013). According to Valenzuela (2013), political activities on social media platforms like Twitter include posting, retweeting and quoting of political tweets, following politicians and political parties Twitter accounts as well as replying to political tweets.

To understand the social media phenomenon, scholars have developed three stages of online participation which include e-enabling, e-engaging, and e-empowering (Effing, Hillegersberg and Huibers, 2011). With e-enabling, users or citizens are given access and information while with e-engaging, users can interact and dialogue with organizations. The third stage of e-empowering is where state and private institutions work together with users or citizens who are empowered with collaborative tasks, responsibilities and options (Grönlund, 2009; Medaglia, 2007; Sommer and Cullen 2009).

2.1.1 Political Communication and Participation

Scholars contend that searching for political information on social media is more popular than participating in the discussions and that those who are perceived to be well-educated use the information to participate actively in politics (Biswas, Ingle and Mousumi, 2014). For example, 42 percent of Twitter users in Korea's 2010 local government elections said that they obtained information about candidates through social media (June, Hong and Sung-Min, 2011). The key to understanding political communication and participation on social media particularly among the youth are the four factors of cognitive engagement theory (Abdulrauf, Hamid and Ishak, 2015). They include political information, political knowledge, political interest and policy satisfaction.

2.1.1.1 Political Information

According to Charles (2010), access to information is key in building political interest and political knowledge which enables people to engage in political participation. Gil De Zuniga, Molyneux and Zheng (2014) have also argued that social media provides tools for participation as it exposes youth to political information. In US for example, as an alternative to traditional media, it has made it easier and cheaper for the youth to access political information and interact with the political elite (see Birgisdóttir, 2014; Hellweng, 2011). This interaction has made the political system more accessible to the people (see for example Abdulrauf, Hamid and Ishak, 2015; Engesser and Franzetti, 2011; Odunlami, 2014; Teng, 2012). In 2009, for example, Gordon Brown, the then prime minister of the UK called on public servants to use Twitter to engage the public for real-time feedback on government activities. Also, Brown gave specific strategies on how to use Twitter which included the use of colloquial English and tweeting at least two to three times a day with the tweets spaced at least 30 minutes apart (June, Hong and Sung-Min, 2011).

Scholars have also argued that social media users bypass gatekeepers enabling them to encounter political news even when engaging in apolitical activities (Bae, 2014; Hellweng, 2011; Johnson and Kaye, 2014). It is thus said that the more they are exposed to political news and information, the more they participate in politics (Bae, 2014). For example, news of Osama Bin Laden's death was first posted on Twitter even before the US government officials publicly confirmed it (June, Hong and Sung-Min, 2011). The challenge, however, is the credibility of political information on social media. For example, in their study, "Credibility of Social Network Sites for Political Information Among Politically Interested Internet Users" in US, Johnson and Kaye (2014) argue that social media platforms are the

least credible among other sources of political news due to the ease and convenience of posting and accessing unfiltered political news.

2.1.1.2 Political Knowledge

According to Carpini and Keeter (1996), political knowledge is a series of actual political information stored in the long-term memory. It is key in decision-making process due to its ability to connect essential political values to policies and the preferred candidates (see Muntean, 2015). Furthermore, political knowledge empowers citizens to understand the political system in which they participate in. In essence, the more knowledgeable citizens are, the more active they become in voting and monitoring politicians (Leeson, 2008; Muntean, 2015). This however, is not entirely true as there are a number of contributing factors that may hinder political participation. A good example is political interest which I have discussed in the next section. It is important though to note that information and the cognitive ability to process that information is essential in building political knowledge. Bernhagen and Schmitt (2014) posit that political knowledge has emerged as a crucial link between deliberative and representative democracy because citizens who are knowledgeable can relate issues of public policy to their interest while assessing the performance of their governments. In Germany, for example, Tumasjam et al. (2010) found that Twitter was used as a political deliberation platform as volumes of tweets reflected voter presence and mirrored the 2009 German federal elections results. The online deliberations between the politicians and their constituents were perceived to be more of live political debates (Tumasjam et al., 2010).

2.1.1.3 Political Interest

Political interest is a strong indicator of political participation because it determines if an individual is politically active or passive (Kruikemeier et al., 2013; Oser, Hooghe and

Marien, 2012). Furthermore, interest in politics partly determines political participation (Carlisle and Patton, 2013; Hur and Kwon, 2014; Shepperd, 2012) as it provides the motivation to devote time and energy (O'Neil, 2006). In Norway, for example, politicians with a specific focus on young voters were found to be the biggest users of social media in comparison to their colleagues (Segaard, 2015). In addition, Norwegian politicians were also found to have extensively used social media during 2009 national election attracting a great deal of public attention among the citizens (Karlsen, 2011).

2.1.1.4 Policy Satisfaction

As a fundamental democratic value, policy satisfaction encompasses a variety of political, economic and social issues. These issues embody governments' role on different concerns like freedom of the press, access to the judicial system and protection of minority groups (See for example Abdulrauf, Hamid, and Ishak, 2015; Shore, 2014). About youth and policy satisfaction, Abdulrauf, Hamid and Ishak (2015) postulate that government policies in Malaysia should aim to positively transform the lives of its youthful citizens through hearing their voices. Furthermore, Vincente and Novo (2014) argue that in Spain, political participation and youth's policy satisfaction are interlinked. With social media, scholars have argued that there is a direct link between government and the public to engage in political activities. In US and UK for example, these political activities affect as well as enable policy satisfaction which is imperative in a democracy (see Abdulrauf, Hamid, and Ishak, 2015; Ezrow and Xezonakis, 2009; Johnson and Kaye, 2014; Valenzuela, Kim and Gil de Zuniga, 2012). In Canada, for example, June, Hong, and Sung-Min (2011) argue that Vancouver held public deliberations on Facebook to help it devise its transport policy. In the Philippines, the Department of Finance also received various tips on corruption and tax evasion through Facebook and Twitter (June, Hong and Sung-Min 2011). The policy making process in

developed democracies like UK has also changed as citizens can create public opinions through the social media and pressure their governments to deliberate on specific issues (see June, Hong and Sung-Min, 2011). In China, for example, government-led policy deliberations were initially done behind closed doors with expert groups while the public hearings were only meant for approvals (see for example June, Hong and Sung-Min, 2011; Korolev, 2014). According to Korolev (2014:1), "the public policy process in China is now more inclusive and pluralistic than it was in the past".

2.2 Political Participation through Social Media

Informational use of many media types like newspapers, television, radio, the Internet, and mobile communication technologies have shown to directly or indirectly lead to political participation (Campbell and Kwak, 2010; McLeod et al., 1999; Norris, 1996; Shah et al., 2005). According to Fenton and Barassi (2011), social media offer new ways of thinking and engaging politically thus facilitating new ways of political participation. Scholars have also argued that social media and Internet use in seeking news and information has been linked to greater political participation (see for example, Kwak et al., 2010; Shah et al., 2005). Also, it can uncover serious issues that the traditional media would either overlook or ignore. For example, in November 2010, Twitter users in Korea initiated a campaign which also contributed to the acquittal of a Korean underwater diving instructor who had been falsely accused of murder in Honduras (June, Hong and Sung-Min, 2011).

In Kenya, during the 2013 elections, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) used social media before, during and after the elections to update the public on the process while politicians also used the same platforms to campaign and updated the public on their political activities (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2013). Also, Kenyan political parties,

politicians, government, civil societies, interest groups and individuals are increasingly embracing the Internet for political communication (Nyabuga, 2007). Nyabuga (2007) found that Electoral Commission of Kenya (Now, IEBC) regularly use the Internet to brief Kenyans about their work. In 2006, for example, Burson-Marsteller (an international public relation firm) ranked President Uhuru Kenyatta as the most popular Sub-Saharan African leader on social media with over two million likes on Facebook while the Kericho Senator Aaron Cheruiyot attributed his win to his social media campaigns (see MCK, 2016; Psirmoi, 2016). According Cheruiyot, a Jubilee Alliance politician, many people got to know him through Facebook even though he was not popular before the campaign (Psirmoi, 2016). Also, Psirmoi (2016) argues that it was easier for the senator to campaign because social media had made him popular among his constituents. Wohn et al. (2011) posit that political information on the Internet may originate from political actors and traditional media sources while Nyabuga (2007) argues that, with regards to the Kenyan political environment, the Internet cannot work alone as it complements the more established traditional and trusted media like radio, television and newspapers.

Mobile technology has enabled people to engage with public institutions and officials to demand more and better services thus fostering transparency, social accountability and enhances service delivery (Ben-Attar and Campbell, 2012; UNDP, 2012). The emergence of Kenya as an ICT hub in Africa has also been attributed to innovative technologies mainly in the mobile sector. For example, M-PESA, Mobikash and Mobile Pay are some of the mobile innovations that offer mobile money transfer services in Kenya. These innovations have enhanced and eased local banking services and payment of electricity, water and insurance bills (see Kenya ICT Board, 2013; Ministry of Information and Communications and Technology, 2014). Other critical areas that mobile technology has had tremendous impact

include health (Reychav et al., 2016), city planning (Riggs and Gordon, 2017), tours and travel (Ivan and Lai, 2015) and hot spot policing (Koper, Lum and Hibdon, 2015). Dalberg (2013) also found that through the e-Government, the Internet in Kenya has reduced the cost of governance and improved transparency, accountability as well as citizen engagement. For example, the Kenya Open Data Initiative provides key government information on development, demographic, statistical and expenditure freely to researchers, policymakers and the public through a single online portal (Dalberg, 2013).

2.3 Social Media and Mobilization

Social media have become important platforms for political debate and mobilization around critical issues in African countries like Egypt and Nigeria (Nwoye and Okafor, 2014). Through Facebook and word of mouth, more than 20,000 people were mobilized in two days to demonstrate against Israel's bombing of Gaza in 2009 (Storsul, 2011). In the US, Obama's campaign managed to get new groups of citizens to register as voters and actively participate in his campaign (Castells, 2009). As a mobilization tool, scholars have also argued that social media enables the youth to freely share their thoughts on any issue especially against social acts like human rights violations and corruption (Biswas, Ingle and Mousumi, 2014). However, this is not entirely true. In Korea, June, Hong and Sung-Min (2011) found that with social media, people are more careful of how they express their opinions and what they post in a bid to avoid content that they do not want to be held accountable. Storsul (2011) also argues that self-representation can limit the impact social media platforms have on political deliberation. In Norway, research has shown that online representation is part of a reflexive process as people are conscious of how they represent themselves on social media (Luders 2007, cited in Storsul, 2011). For example, in Norway, Storsul (2011) argues that high awareness about self-representation influences how teenagers use Facebook for political

purposes as they carefully select political groups to join, chose few causes to support, balance the way they join events and publish pictures and hesitate to engage in political discussion. Also, Storsul (2011) postulates that young people post things that they believe will not be offensive to other people in their network and perceive online political debates risky due to self-representation.

2.4 Social Media and Political Deliberations

Deliberation is key to increasing the levels of citizens' information which may enable them to re-evaluate existing political preferences (Bernhagen and Schmitt 2014). Biswas, Ingle, and Mousumi (2014) also suggest that people who engage actively in political debates on social media do become great tools when they spread the word and influence the opinion of others. In April 2011, for example, Anna Hazare, a social activist also used Facebook to pressure the Indian government to set up a private-public committee to discuss an anti-corruption legislation. The success of the campaign was partly attributed to the use of Facebook (June, Hong, and Sung-Min, 2011).

According to Niemeyer (2011), deliberative democracy is based on broad-scale participation in the political decision-making process where the activation of "citizenship" determines the outcomes. Dryzek (2000) cited in Niemeyer (2011) argues that ideally, citizens are supposed to engage in communicative rational which is free of strategic manipulation. However, their engagement requires an open mind, acceptance of others' argument as valid and a spirit of reciprocity (Gutmann and Thompson, 1996). Dryzek and Niemeyer (2006) postulate that a positive consensus is in the form of a meta-consensus in which common agreement on important issues and legitimate possible outcomes are products of intersubjective deliberation without necessarily agreeing on the exact outcome. Consistency intersubjective occurs when

individuals agree on the way in which reasons inform preferences which are indicative of individuals understanding why they hold their preferences (Niemeyer, 2011). This is in contrast with symbolic politics where the elite use arguments that invoke particular symbols in a strategic manner to manipulate outcomes in a public sphere dominated by political spin doctors (Edelman, 1985 cited in Niemeyer, 2011). According to Niemeyer (2011), in superficial democracies, manipulation occurs as organized interest tactfully needs public approval for political legitimacy. The manipulation, Niemeyer (2011) argues, is partly because of the disparities between the distance from issues affecting the citizens and the motivations of the political actors in securing particular outcomes.

Niemeyer's (2011) case study on Bloomfield Track in Australia shows that with an emancipatory effect and the ability to empower citizens to develop a shared logic about the issue at hand, deliberative democracies make salient, relevant arguments which result to meta-consensus. Sauter and Bruns (2013) also found that in Australia, social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter have been adopted by citizens, journalists and politicians so as to support their political engagements through campaigns, dissemination or retrieval of information and engagement with other stakeholders in the political public sphere. In the UK, for example, parliamentarians have been using Twitter to interact with their constituents (see Bollen, Mao and Zeng, 2011; Cha et al., 2010; Jackson and Lilleker, 2011). Segaard (2015) also found that Norwegians who have little interest in politics tend to grow more interested over time due to their engagement on social media networks. However, those who are most active offline and with a high degree of political interest have been found to be top in using social media for political purposes (Segard, 2015).

2.5 Social Media and Digital Divide

The dichotomous portrayal of the 'haves 'and the 'have-nots' is key to understanding social media use in the political realm. According to Simplican et al. (2015), social inclusion is the interaction between interpersonal relationships and community participation which overlap and mutually support one another. However, ecological conditions at the individual, interpersonal, organizational, community and socio-political level can promote or impede social inclusion (see Simplican et al., 2015). At the individual level, scholars argue that knowledge, confidence, and self-motivation are some of the enabling or disabling conditions while at the interpersonal level, these conditions include a relationship with and across family members and peers as well as their perceived attitudes (see for example Hermsen et al., 2014; McConkey and Collins, 2010a, 2010b). At the organizational level, Bigby et al. (2012) posit that group or family culture, socioeconomic status and social capital are key determiners of social inclusion while living accommodations, availability and access to critical services like transportation and online communities are key at the community level (McConkey and Collins, 2010a). Other conditions at the socio-political level include laws and legal enforcement as well as state perspectives and histories around service delivery (see Hermsen et al., 2014; Simplican et al., 2015). Increasing social inclusion could thus have political effects because a political change as argued by Simplican et al. (2015) is an outcome of groups which include parents, professional and self-advocates mobilizing together.

According to Verdegem (2011), e-inclusion can foster public participation in the information society and reduce digital inequalities when it is seen as a policy intervention. In his paper, "Social Media for Digital and Social Inclusion: Challenges for Information Society 2.0 Research and Policies", Verdegem (2011) argues that as a policy measure, e-inclusion should aim at preventing digital exclusion where disadvantaged groups are not part of the

development of the informed society. Also, e-inclusion should aim at exploiting new opportunities that will enable less favored areas and the socially disadvantaged people to be part of the society (see Cammaerts et al., 2003 cited in Verdegem, 2011). Biswas, Ingle and Mousumi (2014:131) argued that in India, for example, social media usage was restricted to urban areas only as technology had not penetrated into rural parts thus inhibiting politicians to reach rural people through social media. Political parties were therefore compelled to use traditional media and old fashioned ways of campaigning like posters, house to house canvassing, rallies and posters to reach the rural population (Biswas, Ingle and Mousumi, 2014). However, according to Sridhar (2014), wireless service penetration in both rural and urban areas in India is very high compared to wireline services. With the increase of affordable smart phones in India, "mobile is becoming the primary and possibly the only device for accessing Internet and other information services" (Sridhar, 2014:47). Social media has also led to the inclusion of different groups in political participation. In India for example, social media use has been attributed to the education and influence of female voters due to its increase and Internet penetration among female users (Biswas, Ingle and Mousumi, 2014). Verdegem (2011) posits that e-inclusion should not just be seen from the 'technologically rich' versus the 'poor' perspective but the citizen's empowerment and their participation in the knowledge society. Awareness, willingness, skills, competencies and social capital should, therefore, be critical to e-inclusion (Kaplan, 2005).

2.6 Social Media and Political Participation among the Youth

The popularity of social media, especially among the youth in US, provided a good environment for political candidates during the 2008 presidential elections to promote themselves, their political agenda as well as interact with voters in a different manner compared to previous elections (Vitak et al., 2011). Research by Pew Research Center

(2012) in the US reveals that 65% of social media users aged between 18-29 years had engaged in political activities during the 2008 elections. Also, the US presidential candidates during the 2008 elections used interactive sites like YouTube, Facebook, and Myspace which enabled users to post comments, share news, information, videos and discuss their opinions with their peers about political issues (Vitak et al., 2011). Waters and Lester (2010 cited in MCK, 2016) have argued that people use social media for a variety of reasons like messaging and communication, community and social group interactions, exchange of opinions and reviews among others. In parts of sub-Saharan Africa, the youth have embraced social media for connections and interactions which enable them to entertain themselves, collect information and learn, communicate as well as collaborate with their family and friends (Obijiofor, 2015 cited in MCK, 2016). Further, Obijiofor (2015) argues that youth in sub-Saharan Africa find social media to be attractive to them because of its affordability and the perceived greater degree of freedom from political, social and economic controls by leaders (MCK, 2016).

Loader, Vromen and Xenos, (2014) posit that alternative channels of communications such as social media and actions such as those enacted during the Arab spring are used to express the voice of young citizens around the world because the political class has failed to address some of the most important challenges confronting young citizens. Education and employment opportunities for young citizens have also been influenced significantly by social-cultural factors such as ethnicity, gender, location, class and even sexuality (Loader, Vromen, and Xenos, 2014). Young citizens, Loader, Vromen and Xenos (2014) say, can hold representatives to account and critically monitor their policies and actions because social media has empowered them to reflect and participate in political discourses with their friends.

According to Robards and Bennett (2011), social media increases young people's sense of belonging as well as the visibility of their everyday friend-based social connections. In the US, research by Pew Research Center (2012) found that young people are more likely to use social media for civic engagement through posting their thoughts, promoting and or liking political material online. Some existing offline political groups and organizations in Western countries like UK and US have adopted digital models to inform, recruit and mobilize youth (see Mercea, 2013; Rheingans and Hollands, 2013). For example, during the Arab Spring in Egypt, social media was used to mobilize the masses and was seen as a tool for democracy and liberalization because it empowered and gave voice to the activists (Anderson, 2011). Also, social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter have enhanced sharing of expressive political information and points of views that is peer driven and networked (Boyd, 2011; Ellison et al., 2011).

Abdulrauf, Hamid and Ishak (2015) posit that there are two paradigms to youth's engagement in politics. With the non-participation paradigm, there has been an opinion which holds that the decrease in political participation among youth in western democracies like UK was as a result of apathy (see for example Bakker and De Vreese, 2011; Baumgartner and Morris, 2010; Fox, 2015; Theorcharis and Quintelier, 2014; Ward and Vreese, 2011; Yamamoto, Dalisay and Kushin, 2015). For example, in UK, Henn Matt and his colleagues (2002) found that "Prior to 1997, the turnout of the under 25s was always above 60% and usually not far off the electorate average. In 1997, however, only 54% of under 25s voted compared with 71% overall; in 2001, this figure fell to 40%" (see Fox, 2015:4). Scholars like Dahlgren (2009), Milner (2010) and Maktutredning (2003) cited in Strosul (2011) have also argued that among young people in Europe, election turnout and party membership have sunk.

However, those for the participation paradigm argue that there is a steady increase in political interest and participation among the youth in western democracies like UK and US through social media (see for example Chun, 2012; Fox, 2015; Potgieter, 2013; Smuts, 2010). This also influenced social and political change for example during the 2008 and 2012 US presidential election, the 2013 Malaysian election and the Arab Spring in 2011 (see Fox, 2015; Muntean, 2015; Vitak et al., 2011; Vromen, Xenos, and Loader, 2015). In Korea, for example, June, Hong and Sung-Min (2011) argue that social media use in politics also enabled young people to vote due to peer pressure especially when role models and their friends were doing the same. In the 2010 local government elections in Korea, the increase of voters in their 20s by 7.5 percent was attributed to social media (June, Hong and Sung-Min, 2011). In Norway, research has also shown that there is a tendency that young people engage in single issues campaigns which concern them directly and are outside the conventional political realm (Bucher et al., 2009 cited in Storsul, 2011).

According to Henn, Weinstein and Wring (2002), the youth in Britain were found to be politically interested and engaged due to embracing new forms of political participation as a result of societal and technological evolution. However, Fox (2015) says that British youth were also reluctant to formally participate in the institutional processes of democracy in which policies and issues affecting them could be influenced. Their lack of participation was perceived to be as a result of political alienation as opposed to political apathy (see Fox, 2015; Henn, Weinstein and Forrest, 2005; Marsh, O'Toole and Jones, 2007). This is as a result of a profound disconnection from the formal political process, institutions and actors (Fox, 2015). Evans, Stoker and Halupka (2015) also debunked the notion that the youth in Australia are apathetic, disengaged and apolitical. Instead, Australian politicians were perceived to be accusing young people of apathy so as to divert attention from their political

behavior (Evans, Stoker and Halupka, 2015). Young people in Britain have the desire to be involved in politics and care about political issues, but the policies and political parties are not relatable to them (Dale, 2015; Stevenson, 2014). Birdwell, Cadywould and Reynolds (2014) also argued that due to disillusionment with politicians and political parties as opposed to apathy, young people in Britain are completely disengaged from tradition politics. The British youth thus need to feel that their participation can challenge the status quo and contribute to massive change (Birdwell, Cadywould and Reynolds, 2014). According to Fox (2015), the alienation of the British youth in formal political processes is as result of failures of both the political elite and establishment. Young people in Britain "want to see more politicians who represent them; they want to see more women, ethnic minorities and younger politicians they can relate with. They also want more genuine engagement with them, on platforms such as social media" (Birdwell, Cadywould and Reynolds, 2014:13). Education is, however, key to the policy making process. Charles (2010) argues that the more educated the youth are in a given society, the more and better informed thus participate in politics particularly in critiquing government policies. For example, June, Hong, and Sung-Min (2011) argue that Korea's educational system is geared towards habitual memorization and test-taking as opposed to creativity and critical thinking which enables social media users in policy deliberations to respect the divergent opinion. June, Hong, and Sung-Min (2011:129) suggest that as much as policy making process is critical, the Korean education system should be reformed "towards social literacy, including respect for differences of opinion, and critical and creative thinking". Furthermore, Powers, Moeller and Yuan (2016) argue that media literacy education is essential in developing informed, reflective and engaging citizens in a democratic society as well as promoting student's interest in news and current affairs as a way of citizenship. This shows that it is prudent to have a productive and knowledgeable electorate that deliberates on policies through platforms like social media.

