

**SOCIAL MEDIA USE FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICES IN KENYA: A STUDY  
OF TWO UNIVERSITIES.**

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## DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for a Degree in any other university.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this project to my family more specifically to my loving parents, Dr. Alex & Ednah Ronoh. They have been a source of strength throughout my studies; and whose encouragement propels me to finish that which I have started. Special thanks go to Anthony, Edith, Lioba, Felix and Hilda for supporting me throughout the process. I will always appreciate all they have done for me. Thank you Lioba for helping me develop technology skills and for the many hours of proofreading. May God bless you all.

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine social media use for public relations practice in Kenya, A study of Two Universities. Problem statement of the study was that digital communication creates an avenue for publics to access and control information about an institution online. The emergence of the new media necessitates brands or corporates to incorporate the use of this media into their operations so as to allow dialogic communication with the publics. Nature of information online has an impact on institution's image therefore this study examined various public relations practices PR department in the institution and analyzed what social media is use for in implementing public relations activities. The objectives of the study were, to finds out various public relations practices in higher learning institution, to examine which social media platforms are used in the institutions, to analyze what social media is use for in public relations practice in higher learning institution. This research employed two theories: Diffusion of innovation theory and Excellence theory. The research design used is descriptive method, which employs both qualitative and qualitative approaches. Data was collected by conducting interview and through questionnaires to various respondents. Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data while qualitative data were collected by conducting interviews and through focus group discussion. The sample frame was the public relations practitioners in the University of Nairobi and St.Pauls University; Sample population was the internal publics from various faculties in both institutions. Census sampling was used to select PR practitioners and purposive sampling was used to select students' representatives and faculty representative for this study. Qualitative data was analyzed using descriptive analysis technique. Data was analyzed using thematic analysis approach by coding them. Data was presented using histograms and simple percentages to illustrate the responses. The findings outlined that PR practices mainly focused on building and sustaining strong relationship with the publics. Public relations practitioners play an essential role in cultivation of beneficial relationship between an institution and the publics. Through public relations function, an organization develops policies and strategies putting into consideration public interests. This study established that use of social media for public relations activities plays a major role in the institution; in their position public relations practitioners evaluate external and internal opinions, attitude and needs; respond to queries from the publics, respond to inaccurate posts in social media and advise institution's management regarding a crisis or an issue hence influencing decision making and policy implementation. The challenge with the use of social media was that message can be misinterpreted by online users. This study recommends that frequent trainings for public relations practitioners who are the social media manager, to ensure that they have adequate skills about social media platforms. Also ,regular monitoring of what is happening in social media. In this way the practitioners are able to get valuable information needed for a particular event, activity or during a crisis which is helpful in advising and recommending policies and strategies to institution's administration on how to handle the crisis.



# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter entails the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, rationale of the study, significance of the study, justification and scope and limitations of the study.

### 1.2 Background

Public relations is a form of communication that constitute to establishing and maintaining mutual acceptance and understanding between an organization and the publics. It entails crisis and issue management that is useful to executives of an organisation to be knowledgeable about publics' perceptions and to be able to designed policies that attend to public interest. Public relations acts as interface between an institution and its publics as it advises the administration about anticipated environment changes, dynamics and communication trends through research Harlow, (1976).

Since the turn of the century, public relations evolved from press agentry and publicity to become what it is today. The practice can be traced back to Greek rhetoricians around 1800 BC, but it's tough to trace a clear connection from the Aegean to today's public relations profession, according to Grunig and Hunt (1984). It is thought to have originated in the United States, where practitioners claim to be descended from Phineas T Barnum. It's more than likely that it came from a government source in one of the major fighting nations during WWI. Government propaganda groups were formed in order to control information and motivate the populations of the United Kingdom, France, and the United States.

Throughout the twentieth century, the one-way informational paradigm of public relations as a technique of persuasive PR remained the dominant mode. It was exemplified in the United States and the United Kingdom by press agents who offered to get their clients' names in the press in exchange for a fee based on the lineage that appeared. Edward Bernays made a substantial contribution to the creation of public relations in the 1920s. He advocated for a more sophisticated one-way communication technique, claiming that public relations tries to manipulate public opinion through the use of information, persuasion, and adjustment Watson, (2007).

A developed idea of two-way communication, strategy, and feedback applied to the program of activity was missing from these early techniques. Bernays and other major US practitioners, some of whom worked closely with advertising agencies, were more thorough in their study and planning, but press agents and publicity professionals continued to take a short-term view. Instead of creating strategies to accomplish client objectives, they focused on getting column inches of text in newspapers and magazines. Mutual benefit and goodwill became more popular in the 1950s, and public relations began to shift away from its roots in publicity and toward a more structured strategy. Despite tremendous improvements, this issue continues to be a major source of concern. In 2004, a research study for Public Relations Institute in the United Kingdom concluded with a series of recommendations, including the notion that the PR business should concentrate more attention on ethics.

Persuasion is the goal outcome of many public relations initiatives, whether it is to change the government's attitude toward a client, promote an employer's point of view, or raise awareness of a product or service and hence support sales. It's also the standard used by clients who want to know if the PR effort resulted in improvements that were both useful and profitable. Bernays, on the other hand, did not support one-way, crude communication. His goal was to use social science approaches to first investigate the situation and then devise the most effective communication methods. Due to post-Cold War reorganizations on the continent, which sparked a new wave of nationalism, increase consumerism in new Eastern European markets, and a concomitant expansion of Western European and American consultancies keen to capitalize on those new market prospects.

In comparison to western European or American practices, PR has evolved quickly in Central and Eastern Europe. Between 1989 and 1992, political and economic shifts allowed PR to establish a foothold in that area. Converting economy based on free market and with a central plan in a short amount of time posed significant problems for businesses and society as a whole. Following the fall of communism, public relations firms played an essential role in the privatization of enterprises owned by the government as a result of the support for amendments of the market. International organization frequently establishes branches in the area which were led by experienced experts previously lived, worked in United States and United Kingdom in numerous Central and Eastern European nations.

According to Awniczak (2001) the long periods of focal as well as Eastern European PR practice to be a change in the practice. This benefits organizations with adjusting to the shift of midway arranged economy to showcase economies. Principle errands of change incorporate; to construct a picture of free enterprise with a human face to tie down open acknowledgment for monetary changes to make public consciousness of the wide scope of conceivable elective market economy models to work with powerful working of a market economy by advancing business venture and privatization, drawing in unfamiliar speculation and presenting market economy instruments and foundations. Normal practice was that American or western European PR specialists headed the public workplaces of a worldwide PR network Szondi (2004).

According to Sheehan (2014), the moderately fleeting UK-based Empire Marketing Board played a critical PR job in advancing British Commonwealth, including Australian, items. The effect of British or potentially Dutch provincial legacy is noticeable in some Africa nations and is built as critical as far as the improvement of nearby PR ventures. The nations incorporate Kenya, Nigeria, Zambia, Botswana, and Zimbabwe. Early PR was, in this manner, perceived in these nations as essentially government data as well as promulgation that arose in relationship with frontier power from right on time in the 20th century. Interestingly, current PR in Uganda and Nigeria is seen to arise in light of times of tyranny and additionally affable distress.

Examination of the historical backdrop of Public Relations (PR) in Kenya is founded majorly chronicled occasions which, emphatically or adversely, formed the region. In Kenya, the situation of public relations is intently attached to important occasions which occurred generally after Kenya accomplished autonomy from Britain in 1963. Kenya turned into a British Protectorate in 1895 and proclaimed as frontier country in 1920. The British colonialists perceived the significance of cultivating great social and relations with citizens of Kenya, Arabs and Indians in the country Mbeke, (2009). Citizens of Kenya collaborated PR practices and methods in public occasions. Nearby people group had their representative, consultant and expert of function. Strategies, for example, routine were utilized to convey a significant message or to keep visitors engaged during a social affair.

In 1971, the Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) was dispatched. Since then, the body is functional and has developed consistently. PR associations like other corporations, has secretariat, a chief board chose by its individuals. It likewise settled a set of principles, which it controls PRSK,

(2014). One more sign of PR proceeded with development is increment of schools, colleges providing degrees programmes in PR. Approximately 10 private and public schools and universities offer a public relations course as one of their courses Kiambi, (2010).

Rather than the customary interchanges worldview, the components of the special blend like communication and public relations, which were generally inside the control of institutions or brands, have now become democratized as web users would now be able to produce and change content Mangold and Faulds, (2009). User- created content has been worked with by Web 2.0 Kaplan and Haenlein, (2010). PR professionals are carrying out the online media devices in the public relations role, as it is making their occupation more practical, and straightforward Eyrich et al., (2008). It tends to be contended that in view of the modernized media setting of today, the improvement of web-based media has made new significance of two things, one is the capacity to load the news in an intelligible manner with however much detail and media as could be expected and also is a comprehension of enormous information and how it very well may be utilized over the long haul and to excel Schroeder, (2014).

In recent public relations, organizations focus on blending of the PR models among various strategies or specialized devices inside one public relations campaigns or activities. It is ideal to consider the models hypothetical builds that, in execution, become consolidated through the blended thought processes of PR. As indicated by Edwards and Hodges, (2011) the way that brands are gathering gigantic measures of data about their customers and various partners through web-based media the purported huge information along these lines contending that this ought to be considered while considering the power balance among organizations and customers.

Kunsch (2003) contends that communication blend is required to incorporate new specialized instruments and practices into the practice of public relations. Kunsch features the impact of public relations practitioners in organizations contending that the new communication blend ought to be deliberately coordinated and intuitive albeit focused in public relations to advance common advantages for an organization, its various stakeholders, and the general public. Kunsch portrays coordinated communication as a way of thinking that drives the combination of various regions and empowers synergetic activity. Adding that corporate communication, advertising and organization's internal communication are intertwined together in communication blend or mix.

Although plainly oriented on the influence of the creative highlights of the new media of communication on public relations practice, Breakenridge's (2008) concept of PR was centered on the effect of the inventive highlights of the new media of communication on organizational communication. Instead of just changing expert techniques, it was offered as a shift in the mindset of PR professionals. Furthermore, this shift in mindset is unmistakably from a lopsided interaction with partners and stakeholders to a more balanced dialogue, moving away from advertising to debating.

The new perspective on public relations expects that markets are drawn to and kept by brands or institutions that can make valuable relationship. The worldview of public relations is changing significantly into the supporting supposition PR is a relationship-building proficient action that enhances organizations since it expands the ability of business sectors, crowds, and publics to help them instead of to restricting their endeavors, Heath (2000).

Advanced innovations have become unavoidable and omnipresent in contemporary day to day routine. As of late, online media have attracted consideration because of dramatic development in clients in progressively more limited periods. Likewise, web-based media or social media, which were essentially utilized for communication and sharing inside one's very own organizations of connections, are presently additionally locus of expert collaborations. Manuel et al (2012).

### **1.3 Statement of Problem**

Many organizations' public relations practices nonetheless depend on one way communication models and processes to disseminate information. They include the press releases, conferences, advertisements, as well as sponsorship activities that do not take feedback or the relevance of the information to its audiences into account. The lopsided communication models appeals more to organizations since they appear to give them control over the information disseminated through mainstream media such as print and broadcast. They are at this point inappropriate for emerging communication practices enabled by social media interactivity Damasioet.al, (2012). Symmetrical communication is now possible thanks to digital communication. With the incorporation of social media use for communication, the public has greater control of information over the source. As a result, organizations and brands must communicate with them in a symmetrical manner. Despite

the fact that social media allows for immediate interaction and feedback, public relations professionals continue to rely on asymmetric communication channels.

Incorporating digital communication channels that allow for dialogue, symmetry, and feedback to both parties is essential for public relations practitioners in organizations. Public relations professionals have adopted the use of digital communication to foster positive relationships between organizations and their publics. As a result, the purpose of this study is to investigate what digital communication, specifically social media, is use for in public relations practices in higher learning institutions.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

**General objective:** This study sought to analyze what social media is use for in public relations practices in higher learning institutions.

#### **Specific objectives**

- i. To analyze various public relations practices in higher learning institution
- ii. To examine which social media platforms are used in PR practice in higher learning institution
- iii. To analyze what social media is used for in PR practice in higher learning institution

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

- i. What are the various public relations practices in higher learning institution?
- ii. Which social media platforms are used in higher learning institution?
- iii. What social media is used for in PR practice in higher learning institution?

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

Social media use for public relations practices study is useful to public relations practitioners in organizations. The use of this medium in PR practice is useful in that, Instead of one-way communication, which is typically dissemination of information, makes communication two-way by collecting data from the public. Integration of the new medium allows practitioners to engage in dialogue with publics, understanding their needs and attitudes and developing on public relations activities and policies of the organization to meet those needs. In communication, dialogic communication is more effective than lopsided communication, particularly in the case where an organization is regulated by government.

This study is significant to PR practitioners in that it allows practitioners to understand their publics. Knowledge of audience ensures that communication is specifically targeted to publics who want, need, or care about the information by making public relations activities strategic. Social media integration into PR operations prevents practitioners from incorporating resources for communication activities that don't reach their intended audiences or don't do the job they're supposed to. Additionally, this study provides an insight on how the institutions ought to plan, develop, and refine public relations practices and activities through the use of social media. This study equally serves as a platform for further enquiries in related subject matters and as a resource material for researchers who intend to carry out studies in this and other related areas.

## **1.7 Rationale of the Study**

Communication and public relations practice have been drastically redefined with advancement of social and digital media. Public relations practitioners are required to coordinate increasingly complex public relations strategies and define tactics and targets to ensure that an organization's intended messages reach target audiences. This study through findings and recommendations provides organizations with the knowledge and practical importance of incorporation and application of trends and latest technologies and communication strategies into public relations operations.

## **1.8 Justification of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine social media use for public relations practices. Sakali, (2017) investigated the impact of social media on public relations. The data collected in this study can be used to raise awareness and provide information for organizations about various public relations practices in institutions as well as an analysis entailing what social media is use for in public relations practice in institutions. The study's main focus is to analyze the use of social media for public relations practice. Study findings may provide consumers with information that potentially will influence public relations operations in various organizations.

## **1.9 Scope and limitation of the Study**

A major limitation of this study was unwillingness of the respondents to respond to the questions during the interview. The researcher however structured the questions so as to specify a limited list of available answer choices whenever possible. The uncooperative attitude of some members of staff of the department of public relations was also a major limitation. Other respondents were hesitant with some information. However, the researcher assured the respondents that the findings would be used only for academic purpose.

Also, data collection period took a longer time since it was hard meet the interviewees for interview sessions since they were held up with official duties. It took numerous visits to the respective offices to finally get the information needed. The researcher also encountered other challenges or limitations such as none cooperation by some respondent who selected the questions to respond to during interviews hence some questions were incompletely answered. The researcher though redesigned or restructured those particular research questions in a different and simplified way so as to get the respondents answered those particular questions.

### **1.9.1 Operational Definition of Terms**

- Public relations - is a profession dedicated to the effective use of communication
- Social media - is any digital tool that allows users to quickly create and share content with the public
- Communication- transmission of information, ideas, attitudes, or emotion from one person or group to another or others primarily through a medium
- Technology- application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes



- Integration - Act of bringing together smaller components into a single system that functions as one
- Publics - group within a population that have mutual concerns vis-à-vis the organisation
- Image - general impression of a person, organization or product/service to the public
- Practitioner - person actively engaged in a profession
- PRSK - Public Relations Society of Kenya
- PR - Public Relation
- PRO- Public relations officer
- SPU- St.Pauls University
- UON-University of Nairobi

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews, concept of the practice of public relations in organizations, social media platforms and social media usefulness to public relations practice, theoretical, empirical and conceptual framework of the use of social media for public relations practices.

