

**UTILIZATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION IN PUBLIC
UNIVERSITIES: A CASE STUDY OF JOMO KENYATTA UNIVERSITY OF
AGRICULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY**

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**Utilization of social media communication in public universities: a case study of
Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology**

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Science in Mass Communication at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and
Technology**

2015

DECLARATION

This is to certify that this Research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

Signature.....

Date.....

Ng'ang'a Mugeru

This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to dear wife Anastasia and our two children Lewis and Stella. To God be honor and glory for his grace and favour.

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ACRONYMS

JKUAT Jomo Kenyatta University of agriculture and
technology

SNS..... Social Networking sites

SMEs..... Small Medium Enterprises

CAK.....Communications Authority of Kenya

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Social media – term closely related to application of 2.0 which allows individuals to construct the information with a bounded system and share connections with other users.

Blog – A personal journal published on the World Wide Web consisting of discrete entries (posts) typically displayed in reverse chronological order so that the most recent post appear

Micro blog -----A form of a blog where people send shout messages of text or media.

Social Networks – services that allow you to connect with other people of similar interests and background.

ABSTRACT

Effective Communication is central to any institution or organization. In universities, use of proper channels to communicate to students is paramount for both teaching and non-teaching staff if they are to achieve the set aims and objectives of providing information pertinent in pursuant of students' academic and other endeavors. The ability to communicate effectively has a great impact on an organization's success. This is because it affects teamwork and collaboration. Effective communication enables positive interaction between two or more individuals working together to solve problems; create novel products and master required skills. The importance of effective communication in organizations and institutions is paramount as it facilitates coordination and control of activities, builds teamwork and creates a supportive attitude in organizations. The main objective of this study was to determine how social media was being used in Kenyan Public Universities in the absence of a communication policy. The preferred theoretical framework for this study was uses and gratifications which addresses benefits that users get from using social media. The study adopted an exploratory research design. The sample was drawn from JKUAT main campus where a sample of 150 respondents participated where 30 members of staff as well as 120 students participated. Analysis of the quantitative data was performed using statistical analysis tool of SPSS package 21. From the findings it was apparent that 56.67% of the respondents were male while 43.33% were female which implied that most of the responses emanated from male. In addition, age was found to be a key factor in the usage of social media. Young people between ages 18-34 years accounted for majority of social media users with 54.33% of the respondents while older people Above 50 years of age accounted for partly 4%. In addition most of the respondents agreed with the statement that social media has brought positive change in communication practice and is a key factor in its growth. The respondents also said that the usage is due to the fact that social media complements traditional channels of communication. According to this

study, majority of staff used posters to communicate to their students at 50% while a partly 6% use social media during their communication endeavours. Challenges faced in the utilization of social media are that it is not used to relay important information but for other use, notably, just to interact. Respondents also said that social media is prone to abuse by people and has no privacy. Knowledge sharing, collaboration, social interaction and immediate feedback are the proven benefits of social media in public Universities as per the findings of this study. Most of the respondents agreed with the statement that social media has brought positive change in communication practice and is a key factor in its growth. Majority of the respondents cited lack of policies as being the hindrance to the use of social media. Facebook was found to be the most preferred social network site. This study recommended that in order to benefit from social media, students ought to turn to more professional social networks. Many of the respondents said that they used Facebook and twitter which are for communication and fun. The study recommended the need to draft a policy to guide utilization of social media in public universities.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background information

The history of communication dates back to prehistory, with significant changes in communication technologies evolving in tandem with shifts in political and economic systems, and by extension, systems of power (The New media consortium, 2007). The nature of communication has undergone a substantial change in the past 20 years and the change is not over. Email has had a profound effect on the way people keep in touch. Communications are shorter and more frequent than when letters were the norm; response time has greatly diminished (The New Media Consortium, 2007).