2.6.1 Social Media Use among University Students

According to Stollak et al. (2011), the continuous development of mobile technology has enabled more students in US to easily access social media platforms through smartphones, tablets, computers and laptops. Scholars like Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) and Hanson et al. (2011) have also argued that the current generation of students in America have become dependent on social media which is their preferred means of communication due to the exposure to a technological rich world. Furthermore, some university students around the world, particularly those between 18-29 years, not only use wireless technology more actively but have rapidly adopted social networking sites (cf. Kamau, 2013; Lenhart et al., 2010; Johnston, 2013, Schwartz et al. 2014). In US, research has shown that majority of undergraduates use social media for gaining social identity and as a major means of interaction (see Junco et al, 2012; Mazman and Yasemin, 2011). This findings have been echoed by Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) and Hanson et al. (2011) whose study revealed that the need for communication with peers and the ease of accessing entertainment were the most important causes for university students to highly rely on social media use. In Nigeria, Jaslina et al. (2013) argue that social media platforms cannot be separated from male and female university students as they have increasingly become important part of their lives. For example, they posit that through Facebook, students describe themselves to others, upload photos and their statuses for others to see and provide feedback easily to other online activities through liking pictures, comments and statuses. In addition, in relation to usage, they argue that most of the students use social media daily and browse straightaway after they wake up from sleep. According to Williams et al. (2012), Facebook was found to be the most popular social media platform among American university students. This was because most students on the platforms could connect easily to friends across the nation. He however notes

that students in American universities used various platforms for various personal interests. They therefore exhibit multiple personalities which are evident in what they produce, share, watch and how they connect and critique issues on these platforms. Whereas both female and male students have different interest Jones et al. (2008) and Lee et al., (2011) suggest that both genders use social media actively and even multitask academics and social media activities.

2.7 Theoretical Framework: Public Sphere

In the *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere,* Jürgen Habermas argues that public sphere is the conceptual space where private citizens come together to deliberate issues that lead to the formation of public opinions, political parties as well as movements (Habermas, 1989). According to Habermas (1989), the quality of a democratic society is dependent on the capacity of private citizens to communicate and deliberate. Also, the private realm provides individual citizens with an identity and support to represent the actors who are active in the public sphere (Habermas, 1989; Habermas, Lennox and Lennox, 1964). McQuail (2005) postulates that the collection of all free citizens in a specific society determines a functional public due to their freedom of association and democratic ability to converse as well as organize and express themselves freely. Scholars have argued that the public sphere enables the private citizens to organize themselves collectively and engage critically in deliberations and debates on issues that affect them (see for example Calhoun, 1993; Crossley and Roberts, 2004; Dahlgren, 1991).

According to Habermas (1989), the existence of public sphere was determined by three preconditions. They included disregard of status, common concern and inclusivity of which have been contested by several scholars. With disregard of status, Habermas (1989:36) claims

that a better argument exists where there is no hierarchy imposed by the society as the uniformity of "common humanity" is affirmed due to lack of status and ranks in authority. The second precondition was the domain of common concern. According to Habermas, in the 18th and 19th centuries, the state and the church had control on interpretation particularly in the field of literature, art and philosophy. Due to capitalism and the commercialization of works in these fields, private citizens were able to access and make meaning through rational communication with others. Habermas (1989) argues that as a common concern, the commercialization of the works and information paved the way to other topics of deliberation among the private citizens. The third precondition was the concept of inclusivity which was as a result of the commercialization of cultural products and information. Many people were able to participate in debates and deliberations that were previously confined amongst secluded groups (Habermas, 1989). Several scholars like Smuts (2010), Dahlgren (2005) and Obare (2013) have argued that the Internet and social media have emerged as the new public sphere. Obare (2013) for example, suggests that social media is an interactive and a deliberative space where users can exchange ideas freely. Further, Obare (2013) suggests that in Kenya, social media can promote democracy if users continue to mobilize masses to interact and share views without hate speech. It is however critical to consider who determines what hate speech is and why because it might be used to obstruct freedom of expression.

2.7.1 Modern Public Sphere

The public sphere is a rational dialogical process which constitutes three dimensions; structural, representative and interaction (see Dahlgren, 2005a, 2005b). Dahlgren also sees media as a crucial communicative tool which links civil society and power holders. The structural dimension according to Dahlgren (2005a) encompasses media institutions, their

political economy, ownership and control, regulations and legal frameworks as well as financial issues. Critical to the structural dimension are the political institutions that promote democracies, freedom of speech and dynamism in inclusiveness (Dahlgren, 2005a). With representation, Dahlgren (2005a) argues that media production and influence is key in political communication especially through agenda setting, ideological tendencies, completeness, pluralism and divergent views, accuracy as well as fairness. Through interaction, the importance of public opinion is manifested in the discursive relations between individuals and the media as well as between the citizens themselves (Dahlgren, 2005a).

2.7.2 Social Media as Public Sphere

Advocates of deliberative democratic public sphere have argued that the Internet and social media platforms are ideal deliberative digital space for increased political participation (see Birgisdóttir, 2014). From Habermas' public sphere perspective, social media platforms can be seen as enablers of the deliberative political space where people exchange ideas and thoughts freely (Birgisdóttir, 2014). Habermas (1989) suggests that government, citizenship, information and the public sphere are interconnected through media. According to Castells (2007:241 cited in Loader and Mercea, 2011), "what does not exist in the media does not exist in the public mind". This shows that the media is an important avenue for the formation of public discourse. Birgisdóttir (2014) and Abdu, Mohamad and Muda (2016) suggest that social media platforms are cost effective, open when compared to traditional media and encourage freedom of expression.

Through social media, Loader and Mercea (2011) posit that US citizens are no longer passive consumers of government spin, political propaganda or mass media news. Instead, they can publish their own views, challenge political discourse and share alternative perspectives (Loader and Mercea, 2011). Scholars like Cogburn and Esposinoza-Vasquez (2011 cited in

Birgisdóttir, 2014) argue that social media is connecting people directly thus empowering citizens to take collective action in a democratic society and effect change. In addition, through peer to peer public discourse, social media in US is perceived to have taken the power of the traditional mass media in political messaging thus enabling the participation of different people as opinion leaders (Birgisdóttir, 2014). According to Abdu, Mohamad and Muda (2016), today, youth in developed countries like UK get political information more from Facebook as opposed to the traditional media like newspapers and radio. Moreover, the information is user friendly, interactive, brief and easier to understand (Abdu, Mohamad, Muda, 2016). In US, for example, social media enables citizens to directly interact with political organizations, share thoughts with their networked friends and critically monitor corporate and government actions and interests (Loader and Mercea, 2011). In Canada, according to Schein, Wilson and Keelan (2010), public health organizations have not only used social media as a broadcasting platform like traditional media sources to amplify messages but also as a collaborating and content creating tool with target audiences. Leading health organizations in Canada that have adopted social media are able to reach demographics such as teens who have abandoned traditional media (Schein, Wilson and Keelan, 2010). Schein, Wilson and Keelan (2010) also argue that the health organizations have integrated user generated content and feedback thus building and improving users trust and relationships with the organizations

According to Birgisdóttir (2014), politicians in western democracies like US tend to be more personalized when they use social media to increase their popularity. In addition, the platforms provide a public online space where citizens interact with their elected representatives (see Abdu, Mohamad, Muda, 2016). The interaction on social media with the

political figures is also seen as a source of political information and alternative viewpoints thus increasing political participation (Abdu, Mohamad, Muda, 2016).

2.7.3 Contestation

Scholars have argued that Habermas' interpretation of the public sphere simply refers to the liberal public sphere (see for example Fraser, 1990; Loader and Mercea, 2011; Smuts, 2010). For example, Fraser (1990) argues that there exists a significant exclusion which is in conflict with "inclusivity" as advanced by Habermas. Sitton (2003) also says that discrimination against women and the lower social strata of the society used to exist in the bourgeoisie public sphere. The second assumption that all involved in the public sphere are equal is also contested. Eley (1992) argues that as a stratified society, a public sphere is a place where contestation, as opposed to deliberation, occurs. Fraser (1990) also postulates that the concept of the public sphere being open and accessible to all has not been realized yet. The other contestation is based on the third assumption of common concern. Fraser (1990) postulates that a matter of common concern for some might be perceived by others as private interest because it is not guaranteed that private citizens will agree and participate on all issues.

Loader and Mercea (2011) argue that those sceptical of social media are likely to cite extremisms, populist rhetoric and negative campaign as impediments of a deliberative space. In addition, the acquisition of a smart phone or having access to a social media platform does not necessary mean that citizens will engage actively in political participation (Loader and Mercea, 2011). As argued in the digital divide section, there are a number of ecological and socio-cultural factors that might influence political participation. Furthermore, Habermas' theory is contrasting with modern politics and socialization of many cultures (Loader and Mercea, 2011). Konnektiv, Melanie and René (2014) argue that digital divide is still a big

challenge especially in developing countries like Rwanda. Lack of access to the Internet and social media excludes the voices of people particularly those in rural communities, with poor education and senior citizens (Konnektiv, Melanie and René 2014). In addition, Konnektiv, Melanie and René (2014) argue that surveillance, lack of protection of data and respect to anonymity of users in countries like Tunisia and Ethiopia may interfere with the political participation process. Ownership of the infrastructure and the social media policies in place are also critical. In Ethiopia and Rwanda for example, Konnektiv, Melanie and René (2014) posits that the monopolization and control of the infrastructure led to high prices and made it easier for the two governments to restrict freedom of information through spying and censorship of private or anti-government sentiments. With tight controls, self-censorship among users might also been seen as impediment to the realization of deliberative democracy. Lastly, the perceived disconnect between social media users and lack of action by decision makers can lead to slacktivism thus inhibit political participation especially when no effects are seen (Konnektiv, Melanie and René, 2014).

2.8 Epistemology

Epistemology is "a basic set of beliefs that guide action" (Guba, 1990; 17). Bryman and Bell (2011) argue that epistemologies refer to an acceptable knowledge in a field of study. As a broad philosophical perception about the world and the type of research being done by any scholar, epistemologies are grounded on past research experiences, researcher's inclinations and on specific discipline orientations (Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, Slife and Williams (1995) postulate that philosophical ideas need to be identified because even though they are hidden in research, they still influence studies. Although they keep on evolving, some of the common paradigms of research include positivism, post-positivism, advocacy/participatory, constructivism, and pragmatism (Creswell, 2013). As Creswell argues, they all have different

characteristics and represent different models for constructing claims about knowledge. In addition, as a requirement for good research, there is need to make these paradigms explicit. Further, researchers need to be aware of the extent to which the assumptions influence a study (Creswell, 2013). The beliefs held by an individual researcher will also determine if the study will use quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods approaches in their studies (see Creswell, 2014).

2.8.1 Objectivism

The epistemological foundation of this research is anchored in the objectivism worldview which holds that reason and correspondence to external world are key to the development of human knowledge (see Schuh and Barab, 2008; Thomas and Kelley, 1999). According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009:110), objectivism represents how "social entities exist in reality external to social actors". Lakoff (1987) also argues that as a mirror of nature, the mind creates world representations that correspond to the external world. In short, the interpretation of the world is through abstracts and logical representation as a result awareness created through physical senses. This is opposed to idealism which Reber (1995) argues that reality is psychological and is separate from the world of social or physical entities. According to Reber (1995), knowledge and experience are as a result of mental representation. This study seeks to build knowledge on the usage of social media in politics among the youth in Nairobi universities. In effect, objectivism which is firmly grounded on evidence sees social media as an objective entity. By adopting an objectivist stance, this study seeks to explore the factors that inform social media use among the youth in Nairobi universities, the extent to which the youth in Nairobi universities use social media for political purposes and the effects of social media use in politics among the youth in Nairobi universities. As evident in chapter four, objectivism has helped unearth the realities of

political use of social media use among the youth in Nairobi universities in relation to the theoretical framework identified in this chapter.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter has critically examined existing literature detailing the uses of social media for political purposes with a special focus on participation among the youth. It has looked at what social media and political participation mean. It holds that political participation can either be formal or informal and social media can play an important role to enhance the participation. Also, it has demonstrated how political information, knowledge, interest and policy satisfaction is key in understanding political communication and participation from a cognitive engagement perspective.

This chapter also looked at how social media has enabled new ways of political engagement, especially in western democracies like Norway, UK and US. As a mobilization tool, social media has been seen to be enabling users to freely air and advance their views through influencing others. However, the chapter has also shown that not all users share their political thoughts through social media. Furthermore, this chapter has also shown how deliberations and social media engagements can increase political participation among users. It has demonstrated how digital divide can either enhance or impede social inclusion and political participation. It holds that ecological conditions at the individual, interpersonal, organizational, community and socio-political level are key determiners of inclusion and exclusion. Scholars like Fox (2015), Henn, Weinstein, and Forrest (2005), Muntean (2015) and Smuts (2010) have also debunked the popular notion that the youth are apathetic to politics. Instead, as argued in this chapter, the youth are interested in politics and social media plays an important role in influencing youths' participation in politics. Lastly, this chapter has

discussed Habermas' concept of the public sphere, social media as the new public sphere, the different arguments that have been advanced for and against the theory and the philosophical foundation of the study. The next chapter discusses the methodology of this study. It presents the scope of the inquiry and the methods used in collection and analysis of data.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

Research methodology is a systematic way of solving a research problem (Kothari, 2004). Creswell (2014) discusses research methodology as the approaches by which data is procedurally collected and examined so as to be understood. According to Creswell (2014), it is critical for researchers to not only know the research techniques (methods) but also the methodology. It is thus prudent for researchers to precisely specify how and why they select particular research methods for easy evaluation by other researchers. This Chapter discusses research design, rationale for the choice of methodology used, target population and the sampling strategy. In addition, it also explores data collection instruments, process and analysis of the data, validity and reliability of the research instruments and findings as well as the ethical issues that are central to this study.

3.1 Research Design

This study used mixed methods designs. It also used descriptive research design to analyse the political use of social among university in Nairobi County. This aimed to elicit utmost complete responses from the sampled respondents. According Denzin and Lincoln (2011) research designs, also referred to as strategies of inquiry, are types of inquiry within quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approaches that guide researchers on the specific direction to be taken and procedures to be used in a study. Leedy (1993) adds that designs involve planning, organization, collection and analysis of data. Researchers should be able to define the techniques that will be used to gather data, the sampling strategies and tools that will be effective as well as the time and costs the study will require. Some of the common

designs include survey and experiments under quantitative approach while ethnography, grounded theory, case study, narratives and phenomenology are under qualitative approach (Creswell, 2014).

3.1.1 Mixed Methods Design

Creswell (2014) says that mixed methods refers to the integration of qualitative and quantitative research and data in a study. Initially, different terms like quantitative and qualitative methods, multimethod, integrating, mixed methodology and synthesis were used to define this approach. However, recent studies tend to use the term mixed methods instead (see Bryman, 2006; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010). It originated in the late 1980s and early 1990s from individual studies in different fields such as health sciences, education, evaluation and sociology. Through several stages of development and debates, the method has been embraced by different scholars in different disciplines throughout the world (see for example Creswell, 2014; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). According to Creswell (2014), quantitative data tends to be more closed-ended as evident in questionnaires while qualitative is usually open–ended as the responses are not predetermined. Mixed methods were found on the premise that all methods have biases and weaknesses and thus the need to neutralize flaws through the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data. Researchers thus use mixed methods to combine the strengths of the two methods and overcome the limitations of each (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner, 2007). Also, mixed methods are seemingly seen as a means of triangulating data and seeking convergence across the two methods (see for example, Bryman, 2006; Creswell, 2014; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010). This is essential particularly for validating and accuracy purposes (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011).

3.2 Target Population

The target population for this particular study comprised of all university students in Nairobi County who were between the ages of 18 and 35 years and had access to social media. The four main campuses selected included United States International University, Strathmore, Nairobi and Kenyatta universities. The target population or the type of universe according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) refers to a specific group that is relevant to a particular research study. The population should be a distinct group of individuals or objects that have similar characteristics. Further, as the totality of cases under study, the target population must conform to certain specifications with particular elements that would either include or exclude them in the target group under study (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The target population can be finite where the total number of individuals is certain or infinite, where universe number of the individuals is not known (Kothari, 2004). This justifies the decision made above. The population of the selected main campuses is estimated to be eighty seven thousand (87,000) students. Several scholars have argued that young people, particular the youth are active users of new technology particularly the internet and social media. In addition, they posit that youth, especially university students who are perceived to be well educated, use the social networking sites for socialization as well for political discourses (see for example Duggan and Brenner, 2013; Hamat et. al., 2012; Yang and DeHart, 2016). The youth in universities are therefore considered as appropriate respondents for this study. Additionally, the rationale for selecting the University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University (public), United States International University and Strathmore University (private) is that they are the largest and oldest public and private universities in Nairobi Kenya. They attract students from diverse background all over the country. With the population of approximately 87,000 registered students in the four main campuses, a random sample of youth between 18 and 35 years (n=385) was attained by employing a scientific formula as advanced by Habib,

Johargy, Mahmood and Humma (2014) and Naing, Winn and Rusli (2006). The formula is discussed later in this chapter and the numbers were gotten from the offices of the academic registrars of the respective institutions.

3.3 Sampling frame

The sampling frame for this study included four universities within Nairobi County. The study also sampled four key informants and key social media sites/pages that are politically related as stated above with the aim of triangulating the finding from the quantitative data. Also known as sampling frame, source list refers to the source material or device from which sample is drawn. It is a list that contains the names of all those within a universe or population and can be sampled (Kothari, 2004)**.** They may include individuals, schools or institutions. According to Creswell (2014), the sampling frame should represent the population, be reliable, correct, comprehensive and appropriate.

3.3.1 Sampling Unit

The sampling units for this study were students between the ages of 18-35 from four (4) universities within Nairobi County. They mainly included The University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University, Strathmore University and United States International University. The four (4) key informants whose responses were used to triangulate the quantitative data were Mrs. Stella Mwangi, a professional freelance digital copywriter and virtual assistant expert, Dr. Anne Kariuki, a social scientist management consultant and a lecturer at Karatina University, Mr. Javas Bigambo, an expert in political communication, devolution and governance and Mr. Waithaka Ng'anga, a Jubilee party youth mobilizer. With visual analysis, the study used President Kenyatta's and Mr. Odinga's Facebook and Twitter accounts as well as well the major traditional media in Nairobi which had higher number of online subscribers,

mainly Daily Nation, The Standard Digital, The Star Newspaper, Citizen Television, Nation Television and Kenya Television Network. Sampling refers to the process in which respondents are selected as representative of the total population (Kothari, 2004). According to Kothari (2004), as opposed to census survey, a researcher can sufficiently and accurately obtain results by studying a part of total population through a sample survey. On the other hand, a sampling unit refers to geographical unit such as village, construction unit such as flats, social unit such as school or even an individual (Kothari, 2004). It is essential for a researcher to determine the sampling unit before sampling research respondents.

3.3.2 Sample Size

Creswell (2014) postulates that a sample size is the number of individuals or items selected from the universe or target population to form a sample. It is a smaller number of the population from which the researcher uses to make conclusions or generalize results for the whole population. The sample size should neither be too small nor excessively large but optimum for reliability, flexibility, efficiency and representativeness (see Creswell, 2014; Fowler, 2009). According to Creswell (2014), the parameters of interest, size of the population, purpose and the complexity of the study and the budgetary constraints should also be taken into consideration in determining the precise sample size.

3.3.3 Sampling Techniques (Procedures)

There are two major types of sampling procedures or techniques in research – probability and non-probability sampling **(**Denscombe, 2003; Kothari, 2004). In probability sampling, every unit in the population has an equal chance of being selected. The four basic types of sampling procedures under probability sampling include simple random, systematic, stratified and cluster sampling. Non-probability sampling is used where the population is not well defined,

where there is little interest in drawing inferences from population sample or because it is less expensive and can quickly be implemented. The sampling techniques include convenience, quota, self-selection, snowball and purposive sampling (see for example, Creswell, 2014, Denscombe, 2003). This study used both simple random sampling and purposive sampling procedures.

3.3.4 Simple Random Sampling Procedure

As a probability sampling procedure, simple random sampling offers each unit in the sample an equal chance of being selected (Singh and Masuku, 2014). According to Kothari (2004), simple random sampling requires the researcher to first prepare an exhaustive sampling frame detailing all members of the target population before the selection. This procedure, as Kothari (2004) argues, produces estimates which are unbiased and measurable with precision. Sign and Masuku (2014:4) also say that the method provides "unbiased and better estimate of the parameters if the population is homogeneous". Due to time and cost constraints, the samples were drawn from two public and two private universities within Nairobi County. The simple random sample size consisted of 385 respondents. The participants who will completely remain anonymous, consisted of youth in Nairobi, Kenyatta, United States International and Strathmore universities main campuses. The criteria of inclusion were both male and female students between the ages of 18 to 35 years. In Kenya, according to Awiti and Scott (2016), 18 is the minimum legal age of voting while 35 is the upper age limit accepted as the youth. However, it should be noted that the definition of youth differs across nations and cultures (UN-Habitat, 2012). The data collection instrument for the quantitative study was questionnaire which had both close ended and open-ended questions. Socioeconomic status and ethnicity were not considered as issues of measurement in regards to this particular study. When determining a representative sample, it is essential to first determine the population

size, the margin of error, confidence level and standard of deviation (see Fox, Hunn, Mathers, 2009). The population size refers to the total number of people who fit the demographic being researched on and can either be finite or infinite (Kothari, 2004). In this case, the population size for this research as cited in this chapter was the total number of youth in the four accredited universities in Nairobi County and had access to social media. The margin of error which is also referred to as confidence interval determines how higher or lower the sample mean will fall against the population mean (Habib, Johargy, Mahmood and Humma, 2014). For a good precision, the margin of error for this study will be + or -5%. In addition, 90% (Z score=1.645), 95% (Z score=1.96) and 99% (Z score=2.576) are the confidence levels that most researches fall in (see Habib, Johargy, Mahmood and Humma, 2014; Naing, Winn and Rusli, 2006). The confidence level for this study is 95%. According to Habib, Johargy, Mahmood and Humma (2014) and Naing, Winn and Rusli (2006), the standard deviation which is also referred to as variance is either obtained from previous studies or set at .5 for new or pilot studies. The sample size for this study, therefore, is determined through; Sample Size = $(\text{Z-score})^2 * \text{Std Dev}^2 / (\text{margin of error})^2$. With a 95% confidence level, .5 standard deviation and a margin of error of +/- 5%, the sample size for this study was thus 385 respondents. $((1.96)^2 \times .5^2)/ (.05)^2 = (3.8416 \times .25) / .0025 = .9604 / .0025 = 384.16$. A total number of 385 university students selected from the four main universities in Nairobi County were sampled. Each student was issued with a questionnaire to fill in for the research study. With simple random sampling, numbers where picked using random number tables. Students were issued with questionnaires in the intervals of five (the 5^{th}, 10^{th}, 15^{th}, 20^{th}). The researcher and the assistants kept doing this until all the 385 students were identified.