Public relations is a management function that establishes and maintains two-way reciprocal relationships and communication between an organization and the general public, stakeholders, and businesses. A good public relationship in management systems determines a company's success because it includes research, planning, and evaluation before decisions are implemented. Publicity management, as well as interactions with outsiders and the government, plays a critical role in any organization, and it is the responsibility of PR practitioners to keep it in good shape. Hazleton, (2006).

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media is a group of Internet-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content and are built on the ideological and technological foundations of the Web. According to Boyd (2007), social media platforms are online sites that allow users to create a public profile or a page within a system or specific platform that display other users details with whom one can connect, view and navigate their own individual connections as well as those made by others within the social system or framework.

#### **2.2 The Practice of Public Relations in Organisations**

According to Rosenberg (2013), the practice of public relations includes management oversight of organizational internal communications policies and actions, management oversight of organizational external policies and actions, and coordination of internal and external communications. The management perspective of public relations, according to Theaker (2004), is twofold: first, assisting in the collection and interpretation of information from the social

environment in order to make strategic decisions, and second, communicating the strategic vision and goals.

According to Metha & Xavier (2012), public relations is used for a variety of settings, tend to range from in-house government or public affairs to corporate development roles in small, intermediate, huge, publicly traded, and non-profit organizations. Public relations officers utilize communication planning and management to develop and strengthen an organization's reputation as well as establish and maintain relationships that are important to the organization's goals. Most strategic communications departments are in charge of overseeing and responding to dynamic environment, such as issues, preconceptions, partnerships, and public image, while also contributing to the company's desire to retain effective working environments through internal communication. Employee communication that is effective describes corporate strategy and shares updated information so that professionals truly understand necessity transformation and devote their initiatives and concepts to aiding the organization achieve its objectives and vision.

According to Seitel (2011), the organization role of public relations is capable of continuously evaluating internally and externally beliefs, perceptions, and wants, recommending administration on their possible impact, and acting as an instrument in bringing about policy changes and directing new directions. As a result, in order to achieve organizational missions, top-level executives and public relations practitioners should have a comprehensive understanding of their target audiences. The internally and externally stakeholders can determine these organizational missions. The public relations officers act as a counselor and mediator to management, assisting in the translation of private goals into reasonable, publicly acceptable policy and action. This viewpoint clearly demonstrates that relationships are at the heart of public relations and are viewed as a necessary component for an organization's effective operation.

Grunig and Repper (1992) stress that, with the goal for PR to be regarded and utilized adequately by ranking directors, it should work deliberately so as to convey genuine worth to the organization and assists it with accomplishing its goals and objectives. To do this, they contend professionals ought to do examination into the attributes of their interest and target groups, with the goal that they can see how the publics relate and react to the organization public relations practices and

communication. In view of significant attributes, PR professionals would then be able to section main interest groups and design suitable communication strategies more successfully.

An organization and its environment, according to Von Bertalanffy (1968), are differentiated by a boundary throughout which communication and resources flow. Public relations practitioners are seen as playing a critical role in bridging this gap, as they provide information about a company to the public and bring environmental information back to the organization's decision makers. With one foot inside and the other outside, the practitioner keeps an eye on the boundary on a regular basis Grunig & Hunt (1984). In today's organizations, both of these roles are used. Public relations practitioners gather analysis of key publics and issues through formally and informally research mechanisms and feed it back into the organization. Organizations need to know about key publics' attitudes and behaviors in order to plan their objectives and vision.

Public relations professionals perform a significant operations and services in determining the source and usefulness of information obtained, information that may be significant to the organization's relatively brief plans and thus acted on right away, or it may have an impact on its relatively long plans. Vision oriented organizations build advanced amounts of data and information on concerns and interested parties to aid in the identification of industry and area of concern trends, as well as to advise their long-term strategy. Public relations practitioners who support this role become the organization's eyes and ears, staying in touch with key stakeholders to ensure that the organization is always up to date on developments in its surroundings.

The role of public relations management is to create and maintain meaningful relationships that would provide input information to the organization; but nevertheless, in securing such inputs, organizations may need to modify their decisions and actions and respond to the environment. Witmer, Cutlip, Center, and Broom (2006); Cutlip, Center, and Broom (2006). Techniques in the type of environmental and organizational change initiatives that yield and ensure stability in organisational systems' are what lead to adaptation Everett,(1990). Transforming organizational strategy to benefit one group may result in the disenfranchisement of another. As a result, the public relations management role assists the organization's top decision making in maneuvering this mountainous circumstances and implementing a variety of relational maintenance techniques to accomplish the best results conceivable.

According to Metha, (2012) assertions, a functional approach to public relations is characterized by symmetrical communication between the organization and the environment. This necessitates resources for institutions to not only oversee their surroundings and public perception, but also to develop positive relationships with organizations and key stakeholders. These partnerships are based on mutual trust and a shared desire to find a solution that meets the stakeholders' needs. In open systems, public relations work with the environment to figure out what is being said about matters that affect numerous system components.

Public relations practice in organisations entails formulating policies, developing communication strategies and advising administration for influencing legislation. Influence can be achieved through advocacy, lobbying or activism. Advocacy is useful to a society since it influence social change in all sectors. Organisations typically use these methods to also influence the publics in favour of opinion. According to Bunn & Ayer (2004), advocacy initiatives for social justice result in tangible changes in people's lives. They increase people's understanding of their rights and obligations as citizens and promote civil society's involvement in decision-making. Effective lobbying may also increase the accountability of government institutions by strengthening links across the sectors of society.

Inside and outside the organization, public relations leaders attend to deal a variety of audiences. The audiences exist since they interact with or are affected by the organization in some way, or because they may form around a problem, opportunity, crisis or issue Repper & Grunig (1992). To ensure symmetric communication between the organization and the publics such as internal employees, investor and the community, long-term ongoing public relations programs must be developed. New programs may be incorporated into operations to complement those new project and initiatives, that may necessitate establishing contact with publics and audiences with whom an organization has never previously communicated. Publics categorization and characteristics is tracked by public relations managers to ensure that the organization's public relationship is built from the start. Identifying the emergence of new publics as well as monitoring existing publics is part of the boundary-spanning role.

### **2.3 Social Media Technology**

Social media platforms are new sorts of data creation and sharing tools. The devices are utilized in advanced surroundings, in what commitments and connections among all partners are empowering a serious level of community oriented information creation, sharing and relationship building Chang and Kannan, (2008); O'Reilly, (2005). Web-based media practices in the public sector incorporate the utilization of online social network like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, websites or other advanced media sharing sites to help organization' administration achieve its objectives and build a beneficial relationship with the publics Bretschneider and Mergel, (2010; Mergel,( 2011); Mergel, (2010)

YouTube, set up in 2005, is the world's most notable web based video neighborhood, countless people can find, watch and proposition at first made accounts YouTube, (2005). YouTube gives a conversation to people to interface, enlighten, and get others across the globe and goes probably as a critical scattering stage for interesting substance producers and advertisers, tremendous and little. YouTube is arranged in San Bruno, California and usages Adobe Flash Video advancement to show a wide variety of customer delivered video content, including film cuts, TV catches, and music accounts, similarly as amateur substance, for instance, video composing for a blog and short novel accounts. In November 2006, inside a drawn out season of its dispatch, YouTube was purchased by Google Inc. in one of the most talked about acquisitions to date. YouTube has gone into different affiliation relations with content providers, for instance, CBS, BBC, Universal Music Group, Sony Music Group, Warner Music Group, NBA, The Sundance Channel and various others YouTube, (2005). YouTube offered the public a beta site of the site in May 2005, six months before the power dispatch in November 2005. The site grew rapidly, and in July 2006, the association announced that more than 65,000 new accounts were being moved every day, and that the site was getting 100 million video sees every day. YouTube, (2005).

Facebook is an individual to individual correspondence site dispatched in February 2004, and it is furtively worked by Facebook. Facebook, (2004). It was set up by Mark Zuckerberg and others when he was an undergraduate student at Harvard; but when the site was from the get go dispatched, it was restricted to Harvard students for socialization. Later the benefit was loosened to everyone that is 13 years or more settled Boyd, (2007). As of July 2010, Facebook has more than 500 million unique customers. In January 2009, Facebook was situated as the most used casual

communication all over the planet. Also, in May 2010, Google detailed that a bigger number of people visited Facebook than another site in the world. It declares that this was found from revelations on 1,000 objections across the world. TIMES, (2010). Customers may make a singular profile; add various customers as friends, and exchange messages, including customized alerts, photos and comments when they update their profile. Moreover, Facebook customers may join ordinary interest customer get-togethers, facilitated by workplace, school, school, or various characteristics.

Twitter is a miniature writing for a blog interpersonal organization that permits clients to share constant data in short sprays of up to 140 characters for each tweet. It was established in 2006 by Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams, and Biz Stone. It is online likeness cell phone message informing. Twitter clients can follow different clients or convey by utilizing hashtags. The hashtags fill in as client recognizing watchwords or keywords to what others believe are significant. Twitter is situated in San Francisco yet it is utilized in different nations Sheedy (2011).

Podcast is an advanced radio or video program downloadable from the Internet. It is feasible to prefer a digital recording as one would to a blog. One can listen to an entire scope of projects and voices; similarly as sites have permitted clients to become authors without managing a media channel constrained by another person, podcasting has permitted any individual who likes doing as such to turn into a telecaster. Numerous conventional public broadcasts are presently likewise accessible in digital recording design. Many compare the shift from conventional radio to web recordings to that of customary TV channels to on request online administrations, however at a lot quicker pace Main, (2016).

A blog is a site where passages blog entries are normally shown backward sequential order. Blog basics (2017), characterizes a blog as a habitually refreshed internet based individual diary or journal. Writes ordinarily permit users to remark on blog entries. An ordinary blog will highlight text, pictures and connections to other related online journals and sites. Blogs are phenomenal method for speaking with staff, financial investors, industry individuals, writers and forthcoming clients. Publishing content to a blog likewise assists with encouraging a local area around a brand, and gives a chance to accumulate prompt criticism on advancements.

Instagram is the breakout web-based media foundation of 2015. Instagram, by its very nature of sharing sifted pictures has made it immensely available and effective also, particularly with the young people. Instagram clients in Kenya making it greater than Twitter or LinkedIn. It has additionally become conceivable as of late to run Instagram Ads in Kenya utilizing the Facebook Ads dashboard and a lot of Kenyan brands are giving it a shot with incredible achievement.

The fundamental admonition to LinkedIn anyway is that the commitment there are for experts and as such it's more slanted to business commitment dissimilar to the more adaptable manner of speaking on Facebook and Twitter. This accordingly suggests that it is explicitly for significant business related and business matters, LinkedIn is famous in associations and many individuals secure positions there and organizations additionally search for competitors there as well. LinkedIn has around 1.3 million clients in Kenya. Brands can purchase LinkedIn Ads for crusades in Kenya.

## **2.4 Social Media Usefulness**

As indicated by Doriane et.al (2011), Social media catalyst interactions and discussions with contacting a more extensive crowd utilizing the long tail idea, which implies discussions that can be passed on to various forums online. There are a number of communication channels used in various institution that include use of calls, messages and physical meeting or gatherings. The new communication channels have their respective set of limitations, such as forgetting a message, neglecting to take notes during a meeting, and searching for data in a massive list of messages, all of which may be challenging. The use of web-based media sites has increased the number of communication channels and their adequacy in institutions. Individuals no longer need to waste their time because it is now simple to send messages via a moment courier or a tweet and receive a response very instantly. Online media has also aided in the development of collaboration among colleagues in an organization, resulting in a better outcome.

When a group is encouraged to fill in collectively, allowing them to share responsibility, the outcome will be enormous in comparison to what an individual might have accomplished. In such cases, the internet media serves as a platform for people to express themselves and share their ideas. A group's general survivability can be increased through communication and collaboration. If their spokespeople have a well-developed social presence, organizations should allow them to utilize their organizations. This will bring about proficient increases as these web-based media will



empower teaming up without pioneers in their individual ventures. Additionally, this helps the workers keep awake to date with the most recent advancements in the business and furthermore stay associated with the top users Watson et al (2011).

The short presentation on the intangible or long-term benefits of internet media is really easy Hollier,(2009). Participating in web-based media helps strengthen the brand experience, which helps to grow the brand. When a company has a well-crafted brand name, it becomes more enticing to customers as well as present and potential employees. As a result, web-based media will aid in the development of a good reputation for a company. A brand may be described in a few terms, whether it is in the customer or company environment. It helps to sustain the brand in the personalities of the purchasers by establishing a brand.

The organization may continually sustain the brand name using web-based media. Customers benefit from a brand when they use an item or service, as well as when they associate with a company Carraher, Parnell, Carraher, Carraher, and Sullivan (2006). The interactions of an organization's employees are the starting point for brand attention and awareness. Assuming that an organization is pleasant and kind then an organization through public relation practitioners ought to make it known by incorporating on the web Carraher, Parnell, and Spillan, (2009). Digital communication platform creates an amazing method for imparting the brand worth and brand quality as they work with open types of communication.

One more method for making brand awareness and visibility for institution is by engaging with the publics through open discussion using digital communication platform. Kukulska-Hulme, (2010). Whenever completed appropriately, it may be useful for practitioners to collect essential information and even support from the publics. Those publics are additionally likely to positively repute the organization in a functional and touchy manner Carraher, (2011). The significant challenge for social media is to ensure that there is reliability and credibility with information dissemination. Social media can be utilized to be practical, straightforward, and for having the option to convey issues on time accordingly lessening bits of hearsay, contrary talk, and spurring individuals to represent the organization Hollier, (2009).

Digital media is best for the accompanying circumstances; advance open communication among representatives and the board; empower workers to share project thoughts and work in groups

viably, which helps in sharing information and encounters; online media likewise advances better substance, for instance, webcast and recordings, than straightforward message; assists with imparting cooperatively among current and expected clients, in getting criticism, item definition, item improvement, or any types of client support and backing; energize individuals, or some portion of the organization's representatives, to become individuals from a very much perceived local area; Social media turns into a decent setting for conversations and turns into an exemplary objective of showcasing and interchanges, yet the organizations should guarantee that the representatives are holding fast to the principles and behaviors of digital media.

## **2.5 Empirical Framework**

Web-based media applications present a type of mechanical and social development for government and are in this manner saw as profoundly inventive and periodically testing or even problematic Rogers, (1995). Individuals have begun to utilize online media applications, for example, Meet Up or Facebook to sort out themselves or find a typical voice some time before government has treated these devices in a serious way as a legitimate data channel Shirky, (2008, 2010). As a rule government associations are overpowered by the sheer volume of tweets and additionally remarks on their Facebook newsfeeds that are gathering momentum through the network.

Social media have been joined into advertising and corporate communication since their origin. Saxton and Waters (2014) outlined that Facebook and twitter are particularly preferred by various stakeholders since the platforms facilitate dialogic and mobilizational messages. Moreover, web-based media have been incorporated in numerous communications areas. Schultz, Utz, and Göritz (2011) analyzed the impacts of web-based media procedures to the users' emergency communication like sharing data and leaving a message and responses which incorporate readiness to boycott and they tracked down that the medium matters more than the message.

Since their beginnings, social media has been used in public relations research. It entails various online media, like social media platform that is Facebook and Twitter, content local area which include Instagram, virtual social world and YouTube. These online media structures have been analyzed by huge loads of communication particularly PR. Eyrich, Padman, and Sweetser (2008)

explored PR specialists on their reception and adoption of social media platform and their opinions on the development of the new media into PR practice. They observed that PR experts utilized six distinctive online media devices expertly and were bound to take on the more settled and institutional tools.

