

**The Use of Social Media Concerning The Political
Participation During Crises In Developing
Countries: A Case Study of How The Youth In
Kenya Seek Justice Against #CovidMillionaires**

Abed Oraga

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Approval of the Institute of Graduate Studies and Research

Prof. Dr. Ali Hakan Ulusoy
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Communication and Media Studies.

Prof. Dr. Senih Çavuşoğlu
Dean, Faculty of Communication and
Media Studies

We certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate in scope and quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Communication and Media Studies.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ülfet Kutoğlu Kuruç
Supervisor

Examining Committee

1. Prof. Dr. Fatoş Adiloğlu

2. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ülfet Kutoğlu Kuruç

3. Asst. Prof. Dr. Baruck Opiyo

ABSTRACT

The growth of the Internet across the world has diversified the manner in which political and crisis communication takes place everywhere. Young people in developing countries such as Kenya are using social media platforms to interact with each other, get new information and news and seek accountability from their political leaders. In this front, Facebook and Twitter have been among the leading social media applications that have brought together a large number of users across the developing world.

This study aimed to investigate how the youth in tertiary institutions in Kenya, used Twitter and Facebook to engage with public institutions in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study particularly focused on how these youths used Facebook and Twitter to seek justice after a news expose' highlighted how individuals became millionaires out of the pandemic (#CovidMillionaires) aired on Nation TV on August 16, 2020.

Using survey research method, the study collected data through a questionnaire consisting of 40 questions (n=315) which was administered to undergraduate and graduate students at two universities in Kenya. The study was guided by the theoretical framework of Social-Mediated Crisis Communication (SMCC) Model, Uses and Gratifications Theory and Agenda Setting theories.

Findings show that participants heavily relied on Twitter and Facebook to obtain political news and engage in political discourse. It further establishes that social media are critical communication channels that empower young people to seek accountability

from the government and other leaders. On whether online political participation is more effective than offline political participation, the study concludes that although the youth in tertiary institutions in Kenya do not actively engage in offline political participation, the conversations that take place online like #CovidMillionaires are making the youth to be more interested to participate in offline political activities. Consequently, Twitter and Facebook are critical platforms that might enhance offline political participation in developing countries.

Keywords: #CovidMillionaires, Political Participation, Twitter, Facebook, Crisis Communication

ÖZ

İnternet kullanımının hızlı bir şekilde artmasıyla birlikte sosyal medya platformları, Kenya gibi gelişmekte olan ülkelerde popülerleşmeye başlamıştır. İnsanlar, birbirleriyle etkileşimde bulunmak, yeni bilgi ve haberlere ulaşmak amacıyla sosyal medya platformlarını kullanmaktadırlar. Facebook ve Twitter ise bu alanda birçok kullanıcıyı bir araya getiren öncü sosyal medya uygulamaları arasındadır.

Dolayısıyla bu araştırma, Kenya’da eğitim almakta olan üniversite öğrencilerinin COVID-19 pandemisi döneminde Twitter ve Facebook gibi platformları kamu kurumlarıyla etkileşim kurmak için nasıl kullandıklarını incelemeyi hedeflemektedir. Çalışma özellikle Kenya’daki üniversite öğrencilerinin , 16 Ağustos 2020’de Nation TV’de yayınlanan programın COVID-19 Milyonerleri’ni (#CovidMilionaires) ifşa etmesinden sonra adalaet aramak için Facebook ve Twitter’ı nasıl kullandığına odaklanmıştır.

Belirlenen amaca ulaşmak için bu çalışmada, 315 kişiye 40 sorudan oluşan bir anket uygulanmış ve veri toplanmıştır. Araştırmanın katılımcıları, Maseno Üniversitesi ve Jaramogi Oginga Odinga Bilim ve Teknoloji Üniversitesi’nde eğitim alan lisans ve yüksek lisans öğrencilerinden oluşmaktadır. Çalışma, Kullanımlar ve Doyumlar Teorisi, Gündem Belirleme Teorisi ve Sosyal Medya Kriz İletişimi Modeli’nin teorik çerçevesinde irdelenmiştir

Çalışmada, katılımcıların siyasi haberler almak ve siyasi söylemlerde bulunmak için Twitter ve Facebook gibi sosyal medya platformlarına büyük ölçüde güvendikleri ortaya çıkmıştır. Ayrıca çalışma, bu sosyal medya platformlarının, gençleri

hükümetten ve liderlerinden hesap verebilirlik talep etmeye teşvik eden, kritik iletişim kanalları olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Çevrimiçi siyasi katılımın çevrimdışı siyasi katılımdan daha etkili olup olmadığı konusunda ise çalışmada, Kenya'daki üniversite gençliği aktif olarak siyasete katılmamalarına rağmen, #CovidMillionaires gibi çevrimiçi gerçekleşen sohbetlerin bu gençleri daha aktif hale getirdikleri sonucuna varılmıştır. Sonuç olarak, Twitter ve Facebook, gelişmekte olan ülkelerde çevrimiçi siyasi katılımı arttırabilecek kritik platformlardır.

Anahtar kelimeler: #CovidMillionaires, Siyasi Katılım, Twitter, Facebook, Kriz İletişimi

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved father for the unconditional love and great support he has accorded me. I love you dad.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The chapter discusses the background of the research, the motivation of the research, the problem statement, and the research questions of the research. The significance, limitations and methodology of the study will also be explored.

The emergence of the Internet and the widespread use of social networking sites have become the standard all around the world. Social media platforms have managed to connect people around the world, regardless of distance or cultural backgrounds. According to Chen and Zhang (2010), social media have shrunk time and space, making the globe a smaller interacting field by converging new media and globalization; hence all manner of discourse take place on all social media platforms, including politics.

New technologies and their applications have made it easy for people to connect with their leaders online, changing how communication in politics takes place. Before the emergence of the Internet, people relied on traditional media platforms (radio, TV, and newspapers) to get information about the state of politics. However, Individuals may now interact in greater depth using new media channels utilizing the information they consume online, including politics.

As soon as the Internet was developed, political groups utilized it to educate the broader public through their websites as a one-way communication method. In any instance, innovation of the new media have transformed two-way correspondence designs (Emruli & Bača, 2011). With the emergence of different social media applications, the youth in tertiary institutions have seized the opportunity to engage in different discourses, including politics. Currently, it is notable that most youths in Kenya are using social media to involve in politics. Quintelier & Vissers (2008) posed that those political activities which emerge online are useful to the youth, and it influences them to get involved in politics.

This study seeks to investigate how the youth in tertiary institutions in Kenya, used Twitter and Facebook to engage with public institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, this study focuses on how the youth in tertiary institutions in Kenya used Facebook and Twitter to raise their voice after COVID-19 Millionaires expose (#CovidMilionaires) on Nation TV that was aired on August 16, 2020.

1.2 Motivation of the study

Twitter and Facebook are two examples of social media platforms which have become very active spaces where discussions on political discourse in Kenya happen. All arms of government in Kenya (The Executive, Legislature and Judiciary) have adopted usage of social media to communicate to the masses because of their timely features and instant feedback from the masses being communicated to. Also, Kenyan politicians have incorporated the use social media sites to persuade, interrogate, inform and interact with their target audience easily and in real-time (Gurevitch, Coleman & Blumler, 2009).

With the increase of online political activities by the Kenyan government and politicians, most social media users in Kenya are taking the advantage of interacting with their leaders and expecting direct feedback from them. Of interest to this study is how the youth in Kenya, especially those in tertiary institutions used social media to demand for justice against the #CovidMillionaires: #CovidMillionaires was an expose' by Denis Okari of Nation TV (NTV) that exposed how the Kenyan Ministry of Health mishandled the donations the country had received to help fight Corona Virus and other procurement procedures for purchasing personal protection equipment. The expose caused an uproar online which compelled the president to demand an investigation into #CovidMillionaires.

This trend motivated the researcher to try and figure out how the youth in tertiary institutions in Kenya, used Twitter and Facebook to participate in political discourse by engaging with their leaders in calling for justice against the #CovidMillionaires scandal.

1.3 Problem of the study

The Internet has become an essential part of the current society. It has increased our culturally varied world's connectivity and interdependence. Social media enabled people to communicate and interact with each other in real-time despite factors like distance and diversity in culture. Since the discovery of the Internet, the number of people who access information online increases daily; hence people's everyday lives have become more reliant on social media sites. Communication on social media platforms promotes interactive dialogues that contribute to creating an understanding of the different world views. Individuals can use social media to express their own ideas with the world and to criticize other people's public posts (Georgetown

University, 2010). The access of information online has drastically changed the monopoly of dissemination of information that was governed by the media and political elites.

Social media's popularity has influenced people's political engagement (Gil de Zúñiga, Copeland, & Bimber, 2014). Some scholars posed that the youth, are relying more on social media for news, political information and government functions (Mitchell, Gottfried and Matsa, 2015). Unlike the traditional media (newspapers, radio and TV) where the production of political messages consumed more time and was costly, social media platforms are timely updated and do not incur a lot of costs to produce and share political messages (Best & Krueger, 2005). With such advantages that come along with social media, people easily access political messages online and they also create unique material online, resulting in new kinds of political involvement (de Zuniga et al., 2014).

Different scholars have studied how the old media channels have had an influence on political participation and awareness, especially in developed countries. Other researchers have studied the relations between the new media channels and their influence to political participation and influence, but there seems to be a gap in developing countries as very few studies have been conducted on this subject.

In Kenya's many struggles for political independence, campaign for multiparty political system, etc, the youth (especially university students) have been a significant component. Most of the revolutionary acts that changed the system and tone of politics have been possible because of the efforts put in place by university students (Odinga, 1976). This tradition of young adults participating in politics is still evident in Kenya

but how it happens changes over time as globalisation grows. The “youth” as referred to in this study are thus mainly students at tertiary institutions between the ages of 18 and 35 who live and study in Kenya.

Why the youth in Kenya? Statistics from Kenyan Census 2019 reported that 35.7 million (75%) of the Kenyans are under the age of 35 years (Kenya national bureau of Statistics, 2019). These statistics show that Kenya is a country dominated by the young people, who adopted and/ or have witnessed the growth of social media, making it a perfect demography to conduct research of such a nature (Ndungu, 2020).

Consequently, the study investigates how the youth in tertiary institutions in Kenya, used Facebook and Twitter to participate in politics by calling for justice against #CovidMillionaires.

1.4 Research questions

The youth who are currently in tertiary institutions were interrogated directly to help understand how they used Facebook and Twitter to participate in political discourse. Using the COVID-19 scandal dubbed #CovidMillionnaires as a case study, the study tried to answer the following research questions:

- RQ1: Do political activities that take place online have a significant relationship with offline political participation among the youth in universities in Kenya?
- RQ2: How did social media shape how the youth in tertiary institutions in Kenya express their call for justice against the #CovidMillionnaires?

- RQ3: Does calling for justice against #CovidMillionaires on social media platforms prove to be more effective than other means of offline activism?
- RQ4: Does the utilization of social media during crises have an impact on offline activism?

1.5 Significance of the study

The findings and recommendations of this research will be instrumental to political communicators as it will give them insights of the patterns used by the youth to engage in political activities online. The findings of the study will also showcase the trends on what political activities the youth associate with more and what they barely interact with. Furthermore, this study will be informative to media managers by informing them how political messages should be packaged on specific platforms to reach even wider audiences.

Moreover, this study will contribute greatly in literature for future studies on political communication in Kenya as there is scarce research in this field. The study might also come in handy to try and explain why the youth use social media platforms to interact with public institutions and government officials.

1.6 Limitation of the study

The time constraint is one of the study's major limitations. Because the survey is conducted within a certain time frame, the participants' perspectives and experiences are likely to change, but this can be addressed by the recommendations on how the study can shed light on future studies on online political communication.

Whereas the data gathered for this research was collected from a statistical distribution of youths in tertiary institutions in Kenya, the findings cannot be concluded as facts

that represent all youths across all developing countries. Also, the findings cannot be concluded as facts that represent the youths who are not in tertiary institutions, or indeed represent the feelings and thinking of all students spread across other tertiary institutions in the country.

1.7 Methodology

To understand how the youth in tertiary institutions use social media to participate in politics by engaging with public institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic, quantitative research methods were employed. Quantitative approach is used to quantify an issue by producing numerical data that can be converted into usable statistics. It is utilized when measuring attitudes, views, behaviours, and other specified factors, as well as to generalize results from a broader sample group (Wyse, 2011). The survey, in form of a questionnaire, that was administered to collect data, was developed by the researcher.

Using purposive sampling and snowballing sampling, the study administered the questionnaires to 315 university students who study in Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology and Maseno University.

The descriptive statistics from the respondents and recurring themes that emerged in relation to the questions asked on the utilization of Twitter and Facebook to participate in online political activities and the challenges that arise from it were analysed. A general discussion of the research questions and responses was held. An analysis of the characteristics of the participants was presented out first. This involved the analysis of the student's demographic information and their use of technological innovations and social media.

Secondly an analysis on the student's attitude towards the use of Facebook and Twitter for political participation and during crisis within the context of #CovidMillionaires was carried out. The means of statements in the five-point Likert scale were studied. The mean is very significant in interpreting the cumulative attitude of the participants.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

To achieve the objectives set for this study, this chapter critically examines the existing literature on how social media have been utilized for political participation in developing and developed countries during crises. Firstly, the chapter highlights the relation between social media, political communication and its role in political participation, as argued by other scholars. Also, political participation is defined to give the context of the entire research.

Secondly, this section will discuss how developed countries and developing African countries have managed to incorporate social media for political involvement and the outcomes thereof. Also, some case studies have been highlighted to showcase the similarities and difference of application of social media across African countries and other developed countries during crises.

Thirdly, in relation to the #CovidMillionaires scandal, the chapter will give context of the scandal and outline how social media was instrumental in raising awareness and seeking justice by Kenyan citizens. Finally, the chapter will look into previous studies on how the youth have utilised social media for political participation during crises in Kenya.

The extensive literature review also points out the research gap which is instrumental in formulating the research questions of the survey. The theories that guide this study are also discussed extensively.

2.1 The relationship between political communication and social media

2.1.1 Social media and political communication

With the rapid emergence of digital and mobile technology, communication between people has been easier and as frequent than ever before; and with that, a new generation of individuals have grown while interacting with each other despite the boundaries that might be put in place such as the distance between the individuals, culture, religion and governance. The current growth of technology has also made it possible for an individual to interact with huge audiences online and receive instant feedback (Manning, 2014).

Social networks have been credited with connecting different groups; either close knit groups or diverse communities. Although Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe (2007) attested that most social media users utilize these platforms to get in touch with the persons they are acquainted with in real life, Westling (2007) suggested that the main purpose of social media platforms is to put consumers into contact with individuals they have never met before.

Lattimore (2010) asserted that social media includes all platforms that utilises technology in enabling interactions, participation and create open collaborations; also, users of social media have the freedom to share their experiences, opinions and ideas in forms words, audio or visual materials. The main objectives of social media are to

enable platforms that are credible, present and easy for collaboration of information sharing among their users.

Some of the popular interactive online platforms include Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Google+, Blogs and Snapchat (Knight & Cook, 2013). Social media sites have ushered in a new space for people to engage in diverse discourse including access of information, giving their political opinions and giving feedback instantly to anyone in their networks (Storsul, 2011). Also, Schulz (2005) suggested that most users of new media are very involved in online political activities.

Effective communication in political context is paramount as it facilitates the transmission of political and policy information among politician, the government, news media and their publics. Political communication is critical as it can build or break good relations among individuals, groups and political structures in the process of seeking power and keeping it. Political communication, according to Swanson and Nimmo (1990), is the deliberate use of communication to affect public understanding, opinions, and actions on political issues. While pointing out how persuasion on political matters is critical, strategy of the nature of communication stands out.