3.3.5 Purposive Sampling Procedure

This study also used four key informants and visually analysed social media pages that are politically related. The sample was chosen based on who the researcher thought would be appropriate for the research study (cf. Kothari, 2004). Key is the application of expert knowledge on who would adequately answer the research questions. In addition, the sample selection representing a cross-section of the population was done in a non-random manner. However, one major disadvantage of this method is subjectivity because other researchers are likely to have different samples when identifying characteristics and elements that are deemed to be important during sampling. Subjectivity during the sampling on the other hand is considered appropriate especially for small samples from a limited geographical area or key informants rich with knowledge of the subject under study. In addition, the sample size for a small scale qualitative research should be between five to eight participants (see for example, Fowler, 2009; Henning, 2004; Kothari, 2004).

3.4 Data Collection Tools and Procedures

This study used questionnaires (see appendix I), interviews (see appendix II) and visual analysis of sampled political related social media sites. Kothari (2004) argues that data collection is the contacting of the sampled members of the population so as to collect the required information related to the research. With convergent parallel mixed method, data is collected in both qualitative and quantitative forms using parallel concepts or constructs (Creswell, 2014). For example, if the mode of social media use is measured quantitatively, the researcher asks the same in an open-ended interview during the qualitative data collection process. There are numerous ways of collecting qualitative and quantitative data which depend mainly on the purpose and aims of the study. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative data is collected through observations, documents, records, textual or visual

analysis, focus groups and interviews while quantitative data is collected through survey or experiments.

With mixed research, researchers can use words, narratives and audio visuals to add meaning to numbers while numbers can also be used to enhanced words, narratives and pictures (Creswell, 204; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The qualitative and quantitative strengths were also combined in ensuring that the researcher is not limited to one research approach. As Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) argue for example, when not confined to one research, researchers can use a wide range of research questions. Furthermore, as opposed to using one method of research, mixed research can lead to greater understanding of the problem under study through convergence and corroboration of data. However, it is not entirely true that mixed method can produce a more complete knowledge. This is because a number of factors may interfere with the research process. First of all, researchers who understand a particular research method can contribute to generating knowledge as opposed to those who do not comprehend mixed methods. Researchers thus need to understand how to mix both approaches appropriately (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Secondly, it depends on the purpose for a particular research. While some studies might require mixed methods, others might only require qualitative or quantitative methods. Lastly, mixed methodology might require a research team, and might be costly and time consuming of which if not well considered, might affect the findings of the study (see, Creswell, 2014; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

3.5 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data analysis refers to categorizing, tabulating and examining of the evidence collected from the samples (see Leedy, 1993). With convergent mixed methods design however, the

challenge is converging the data which are analysed separately (Creswell, 2014). To overcome this, Creswell (2014) proposes three ways. The first way he argues is through a joint display of data where researchers marge the qualitative and quantitative data in a graph or table. For example, the questions might be on the vertical axis and the two forms of data might be on the horizontal axis. The researcher can thus jointly and visually display the two forms of data. Secondly, researchers can use data transformation procedure by changing qualitative themes or codes into quantitative variables then merge the two sets of data. The third approach which this study used is referred to as side-by-side comparison. With this approach, researchers make comparisons by discussing one set of findings first followed by the other. For example, the researcher will first give the quantitative results and later discuss the qualitative results to either confirm or disconfirm the quantitative results (see for example Bryman, 2012; Cresswell, 2014; Kothari, 2004). Data collected through questionnaires will be analysed through open coding, which is a technique that will enable the researcher to categorize and classify the data with the aim of drawing conclusion from the generated patterns (Leedy, 1993). The researcher used descriptive statistics to analyse and present the data in frequencies and or percentages. In addition, the researcher uses IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) which is predictive software for analysis. Creswell (2014) postulates that in the convergent mixed method approach, interpretation is part of the discussion section of the research. The result section reports on the findings of the analysis of the two forms of data while the discussion section reports whether there is a convergence or divergence of information from the two sets of data.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

3.6.1. Validity

Validity, as Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) posit, is the accuracy and significance of the insinuations or inferences that result from the analysis of data in a given research study. According to (Kothari, 2004) validity indicates the extent to which a research instrument measures what it actually intends to measure. As a utility, validity also refers to the extent in which the results are truthful (Joppe, 2000 cited in Golafshani, 2003). Kothari (2004) argues that there are three types of validity. With content validity, researchers determine the extent to which instruments adequately cover the concept being studied while criterion validity focuses on the predicting ability or estimates of the current conditions. Key to criterion validity are qualities such as relevance, freedom from bias, reliability and availability. With construct validity, Kothari (2004) argues that it is the most complex and abstract of the three types of validities. It refers to the correlation of results to the initial concept, hypothesis or questions that defines which and how data is gathered (see Kothari, 2004). According to Creswell (2014), it is important to establish both qualitative and quantitative validity which can be through triangulation and construct respectively. Convergent parallel mixed methods also have potential validity threats. They include imbalanced sample sizes for both sets of data, use of different variables or concepts that may make it hard to merge or compare the findings and lack of follow up when there is lack of convergence on the findings (Creswell, 2014). This study used content validity to measure the degree to which the research questions mirrors the themes covered. Furthermore, students were requested to complete the questionnaires before the beginning and immediately after their lectures. This was to ensure that the measuring instruments were filled by the right respondents.

3.6.2: Reliability

Reliability refers to the ability of research instruments to constantly measure specific characteristics of interest over time with almost the same results (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The research instruments used are therefore supposed to consistently yield same results after repeated trials. In short, if the results are consistent over time and the respondents are accurate representation of the total study population using similar methods and instruments, both instruments and results will be considered reliable (Joppe, 2000 cited in Golafshani, 2003). According to Kothari (2004), instruments which are reliable contribute to validity, but a reliable instrument may not necessarily be valid. Some of the general classes of reliability estimates include, inter-rater, test-retest, parallel forms and internal consistency reliability (see Creswell, 2014; Joppe, 2000, cited in Golafshani, 2003; Kothari, 2004). This study used test and retest techniques as well as internal consistency to determine the reliability of both the instruments and the results. Prior to collecting data, a sample of 20 questioners were pretested at the university on Nairobi for reliability purposes. The researcher used Statistical Package for Social Sciences to analyse and interpret the data collected from the survey. As evident in chapter four, descriptive statistics through the use of charts, tables and figures were used.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethics, which is a branch of philosophy, is a system of principles that concerns right and wrong when making decisions (Fouka and Mantzorou, 2011). Some of the common ethical issues in research include informed consent, respect for privacy, harm from the research and respect for anonymity and confidentiality (see Creswell, 2014; Fouka and Mantzorou, 2011). The researcher obtained the Certificate of Field Work (see appendix III) from the university in order to carry out the research. The researcher also had to ensure that no one suffered or

was harmed from the research. In addition, to increase the respondents' truthfulness, the researcher assured them their anonymity of their identity (cf. Creswell, 2014; Leedy and Ormrod, 2010). This study, therefore did not use or mention the names of the respondents apart from the Key informants and all the information received was confidential and for academic purposes only. Furthermore, the study required consent, thus the researcher and the research assistants notified the class representatives and the participants before issuing them with the questionnaires. The introduction to the study took approximately two minutes and it took not more than 10 minutes to complete the survey. There was also a debriefing which also lasted not more than two minutes. It was free to take part in the survey and no compensation was given to the participants for taking part in the study. The researcher further obtained a Certificate of Corrections (see appendix IV) after making corrections in consultation with the assigned supervisor and finally, he generated an originality report (see appendix V) to declare ownership of the study. All these were aimed at adhering to professionalism and university's code of quality.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the methodology and methods used in the research study. It has also detailed designs and techniques applied to this study. From the discussions above, the research methodology can be seen to be having many dimensions. The researcher has shown that the scope of research methodology is wider and encompasses many elements including the reasons behind the methods used in this particular research.

In addition, this chapter has explored the three common research approaches that are essential to social studies. The researcher argued in support of mixed methods research approaches for this particular study. The chapter has also argued that specific research designs for specific

research approaches are used to guide researchers on the specific direction to be taken and procedures to be used in a particular study. Key to research designs is the purpose of the study, planning, organization, collection and analysis of data.

The chapter also discussed the target population, sampling unit, sample frame, sample size and the sampling techniques or procedures. In addition, it used both probability and non-probability sampling procedures. Finally, it looked at data collection tools and procedures, data analysis and interpretation, validity, reliability, ethical considerations and limitations which were core to this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Overview

This chapter presents data findings and analysis. Broadly, the findings show that the youth in Nairobi universities use social media very often not only for communication and chatting but also as a political tool and platform for political communication. It is also evident from the data that the youth can easily access political information and engage in online political activities. Furthermore, the findings show that social media enhances political participation because it offers opportunities for expressing opinions, for engaging directly with their political actors including leaders and opinion shapers. In essence, it helps advance political inclusion.

Nevertheless, the findings show that some information on social media is not credible. In addition, it is noted that many youth as well as political leaders and the Kenyan government

do not use social media effectively to deal with political issues thus inhibiting the full realisation of social media as a public sphere.

This chapter first presents the response rate, the respondent's gender and age bracket, and the use as well as the frequency of social media use among the respondents. It also gives the respondent's preferred social media platforms and their supporting reasons, the reasons for social media usage followed by sources and the reasons for the respondent's sources of political information. In addition, it presents the access to and search for political information on social media, political discussions with family and friends, and on social media, the frequency of the discussions as well as the expression status on social media. The change of a political stand or opinion and the agreement status with political opinions as a result of accessing political information on social media are also presented. It sequentially offers the credibility of political information on social media, respondents following status of a politician and political parties on online platforms as well as the online and offline political activities the respondents are involved in. Respondent opinions on whether social media can be useful in improving political knowledge, promote accountability and enhance political inclusion in Kenya are also documented. It is followed by the respondent's opinion and the reasons on whether the political discussions among the youth on social media are issue based or not and whether the youth use social media effectively. Successively, the respondents were asked of their opinions and reasons on whether the Kenyan government is using social media effectively to engage the youth and the factors that influence political debates on social media in Kenya. Secondly, it presents the responses from four key informants with the aim of triangulating the findings of the quantitative data offered in this study. It lastly presents the findings of the visual analysis of social media pages that are politically related.

4.2 Response rate

In this study, 385 questionnaires were administered. All of them were returned. This is a 100% response rate. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a response rate of 50% is acceptable for analysis, 60% is good, 70% is very good and beyond 80% is excellent.

4.3 Descriptive statistics

4.3.1: Respondents' gender

Figure 4.1 overleaf shows the gender of respondents. A majority of the respondents, 58%, were male while the rest (42%) were female. The study aimed to have an equal number of male and female students. It was however not realized because of the high number of male students sampled. This can be attributed to the simple random sampling procedure used as opposed to the rate of enrolment of either gender in the specific universities. However, despite the rise in female students enrolment, male students still out number their counterparts in Kenyan universities (cf. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

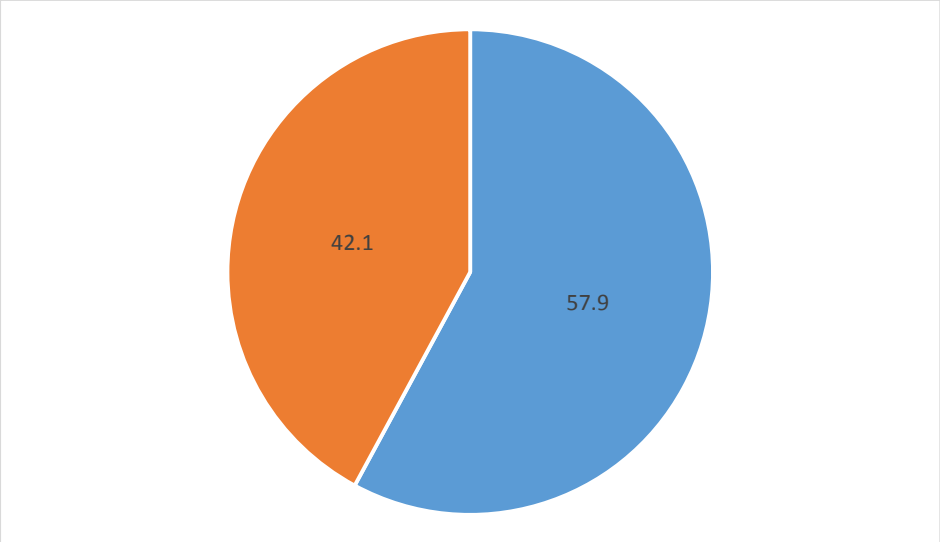

Figure 4.1: Respondents' gender

4.3.2: Respondents' age bracket

Figure 4.2 shows the age categories of the respondents. Most of the respondents, 84.9%, were aged between 18 and 23 years, 13.3% between 24 and 29 years while a few, 1.8%, were between 30 and 35 years. The fact that this study targeted students between the ages of 18 and 35 years in universities explains why the majority of the youth were within the ages of 18 and 23 (cf Kamau, 2013). The findings also show that the target audience for this particular study was reached.

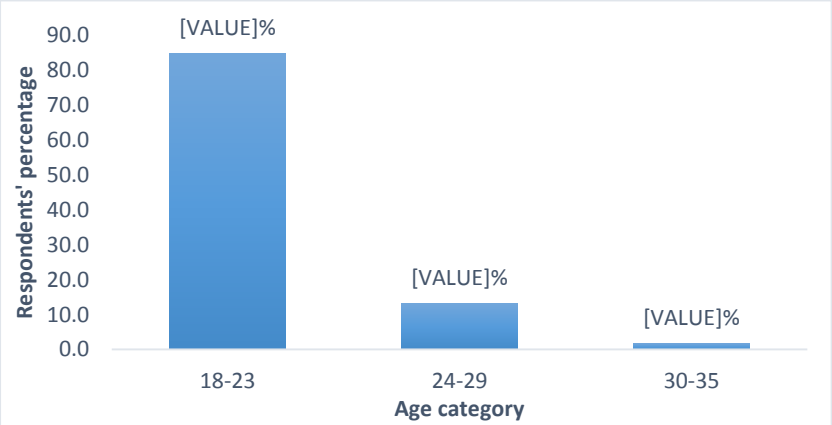

Figure 4.2: Respondents' age bracket

4.3.3: The use social media

Figure 4.3 presents a summary of the use of social media. Most respondents, 98%, used social media while only 2% did not. It illustrates that most youth in universities not only have access to social media, but also use the platforms for interaction, personal needs and social identity (cf. Junco et al., 2012). It further confirms Stollak et al. (2011) argument that more university students can easily access social media platforms due advancements in mobile technology.

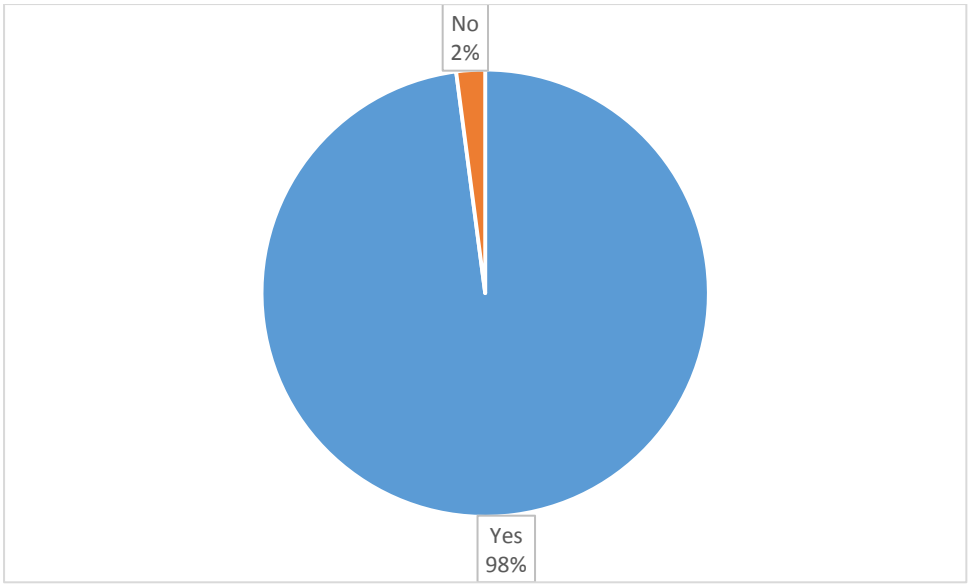

Figure 4.3: Use of Social media

4.3.4: The frequency of social media use among respondents

Regarding the frequency of social media use among the respondents as indicated in Figure 4.4, most of the respondents, 89%, used social media very often while the other 11% rarely used it. The high frequency of social media usage collaborates Jaslina et al. (2013) who argued that most university students not only use social media daily but also browse immediately they wake up from sleep.

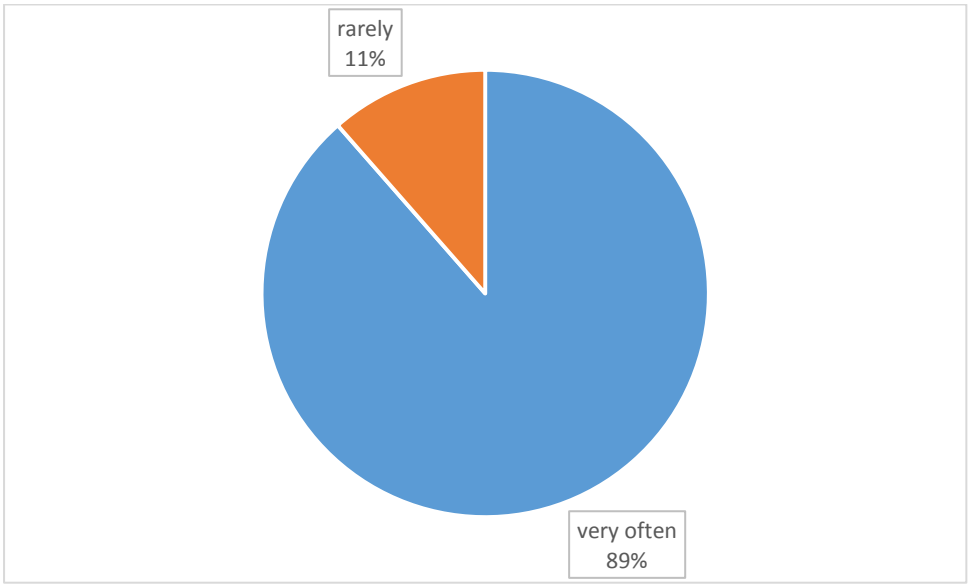

Figure 4.4: The frequency of social media use

4.3.5: The respondents' preferred social media platform

This section shows the respondents' preferred social media platform. The results are presented in Figure 4.5 below. It can be seen that 43.8% of the respondents considered WhatsApp as their preferred social media platform, 36.5% Facebook and 7.3% Twitter. The other respondents (6.5%) preferred YouTube, 3.1% Snapchat, 2.6% Instagram while a small number (0.3%) indicated that Telegram was their choice platform. The findings contradicts Williams et al. (2012) who found that Facebook was the most popular social media platform among university students in America. The reasons in support of the same are noted in the next section.

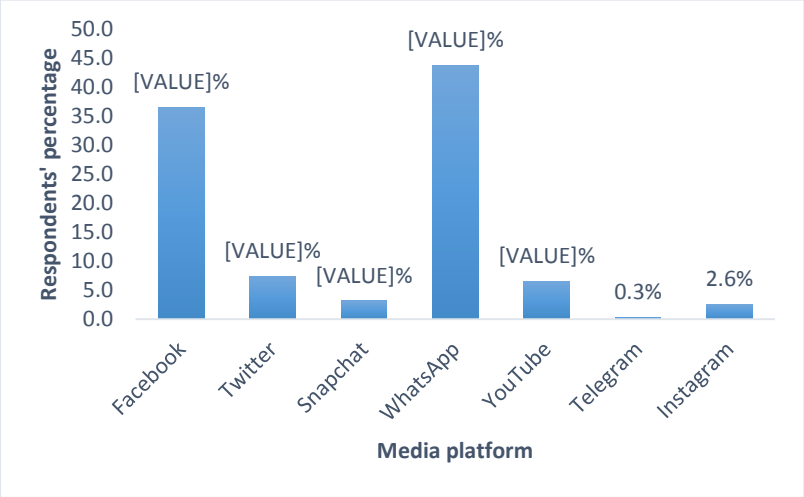

Figure 4.5: Respondents' preferred social media platform

4.3.5.1: Reason for the respondents' preferred social media platform

The findings in Table 4.1 below indicate the reasons why the respondents prefer social media platforms. Most respondents, 42.4%, said they liked social media platforms because it made communication easier, 10.8% because of entertainment while 10.8% said it was easy and convenient to use. Others (11.6%) indicated that it is a better source of information, 8.8% because it is cheap and affordable, 7.6% because it offers a better platform to network with friends. Only a few (or 1.6%) used it because it is widely used and most common although this is contrasted by those (4%) who indicate that it is readily available/accessible. Another

small group of respondents (1.6%) use it because it offers a better platform for detailed analysis. Only 0.8% use it because it offers better privacy. This section provides some evidence corroborating the findings of Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) and Hanson et al. (2011) who argued that the current generation of students in America are dependent on social media as their preferred means of communication. It proves why WhatsApp as a communication tool is more preferred when compared to other social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Table 4.1: Reasons for the respondents' preferred social media platform

Reason	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Better means of communication	106	42.4
Better source of information	29	11.6
Better entertainment platform	27	10.8
Easy and convenient to use	27	10.8
Cheap/affordable	22	8.8
Readily available/accessible	10	4.0
A platform for networking with friends	19	7.6
Most common and widely used	4	1.6
Offers a platform for detailed analysis	4	1.6
Privacy	2	0.8
Total	**250**	**100.0**

4.3.6: Reason for social media use

Table 4.2 below shows the reasons why the respondents' use social media. Most respondents, 56.8%, used social media for entertainment, 53.6% for chatting, 49.2% to seek general information and 20.8% for political information. 17.7% indicated to pass time, 13.5% to make friends while 5.3% for tracking/following other users. This findings echoes the arguments of Junco et al, (2012), Mazman and Yasemin (2011), Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) and Hanson et al. (2011) that most undergraduates (in US) use social media not just to gain identity but for interaction, communications and entertainment.