Other studies consider web-based media as an avenue to lead public campaigns through communication. A functional case is PC producer Dell and its Digital Nomads online campaigns. Dell utilizes a blend of platform communication such as Facebook, online journals, and content networks, YouTube recordings, to show how its scope of PCs cause people to turn into an itinerant versatile labor force Kaplan and Haenlein, (2010). Various analyses perceive online platforms as channels for information dissemination. Public relations practitioner examine social media pages and updates of brands and institution to analyze and plan how to deliberately develop communication strategies to enhance a good relationship between an organization and their key stakeholders and publics Sweetser and Lariscy, (2008); Rybalko and Seltzer,( 2010). The results of the research established that web-based media acts as data source and the channel for collaboration among the publics and organization.

The researches explore the impacts of social media on the practice of public relation. The result factors incorporate public involvement, attitudes, behaviour and perceptions greatly influence establishment and maintenance of beneficial relationship between organization and the publics. By joining in the conversations embedded in a company's social networking sites pages by commenting on the organization and its products or services, expressing support, making suggestions, and sharing the organizations' posts, online stakeholders can directly engage the organizations and each other on a more personal and social level.

Organizations' connection nurturing tactics have been studied in public relations research. Kelleher and Miller (2006) created online public relations-specific relationship maintenance techniques and assessed the potential benefits of organizational blogs over regular Web sites. They concluded that trust, contentment, control mutuality, and commitment were linked to perceived relational strategies conversational human voice and expressed relational commitment.

The study done by Mutua (2018) sought to determine the effects of internet on in- public relations public relations in institutions of higher learning institutions in Kenya. The findings indicated that

the tool that is commonly used to communicate is email with a mean of 3.13 followed by newsletter with mean of 2.67 with both WWW and virtual communication tying with mean of 2.58. the study also found out that the function mostly communicated via website was accessing terms notes with a mean of with the mean of 3.01 mean followed by website with a mean of 2.91. According to the findings, the respondent strongly agreed that the internet made information easily accessible to the University.

According to Sakali (2017) study findings revealed that social media had impacted positively on service delivery at the immigration department. The findings determined that social media had created a convenient avenue for publics to make enquiries and received guidance simultaneously from the officers. Secondly, social media had widened accessibility to information, whereby the public no longer had to physically visit the office to get information or service. Furthermore, social media had eased communication between public relations officers and other line state departments hence the PR officers were positions to relay the same to the enquiring public hence offering timely responses to issues at hand. Moreover, findings determined that social media engagement with the public generated immediate responses hence improved trust and confidence in public service. This research sought to analyze social media use for public relations practices in higher learning institutions in Kenya.

## **2.6 Theoretical Framework**

### **2.6.1 Diffusion of Innovation Theory**

The diffusion of innovations theory proposed by Everett Rogers aims to explain how, why, and at what pace new ideas and technologies spread. According to Rogers, diffusion is the process through which an invention spreads over time among the members of a social system. Rogers (2003) defines adoption as the decision to fully exploit an invention as the best course of action available, whereas rejection is the decision not to accept an innovation. Diffusion, according to Rogers, is the process through which an invention is conveyed to members of a social system over time via specified routes. Innovation, communication channels, time, and the social structure are the four fundamental components of the transmission of innovations, according to this theory.

To have a successful campaign, each public relations professional must consider each of the four main elements of innovation, communication channels, time, and the social system. The

innovation could be linked to a public relations issue or an idea that public relations professionals are attempting to communicate to their target audience. Public relations professionals must set time limits and how the campaign will unfold over time in order to properly and effectively disseminate this information.

Knowing the diffusion theory can also help public relations professionals understand why and how their target audience will react to the product, service or an organisation they're trying to promote. The diffusion theory describes how members of a given culture adapt a new idea, product, or practice, and it can be applied to more than just communication but to the entire world. The diffusion of innovation theory examines how members of society adopt new innovative ideas and make decisions about them. The diffusion process involves both mass media and interpersonal communication channels. Human capital is a big part of the theory. According to the theory, in order to achieve development and sustainability, innovations should be widely adopted.

### **2.6.2 Excellence Theory**

The Excellence Theory of Public Relations proposes how public relations improve the effectiveness of organizations, how it is organized and managed, and the conditions in which organizations and their environments become more effective Gruning,(2008). Components of the Excellence Theory, according to Gruning, enables a PR specialist to promote the PR profession because they perform work that many people believe is only done by marketing practitioners. Environment monitoring is an important communication strategy since it allows public relations practitioners to gather information about a variety of audiences through a variety of channels. The discussed monitoring is a technique used by public relations professionals to gather information about their target audience's needs and current attitudes toward a particular organization or issue.

The value of public relations to organizations and society is defined by the social responsibility of managerial decisions and the quality of stakeholder and general public involvement. According to the theory, an organization must engage in ways which solve issues and achieve the goals of stakeholders as well as management in order to be effective. In socially appropriate ways in socially acceptable ways, companies must scan their surroundings for publics who are affected by possible organizational decisions or who want organizations to make decisions to solve issues that are important to them Gruning (2008). Consequently, in order to cultivate high-quality, long-term

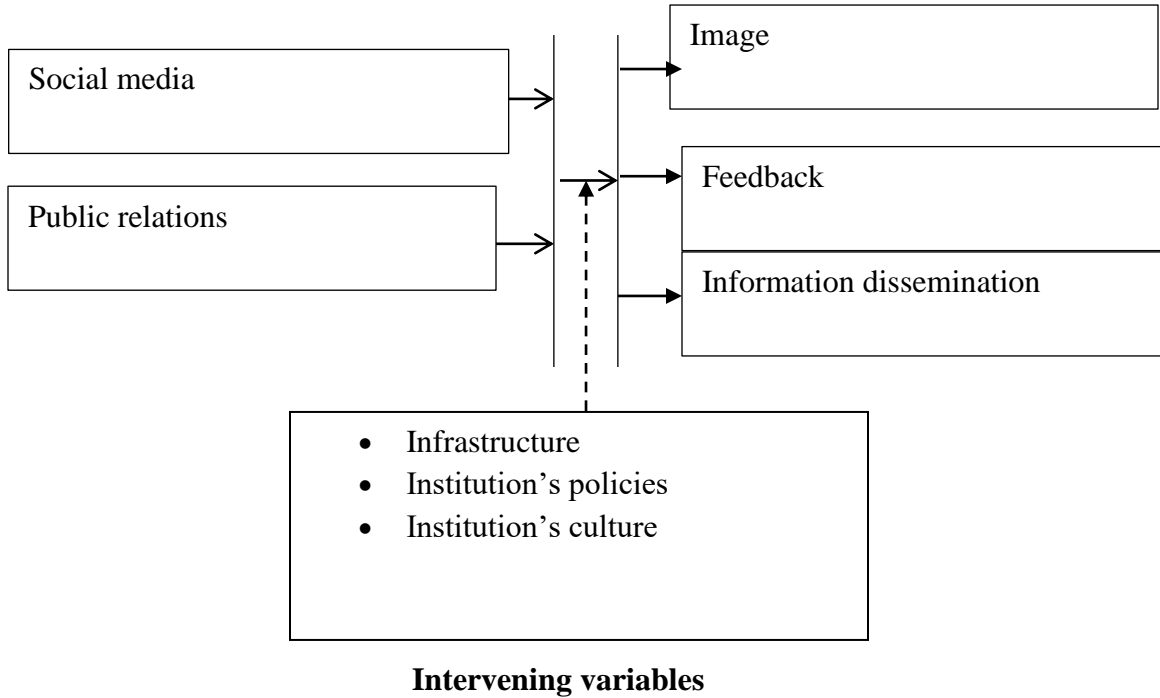
connections with the public, organizations must engage symmetrically with individuals, taking both the organization's as well as the public's interests into account.

Social media is a stage that PR specialists can explicitly use for environment monitoring. Online media in itself is a natural checking apparatus that permits professionals to look and report significant information identified with their audience. Web-based media is valuable in that PR experts utilize catchphrases identified with their foundation or association to take advantage of discussions that are happening identified with those themes. What's more, PR experts likewise use hashtags during efforts to gauge how powerful a methodology is on the web and to see its publics' reactions progressively. Excellence theory is helpful to this review since it empowers professionals to explore through web-based media about qualities of their interest groups, so they can all the more likely see how to relate with the publics. In view of pertinent qualities, PR specialists are then in a situation to fragment target audience and design suitable communication strategies conveniently and effectively.

## 2.8 Conceptual framework

### Independent variables

### Dependent variables



**Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework**

The incorporation of social media in various sectors has drastically increased globally. Public relations professionals have adopted and integrated the new media into their operations. Through digital media, the PROs get information, feedback and measure who are talking about their institutions in various platforms. The new media brings concrete benefits for the organization through its' platforms which provides an avenue for symmetric communication, monitoring of the environment that helps build good relations with the public. Dialogic communication helps to establish, maintain and build a good relationship between an institution and the publics.

Even though organizations have integrated social media as a means of communication, intervening factors such as infrastructure, organization's policies and culture is barrier to public relations practitioners. The new media helps an organisation to disseminate information to wider publics, increase the visibility of the organization to a large geographical location, social media also provide an avenue for public relations practitioners to assess the perceptions and attitudes of the publics through the feedback from various social media platform which is beneficial to decision &

policy making As a consequence of social media use helps public relations practitioners improves organizational communication, strategic role in assuring that organizational communication reaches the intended publics through an effective and convenient channel so as to build a desirable image and reputation.

Organization's formal structure, policies and culture predict the parties involved during decision and policies making. Centralized leadership keeps the decision making, management role, in the hands of top managers. Such hierarchical structures can be ineffective especially when dealing with dynamic external environments because they depend on the input of fewer number of individual for making decisions. To ensure effectiveness, organizations need to be decentralized since organizations' management style impacts on employees' attitude and productivity.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This section presents the methodology that was used in this study. It contains the research design, the target population, sample size, sampling procedure, and instruments for data collection, validity and reliability of the instruments, procedure for data collection, analysis presentation and ethical considerations

#### **3.2 Research Design**

Descriptive design was used in this study to collect information from the respondents on their opinions and attitudes in relation to social media use for public relations practice in higher learning institutions. According to Orodho, (2003) descriptive survey is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering questionnaires to a sample of individuals. It is used when collecting information about people's attitudes, opinions, habits or any of the variety of education or social issues Orodho and Kombo,(2002). The design uses both quantitative and qualitative approach. Data was obtained by conducting interviews, through focus group discussion and administering questionnaires to the respondents. Quantitative data was collected by distributing the questionnaires to the class representatives from the sampled faculties in both institutions. They were given time to complete answering the questions. All the questionnaires were gathered after the respondents' response to the questions. Qualitative data was collected through scheduled interviews to Public relations practitioners from both institutions and faculty representatives from both institutions.

#### **3.3 Research Site**

This study was carried out at the University of Nairobi, main campus and St. Paul's University Nairobi town campus both located at CBD in Nairobi, Kenya. These institutions were selected since they are both located in Nairobi which is the capital city of Kenya. These sites are located in the Cosmopolitan urban area in the city therefore they have a diverse publics and stakeholders.

University of Nairobi is ranked the best public university in Kenya, Web, (2019). St.Pauls is Christian ecumenical institution with students and staff from all over the world. It acquired the status of university, on September 14, 2007 and the University was awarded a Charter to become St. Paul's University.

### **3.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure**

Sampling is the process or technique of selecting a suitable sample, or representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population to Kombo and Tromp, (2006). Purposive sampling is used with both quantitative and qualitative studies. The sampling method lies in selecting information rich cases for in-depth analysis related to the central issue being studied Kombo and Tromp, (2006). Public relations department was purposeful selected for the study because of its organizational role in terms of internal and external communication. For public relations practitioners, complete Census sampling was used since the target respondents or source of information was a small population from both study sites; respondents were all members of public relations department; they were categorized based on their administrative roles. Purposive sampling was used to select various faculty representatives within the sampled learning institutions in Kenya. This study majorly targeted the public relations practitioners in the selected institutions and its internal publics. The sample frame was the public relations practitioners composed of 5 officers from UON and 4 from SPU whereas sample population is institution's internal publics.

The sampled respondents were administered with the questionnaires, interviewed individually and in focus group discussion in order to find out their opinions regarding social media use for public relations practices in higher learning institutions. The internal publics constituted of head of faculties and class representatives drawn from UON main campus; Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Social Sciences and Faculty of Engineering and Faculty of Theology, Faculty of Business and Faculty of Social Sciences from SPU Nairobi town campus. The internal publics include the following representatives: 2 from Faculty of Arts, 2 from Faculty of Social Sciences and 2 from Faculty of Engineering for UON and 2 from Faculty of Theology, 2 from Faculty of business and 2 from Faculty of social sciences for SPU. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) 10-40% of the accessible population is a representative sample. Therefore 50 students who are class

representatives within the sampled faculties were purposefully selected for this study since they liaise between fellow students and the administration

The sample size for the study constituted 121 respondents for the following categories public relations officers, students and head of various faculties.

### 3.5 Target Population

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) define population as a complete set of individuals, cases or objects with common observable characteristics. This study targeted the public relations department staff of the University of Nairobi, St.Pauls University and their internal publics. The researcher focused on the public relations practitioners and the internal publics who include heads of various faculties within the institution and students as a case to give in-depth input on social media use for PR practices.

#### Target population

#### Frequency

#### Item

#### UON

#### SPU

PR director	1	1
Assistant director	1	1
PR practitioners	3	2
Faculty representatives	8	6
Class representatives	50	50
<b>Total</b>		<b>121</b>

### 3.6 Data Collection Method

The researcher used interview guide and questionnaires as research instruments for this study. The interview guides were divided into four parts, part 1 was for head of public relations practitioners, and part 2 contained questions for the public relation practitioners. PRO interview guide was sub-divided into three parts, namely; various public relations practices in the institution, social media platforms used and an analysis of social media use for public relations practice in the institution. Part 3 of the interview guide was questions to the head of various faculties about their perception about public relations practices and social media use for public relations practices in the

institution. Part 4 was the questionnaires to the students; that is class representatives from all the faculties within the campus. To ensure validity and credibility of the questionnaire, a pilot survey was carried out. This was done by administering the questions to five respondents from the each sample population before the actual date of administering the questions to all respondents. The questions were structured accordingly for clarity and relevance. Questionnaires were distributed to the respondent and later collected upon agreed time and date. Respondents were interviewed individually and in focus group discussion, the researcher recorded the feedback of the discussion with the respondents.

### **3.7 Data Presentation and Analysis and Method**

This study used quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Quantitative data was cleansed and organized before analysis to ensure any ambiguous answer was omitted. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis approach. The form of analysis categorizes related topics Kombo & Tromp, (2006). The analyzed results were tabulated appropriately using histogram and simple percentages to illustrate the responses from the interviewee. The demographic data and social media platforms were presented using histograms and percentages. To determine public relations practices and social media use for PR practices in learning institutions in Kenya, an analysis and presentation of questions relating to the variables was done using both histogram, percentages and depending on the nature of questions narrations has also been used to present the findings where necessary.

### **3.8 Validity and Reliability**

Validity is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon under study Mugenda & Mugenda (2003). The researcher ensured that the interview schedule items were modified in a way that they related to each research question. This ensured that all research questions were covered. Most importantly, an attempt was deliberately made to avoid leading and subjective questions by utilizing a structured interview guide. To ensure instrument Reliability, the researcher use pre-test methods. This helped to identify errors that occurred. The researcher visited the sampled respondents to make them aware of the need of the study.

### **3.9 Ethical Consideration**

The most important ethical consideration in this research was related with the informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. All the participants both the public relation practitioners and the internal publics were informed in advance about the purposes of this project, and gave their informed consent to participate in writing. Respondents' identities were confidentially kept.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings of the use of social media for public relations practices in higher learning institutions in Kenya.