2.1.2 Social media and political participation

The connection between the use of social media and political support has been broadly examined in social sciences' studies. Initial discussions on the nature and setup of the web caused a great contention among scholars on whether the web could assemble and inform uninterested political participants (Norris, 2003). According to Downs (1957), although obtaining and analysing political information is expensive, the evident advantages of its consumption are dependent on people's motives, notably their interest and curiosity in politics.

Hermida (2012) and Hill and Lashmar (2013) outlined some distinct characteristics of social media that sets them apart from the traditional media. These characteristics include openness, participation, conversation and community participation. Effing, Hillegersberg and Huibers (2011) and other academicians have advanced this claim by posing that participation is a key aspect of the development of social media and web2.0.

A study conducted by Castells (2007) found that there is a direct relationship between the Internet and the rise of social autonomy (a group of members cooperating effectively). Castells (2014) demonstrated the use of Internet for communication has contributed to the growth of socio-political participation across the globe, despite the economic disadvantages experienced in developing countries.

According to Grönlund (2009), participation is the unique activity of doing things jointly while Political participation is defined as behaviours designed to change or shape governmental policies, either by influencing public institutions or civil servants or by influencing their decisions. (Xie et al., 2008). Verba and Nie (1972) are considered to be among the first scholars to have crafted an ideal definition of political participation, alluding that political participants include private citizens who engage in political activities with the objective of influencing the activities of civil personnel. Other scholars (see for example, Fox, 2014; Lamprianou, 2013; Luhrmann, 2013) contested the definition arguing that anyone, regardless of whether private or public, can participate in political activities and not really to impact government measures.

While probing the impact of the Internet on offline and online political activities, Jiang (2016) posed that by involving in online political activities, most social media

users also develop strong interest in offline political activities. Social media sites have made it easier for their users to share their opinions, suggestions and any other political discourse bypassing the traditional gatekeepers and other stakeholders who poses power in traditional media and can influence any publication. These participatory abilities that social media have provided have been able to bring together large audiences to deal with specific agendas, and help shape political discourses and share the outcomes to masses (Cohen & Kahne, 2015).

Yang, Chen, Maity & Ferrara (2016) asserted that in Kenya and throughout the world, in political communication, social media have emerged to be essential. Since politics involves governance, distribution of resource and formulation and implementation of policies, communication has always played a role in facilitation of all these services (Perloff, 2013). With such responsibilities from political leaders, public participation in the governance process becomes a mandatory activity. Public participation can be defined as the process by which values, needs and concerns from the public are included into corporate and government decision making processes (Creighton, 2005).

Unlike the traditional media, especially Television, where political discourse— “a game of persuasion, power, aggregating votes and mobilizing support for politicians and policies” (Gurevitch, Colema & Blumler, 2009, p.165) took place within mediated gaze of television, social media has made it possible for every individual to interpret, analyse and give instant feedback hence changing the nature of political communication (Gurevitch, Colema & Blumler, 2009).

Biswas, Ingle & Mousumi (2014) asserted that it has become popular for people to search for political information online and utilize the information acquired to

participate actively in other political discourses online or offline. Wattal et al. (2010) illustrated how the 2008 USA presidential campaign provided a good example on how social media platforms have grown in importance for public discourse and persuasion. It became clear that social media might be efficiently used to reach out to and connect with voters and also share significant communication messages to them directly. Particularly young adults were roused to political discourse utilizing social media as communication channels (Kushin & Kitchener, 2009).

Different social media sites have been used to achieve a target result for political reasons. For example, Ittefaq and Iqbal (2018) found out that the most used platform in Pakistan among the youth for online political activities in comparison to other social media platforms, is Facebook. Alternatively, Twitter users can take part in a range of political actions such as publishing, responding, quoting, or retweeting to political tweets, interacting with political parties and politicians, and participating in political debates (Tumasjan et al., 2010). Golbeck et al. (2010) found that most Congress members in USA prefer using Twitter in promoting their political ambitions and showcasing their progress while in office, like of blogs and news articles about themselves.

Moreover, citizens worldwide have used social media sites for political reasons. For example, Gaffney (2010) posed that Iranians used the hashtag #IranElections to track the election process and outcome during the 2009 elections. Despite the use of Twitter by the protesters in tracking the election process, Gaffney (2010) stated that it was not certain to tell the effect of Twitter usage in tracking the election process.

Yardi and Boyd (2010) emphasised that, in political setting, most social media users' bond with other users whom they share similar perspectives in terms of sharing, reposting or retweeting their ideas. However, they are additionally effectively drawn in with those with whom they oppose these ideas. Furthermore, the feedback from concurring users of social media would strengthen their connectivity and the manner on how they interact with each other, whereas negative feedback from other users will fortify in-group and out-group connection.

In this regard, the cognitive engagement theory offers structural format in understanding political participation through political communication, using social media. The cognitive engagement theory suggests that a person's participation in political matters depends on their access to information, education on the political matters, political interest, political knowledge and satisfaction.

2.1.3 Social media and political awareness

Political awareness has been broadly explored in political science literatures. Over the period of its study, different terminologies have been used to describe what political awareness entails: political information, political expertise, political sophistication, political knowledge and political information (Amer, 2009).

According to Carpini and Keeter (1996), awareness of politics is a function of acquiring knowledge about politics and governance. They further simplify it by pointing out that political awareness majorly entails the amount and level of factual information individuals have when engaging in political activities. All in all, access to political subject matters, media exposure, political interest, political involvement and education are all indicators of political awareness, with political information being the

absolute best indication (Amer, 2009). Friske et al. (1983) also defined political awareness as an integration of political participation, knowledge and interest.

Early studies define political knowledge as accurate information stored in long-standing memory (Bartels 1996; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Althaus 1998). This and other definitions of political knowledge emphasize on the factual aspect of the content and formation of political discourse. Therefore, it is critical to note that the information that amounts to political knowledge depends on the aim of specific studies which are interrogating political knowledge. However, there are some general facts that are targeted by a lot of researchers. These broad facts can be divided into two categories. (Clark, 2013):

General knowledge--Some thematic issues addressed include political processes, political systems, institutions, structures and actors within the political systems. Issues of democracy, elections, political parties, government and parliament also arise in this category.

Specific knowledge—The thematical subjects addressed in this category comprises of specific policies and issues, current political processes, political elites, political parties, etc.

Also, these studies found out that there is a direct correlation between people with high political knowledge and how well their democracy functions. Such individuals also possess attitude that can enable them tolerate a wide range of political issues, critical contrasting political discourses, and they engage in political participation at very high levels (Pastarmadzhieva, 2015).

Over the years, media have been the main source of political discourse and information (Hayes and Lawless 2015; see also Prior 2007; Jerit, Barabas, and Bolson 2006). Nevertheless, the invention of the Internet and subsequent the consumption of political information has been changed because of the configurations of social networking platforms. Unlike the era where the TV news were scares and there was no twenty-four hours of news broadcast, newspapers were only delivered in the morning, social media have revolutionized the access of political knowledge and news at any given time of the day as long as one is connected to the Internet (Prior, 2007).

Risko and Dunn (2015) indicated that the presence of the Internet has made people depend on social media platforms to store information online rather than processing and internalizing the information in their memory. Storing the information online rather than internalising it assures individuals that they can access the information at any time, unlike relying on human memory (Wegner, 1987).

Delli Carpini (2004) defined political interest as the democratic norms and values an individual has that guarantees their involvement to political discourse. This involves one having political beliefs and attitudes like orientations and ideologies or participating in political activities such as campaign and voting (Kruikemeier et al., 2013). Moreover, Weaver (1996) suggested that the introduction of new media to the political arena increases political participation and involvement because of the increase in political information and the easy access to it.

In contrast with other political behaviours like political campaigns and voter turnouts, political interest is commonly applied as a solid pointer on the political behaviour of people because political interest grows with time among people who keep on involving

themselves with political discourse (Prior, 2010). Although this perspective tries to imply that political interest dictates the political dynamics of a particular people (Verba et al., 1995), Kruikemeier et al. (2013) claimed that the connection between political interest and involvement in politics is far much complicated. Verba et al. stresses that “Political interest...most likely leads to political action, while participation in politics, presumably, increases political interest” (1995, p. 276). These thoughts are upheld by recent investigations such as; Wang (2007) found that the usage of the Internet in political debates increases political interest and binds people to actively participate in political matters. Shehata and Strömbäck (2010) concluded that thoughtfulness regarding news on politics was inextricably linked to political interest. Also, they point out that this connection is both reciprocal and casual.

Classical definitions of political participation (Kaase and Marsh, 1979; Parry et al., 1992; Norris, 2001; Verba et al., 1995; Milbrath and Goel, 1977; Verba and Nie, 1972) suggested that it involves political engagement of private citizens in an attempt to influence on how government decisions are made (Hooghe et al., 2014). Unfortunately, this point of view insinuates that any other political activity whose object is not to influence government decision making does not qualify to be termed as political participation.

Evidently, all these definitions were proposed before the digital era and they are still cited widely in this subject. However, with the rapid growth of social media and other technological developments, the nature of politics is drastically changing as political discourse become more personalised, and more political activities take place outside the institutionalise political domains. Currently, political participation recognised to

be practised in the expanded political domain other than “policy- making process” (Hooghe et al., 2014).

To address this mishap, Van Deth (2014) formulated an operational definition of political participation, by coming up with a model that places an activity into categories to determine if it qualifies to be labelled as political participation. This definition gives way for online activities like posting political opinions, information, audio-visuals materials and blogs, with condition that they are fixed at expressing political motives. Although the most visible form of political engagement is voting, other forms such as flash mobs, suicide protests, volunteering in political activities, protests which seek to influence political opinion and political consumption directed at company activities (Van Deth, 2014).

The expression "participation" in this study will be viewed on the whole to incorporate other political discourse and electronic spread of political information. When defining participation on social media, it is critical to have a definition that goes beyond implying electoral behaviour. When discussing how new media fits into the concept of participation, it is critical that the interpretation of participation be broad enough to encompass other political discussions and the dissemination of political information.

It is obvious that the presence of new media platforms have enabled new types of political participation. Some platforms have no clear equivalents in the real world. For instance, individuals may use the Internet to propagate political ideas and try to influence government choices by leaving comments on official government websites. The presence of new kinds of participation projects the increase of involvement by even more people. The impact on interest levels will be determined by how widely the

new media sites are utilized: If the new media platforms are used in minimal, they are probably not going to deliver a more participative society (Anduiza, Cantijoch & Gallego, 2009).

2.2 The role of new media during crises

A crisis is described as a major interruption in an organization's regular operations that results in widespread media coverage and public inquiry (Ajzenman, 2020). Organizations should have a crisis communication strategy and procedures in place for security and preparation in the event of a catastrophe, which is not always avoidable.

The crisis communication plan is a guideline that is focused on communication. It describes how the organization will communicate to the public and the media in the event of a crisis (Fearn-Banks, 2016). The rising or falling of an organization depends on how well or how badly it handles a crisis.

The growth of social media has led to communication getting faster, worldwide, interactive, and collective. There is an accessibility of 24hours, and there is no geographical barrier. Organizational managers and public relations officers should put into consideration such factors when handling crises so that they can swiftly present statements and manage the information that caused the crisis. with ease of accessibility of information, the speed at which the information develops as well as its viral nature (Zafliro, 2000).

2.3 The use of social networking sites for political participation in developed countries

For decades media have played a critical role in terms of political participation in developed countries. As stated by Barner (2010), the media provide forums for the

presentation and contestation of perspectives, assisting the public in making informed decisions. Social media platforms have expanded democratic functions by allowing for both propositions and oppositions in political discourse and functioning as a platform for collective action. Social media, through acting as a two-way communication transmission, assists political organizations and candidates in engaging and interacting with constituents and electorates effectively while receiving feedback instantly or later.

De Zuniga, Puig-I-Abril, and Rojas (2009) investigated the impact of conventional information acquired online on political involvement utilizing data from American Life Project and the Pew Internet. They discovered that using conventional sources online is positively connected to many forms of political involvement, both offline and online. Östman (2010) found that engagement in User Generated Content (UGC) predicts online and offline political involvement, in a study conducted among Swedish teenagers aged 13-17 years old. Kirk and Schill (2011) while investigating the 2008 USA presidential election, concluded that the CNN's use of YouTube established a digital agora, an interactive space that amplified citizen participation, civic efficacy, and political involvement, rather than being political "magnifiers or mouthpieces ". Citizens, they claim, not only acquired campaign messaging and news and information, but actively interacted with both contenders and each other in discussions about the future of the country (Kirk and Schill, 2011).

Professor Patrick J. Egan (2020) affirmed that social media platforms have grown to be essential news source in American democracy, but there is evidence that individuals remain in their shells when it comes to the types of online news that they read. Second, because social media provides a virtually unmediated avenue for politicians to

communicate with their supporters, they bypass the usual filtering and gatekeeping function that conventional media performs in assisting people to comprehend political campaigns. Second, because Internet provides a virtually unmediated avenue for politicians to communicate with their supporters, they bypass the usual filtering and gatekeeping function that conventional media performs in assisting people to comprehend political campaigns. Furthermore, he claimed that social media provides an environment where politicians can share any advertisements even if they break the conventional rules in traditional media. Below are some of the case studies on how social media have influenced political participation in the developed world:

2.3.1 Case 1: The voting advice application by Finnish voters in 2011

After the Assembly polls that were held on 17 April 2011 in Finland, Talon and Sulkava (2011) analysed how the electorates utilized the Internet to get election-related information. It emerged that every second person between the age of 18-74 had utilized the Internet to find out more about the aspirants their political parties. The democratic counsel application didn't have a lot of an effect on the political group.

The research also looked at the influence of social media platforms on people's voting selections. The findings revealed that information obtained from social media had little influence on voter's decision- making. Election machines, traditional media and the websites of parties and aspirants were seen as far more essential information sources (Talonen & Sulkava 2011).

2.3.2 Case 2: The French presidential election of 2007

In the French presidential election of 2007, Nicolas Sarkozy of the Centre-right UMP party beat socialist candidate Ségolène Royal. New media platforms had a significant influence on the election's results: more than 40% of People using the Internet indicated that online

chats and other activities online impacted their voting selections (Hanley, 2007). Social media platforms provided a space where the leaders could target their voters without the worry of gatekeepers filtering their messages.

2.3.3 Case 3: Elections in Berlin and the Pirate Party in Germany

Against all odds, the Pirate party got 8.9% of the votes casted and 15 seats in the state's parliament during the 2011 Berlin state election. Different demographic categories who participated in the elections ensured the party get 120,000 votes. They included; new voters who had just reached the voting age, the liberals, the left-wing voters, the Green and Christian Democrats. One in every five voters between the ages of 18 and 34 voted for the Pirate Party. All of this was accomplished on a €50,000 budget.

From the cases above, it is clear that social media have become platforms that most individuals use for political awareness. The media are assuming a critical part in giving data to general society on political occasions, appealing to their audiences and empowering them to engage in political exercises offline. The media, particularly social media platforms, have become critical for political debate and involvement (Golan, Arceneaux, & Soule, 2019).

Media involvement gives politicians and citizens opportunity to agree or disagree with the position of public institutions and other politicians who seek votes. Social media gives participants the opportunity to support and argue their position of which leader to elect as their representative. Based on the posts made by the political aspirants on social media platforms, many citizens used social media sites to either back the statement posted by clicking 'like' or argued the position by making comments. Hence, turning the sites as a platform for fashioning 'unanimous' stand on issues at stake.

Situations of expanding political involvement, as individuals can cast a ballot in races and referenda from the comfort of their houses (Allen, 1995; Freeman, 1997; Mulgan and Adonis, 1994). Alexander and Pal (1998) have contended that with more extreme policies of the demise of intermediate organisations, the creation of a new and stronger public discussion space and the growth of direct democracy contribute to better political policies. Advocates of these liberalization ideologies claimed that the Internet will boost interaction, voting and information collecting because it enhances the logical and expressive advantages of involvement.