The ability to communicate effectively has a great impact on an organization's success. This is because it affects teamwork and collaboration. Effective communication enables positive interaction between two or more individuals working together to solve problems; create novel products and master required skills. The importance of effective communication in organizations and institutions is paramount as it facilitates coordination and control of activities, builds teamwork and creates a supportive attitude in organizations (Olembo, 2005).

Murphy (2010) points out that picking the right communication channel for your message would contribute significantly to the success of your message reaching your audience and therefore, it is important to understand the various communication channels available. Communication channels, also known as media, are the delivery vehicle for your message. According to the scholar, traditionally these channels have included publications like newspapers, magazines, journals; Radio and television;

Billboards; Telephones; US Postal Service; face to face among others. The advent of social media has changed the information environment and the architecture of the Internet significantly over the past 10 years (O'Reilly 2007; Warschauer & Grimes 2007).

Boyd and Ellison(2007) notes that social media provides a great space for individual Internet users not only for the basic data storage needs, but even more importantly for the users' psychological experience requirements, such as to “be found”, “be authorized” and “be admired”. The applications include blogs/micro blogs (e.g. Twitter, Tpeople), wikis/Wikipedia, image sharing (e.g. Flickr), podcasts/video-sharing (e.g. YouTube, Youku), and community forum/social networks (e.g. MySpace, Face book) (Beer, 2008 ; Wilson, 2008). The major social networking tools like MySpace and Facebook give people an online identity and an online space to call their own (Rethlefsen, 2007).

Facebook the most popular social network surpassed the 500 million registered users in 2010 (Crunch base, 2010). The network's popularity with digital natives who grew up with the social media is due in part to the networks ability personalize content with interactivity as users share and discuss contents with friends and family (Yaros, 2009). Locally, according to www.bakers.com (2012), there are 1994720 Facebook users in Kenya which makes it number 65 in the ranking of all Facebook statistics by country. Facebook penetration in Kenya is 4.98% compared to the country's population and 19.01% in relation to the number of internet users.

(Belleghem et al., 2012) affirms that emerging markets such as Argentina, Brazil and India have the highest penetration of social network usage where they also have the highest usage frequency and intensity as well. According to www.bakers.com , the largest age group of users is currently 25-34 years where there are 64% male users

compared to 36% female users. It's different in other countries since in Slovakia there are 48% male users against 52% and 50% against 50% in Costa Rica.

A research done by The Neighborhood Skum (TNS), (2011) revealed much statistics that has made this market more worth to invest in. According to their research, globally, people who have online access have digital sources as their number one media channel. 61% of online users use the internet daily against 54% for TV, 36% for Radio and 32% for Newspapers.

Insites consulting (2012) indicates that awareness of social networks sites is very high. Facebook is close to 100%, Twitter reaches 80% awareness, while Google+ is known by 70%. LinkedIn continues to have relatively low awareness where about 4 out of 10 users are familiar with this network. More than 7 out of 10 internet users are members of at least one social network.

It is impossible to ignore the influence of social media in our society. While it took media such as radio and television more than a decade to reach 50 million users, it took less than nine months for Facebook to reach 100 million users (Patel, 2010).

Mobile technologies including laptops, tablets, and smart phones allow us to be constantly connected, which has had a dramatic impact on how we communicate nowadays. These latest communication technologies if enhanced can help enhance communication among people and institutions (Patel, 2010). Bellingham et al. indicate that 51% of internet population is using smart phones; a majority of them has a data subscription as well. Android is market leader in this market followed by apple. Over 98% of web access in Kenya is through mobile phones. According to a study by a Kenyan based research firm estimated the combined monthly airtime expenditure for the youth of Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania at \$70 million. This clearly shows that Kenyan

youth are active users of mobile phones and online social networks. According to Communications Authority of Kenya (CA) 2011 report, Kenya had 25.27 million mobile phone subscribers by June 30, 2011 representing 64.2% of the total population. The total internet users' in Kenya are 12.8 million and 98% of these people access the internet through their phones (Mayeku, 2011)

Social networking sites (SNSs) have also attracted increasing scholarly attention as being effective as both means of self-expression and for the management and amelioration of individual and group networks (Barnett, 2011). This is particularly applicable to the younger generation in technologically developed countries. SNSs allow individuals to create online profiles, share personal information, and view information created by others, thereby facilitating the formation of social networks among users (Boyd and Ellison 2007; Donath and Boyd 2004).