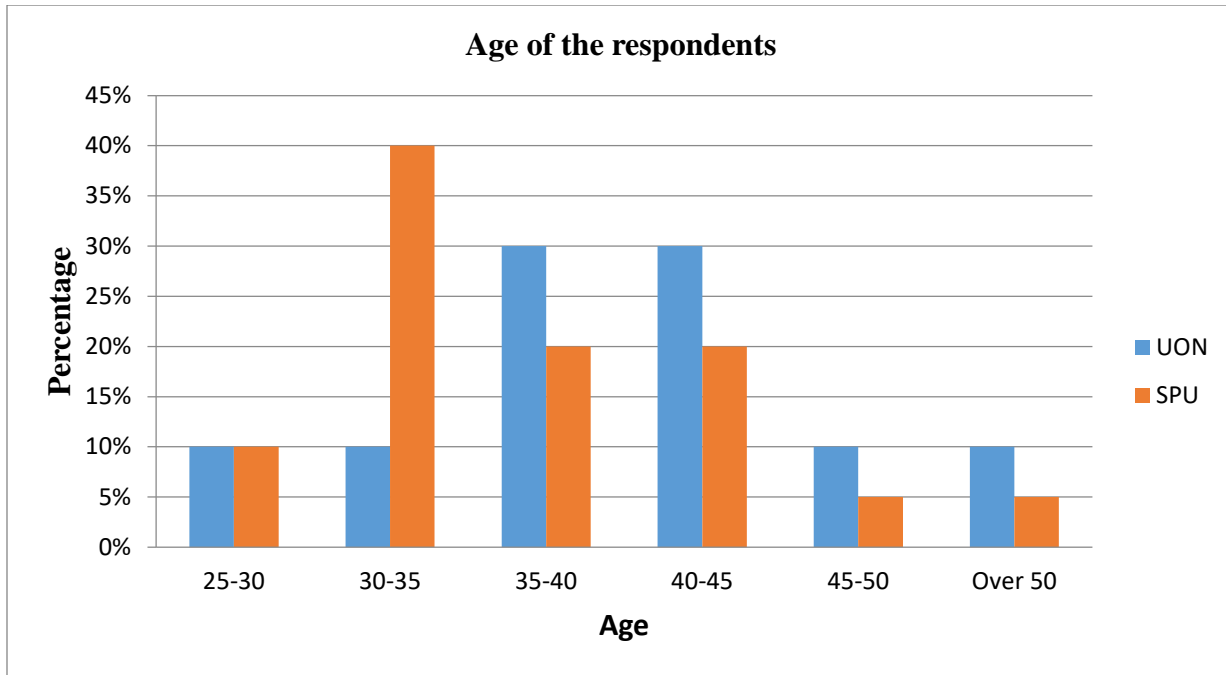
This study targeted 121 respondents; interviews were scheduled and questionnaires were distributed to all targeted respondents. However, out of 121 respondents only 107 participated in the study. This contributed to 88% response rate.

The chapter analysis responds to the following research questions.

1. What are the various public relations practices in higher learning institutions in Kenya?
2. Which social media platforms are preferred in higher learning institution in Kenya?
3. What social media is used for in public relations practice in higher learning institutions in Kenya?

#### **4.2. Public Relations Practices**

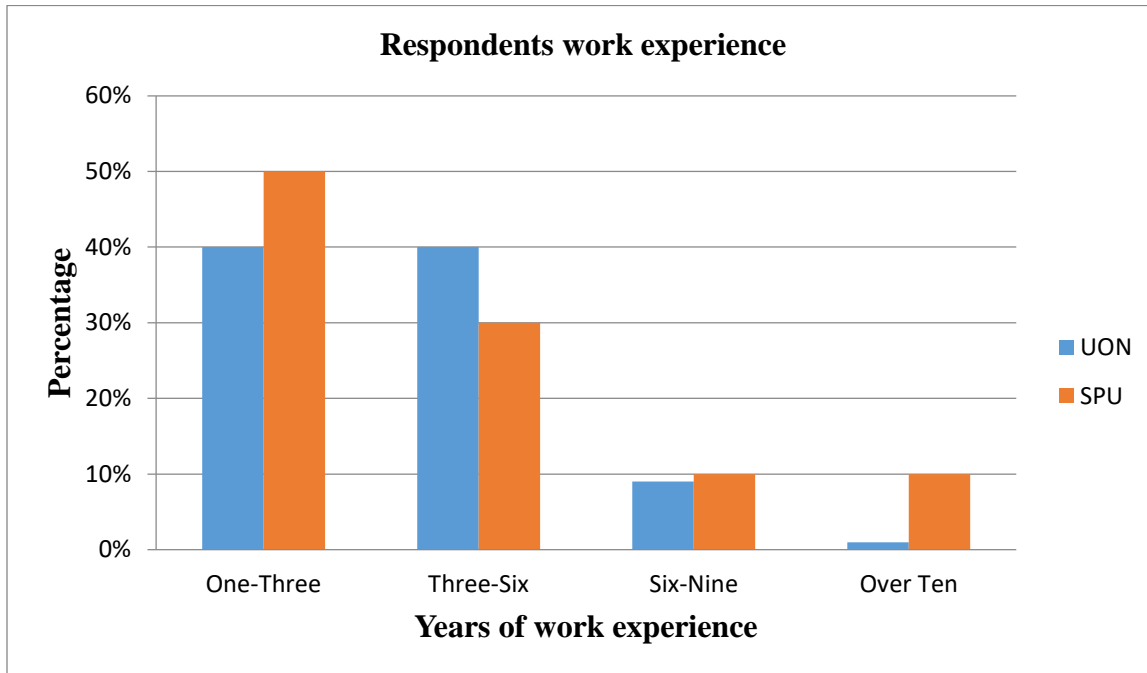
**Figure 4.1: Age of the Respondents**



The researcher intended to establish the age of the respondent for the study. The results provided that 40% of the respondents from SPU were within the age bracket of 30 – 35 years while majority of the public relations practitioners were within the age bracket of 35-40 & 40-45 years constituted to 30% of PROs. Those who were in the age brackets of between 45-50 years and over 50 years were represented by 10% and 5% and 10% and 5% for UON and SPU respectively. Only 5% from SPU were aged 50 years and above.

This indicates that majority of public relations practitioners from both institutions who participated in this research were within the age bracket of 35-40 and 40 – 45 years hence a huge percentage is represented by middle age individuals.

**Figure 4.2: Practitioners Work Experience**

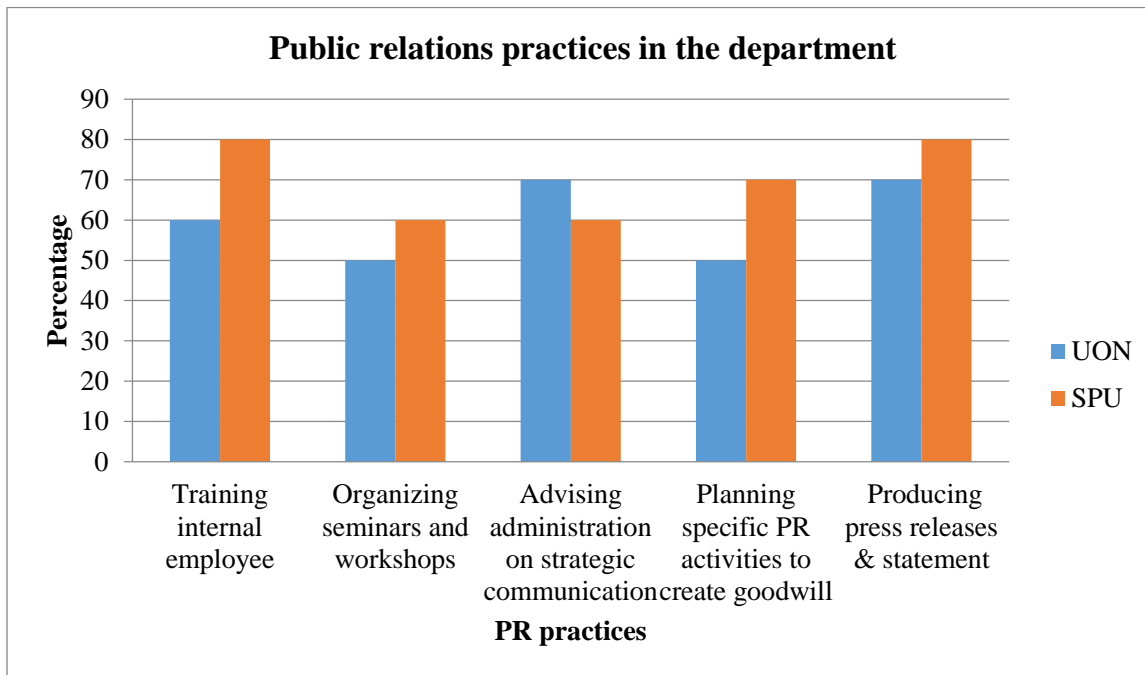


The researcher intended to establish the respondents' work experience years. The results provided that 50% of the respondents from SPU had 1-3 years of work experience while most respondents from UON had worked as public relations practitioners in the institutions for 1-3 and 3-6 years. Those who have worked in the department for more than 6 years were represented by less than 10% of the respondents from both institutions.

This indicates that practitioners from both institutions who participated in this research had 1-6 years of work experience therefore they were suitable for the study since they provide deeper insights about the dynamics and trends of public relations practice as well as social media use for public relations practice in their respective institutions.



**Figure 4.3: Public relations practices in the department**



The study sought to analyze the public relations practices in higher learning institutions in Kenya through public relations practitioner. From the findings, the respondents reported that public relations role is producing press releases and statement to a great extent as shown by a percentage 70% for UON and 80% for SPU. Others respondents were of the opinion that public relations is useful when it comes to training of internal employees, specifically non-teaching staff about various public relations practices in the institution, this was shown by 60% for UON and 80% for SPU. The respondents also outlined that, public relations practitioners advise and recommend communication strategies and policies to the administration to make them adopt channels that enables symmetrical communication between the institution and the publics.

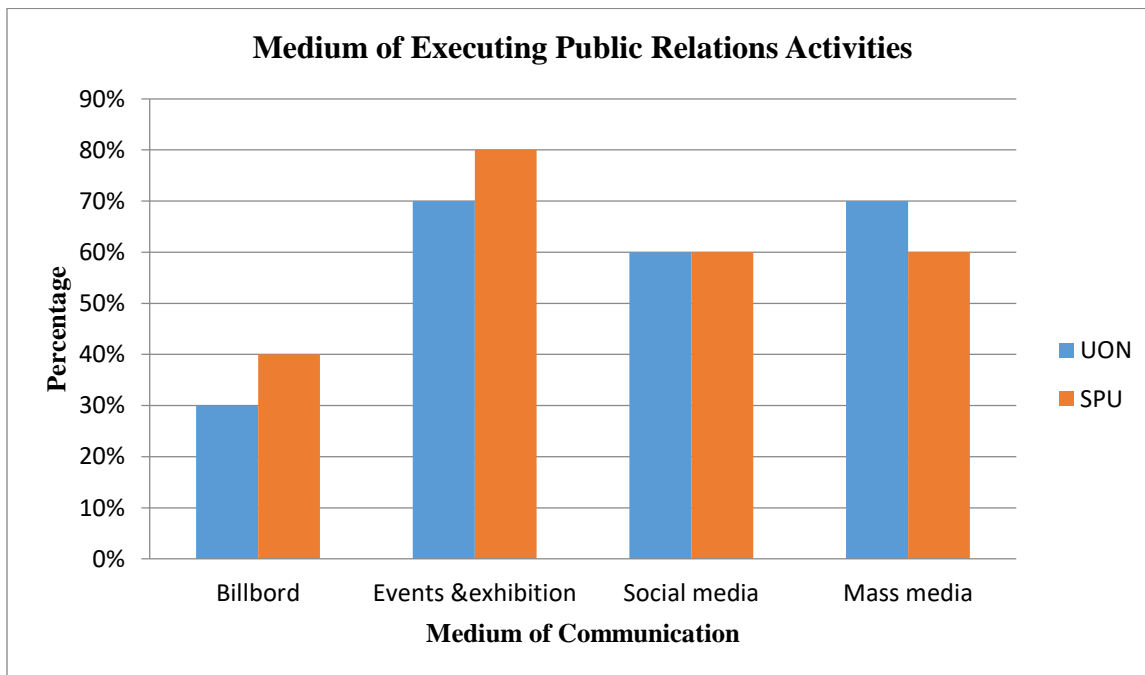
Some respondents indicated that PR activity includes planning specific PR activities through corporate social responsibility and community relations so as to create good will. This is shown by the 50% response from UON and 70% response from SPU. Others stated that PR role is to organize institutional activities such as exhibitions, cultural events, seminars and conferences. The other respondents outlined that public relations plays important role in maintaining media relations including press conferences and releases. Additionally the respondents justified that PR department plays a major role to advertising and marketing department by providing promotional

assistance such as designing messages for the target audience. The respondents also outlined that PR department disseminate releases to other employees in other department within the institution.

It can be deduced that PR practices mainly focused on advising the administration about effective communication and PR strategies so as to create good will. This is shown by 70% response from UON and 60% response from SPU. The findings agree with Metha, (2012) who stated that “functional approach to public relations is characterized by symmetrical communication between the organization and the environment. This necessitates resources for institutions to not only oversee their surroundings and public perception, but also to develop positive relationships with organizations and key stakeholders. These partnerships are based on mutual trust and a shared desire to find a solution that meets the stakeholders’ needs. In open systems, public relations work with the environment to figure out what is being said about matters that affect numerous system components”.

#### 4.2.1 Medium of executing PR activities

Figure 4.4: Medium of executing public relations activities



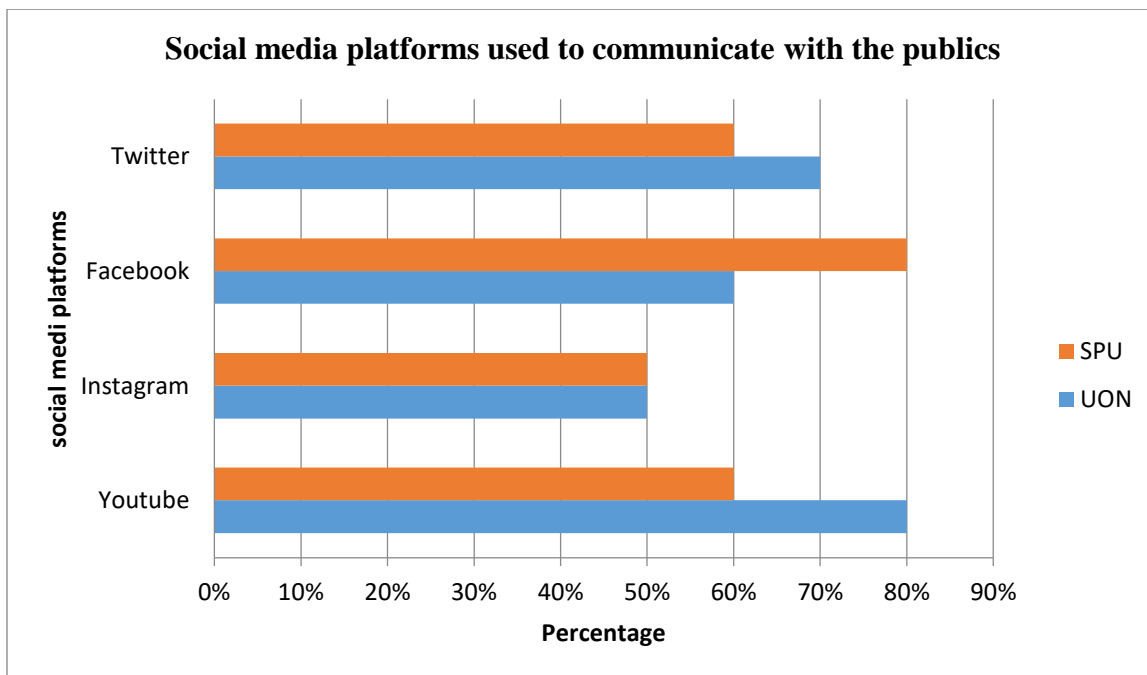
From this figure, PR practitioners majorly use events and exhibitions as a medium of executing PR activities this is shown by 70% and 80%, responses from UON and SPU respectively.. Billboard is also used as a medium of PR activities as seen in the figure above, this is represented by 30% UON and 40% SPU Social media and mass media are represented by 50% and 60% and 70% and 60% for UON and SPU respectively.