Cognitive and behavioural barriers are being broken down because political discourses become more widely available and new technological instruments for more direct conversations within the elites and between the masses and elites are made publicly available. Citizens will find it simpler to form online networks and develop social capital, regardless of geographical or time constraints. As per these views, the Internet does not only deepen but also broaden the participative approach, re-engaging the disillusioned and integrating those who previously lacked the ability or time to participate, through leveraging new channels for citizen involvement (Dyson et al, 1994; Rheingold, 1996; Negroponte, 1995).

Online political activities appear to reflect and magnify the demographic bias of its offline equivalent. Major studies which focused on the users of new media have all painted a similar image. Intense Internet users are mainly male, in professional work, middle-class, with a high level of education, in between ages of 24 and 40, and live-in cities. In both Europe and the USA, the works of Bimber (1998) and Norris (1999; 2000) over a period of three years (1995– 1998), revealed that individuals who used the Internet for

political reasons had high levels of political efficacy, cognition, and interest as well as a higher socio-economic position.

Similarly, Gibson and Ward (1999) found the primary determinant influencing online political participation in the European setting as one's pre-existing inclination to engage in political discourse offline. These initial studies all come to the same conclusion: persons who have access to the Internet are the individuals who would be most inclined to participate in political discourse. The demographic with low participation rates is vastly underrepresented (Brown and Svennevig, 1999).

Secondly, according to certain studies, a higher proportion of younger users between the age of 18 and 29 years rely on the Internet for news. This tendency might lead to increased political engagement among this previously uninterested demographic. Third, at least in the United States, Bimber (1998) discovered that individuals with Internet connection had higher levels of civic involvement and proclivity to vote, irrespective of socio-economic level; this led him to conclude that the Internet might be a meeting place not only for the well-educated, but also for larger audiences who are more politically active than others. More importantly, Bimber's findings offer the provocative notion that simply being online increases engagement in real-world politics. (1998).

Media have played a vital role in developed world, for example, the case of election in the United States, politicians have used media to reach out to different people from different states through interaction on different media platforms. Furthermore, they have been able to share their referendum on what they will do when they get the position for presidency. Also, social media have significant impact on elections. Regularly, most mass media platforms like cable TV integrate social media platforms in their distribution of content

and engaging in political discourse. For many people, cable television is the initial point of contact for where they obtain their political information and sources. Commentary on cable channels also fosters polarization and capitalizes on people's inclinations toward specific political parties.

Most mainstream media establishments use new media platforms to re-affirm and promote their themes, and also to maintain partisan differences. According to Garrett (2019), the usage of social media has no effect on their users' political beliefs. Rather, social media produces a herd mentality when a candidate in an election makes a mistake in their leadership or campaign and people on social networking sites reinforce the effects of these failures online.

2.4 Use of social media for political participation in developing African countries

The roles of both traditional and new media keep on being the main streams of setting agendas of political discourse among citizens especially on issues that are seen as vital and in shaping the public opinion; hence majority of Africans engage in political and governance processes (Kalyango, 2011; Montero, 2009). However, the development and growth of the new media channels is rapidly dominating the scene in spreading political content and enabling all intended publics to engage instantly (Montero, 2009).

According to The International Telecommunication Union (2020), at the end of 2014, there were over 3 billion Internet users, two-thirds of them coming from the developing world and the number of mobile-broadband subscriptions reached 2.3 billion globally. 55 per cent of these were in the developing world. However, further statistics suggest that although it is evident that Internet usage has increase significantly in Africa, it

only contributes to five percent of Internet traffic worldwide. Such statistics help showcase how the new media had become very important transmitters of globalisation (Bonjawo, 2002; Castells et al., 2007; Gyamfi, 2005).

Although the connection between the use of new media for political participation has been studied extensively in developed countries, such investigations have not been conducted exhaustively in Africa and other developing nations. Apart from the difference in the political landscape and economic development, Africa and other developing countries face poor communication technological structure which in turn limits the access of information online (Nyirenda-Jere & Biru, 2015). In Kenya and Nigeria, for example, Internet penetration remains at 45.6 percent and 47.7 percent, respectively, compared to 76.2 percent in the United States (Adegbola and Gearhart, 2019). Contrary, traditional media outlets are still powerful channels for sharing political information across most African countries (Edegoh, Ezech, & Anunike, 2015; Omwoha, 2016).

Freedom House (2017) alluded that most African countries are perceived to be young democracies which are hugely affected by claims of electoral malpractice, violence, high level of poverty and claims of authoritarianism or dictatorship among most of her nations. Nevertheless, different nations within Africa have different growth and development levels in their economic structures, advancement in technology and the development of the political scene, measured by the strength of their democracy. Some examples of the studies conducted across Africa are categorized into South Africa and Zimbabwe representing countries located in the southern part of Africa,

Nigeria representing countries located in the western part of Africa, Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya representing the northern part of Africa.

2.4.1 South Africa and Zimbabwe (representing southern countries in Africa)

Although a majority of the youth in South Africa trust the mainstream media, they barely consume mainstream news and they have low trust in the political processes and government institutions. This abnormality of neglecting mainstream media is ascribed to lack of youth related content and what they consider as bias coverage by the mainstream media (Bosch, 2013). Since the youth in South Africa dislike consuming mainstream news, they find other alternatives to engage in political discourse like expressing their political interests online (Mhlomi & Osunkunle, 2017). However, it has not been established yet academically if participation in online political activities translates to offline participation in South Africa (Bosch, 2016).

Academicians from Zimbabwe have also investigated social media's influence in political participation (Mhiripiri and Mutsvairo, 2014; Manganga, 2012; Gukurume, 2017; Mare, 2018;). The findings from these articles show how the use of social networking sites have been effective in influencing political policies and opinions. Also, the studies found that social media was used extensively to share political campaign materials and mobilizing for solidarity marches against the ruling government. For example, Mare (2018) posed that all political parties and their candidates invested a lot of resources to attract the first-time voters, especially young people during the 2013 and 2018 elections.

2.4.2 Nigeria (representing west African countries)

In Nigeria, a number of studies have been done to ascertain how social media have influenced the political worldview in Nigeria. Dagona et al. (2013), Onyechi (2018)

and Abdulrauf (2016) have explored how the youth in Nigeria have actively participated in politics in their motherland. While looking into online political involvement and cognitive engagement on Twitter and Facebook among the youth in Malaysia and Nigeria, Abdulrauf (2016) found that the main factor that influenced the youth to use Twitter and Facebook to actively participate in politics was as a result of the accessibility of political information in those platforms.

Social networking sites are easily accessible, affordable and timely in distributing political information. Additionally, Onyechi (2018) asserted that most students in Nigeria who are active on social media and engage in political discourse online were active participants during the election campaigns offline. Also, Dagona et al. (2013) identified a significant relationship between the usage of social networking platforms for political mobilization among the youths in Nigeria. These investigations have had the option to uncover the extend of the use of social media in engaging in online political activities; However, Dagona et al. (2013) failed to address the kind of political activities the youth participate in when using social media platforms.

Other studies have also been undertaken to investigate how social media are utilized for political involvement in Nigeria. Obi and Chinedu-Okeke (2016), for example, investigated the degree of South-Eastern Nigerians' contribution with social media during election period and revealed that most campaigns and mobilization that used social networks significantly affected the turnout of results in the 2011 general election and 2015 General election in Nigeria.

Furthermore, Santas and Okoro (2017) evaluated the usage of new media for political correspondence during the 2011 official political decision in Nigeria, to decide if

citizens' decision of official up-and-comers was affected by their usage of social media. The outcomes uncovered that most of the respondents' decisions of official competitors was impacted by the utilization of social media. Additionally, the participants were of the supposition that the two candidates who were vying for presidency were well known to the voters because of their popularity on social media.

Ekwueme and Folarin (2017) studied how social media was critical in the official electioneering measures in Nigeria in 2015. They uncovered that online media assumed a significant part in assembling individuals, making mindfulness discourse and collecting data about election contestants. In addition, the repercussions of online media utilization in the discretionary cycles and missions of the Nigerian 2011 and 2015 general races were investigated (Apuke & Tunca 2018). Other research suggested that social media platforms were used because of their interactive character and that these platforms were utilized to impact the musings of numerous youngsters, expanding their political mindfulness.

2.4.3 Tunisia, Egypt and Libya (representing northern part of Africa)

To the North of Africa, the history of the Arab Spring showcased the power of social media. Facebook, Twitter and local blogs were the main platforms for mobilization of the protests that broke out in Tunisia. Citizens protested against the high levels of inequality, censorship, and corruption from the government. Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, who had governed for somewhat 20 years, resigned as a result of the demonstrations.

The revolution in Tunisia quickly spread across other Arab nations in the northern part of Africa including Egypt and Libya (Adibe, Odoemelam and Chibuwe, 2012). The protests in these countries escalated because most activists used social media platforms

to inform their citizens the cause of the protests hence giving them a sober reason on why the rulers of these countries had to resign. Social media also provided alternative channels from news broadcast as most traditional media platforms like TV and radio were owned by the ruling governments making most of the broadcasted news not credible (Nwafor et. al., 2013). The rise of pro- democracy in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya spread to other Arab countries which came to be known as the Arab Spring.

2.5 The Kenyan political profile concerning communication and media since independence

Mass media in Kenya can be traced back to 1927 when the East African Broadcasting Corporation (EABC) transmitted BBC news to the Kenyan Colony and white settlers in Kenya (Mbeke, 2008). The white settlers in Kenya relied on the radio broadcast to receive updates from their homes and other colonial territories around the world that were controlled by the British. During World War 2, the broadcasts began targeting Africans with the goal of informing the families of African soldiers about what was going on at the front lines.

In 1953, African Broadcasting Service (ABS) was established to focus on Africans. The programs in this broadcast included: Dholuo, Kiswahili, Kinandi, Arabic, Kikuyu and Kikamba. The provincial administration established a panel in 1954 to explore the future of radio in Kenya. Kenya Broadcasting Services (KBS) was established as a consequence in 1959. Local broadcasting stations were established in Nyeri (Mount Kenya Station), Mombasa (Sauti ya Mvita), and Kisumu (Nyanza). Another TV slot was established in Mombasa in 1970 to hand-off programs and develop nearby shows, socials, and various initiatives addressing beach front concerns. The Voice of Kenya

was renamed Kenya Broadcasting Corporation by an Act of Parliament in 1989 (Wanyama, 2015).

2.5.1 President Jomo Kenyatta era (1962-1978)

Jomo Kenyatta was Kenya's first president. The President and the government he led after independence was aware of how powerful the media was. Therefore, they purposed to control how the media disseminates information to the public (Mbeke, 2008). During the Kenyatta administration, the agenda that shaped media legislation and policy included issues of growth and national cohesion, political competitiveness, and philosophical concerns about media ownership. The government led by Kenyatta favoured a designated media entity that would support the country's development and national unity Agenda. At the time, the administration was opposed to an autonomous and unfamiliar possessed media acting as a watch dog role that may generate thwarted expectations towards the incoming government. In 1964, the independent government nationalized Kenya Broadcasting Service and renamed it Voice of Kenya (VOK) (Wanyama, 2015).

President Kenyatta's administration was hostile to the press. It went ahead to formulate and implement the Official Secrets' Act in 1968 to manage and punish government officials who leaked government information to the press and to control how the press published news. In 1969, the political squabble and fallout between President Kenyatta and his Vice President, Oginga Odinga, played out throughout the media, setting the tone for future state involvement with the media.

2.5.2 President Moi's era (1978-2002)

Daniel Arap Moi was the second president of Kenya. He took over the leadership of government in October, 1978 after the sudden passing of President Jomo Kenyatta.

Some notable events that shaped Moi's attitude towards mass media included the touch faceoff between the first president and his vice president, the attempted coup in 1982 and the fight for political liberation and globalization by university students in the 1990's (Mbeke, 2008).

The struggle of control at the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) during the attempted coup, in particular, cemented Moi's position on mass media. This led the government to treat the press in a dictatorial manner and limiting and restricting political freedom across the country and the press, making Kenya a *de Jure* political state. The government went ahead to openly clump down independent media entities which supported the opposition ideologies and even criminalised political opposition.

Section 2A of the Constitution was repealed in 1991. It enforced the one-party rule reintroduced the multiparty politics and also liberated the freedom of the press. In 1991, multiparty politics was introduced. This expanded the range of journalistic and political options and spurred the growth of independent publications and periodicals such as Economic Review and Finance (Mbeke, 2008).

2.5.3 President Kibaki's era (2003-2012)

The 2002 Presidential elections were highly contested to ouster Moi's regime and party—KANU. President Mwai Kibaki was elected as the third president of Kenya. President Kibaki's government was widely seen as a reformer one which could aggressively tackle the legal, regulatory, and policy problems that have hampered the country's socioeconomic state and the press. His goal was to produce a new constitution in his first 100 days in office, which included progressive media laws that would have allowed the press to operate freely while carrying out its purpose.

Regrettably, the proposed constitution was voted down during the 2005 referendum (Wanyama, 2015).

Regardless, President Kibaki pushed for policies that promoted a free press. His administration campaigned for the Freedom of Information Act (2007), which would repeal the Official Secrets Act and enhance access to governance and government information. (Mbeke, 2008).

2.5.4 President Uhuru's era (2013-Date)

Uhuru Kenyatta became the fourth president of Kenya following a hotly challenged political race held in March 2013. After taking over as the president, Uhuru seemed to change from the traditional perspective of how the government should work with the media to what was viewed as reformist perspective. In general, the Kenyan media's relationship with the government has been chilly and uncertain in the past. (Oluoch et al., 2016).

After two months in office, Kenyatta welcomed media partners including senior columnists and editors to statehouse. To numerous experts this affirmed an administration prepared to work with the media. Unfortunately, half a month later, journalists were tossed out of parliament allegedly because they were misreporting the proceedings of parliament. This denoted the start of a new column between a newly chose government and the press. Strain increased in the subsequent years of Uhuru's presidency like: The report of incidents from Westgate terror attack published by the Standard Group Media, and journalists being roughed up by police when they tried to cover protests (Mitullah et al., 2015).

2.6 Use of social media for political participation by the youth in Kenya

In Kenya's history for the struggle of independence and the fight for a multiparty system, the youth (university students in particular) have been a significant lot. Most of the revolutionary acts that changed the system and tone of politics have been possible because of the efforts put in place by university students (Odinga, 1976). This tradition of young adults participating in politics is still evident in Kenya but how it happens changes over time as globalisation grows.

Social networking sites have become an integral part of our everyday life. Research have indicated that most youths in Kenya, around 75%, use media as a form of interaction and a way of expressing different opinions concerning matters arising in political, economic, and social spheres. Zavattaro & Sementelli (2014) stated that social media have allowed youths to participate actively, both off-line and online. For example, the use of Facebook and Twitter are the most used platforms to enhance political participation. Furthermore, social media provides involvement and immediacy in communications, which are pretty valuable characteristics for youth in Kenya, and is now a part of modern young individual's everyday routines (Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe, 2008).

Baumgartner and Morris (2009) stated that the youths who do not frequently engage in politics can easily obtain political information shared by their friends, family and acquaintances online, this may lead to them developing political interest with time. A spirit of virtual community can increase interest in a political concept or leadership. Gottfried et al. (2015) contended that online sources were important sources of

information on the 2016 elections, after TV. In their investigation of political news patterns, they discovered that 61 % of young participants aged between 18 and 33 obtained their information from Facebook, compared to 60 % of the older participants who got their political news from local television.

As seen in the 2016 US presidential contests, as well as the 2017 and 2013 Kenyan presidential elections, social media platforms are widely available platforms for absorbing and disseminating campaign materials, enabling political strategists to quickly recruit volunteers, target voters, rally support and report on campaign plans (Smith, 2013).