According to research done by Njuguna(2005), traditional channels of communication being used in University of Nairobi which include face to face communication, newsletters, websites, Emails amongst others are faced with myriad of problems ranging from redundancy of information before reaching its intended audience as well as information not reaching the intended audience promptly. Of all the traditional channels listed, Email was voted as the most effective by over 62% respondents. It is for this reason that organizations and institutions have started embracing social media which promises to reach more people specifically the young people who are engrossed to the social media craze (Njuguna, 2005).

However, the problem of ineffective traditional channels of communication is not only unique to the Kenyan universities but is a global concern. The Colombian educators for example were faced with similar problems and they resulted to incorporating social media like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube as well as flicker in an attempt to communicate

to as many students as possible and promptly. The University of Missouri in United Kingdom on the other hand resulted to using Facebook, Twitter, podcast, as well as flicker when they were faced with the challenges of information not reaching their students in good time. If there were announcements to be made, they communicated through these social Networks.

However despite the benefits associated with the use of social media, organizations and institutions often face challenges with the adoption and use of new information systems and social media is no exception. Bughin et al... (2008) points out that despite the possibilities offers for organizations, many companies also associate challenges and problems with its adoption and use. One of the factors affecting full utilization is lack of social media communication policy in organizations. The social media communication policy provide a framework for participation in social media by university students and staff regarding university matters (Bughin, 2008)

The major concern of this research therefore is to find out factors that hinder full utilization of social media in public universities in the absence of social media communication policy with a view of encouraging them to adopt this latest technology.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Effective communication is central to any institution or organization. According to Koontz and O'Donnell (2005), communication is important to all phases of management by every individual within the system and is particularly important in directing and leading any system. McFarland (1994:56) further postulates that communication is a central element in all aspects of life.

From the two scholars Kootnz and O'Donnell, the study is of the opinion that in the universities, use of proper channels for communication with students is paramount if universities are to achieve their set aims and objectives of providing information pertinent in their pursuit of their academic and other endeavors.

Blackboard connect (2012), an information-disseminating network confirm that no institution of higher learning can over rely on traditional channels of communication. They affirm that these institutions need to stay abreast with new emerging channels to make sure that information intended for dissemination to the university community reaches all and sundry and promptly to achieve its desired objective.

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However, the problem of ineffective traditional channels of communication is not only unique to the Kenyan universities but is a global concern. The Colombian educators for example were faced with similar problems and they resulted to incorporating social media like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube as well as flicker in an attempt to communicate to as many students as possible and promptly. The University of Missouri in United Kingdom on the other hand resulted to using Facebook, Twitter, podcast, as well as flicker when they were faced with the challenges of information not reaching their students in good time. If there were announcements to be made, they communicated through these social Networks.

It is for this reason that organizations and institutions have started embracing social media which promises to reach more people specifically the young people who are engrossed to the social media craze (Njuguna, 2005). This has led to positive outcomes like increased interaction between students and staff, information reaching intended audience in real time among other benefits

As Bughin et al. (2008) note, organizations often face challenges with the adoption and use of new information systems, and social media is no exception. Despite the possibilities social media offers for organizations, many companies also associate challenges and problems with its adoption and use. One of the factors that could be affecting full implementation is lack of social media communication policy in organizations. The Social Media Communication Policy provides a framework for participation in social media by University staff and students regarding University matters. This in essence ensures that people using social media do so responsibly and in the set out parameters.