From the findings, it is deduced that despite the use of offline communication medium, PR practitioners are adopting and integrating the use of social media as a medium of communication to enable two way communication as shown by the above percentages

The findings agree with Rogers,(2003) who outlined “While mass media channels include a mass medium such as TV, radio, or newspaper, interpersonal channels consist of a two-way communication between two or more individuals. Thus, interpersonal channels are more powerful to create or change strong attitudes held by an individual.”

#### 4.2.2 Social media platforms used in the department

**Figure 4.5: Social media platforms used to communicate with the publics**

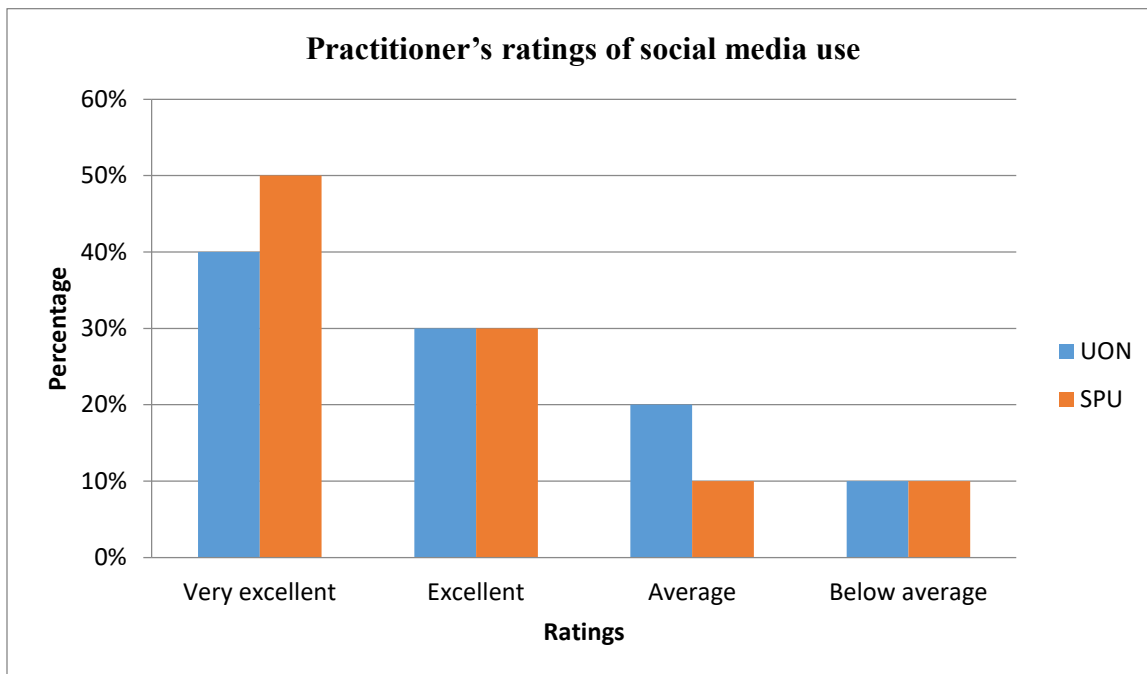


The researcher also sought to examine social media platforms used in public relations department. The responses indicated that social media has been fully adopted into PR activities and programmes. Since their beginnings, social media has been used in public relations research. They include Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. The study findings agree with Saxton and Waters, (2014) who outlined that “Facebook and twitter are particularly preferred by various stakeholders since the platforms facilitate dialogic communication and mobilizational messages.” From the responses, it indicated that social media specifically Facebook and Twitter were majorly used in the PR department.

By implication Facebook and YouTube have been considered as the best means of communication by the public relations practitioners in both institutions. This is indicated with their respective percentages in the figure above. However, a small number of respondent outlined that blogging is an excellent way to communicate with the publics. The respondent justified that blogs feature text, image, and website and allow readers to comment on a posts.

#### 4.2.3 Practitioners views on social media use

**Figure 4.6: PR practitioner’s ratings of social media use**

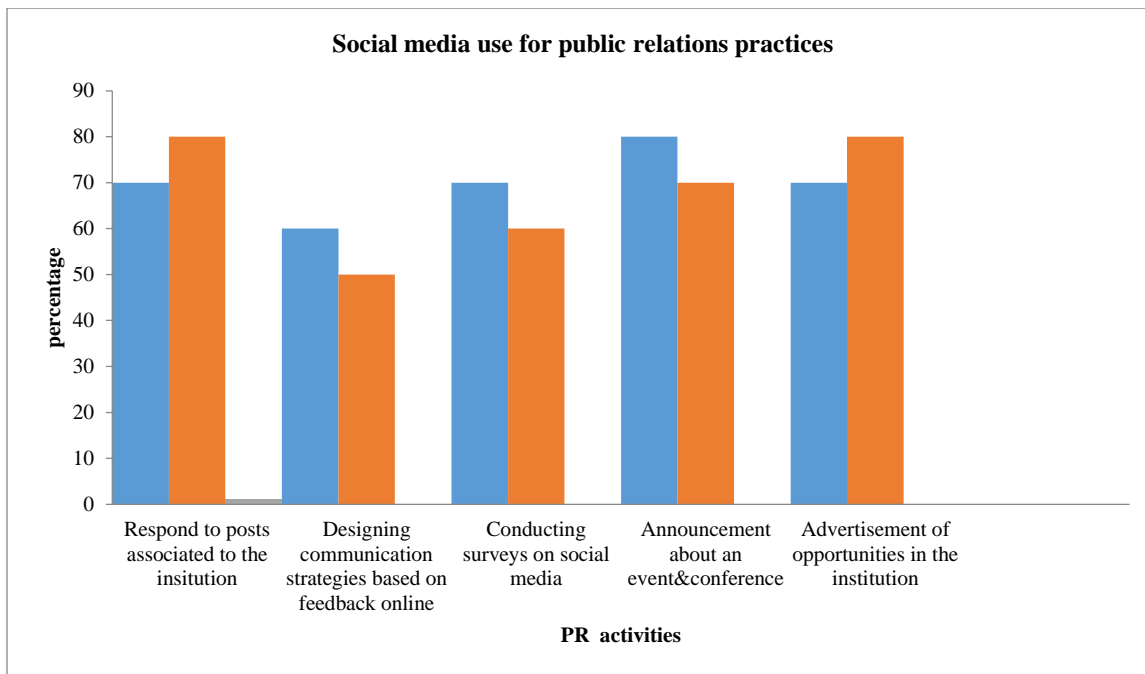


Most of the practitioners 40% from UON and 50% from SPU view social media use as excellent. This indicates that majority of these PR practitioners have been involved in social media use for quite some time and they have integrated it into PR practices. They are also the perfect candidates for the researcher since they are able to provide the information required without any bias. It is also clear that the respondents who gave contrary views represent a very small fraction of practitioners 10% for UON and 10% for SPU.

The findings agree with Sakali (2017), outlined as “Social media creates a convenient avenue for public to make enquiries and receive guidance simultaneously from the PROs”. This implies that social media use for public relations practice brings convenience to the PR practitioners and the publics.

#### 4.2.4 Integration of social media into PR practice

**Figure 4.7: Reasons PR practitioners integrate social media into PR practice**



Majority of PR practitioners integrate on social media to respond to posts associated with the institution strategize as represented 80 % for SPU and 70% for UON while minority of practitioners integrate on social media to design communication strategies based on the feedback from online platforms. Other practitioners stated that conducting surveys and advertisement about opportunities in the institution is the reason they integrate social media into public relations

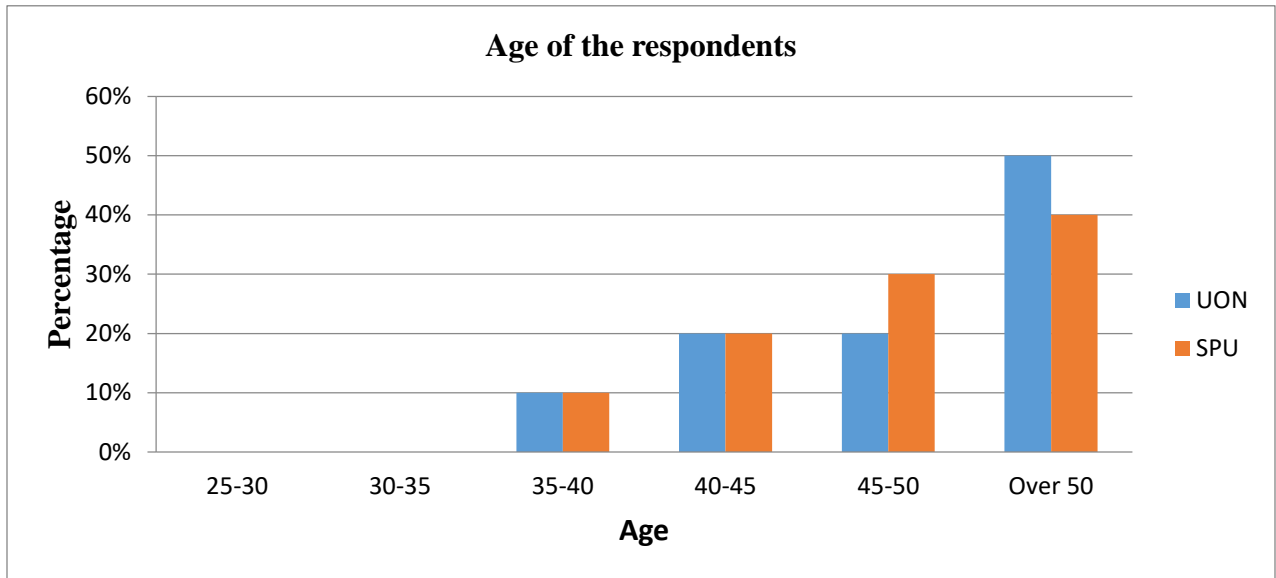
practice. This aspect is represented by 70% & 70% for UON and 60% & 80% for SPU respectively. The conclusion is majority of the respondents integrates in social media to public relations practice so as to strategize and respond to the posts about the institution online which helps to plans and make a conclusive decision about the perception of the publics based on the comments and feedback of the post. The findings agree with Sweetser & Lariscy, (2008); Rybalko & Seltzer, (2010) who argued that “PR practitioners examine social media pages and updates of brands and institution to analyze and plan how to deliberately develop communication strategies to enhance a beneficial relationship between the organization and their key stakeholders and publics.”

This implies that use of social media for public relations activities plays a major role in the institution; in their position they evaluate external and internal opinions, attitude and needs; respond to queries from the publics, respond to inaccurate posts in social media and advise institution’s management regarding a crisis or an issue hence influencing decision making and policy implementation. Through social media, PROs are able to measure the magnitude of a situation or crisis by analyzing public comments, feedback and interpretation of information or post about an institution circulating on various online platforms which helps them in developing strategies and analyzing the best communication channel to counter the particular situation or crisis.

Through this study, the respondents outlined that social media use has greatly impacted the departments operations in terms of dissemination of information to the publics. Public relations practitioners develop adverts and publicize them through social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. The respondents outlined that as opposed to mainstream media, the online platforms creates a quick and dialogic communication between their organization and diverse publics. Additionally, social media use for PR practice enables PROs to intensively and extensively scan the environment so as to develop procedures for inoculation.

#### 4.2.5 Internal publics views of social media use for public relations practice

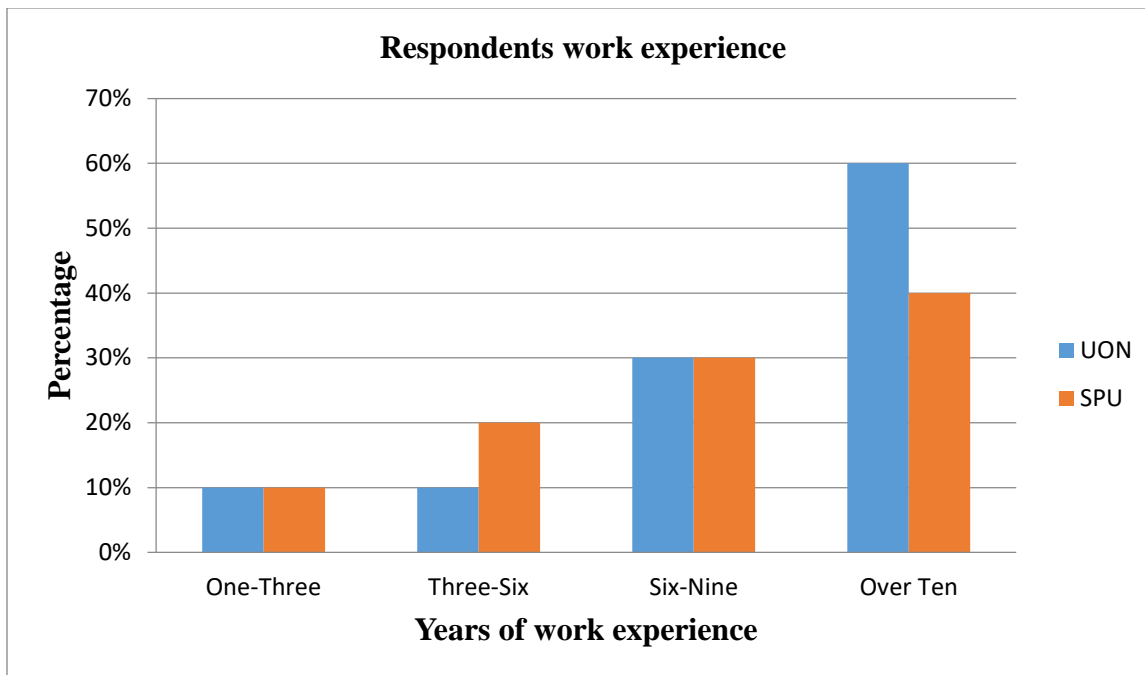
Figure 4.8: Age of the respondents



The researcher intended to establish the age of the respondent for the study. The findings indicate that 40% of the respondents from SPU were within the age bracket of 30 – 35 years while majority of faculty heads respondents from UON were within the age bracket of over 50years. Those who were in the age brackets of between 45-50 years and 40-45 years were represented by 20% and 20% and 30% and 20% for UON and SPU respectively. Only 10% from SPU and UON were aged 40 years and below .

This indicates that majority of the respondents from both institutions who participated in this research were within the age bracket of 50 years and above. This indicates that the individuals have gained valuable insights relating to dynamics of communication in their respective faculties based on their ages.