Table 4.2: Reasons for the use of social media by respondents

Reason	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Entertainment	218	56.8
Chatting	206	53.6
Seek information	189	49.2
Political information	80	20.8
Pass time	68	17.7
Make friends	52	13.5
Tracking/following	8	5.3

4.3.7: Source of political information

The study sought to establish respondents' source of political information. As seen in Table 4.3, many of the respondents, 57.7% said television was their source of political information, 53.1% social media, 20.1% newspapers, 12.5% radio, 1.2% class/groups while a small group, 0.8%, said posters was their source of such information. From the findings, it is evident that television still plays a critical role in political communication especially among the youth. This might be as a result of credibility as argued in the next section. However, social media has emerged as a key source of political information among university students when compared to radio and newspapers. This confirms that social media exposes the youth to political information (cf. Molyneux and Zheng, 2014; Storsul, 2011). Furthermore, the findings corresponds Abdu, Mohamad and Muda (2016) who argue that in UK, youth get political information that is user friendly, interactive, brief and easier to understand more from Facebook as opposed to the traditional media like newspapers and radio.

Table 4.3: Source of political information

Source	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Television	222	57.7
Social Media	204	53.1
Newspaper	77	20.1
Radio	48	12.5
Class/Groups	4	1.2
Posters	3	0.8

4.3.7.1: Reasons for the sources of political information

To achieve the results shown in Table 4.4, respondents were asked to give reasons for their sources of political information. Most of the respondents, 57.6%, preferred newspapers because of accessibility, 27.2% credibility while a small group (15.2%) said better source of information. A majority of the respondents (69.7%) preferred radio because of accessibility, 18.1% credibility, 6.1% better source of information while only 6.1% said it is cheap. Among those who preferred television, 59% said it was easily accessible, 35% credible, 2.4% better source of information and 2.4% said it is appealing. Only a few (1.2%) chose television because it was cheap. Most of the respondents, 79.5%, preferred social media because of accessibility, 7.4% credibility and 5.7% said better source of information. The other (4.1%) preferred social media because it was fast while a few (3.3%) said it was cheap. These findings show that accessibility as result of developments in mobile technology and cost effectiveness plays a key role in enabling the youth to access political information through social media (cf. Abdu, Mohamad and Muda, 2016; Birgisdóttir, 2014; Stollak, Vandenberg, Burkland, and Weiss, 2011). However, credibility of social media as a source of political information is low compared to television. This demonstrates why majority of the students prefer television as their source of political news. The findings also confirms Johnson and Kaye (2014) suggestions who posit that with the ease and convenience of posting and accessing unfiltered political news, social media platforms are the least credible among other sources of political news.

Table 4.4: Reasons for the source of political information

Reason	Newspaper (%)	Radio (%)	Television (%)	Social media (%)

Accessible	19 (57.6)	23 (69.7)	49 (59.0)	97 (79.5)
Credible	9 (27.2)	6 (18.1)	29 (35)	9 (7.4)
Better source of information	5 (15.2)	2 (6.1)	2 (2.4)	7 (5.7)
Cheap	-	2 (6.1)	1 (1.2)	4 (3.3)
Appealing	-	-	2 (2.4)	-
Faster	-	-	-	5 (4.1)
Total	**33 (100)**	**33 (100)**	**83 (100)**	**122 (100)**

4.3.8: Access to political information on social media

As can be seen from in Figure 4.6, a highly significant 88% of the respondents accessed political information on social media while a small number (12%) had not accessed any political information on social media. It is thus evident that majority of university students in Nairobi access political information through social media. The findings agrees with scholars like Gil De Zuniga, Molyneux and Zheng (2014) who argue that social media exposes youth to political information. Furthermore, as an alternative to traditional media, it is cheaper and easier for the youth in Nairobi universities to use social media to bypass gatekeepers and encounter political news (cf. Bae, 2014; Birgisdóttir, 2014; Hellweng, 2011; Johnson and Kaye, 2014).

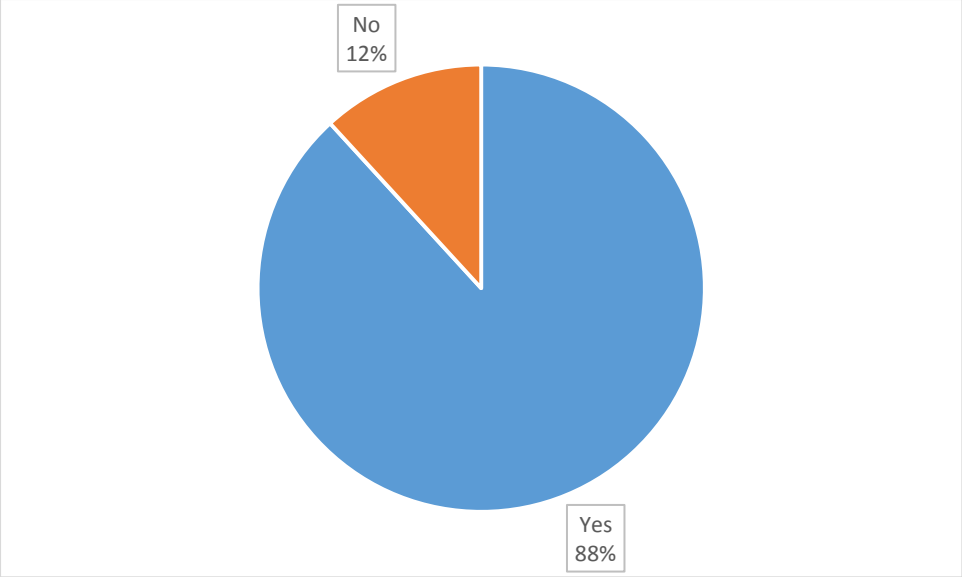

Figure 4.6: Access to political information on social media

4.3.9: Search for political information on social media

The respondents were asked if they have ever looked for political information on social media. As Figure 4.7 below shows, a majority of the respondents, 76% had searched for political information on social media and the rest (24%) had not. This confirms that majority of the youth in universities in Nairobi actively look for political information on social media. It corresponds to Biswas, Ingle and Mousumi (2014) who posit that unlike political discussions, searching for political information on social media is very popular.

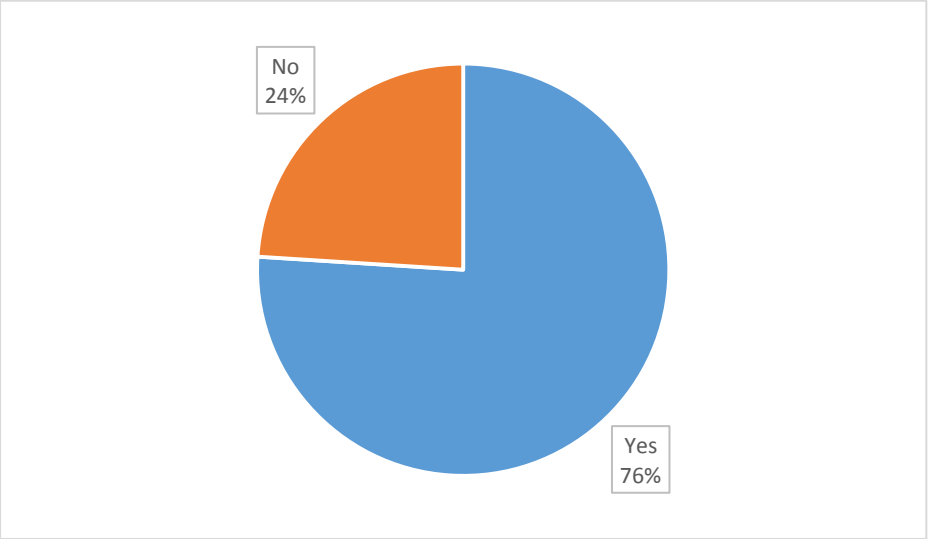

Figure 4.7: Search for political information on social media

4.3.10: Political discussion with family and friends

A majority of the respondents (90%) answered that they discuss politics with family members and friends. Only 10% reported not discussing politics with their acquaintances. The results are displayed in Figure 4.8 below. This indicates that majority of the youth in universities in Nairobi engage in political activities. Though informal, they participate in political discussions with family and friends with the aim of influencing decision-making processes which shape and determine their lives (cf. Fox, 2014; Lamprianou, 2013; Luhrmann, 2013).

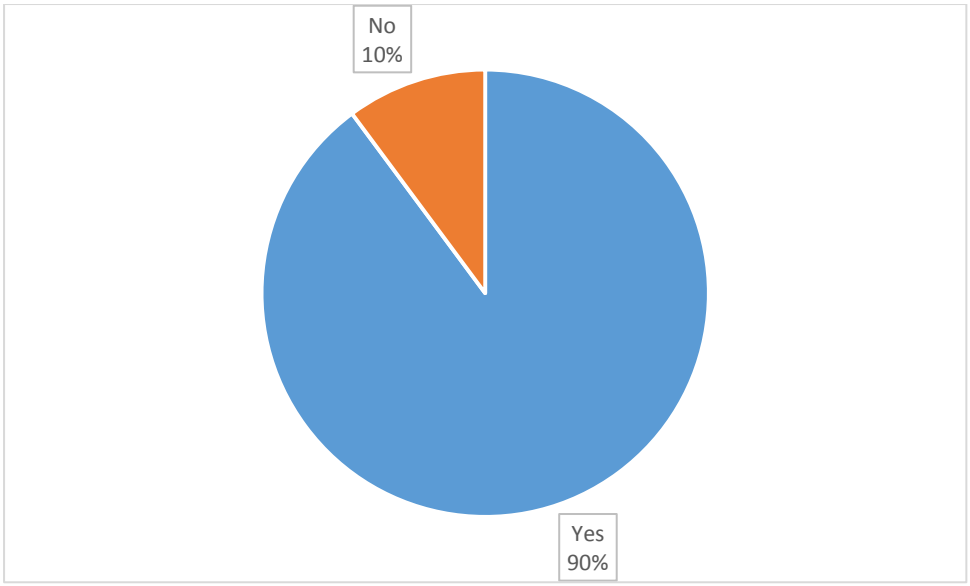

Figure 4.8: Political discussion with family and friends

4.3.11: Political discussion on social media

The next question sought to establish if respondents engage in political discussions on social media. The results of this inquiry as indicated in Figure 4.9 below shows that most respondents, 60%, did not discuss politics on social media while 40% discussed. These findings indicate that political discussions on social media among the youth in Nairobi universities is low. It corresponds Biswas, Ingle and Mousumi (2014) who posit that searching for political information on social media is more popular than participating in the discussions. This might also be as a result of self-identity as documented later in this chapter.

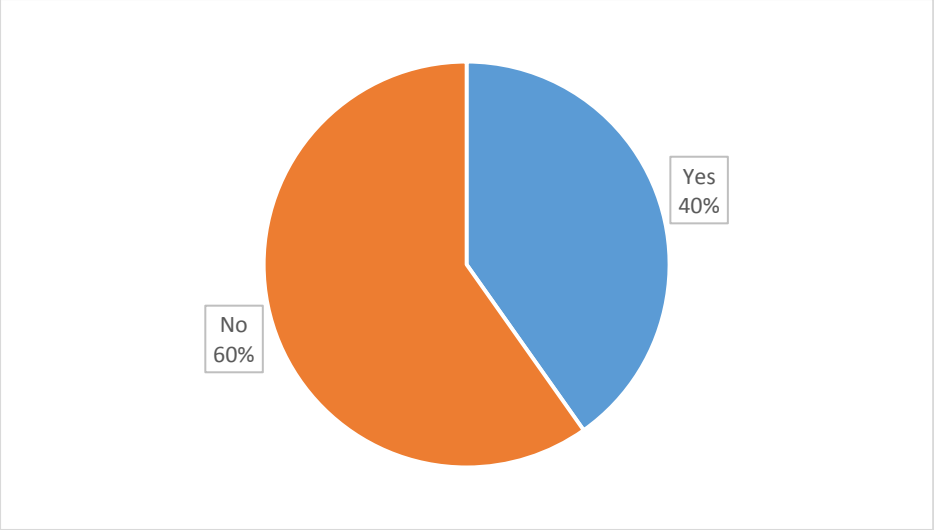

Figure 4.9: Political discussion on social media

4.3.12: Frequency of political discussion on social media

The information found in Figure 4.10 indicate that most respondents, 31.2% discussed politics on social media somewhat often, 28.6% very often, 13.6% somewhat not often while 26.6% did not often discuss politics on the platforms. The findings indicate that political interest of the majority of the university students in Nairobi is somehow high due to their regular engagement in online political discussions. The interest is key in determining their political participation as they are motivated to devote energy and time to actively participate in the discussions (cf. Carlisle and Patton, 2013; Hur and Kwon, 2014; Kruikemeier et al., 2013)

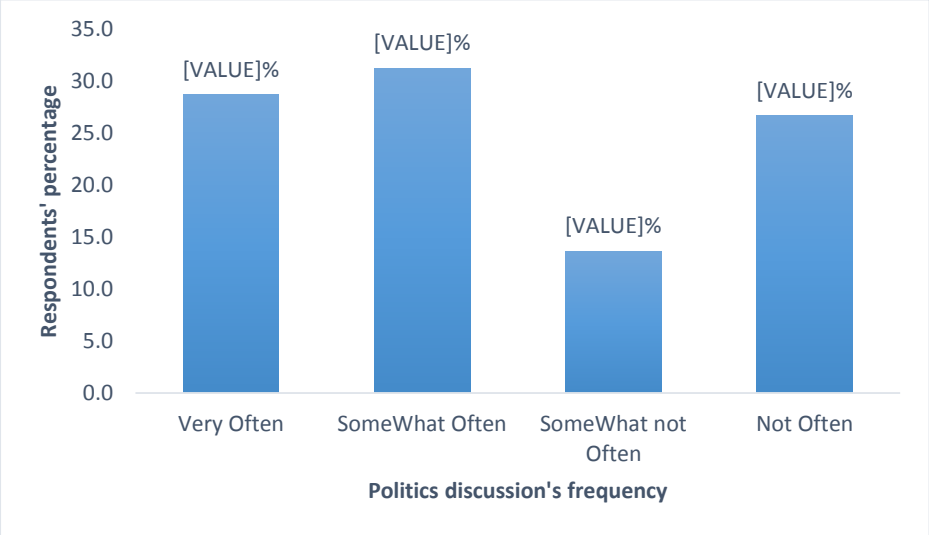

Figure 4.10: Frequency of political discussion on social media

4.3.13: Expression status when contributing to political discussions on social media

The study also sought to show how freely respondents express themselves when contributing to political discussions on social media. The findings show that a majority of the respondents, 36.5% very freely expressed themselves, 26.5% do it freely, 12.0% neither freely nor not freely, 16.5% somewhat not freely, while 8.5% said they do not freely express themselves when contributing to political discussions on social media. With majority of the university students who discuss online indicating that they freely contribute to political discussions, it can be argued that social media enables the students to freely share their thoughts on issues that affect them and are politically related (see for example Biswas, Ingle and Mousumi, 2014). However, for the students who do not freely express themselves, it might be as a result self-representation so as to safe guard their identity or do not want to be held responsible for what they post on social network platforms (cf. Korea, June, Hong and Sung-Min, 2011; Storsul, 2011).

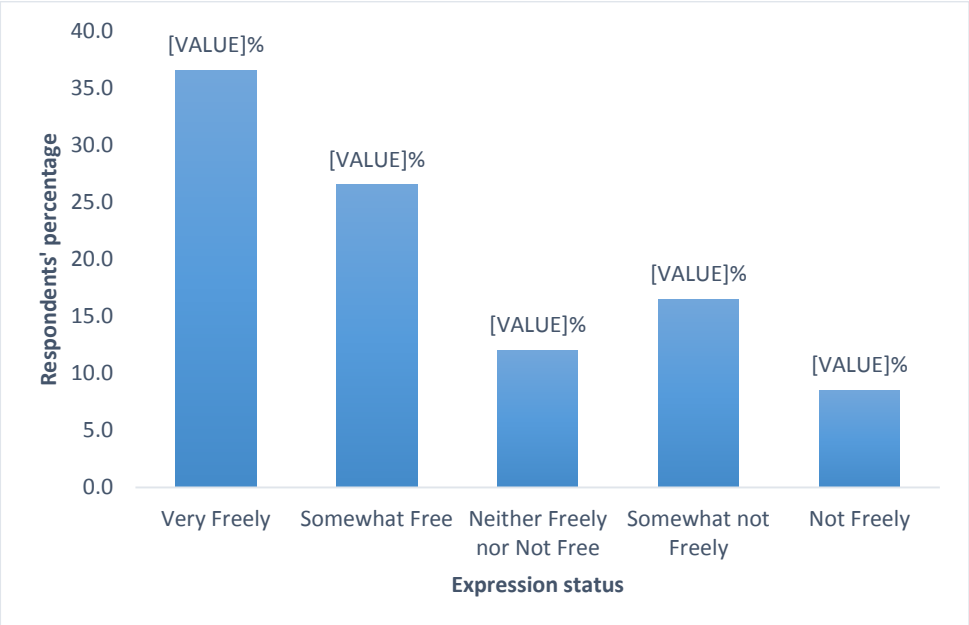

Figure 4.11: Expression status when contributing to political discussions on social media

4.3.14: Change of a political stand/opinion after reading/watching something on social media

In Figure 4.12 below, the critical information on the respondents' stand or opinion after reading or watching something on social media is shown. The results of this inquiry indicate that a majority, 64%, changed their political stand/opinion while 36% did not. This is proof that social media plays a critical role in influencing the youth in universities in Nairobi County. It increases their levels of political information which can enable them to re-evaluate different political stands and influence their opinions as well (cf. Bernhagen and Schmitt, 2014; Biswas, Ingle, and Mousumi 2014)

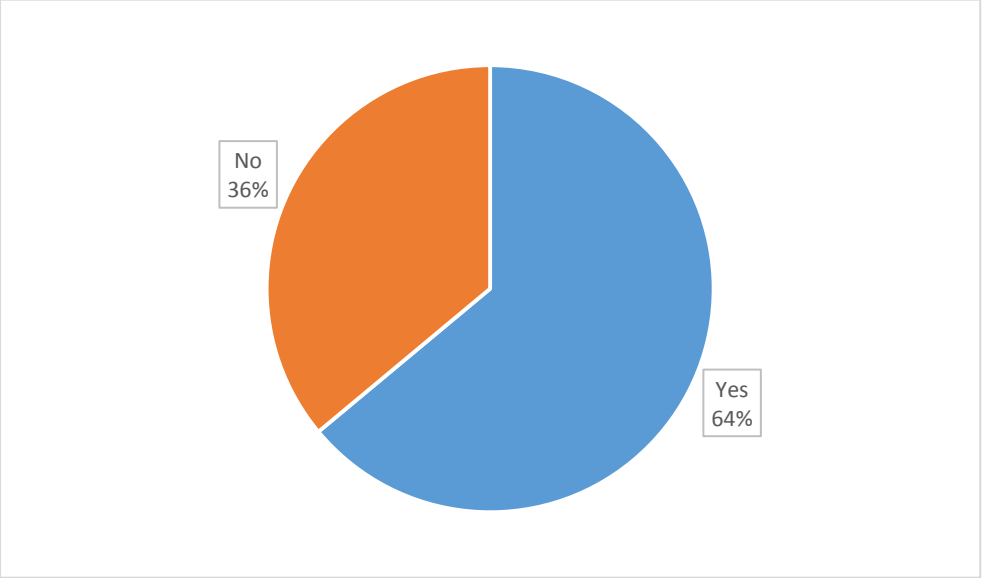

Figure 4.12: Change of a political stand/opinion after reading/watching something on social media

4.3.15: Agreement status with political opinions or content posted on social media by the respondents' friends

To achieve the results in Figure 4.13, respondents were asked how often they agreed with the political opinions or content their friends posted on social media. A significant 70.1%, sometimes agreed, 2.6% always agreed, 5.5% almost always agreed, 16.1% agreed most of the time while 5.7% never agreed. The findings therefore provide some evidence that social

media connects people directly and empowers them to take collective action in a democratic society and effect change. Furthermore, the platforms can be seen to be enhancing networking and peer driven views through the political expressions thus influencing the opinion of others users (cf. Biswas, Ingle, and Mousumi, 2014; Birgisdóttir, 2014; Boyd, 2011; Ellison et al., 2011).