The 2017 general elections in Kenya created a perfect environment for all political entities to utilize social media. All political parties utilised social media to strengthen participatory traits to their target audience. The political parties used social media to monitor public opinions, and also to disseminate information to the audience. At the end, Jubilee party won the election. The political party branded itself as the 'digital team' attracting more young people both online and offline. President Uhuru Kenya, in particular was an active user of Twitter, to an extend of being named by The Guardian as Africa's top 10 active [politicians on Twitter (Orring, 2013).

Various studies have proven that Media platforms are useful for facilitating political discussions among the youth, increasing political knowledge, facilitating interaction between political aspirants and voters, targeting voters with campaign information, disseminating political messages and propaganda, all with the intention of persuading voters' political decisions at the ballot box.

2.6.1 The use of Facebook for political participation in Kenya

The rapid growth of Internet across the globe has empowered many youths to develop interest in inventing more features to make technology more reliable. Social media being one of the inventions that receive feature updates on a daily basis, they have led to advanced networks for communication for most of the youths in Kenya. Youths use social media to influence political decisions and campaigns (Mitchell, Gottfried and Matsa, 2015).

Most researchers in the field of communication and other social sciences have focused more on Facebook due to its popularity in socio-political discourses. The platform provides easy access to public accounts' posts and subsequent commentaries, Facebook groups and Facebook pages of like-minded individuals who voice their viewpoints and sentimentality regarding a given person, news or topic. Kushin and Kitchener (2009) studied how Facebook has been utilized by the citizens to engage in political discussions. They find that Facebook is an instrumental platform where political discourse and other policy centred issues are discussed and the outcome of the discussions directly and instantly take effect to the participants.

Facebook's growing importance in political discourse has enabled politic participation to take on a new shape. Joining and forming groups on social networking platforms, posting and commenting online, participating in online debates with friends, planning protest activities, and 'liking' a political person or party's Facebook page to indicate political affiliations have all become commonplace. In Kenya, youths have created different groups and links on Facebook where they share their views concerning matters that arise (Conroy, Feezell and Guerrero 2012).

Globally, the usage of Facebook for virtual political participation has skyrocketed. Facebook is notably popular among young persons as they aim to influence political and social change. According to Conroy et al. (2012), young people are using Facebook to obtain political information, produce political content, mobilize like-minded individuals, and communicate political ideologies). Gradually, different political entities have used Facebook to motivate people to take part in political activities such as protests across the world. This, nonetheless, implies that Facebook can assist in converting or mobilizing people who might have disconnected from politics in real life to participate in political discourse online (Theocharis and Quintelier, 2012).

However, according to research, Facebook seems to be more effective than conventional media (Conroy, Feezell and Guerrero, 2012). In terms of information exposure, Facebook offers a similar and sophisticated function, but with the added advantages and benefits of international reach, faster speeds and higher quality and an engaging medium of virtual political conversation. Facebook, with such qualities, provides a significant role in the expansion of political knowledge. Facebook may encourage online political engagement by providing access to information, especially among Kenyan youths (Benesch, 2014).

2.6.2 The use of Twitter for political participation in Kenya

Twitter was founded in 2006 as a social microblogging site. Twitter is distinguished by its short communications known as "tweets," which are restricted to 280 characters (Sandoval Alamaz, 2017). According to estimates from March 2015, Twitter had over 1.3 billion users globally. Furthermore, figures published in July 2017 reveal that Twitter had a massive 157 million daily active users (Smith, 2017).

Twitter has empowered young Kenyans to engage in a range of political activities such as publishing, re - tweeting, quoting, or reacting to political tweets, as well as interacting with political parties and politicians, hence playing an active role in political discussions (Tumasjan et al. 2010). Other research have indicated that media or digital connectedness and engagement on platforms like Twitter can improve political information and knowledge, resulting in a more accurate assessment of a political aspirant (Tedesco, 2007). Min (2007) discovered that participation in political discourse on Twitter is associated with improved issue awareness, desire for political efficacy and to participate in politics.

2.7 The use of social media by university students for political participation in Kenya

The use of social networking sites has grown since the increase in the evolution of Internet technology. Social media platforms have grown in popularity and play a significant role in various aspects of our life, particularly education. Benesch (2014) and Clark (2013) demonstrated that the usage of social media serves various functions, including the exchange of ideas among educational professionals, assisting students in building collaborative communities, promoting the art of studying, and connecting with students.

Social media has always been an important tool for political participation in Kenya. Nowadays, social media has turned into a tool for university students that is widely used to share their thoughts and concerns on political topics. In recent years, Kenyan universities have become a hub of critical thinking and a platform where common grievances are voiced. Experts believe that this trend has changed how students

integrate civic engagement with their academic studies and can have tremendous implications on enhancing student activism at schools across Africa.

The usage of social networking sites by students in universities appears to be on the rise on a daily basis, and majority of them depend on those platforms for communication and engagement. According to Billot, & et al., (2009), an overwhelming majority of students, particularly those in tertiary education, are using social media while ignoring their emotional, psychological and physical health

2.7.1 Social media as a form of political campaign platform by university students in Kenya

University students are increasingly using social media, especially for campaigns as they are electing their student leaders. For example, most students who are aspiring to be student leaders will use Facebook, WhatsApp, and telegram to enhance communication among their fellow students (Hussain, 2005). The student's leaders interact with other students by sharing their memorandum and campaign strategies.

The usage of social networking sites like Imo, Facebook, WhatsApp, Viber and Messenger equips students with a communication gateway that allows them to stay in touch with others while also altering their everyday lives. Facebook is well-known, and its global expansion has been speedy. As of the first quarter of 2018, there were roughly 2.19 billion active Facebook members globally (Facebook, 2018).

Firstly, social media gives students a sense of freedom to post anything they want and communicate with anyone they choose. Students can also make new acquaintances and leave comments on other people's posts made by their friends and even have private conversations with their friends through the inbox feature. Social media

have provided a space for students to form virtual groups that may lead to disputes in the real life. It allows them to enthrall themselves with greater freedom.

Students are currently the most active users of social networks, which influences their everyday lives, habits, public life, community approaches and physical events. Students use social networks to influence decision making, for instance, a case study of Daystar University whereby students used Twitter and Facebook to showcase how the vice-chancellor had allegedly misused school resources and funds, leading to his termination (Mbuthia and Bashir, 2018).

Students in universities in Kenya use Twitter and Facebook several times a day. Because of the increased usage of social media platforms by students across universities in Kenya, the necessity of using the platforms for political discourse has become critical (Özmen and Atici, 2014).

2.8 Corona virus pandemic

The outbreak of Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) brought the whole world to a standstill as it spread across the globe. COVID-19 is caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), which mainly affect the respiratory organs of the human body. As it spread across the globe at an accelerated rate, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared it as a *pandemic* on 11th March, 2020, (WHO Director-General, 2020). Although most coronavirus infections that affect humans are always mild, COVID-19 (SARS-CoV) has been rampant as it has affected all countries in the world.

The Kenya Ministry of Health verified the first incidence of Coronavirus illness on 13th of March 2020. The Government of Kenya decided to close the international borders, restaurants, schools, nightclubs and bars. Also, social gatherings and political rallies were halted and a dusk to dawn curfew were declared. All these measures were implemented to mitigate the spread of the disease withing the country.

As the number of the infected people kept on rising, the Government went further to restrict movements between major city countries; Mombasa and Nairobi were considered epidemic hotspots at the time (Ministry of Health-Kenya, 2020). The main reason for such measure to be put in place by the Government is because of the limited capacity of the health system in Kenya (Barasa, 2020), the lack of enough medical personnel that can handle a huge number of patience (Macharia, Joseph and Okiro, 2020).

In light with the measures put across by the government, the country witnessed few cases of COVID-19 between the month of April and June (Ministry of Health-Kenya, 2020). This resulted to the relaxation of some measures put by the government in June and July that included the opening of places of worship, restaurants and the cessation of movement in Nairobi and Mombasa County. As of 20th of November 2020, there had been 74,145 positive cases and 1330 deaths caused by COVID-19 pandemic in Kenya.

2.8.1 The role of social media during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Experts from World Health Organisation (WHO) and other health institutions and regulatory authorities heavily rely on social media to create awareness on matters concerning health around the world (Benetoli, 2018). Also, they use social media to

educate health care workers and the general public in a wide area, starting from problems or challenges like anti-microbial resistance to subjects such as allergic reaction reporting. The primary focus of these activities is represented by education campaigns took advantage of social media platforms' vast scale, immediacy and breadth of reach to communicate effectively, quickly and efficiently. Using social media to help with infectious diseases control and prevention can be cost-friendly (Al-Surimi K et al, 2016).

Social network sites are the most powerful influential tools to create awareness of dangerous diseases, specifically diseases that might lead to a pandemic around the globe. Why media? This is because most people in the world obtain information through media to know how fast is the diseases spreading and how many people have been infected and also the data on how can we prevent these contagious diseases like COVID-19 (Allgaier et al., 2015).

According to Freberg (2013), the function of social media in the transmission of information has efficiently resulted in behaviour changes which has influenced how health institutions and workers make decisions. Also, the users of these platforms have enabled the general public to engage in discussions by giving their own experiences and opinions. Yet, such discussions from the general public on social media platforms raises the question of credibility of the information because such discourse lacks professional medical specialists; consequently, such material may lack accuracy, usefulness, reliability, or correctness. To combat misinformation, the World Health Organisation has called for positive and effective use of social media platforms when disseminating information concerning health matters especially emerging infectious diseases like COVID-19 pandemic (Freberg, 2013).

As the COVID-19 pandemic threatens the global health, social media platforms have played an important role in facilitating the distribution of trustworthy information to the general public on the seriousness of the disease and the measures that help slow the spread of the virus (Chan et al., 2020). Apart from the instant communication between medical professionals, social media platforms came in handy when almost the whole world was under lockdown; according to the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) data usage had seen over 20% surge on average, with far higher demand in urban areas (Posetti, 2020).

During an emergency like the COVID-19 pandemic, the public keeps an eye on social media to be informed on the progress of the scientists, share their opinions and experiences under lockdown. With the whole world online, it is obvious to stumble upon all kinds of information on social media platforms but the most critical information particularly on COVID-19 is the situational information. This is the information that help the authorities or people in power to formulate policies that will control the negative impact caused by the virus (Ojal et al., 2020).

2.8.2 The #CovidMillionaires scandal

#CovidMillionaires is a hashtag that was developed by the media to expose individuals in the government who allegedly had stolen or lute out the donations that were sent to Kenya by Jack Ma, a Chinese billionaire, to help combat COVID-19. The interview carried out by Dennis Okari¹ of Nation TV Kenya (NTV) on 16th August 2020 at 9:00 pm.

¹ Dennis Okari is an award-winning investigative journalist. Currently, he works for Nation TV (NTV) as the news anchor and special project's editor. For the last 17 years, he has worked in various fields in broadcast journalism for both international and local media organisations (Okari, 2021).

Nation Television (NTV-Kenya) is a television station in Kenya under the Nation Media Group founded by His Highness the Aga Khan. The group first established two newspapers; Taifa Leo (the first Swahili newspaper in Kenya) and Daily Nation newspaper. These two newspapers became popular because of their bold approach in reporting the events that were occurring during the struggle for independence, political turbulence and Pan-Africanism in Kenya, East Africa and across Africa. With the continued success, NMG expanded their media entities to radio stations, television programs and even owning their own printing press (Nation Media Group, 2021).

The expose' alleged that a huge shipment of donations from Jack Ma, Chinese billionaire, including ventilators and masks, mysteriously disappeared after they arrived in the country. The expose' also claim that although the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) did investigate on these allegations, the report they generated did not reflect the accurate findings of what was going on at Kenya Medical Supplies Authority (KEMSA).

According to a whistle-blower whose name was not revealed in the expose', the donations were supplied to different companies to be sold to Kenyans at a very expensive price to make a profit during this pandemic yet the equipment were meant to be free to help fight the virus.

Okari goes ahead to reveal that there was evidence of misappropriation of S7.6 billion Kenya shillings meant to be used during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, it was discovered that KEMSA made a fraud report to prevent the main culprits from being exposed. Apart from the disappearance of the donated medical equipment, the expose' also reveals how Dr. Manjari, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of KEMSA, got a

letter from the Permanent Secretary of Health authorizing the purchase of Personal Protection Equipment (PPEs) from which supplier, unit price, the quantity and cost of each item. This letter went against the procurement laws of Kenya; an allegation the permanent secretary denies.

Although Okari used traditional media (TV) to expose corruption in society, social media played a critical role in availing platforms where citizens could air their opinion and demands to the relevant public institutions. After the #CovidMillionaires expose' Kenyans took to Twitter and Facebook to call out the Ministry of Health and KEMSA. They also called upon the parliament to interrogate the matter and bring to book every culprit involved in the scandal (Okari, 2020: Nation TV). As of the drafting of this study, investigations of this matter are still underway.

By examining how the hashtag #CovidMilionaires was used to seek accountability from public institutions in Kenya and to engage with legislatures (representatives of the people), this study investigates the role of Twitter and Facebook concerning the political participation during crises in developing countries.

2.9 Research gap

From the above literature review, it is evident that political communication that occur online (which allows for interactive and customized engagement) promotes individuals' participation with public entities and political officials by bringing political structures closer to citizens (De Vreese, 2007; Tolbert and McNeal, 2003). The availability of a direct communication link between the citizens and their political representatives makes it easy for the citizens to hold public officials accountable. There is, nevertheless, little empirical evidence that explains how the youth in

developing countries are using social media platforms to seek justice and hold their public officials accountable in developing countries (Boulianne, 2009).

Hence, this study seeks to investigate further on how the youth in tertiary institutions in Kenya use social media to participate in politics during crises, and its impact thereof. The findings will also provide a precedence on an explanation on how the youth in developing countries put social media to use.

2.10 Theoretical framework

The study intends to uncover the role of social media concerning the political participation during crises in developing countries by examining how the youth in tertiary institutions in Kenya used Facebook and Twitter to engage with public institutions and their political representatives to seek justice against #CovidMilionaires. To achieve the objectives set, the study will be guided by Social-Mediated Crisis Communication (SMCC) Model, Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) and Agenda Setting Theory. These theories help explain how people engage using social media and other online networking sites.

2.10.1 Social-mediated crisis communication (SMCC) model

Austin, Liu & Jin (2012) developed a Social Mediated Crisis Communication Model (SMCC) in order to examine the influence of social media on crisis communication. Thereby putting into perspective, a framework that best describes how organisations cogitate with traditional media, social media and offline publics; during crises (Austin, Fraustino, Jin, & Liu, 2017).

The SMCC model outlines that in any given crisis, there exists a multiple ‘audiences’ or ‘publics’; in the realm of social media. The publics include (Austin et.al., 2017):

- **Influentials:** They are social media users who generate information that is accessed by others.
- **Followers:** These social media users follow the Influential to access the information they generate.
- **Inactive Members:** People who don't access information directly from social media, instead they acquire information from alternative sources or are exposed to information from social media indirectly.

The model also illustrates how social media, both indirectly and directly, disseminates information. Crisis information, for example, is conveyed directly to social media followers from influential social media users, but it may also be shared indirectly to social media inactives from influentials. Also, crisis information is shared immediately across social media and traditional media; for example, although the '#CovidMillionaires expose' was aired on Nation television, social media users picked it up and amplified the message, encouraging the inactives who are not on social media platforms to join in calling for justice using any other means.

The most important aspect of SMCC model is the indirect and direct propagation of information between traditional media and social media and across social networks sites (Austin, Liu & Jin, 2012). With the rapid growth of social media platforms, the exchange of information during emergencies and crises tend to engage with different types of audiences. The theory provides a paradigm for identifying audience traits that might aid in the refinement of communication components and methods.