**Figure 4.9: Respondents Work Experience**

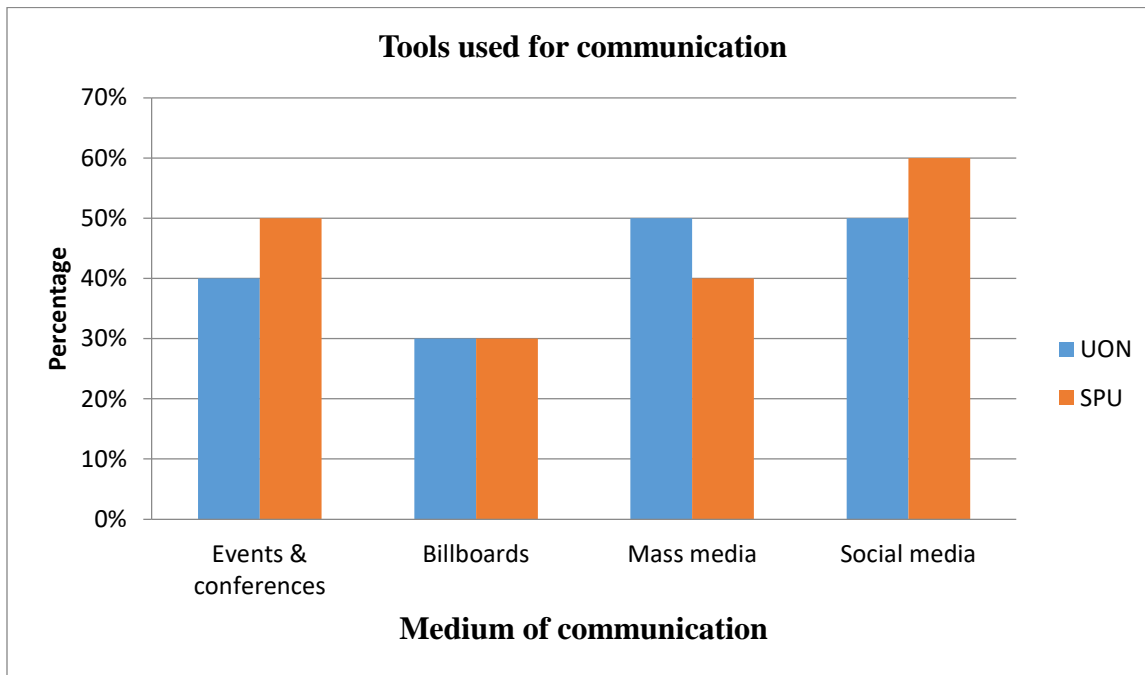


The researcher intended to establish the respondents' work experience years for the study. The findings shows that 60% of the respondents from UON had over 10 years of work experience while 40% of respondents from SPU had worked as faculty heads for over 10 years in the institution. Those who have worked in the department for more than 6 years were represented by 30% of the respondents from both institutions.

This indicates that the respondents from both institutions who participated in this research had over 10 years of work experience therefore they had an increased understanding of the work environment and dynamics in terms of communication, therefore they were suitable for the study.



**Figure 4.10: Tools used for Communication**



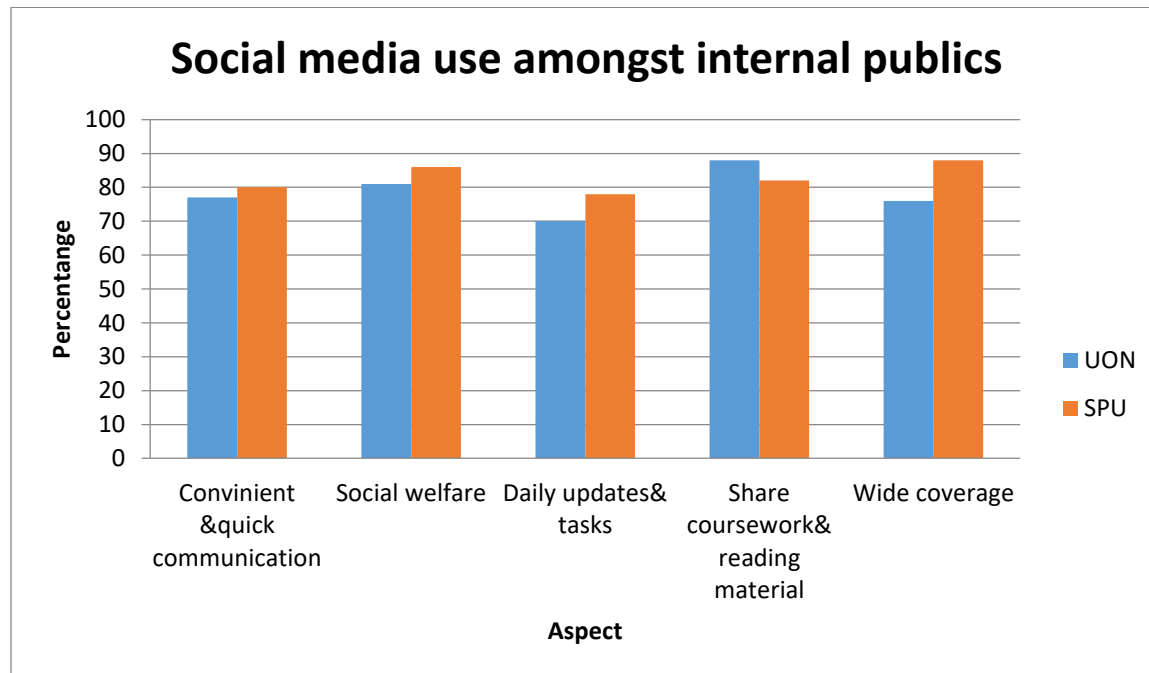
The researcher intended to establish from the respondents the medium of communication in the institution to internal employees and the general publics. From the findings, the respondents reported that indeed social media is a major medium of communication for the institution and the publics as by 50% for UON & 60% for SPU. The respondent also outlined that despite the ongoing use of mass media, billboards and events& conferences as medium of communication, they have their own limitations in terms of number of audience reach, location, time, feedback and even accessibility. The findings agree with Damasio et.al, (2012) who argued that “many organizations' public relations practices nonetheless depend on one way communication models and processes to create and disseminate information. They include the press releases, conferences, advertisements, as well as sponsorship activities that do not take feedback or the relevance of the information to its audiences into account. The lopsided communication models appeals more to organizations since they appear to give them control over the information disseminated through mainstream media such as print and broadcast. They are at this point inappropriate for emerging communication practices enabled by social media interactivity”.

This implies social media plays a major role to public relation officers in terms of creating a two way communication between the institution and the publics. It also enables the institution to monitor the environment, public opinion, attitudes, perception, assumptions and build relationship

with the publics. Additionally, social media is convenient and effective medium of communication amongst internal employees since a message can be conveyed to a wider number of individuals within a shorter time and provides an inclusive avenue for input, discussion and feedback.

#### 4.4 Social media use for public relations practice amongst internal employees.

Figure 4. 11: Social media use amongst internal publics



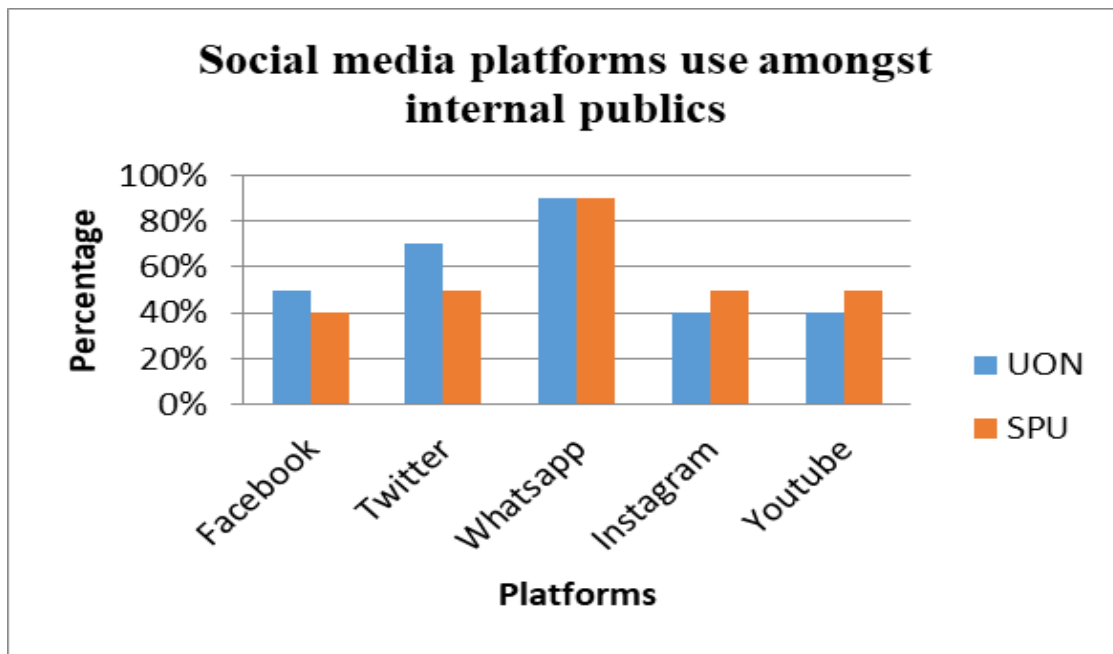
The researcher intended to establish from the respondents views on social media use for PR practice. From the findings, the respondents reported that the purpose of social media use for PR practice is for convenient & quick communication and social welfare purpose in the institution. This is shown by 77% & 81% for UON and 68% & 86 % for SPU. This indicates that convenient communication such as an impromptu meeting in the department and social welfare affairs like fundraising are the key reason of social media integration into departmental operations for internal employees. Sharing coursework & reading materials and wide coverage have the percentages of 82.0% & 76% of and 82% & 88% for UON & SPU respectively. This indicates that UON consider social media integration to their operation is to make sharing of coursework and reading materials convenient whereas SPU respondents justified that social use ensures that information or message is shared or disseminated a wider audience. The findings agree with Doriane et.al (2011), who stated that, “Social media helps conversations to reach a wider audience

leveraging the long tail concept, which means conversations that can be conveyed to different forums.”

This implies that use of social media allows members of department to communicate and share information conveniently and effectively. Through social media platforms, members can conduct meetings; perform a given task regardless of one’s geographical locations. From the findings, it can also be deduced that sharing reading material and course work instruction have been simplified and made convenient for both students and instructors. Social media facilitates social welfares collaborations amongst team members of a department, faculty or an entire institution which results better outcome.

#### 4.5 Social media platforms use amongst internal publics

Figure 4.12: Social media platforms



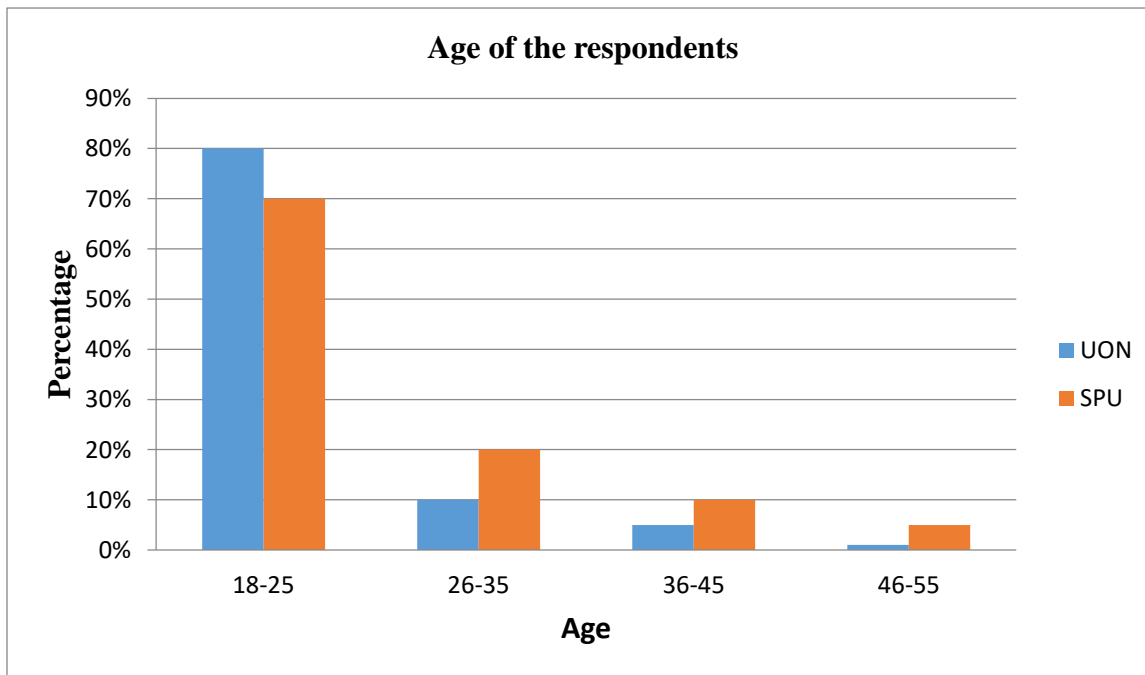
The researcher intended to establish social media platforms used by respondents in their various departments. The figure above shows that; majority 90% from UON and 90% from SPU of the respondents indicated that the most used platform is Whatsapp, while 50% from SPU and 70% from UON of respondents indicated that they use Twitter to consume information and news about the

institution. In terms of social media platform usage, the findings agree with Doriane et.al (2011) who stated that “Social media assists discussions with contacting a more extensive crowd utilizing the long tail idea, which implies discussions that can be passed on to various forums online.”

From the findings it can be deduced that Whatsapp brings individuals within a system, department or an organization together by sharing information, photos, videos, conferences and events. The application also provides an avenue for users to interact with each other over the internet. The findings established that social media platforms act as channels for communication between head of department and fellow employees, administration and even students. It can be deduced that majority of the respondents from both institutions use Whatsapp which is convenient and cost effective and readily available for user as long as they can access communication gadget which the platform can be installed and used.

#### 4.6 Students view on social media use for public relations

Figure 4.13: Age of the respondents

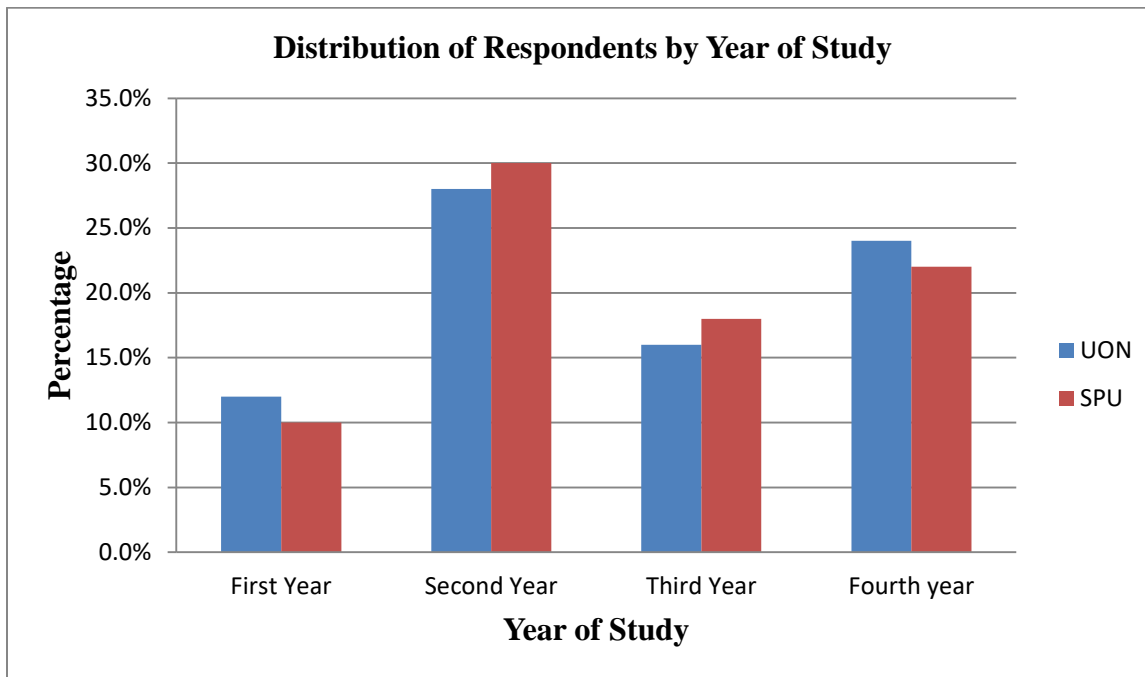


The researcher intended to establish the age of the respondent for the study. The results provided that over 70% of the respondents were within the age bracket of 18 – 25 years from both UON & SPU. Those who were in the age brackets of between 26 – 35 years and 46 – 55 years were

represented by 10% and 20% percent respectively. Only 5% from SPU were aged 55 years and above.