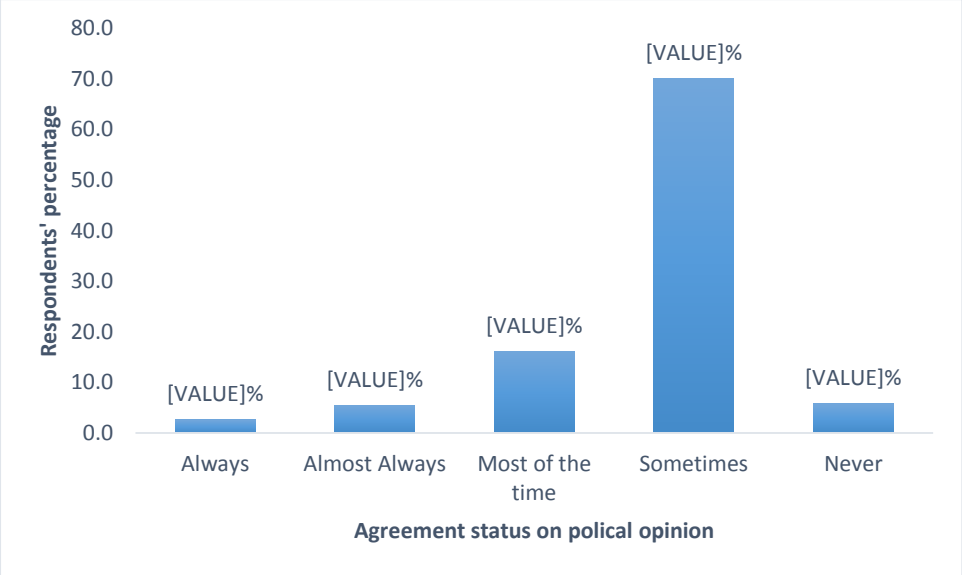

Figure 4.13: Agreement status with political opinions or content posted on social media by the respondents' friends

4.3.16: Credibility of political information on social media

In Figure 4.14 we can see that most of the respondents, 54% indicated that the political information on social media was not credible. This was closely followed by 46% of the respondents who thought otherwise. As argued earlier in this chapter, it is evident that the credibility of political news on social media is low when compared to traditional media like television, radio and newspapers. It corresponds Johnson and Kaye (2014) suggestions that the ease of posting and accessing political news that is unfiltered hampers users from accessing credible political information on social media. However, with nearly a half of the respondents saying the political information on social media is credible, it is proof that social media plays a key role in political communication. This might be as a result of social media

users engaging political actors directly and some of the information on the platforms corresponding traditional media source as well (cf. Loader and Mercea, 2011; Nyabuga, 2007; Wohn et al.,2011)

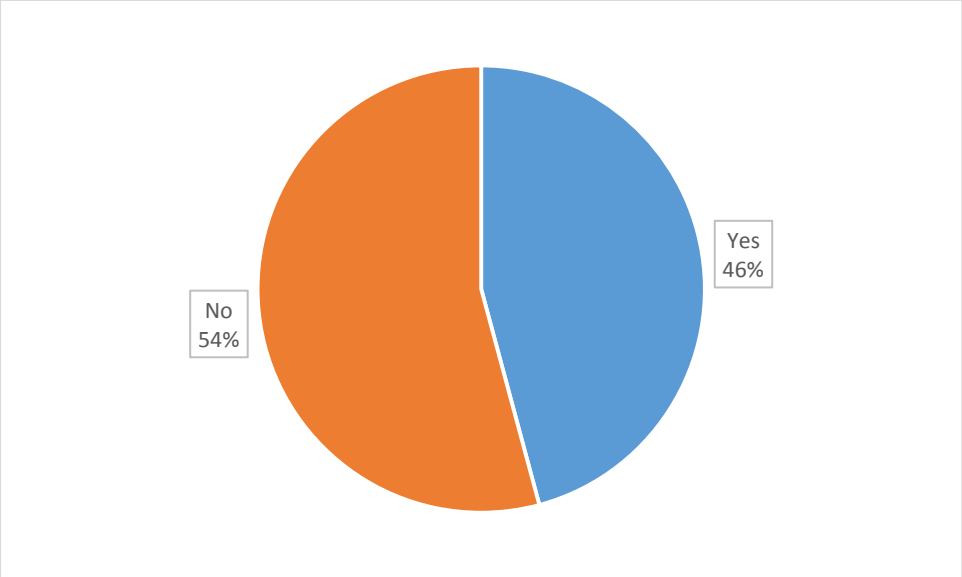

Figure 4.14: Credibility of political information on social media

4.3.17: Respondents' following status of a politician on social media

The next question sought to establish if the respondents follow any politician on social media. The results of which are shown in Figure 4.15 indicate that a majority, 53% followed a politician on social media while 47% did not. Social media can therefore be seen to be connecting most of the youth in Nairobi universities with the government and other political actors. This not only broadens political participation but has also made Kenyan political system more accessible to them. Furthermore, it provides an opportunity for real-time feedback on political and government activities and avenue for the political actors to promote themselves during elections and sell their ideologies and agendas to the students (cf. Abdulrauf, Hamid and Ishak, 2015; Chardwick, 2008; Howard, 2006; Norris 200; June, Hong and Sung-Min, 2011; Vitak et al., 2011).

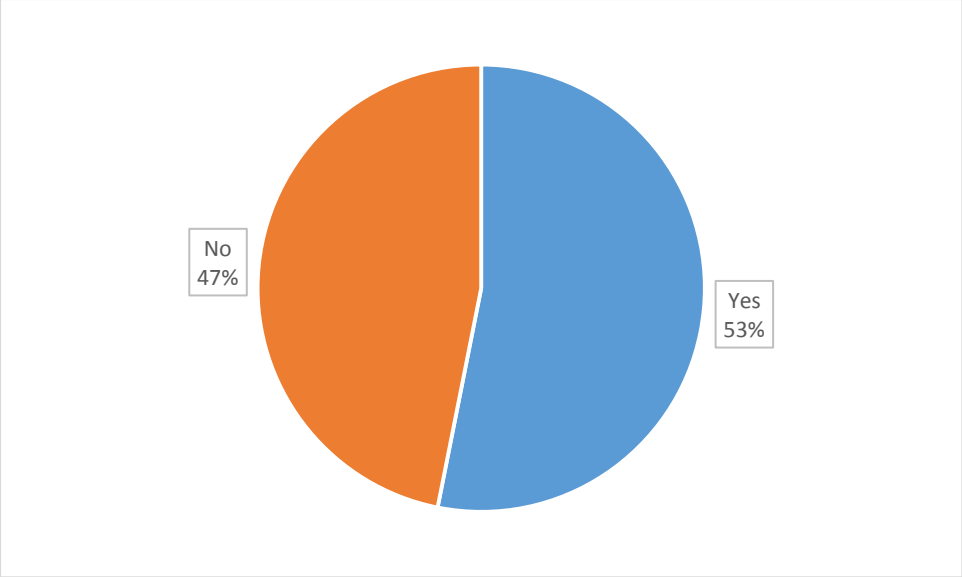

Figure 4.15: Respondents' following status of a politician on social media

4.3.18: Respondents' following status of a political party on social media

When asked if they followed any political party on social media, most of the respondents, 61% said they did not while the remaining 39% did. Figure 4.16 indicates the results which generally show that university students in Nairobi identify less with political parties. It can thus be argued that political party membership among Kenyan youth particularly in Nairobi universities has sunk and the students engagement are on issues outside the conformist political realm. Furthermore, this might be as a result of disconnection from the formal political processes, as most students may not be able to participate in institutions process of policy formulation or the political parties are also not relatable to their aspirations (cf. Dale, 2015; Fox, 2015; Stevenson, 2014; Strosul 2011)

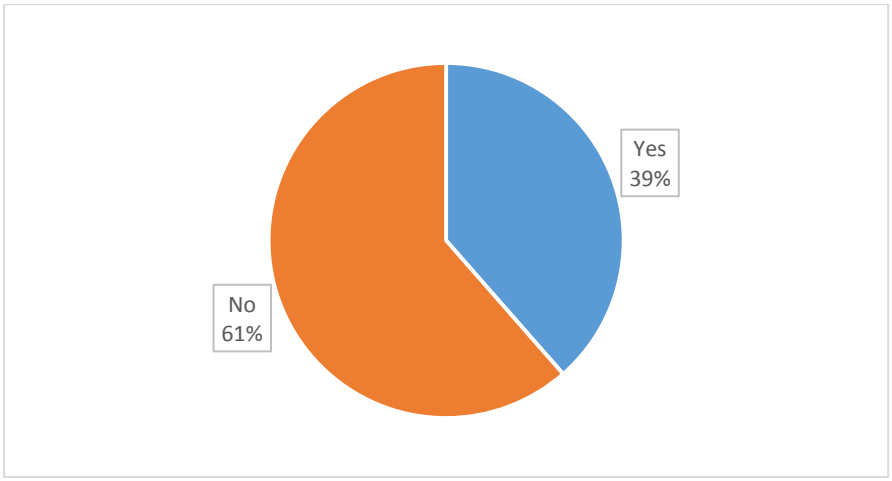

Figure 4.16: Respondents' following status of a political party on social media

4.3.19: Communication of citizens with politicians on social media

As shown in Figure 4.17, the largest fraction (76%) of the respondents thought that social media helps citizens communicate with political leaders while only 24% thought otherwise. Social media can hence be seen as an effective communication tool due to its ability to connect the citizens with their political leaders and institutions. With its interactive features, citizens not only express their political views but also raise issues directly to these political actors who are part of their network thus broadening political participation (cf. Chardwick, 2008; Howard, 2006; Norris 2001; Storsul 2011).

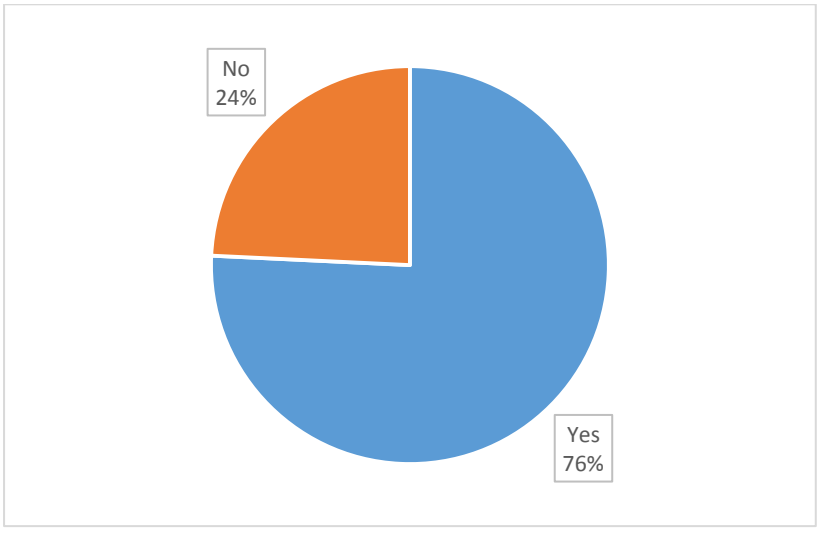

Figure 4.17: Communication of citizens with politicians on social media

4.3.20: Respondents' involvement in the political process on social media

Table 4.5 below shows the respondents' involvement in the political process on social media. In a declining order, most respondents, 59.9% commented/shared/liked a political tweet/Post/photos/videos/link, 18.5% persuaded others to vote, 17.2% posted/tweeted a political comment, 9.6% started or joined a political group, 4.9% involved in online protest and only 3.6% contacted public officials. These results corresponds the findings of scholars like Cunningham (2015), Curtice and Ormston (2015), Luhrmann (2013) who found that informal participation through political activities like online political activism and petitioning are key in promoting democracy. It is however important to note that majority of the youth mainly prefer to comment, share or like a political tweets, post, videos, photos or links which are new forms political participation that social media platforms offer due their interactivity (cf. Valenzuela, 2013; Vitak et al., 2011). Additionally, as suggested by Mercea (2011), some university students in Nairobi can now be seen as active consumers of political news or information due to their ability to challenge political discourses, share alternative voices and also publish their personal views through social media.

Table 4.5: Respondents' involvement in the political process on social media

Political process	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Commenting, sharing or liking a political post /tweet/photos/videos/link	230	59.9
Persuading others to vote	71	18.5
Posting/Tweeting a political comment	66	17.2
Starting or joining a political group	37	9.6
Online protest	19	4.9
Contacting public officials	14	3.6

4.3.21: Respondents' involvement in offline political activities

The findings in Table 4.6 indicate the respondents' involvement in offline political activities. A majority of the respondents, 53.1% either voted or intended to vote, 44.5% discussed political issues with friends and family members and 33.1% encouraged others to vote. Only 10.4% attended political meetings in contrast to those (2.3%) who protested and demonstrated. A small group (2.1%) donated to a political course or party. With the majority of students in Nairobi universities either voting or intending to vote and discussing political issues with family and friends, social media can be seen as an empowering tool. They not only enable users to access political information but also increases their political participation. The youth are thus able to use the information from social media to link with critical issues that affect them and act on them for example through voting or encouraging others to vote (cf. Anderson, 2011; Charles 2010). The findings also matches with June, Hong and Sung-Min (2011) suggestions that young people are able to vote as a result of peer pressure especially when their peers and role models in same online platforms are doing the same as a result of using the platforms.

Table 4.6: Respondent's involvement in offline political activities

Political process	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Voting or intend to vote	204	53.1
Discuss political issues with friends and family members	171	44.5
Encourage others to vote	127	33.1
Attend political meetings	40	10.4
Protests and demonstration	9	2.3
Donate to a political course / party	8	2.1

4.3.22: Enhancement of political participation among the youth through social media

As can be seen in Figure 4.18, a highly significant 90% of the respondents thought that social media enhances political participation among the youth while only a small number (10%)

thought otherwise. With the majority of the youth in universities in Nairobi County believing that social media enhances political participation among them, it can be argued that this is true based on the political activities they engage in as highlighted earlier in this chapter. The findings are also parallel to the assertions of scholars like Effing, Hillegersberg and Huibers (2011) and Kwak et al. (2010) who advanced that participation is a key element of Web 2.0 and social media thus linked to greater political participation.

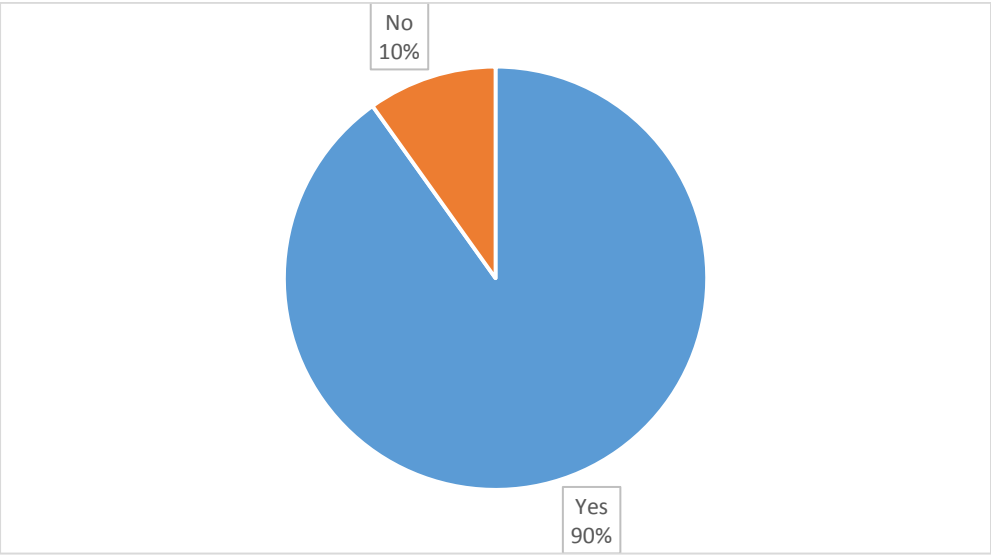

Figure 4.18: Enhancement of political participation among the youth through social media

4.3.23: Opinion on whether social media can be useful in improving political knowledge

The respondents were asked if they thought social media can be useful in improving political knowledge. Figure 4.19 shows the findings. A majority of the respondents, 90% thought that social media can be useful while 10% thought it was not. Through social media, some users are able to access political information of which they can store in their long-term memory and retrieve when engaging in political activities and making political decisions. As a result, it can be argued that the information got helps in building political knowledge when they relate political ideologies and values to policies and issues that affect them. As a result they make critical decisions like voting (cf. Bernhagen and Schmitt, 2014; Carpini and Keeter, 1996; Muntean, 2015).

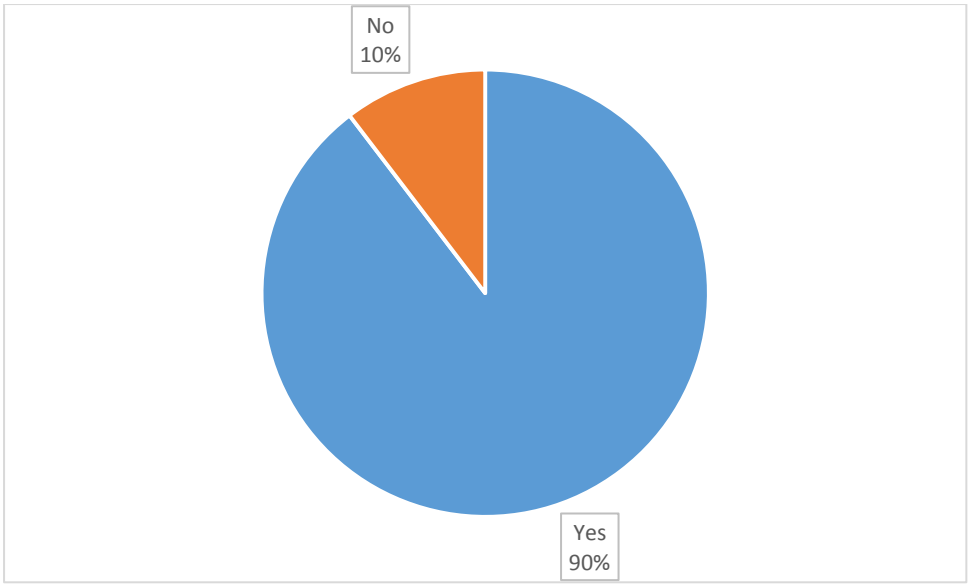

Figure 4.19: Opinion on whether social media can be useful in improving political knowledge

4.3.24: Opinion on whether social media promotes accountability in Kenya

Figure 4.20 shows that most of the respondents, 63% thought that social media promotes accountability in Kenya. However, a small group (37%) thought otherwise. Accordingly, it can be argued that scholars like Catinat and Vedel (2000) and Coleman and Gotze (2001) were right when they alluded that online political activities broadens democracy and citizen participation in public affairs and accountability of governments.

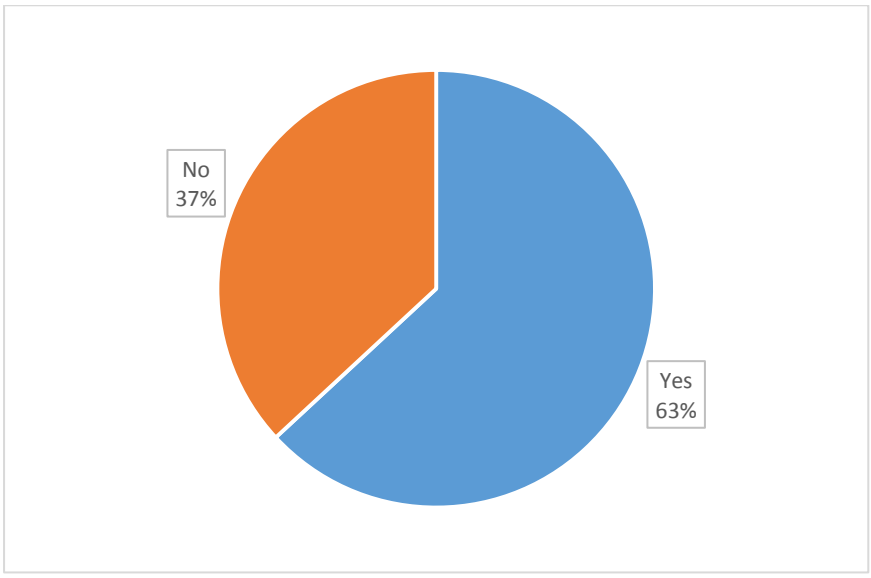

Figure 4.20: Opinion on whether social media promotes accountability in Kenya

4.3.25: Opinion on whether social media has enhanced political inclusion in Kenya

Overwhelmingly (77 %) of respondents as indicated in figure 4.21 revealed that social media has enhanced political inclusion in Kenya. This is contrasted by those (23%) who indicated it does not. These findings generally corresponds the suggestions of several scholars who argue that social media has led to e-inclusion particularly among marginalized and disadvantaged groups like the youth (cf. Catinat and Vedel 2000; Coleman and Gotze, 2001). University students can hence be perceived as playing a crucial role in politics and policy formulation through airing their opinions through the online platforms.

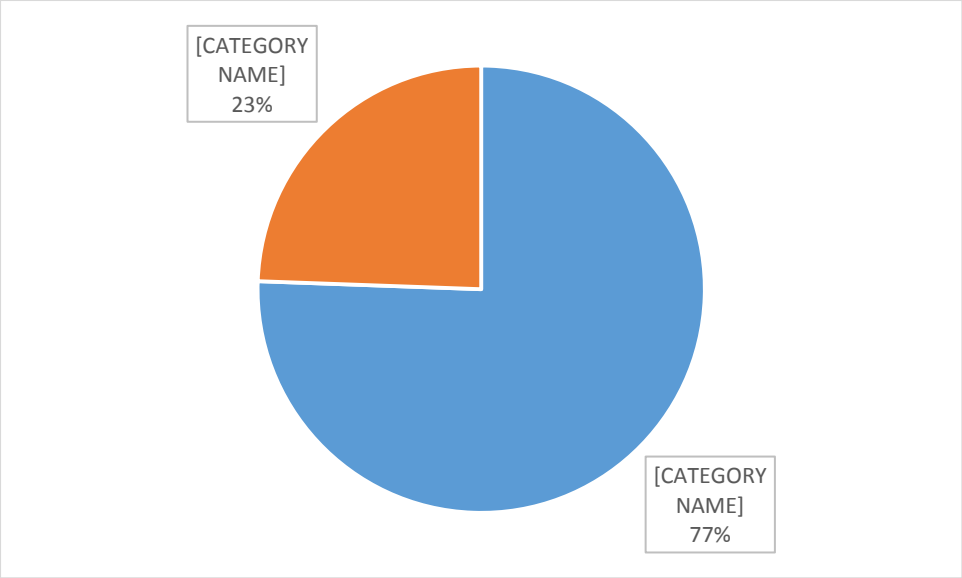

Figure 4.21: Opinion on whether social media has enhanced political inclusion in Kenya

4.3.26: Opinion on whether political discussions among the youth on social media are issue based

Figure 4.22 indicates the summary statistics on whether political discussions among the youth on social media are issue based or not. A majority of the respondents, 59% said they are issue based while the rest (41%) thought they were not. This shows that political participation on social media among the youth and policy satisfaction are interlinked as some of them are able to raise and deliberate on issues that affect them as noted in table 4.7. Furthermore, they feel

they are part of the political process and are able to express their issues freely while engaging politicians directly on their social networks (cf. June, Hong and Sung-Min, 2011; Vincente and Novo, 2014). However, critical issues are raised with nearly half of the respondents suggesting that the discussions are not issue based. Some of the reasons cited in table 4.7 include tribal discussions, biasness abusive discussions and propaganda. This brings to the fore issues of critical thinking, media literacy education and symbolic manipulations which might have advance effects to issue based discussions among the youth in Nairobi universities (cf. June, Hong, and Sung-Min, 2011; Niemeyer, 2011).