Although most scholars have critically analysed and used the SMCC in different contexts (Zhu et al., 2017; Cheng, 2016a; Tai & Sun, 2007; Liu et al., 2015; Taylor & Perry, 2005;), very few studies have examined the SMCC research in developing countries' context such as the trends of the use of social media in African countries.

SMCC is vital in this study as it sets a framework to understand the relationship between the flow of information from traditional media to social media. It also sets a framework in understanding how the youth in developing countries; more so those in tertiary institutions in Kenya incorporates information disseminated by traditional media to social media to influence and expedite change or demand for justice. The theory will also help explain how influencers ensure their content and ideas are shared with the inactive members of the society.

2.10.2 Uses and gratifications theory (UGT)

The theory of uses and gratifications focuses on what individuals do with media rather than what media does to them (Nachrin, 2020). Studies that were conducted during the foundation of Uses and Gratifications theory (Berelson, & Gaudet, 1948; Merton, 1949) were largely expressive, and aimed to seek clarity on the responses of different media audiences into meaningful discourses by different media outlets. Katz & Lazarsfeld, (1955) and Blumler and McQuail (1969) are some of the authors who greatly contributed in the formulation of the theory.

Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) tries to comprehend how and why individuals deliberately seek out certain media to suit their demands (McQuail, 2010). With this freedom of choice on what media platform one will use for a specific reason, people get a certain satisfaction (gratifications) (Stafford et al., 2004). The satisfaction individuals get may be linked to their tension relief, cognitive needs (Stefanone et al.,

2019) and personal and social integration needs (Katz et al., 1974; Levy & Windhal 1984).

How people use media can be examined in two different ways: by focussing on how the content causes satisfaction to the user (content gratification), and the experience/efficiency of the user gets by using a particular media platform (process gratification) (Eginli & Tas, 2018). Quan-Haase and Young (2010) argue that unlike traditional media use, most social media users achieve more content gratifications because social media provide features where their users can interact further on a subject matter and get feedback instantly. Furthermore, social media allow their users to update their day-to-day life events and share with their friends and loved ones (Quan-Haase and Young, 2010).

Different people use social media for different reasons for satisfaction (Perse & Courtright, 1993). Some people use social media in making and maintaining relationships, getting information, configuring relations strategically, seeking clarification and self-expression (Eginli & Tas, 2018).

In relations to political participation, people may now easily express their own experiences due to social media on how they interact with political institutions like political parties, access to government services and their opinions on political policies. Those with similar experiences (both positive and negative), come together to discuss those experiences and if the experiences were negative, they suggest solutions. Although such processes happen online, they might influence government actions (political participation) (Petric et al., 2011).

Therefore, U&G is instrumental in this study in explaining why and how users of Facebook and Twitter choose what platform they want, the kind of content they post on either of the platform and the gratifications they fulfil while using any social media sites.

2.10.3 Agenda setting theory

McCombs and Shaw (1972) observed how mass media influenced opinions of the voters during the 1968 elections in USA. From there examination, they found out that “a significant number of voters relied on the media for the information about the political party’s interests, electoral process, and electoral outcome” (McCombs and Shaw, 1972, p. 187). Also, they noted those who were enthusiastic in politics where the once who showed passionate interest in following up the political process in media.

The agenda setting theory attempts to explain the role of mass media in making some subject matters, a public agenda. In this case, for an issue to be a public agenda, it has become a topic of interest that is widespread in a given society. Littlejohn and Foss (2009) asserted that agenda setting theory is critical in explaining the relationship between how the media highlights an issue and how the audience reacts to the issue.

Although the theory began with a focus on how political patterns are influenced by mass media during elections (Cohen, 1963), it has also helped explore how mass media package their news and messages for their audiences (See; Matsaganis and Payne: 2005; Iyengar & Kinder: 1987).

With the growth of political communication, especially within social media, Agenda setting theory has been widely adopted (Reese, 1991). Most political entities that have adopted the use of Agenda setting theory when crafting their political messages, aim

to influence the values, priorities and focus of their target audiences (Littlejohn and Foss, 2009).

Agenda setting theory provides a contextual understanding on how the media formulates discourses that might be deemed to be of public interest. For instance, how the traditional media (NTV's reporting on #CovidMillionaires) influenced the public to seek for justice by calling for prosecution of all public officials who were involved in the scandal to be held accountable.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

The study aims to explore how the youth in tertiary institutions in Kenya, used Twitter and Facebook to engage with public institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, the study examines how the youth in tertiary institutions in Kenya used Facebook and Twitter to raise their voice after COVID-19 Millionaires expose (#CovidMillionaires) on Nation TV that was aired on 16th Aug 2020. A quantitative research technique was employed to collect data.

Therefore, the chapter discusses the research methodology and design, data aggregation method and instruments, sampling, the authenticity and dependability of the data gathering instrument and how the data has been analysed.

3.1 Research methodology

This study aimed to understand how the youth in tertiary institutions in used Twitter and Facebook to participate in political discourse. Using the COVID-19 scandal dubbed #CovidMillionnaires as a case study. The project aims to provide answers to the research questions below:

- RQ1: Do political activities that take place online have a significant relationship with offline political participation among the youth in tertiary institutions in Kenya?

- RQ2: How did social media shape how the youth in tertiary institutions in Kenya express their call for justice against the #CovidMillionaires?
- RQ3: Does calling for justice against #CovidMillionaires on social media platforms prove to be more effective than other means of offline activism?
- RQ4: Does the use of social media during crises have an impact on offline activism?

3.2 Research design

The study employed quantitative research method to answer the specified research questions. Specifically, a survey was formulated to collect the required data. The objective of the survey method is to query respondents about a subject or subjects and afterwards evaluating their replies (Jackson, 2011). In social sciences, survey method is used to collect primary data to evaluate people's attitude, test new concepts, etc.

3.2.1 Primary data collection

Data was gathered using an online questionnaire. The online survey was shared with the respondents between April 1st to May 7th, 2021. The primary data of the study was collected from two public universities are located in the western part of Kenya: Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology and Maseno University students. These two universities were accessible to the researcher during the lockdown period that had been imposed in Kenya during the data collection period.

Maseno University presently has 21,000 students enrolled across three campuses: the Homa Bay Campus, the Main Campus, and the Kisumu City Campus College.

However, this study only focused on students at the main campus. As of 2019, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of science and technology had approximately 13,265 students.

Maseno University main campus is situated at Maseno Township, besides the Kisumu-Busia Road, 25 kilometres from Kisumu City and 400 kilometres west of the capital city of Kenya (Maseno University Brief, 2021). Its main campus located in Maseno town in Kisumu rural constituency, Kisumu County. Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology is located in the town of Bondo, in Siaya County in the western part of Kenya, approximately 62 kilometres by road, west of the city of Kisumu (Google maps, 2021).

The study has been considered as a cases study as it seeks to find out how the youths from tertiary institutions in Kenya utilized Facebook and Twitter to seek justice against #CovidMillionaires.

3.2.2 Secondary data collection

In addition to the primary data collected through the survey research, the comprehensive literature review included in this study gives profounder knowledge of the thematic issues related to this study. Different points of view, both supporting, criticizing and comparing how social media have been utilized by the youth to participate in politics in developed and developing countries have been discussed in details. Leedy (1989) notes that the more knowledgeable an individual is, the better s/he will be able to understand the problem presented. Aitchison (1998) upholds the view that literature review permits the scholar to discover what has been done as far as the issue being explored - to guarantee that duplication doesn't happen.

Although the literature review does not directly answer any research question proposed by the study, it gives a foundation and an overall comprehension of the ideas related with all the inquiries.

3.3 Data collection instrument

In this study, data is gathered through the use of an online questionnaire. The researcher created the questionnaire and it was approved by the EMU's Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Board (BAYEK). The questionnaire developed consists of 40 questions divided into five parts (Part A-E), each part having a specific objective. The questionnaire was developed using Dichotomous scales and Likert scale format.

Part A (question 1-5) of the questionnaire aims to gather the demographic information of the participants, with a focus on their age, gender and their level of education. Part B (question 6-18) gathers how the participants use social media platforms. This includes the social media platforms they prefer, how long they spend online and the favourite topics they like discussing online. In Part C (question 19- 29), the questionnaire tries to establish if the information the participants interact with while on social media is credible and their attitude towards the information.

Moreover, Part D (question 30-40) employs the use of the five-point Likert scale to enquire on the use of social media to participate in politics. In this section, the questionnaire tries to establish if the participants engage in political disclose on social media. Finally, the questionnaire end by questioning the participants about the use of Facebook and Twitter for political participation during crises; #CovidMillionaires.

3.4 Population and sample of the study

Students from Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology and Maseno University took part in this research. Students from these two universities were selected by the researcher because the two universities were accessible to the researcher during the lockdown period that had been imposed in Kenya during the data collection period. The total number of those who participated in the study is 315 who were drawn from the two universities.

3.4.1 Purposive sampling

Access to the target population of the study proved to be difficult because of the restrictions imposed by the government due to the battle against COVID-19 pandemic. These restrictions ranged from the cessation of movement within the territory on the republic of Kenya to the closure of academic institutions in the better part of the year 2020 to 2021.

Therefore, the researcher employed the purposive sampling method to recruit 10 primary respondents from Maseno University and 10 respondents from Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology. These primary contacts included student leaders in the respective schools. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling approach in which items chosen for the sample are decided by the researcher's discretion. Researchers frequently assume that by using competent judgment, they can acquire a representative sample, therefore reducing costs and time.

3.4.2 Snowballing sampling

This study utilized Snowballing sampling methods to attain the appropriate population for the study. Snowballing sampling method is a methodology under the non-probability sampling methods. Snowballing sampling was the best method to use as it

provides a framework on how to access the target population when it might be difficult (McCombes, 2019).

To overcome this challenge, snowballing sampling provided a solution whereby the researcher had to contact a few students (herein referred to as the primary contacts) via Facebook and WhatsApp, share the link to the questionnaire to them and encourage them to refer their fellow schoolmates to participate in the study. The 20 primary contacts then shared the link to the questionnaire to various groups on WhatsApp and Facebook groups in their respective schools.

Snowballing oftentimes yields results more quickly than does random sampling and might work well if the researcher is limited on time and resources. More importantly, if the people coming forth and meeting your criteria represent a homogenous population, snowballing might turn out to be an ideal option for getting accurate results from those chosen few individuals.

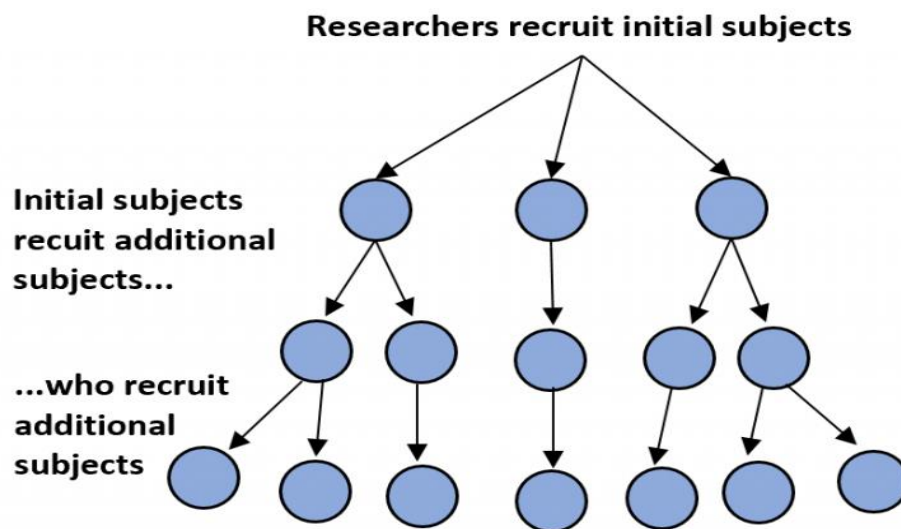


Figure 1: Illustration of snowballing sampling method: Source Zach (2020)

3.5 Reliability and validity of the data collection instrument

The researcher conducted a pilot study among 15 undergraduate students and 5 Masters students from Maseno University before the questionnaire was administered to the rest of the participants. The results and feedback from the pilot study helped the researcher polish the questionnaire before sharing it with the rest of the participants, hence strengthening the content validity of the research. All the participants in the pilot study found the questionnaire to be efficient and timely.

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.976	.974	19

The Alpha coefficient reliability analysis for the statements was .976 indicating good reliability of the data collection instrument during the pilot test.

In the questionnaire, demographic and behavioural questions were asked using the dichotomous scale. A dichotomous scale is a sort of surveying response scale that has two alternatives at opposing ends. On a dichotomous scale, the survey respondent

cannot provide a neutrality answer since it is correct or incorrect (Louangrath & Sutanapong, 2018).

Also, attitudinal questions were asked using the five-point Likert scale. Likert scale is a form of quantitative scale used to collect data on people's attitudes and behaviours on certain topics and circumstances. It is used to assess how much individuals disagree or agree with a topic or statement (Louangrath & Sutanapong, 2018). The values associated with the selections of attitude scale questions in this study include: 5 representing Strongly Agree, 4 representing Agree, 3 representing Neutral, 2 representing Disagree and 1 representing Strongly Disagree.

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	315	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	315	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.857	.855	19

To determine the reliability of the data collected from all participants, a factor analysis of the statements in the Likert scale was performed (19 in number).

The formula for *Cronbach's alpha* is:

$$\alpha = \frac{N \cdot \bar{c}}{\bar{v} + (N - 1) \cdot \bar{c}}$$

Where:

- \bar{v} = average variance.
- N = the number of items.
- \bar{c} = average covariance between item-pairs.

The Alpha coefficient reliability analysis for the statements was .857 indicating good reliability of the data collection instrument. The acceptable reliability coefficient is 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978). The coefficient of the data is different from the coefficient of the pilot test because of the high number of participants in the main study compared to the pilot study.

3.6 Data analysis

To analyse the obtained data, the study used the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 20 software.

Chapter 4

DATA FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The data obtained from the administered questionnaire is presented and analysed in this chapter. An analysis of the characteristics of the participants was presented out first. This involved the analysis of the students' demographic information and their use of technological innovations and social media.

Secondly, an analysis on the student's attitude towards the use of Facebook and Twitter for political participation during crises within the context of #CovidMillionaires was undertaken. The means of statements in the five-point Likert scale were studied. The mean is very significant in interpreting the cumulative attitude of the participants. A mean of 4.21 to 5 represents strongly agree; A mean of 3.41 to 4.20 represents agree; A mean of 2.61 to 3.40 represents neutral; A mean of 1 to 1.8 represents strongly disagree while a mean of 1.81 to 2.60 represents disagree (Pimentel, 2010).

The values associated with the selections of attitude scale questions in this research are: 1 representing Strongly Disagree, 2 representing Disagree, 3 representing Neutral, 4 representing Agree, and 5 representing Strongly Agree. The data analysed in this chapter was obtained from students who study at Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology and Maseno University, hereafter referred to as 'participants'.

4.1 Analysis of the respondent's demographics

A total of 315 participants responded to the circulated questionnaire: N=315.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of participants' responses to "Age"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	16-18	12	3.8	3.8	3.8
	19-21	33	10.5	10.5	14.3
	22-24	93	29.5	29.5	43.8
	25-35	177	56.2	56.2	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

12 participants out of the total number are aged between 16-18 as the lowest age group while 177 out of the total are aged between 25-35 years as the highest age group.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of students' responses to "Gender"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	170	54.0	54.0	54.0
	Female	145	46.0	46.0	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

The number of female participants out of the total were 145, representing 46% while the number of male respondents (students) were 170 out of the total number representing 54%.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of participants' responses to "What is your university?"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Maseno University	204	64.8	64.8	64.8
	Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University	111	35.2	35.2	100.0

	Total	315	100.0	100.0	
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Maseno University had the highest number of students at 204 (64.8%) compared to Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology students' respondents at 111 (35.2%).

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of participants' responses to "What is your educational background?"