The absence of this policy can lead to misuse of the social media since both students and staff are likely to use social media against the set out parameters like communicating official matters without authority which might affect the university's image negatively. This can lead to low students enrollment as a result of negative publicity as well as expose them to some litigation

Globally, universities have gone ahead and introduced social media communication policy in their policy framework. A case in point is the University of Newcastle in Australia where its policy encourages and support staff and students' responsible use of social media use when communicating on one of the University's official social media channels or commenting on University matters on other social media channels. The policy applies to all University staff representing the University on official or external

social media channels or commenting on University matters on other channels. It also applies to University students engaging in social media on one of the University's official social media channels or commenting on University matters on external and personal sites.

It was therefore imperative to establish how social media was being utilized in public universities in Kenya in the absence of a communication policy which guided proper utilization with a view of establishing whether it was being used properly.

1.3 Objectives

1.3.1 General objective

The general objective of this study was to determine how social media is being used in Kenyan Public Universities in the absence of a social media communication policy.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of this study are;

1. To determine the factors that affect social media use in public universities in the absence of a communication policy
2. To determine the challenges of adopting social media in public universities in the absence of social media communication policy
3. To assess the benefits of using social media in public universities.
4. To find out the preferred social networking sites among students and staff of public universities

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the factors that affect use of social media in public universities?
2. What challenges come as a result of using social media?
3. What are the benefits of using social media?
4. What are the preferred social networking sites in public universities?

1.5 Justification

Social media craze is here in Kenya where most young people who have not subscribed to it are seen as backward. Positively even the Kenyan universities have received the adoption of this new technology and hence if enhanced can herald a new beginning in the way communication is being done in these institutions.

The absence of a communication policy has made full utilization of social media lag behind especially in public universities since the absence of this policy can lead to misuse of the social media since both students and staff has likelihood of using social media against the set out parameters which might affect the university's image negatively. It is for this reason that there is need to establish how both students and staff are embracing this new technology which in turn would inform the universities on the need to put in place proper communication policy which would ensure that both students and staff operate within the laid down rules.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the study

This study target university students, lecturers, as well as administrative staff of JKUAT. This is because students as well as staff working in higher institutions of learning are quick to embrace technological change especially when compared to people in other

sectors because both students and staff are exposed to ICT during their academic as well as career endeavors’.

The study is geographically limited to students and staff of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) due to the fact that JKUAT is very well known in the field of technology and also due to logistical and financial constraints that the researcher is likely to face. Carrying out research to cover many universities would require more funds, which the researcher does not have.

1.7 Significance of the study

This study is very important since it would go a long way in helping public universities to fully utilize social media and incorporate them in their already existing channels of communication. It will also go a long way in helping other government organizations who only rely on only traditional methods of communication to embrace this latest technology which will in essence improve communication.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter gives literature that is pertinent to the area of social media and which has been done by renowned scholars and researchers. It aims to give an insight on what has been written on social media as well as establish the gaps that have been left by other researchers. The review is based on background information on communication, introduction to social media, history of social media, types of social media currently being used in universities, benefits as well as challenges of using social media, conceptual as well as theoretical framework.

2.1 Communication Overview

The nature of communication has undergone a substantial change in the past 20 years and the change is not over. Email has had a profound effect on the way people keep in touch. Communications are shorter and more frequent than when letters were the norm; response time has greatly diminished (The New Media Consortium, 2007)

Communication channels, also known as media, are the delivery vehicle for your message. These traditionally have included: Publications like newspapers, magazines, journals; Radio and television; Billboards; Telephones; Websites; US Postal Service; face to face among others (Murphy, 2010). New media channels have come up which include Internet communication vehicles like Websites / Blogs; Social media – Facebook, Twitter, YouTube; Email; Mobile Search; Videoconferencing etc.

“Social Media” is a term that in recent years has become closely related to the important applications of Web 2.0. It allows individuals to construct the information with a bounded system and share connections with other users (Boyd and Ellison, 2007).

The advent of social media has changed the information environment and the architecture of the Internet significantly over the past 10 years (O’Reilly 2007; Warschauer & Grimes 2007). One significant development in the evolution of the Internet is the increasing prevalence of social media platforms that enable Internet users to collaborate, communicate, and publish original content such as blogs, videos, wikis, reviews, or photos (Boyd and Ellison, 2008).