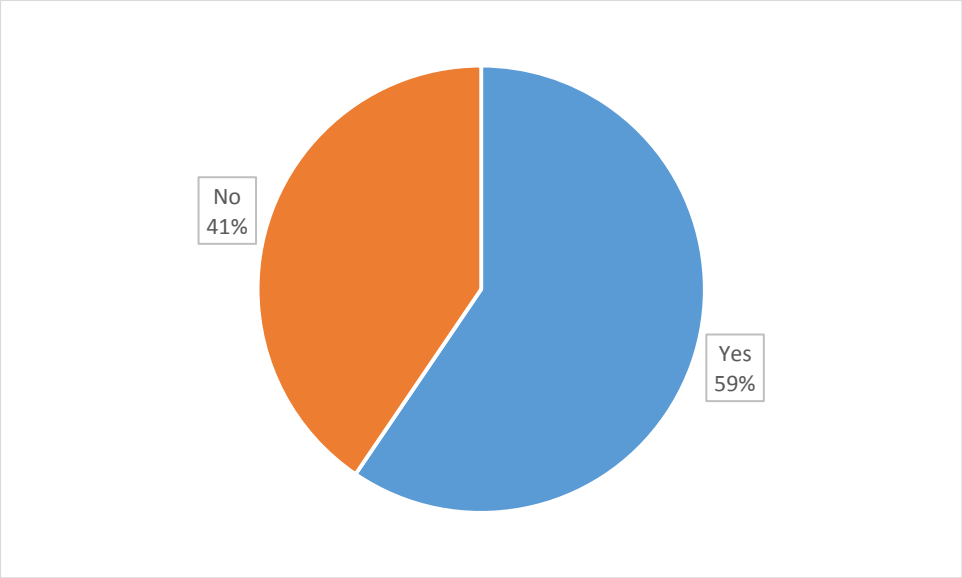

Figure 4.22: Opinion on whether political discussions among the youth on social media are issue based

Related to Figure 4.22 above, Table 4.7 below indicates the reasons for the respondents' opinions on whether political discussions among the youth on social media are issue based or not.

Table 4.7: Reasons for Respondents' opinions on whether political discussions among the youth on social media are issue based

No.	Yes	No
1.	Relevant to issues affecting the youth	Tribal discussions
2.	The information is credible	Incitement and violence
3.	Emerging issues	Discussions are self-centred

4.	Current affairs	Discussions lack credibility. They are full of propaganda
5.	Assess political leaders	Abusive discussions
6.	Opinions are freely expressed	Biasness
7.	Enlightens the youth on issues	Easily disrupted by irrelevant topics
8.	Promotes political inclusion	Ignorance of the youth
9.		Sideshow discussions

4.3.27: Opinion on whether the youth are using social media effectively to deal with politics

From the study as revealed in Figure 4.23 we can see that a majority of the respondents, 60% thought that the youth were not using social media effectively to deal with politics while the rest (40%) thought otherwise. As earlier discussed, most youth in universities prefer their social media platforms because of entertainment and chatting with friends. Scholars like Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) and Hanson et al. (2011) also posit that university students highly rely on social media use for communication with peers and the ease of accessing entertainment. In addition, the reasons given shows that a lot of negativity impede the effective use of social media in politics. As noted in table 4.8, some of the reasons include tribalism, incitement, biasness, spread of hate massages and invective arguments. Lack of reciprocity and acceptance of other user's arguments as valid (cf. Gutmann and Thompson, 1996) may also hamper social media effectiveness.

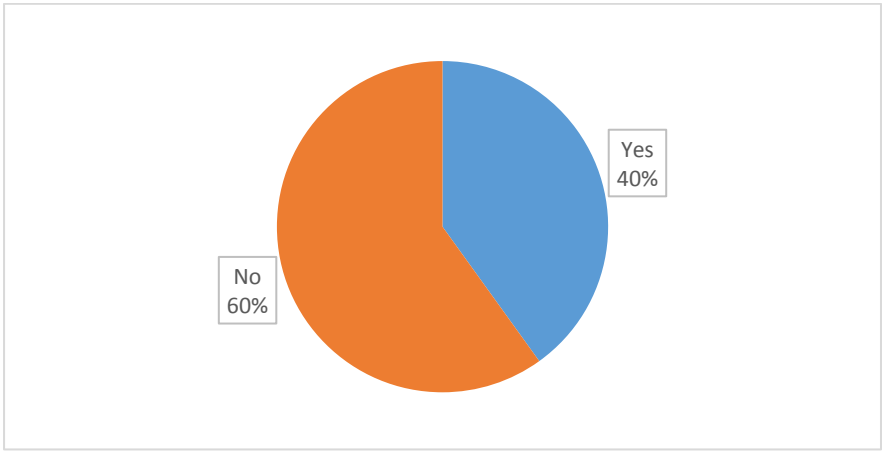

Figure 4.23: Opinion on whether the youth are using social media effectively to deal with politics or not

Table 4.8 below presents responses of the respondents' opinion on whether the youth are using social media effectively to deal with politics or not.

Table 4.8: Reasons for the respondents' opinion on whether the youth are using social media effectively to deal with politics

No.	Yes	No
1.	Connect with political leaders	Abusive and arrogance
2.	Mobilization (e.g. mobilize people to vote)	Incites people
3.	To express their opinions and views freely	Non-objective and bias discussions
4.	Access information	Tribal discussions
5.	Engage in positive discussions of the issues affecting them	Sideshow discussions
6.	Able to increase their political knowledge	Spread of hate messages
7.	Critic political leaders	Ignorance
8.	Creates awareness	Fanaticism
9.	Positive protest yielding fruits	Immaturity in discussions
10.		A lot of raised issues cannot be attended to
11.		Lack of credibility of information. Its full of propaganda
12.		Too much criticism
13.		Inadequate knowledge
14.		They are not active on political issues in social media
15.		Lack of political interest among the youth
16.		Youths trying to protect their self-identity

4.3.28: Opinion on whether or not the Kenyan government is using social media effectively to engage the youth

According to Figure 4.24, most respondents, 53% thought that Kenyan government was not using social media effectively to engage the youth while the remaining 47% thought otherwise. Some of the reasons given in support of why the Kenyan Government is not using social media effectively to engage the youth include unresponsiveness of the state on issues raised by the youth on social media, tribalism, hatred and incitement. Other students believe

that the government is instead engaging in public relations rather than tackling real issues. In addition, some of Government social media platforms or accounts are unverified thus may not promote meaningful engagement. The findings also collaborates the suggestions of Konnektiv, Melanie and René (2014) who argued that slacktivism as a result of disconnect between social media users and lack of action by decision makers may inhibit political participation especially when no critical actions are taken or seen.

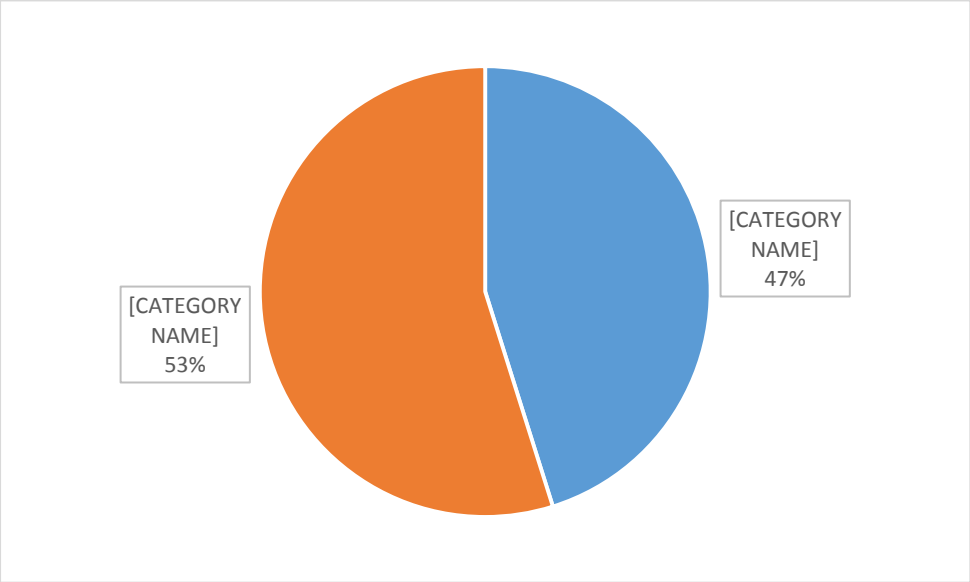

Figure 4.24: Opinion on whether or not the Kenyan government is using social media effectively to engage the youth

In Table 4.9 below, the reasons for the respondents' opinion on whether the Kenyan government is using social media effectively to engage the youth or not are shown.

Table 4.9: Reasons for the respondents' opinion on whether the Kenyan government is using social media effectively to engage the youth

No.	Yes	No
1.	Create awareness	Unresponsiveness on issues raised by the youth on social media
2.	Communication between the youth and the Government	Tribalism, hatred and incitement
3.	Social media is the easiest way to access the youth	Too much protest and criticism by the youth
4.	For information purpose	More of public relations than tackling issues
5.	To interact with the youth	Lack of inclusiveness
6.	To mobilize them for a cause	Limited information

7.	Encourages Diversity of views and criticisms from the youth	The Government is not very active on social media platforms
8.	Encourage the youth to access the Government services through social media	Propaganda
9.	Responds to issues raised on social media	Unverified Government social media platforms
10.	By using social media platforms to reach majority of the youth	Immaturity in discussions
11.	To address issues the youth face	Ignorance among the youth
12.	To enhance political knowledge among the youth	Lack of political interest among the youth
13.		Limited expression and freedom of speech
14.		Limited engagements between the youth and the Government on social media
15.		Lack of strict regulations on social media use in politics

4.3.29: Main factors influencing political debates on social media in Kenya

Finally, the last question in the questionnaire sought to establish main factors influencing political debates on social media in Kenya. The responses are given in Table 4.6 below. 36.4% of the respondents said tribe. It was followed in declining order by trending topics (35.2%) emerging issues of the day (29.4%), political personalities (24.6%), policies (10.8%) and finally political parties (2.9%). These results show why both government and the youth are not engaging each other effectively on political issues. With tribe playing a key role, it's evident that important political issues and policies are overlooked. It also demonstrate why discussions on political issues on social media is low. It partly contradicts Charles (2010) who argues that when the youth are more educated in a particular society they become more and better informed thus participate actively in politics through critiquing government policies.

Table 4.10: Main factors influencing political debates on social media in Kenya

Factor	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Tribe	138	36.4
Trending topics	133	35.2
Emerging issues of the day	111	29.4
Political personalities	93	24.6
Policies	41	10.8
Political parties	7	2.9

4.4 Analysis of responses from key informants

This section highlights the responses from key informants. Its main aim was to triangulate quantitative data offered in this work. The key informants included Mrs. Stella Mwangi, a professional freelance digital copywriter and virtual assistant expert, Dr. Anne Kariuki, a social scientist management consultant and a lecturer at Karatina University, Mr. Javas Bigambo, an expert in political communication, devolution and governance and Mr. Waithaka Ng'anga, a Jubilee party youth mobilizer.

When asked about the factors that enable the youth to use social media, accessibility was identified as a major factor. The respondents argued that the availability of cheap smart phones as well as cheap and fast internet had enabled the youth to access social media platforms easily. Mr. Bigambo argued that social media is a new and exciting technological phenomena particularly among "Generation Y" or the Millennials. It provides platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat which excite young people through the use of photos and videos. "Age factor and the ease of developing interest in social media plays a key role." He said. It was also noted that the ease of use particularly through smartphones was a big enabling factor. The youth were perceived to have the time and interest to learn about this exciting phenomena. Further, social media was seen to have given the youth an opportunity to freely express themselves thus built their self-esteem which was compounded through anonymity as many of them could hide their identity. Mr. Waithaka added that the media, government agencies and society in general are increasingly attracted to social media. This

has created a bandwagon effect among the youth to be part of the social media society. To echo Waithaka's sentiments, Mr. Bigambo argued that social media is there to be used and it has been mainstreamed in different sectors to complete young people as their way of life. Some of these sectors include banking, education and entertainment. Mrs. Mwangi also argued that it offers numerous opportunities for jobs, fun, sports, trips and even E-marketing thus easing operations of day to day activities. In the end, the youth can conveniently and easily access information as well as communicate with each other. Moreover, Dr. Kariuki, argued that majority of the youth read and get information from social media thus making it a better means of communication among youth. "Though still expensive, coverage is still high and better than other means used to reach the youth," she said. The cost of traditional media was also considered to be prohibitive. For example, the cost of buying three daily newspapers of national circulation and weekly magazines was deemed to be too expensive compared to daily bundles offers. The global push or inclination to embrace social media was also considered to be a critical factor. This is because it offers new dimensions. For example during employment, some institutions use social media to carry out background checks on their prospective employees. This is because some people parade their ideas, characters and even interest on these platforms thus providing useful information to prospective employers.

The respondents also argued that the youth could easily access political information on social media due to some of the aforementioned factors which include but not limited to proliferation of mobile technology in Nairibi, access to cheap smartphones, availability of free Wi-Fi, fast and cheap internet and the assimilation of social media use by the political actors. Dr. Karikui argued that social media is also convenient particularly "twitter for over 30 year olds and Facebook for the youth between 18 and 30 years". According to Bigambo, there is high use of social media in Nairobi which has become available for outreach,

mobilization and propagation of political ideas. He further argues that political parties and politicians use social media for advocacy and to create interest which can easily be shared by those who have interest. “There is growing interest in politics among the youth especially during electioneering period.” He said. The simplicity of information on social media like the use of short videos on WhatsApp and short posts and updates which could also be shared easily and spread fast whether genuine or propaganda played a major role.

Whereas the respondents argued that the youth actively engage in political discourses on social media, they said that they were not very effective. Their engagement was made possible due to the use of the platforms which were perceived to be appealing, affordable, quickly informative and very current. According Bigambo, there is need to operationalize the term discourse first. He argued that the youth engage actively in both deconstructive or retrogressive and constructive or progressive discourse. “There is spread of hate and displeasure messages,” he said. “This is partly due the use of pseudo or anonymous accounts and the ease to share information on social media as opposed to a face to face conversation.” He added. Dr. Karikuki argued that they are not effective, “unless they are responding to something on social media. They are not resilient in what they want in their lives and they want to be told what to do”. She also said that politics is just a by the way as majority of the youth do not understand their roles. “There are a lot of wars on social media. The youth are not serious people. Many girls mostly look at what is trending in fashion while the boys look for issues that please them like the English Premier League.” She added. It was also argued that some of their engagement was not meaningful as there are a lot of fake news and sensationalism that is forwarded around and which the youth as a group are most prone to.

The respondents argued that not all youth express their political opinions freely on social media. One of the factors that enable some of them to express themselves is freedom of expression. This, according to Bigambo, is supported by the Kenyan Constitution under Article 33[1] on freedom of expression and Article 35[2] on access to information. However, there is a thin line between them expressing their views and using inflammatory statements that could be deconstructive. Secondly, social media is majorly dominated by youth and they use it to speak out. The social nature of social media, Bigambo argues, enables them to freely and quickly express their thoughts. It has thus become one of the main avenues for the youth to express their political opinions. Thirdly, the virtual space offers them an opportunity to be faceless. They are able to use names and identities which may not be easily traceable to their actual identities. Fourthly, social media provides a safe mechanism for mob justice without fear of being held accountable. Sometimes it is difficult to apprehend persons on social media because they can't be accessed easily by the government. Lastly, it not only allows for "live" responses to issues but also enables users to reach out to a larger audience within a short period. The ease of comfort thus plays a critical role. On the contrary, majority of the youth do not express themselves freely as they safe guard their identity. Dr. Kariuki also argued that identity is key particularly among the young adults over 30 years. "Young adults are conscious because prospective employers can use social media to carry out background check on them," she said. Hate speech and tribalism were also argued to be preventing many people

[1] FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION: Every person has the right to freedom of expression, which includes-

(a) freedom to seek, receive or impart information or ideas; (b) freedom of artistic creativity; and (c) academic freedom and freedom of scientific research.

[2] ACCESS TO INFORMATION: Every citizen has the right of access to- (a) information held by the State; and (b) information held by another person and required for the exercise or protection of any right or fundamental freedom.

from expressing themselves freely. “Tribalism is an impediment but with intermarriage, it will reduce gradually”, Dr. Karikuki noted. The regulation of the social media space by the National Cohesion and Integration Commission and the prosecution of social media high profile users and Bloggers like Robert Alai and Cyprian Nyakundi might have helped regulate the type of content on social media. Nonetheless, it has also led to self-regulation which might be positive in the reduction of hate messages but negative by inhibiting freedom of expression.

In relation to tolerance to divergent political views, majority of the youth were perceived to be intolerant. Relatively, those who share same beliefs and are in the same social media circles tend to tolerate each other more. For example, Dr. Kariuki argued that the youth “agree more with those who associate with them”. Positively, this can be as a result of access to credible information and enhanced political knowledge among the youth. However, the informants noted that there is so much virtual hatred which is mirrored through the language and words used. The increase in intolerance as opposed to tolerance was perceived to be as a result of the “facelessness” of the users. This is because they can’t tell the feelings of other users which are manifested in face to face conversations. Furthermore, many social media users are either oblivious or ignorant of their electronic footprints which can be accessed later in future as internet does not forget.

When asked if they thought that political information on social media was credible, the verdict was “Not always”. They argued that in most scenarios, social media has become a platform for fake news and propaganda. In addition, much of the discussion is tribal and on unsubstantiated news and hate speech. Unlike major media houses which have verified accounts, most of the social media accounts are not verified which lowers the credibility of

the information. According to Bigambo, credibility is subject to confirmation. “With the emergence of fake and alarming news on social media, it is not easy to tell the authenticity,” he said. “It’s only credible when verified or confirmed.” He added. Facelessness and the use of pseudo accounts were also perceived to be promoting propaganda and fake news. It was further noted that majority of the youth are deemed to be lazy to search for credible news but quick to spread propaganda. With political economy in consideration, Dr. Kariuki argued that the credibility of media houses might also be questioned as they also serve interests of their owners and politicians. “However, this does not mean that social media lacks credible news in its entirety.” She said. Furthermore, many political actors have embraced social media and they use it to publish their own information.

Tribalism and negative ethnicity were cited as the main factors that influence political discourse among the youth in Nairobi. Huge political interest among the youth and political class, sensationalism of political news and leaders or political icons were also noted. As a result, the engagement was because the youth wanted to foster the images of their icons and or rise or stand against their perceived political enemies on social media. Other factors cited include propaganda, actions of political actors and political divide. Issues affecting the youth like unemployment, poverty, high crime rate and corruption were also mentioned. Developmental issues like sustainable development goals, exposure to news and political information as well as increase in level of education were also considered as critical issues that influence political discourse.

The informants postulated that some of the political activities the youth engage in include; creation of political memes, posts reflecting political interest or disinterest, political activism through radical ideas, mobilization and creation of fake news or “yellow journalism”. Others

included, following politicians, participating in Hashtags (#) and discussions, sharing political information, watching and reading of online political news/ Political blogs, subscribing to political related pages and groups, tweeting politicians as well as tweeting and commenting on political posts. Youth were also seen to be encouraging fellow Kenyans to keep off engaging in violence after elections by preaching peace and participating in online political surveys. On offline activities, the political activities the youth engaged in included attending political rallies and meetings, roadshows, voting, working on political campaigns, organizing caucuses, engaging in protests, forming groups that reflect online groupings and debating political issues with family and friends. Some of these offline political activities are as a result of the online political activities or extension of the same.

When asked if the messages on social media influences political decisions made by Kenyan youth in any way, some informants said that to a greater extent it does. This is because people learn and unlearn from social media. According to Bigambo, some people change their positions especially the uninformed youth. It was also argued that rationality plays a key role. As a result, rational decision makers can thus make informed decisions from the information they get from social media. However, it was noted that the messages do not influence political decisions that much. For example, according to Mrs. Mwangi, some politicians like Peter Kenneth have lost in elections even after doing extensive social media campaign as opposed to offline ground campaigns. In addition, many youth do not tolerate divergent views and lack critical minds to critically analyse political discourse and make informed decision. Dr. Kariuki also argued that their influence is low and their engagement is not serious. Furthermore, “they are not sure who manages the pages because most probably it’s not the leaders they engage with but paid social media managers or administrators,” she said.

When asked if social media use can contribute to political knowledge and inclusion, the informants argued that yes it can, but not entirely. According to Bigambo, both inclusion and exclusion are apparent in social media. When it comes to Knowledge, Bigambo argued that the platforms are good sources of information. “Key leaders use these platforms which their followers also use to access various political information.” He said. He also added that social media is a powerful mobilization and information sharing tool which can be used for tooling and retooling. “With tooling, the youth can be trained without a formal meeting and can also be retooled after the training.” He argued. It was also noted that social media breaks some of the barriers created by wealth, age and illiteracy which often are common areas which some youth are discriminated on. Dr. Karikuki also argued that when discussions are issue based, credible and accessible to high and large number of people, it contributes to building political knowledge and inclusion as well. The same sentiments of credibility were echoed by Mrs. Mwangi. It was however argued that a majority of the youth do not contribute to the online discussions. Lack of quality education, for example, was considered to be a big factor inhibiting inclusion and political knowledge. In addition, it was noted that those using social media need to be able to critically analyse the information they get first. Additionally, lack of knowledge and tribalism were also considered to be factors leading to exclusion. Mr Bigambo argued that there is further “selective inclusions and exclusions” through the online groupings. Nevertheless, some informants argued that there was need to verify and regulate the accounts with the aim of getting rid of fake news. Furthermore, they argued, social media can be used to disseminate information faster and to a larger audience. If managed well, the messages that encourage participation and engagement by youth in politics can have an overall effect on their attitudes and knowledge. Inclusivity can also be enhanced through social media accessibility. For example, it was noted that there is need to improve on the

internet connectivity in Nairobi and other parts of the Country and further lower the cost of internet as well as smart phones.

The informants argued that even though issue based political discussions have grown overtime and are evident on social media, tribal tones are still playing a bigger role in influencing these political discourses. This is as a result of varying inclinations based on tribe and political persuasions which are predominantly tribal. Furthermore, it was argued that there is need to operationalize the term issues because what might be deemed to be non-issue to others might be real issues for others. Accordingly, it depends with the nature of the discourse, the actors and the political events. According to Dr. Kariuki, social media is more fun oriented than issue based. "Issues always deviate to other non-serious issues," she argued. According to Mr. Waithaka, social media does not have sufficient inbuilt control mechanisms to be able to properly segment issues and seek feedback like a face to face meeting would provide.