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Undergraduate	276	87.6
	Masters	39	12.4
	Total	315	100.0

Out of the 315 participants, 276 are undergraduate students (87.6%) while 39 are masters students (12.4%). No PhD student participated in the research.

Table 5: Descriptive statistics of participants' responses to "When did you start using a computer?"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	First 10 yrs	84	26.7	26.7	26.7
	10-15 yrs	129	41.0	41.0	67.6
	16-21 yrs	96	30.5	30.5	98.1
	22-27 yrs	6	1.9	1.9	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

129 of the participants (41%) began using the computer between the ages of 10-15 years, this being the largest percentage. 96 of the participants (30.5%) started interacting with the computer between the ages of 16-21. 84 of the participants (26.7%) started using the computer within their first 10 years while 6 of the participants (1.9%)

started using a computer for the first time between the ages of 22-27. Most participants started using a computer device in their late teen years. Possibly as soon as they had finished high school or while joining the university.

The participants were also asked on when they started using the Internet. 144 of the participants (45.7%) started using the Internet between the years 2010-2013. 114 of the participants (36.2%) started using the Internet between the years 2005-2009. 39 of the participants (12.4%) started using the Internet between the years 2014-2017. 15 of the participants (4.8%) started using the Internet before the year 2005 while 3 of the participants (1.0%) started using the Internet after the year 2018.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics of participants' responses to "What kind of news are you interested in the most on social media?"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Politics	90	28.6	28.6	28.6
	Sports	66	21.0	21.0	49.5
	Entertainment	153	48.6	48.6	98.1
	Other	6	1.9	1.9	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

Moreover, the participants were asked "What kind of news are you interested in the most on social media?" 153 of the participants (48.6%) were interested in news on entertainment. 90 participants (28.6%) were interested in news about political discourse. 66 of the participants (21%) were interested in sports news while 6 of the participants (1.9%) were interested in other topics. However, the participants did not specify the kind of news topics that they interact with, despite the questionnaire giving them an option to specify the topics they are interested in.

Table 7: Descriptive statistics of the crosstabulation between the Age and when the participants started using the Internet?

		When did you start using the Internet?					Total
		before 2005	between 2005-2009	between 2010-2013	between 2014-2017	After 2018	
Age	16-18	0	6	3	3	0	12
	19-21	0	3	12	15	3	33
	22-24	0	39	45	9	0	93
	25-35	15	66	84	12	0	177
Total		15	114	144	39	3	315

Most of the respondents started using the Internet between the years 2010- 2013. At that time, a total number of 84 respondents were aged between the years 25-35 while 45 participants were aged between the years 22-24. 12 respondents were aged between the years 19-21 while 3 respondents were aged between the years 16-18 years old. The crosstabulation between the age of the respondents and when they started using the Internet gives a clear picture of how young the respondents started using social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook.

The majority of the participants started using the Internet between the years 2010-2013. Around the same time, most social media platforms were booming across the globe. This might be because of the high demand of Internet services across the globe.

Table 8: Descriptive statistics of participants' responses to "Which device do you use to connect to the Internet often?"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Laptop	33	10.5	10.5	10.5
	Desktop Computer	33	10.5	10.5	21.0
	Smart phone	249	79.0	79.0	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

A large number, 249 of the participants (79%) use their smartphones to access the Internet while 33 of the participants (10.5%) use laptops and an equal number, 33, of the participants (10.5%) regularly use desktop computers.

Table 9: Descriptive statistics of participants' responses to "Has the cost of Internet data hindered you from being active on social media?"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	201	63.8	63.8	63.8
	No	114	36.2	36.2	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

Despite all the participants being able to access the Internet, 201 of the participants (63.8 %) noted that the cost of Internet data hinders them from being active on social media while 114 of the participants (36.2%) were not affected by the prices of the Internet.

Table 10: Descriptive statistics of participants' responses to "Are you on Facebook?"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	279	87.6	87.6	87.6
	No	36	12.4	12.4	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

To establish whether the participants are on Facebook, 279 of the participants (87.6%) agreed that they are on Facebook while 36 of the participants (12.4%) are not on Facebook.

Table 11: Descriptive statistics of participants' responses to "If yes, how many hours do you spend on Facebook every day?"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	less than 1 hour	135	42.9	48.4	48.4
	1-2 hours	66	21.0	23.7	72.0
	3-4 hours	60	19.0	21.5	93.5
	More than 4 hours	18	5.7	6.5	100.0
	Total	279	88.6	100.0	
Missing	99	36	11.4		
Total		315	100.0		

135 participants (42.9%) who are active on Facebook spend less than one hour on the platform. 66 of the participants (21%) who use Facebook spend between 1-2 hours on Facebook. 60 of the participants (19%) who are active on Facebook spend 3-4 hours on the platform while 18 of the participants (5.7%) who are active on Facebook spend more than four hours on Facebook.

Table 12: Descriptive statistics of participants' responses to "Are you active on Twitter?"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	249	70.5	70.5	70.5
	No	66	29.5	29.5	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

To establish whether the participants are on Twitter, 249 of the participants (70.5 %) agreed that they use the platform while 66 of the participants (29.5%) do not use Twitter.

Table 13: Descriptive statistics of participants' responses to "If yes, how many hours do you spend on Twitter every day?"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	less than 1 hour	111	35.2	44.6	44.6
	1-2 hours	75	23.8	30.1	74.7
	3-4 hours	41	13.0	16.5	91.2
	More than 4 hours	22	7.0	8.8	100.0
	Total	249	79.0	100.0	
Missing	99	66	21.0		
Total		315	100.0		

111 of the participants (35.2%) who use Twitter spend less than one hour on the platform. 75 of the participants (23.8%) who use Twitter spend 1-2 hours on the platform while 41 of the participants (13.0%) who use Twitter spend 3-4 hours on Twitter. 22 of the participants (7%) who use Twitter spend more than four hours on the platform.

Table 14: Descriptive statistics of participants' responses to "Choose the option below that best describes why you prefer to use the Internet for communication (You may choose more than one option)"

		N	Percent	
Why do you prefer to use the Internet for communication ^a	Due to its global presence	207	34.8%	65.7%
	Because it is cheap	69	11.6%	21.9%
	For easy access	177	29.8%	56.2%

	Due to its interactive features	141	23.7%	44.8%
Total		594	100.0%	188.6%

To establish why the participants prefer using the Internet to communicate, the question allowed the participants to choose more than one reason on why they prefer to use the Internet. The table above shows the number of times each reason for use of internet by the participants was selected. The main reason for the use of Internet for communication was due to its global presence, it was selected 207 times (34.8%). The second reason on why the participants preferred to use the Internet is for easy access of information.

This option was selected 177 times by the participants (29.8%). Notably, “Due to the internet’s interactive features” was selected 144 times by the participants (23.7%) while “Because it was cheap” was selected 69 times by the participants (11.6%). No participants indicated any other reasons on why they prefer to use the Internet for communications, despite the question providing an option for additional comments from the participants. The data clearly outlines the impact and importance of the Internet in enabling the sharing of information on a global level. Although the cost of Internet might be a hindrance for access of information online, the data indicates that the youth will still try and access online platforms.

Table 15: Descriptive statistics of participants' response to "Which social networking platform are you active on the most? (You may choose more than one option)"

		Number of selections		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Which social networking platform are you active on the most? ^a	Facebook	138	26.2%	43.9%
	Twitter	131	24.9%	41.7%
	Instagram	201	38.1%	64.0%
	Other	57	10.8%	18.2%
Total		527	100.0%	167.8%

The participants were questioned to select which social networking sites they are active on the most. The table above outlines the number of times each social media platforms was selected to determine which social media platform was mostly used by the participants. The data indicate that Instagram was the most popular social networking platform among the participants as it was selected 201 times (38.1%) while Facebook came second with a selection of 138 times by the participants (26.2%). Twitter came in closely with a selection of 131 times by the participants (24.9%) while 57 participants (10.8%) chose other social media platform but they did not indicate which platforms they were active on despite the question giving an option for the participants to specify any other social networking platforms that might not be on the questionnaire.

Table 16: Descriptive statistics of participants' responses to "How often do you use these social media platforms?"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A few times in a year	3	1.0	1.0	1.0
	A few times in a month	0	0.0	0.0	1.0
	A few times in a week	21	6.7	6.7	7.6
	Daily	291	92.3	92.3	100.0
	Never	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

291 of the participants (92.3%) use social media platforms on a daily basis. 21 of the participants (6.7%) use social media platforms a few times a week and only 3 of the participants (1%) use social media platforms a few times a year. No participants used these social media platforms a few times in a month and never.

Table 17: Descriptive statistics of participants' responses to "How many hours do you spend on social media in a day?"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	None	3	1.0	1.0	1.0
	1-5 hours	165	52.4	52.4	53.3
	6-10 hours	102	32.4	32.4	85.7
	11-15 hours	27	8.6	8.6	94.3
	More than 15 hours	18	5.7	5.7	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

Another aspect that was examined was the approximate time (in hours) the participants spend on social media platforms in a single day. The study found that 165 of the participants (52.4%) spent 1-5 hours on social media platforms. 102 of the participants (32.4%) spent between 6-10 hours online and 27 of the participants (8.6%) spent between 11 to 15 hours on social media platforms. The participants (5.7%) who spent more than 15 hours on social media were 18.

Table 18: Descriptive statistics of participants' response to "What is your main purpose of using social media? (You may pick more than one option)"

		Number of selections		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
What is your main purpose of using social media ^a	To get news	207	31.9%	70.4%
	Making and sharing news	81	12.5%	27.6%
	Communication for personal reasons	54	8.3%	18.4%
	For digital activism	48	7.4%	16.3%
	For entertainment	240	37.0%	81.6%
	Other (Please specify)	18	2.8%	6.1%
Total		648	100.0%	220.4%

One of the main reasons why the participants use social media is "For entertainment" as it was selected 240 times by the participants (37%). "To get news" was selected 207 times by the participants (31,9%) while "Making and sharing news" was selected 81 times by the participants (12.5%). On the other hand, "Communication for personal reasons" was selected 54 times by the participants (8.3%) while "For digital activism was selected 48 times by the participants (7,4%). Although most participants' main

purpose of using social media is for entertainment, the data shows that getting news from social media platforms is an aspect that contributes to the use of social media.

Table 19: Descriptive statistics of participants' responses to "How credible is the information you get from social media?"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rarely Credible	15	4.8	4.8	4.8
	Sometimes Credible	135	42.9	42.9	47.6
	Never credible	0	0.0	0.0	47.6
	Often Credible	135	42.9	42.9	90.5
	Always Credible	30	9.5	9.5	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

On credibility of the information the participants get from social media, an equal number of participants, 135, confirmed that the information they get is often credible and equally sometimes credible (42.9%). 30 of the participants (9.5%) found the information online always credible and 15 of the participants (4.8%) rarely found credible information on social media platforms. None of the participants responded to 'never credible' when questioned on how credible is the information they obtain from social media.

4.2 Descriptive analysis of the Attitude of the participants on the use of social networks for political participation

Table 20: Descriptive statistics of participants' responses to "I use Twitter to obtain news about current political affairs in my country"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	18	5.7	5.7	5.7
	Disagree	45	14.3	14.3	20.0
	Neutral	36	11.4	11.4	31.4
	Agree	123	39.0	39.0	70.5
	Strongly Agree	93	29.5	29.5	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

123 of the participants (39%) have used Twitter to obtain news about current political affairs in Kenya. 93 of the participants (29.5%) strongly agree that they used Twitter to obtain news about current political affairs in Kenya. The reliance of Twitter to obtain news clearly indicates frequency, reliability and credibility of the platform.

Table 21: Descriptive statistics of participants' responses to "I use Facebook to obtain news about current affairs in my country"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	72	22.9	22.9	22.9
	Disagree	51	16.2	16.2	39.0
	Neutral	87	27.6	27.6	66.7
	Agree	69	21.9	21.9	88.6
	Strongly Agree	36	11.4	11.4	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

The respondents were questioned if they used Facebook to obtain news about current affairs in Kenya. 69 participants (21.9%) agreed while 36 participants (11.4%) have strongly agreed that they used Facebook to obtain news about current affairs in Kenya. However, 72 participants (22.9%) strongly disagree and 51 participants (16.2%) disagreed using Facebook to obtain news about the current affairs in Kenya. The notable 87 participants (27.6%) who remained neutral might have encountered news on current affairs in Kenya although it was not their objective purpose on Facebook.

Therefore, a platform like Facebook becomes a critical component in when sharing news as it will reach as many users as possible, despite their intentions online.

Table 22: Descriptive statistics of participants' responses to "I have shared or engaged in political discourse on Facebook"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	102	32.4	32.4	32.4
	Disagree	72	22.9	22.9	55.2
	Neutral	66	21.0	21.0	76.2
	Agree	51	16.2	16.2	92.4
	Strongly Agree	24	7.6	7.6	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

The respondents were queried on whether they have shared or engaged in political discourse on Facebook. 51 participants (16.2%) agreed while 24 participants (7.6%) strongly agreed of using Facebook to share or engage in political discourse online. However, 102 participants (32.4%) strongly disagreed and 72 other participants (22.9%) disagreed; this accounted to 174 participants (55.3%) who did not share or engage in political discourse on Facebook.

Although almost all participants use Facebook for any given reason, a very huge number of the participants have not taken part in directly sharing or actively engaging in political discourse on the platforms. The frequencies above portrays that most participants tend to be Followers (these social media users follow the Influential to access the information they generate) as suggested by Social Mediated Crisis Communication Model (SCCMC).

Table 23: Descriptive statistics of participants' responses to "I have shared or engaged in political discourse on Twitter"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	90	28.6	28.6	28.6
	Disagree	60	19.0	19.0	47.6
	Neutral	54	17.1	17.1	64.8
	Agree	66	21.0	21.0	85.7
	Strongly Agree	45	14.3	14.3	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

66 participants (21%) and 45 participants (14.3%) agreed and strongly agreed respectively that they used Twitter to share or engage in political discourse. On the other hand, 90 participants (28.6%) strongly disagreed while 60 participants (19%) disagreed of using Twitter to share or engage in political discourse.

The comparison of the data on Table 22 and 23 give a clear picture of comparison on how the participants utilized both Facebook and Twitter in sharing and engaging in political discourse online. Although a majority of the participants have not shared or engaged in political discourse on Facebook and Twitter, the number of participants who strongly disagree and disagree on sharing or engaging in political discourse on Facebook is much higher (174) compared to that of Twitter (150). Also, more participants (111) have shared or engaged in political discourse on Twitter while only 75 of the participants did it on Facebook. These numbers show how political discourse dominates on Twitter compared to Facebook among Kenyan university students

Table 24: Descriptive statistics of participants' response to "Social networks have made it easier to access political information"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	12	3.8	3.8	3.8
	Disagree	0	0.0	0.0	3.8
	Neutral	24	7.6	7.6	11.4
	Agree	126	40.0	40.0	51.4
	Strongly Agree	153	48.6	48.6	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

The frequency of the number of participants who agree that social networks have made it easy for the participants to access political information corresponds with the mean (4.3) of the whole population of the study. 279 of the participants (88%) agree that social media platforms have become a source of political news in Kenya. None of the participants disagreed that social networks have made it easier for them to access political information.

Table 25: Descriptive statistics of participants' responses to "Social media have made it easier for me to have direct communication with my Member of Parliament (MP), civil servants in public institutions and other political leaders"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	114	36.2	36.2	36.2
	Disagree	54	17.1	17.1	53.3
	Neutral	81	25.7	25.7	79.0
	Agree	57	18.1	18.1	97.1
	Strongly Agree	9	2.9	2.9	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

The participants are also finding it hard to contact their Members of Parliament (M.P), civil servants and other public leaders despite acknowledging that social networks have made it easier to obtain, convey and interact with political information. Yet, 81 of the participants (25.7%) are neutral on whether social media have made it easy for

them to communicate directly with public officials. This is because most social media platforms have features allowing any individual to directly contact any other person. The only hinderance is that there is no guarantee that the public officials will reply.