The new Internet is characterized by the interactive publishing, participation and networking of its users through among others social networking sites. Examples include Facebook), micro blogs (e.g. Twitter), blogs, content networks (e.g. YouTube), wikis and social bookmarking (e.g. digg.com) (Benkler 2006; O’Reilly 2007; Warschauer & Grimes 2007; Bawden & Robinson 2008).

Social media have enriched the communication profession with new and immediate Ways of stakeholder interaction. The conversation occurring via these social media channels never rests and potentially includes every individual with an Internet connection. Many such individuals seize the opportunity to actively participate in conversation with each other and with organizations, rating, commenting and generally contributing content to a dialogue that has become a buzzing ‘polylogue’ since the rise of social media (Anderson 2004)

Use of online social networks has become a fad among teenagers and young adults. The result of a study by Pew Internet & American Life Project (2009) as cited by Lenhart, Purcell, Smith and Zickuhr (2010) affirmed that 73% of teens (ages 12 -17) and young

adults (ages 18-29) in the United States use online social networks. (Uloma, 2011) on the other hand postulates that while most of the younger generation makes use of the Internet and social media to stay in touch with the world of culture and entertainment, channels that are more traditional still apparently predominate. While 87% of the youngsters interviewed said they use the Internet and 83% use social networks to find out what's going on, and 84% cited television and radio as sources of information, fully 93% stated that they obtain such information via their immediate circle, a group comprising family, friends and work colleagues.

Sudheim (2011) argues that Social Media has recently become an integral part of our everyday lives, but it has been around since long before Facebook and Twitter. What has changed is that social media is now widely available whereas it used to be limited to those with an in-depth understanding of technology and underground hacker circles.

Along with new possibilities also come challenges as professionals are engaging in real-time conversations with their audiences on Facebook, Twitter, blogs and the like, they have to learn to mentally cope with an oversupply of possibly relevant information, with an invasion of work matters into the private domain and with changing work contents and structures (Bucher, 2012).

2.2 History of social Networking Sites

It has been only a few short years since the terms "social networking" and "social media" first entered our vocabulary. In that time, social networking has become one of the United States' fastest-growing industries and a part of the everyday lives of many Americans. In fact, social networking, which was originally designed as a simple and entertaining way to share interests, photos and other personal information, has grown into a technological and societal revolution. The history of social media is one of rapid

growth, which has only accelerated as social networking sites have become more common and accessible.

2.2.1 The Birth of the Web

The seeds for what ultimately becomes social networking were planted when defense contractor Ray Tomlinson sent the first email in 1971. Granted, the two computers were right next to each other and linked via a cable, but the idea that computers could communicate with each other was born. Seven years later, computing pioneers Ward Christensen and Randy Suess developed the first Computerized Bulletin Board System (BBS). These bulletin boards allowed users to leave messages and share files through a common network.

A few years later, 1978 marked the birth of Usenet, which took computerized bulletin boards one step further by eliminating the needs for a large central server to manage the systems; instead, information was sent from server to server. It was on Usenet boards that many now-common Internet acronyms, including "FAQ" and "spam", made their first appearances.

2.2.2 The 1990s and the Boom

The World Wide Web built real momentum through the '80s and early '90s, but social media as we know it emerged only in 1994, with the introduction of Geocities, a tool that helped individuals to create and manage a website, with content of their choosing. With Geocities, they could share information, links, photos, and text-and could receive recipient-generated comments in turn. The general population was now able to choose their own web content, which allowed them to create a sense of community through organic means.

The second major development of the decade occurred when American Online (AOL) began offering its instant messaging service in 1997. Friends, coworkers, and even strangers could communicate instantly via their computer screens. That same year, the website Sixdegrees.com launched. Arguably the first true social networking site, it allowed users to list friends and invite them into message boards and interactive content, and granted them access to the information of friends of friends up to three degrees of separation away from themselves.