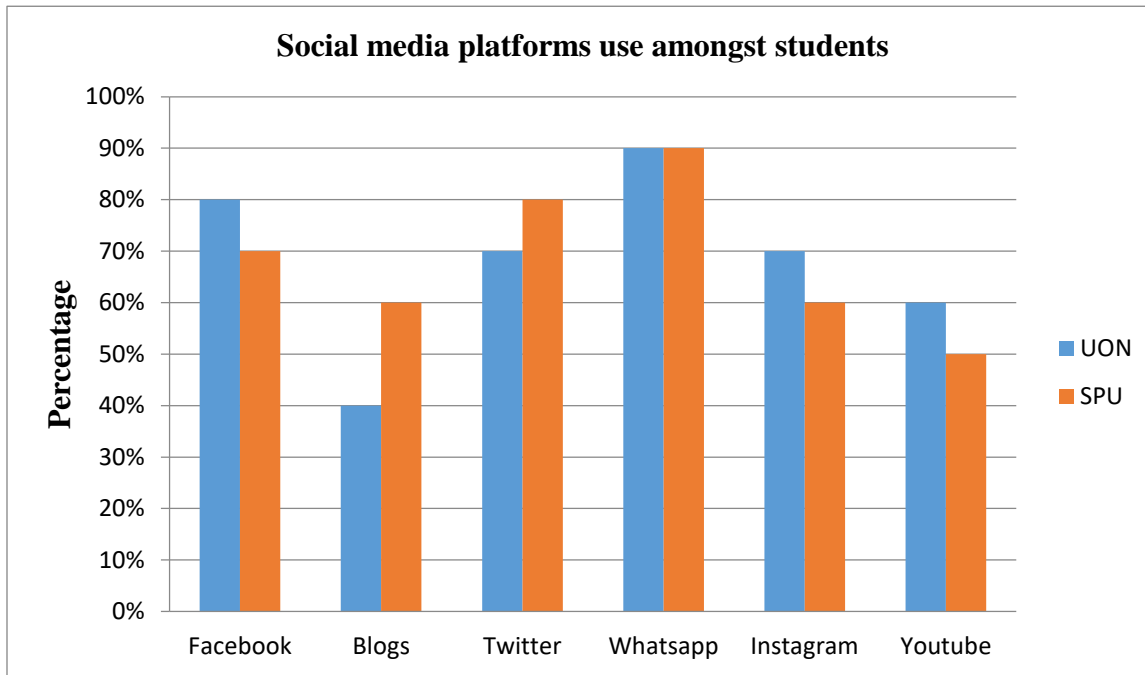
This indicates that the class representatives from both institutions who participated in this research were within the age bracket of 18 – 25 years hence a huge percentage is represented by a youthful leadership.

**Figure 4.14: Distribution of Respondents by Year of Study**



The study sought to find out the distribution of respondents by year of study. The graph above shows that majority of students are in the second year (30%) who are in SPU while 28% of the respondents represented UON students. The study also reveals that majority of the students interviewed are in category of first year which are represented by 10% and 12% for UON and SPU respectively. UON has a lot of fourth year students than SPU as seen in the figure while almost equal number of students is in third year 16% and 18% for UON and SPU respectively. The findings were drawn respondents from the undergraduate level. This implies that second year respondents from both institutions were respondents were more willing to participate in this study.

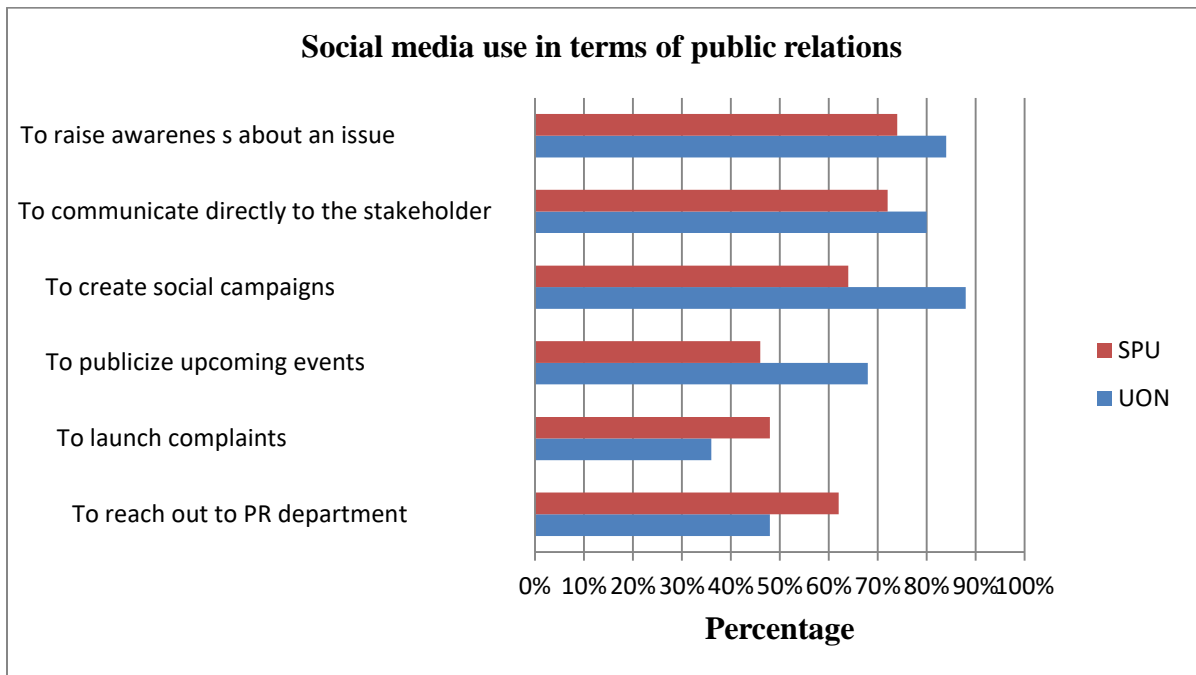
**Figure 4.15: Social media platforms use amongst students**



The researcher intended to establish the social media platforms used by the respondents who participated in the study. The figure above shows that; majority 90% from UON and 90% from SPU of the respondents indicated that the most common social media used is Whatsapp, while 80% from SPU and 70% from UON of respondents indicated that they use Twitter to consume information and news online. In terms of social media platform usage, the findings agree with Doriane et.al (2011) who stated that “Social media catalyst interactions and discussions with contacting a more extensive crowd utilizing the long tail idea, which implies discussions that can be passed on to various forums online.”

The findings imply that Whatsapp is the most popular platform used amongst students. The application connects people who share same interests and experiences by allowing them to share their information using the app. The program allows users to communicate with one another over the internet through groups created on the app. The findings established that social media platforms acts as channels for communication between class representative and fellow students ,administration and students, course instructor and class representative or even administration and course instructor. It can be deduced that majority of the respondents from both institutions use Whatsapp which is convenient and cost effective.

**Figure 4.16: Social media use in terms of public relations reasons**

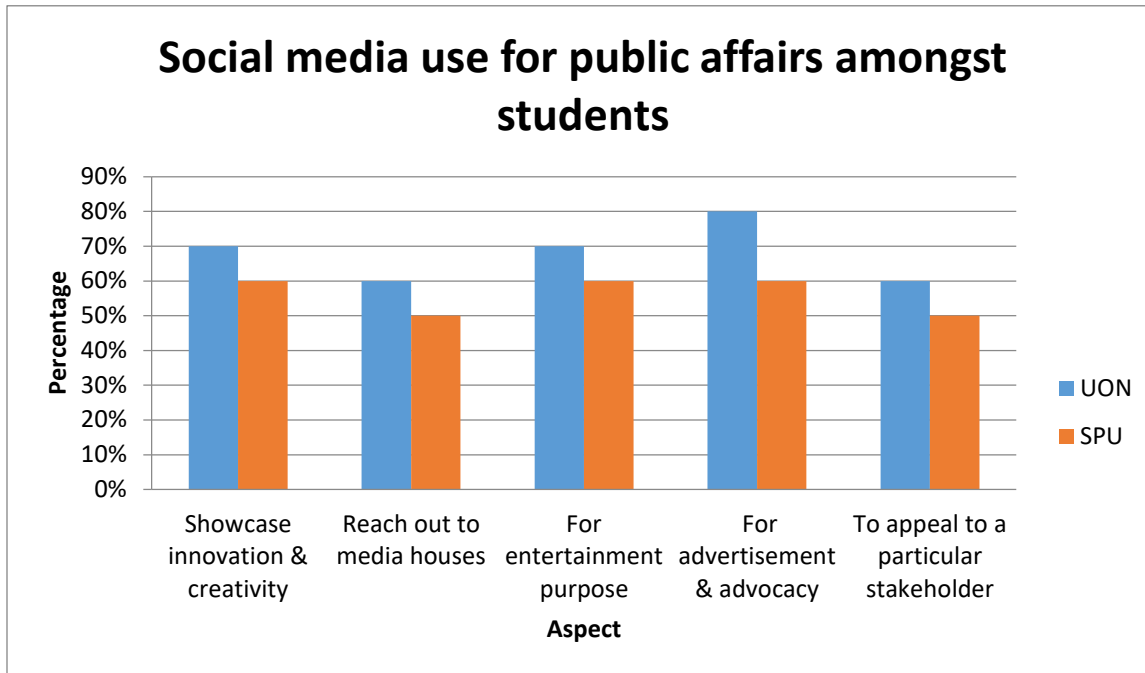


The researcher intended to establish from the respondents the use of social media for public relations. From the findings, respondents reported that they use social media as a representative to create social campaigns, raise awareness about an issue which may rise in the institution as shown by 88%&84% for UON and 64%&74% for SPU. The findings also revealed that very few respondents use social media to launch complains and reach out to PR department with 36% and 48% respectively. Some respondent outlined that they use social media for entertainment and to socialize and share reading materials with each other.

By implication social media enhances communication and interaction between students and course instructors, as well as between students and the general public. Students utilize social media to talk about impending assignments or exams, as well as to acquire information from their peers regarding things that will be covered on a test and assignment requirements. When students are having difficulty with a topic, they might use social media to help them. Learners use social media specifically Whatsapp to reach to fellow classmates to get assistance.

#### 4.7: Social media use for public affairs for students

Figure 4.17: Social Media Use For public affairs



The researcher intended to establish from the respondents the use of social media for public affairs amongst students. This study findings established that the students from the sampled institutions have a presence on social media platforms which includes; Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and TikTok for various use. The respondents outlined the following aspect as the reason the use social media to reach out to the publics. They include; innovation & creativity, entertainment, to gain credibility and reach out to wider public through media houses, advertisement and advocacy and appeal to stakeholders about an agenda issue. The findings indicate that advertisement and advocacy has the highest percentages of 80% for UON students and 60% for SPU students.

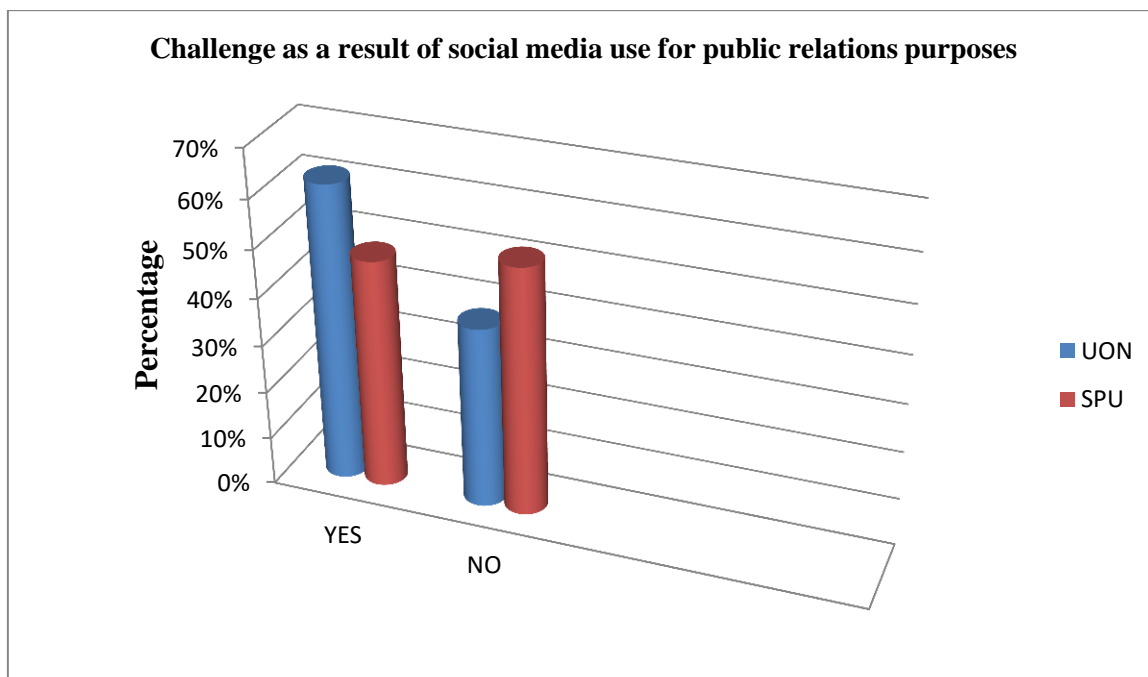
From the findings, the respondents argued that advocacy campaigns conducted through social media platform not only reaches to a wider audience by the use of hashtags and tagging the targeted individuals, organization's pages and website but also expand people's awareness of their rights and responsibilities as citizens. The findings agree with Ayer & Bunn, (2004) who argued that "advocacy initiatives for social justice result in tangible changes in people's lives. They increase people's understanding of their rights and obligations as citizens and promote civil



society's involvement in decision making. Effective lobbying may also increase the accountability of government institutions by strengthening links across the sectors of society.”

By implication Social Media facilitate the flow of information to and from the organization to publics outside its boundaries. Sharing of information about innovation and creativity or appealing to a particular stakeholders such as Higher Education Loans Board tend to attract more press interest, and so most media personalities have a presence on social media forums would be compelled to reach out to the source and published that particular issue.

**Figure 4.18: Challenge as a result of social media use for public relations purposes**



From the findings, 62% of the respondents from UON encounter challenges as a result of social media use for public relations while 52% of the respondents from SPU do not encounter any challenges at all. This indicates that more UON PROs relatively face challenges compared to those of SPU when it comes to usage of social media for public relations.

Some respondent outlined that organization’s formal structure affects the operations of department in terms of integrating and utilizing the new media as a medium of communication. They outlined that institutions bureaucracy and policies hinder them from managing a situation on social media without management approval. Other respondents claim that information online can be easily distorted hence tarnishing institutions reputation. Another challenge experience by the PRO is the

backlash from the publics; internet users. Some respondents also mentioned credibility of information and news from social media platform is a challenge to the consumer since at times it could be impossible to trace the source of the information or news circulating online. The respondents also outline that the right of privacy is easily violated through the use new media since an individual may leak sensitive information to social media users pertaining a public figure, office, various practices or even institutions tarnishing their image and reputation.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents summary of the findings, discussion of the findings and recommendations based on the findings. Recommendations of other related potential areas of study are outlined. The purpose of the study was to investigate the use social media for public relations practices in higher learning institutions in Kenya.