Table 26: Descriptive statistics of participants' responses to "Social media have made it easier for the participants to discuss their political opinions freely without fear of censorship"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	54	17.1	17.1	17.1
	Disagree	30	9.5	9.5	26.7
	Neutral	96	30.5	30.5	57.1
	Agree	87	27.6	27.6	84.8
	Strongly Agree	48	15.2	15.2	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

96 of the participants (30.5%) are undecided if social media have made it easier for individuals to openly discuss their political ideas. On the other hand, 135 of the participants (41.8%) agree or strongly agree that social networks have made it easier for them to share their political opinions freely while 84 of the participants (26.7%) disagree or strongly disagree that social media has provided such an atmosphere where they can share their opinions.

These numbers portray a clear picture of the overall impression that most young people have on link between media and politics. Although social networking platforms have made it easier for people to share their political opinions freely, a good number of people will still be careful or not share at all their opinions on political discourses

because of the terrible history of the government interfering with media entities and even censoring private entities like social media influencers and bloggers who criticize the government (Mbeke, 2008).

Table 27: Descriptive statistics of participants' responses to "I have shared political information on my social media platforms regularly"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	72	22.9	22.9	22.9
	Disagree	78	24.8	24.8	47.6
	Neutral	75	23.8	23.8	71.4
	Agree	54	17.1	17.1	88.6
	Strongly Agree	36	11.4	11.4	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

150 participants (47.6%) do not share political information on their social media platforms regularly. This corresponds to the claims of censorship from the government or the uncertainty of what might happen to them. 75 of the participants (23.8%) are neutral because they share political information without any concern on what may happen later.

Table 28: Descriptive statistics of participants' response to "Political elites communicate regularly to their constituents through their social media platforms"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	39	12.4	12.4	12.4
	Disagree	66	21.0	21.0	33.3
	Neutral	69	21.9	21.9	55.2
	Agree	111	35.2	35.2	90.5
	Strongly Agree	30	9.5	9.5	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

As seen in table 27, with the emergence of social media platforms, different entities in the political fraternity employed the use of social networks. Those considered elites in politics and opinion leaders in the society are employing the power of social media to communicate to their masses because of global presence, it is cheap and it bypasses the requirement for gatekeeping unlike traditional media platforms. As evident in the data collected, 141 participants (44.7%) agreed or strongly agreed that political elites greatly use social media platforms to communicate to their constituents. However, 105 of the participants (33.3%) either disagree or strongly disagree with this assertion.

Table 29: Means of the attitude of the participants on the use of social networks for political involvement/Participation

Statement	Mean	Percent	Likert Scale Division
I use Twitter to obtain news about current political affairs in my country	3.72	74.4	Agree
I use Facebook to obtain news about current affairs in my country	2.83	56.6	Neutral
I have shared or engaged in political discourse on Facebook	2.44	48.8	Disagree
I have shared or engaged in political discourse on Twitter	2.73	54.6	Neutral
Social media have made it easier for me to access political information	4.3	86	Strongly Agree
Social media have made it easier for me to have direct communication with my Member of Parliament (MP), civil servants in Public Institutions and other political leaders	2.34	46.8	Disagree
Social media have made it easier for me to discuss my political opinions freely without fear of censorship	3.14	62.8	Neutral

I have shared political information on my social media platforms regularly	2.7	54	Neutral
Political information from Twitter is more credible than that on Facebook	3.49	69.8	Agree
Political information from Facebook is more credible than that on Twitter	2.36	47.2	Disagree
Political elites communicate regularly to their constituents through their social media platforms	3.09	61.8	Neutral

In the study, data was gathered using a five-point Likert scale. Participants were requested to signal the degree to which they disagree or agree with each subject matter provided in the questionnaire whereby the values associated with the selections of attitude scale questions in this study are as follows; 5 representing Strongly Agree, 4 representing Agree, 3 representing Neutral, 2 representing Disagree and 1 representing Strongly Disagree.

According to the means of the table above, the students agree (Mean of 3.72) that they use Twitter to obtain news about current political affairs in Kenya. On the other hand, the majority of the participants are neutral (Mean of 2.83) on whether they obtain news from Facebook. The mean of the participants who share or engage in political discourse on Facebook is 2.44, meaning that a majority of the participants disagree. On the contrary, a higher mean, 2.73, is recorded on whether the participants have used Twitter to share or engage in political discourse. Although most of the participants are neutral, it is a higher value than Facebook.

Almost all the participants strongly agree (mean of 4.3) that social networking platforms have made it easy for them to access political information. However, the

vast proportion of participants disagree that social media have made it easier for them to have direct communication with their Member of Parliament (MP), civil servants in public institutions and other political leaders.

Also, the participants are neutral (mean of 3.14) on whether social media have enabled them to openly express their political views without fear of repression. Equally the majority of the participants are neutral (mean of 2.7) on whether they have shared political information regularly on their social media platforms.

The participants generally agreed (mean of 3.49) that political information from Twitter is more credible than that on Facebook. Equally, the majority of the participants disagreed (mean of 2.36) that political information from Facebook is more credible than that on Twitter. Finally, the participants remained neutral (mean of 3.09) on whether political elites communicate regularly to their constituents through their social media platforms

216 of the participants (68.5%) agree that they obtain their news on current political affairs from Twitter, however, it is notable to state that 99 of the participants (31.4%) are either undecided, disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. Contrary, only 105 (33.3%) of the participants agreed that they get their news on political affairs from Facebook.

Generally, the participants agree that both Twitter and Facebook facilitate the access to political information and political actors. The majority value twitter compared to Facebook when it comes to the credibility of the information accrued on these platforms.

4.3 Descriptive analysis of the attitudes of the respondents on the use of social media for political participation during crises: #CovidMillionaires

Table 30: A descriptive statistic of participants' responses to "Are you familiar with the hashtag #CovidMillionaires?"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	297	94.3	94.3	94.3
	No	18	5.7	5.7	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

297 of the participants (94.3%) were familiar with the hashtag #CovidMillionaires while only 18 of the participants (5.7%) were not. 147 participants (46%) watched the expose' on Nation TV first before any other platform while 108 of the participants (34.3%) saw the hashtag trend on Twitter first before watching the expose'. This shows a trend of how most of the youth in Kenya rely on social media platforms to gather news.

Table 31: Descriptive statistics of participants' response to "If yes, which of the following was the first platform that you got to know about #CovidMillionaires?"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Nation TV	147	46.7	49.0	49.0
	Facebook	24	7.6	8.0	57.0
	Twitter	108	34.3	36.0	93.0
	YouTube	18	4.8	5.0	98.0
	Other	3	1.9	2.0	100.0
	Total	300	95.2	100.0	
Missing	99	15	4.8		
Total		315	100.0		

A total number of 150 participants (47.6%) interacted with the hashtag on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook compare to 147 of the participants (46.7%) who interacted with the hashtag on TV first. These statistics show how influential social media platforms are. Even though the expose' was air on TV first, the data shows that a significant number of the youth interacted with the hashtag on social media compared to TV.

Table 32: Descriptive statistics of participants' response to "Expressing my outrage using the hashtag #CovidMillionaires on social media made me feel that I am part of Kenyans who are seeking justice against corrupt public officials"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	21	6.7	6.7	6.7
	Disagree	63	20.0	20.0	26.7
	Neutral	93	29.5	29.5	56.2
	Agree	84	26.7	26.7	82.9
	Strongly Agree	54	17.1	17.1	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

84 of the participants (26.7%) agreed that using social media to express outrage using the hashtag #CovidMillionaires on social media made them feel as being part of Kenyans who are seeking justice against corrupt public officials. Another 54 of the participants (17.1%) strongly agreed. 63 of the respondents (20%) disagreed and 21 of the respondents (6.7%) strongly disagreed. However, 93 of the participants (29.5%) remained neutral, posing questions whether seeking justice using social media yields results that they expect. Probably, the participants who remain neutral do so because of the lack of government action on those accused of corruption.

Table 33: Descriptive statistics of participants' responses to "Social media platforms have increased the number of people who take part in holding public institutions accountable as evident on the hashtag #CovidMillionnaires"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	18	5.7	5.7	5.7
	Disagree	15	4.8	4.8	10.5
	Neutral	54	17.1	17.1	27.6
	Agree	114	36.2	36.2	63.8
	Strongly Agree	114	36.2	36.2	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

The participants also agree that Facebook and Twitter have increased the number of people who take part in holding public institutions accountable, just as seen on the hashtag #CovidMillionnaires. 228 of the participants (72.4%) agree or strongly agree that social media platforms have definitely enhanced the responsibility of holding public institutions accountable by increasing the number of people who take part in seeking accountability. 54 of the participants (17.1%), are undecided of the impact of social media in seeking accountability. This might be attributed to lack of visible impact that can be pointed out and be credited as an outcome of the efforts put in place by social media users.

Table 34: Descriptive statistics of participants' responses to "From the engagements I witnessed online through the hashtag #CovidMillionnaires, I believe activism on social media platforms is more effective than offline activism"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	15	4.8	4.8	4.8
	Disagree	51	16.2	16.2	21.0
	Neutral	75	23.8	23.8	44.8
	Agree	99	31.4	31.4	76.2
	Strongly Agree	75	23.8	23.8	100.0

	Total	315	100.0	100.0	
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Within the context of #CovidMillionaires, 174 participants (55.2%) agreed and strongly agreed that activism online outperforms offline activism. 66 of the participants (21%) disagree and strongly disagreed that online activism is more efficient than offline activism. 75 of the participants who remained neutral (23.8%) were also a significant number. Clearly indicating the influence of social media as it penetrates to the whole country.

Table 35: Descriptive statistics of participants' responses to "When it comes to seeking Justice and directly involving Members of Parliament (MP) and other civil servants, Twitter stands out as an effective platform compared to Facebook"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	12	3.8	3.8	3.8
	Disagree	12	3.8	3.8	7.6
	Neutral	69	21.9	21.9	29.5
	Agree	102	32.4	32.4	61.9
	Strongly Agree	120	38.1	38.1	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

To compare which platform is more effective when the participants seek to accountability from their Members of Parliament and leaders of public institutions, Twitter stood out as the best platform compared to Facebook. 222 of the participants (70.5%) agree and strongly agree that Twitter is more effective while only 57 of the participants (18.1%) support Facebook. From the data, it is evident that Twitter is more popular than Facebook. This might be attributed to the ease of communicating with an individual directly on Twitter compared to Facebook.

Table 36: Descriptive statistics of participants' response to "When it comes to seeking Justice and directly involving Members of Parliament (MP) and other civil servants, Facebook stands out as an effective platform compared to Twitter"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	51	16.2	16.2	16.2
	Disagree	105	33.3	33.3	49.5
	Neutral	102	32.4	32.4	81.9
	Agree	36	11.4	11.4	93.3
	Strongly Agree	21	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

156 participants (49.5%) disagreed and strongly disagreed that Facebook stands out as an effective social media platform compared to Twitter when seeking Justice and directly involving Members of Parliament and other civil servants. 102 of the participants (32.4%) remained neutral while only 57 participants (18.4%) agreed and strongly agreed. Twitter keeps a record of trending hashtags making it easy for its users to follow up on trending or current affairs within any specified location. These two features give Twitter an upper hand as a platform of choice for social media users to interact with when they seek to contact their political representatives directly.

Table 37: Descriptive statistics of participants' response to "The use of social media for political participation during crisis like #CovidMillionaires has made me more interested in political matters"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	12	3.8	3.8	3.8
	Disagree	42	13.3	13.3	17.1
	Neutral	81	25.7	25.7	42.9
	Agree	108	34.3	34.3	77.1
	Strongly Agree	72	22.9	22.9	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

To find out if the use of social media for political participation during crisis like #CovidMillionaires has made the youth more interested in political matters, 208

participants (57.2%) agreed and strongly agreed that social media have been very integral in making them be more interested in politics. 54 of the participants (17.1%) disagreed and strongly disagreed on this assertion.

Table 38: Descriptive statistics of participants' response to "Social media have empowered the youth to be more influential and actively engage with public institutions during crises"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	9	2.9	2.9	2.9
	Disagree	12	3.8	3.8	6.7
	Neutral	42	13.3	13.3	20.0
	Agree	162	51.4	51.4	71.4
	Strongly Agree	90	28.6	28.6	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

As seen in table 34, social media platforms have empowered the youth to be more influential and actively engage with public institutions during crises. 252 of the participants (80%) acknowledge that social media platforms are giving the youth avenues where they can engage with their leaders and public institutions. However, 21 of participants (6.7%) disagree, or strongly disagree with this assertion. This might be due to the incidents of censorship that might have been pointed out on Table 20.

Table 39: Descriptive statistics of participants' response to "Social media are changing the nature of activism in Kenya"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	9	2.9	2.9	2.9
	Disagree	3	1.0	1.0	3.8

	Neutral	21	6.7	6.7	10.5
	Agree	126	40.0	40.0	50.5
	Strongly Agree	156	49.5	49.5	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

Regardless of the slightly different opinion on how social media is aiding in seeking accountability from public institutions, almost all the participants (89.5%) agreed and strongly agreed that digital activism is changing the nature of activism in Kenya by involving more youth compared to offline activism. These results shows that social media platforms, more so Facebook and Twitter, are enhancing activism across developing countries. However, offline activism is still a major element to influence change in developing countries.

Table 40: Means and attitudes of the participants on the use of social media for political participation during crises: #CovidMillionnaires.

	Statement	Mean	Percentage	Likert scale Division
3 3	Expressing my outrage using the hashtag #CovidMillionnaires on social media made me feel that I am part of Kenyans who are seeking justice against corrupt public officials	3.28	65.6	Neutral
3 4	Social media platforms have increased the number of people who take part in holding Public Institutions accountable as evident on the hashtag #CovidMillionnaires	3.92	78.4	Agree
3 5	From the engagements I witnessed online through the hashtag #CovidMillionnaires, I believe activism on social media platforms is more effective than offline activism	3.53	70.6	Agree

36	When it comes to seeking Justice and directly involving Members of Parliament (MP) and other civil servants, Twitter stands out as an effective platform compared to Facebook	3.97	79.4	Agree
37	When it comes to seeking Justice and directly involving Members of Parliament (MP) and other civil servants, Facebook stands out as an effective platform compared to Twitter	2.59	51.8	Disagree
38	The use of social media for political participation during crisis like #CovidMillionaires has made me more interested in political matters	3.59	71.8	Agree
39	Social media have empowered the youth to be more influential and actively engage with public institutions during crises	3.99	79.8	Agree
40	Social media are changing the nature of activism in Kenya	4.32	86.4	Strongly Agree

The participants were requested to mark the degree to which they disagree or agree with each statement provided in the questionnaire whereby the values associated with the selections of attitude scale questions in this study are: 1 representing Strongly Disagree, 2 representing Disagree, 3 representing Neutral, 4 representing Agree, and 5 representing Strongly Agree.

Table 40 shows the attitude of the participants on the extent to which they agreed or disagreed on the use of social media for political participation during crises in developing countries, within the context of #CovidMillionaires. The participants agreed with statement 34 'Social media platforms have increased the number of people who take part in holding Public Institutions accountable as evident on the hashtag

#CovidMillionnaires’ (mean of 3.92), 35 ‘From the engagements I witnessed online through the hashtag #CovidMillionnaires, I believe activism on social media platforms is more effective than offline activism’ (mean of 3.53), statement 36 ‘When it comes to seeking Justice and directly involving Members of Parliament (MP) and other civil servants, Twitter stands out as an effective platform compared to Facebook’ (mean of 3.97), statement 38 ‘The use of social media for political participation during crisis like #CovidMillionnaires has made me more interested in political matters’ (mean of 3.59) and statement 39 ‘Social media have empowered the youth to be more influential and actively engage with public institutions during crises’ (mean of 3.99). Also, the participants strongly agreed with statement 40 ‘Social media are changing the nature of activism in Kenya’ (mean of 4.32). Statement 33 ‘Expressing my outrage using the hashtag #CovidMillionnaires on social media made me feel that I am part of Kenyans who are seeking justice against corrupt public officials’ was neutral (mean of 3.28) among the majority of the participants while most of them disagreed with statement 37 ‘When it comes to seeking Justice and directly involving Members of Parliament (MP) and other civil servants, Facebook stands out as an effective platform compared to Twitter’ (mean of 2.59).