As investors realized the potential value of web content, thousands of Internet-based companies were formed based on the assumption that they be profitable. For a time, they were immensely so, as stock prices of such companies rose considerably. These companies were collectively referred to as dot-com companies, which were notorious for overlooking quality metrics in favor of technological advancements.

2.2.3 The Burst of the Bubble and the Aftermath

In 2000, the dot-com bubble burst sent the stock market into a nosedive and put web developers into damage control mode. In the midst of the web crisis, Internet developers scrambled to develop content that interest a more jaded and web-savvy populace. In the years that followed, the major players of social networking - Friendster, MySpace, Facebook and Twitter - were developed, along with a host of lesser known imitators. These websites were unique in that they were devoted to connecting friends who knew each other in real life, rather than forging friendships between strangers online.

Friendster was the first on the scene and quickly gained enough members to capture the attention of marketers and the public alike. Savvy Internet marketers stepped to the beat and introduced a hastily-coded MySpace to the eager public. When MySpace was introduced in 2003, it quickly overtook Friendster. But with the launch of Mark

Zuckerberg's Facebook site in 2004, MySpace and Friendster were rendered obsolete. Facebook today continues to dominate the social networking scene. Twitter, launched in 2006, has also garnered a huge following with its unique "micro-blogging" format, which allows users to send out short messages of 140 characters or less to a number of people simultaneously.

2.3 Channels of Communication currently being used in public Universities

Communication channels refer to the way that information flows within an organization and with other organizations (Tutorials Point, 2013).

The structure for an organization should provide for communication in three distinct directions: downward, upward and horizontal (Lumenverg and Ornstein, 2008): These three directions establish the framework within which communication in any organization takes place.

Downward communication transmits information from higher to lower levels of the school organization while upward communication is where information flows from the people in low hierarchy to high hierarchy. Horizontal communication on the other hand is where people of the same level are involved in the communication (Lumenverg, 2010)

Burgers, (2003) says that there are various communication channels that institutions including universities employ on a daily basis and several of these channels include brochures, letters, email messages, video telephone conversations, video conferencing, newspapers, websites among others are some of the most heavily used.

Business brochures dictionary.com defines a brochure as a publication consisting of open folded page stitched together but not bound used mainly for advertising purposes.

Writers usually create brochures to provide information on a product or service while often used for persuasive purposes, they are usually presented as routine informational documents.

2.3.1 Letters

A letter is a written message containing information from one party to another (Blake, 1993). As communication technology has diversified, posted letters have become less important as a routine form of communication. They are appropriate channels for certain attempts at persuasion

2.3.2 Email messages

Electronic mail, most commonly referred to as email since approximately 1993, is a method of exchanging digital message from one author to another to one or more recipients (Berendzen, 2011). Email messages are widely in business as well as in personal life.

2.3.3 Video Email Message

This is much like text messaging except that the sender can include video. A video messaging system provides access to record message through one of its designated service provider.

The user can retrieve the message through the same

2.3.4 Telephone conversations

This is a somewhat richer channel, which transmits sound rather than printed words. It allows for immediate feedback, qualifying it as a richer channel, which organizations use to get immediate responses.

2.3.5 Video conferencing

This is the conduct of a video conference by a set of telecommunication technologies, which allows two or more locations, communicate with simultaneous way video and audio transmission (Biello, 2009).

2.3.6 Face to face meetings

Face to face, meetings are ranked at the top of the richness scale because they allow the complete rise of all senses and continuous feedback (Fieherty, 2009).

2.3.7 Web sites

This is a set of related WebPages served from a single web domain. Websites can be divided into two broad categories-statistics and interactive. Interactive sites are part of web 2.0 community of sites and allow for interactivity between the owner and site visitors. Static sites serve or capture information but do not allow engagement with audience directly (The free dictionary.com).

2.3.8 Posters

A poster is a piece of printed-paper designed to be attached to a wall or vertical surface. Typical posters include both textual and graphical elements although a poster may be either graphical or textural (Gesling, 1999).