When asked to state some of the effects of social media use in participatory politics among the youth in Nairobi, information sharing, indoctrination, enhanced visibilities of political parties and politicians, wider reach and ease of access through a click of a button were cited. Others included learning of new ideas, access to information with ease, recruitment of online and offline memberships as well as enhanced political awareness. According to Dr. Karikuki, social media has become a platform for communications and mobilization. The youth and political leaders also use it to voice their concerns and set agenda on political issues. Furthermore, social media can also contribute to enlightened youth, informed voting, growth of issue based politics and accountability. The youth, for example, can critique their political leaders and also seek or inquire about government services on social media. However, on the

negative side, social media might contribute to abhorrence, increase in intolerance, incitements, distortion of truth, negative peace and ethnic profiling or tribalism. Mrs Mwangi argued that it has "enhanced tribal inclinations, political biasness, spread of false information, hate speech and ethnic messages."

4.5 Social Media visual analysis

Key areas of focus on visual analysis were the nature of contents posted, the number of subscribers, likes and followers, the reactions and interactions by the subscribers, tolerance to divergent views and credibility of the information. This section was majorly aimed at triangulating the quantitative data as well. Most news feeds on Facebook and tweets on Twitter were election related content during the 2017 general elections period. Through political engagement, many social media users were exposed to diverse viewpoints. In certain posts and Tweets, reinforcement of political views among followers was evident as some social media users agreed to other people's views through their comments and likes. In others, disagreements were the norm. This was evident particularly on Kenyatta's and Odinga's Facebook pages and Twitter accounts as discussed below.

Both President Uhuru Kenyatta and Raila Odinga who were front runners in the 2017 presidential election had Facebook pages and Tweeter accounts. By 1 October 2017, President Kenyatta had over three million likes on his Facebook page while Odinga had over nine hundred thousand. On Twitter, Kenyatta had over two million followers while Odinga had over 1.2 million. Both Kenyatta's and Odinga's Facebook pages as well as Twitter handles had posts on regular basis and embraced the usage of texts, photos and videos. A number of political online activities were identified. One major activity was the live streaming of events which the two politicians used to engage with their publics and other

political leaders. This is evident in image 1 below which shows Odinga giving a live press conference on 18 September 2017. The live stream attracted over 80,000 views and two thousand comments.

Image 1: Live streaming of a political events

With the live streaming of political events and functions, both Kenyatta and Odinga's supporters could follow live proceedings of activities their politicians engaged in. Some of these activities included political rallies and meetings with other grassroots political leaders.

Image 2: Odinga's Facebook post

Image 3: Kenyatta's Facebook post

In image 2 and 3 above, both Odinga and Kenyatta addressed Kenyans and specifically their supporters through issuing political statements on their Facebook pages. This was an indication that political leaders can use social media to communicate directly to their followers. Both posts attracted reactions from their publics. Some social media users commented, liked, shared and replied to these political posts. From the reactions, it was also evident that social media platforms offered an opportunity for supporters to engage their leaders and fellow supporters directly. In image 4 overleaf, a Facebook user by the name Amos Cheruiyot comments in one of Odinga's post saying "I like your charismatic leadership. The rule of law must always prevail. You draw power from the people with sober minds. Viva Reformist". Isaac Nyabera in image 5 commented, "Time is running out Baba call for mass peacefully demonstrations, what are you waiting for, people are ready, I'm ready to remove Chiloba out of IEBC, or else we won't vote period, that would be a waste of

my precious time, my vote will be wasted". This supports the growth of a democratic society in Kenya which is dependent on capacity of private citizens to communicate and deliberate (see Habermas, 1989).

Image 4: Supporters engaging Odinga

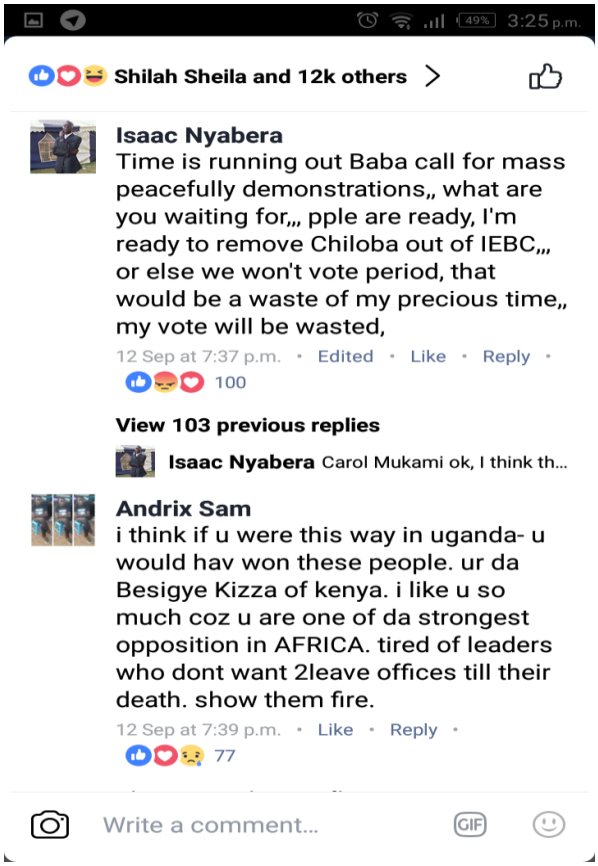

Image 5: Engagement on Facebook

Images 6 and 7 overleaf also indicate that Facebook and Twitter can be effective tools for political discussions and engagements. Through the discussions, social media users raised critical issues while seeking answers from their leaders and other social media users. For example, Isaac Nyabera and Carol Mukami engaged each other on Facebook on who is mandated under the Kenyan constitution to fire the IEBC commissioners. @IvetaLemo and @WKenvas engaged each other on Twitter on issue pertaining democracy and the will of the people. From Habermas' (1989) public sphere perspective, social media platforms can be seen as enablers of the deliberative political space as users can exchange ideas and thoughts freely. In addition, social media users in Kenya can be seen to be free citizens as argued by

McQuail (2005). This is a result of their freedom of association, ability to converse democratically as well as freedom of expression while engaging their leaders and their peers.

Image 6 : Discussion on Odinga's Facebook Page

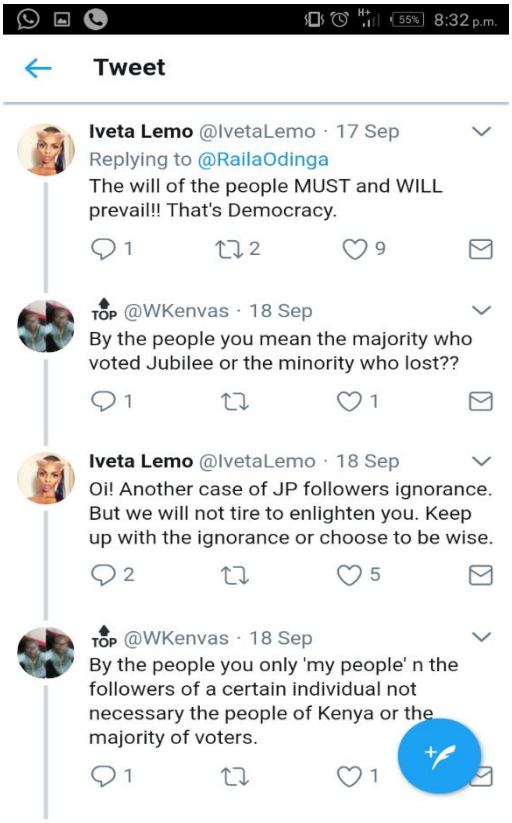

Image 7: Discussion on Odinga's Twitter handle

It was, however, clear that the discussions between the leaders and their supporters were minimal. For example, with Facebook Pages, social media users could only comment on the political posts by their leaders. They could not post directly on their pages and if they did, the posts were deleted as no post from their supports was seen. Secondly, the leaders did not respond to the comments from users which more often than not were enormous. This shows that the leaders mostly post on Facebook and may not be keen to respond to the comments or alternatively, they have Facebook managers whose work is majorly to post and not to respond to issues raised by their followers on the platforms. Twitter however enabled users to tweet their leaders directly. In some of the tweets, the leaders could respond. For example in image 8 below, Odinga reacted to Lizzah Aquiliah's tweet by retweeting her tweet.

Image 8: A retweet by Odinga

Facebook and Twitter were are also used as tools for mobilization by both leaders and their followers. For example, in image 9 overleaf, Ever Achieng who follows Odinga on Facebook pleaded with fellow Facebook user by the name Alice Cherono to join "Daughters of Raila", a women's group that was doing grassroots campaigns for Odinga. President Kenyatta also used his Twitter account to mobilize his supporters to come out in large numbers to vote for Jubilee (see image 10). By linking some civilians and power holders like President Kenyatta, social media has become a crucial communicative tool in Nairobi and other major towns in Kenya. This echoes Dahlgren's (2005a) argument that as a tool, media plays a critical role in connecting those in power and the civil society. Further linking of civilians among themselves and call for a particular political action is seen a mobilization tool towards a given course.

Image 9: Users mobilizing each other

Image 10: Kenyatta mobilizing his followers

The discussions, particularly on Facebook were, however, marred with controversies. Whereas there are users who engage in bipartisan and objective arguments, others do not. For example, there seemed to be a lot of polarization as shown in images 11, 12 and 13, among the Jubilee and NASA supporters. A Facebook user by the name Janet Atieno commented, "Ignore the two jigger My president, we shall spray paraffin to kill them all anyway no reform no election". Jubilee supporters Qandy Damah and MC S Kab also engaged her negatively while John Mutua as seen in image 14 referred to NASA supporters as "Terrorist". This evidence contradicts scholars like Calhoun (1993), Crossley and Robert (2004) and Dahlgren (1991) who argued that the public sphere enables the private citizens to organize themselves collectively and engage critically in deliberations and debates on issues that affect them. Furthermore, those sceptical of social media as a deliberative space as argued by Loader and Mercea (2011) may also cite tribalism, invective discourses and use of foul

language alongside extremisms, populist rhetoric and negative campaign as key impediments particularly in Kenya.

Image 11: Comment on polarization

Image 12: Negative online engagement

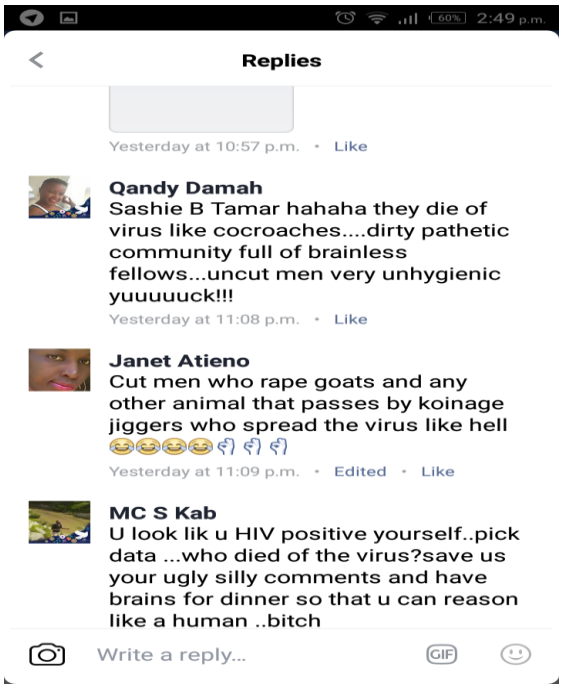

Image 13: Negative polarized engagement

Image 14: Polarized engagement

Image 15: Emotive and resentment

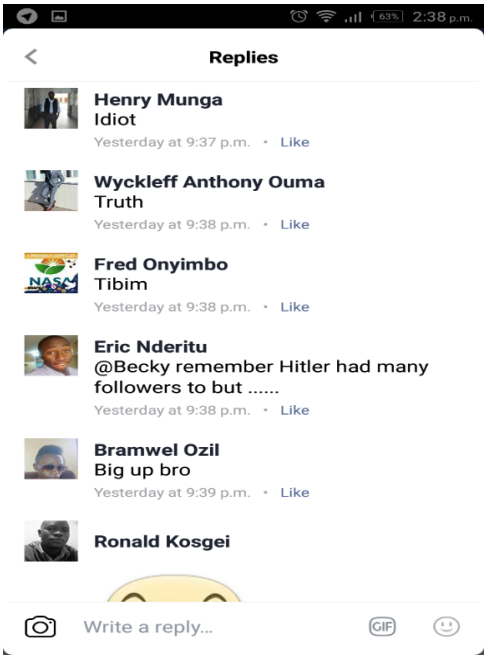

Image 16: Use of harsh tone

Furthermore, some political comments were also perceived to be emotive and resentful especially against the opposing political camps. For example, in image 15 above, Michael Kimani commented that Kenya cannot be led by "Witchcrafts and murderers", referring to NASA presidential candidate, Mr. Odinga. Other users like Henry Munga as seen in image 16 used harsh tones and words like "Idiot" to disagree with others.

The partisan animosity on Facebook and Twitter more often than not digressed to tribal debates with the use foul language among users. Some comments were contentious, annoying and offensive. From the engagements in image 17 below, it was evident that some users could not engage in mature political discussions. For example, Isaac Siololo questioned another user, "@kamau Umetaheriwa vizuri ama ni kama mtoto, ebu toa hiyo mboro yako tuone kama ww ni mwaume..Punda" which meant, "@Kamau, if you are circumcised like a man, remove your manhood for us to prove it. Donkey".

Image 17: Use of foul language

Image 18: Political activities promoting tribal arguments on social media

Political leaders were also seen to promoting tribalism through their actions. For example, Omar Bond tweeted @UKenyatta, "more tribal meetings..pokomos, pokots, gabra etc..keep voting for Jubilee, but you wont even get a tribal invite for state house". This was after Kenyatta had held separate meetings with Lughya, Maasai and central Kenya delegations (see image 18). As argued above, when the discussions are negative, they go against the spirit of public sphere as envisioned by Habermas. They might thus lead to exclusion of other social media users who do not identify with immature and negative political ideologies that are tribal related.

Intolerance to divergent views was also evident among social media users as well as political leaders. Some Jubilee and NASA supporters could not tolerate views from other social media users who they perceived to be their rivals. For example, as shown in image 19, Patrick Owuor who supports Odinga commented, "What du this kikuyu want in our page, go follow uhuru kinyatta,, the president of kales [Kalenjins] and kiuks [Kikuyus] …". The same was

also witnessed on Kenyatta's Facebook page where some pro-Odinga supporters were asked not to comment. A social media user by the name Jesse McOgara also referred to Deputy President Ruto as a coward for blocking him on Twitter (see Image 20 below).

Image 19: Intolerance by online users

Image 20: Intolerance by political leaders

Some social media users like Fred Ndaga (see image 21) believed that President Kenyatta and his deputy treated voters and the mainstream media with a lot of contempt when they refused to participate in the presidential and deputy presidential debates[3] respectively. However, social media gave them an option when Kenyatta argued that he would instead engage Kenyans directly on social media through live chats. In fact, the political campaigns and advertisement were majorly on the digital space as opposed to the television and radio channels. For example, NASA's flag bearer Hon. Raila Odinga had his own "Facebook TV" which he would live stream most of his political rallies. President Kenyatta also used Facebook live chats to engage with young voters on his action plan for job creation and lowering of prices as indicated in image 22. However, some voters through their twitter handles were skeptical of President Kenyatta's action after snubbing the presidential debate. For example, @Shadytrillo argued, "Looks to me it's too late for that Mr. President, all these

[3] Political debates - series of public engagement in which presidential candidates and their deputies engaged in to expose their manifestos and policies for criticism to the potential voters. They were mainly aired on all major television and radio stations.

years you couldn't curb inflation, why should I trust you now", @Nyamagina1 questioned, "Mr. President sir, where have you been for the last four years to engage us" and @SueKE254 argued, "Kenyatta, instead of doing social media chats, just go for national debate slated for Monday. Unless there's something you're hiding from". With Kenyatta engaging his supporters on live chats, social media can be argued to be embracing Habermas' (1989) three preconditions which include disregard of status, common concern and inclusivity. The interaction with the political figures like Kenyatta and Odinga on social media is a good source of political information. Furthermore, through the interactivity of the platforms, most users have been able to circumvent gatekeepers. Their ability to engage their political leaders directly has foiled the power of traditional media enabling social media to emerge as a dynamo of information and political communication. In essence, the alternative viewpoints from other users not only increases political participation but also political knowledge.

Image 21: Tweet on snubbing presidential debate

Image 22: Use of live chats to engage the youth

It was also evident that traditional media had incorporated the use of social media platforms as part of their strategy to reach the masses including the youth. For example, by 24 September 2017, major daily newspapers in Kenya like Daily Nation (DN) and The Standard (Standard Digital) had 2.1 million and 1.2 million likes on Facebook respectively. The Star newspaper had 798,000 likes. Citizen Television, Nation Television (NTV) and Kenya Television Network had 3.2 million, 3 million and 2.9 million likes on Facebook respectively. This showed how influential social media has become. Birgisdóttir (2014), for example, argues that in US, social media is perceived to have taken the power of the traditional mass media in political messaging. The same is evident in Kenya. The incorporation of Facebook and Twitter by the traditional media in Kenya is evidence that social media plays an important role in the creation of opinion leaders and connection of citizens directly. The reactions and the instant feedback to political issues could not be enabled by the traditional media as social media does today. Furthermore, the number of subscribers on the traditional media online pages shows that some Kenyans are able to access political information with ease. The posts on the platforms are brief and interactive in nature. Nevertheless, the subscription to traditional media Facebook pages and Twitter handles is indicative of the demand for substantiated political information from the main stream media. Whereas they posted on regular basis, the information had gone through editorial process. In addition, incorporation of these platforms enabled instant feedback through the reactions. For example, a video of Kenyatta published on the DN Facebook page with a headline, "You are free to protest peacefully" had over 191 comments, 88 shares and 35 thousand views. The reactions were, however, mixed. While some supported the president's call, others were pessimistic and questioned why the government was using excessive force against its citizens. Nevertheless, in certain instances, interactions between users was also 'tribal'.

The spread of false information by some users was also evident. For example, an anonymous social media user by the name "The Real Raila" posted a video on YouTube titled Kenya in 2020 if Raila Odinga is elected president. The video was shared widely on social media platforms and pages. It aimed to instill fear among voters that Raila's presidency would be dictatorial and would bring down Kenya's economy within three years of his rule. Within 13 days, the video had garnered over 80,000 views. The "anonymous" also posted fake information about Odinga through www.therealraila.com and The Real Raila Facebook page. See image 23 below.

Image 23: Propaganda by an anonymous social media user

Transparency International Kenya was also forced to release a statement denouncing a fake "NaswaGateScandal Report" which had alleged that opposition governors had spent over Ksh78 billion to fund Odinga's Campaigns. Cable News Network (CNN) and British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), which are global news outlets with offices in Kenya, were also victims of the same. They were compelled to issue clarifications denouncing fake broadcasts based on opinion polls showing President Kenyatta was ahead of Odinga by a considerable margin despite missing the political debate. Fake news was commonplace during the electioneering period. This made Facebook and main stream media like DN to

publish tips for spotting false news so as to limit its spread on social media as shown in images 24 and 25.

Image 24: News on spotting fake news

Image 25: Facebook notice on spotting false news

Some social media users and leaders as well accused the main stream media of bias and misinformation. For example, a Facebook user by the name Kirya Moses Isiko (see image 26 overleaf) questioned why NTV Kenya had a video with a misleading headline, "Raila shouted down by crowd in Mombasa". The video showed Joho's and Omar's supporters shouting when Raila Odinga introduced the two NASA gubernatorial candidates to the crowd most of whom were clearly supporting Joho. One social media user by the name Ezeikiel Mwabili also called out on NTV for poor framing of the above cited headline. This could be seen as a tactic to attract visitors to their page. In addition, whereas NTV shared widely on its social media platforms including DN's Facebook and Twitter pages, the "Raila shouted down by Crowed in Mombasa" story and video, it did not share a similar video which showed President Kenyatta facing hostile crowed in Makueni. However, through social media

platforms like Telegram and WhatsApp, the video was circulated widely. Citizen TV also posted on Facebook that DP Ruto had castigated Kenyan media over biased reporting (see image 27 below). With social media, users are exposed to not only alternative political information but also to raw and unedited news or information thus the preference among the youth. As advanced by June, Hong and Sung-Min (2011), social media in Kenya can also uncover serious issues that the traditional media would ignore or overlook.

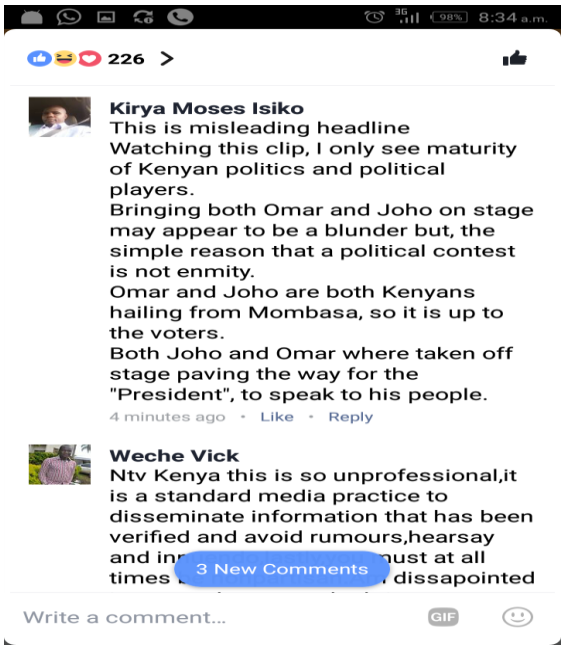

Image 26: NTV accused of biasness

Image 27: Citizen's TV post on media bias

A DN Post on Facebook which President Kenyatta threatened to punish Makueni chiefs working with NASA elicited various remarks from Facebook users. For example, one Facebook user, Wanjawa Njuguna, questioned the president's remarks. She argued, "Jubilee property or Government Property? I thought there is a distinction between the party and the government? So, should everyone working in the government wear red jubilee colors ama? Siasa kweli ni shida". This was an indication of social media use to inform the public and an informed social media user questioning the actions of the president. It is thus clear that through the use of social media, some Kenyans are no longer passive consumers of media

news or propaganda. They can post their own opinions and views, contest political discourse and even offer perspectives that differ with the norm.