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

This section provides an overview of the study and draws conclusions founded on the questions proposed by the research. Finally, the chapter also recommends possible areas for research in the future.

5.1 Summary of the study

Social media platforms have altered the dynamics and character of communication around the world. However, few research have been performed to determine the influence of social media in third world nations on many disciplines. Consequently, this research aims to advance the literature and provide new findings on the use of social media concerning the political participation during crises in developing countries.

To elaborate on the subject matter, the study focused on a case study of how the youth in tertiary institutions in Kenya took to Facebook and Twitter to seek justice against #CovidMillionaires. The descriptive analysis in chapter 4 of this study clearly indicates that Twitter and Facebook have contributed in providing spaces for political discourse, hence contributing to the strength and nature of democracy in most developing countries including Kenya.

The literature review of this study extensively explored themes on political participation, social media (with a concentration on Facebook and twitter), political

communication and the social media's impact on political involvement in both developing and developed countries. This literature also reviews crisis communication in relation to the main objective of this study. Finally, a chronological account of the case study is given to provide context to the subject matter.

It is evident from this study that the availability of the Internet across the globe is helping with the expansion of the availability of information on all matters that might interest an individual. Twitter and Facebook, among other social networking platforms, have made it easier for individuals to contact and organize with each other without any temporal or physical limits.

Although Krieger (2002) and Delli Carpini (2000) claim that the youth rarely participate in many traditional norms such as seeking accountability from the authorities; This notion is being challenged in this era of the Internet and the emergence of social networking platforms like Facebook and Twitter. As illustrated by the findings of this study, young people in Kenya and other developing countries are slowly amplifying their voices by utilizing Facebook and Twitter to participate in political discourses online, as evident with the #CovidMillionaires crisis.

As more youth use social media platforms to engage in political discourses online, models such as Social Mediated Crisis Communication give a framework on how the youth can become influencers on social media platforms. By becoming influencers, the youth will be able to clearly give feedback to their political representatives and also hold them accountable by publishing accountability posts on their platforms. SMCC model also provides clear categories of social media users and the manner they use their platforms. This might be critical to the influencers by informing them how to

package their followers and how to reach the inactives so that they can help in seeking accountability against corrupt government officials.

5.2 Conclusions

The objective of the research was to explore how youth in tertiary institutions in Kenya, used Twitter and Facebook to engage with public institutions during the early phases of the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, the study focused on how the youth in tertiary institutions in Kenya used Facebook and Twitter to raise their voices after COVID-19 Millionaires expose (#CovidMillionaires) on Nation TV that was aired on 16th of August 2020.

The study was conducted among 315 students from Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology and Maseno University, 204 participants (64.8%) study in Maseno University while 111 participants (35.2%) study in Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of science and Technology. All the participants of the research were between the ages of 16 and 35. out of the 315 participants, 276 were undergraduate students (87.6%) while 39 were masters students (12.4%).

To assess if the above objective was achieved, the study draws conclusions by revising the research questions in line with the findings of this research.

RQ1. Do political activities that take place online have a significant relationship with offline political participation among the youth in tertiary institutions in Kenya?

The findings of the research reveal that it is evident that the youth in tertiary institutions in Kenya use Twitter and Facebook to participate in political discourse. This is because

most of the youths in tertiary institutions in Kenya concurs that such online networking platforms have simplified how they access political information. Most of the youth rely on Twitter and Facebook to obtain news on political matters. However, the study finds that news obtained from Twitter are perceived to be more credible (by 68.5% of the participants) than news obtained from Facebook (see table 29).

Undeniably, it can be concluded that Twitter and Facebook are platforms that have been instrumental in exposing the youth to online political activities and news. As to whether the exposure of the youth to political discourse online has significant relationship with real life political participation, among the youth in tertiary institutions in Kenya, the study finds that there is a relatively significant relationship between the online political activities with real life political participation.

The youth tend to participate in political activities in real life after obtaining information from online platforms like Twitter and Facebook. Another significant aspect that the youth in tertiary institutions in Kenya expressed is that; by expressing their outrage online using the hashtag #CovidMillionaires on either Facebook, Twitter or both, they felt that they are equally part of Kenyans who are seeking justice against corrupt public officials. Hence, it is appropriate to conclude that there is a strong link between online political activity and offline political involvement.

RQ2: How did social media shape how the youth in tertiary institutions in Kenya express their call for justice against the #CovidMillionaires?

Despite the expose' on #CovidMillionaires being aired on Nation TV (tradition Media channel), the citizens across the county took to social media platforms, especially Twitter and Facebook to express their outrage and rally against the government to act

upon all those involved in the scandal. Apart from getting information from Twitter and Facebook on #CovidMillionaires, the platforms were also suitable for these youths to express their views on the subject matter. In fact, social media have empowered these youths to be more influential and actively engage with public institutions online during such crises.

Social media platforms have become active platforms where the youth prefer to engage with their peers and their leaders to contribute directly to political discourse and seek accountability from public institutions.

RQ3: Does calling for justice against #CovidMillionaires on social media platforms prove to be more effective than other means of offline activism?

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the government-imposed curfew at certain times of the day and it had also prohibited large gatherings. Thus, rallying against #CovidMillionaires on social media was probably the readily available option the netizens could use for their voices to be heard. The uproar on Twitter and Facebook went on until the president called a press conference to address the matter and direct for an investigation and enquiry into the matter.

Although this study did not establish if the president of Kenya would have done the same if citizens would not have taken to social media, the findings of the study finds that from the engagement the youth in tertiary institutions witnessed and participated online using the hashtag #CovidMillionaires, 70.6 % believe that activism on social media are more effective than offline activism. However, the effectiveness of social media in relations to #CovidMillionaire is mostly agreeable because there were no offline activism activities (due to the pandemic) that would have been measured then

compared by this study. In essence, social media proves to be a reliable alternative when circumstances render offline activism impractical.

Also, 78.4% of the participants concur that social media have proved to be more effective compared to offline activism because of the ease of contact with public officials hence making it easy for anyone to seek accountability; unlike in offline activism where in most instances, only activists get to rally behind an agenda to submit their petition to the authorities. The framework laid out by Agenda Setting Theory provides a clear method of how activists can use social media platforms to push for reforms and better policies in government. The theory empowers the youth to use both traditional and new media to pioneer important discussions that affect the citizenry. Therefore, priority is given to issues that matter the most at any given time within society.

RQ4: Does the use of social media during crises have an impact on offline activism?

Facebook and Twitter have proved time and again on how they are critical communication tools during crisis communication. The findings of this study determine that although the youth from tertiary institutions in Kenya do not engage much in offline activism, the conversations that takes place online like #CovidMillionaires made the youth more interested, active and involved in offline activism. The finding (86.4% of the respondents on table 40) strongly determines that digital activism is changing the nature of activism in Kenya by involving more youth in politics and governance matters compare to offline activism.

The two forms of activism seem to be critical in the fight for better governance and seeking accountability from leaders in developing countries. Consequently, both offline and online activism still play a great role in seeking change within developing countries. In fact, in recent times, it is obvious to witness activists incorporate the two forms of communication to achieve their target results. Facebook and Twitter have become very resourceful platforms where activists educate, share and mobilize other individuals to unite in a common belief, as guided by the SMCC model.

5.3 Recommendations for future studies

This research focused on how the youth in tertiary institutions in Kenya used Facebook and Twitter to seek for justice against #CovidMillionaires. However, the research notes that most of the participants use Instagram. Hence future research can investigate the impacts of Instagram on political and crisis communication in developing countries. Also, this research only incorporated youths from two universities, therefore, future studies can expand the study to incorporate a higher and diverse number of participants in Kenya and other developing countries.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire

INFORMATION SEEKERS SURVEY

Dear participant,

My name is Abed Oraga, a Masters of Arts student in Communication and Media studies at **Eastern Mediterranean University, North Cyprus**. As part of my degree, I am conducting a study on; **The impact of social media concerning the political participation during crises in developing countries: A case study of how the youth in rural Kenya seek justice against #Covidmillionaires.**

To achieve this, the study seeks to investigate how the youth in rural parts of Kenya, used Twitter and Facebook to engage with public institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, the study will focus on how the youth in rural parts of Kenya used Facebook and Twitter to raise their voice against the #CovidMillionaires after an expose' by Denis Okari that aired on Nation TV (NTV) on 16th August, 2020.

This questionnaire targets Kenyan students who are studying in universities located in rural parts of Kenya. Your participation is voluntary and the information you give will remain confidential and will only be used in analysing the findings of this research. Kindly read each question carefully and give your honest response.

Thank you.

Oraga Abed

Part A: Demographic Information

Instructions: Please choose one answer unless otherwise specified on the question.

1. Age
 - a) 16-18
 - b) 19-21

- c) 22-24
 - d) 25-35
 - e) Above 35
2. Gender
- a) Male
 - b) Female
 - c) Other (Please specify)
3. What is your University?
- a) Maseno University
 - b) Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University
 - c) Other (Please specify)
4. What is your educational background?
- a) Diploma
 - b) Undergraduate
 - c) Master
 - d) PhD
5. Where do you currently reside?

Part B: The use of technological innovations and social media

6. When did you start using a computer?
- a) Within the first 10 years
 - b) 10-15 years old
 - c) 16-21 years old
 - d) 22-27 years old
 - e) 28-33 years old
 - f) 34 years and above

7. When did you start using the internet?
- a) Before 2005
 - b) Between 2005-2009
 - c) Between 2010- 2014
 - d) Between 2014-2019
 - e) After 2019
8. Which device do you use to connect to the internet the most?
- a) Laptop
 - b) Desktop computer
 - c) Smartphone
 - d) Tablet
 - e) Other (Pease specify)
9. Has the cost of internet data hindered you from being active on social media?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
10. Choose the option below that best describes why you prefer to use the Internet for communication (You may choose more than one option).
- a) Because it is cheap
 - b) For easy access
 - c) Due to its Interactive features
 - d) Due to its global presence
 - e) Other (Please specify)

11. Which social media platform are you active on the most? (You may choose more than one option).

- a) Facebook
- b) Twitter
- c) Instagram
- d) YouTube
- e) Other (Please specify)

12. How often do you use these social media platforms?

- a) Daily
- b) A few times a week
- c) A few times a month
- d) A few times a year
- e) Never

13. How many hours do you spend on social media in a day?

- a) 1 to 5 hours
- b) 6 to 10 hours
- c) 11 to 15 hours
- d) More than 15 hours
- e) None

14. What is your main purpose of using social media? (You may pick more than one option)

- a) To get news
- b) Making and sharing news
- c) Communication for personal purposes
- d) For digital activism

- e) For entertainment
- f) Other (Please specify)

15. If you are active on Facebook, how many hours do you spend on it each day?

- a) Less than 1 hour
- b) 1-2 hours
- c) 3-4 hours
- d) More than 4 hours
- e) None

16. If you are active on Twitter, how many hours do you spend on it each day?

- a) Less than 1 hour
- b) 1-2 hours
- c) 3-4 hours
- d) More than 4 hours
- e) None

17. What kind of news are you interested in the most on social media?

- a) Religion
- b) Politics
- c) Sports
- d) Entertainment
- e) Other (Please specify)

18. What can you say about the credibility of information you get from social media?

- a) Never credible
- b) Rarely credible
- c) Sometimes credible
- d) Often credible

e) Always credible

Part D: The use of social media for political participation

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement in the table below

**5- Strongly agree (SA) 4- Agree (A) 3- Neutral (N) 2-Disagree (D) 1-
Strongly Disagree (SD)**

		SA	A	N	D	SD
	Statement	5	4	3	2	1
19	I use Twitter to obtain news about current political affairs in my country					
20	I use Facebook to obtain news about current affairs in my country					
21	I have shared or engaged in political discourse on Facebook					
22	I have shared or engaged in political discourse on Twitter					
23	Social media have made it easier for me to access political information					
24	Social media have made it easier for me to have direct communication with my Member of Parliament (MP), civil servants in Public Institutions and other political leaders					
25	Social media have made it easier for me to discuss my political opinions freely without fear of censorship					
26	I have shared political information on my social media platforms regularly					
27	Political information from Twitter is more credible than that on Facebook					
28	Political information from Facebook is more credible than that on Twitter					
29	Political elites communicate regularly to their constituents through their social media platforms					

Part E: The use of social media for political participation during crises:

#CovidMillionaires scandal

30. Are you familiar with the hashtag #CovidMillionaires?

a) Yes

b) No

31. If your answer to question 30 is Yes, which of the following was the first platform that you got to know about #CovidMilionaires?

a) Nation TV (NTV)

b) Facebook

c) Twitter

d) YouTube

e) Other (Please specify)

32. Have you used to share your opinion on social media concerning #CovidMillionaires?

a) Yes

b) No

If yes, between Twitter and Facebook, which platform did you use more?

a) Facebook

b) Twitter

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement in the table below

5- Strongly agree (SA) 4- Agree (A) 3- Neutral (N) 2-Disagree (D) 1-Strongly Disagree (SD)

		SA	A	N	D	SD
	Statement	5	4	3	2	1
33	Expressing my outrage on the hashtag #CovidMillionaires on social media made me feel that I am part of Kenyans who are seeking justice against corrupt public officials					
34	Social media platforms have increased the number of people who take part in holding Public Institutions accountable as evident on the hashtag #CovidMillionaires					
35	From the engagements I witnessed online on the hashtag #CovidMillionaires, I believe activism on social media platforms are more effective than offline activism					
36	When it comes to seeking Justice and directly involving Members of Parliament (MP) and other civil servants, Twitter stands out as an effective platform compared to Facebook					
37	When it comes to seeking Justice and directly involving Members of Parliament (MP) and other civil servants, Facebook stands out as an effective platform compared to Twitter					
38	The use of social media for political participation during crisis like #CovidMillionaires has made me more interested in political matters					
39	Social media have empowered the youth to be more influential and actively engage with public institutions during crises					
40	Digital activism is changing the nature of activism in Kenya by involving more youths compared to offline activism					

Appendix B: Approval Letter

 Doğu Akdeniz Üniversitesi "Erdem, Bilgi, Gelişim"	Eastern Mediterranean University "Virtue, Knowledge, Advancement"	99628, Gazimagusa, KUZZEY KIBRIS / Famagusta, North Cyprus. via Mersin-10 TURKEY Tel: (+90) 392 630 1995 Faks/Fax: (+90) 392 630 2919 E-mail: bayek@emu.edu.tr
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Etik Kurulu / Ethics Committee

Reference No: ETK00-2021-0039

16.01.2021

Subject: Your application for ethical approval.

Re: Abed Oraga (19500121)

Faculty of Communication and Media Studies.

EMU's Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Board (BAYEK) has approved the decision of the Ethics Board of Communication (date: 25.01.2021, issue:95) granting Abed Oraga from the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies to pursue with his MA thesis titled "**The Impact of Social Media Concerning the Political Participation during Crises in Developing Countries: A Case of Study of How the Youth in Rural Kenya Seek Justice Against Covidmillionaries**" supervised by Assist. Prof. Dr. Ülfe Kutoğlu Kuruç.

Best Regards



Prof. Dr. Yücel Vural

Chair, Board of Scientific Research and Publication Ethics - EMU

YV/şk.