2.3.9 Social networking sites in use

Tim Grahil et al... (2012) says that there are six types of social media and include the following

Social Networks - Services that allow you to connect with other people of similar interests and background. Usually they consist of a profile, various ways to interact with other users, ability to setup groups, the most popular are Face book and Linked in

Bookmarking Sites - Services that allow you to save organize and manage links to various websites and resources around the internet. Most allow you to “tag” your links to make them easy to search and share. The most popular ones are Delicious ad Stable upon

Social News - Services that allow people to post various news items or links to outside articles and then allows its users to “vote” on the items. The voting is the core social aspect as the items that get the most votes are displayed the most prominently. The community decides which news items are seen by more people. The most popular are Diggs and Reddit

Media Sharing - Services that allow you to upload and share various media such as pictures and video. Most services have additional social features such as profiles, commenting, etc. The most popular are YouTube and Flicker

Micro blogging - Services that focus on short updates that are pushed out to anyone subscribed to receive the updates. The most popular is Twitter

Blog Comments and Forums - Online forums allow members to hold conversations by posting messages. Blog comments are similar except they are attached to around the topic of the blog post. There are many popular blogs and forums.

FredCavazza.net (2011), on the other hand says that social media is divided into 10 categories which include Publish (wiki); Share (YouTube); Discuss (Skype); Social networks (Facebook, LinkedIn); Micro blog (twitter); Life stream (Friend feed); Live cast (justin.tv); Virtual worlds (Second Life, HABBO); Social games (pogo, doff) and Massively multiplayer online games (World of War craft, Happy Farm).

2.4 Factors affecting social media communication

Although the basic process of communication is similar in many different contexts, one unique feature of organizations has a profound affect the communication process- namely its structure (Greenberg and Baron, 2011). Organizations are often structured in ways that dictate the communication patterns that exist.

Massey and Montoya-weis (2006) says that utility of social media is affected by three imperative factors: geographical dispersion of participant; availability of recipients and accessibility of media. These factors are mentioned by many learners in empirical data findings as important issues in the use of social media and participation in online learning.

Whereas there are geographical dispersions in online learning tendencies of using web-based techniques for their interactions, Hrastinaki (2007) as cited by Aghae (2010) shows that by using synchronous and asynchronous communication tools students seldom meet face to face in geographical dispersion. Hrastinski (2007) as cited by Aghae (2010) further says availability of recipients is significant since if recipients are not perceived to be available by a medium, another medium might be preferred. For

instance, when students are not available on a specific medium, others choose not to use it. Accessibility of the media is an issue that stimulates learners' desire to use the media (Aghaee, 2010). In demographic factors, three factors are mentioned namely age, educational level and by learning style. Keller and Hrastinski (2006) study shows that age is a significant factor to affect perceived participation. The younger generation groups who are digital age learners have more desire of using social medium. People who have higher educational qualifications are likely to be more receptive to social media as compared to the others (Keller and Hrastinski, 2006)

From the literature on social networking sites and diffusion of innovation theory (Rogers, 2003) as cited by (Lin, Trisha, Vicks & Lim, 2011) adopter characteristics, perceived characteristics of the innovation (Moore and Benbasat, 1991), technology cluster (kang, 2002) and perceived popularity of the innovation (Katz and Shapiro, 1986) are identified as the key factors that may affect the adoption of social network sites (SNSs).

Adopter characteristics

Demographics-Early adopters of an innovation were found to be younger and more well educated (Helhart, 2009; Rogers, 2003), especially the diffusion of SNSs starting from the youth

Innovativeness-This is defined as individuals tendency to receptive to new ideas (Li, 2004; Midgley and Graham, 1978). SNSs adopters are likely to be more innovative than non adopters

Perceived characteristics of the innovation

Whether the innovation is adopted and the rate of its adoption are affected by its perceived characteristics (Rogers, 2003)

Technology cluster

A technology cluster is made up of one or more distinguishable elements of technology. (Rogers, 2003). Peoples experience with a technology influences their perceptions of similar technology hence their intention to adopt the technology (Rogers, 2003)

Perceived popularity of an innovation

Rogers, (2003) notes that perceived popularity as a concept associated perceived critical mass that reaches the point at which enough individuals in a system have adopted an innovation.