Image 28: Post on Kenyattas' threats on Chiefs

Image 29: Reactions on biasness

Social media can also be seen as a source or avenue for political entertainment ("Politainment"). During the tense moments before the winner of the 8 August 2017 presidential election was announced, the #Githeriman trended on social media platforms where users made fun as well as release tension. The #Githeriman referred to a photo of a man who had queued to cast his vote while eating "Githeri" (a mixture of boiled maize and beans). He was photoshoped and juxtaposed next to popular individuals to make fun of the scenario. For example, some of the photos showed him exiting a military helicopter with president Trumph of USA, walking with Kim Kardashian while holding hands, bodyguard to president Mugabe of Zimbambwe and standing alongside President Kenyatta, Deputy Ruto and opposition leaders in statehouse. Key to this was the ability of social media to set an agenda where

almost all mainstream media (TV, Radio and Newspapers) in Kenya were forced to cover the story (see images 30 and 31) and even look for the "Githeriman" for interviews.

Image 30: DN post on 'Githeriman'

Image 31: Star post on Githeriman"

Part of the entertainment was the sensationalism of political discourse or sideshows on social media platforms. For example, Mr. Ezra Chiloba, the chief executive officer of IEBC, was the most searched person on google in Kenya a day before the 2017 elections results were announced. The #Chilobae hashtag which trended during the period made reference to how some young Kenyan women on social media inquired if Chiloba was single so that they could date him (see image 32 below). Some young women on social media referred to him as, "Vindu nice, Bae, Handsome and Thitima" which basically meant that he was very good looking. Some of the women said they wouldn't mind dating Chiloba even if he was married. Evidently, this shows that "politainment" and sideshows of political discourse can encourage many social media users to engage in political issues on social media albeit without realizing

they are doing so. On the Negative side, the sideshows could also exclude other users who would prefer to engage in serious political discussions.

Image 32: Sideshow on political a discourse

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has presented and discussed the findings of this study. It shows that social media is a key element in Kenya's political and democratic processes. This is based largely on the fact that it offers a platform for political engagement, communication and interaction among different political actors. Based on data generated during the fieldwork, it is evident that the youth in Nairobi use social media as a source of political information and as a communicative tool to engage their political leaders. With accessibility being key, social media enables the youth to engage in online political activities which also influences their offline political activities. It has increased political participation and knowledge among the youth through their engagements. This endorses Habermas concept of public sphere as a conceptual space

where citizens deemed to be private can come together and deliberate critical issues which can lead to the formation of public opinions, political parties and movements. Furthermore, social media has not only given an identity to the users but also enhanced the quality of democratic society in Nairobi and Kenya as a whole which Habermas (1989) argues is dependent on private citizens to communicate and deliberate.

The data also shows that Dahlgren's (2005a) three dimensions (structural, representation and interactivity), which are critical in modern public sphere, were partly manifested through the social media interactions in Nairobi. It is evident that social media aids freedom of speech among its users as well as promote inclusiveness which in itself is dynamic. Further, through the discursive interactions on platforms like Facebook and Twitter, social media users particularly in Nairobi have been able to set different agenda and be exposed to multiplicity of divergent views. This is crucial in the growth of political communication and democracy in Nairobi, Kenya. In addition, through the post by the political leaders, social media users not only react to this posts but get something to talk about. The issues disscused exist in the public mind because they exist on media as adavanced by Castells (2007). The platforms are thus key for the formation of public discourse.

The above arguments, notwithstanding, there were a number of negativities which impede the full realization of social media as a public sphere in Nairobi County. The findings indicate that a majority of the youth did not engage in online political discussions even though they had access to social media. With tribalism or ethnicity and inevective arguments and presentations characterising some engagements, some youth were excluded from the deliberations due to lack of critical engagement which is key in the realization of modern public sphere. Furthermore, the assumption that all involved in the public sphere are 'equal'

is also not entirely true. Just because Kenyatta and Odinga post on social media platforms, it does not mean that they are of even status with their followers. As Eley (1992) argues, in a stratified society, a public sphere is a place where contestation, as opposed to deliberation exist. The political leaders for example only posted on Facebook but did not engage their supporters who reacted to their posts. They did not engage those with alternative views to theirs. In addition, the political leaders had the rights and control of their platfroms. They determined what and when to post, and how to package their political messages. On Facebook for example, their followers could not post dirrectly on their pages while on Twitter, they could easily block those who they felt were challenging their views. The next chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

Social media use in politics is still a relatively new topic for research particularly in developing countries. As an academic paper, this study aimed to contribute to knowledge on how social media is used for political purposes in Kenya. Further, it aimed to promote the utilisation of social media in the consolidation of democracy in Kenya. From the evidence in Chapter 4, it is possible to conclude that social media has played some role in the political process in Kenya. This conclusion is based on systematic and rigorous analysis of political use of social media, particularly with regards to political communication, participation and inclusion. The foregoing assertions are based on increasing use of social media by various political actors, their contributions on online platforms, and use of the social media to engage in political activities.

Data collected for this study show that the youth in Nairobi universities are using social media to participate in politics. With many university students in Nairobi using social media, the platforms are seen to be enablers of democratic space (cf. Birgisdottir, 2014). This is because of a number of factors. In line with the first objective, many of the youth sampled cited accessibility as playing a key role in their engagement with politics. This is as a result of cheap and fast internet, free Wi-Fi and cheap smart phones. The growth of social media society is also seen to be a contributing factor. As a society, Nairobi is deemed to be increasingly attracted to the opportunities and interactions on social media. Due to its mainstreaming in different sectors like education and entertainment, it partly completes young people as their way of life. With the increase of independent, government and even private institutions like media embracing the use of social media, the youth are also attracted to this virtual society. In the end, they have to communicate and interact with each other as

well as seek information using social media. This reinforces Segaard's (2015) argument that social media is a vehicle that develops communicative communities in a virtual public sphere as a result of its ability to get people together. Furthermore, social media is seen not only as the preferred but also as the better means of communication between the youth and their political leaders. From the findings, political leaders and the Kenyan government are seen to be engaging the youth through social media though not effectively. Personal needs, though not politically related, like entertainment and chatting with peers are also seen to be critical factors particularly in the use WhatsApp and Facebook. Emerging and trending issues are also promoting the use of social media as the youth contribute on issues that affect their lives or are deemed to be crucial. Other factors that determine social media use include access to information and freedom of expression which are both supported by articles 33 and 35 of the Constitution of Kenya 2010. Anonymity through the use of pseudo accounts where the youth use fake identity to air their opinion was also cited as an enabler. However, it might be a key impediment to the realization of social media as a public sphere as a result of its negativities as argued later in this chapter.

In assessing the modalities of social media use for political purposes among the youth in Nairobi universities, the study identified several ways in which they use social media. With WhatsApp being the most preferred social media (followed by Facebook and Twitter respectively), a majority of the youth mostly use these platforms for entertainment, chatting and seeking information. There are few exceptions though as some youth use the platforms to seek political information. This, however, is indicative of the Nairobi County youth's little interest in searching for political information on social media. The credibility of political information on social media is also in doubt. For example, only 7.4% of the respondents cited credibility as a reason for choosing social media as their preferred source of political

information. This is in contrast to the 35% who chose television because of credible political information. In fact, this confirms Johnson and Kaye's (2014) argument that social media platforms are the least credible among other sources of political news. Nevertheless, with the majority of the youth having accessed political information on social media, it is interesting to note that a majority of the youth access political information on social media even when they are not actively searching for one. It is, thus, true that social media users could bypass gatekeepers and encounter political news even when engaging in apolitical activities (cf. Bae, 2014; Hellweng, 2011; Johnson and Kaye, 2014; Storsul, 2011). In addition, many youth in Nairobi comment, share or like political tweets, posts, videos, photos or links. They also use social media to follow politicians more than they follow political parties. This shows that they either want to be informed of the political activities their political leaders engage in or identify more with the politicians as opposed to political parties and their ideologies. Their engagement, for example, with President Kenyatta through Facebook live chats is proof that social media can act as a direct link between the youth and the political leadership. This observation may agree Zhang et al. (2010) and Zuniga and Valenzuela (2010) arguments that discussions on social media have significant effects on political processes. Interestingly, while acknowledging that social media use has increased political participation, majority of the youth in Nairobi County still do not discuss politics on social media. This is because of a number of factors which included ethnicity (or tribalism as is commonly referred), ignorance, bias, inevective arguments, sideshows, hatred, incitement as well as fake news and propaganda. It can also be argued that some youth are reserved and tend to protect their image and identity while others are just not interested in politics at all because they do not understand their roles in participatory politics. These findings partly contradicted Biswas, Ingle and Mousumi's (2014) position that social media enables the youth to freely share their thoughts on any issue. In addition, it is not entirely true that the youth can express their

political views and discuss issues with other people in their network as advanced by Storsul (2011). However, it is in support of June, Hong and Sung-Min (2011) and Storsul (2011) who reasoned that self-representation and accountability on online posts made people to be more careful of their online activities. As a result, the lack of political discussions by the youth could limit the effects of social media platforms on deliberative politics among the youth in Nairobi. This also confirms Biswas, Ingle and Mousumi (2014) assertions that searching for political information on social media is more popular than participating in the discussions.

Regarding the effects of social media use in participatory politics among the youth in Nairobi universities, it is evident that social media plays an important role in enhancing access to political information among the youth. This has partly led to an informed society and partly improved political knowledge among the youth. Many of the youth surveyed said they either voted or intended to vote during the 8 August 2017 general election. Thus, these findings reinforce Muntean's (2015) and Bernhagen and Schmitt's (2014) arguments that with political knowledge, citizens are empowered to understand their political systems and participate in decision-making process. Even though very few youth discuss political issues on social media, majority discuss offline with families and friends and even encouraged others to vote. Online participation can therefore be seen to be having a positive effect on offline political participation. Political actors and government institutions also use social media to communicate, inform as well as interact with the youth through social media. Various exemplars support these utilities. For example, the youth were able to follow politicians like President Kenyatta and Odinga as well as comment, share, like or retweet political posts, videos or links posted by these two leaders. In addition, as a mobilization tool, some politicians and some social media users use these platforms to rally their supporters towards a specific course. Social media also enables the youth in Nairobi to freely air their

opinions and views on issues that affect them. Furthermore, social media is seen to be promoting accountability, enhancing political inclusion and even influencing many people to change their political positions as well as reinforce their political beliefs and opinions. Ultimately, it has enhanced the political participation of the youth in Nairobi County as well as contributed to the growth of issue-based politics. Regardless, there are also negative effects attributed to social media. One is the rise of fake news and propaganda leading to misinformation. The use pseudo accounts as stated earlier has partly contributed to this rise. This also shows why the credibility of political news on social media is low when compared to television, radio and Newspapers. Furthermore, only 40% of the youth surveyed discuss politics on social media. This could be attributed to distortion of truth, abhorrence and hate speech, increase in ethnicity, incitements and intolerance to divergent views which are all exhibited on these platforms. Nonetheless, it is crucial to note that there are other contributing factors to these effects and not just social media. Some of these include lack of quality education, information and knowledge as well as ignorance.

5.2 Conclusions

Evidence from this study thus shows that many youth in Nairobi are quite active on social media particularly on WhatsApp and Facebook. These platforms are essential in both offline and online political activities thus enhancing political knowledge and increasing political participation and inclusion in Nairobi. More political actors, including the government agencies, need to embrace these platforms because they are ideal for reaching out to a majority of the youth in Nairobi. Further, social media is key in capturing their attention towards political issues. From the findings, it can be argued that the more the youth access political information on social media, the more they engage in online political activities like commenting, sharing or liking a political post, video, link or tweet. And the more they

engage in political activities on social media the greater their level of offline forms of political participation. Some of these activities include discussing with family and friends, voting or intending to vote and encouraging others to vote.

As seen in Chapter 2, four factors of cognitive engagement theory are key to understanding political communication and participation on social media particularly among the youth (see, for example, Abdulrauf, Hamid and Ishak, 2015). With enhanced political knowledge as a result of access to political information, some youth can connect essential political values and their interests to public policies as well as asses their preferred political leaders effectively. However, fake news and propaganda can also be seen as impediments. Whereas they are aimed at influencing the masses, they distort facts. Some political discourses on issues that affect the youth are thus perceived to be skewed and lack objectivity. The political interest and policy satisfaction can be manifested through the political posts, reactions and discussions on social media. Even though some youth also feel that the government and other political actors are unresponsive, a majority feel that political discussions on social media among the youth are issue based. They argue that the discussions on social media which are current and emerging are on issues relevant to them. Furthermore, the findings show that they could use social media to assess political leaders and express their opinions freely. However, in building their political interest, the youth suggest that there is need to address barriers that impede genuine political discourse. In essence, their policy satisfaction will grow when the political issues affecting them are addressed.

The manifestation of social media as the new public sphere in Nairobi, Kenya is also evident due to the freedom of expression as the youth can post and share their views and opinions without government or media filters. They can also access a lot of political information with

ease even when they were not actively looking for one. Further, the youth are able to follow and interact with their political leaders like Kenyatta and Odinga through their social media platforms. Just like the "Githeriman" and "Chilobae" trending topics (see discussions in Chapter 4), social media platforms are able to set agendas through the use of "Poli-tainment". This is enabled through the use "Memes" and #Hashtags. In the end, the youth, through social media can determine what the social media society would think of and talk about as well as what the media would report on. From the findings, it can also be argued that social media adheres to Habermas' three preconditions of public sphere. First and foremost, the disregard of status was manifested through the public discussions between the youth and the political actors, for example, through the Facebook live chats between president Kenyatta and the youth. Secondly, common concern was evident through the political issues discussed on social media. In addition, those who liked, shared or reacted to other people's political comments on President Kenyatta's and Mr. Odinga's social media pages seem to have been concerned on the same issues. Inclusivity, which is the third precondition, however, seemed to be problematic. Even though many of the youth surveyed indicated they are on social media, a majority do not participate in political discourse on social media thus are excluded from political discourses therein. Lack of knowledge, immaturity, hatred and ethnicity are also seem to be excluding other social media users from deliberative politics. In fact, whereas social media advances political inclusion, it also promotes selective inclusion and exclusion through groupings on these platforms. For example, there are online political groups like "Daughters of Raila" (see Chapter 4; 39) which excludes those who don't identify with their course.

In relation to modern public sphere (see further discussion in Chapter 2), Dahlgren (2005a) argues that there are three key analytical dimensions. They include structural, representation

and interaction. With structural, some of the key features of the media institutions constitute control and ownership, funding, legal frameworks and their political ecology. In relation to social media platforms, there is need to consider the ecological conditions particularly at the community and socio-political level. In fact, the ownership and management of these social media accounts, the financial capabilities of the owners, the legal guidelines in place, the unresponsiveness of the political actors, and the architectural features of the platforms may inhibit the success of social media as tools for civic use by the youth. With representation, the output of the media for political communication is essential. Some of the key features include accuracy, fairness, agenda setting, pluralism of views, completeness and ideological tendencies (see Dahlgren, 2005a). In relation to social media, the creators of the messages are also seen as the consumers of social media outputs. The youth and other political actors are thus seen as information producers and receivers. They not only seek information but can also set agendas through the use of these platforms. Nevertheless, intolerance to divergent views, lack of credible political information and the rise of fake news on social media platforms have been impediments to the realisation of this dimension. Interaction which is the last dimension refers to the discursive relations that individuals have with the media and among themselves (c.f. Dahlgren, 2005a). From the findings, it is evident that civic engagements have also gone online. With the youth engaging in talks with each other as well as their political leaders on social media, it can be argued that the democratic space in Kenya has been expanded. It is important to note, regardless, that issues like hatred, intolerance, tribalism, invective arguments, ignorance and lack of political knowledge affects the discursive feature. These challenges also lead to exclusion. Furthermore, they could be enhancing tribalism and negative ethnicity through reinforcement of opinions particularly of those in the same circles or associations. In this era of emerging technologies, social media is critical to the existence social media societies. To advance the use of social media for

political purposes among the youth, a number of issues need to be addressed. These are contained in the recommendations below.

5.3 Recommendations

i. With devolution, more political actors in other Counties in Kenya should use social media effectively to engage the youth in political issues that affect them.

ii. The youth should be informed and trained on how best they can use social media platforms to actively engage in political discourse.

iii. There is need for the youth to be empowered on the importance of discursive politics that is free of tribalism, hatred, immaturity and ignorance. It is important for the youth to air their views responsibly so as not to polarize the country by inciting each other.

iv. Social media users need to be educated on how to identify fake news or propaganda so as to be objective in their discussions. There is need for developing an anti-propaganda social media application that will alert users whenever they come across fake news.

v. The findings of this study should be used to formulate political participation policies that would encourage the youth to freely interact with each other and their leaders on issues that affect them.

5.4 Suggestions for further research

i. This study focused on social media platforms. However, further studies should narrow down on the influence of specific social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter on participatory politics.

ii. The study sampled youth from Nairobi County (two public and two private universities) which is majorly cosmopolitan. Similar studies should be carried out countrywide and should focus also on remote areas like Turkana, Garrisa and Kwale Counties.

iii. The target group for this study were the youth between the ages of 18 to 35 in Nairobi universities. A similar study can be done but on other ages outside this bracket.

iv. Further studies should be done to assess whether or not social media enhances tribalism and negative ethnicity among the youth in Nairobi in relation to participatory politics.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I - Questionnaire

Social Media use in participatory politics among the youth in Nairobi, Kenya

I am Masters student at the University of Nairobi conducting a research on the use of social media in participatory politics among the youth in Nairobi Kenya. Studies have shown that there is an increase of social media use in politics around the world. To gauge the political usage of social media in Kenya particularly among the youth, I kindly request you to take a few moments of your time to fill this questionnaire. Your responses will be used for academic purposes only and you are assured of complete anonymity. If you have any question, kindly get in touch with me at fmbetera@gmail.com. Thank you for your support.

Are you:

MALE ☐ FEMALE ☐

Which age bracket do you fall in?

18-23 ☐ 24-29 ☐ 30-35 ☐

1. **Do you use social media?**

   Yes ☐ No ☐

2. **How often do you use social media?**

   Very often ☐ Rarely ☐

3. **What is your preferred social media platform?**

   Facebook ☐ Twitter☐ Snapchat ☐ WhatsApp ☐ YouTube ☐

   Telegram ☐

   Other (Specify)...…….

   Why do you prefer the social media platform chosen above?

4. **Why do you use social media?**

   Entertainment ☐ Chatting ☐ Make friends ☐ Seek information ☐

   Political information ☐ Pastime ☐ Others (Specify) ……

5. **What is your source of political information?**

   Newspaper ☐ Radio ☐ Television ☐ Social Media ☐ Other(Specify)

   Why? …….

6. **Have you accessed political information on social media?**

   Yes ☐ No ☐

7. **Have you ever looked for political information on social media?**

   Yes ☐ No ☐

8. **Do you talk about politics with family and friends?**

   Yes ☐ No ☐

9. **Do you contribute to political discussions on social media?**

   Yes ☐ No ☐

   If yes answer question 10 -11. If not, proceed to question 12.

10. **How often do you discuss politics on social media?**

    Very often ☐ Somewhat often ☐ Somewhat not often ☐ Not often ☐

11. **How freely do you express yourself when contributing to political discussions on social?**

    Very freely ☐ Somewhat freely ☐ Neither freely nor not freely ☐

    Somewhat not freely ☐ Not freely ☐

12. **Have you ever changed your mind on a political stand or opinion after reading/watching something on Social media?**

    Yes ☐ No ☐

13. **How often do you agree with the political opinions or political content your friends post on Social media?**

    Always ☐ Almost Always ☐ Most of the time ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never ☐

14. **Do you think the political information on social media is credible?**

    Yes ☐ No ☐

15. Do you follow any politician on social media?

Yes ☐ No ☐

16. Do you follow any political party on social media?

Yes ☐ No ☐

17. Do you think social media helps citizens communicate with political leaders?

Yes ☐ No ☐

18. How have you been involved in the political process on social media?

a) Posting/Tweeting a political comment
b) Commenting, sharing or liking a political post/tweet/photos/videos/link
c) Starting or joining a political group
d) Persuading others to vote
e) Online protest
f) Contacting public officials
g) Any Other (specify) ……...

19. What offline political activities do you engage in?

a) Attend political meetings
b) Voting or intend to vote
c) Encourage others to vote
d) Donate to a political course/party
e) Protests and demonstration
f) Discuss political issues with friends and family
g) Any Other (specify) ……...

20. Do you think social media has enhanced political participation among the youth?

Yes ☐ No ☐

21. Do you think that social media can be useful in improving political knowledge?

Yes ☐ No ☐

22. Do you think social media use in politics promotes accountability in Kenya?

Yes ☐ No ☐

23. Do you think social media has enhanced political inclusion in Kenya?

Yes ☐ No ☐

24. Do you think the political discussions among the youth on social media are issue-based?

Yes ☐ No ☐ **Why?** ……

25. Do you think the youth are using social media effectively to engage with politics?

Yes ☐ No ☐ **Why?** ……

26. Do you think the Kenyan government is using social media effectively to engage the youth?

Yes ☐ No ☐ **Why?** ……

27. What is the main factor that influences political debates on social media in Kenya?

Tribe ☐ Policies ☐ Political personalities ☐ Emerging issues of the day ☐ Trending topics ☐ Other (Specify) ……..

Thank You

Appendix II - Interview Schedule

1. What are some of the factors that enable the youth use social media?
2. Do you think the youth can easily access political information on social media? Why?
3. Do you think the youth actively engage in political discourses on social media? Why?
4. Do you think the youth freely express their political opinions on social media?
5. Do you think the youth are tolerant to divergent political views? Why?
6. Do you think the political information on social media is credible? Why?
7. What are some of the factors that influence political discourse among the youth in Kenya?
8. What are some of the political activities the youth engage in?
    - Online
    - Offline
9. Do the messages on social media influence political decisions made by Kenyan youth in any way? How?
10. Do you think social media use can contribute to political knowledge and inclusion? Why?
11. Do you think political discourse among the youth on social media is issue-based? Why?
12. What are some of the effects of social media use in participatory politics among the youth in Nairobi?

Appendix III – Certificate of Field Work

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REF: CERTIFICATE OF FIELDWORK

This is to certify that all corrections proposed at the Board of Examiners meeting held on 26/5/2017 in respect of M.A/PhD. Project/Thesis Proposal defence have been effected to my/our satisfaction and the project can be allowed to proceed for fieldwork.

Reg. No: K50/8/832/2015

Name: MBETERA FELIX MEYO PAUL

Title: ASSESSING SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN PARTICIPATORY POLITICS AMONG THE YOUTH IN NAIROBI KENYA

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Appendix IV – Certificate of Corrections

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Name: MBEIERA MEYO FELIX

Title: SOCIAL MEDIA USE AND PARTICIPATORY POLITICS AMONG STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITIES IN NAIROBI

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Appendix V – Originality Report

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