#### **5.2 Summary of Findings**

The study sought to establish the opinion of respondents on the public relations practices in higher learning institutions in Kenya. From the findings, the respondents reported that public relations role is producing press releases and statement to a great extent as shown by a percentage 70% for UON and 80% for SPU. Others respondents were of the opinion that public relations is useful when it comes to training of internal employees, specifically non-teaching staff about basic public relations practices they need to integrate into their respective duties. This was shown by 60% for UON and 80% for SPU. The respondents also outlined that, public relations practitioners advise and recommend communication strategies and policies to the administration to make them adopt channels that enables symmetrical communication between the institution and the publics.

Some respondents indicated that PR activity includes planning specific PR activities through corporate social responsibility and community relations so as to create good will. This was shown by the 50% response from UON and 70% response from SPU. Others stated that PR role is to organize institutional activities such as exhibitions, cultural events, seminars and conferences. The other respondents outlined that public relations plays important role in maintaining media relations including press conferences and releases. Additionally respondents justified that PR department plays a major role to advertising and marketing department by providing promotional assistance such as designing messages for the target audience. The respondents also outlined that PR department disseminate releases to other employees in other department within the institution.

This study established that PR practices mainly focused on advising the administration about effective communication and PR strategies so as to create good will. This is shown by 70% response from UON and 60% response from SPU. The findings agree with Metha, (2012) who stated that “functional approach to public relations is characterized by symmetrical communication between the organization and the environment. This necessitates resources for institutions to not only oversee their surroundings and public perception, but also to develop positive relationships with organizations and key stakeholders. These partnerships are based on mutual trust and a shared desire to find a solution that meets the stakeholders’ needs. In open systems, public relations work with the environment to figure out what is being said about matters that affect numerous system components”.

On social media use for public relations practice, the study established that use of social media for public relations activities plays a major role in the institution; in their position they evaluate external and internal opinions, attitude and needs; respond to queries from the publics, respond to inaccurate posts in social media and advise institution’s management regarding a crisis or an issue hence influencing decision making and policy implementation. Through social media, PROs are able to measure the magnitude of a situation or crisis by analyzing public comments, feedback and interpretation of information or post about an institution circulating on various online platforms which helps them in developing strategies and analyzing the best communication channel to counter the particular situation or crisis.

For internal employees, the study revealed that use of social media allows members of department to communicate and share information conveniently and effectively. Through social media platforms, members can conduct meetings; perform a given task regardless of one’s geographical locations. Sharing of reading material and course work instruction have been simplified and made convenient for both students and instructors. Social media facilitates social welfares collaborations amongst members of a department, faculty or an entire institution.

Similarly, the study established that Whatsapp is the most popular platform used amongst members of a department, faculty or students. The software connects people who share same interests and experiences by allowing them to share their information using the app. The program allows users to communicate with one another over the internet through groups created on the app. It is also revealed that social media platforms acts as channels for communication between class

representative and fellow students ,administration and students, course instructor and class representative or even administration and course instructor. Majority of the respondents from both institutions use Whatsapp which is convenient and cost effective.

The study also established that social media improves communication not only between students and course instructors but also among students and the publics. Students use social networks to discuss about upcoming assignments or tests, get details from the cohort about materials that will be covered on a test and the requirements for assignments. Social media is useful to students whenever they have trouble with a certain topic. They use social media specifically Whatsapp to reach to fellow classmates to get assistance.

The research also found that social media enhances communication and interaction between students and course instructors, as well as between students and the general public. Students utilize social media to talk about impending assignments or exams, as well as to acquire information from their peers regarding things that will be covered on a test and assignment requirements. When students are having difficulty with a topic, they might use social media to help them. Learners use social media specifically Whatsapp to reach to fellow classmates to get assistance.

Additionally, the study revealed that social media facilitate the flow of information to and from the organization to publics outside its boundaries. Sharing of information about innovation and creativity or appealing to a particular stakeholders such as Higher Education Loans Board tend to attract more press interest, and so most media personalities have a presence on social media forums would be compelled to reach out to the source and published that particular issue.

Also it is revealed in the study that organization's formal structure affects the operations of department in terms of integrating and utilizing the new media as a medium of communication. Institutions' bureaucracy and policies hinder PROs from managing a situation on social media without management approval. Another challenge of social media established in this study is the backlash from the publics; internet users and distortion of information. Also, credibility of information and news from social media platform is a challenge to the online consumer since it could be impossible to trace the source of the information or news circulating online. There is also violation of privacy rights through the use new media since an individual may leak sensitive

information to social media users pertaining a public figure, office, certain practice or even institutions tarnishing their image and reputation.

The study established that social media improves communication between institutions and internal and external publics but also but also among students. Social media platforms communication plays a major role to the public relation practitioners and the stakeholders. The findings of the study agree with, Doriane et.al (2011), who stated that,” that “Social media enhances interactions and discussions with contacting a more extensive crowd utilizing the long tail idea, which implies discussions that can be passed on to various forums online.”

### **5.3 Conclusions**

Public relations department play an important role in University of Nairobi and St. Paul University through their various practices that helps to build and sustain a good relationship with their respective publics. PR department is responsible for monitoring, evaluating and responding to changes in the internal and external environment, including a crisis, perceptions, and assumptions so as create a good image of the institution. PROs play an essential role to ensure a conducive working place in the institution by training other employees the significance of public relations practices and communication. Public relations role is to advise and recommend policies and communication strategies to the administration. Public relations practitioner engages with the publics on behalf of the institution by using digital media technologies for two way conversations with their various publics.

Another conclusion of the study is that social media plays a major role to public relation officers in terms of creating a two way communication between the institution and the publics. It also enables the institution to monitor the environment, public opinion, attitudes, perception, assumptions and build relationship with the publics. Additionally, social media is convenient and effective medium of communication amongst internal employees since a message can be conveyed to a wider number of individuals within a shorter time and provides an inclusive avenue for input, discussion and feedback.

The study concludes that Integration of social media into operations allows members of department or faculty in the University of Nairobi and St.Pauls University to communicate and

share information conveniently and effectively. Through social media platforms, members conduct meetings; perform a given task regardless of one's geographical locations. Through the use of social media, sharing of reading material and course work instruction have been simplified and made convenient for both students and instructors. Social media facilitates social welfares collaborations amongst members of a department, faculty or an entire institution.

The study also concludes that Whatsapp is the most popular platform used amongst students. The application brings individuals with common interests and experiences together by sharing their information using the app. The application also provides means for users to interact with each over the internet through chat groups created on the app. Also, social media platforms acts as channels for communication between class representative and fellow students ,administration and students, course instructor and class representative or even administration and course instructor. Majority of the respondents from both institutions use Whatsapp which is convenient and cost effective.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

This study recommends that frequent trainings for public relations practitioners who are the social media manager, to ensure that they have adequate skills for social media platforms. They need to equip themselves with designing information for various platforms targeting each and every audience or online users.

Another recommendation is PROs from UON and SPU need to engage with the publics online through various activities that give feedback to public relations department as oppose to using it to disseminate of information about the institution. This can be done through the use of social media platforms to ask users to fill a questionnaire regarding the institution.

Regular monitoring of what is happening in social media. In this way the practitioners are able to get valuable information needed for a particular event, activity or during a crisis which is helpful in advising and recommending policies and strategies to institution's administration on how to handle the crisis.

## **5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies**

The following is some an areas which need a comprehensive research; A detailed replicate of this study should be done to other organisations and other learning institutions especially the non-governmental organizations and institutions to establish how they utilize social media platforms as a medium of communication.



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# APPENDICES

## PUBLIC RELATION PRACTITIONERS INTERVIEW GUIDE

My name is Faith Chepkemoi, graduate student, University of Nairobi currently doing research on Social Media use for Public Relations practices in higher learning institutions in Kenya. Your opinion is highly appreciated and the answers given will be solely for research purposes only.

Please answer questions by putting a tick [] in the appropriate box or by writing in the space provided.

### SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION

#### 1. Gender

Male

Female

#### 2. Age Bracket

25-30 years

30-35 years

35-40 years

40-45 years

45-50 years

Above 50 years

#### 3. Work experience

1-3 years

3-6 years

6-9 years

Over 10 years

**SECTION B**

**SECTION 1: Public relations practice**

**In a scale of (1-5) where 1-Not at all, 2-Little extent 3- Moderate extent 4- Great extent 5-Very great extent, rate the following Public relations practices in your institution.**

Aspect	Very great	Great extent	Moderate extent	Little extent	Not at all
Training internal employees					
Organizing seminars and workshops					
Advising administration on strategic communication					
Planning specific PR activities to create good will					
Producing press releases and statement					

Others.....  
 .....

**2. In a scale of (1-5) 1-Not at all, 2-Little extent 3- Moderate extent 4- Great extent 5-Very great extent, outline medium of executing public relations activities in your institution.**

Aspect	Not at all	Little extent	Moderate extent	Great extent	Very great extent
Billboards					
Events& exhibitions					
Social media					
Mass media					

Others  
 .....  
 .....

**SECTION 2: Social Media and Public Relations Practice**

**Does your public relations office use social media?**

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

**Which social media platforms do you usually use in your department? (Select all that applies)**

YouTube [ ]

Facebook [ ]

Instagram [ ]

Twitter [ ]

3. Which is the most preferred platform used and why?.....  
.....

1. How long has your department adopted social media use?

Over 1 year [ ]

1-2 years [ ]

2-3 years [ ]

3-4 years [ ]

Over 5 years [ ]

**Section 3: Social Media Use**

1. Do you use social media to get information from the publics?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

If yes, which one do you use.....  
.....  
.....

2. In a scale of (1-5) where, **1- Not at all 2-Little extent 3- Moderate extent 4- Great extent 5-Very great extent**, rate what you think of social media integration into public relations practice

Aspect	Very great	Great extent	Moderate extent	Little extent	Not at all
Respond to posts associated to the institution					
Designing communication strategies based on feedback online					
Conducting surveys on social media					
Announcement about an event or conferences					
Advertisement of opportunities in the institution					

Others.....  
.....

**DIRECTOR PUBLIC RELATIONS INTERVIEW GUIDE**

My name is Faith Chepkemoi, graduate student, University of Nairobi currently doing research on Social Media use for Public Relations practices in higher learning institutions in Kenya. Your opinion is highly appreciated and the answers given will be solely for research purposes only.

Please answer questions by putting a tick [√] in the appropriate box or by writing in the space provided.

**SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION**

**1. Gender**

Male [ ]

Female [ ]

**2. Age Bracket**

18-25 years [ ]

26-35 years [ ]



36-45 years [ ]

46-55 years [ ]

Above 55 years [ ]

**3. Work experience**

1-2 years [ ]

2-3 years [ ]

3-4 years [ ]

Above 5 years [ ]

1. How would you rate the use of social media by PROs in the department?

Very High [ ]

High [ ]

Fair [ ]

Low [ ]

2. Basing on the social media platforms used in the department, quantify the number of publics reached.....

.....  
.....

3. How would you rate the adoption of social media into public relations practice in building institution's

reputation.....  
.....  
.....

4. Is it institutional policy to use social media in the department?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

5. In a scale of (1-5) **1- Not at all 2-Little extent 3- Moderate extent 4- Great extent 5- Very great extent**, rate how social media use has influenced public relations role in the department?

01 [ ]

02 [ ]

03 [ ]

04 [ ]

05 [ ]

6. How frequent does your department use social media to public relations activities.....  
.....  
.....

7. What are some the challenges you face when trying to disseminate public relations messages throughsocialmedia.....  
.....  
.....

8. What suggestions would you give to enhance the use of social media by public relations practitioner.....  
.....  
.....

## **FACULTY REPRESENTATIVE INTERVIEW GUIDE**

My name is Faith Chepkemoi, graduate student, University of Nairobi currently doing research on Social Media use for Public Relations practices in higher learning institutions in Kenya. Your opinion is highly appreciated and the answers given will be solely for research purposes only.

Please answer questions by putting a tick [] in the appropriate box or by writing in the space provided.

### **SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION**

#### **1. Gender**

Male [  ]

Female [  ]

#### **RESPONDENT CATEGORY**

UON [  ]

SPU [  ]

#### **2. Age Bracket**

25-30 years [  ]

30-35 years [  ]

35-40 years [  ]

45-45 years [  ]

45-50 years [  ]

Over 50 years [  ]

#### **3. Work Experience**

1-3 years [ ]

3-6 years [ ]

6-9 years [ ]

Over 10 years [ ]

**SECTION B**

1).In a scale of (1-5) **1- Not at all 2-Little extent 3- Moderate extent 4- Great extent 5- Very great extent**, use it to rate the role stakeholder to an institution in terms of PR activities

Aspect	Not at all	Little extent	Moderate extent	Great extent	Very great extent
Convenient and quick communication					
Social welfare					
Daily updates and tasks					
Share coursework and reading materials					
Wide coverage					

Others

.....

.....

.....

2).What tools do you recommend as effective medium of communication to a wider public from an institution. **(Select all that applies)**

Billboard [ ]

Print media [ ]

Events & conferences [ ]

Social media [ ]

Broadcast media [ ]

Newsletter [ ]

Others.....  
.....  
.....

3. Which social media platforms do you usually use to get information from the university? (you can tick more than one)

Facebook [ ]

Blogs [ ]

Twitter [ ]

Whatsapp [ ]

You tube [ ]

Others,  
state.....  
.....

4.) Do you encounter any challenge as a result of social media use for public relations purposes?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

Explain your answer.....

**QUESTIONNAIRES**  
**Student representatives**

Please answer questions by putting a tick [√] in the appropriate box or by writing in the space provided.

**SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION**

**1. Gender**

Male [ ]

Female [ ]

**2. Age Bracket**

18-25 years [ ]

26-35 years [ ]

36-45 years [ ]

46-55 years [ ]

Above 55 years [ ]

**3. Year of Study**

First year [ ]

Second year [ ]

Third year [ ]

Fourth years [ ]

**SECTION: B**

1. Do you use social media?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

2. Which social media platforms do you usually use to get information from the university? (you can tick more than one)

Facebook [ ]

Blogs [ ]

Twitter [ ]

Whatsapp [ ]

You tube [ ]

Others, state.....

3. If yes, do you use social media to get information from the University?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

4. If No above, explain what you think is the reason behind this

.....  
.....  
.....

5. Which information do you get from the university using social media

Exam results [ ]

Updates [ ]

Entertainment [ ]

Conferences [ ]

6. In terms of public relations affairs, how do you use social media as a class representative? Use a scale of (1-5) where **1-not at all 2-little extent 3-moderate extent, 4-great extent 5-very great extent**

Aspect	Not at all	Little extent	Moderate extent	Great extent	Very great extent
To reach out to PR department					
To launch complaints					
To publicize upcoming events					
To create social campaigns					
To communicate directly to the institution					
To raise awareness about an issue					

7. How would you rate the impact of adoption of social media use by institution?

Very High [ ]

High [ ]

Fair [ ]

Low [ ]



8) In a scale of (1-5) where, 1- Not at all 2-Little extent 3- Moderate extent 4- Great extent 5- Very great extent, rate the how you use social media for public affairs using the following aspect.

Aspect	Not at all	Little extent	Moderate extent	Great extent	Very great extent
Showcase innovation and creativity					
Reach out to media houses					
For entertainment					
For advertisement and advocacy					
To appeal to a particular stakeholder					

Others.....  
 .....  
 .....

9. Do you encounter any challenge as a result of social media use for public relations purposes?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

Explain your answer.....

**Thank you for your time**

## **LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**

School of Journalism and Mass Communication,

University of Nairobi,

P.O. Box 30197,

Nairobi.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a post graduate student in the school of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Nairobi.

As part of my Master of Communication Studies course, I am required to collect data and write a project. My project title is Social Media use for Public Relations Practice in higher learning institutions in Kenya. In this regard, I request for your participation to enable me collect data by giving honest response to the questions.

I wish to assure you that the information obtained in this exercise is purely for research purposes and your identity will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Yours sincerely,

**Faith Chepkemoi**

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