On their part, Markus,1987;Rogers,2003 further affirm that when applied to interactive media, an individual adopter benefits from the use only if people he or she communicates with are also using it.Zhou, (2008) further add that perceived popularity exert a greater impact on more influential media such as the internet because of a certain degree of interdependence among the adoption decisions of the members of a system.From the above, various scholars have given different factors that affect social media communication. It is apparent that from the reviewed literature, there is general agreement that age of the users, education levels have been cited by as major factors that hinder social media adoption

2.5 Benefits of using social media

Social media is a recent technology that has made it possible to communicate a distance easier, quicker and cheaper is the internet or often by exchanging text is internet and computer mediated communication (Hrastinski, 2009.80; Hratinsiki 2007).

The web based tools, services or virtual environments, as Magaryan and little John discuss are characterized by decentralization of authority in knowledge creation and technology ownership. This enables new forms of collaboration and knowledge sharing for lacunars (Aghae, 2010).

Daft et.al (1987) blend four factors as media utilities, immediacy of feedback, use of multiple verbal as well as non verbal eves, language and variety and the advantage of being able to personalize messages (cited in Massey& Montoya-Weis, 2006).

Interactive websites and social networking makes communication of friends, classmates, and colleagues possible via distance. On one hand, a very common type of communication among learners in online education is a synchronous communication, which provides learners with a higher degree of central and flexibility. It allows learners to log on to the online medium any time they wish, taking into consideration what has been posted and formulate the response with having more time for reflection (Hrastinski, 2007).

Johnson and Johnson (1996) as quoted by Aghae (2010) note that there are many advantages of using social media in collaborative learning; assisting each other when needed; exchanging resources and documents; classifying complex knowledge, sharing existing knowledge with others as well as giving and receiving reflections and feedback from others. Curtis Lawson as cited by Aghae (2010) further notes that social media advocates for increased effort and perseverance among peers, engaging in-group skills, monitoring each other's efforts and contributions.

Bouwen and Taillieo (2004) as cited by Aghae (2010) state that ICT development enables globalization that calls forth the perspective of learning in organizations and societies. As Mitchell & Honove (2008) puts it, online learning has recently grown significantly in academics since learners have the possibility of continuous learning besides saving time and reducing travel costs.

Social media facilities open communication, leading to enhanced information discovery and delivery (www.shrm.org). According to this website, social media targets a wide audience making it ideal for communicating with large audiences to institutions where there is likelihood of misuse which can hinder the positive contributions. However there is likelihood of using social media being misused by both students as well as staff which might hinder full utilization and unless proper measures are taken, fully utilization may end up with more disadvantages than advantages.

2.6 Challenges of using Social Media

Social Media enriched communication with new and immediate ways of stakeholder interaction. Along with the new possibilities also come challenges as professionals are engaging in real-time conversations with their audiences on Facebook twitter, blogs and the like, they have to learn to cope with an oversupply of possibly relevant information, with an invasion of work matters into the private domain and with changing work contents and structures (Bucher, 2012).

In the sphere of education, social media has posed enormous challenges and released its potential as a venue to communicate with stakeholders (Wang, 2013). The role of social media in building social capital, string of legal issues arises when social media has made its way into education. In light of the venue of free speech provided by social media, institutions social media policy makers need to be aware of inherent danger in the infringement on social media users' freedom of speech (Wang, 2013).

Clifford (2009) as quoted by Tsuma (2012) says that, given social media's explosive personality it should come as no surprise to employers that employees are accessing these sites and posting on these sites both at home and at work. Employee's inappropriate use of social media can create significant problem for employers' organization (Clifford, 2009). An offensive and unlawful posting may do more than simply embarrass an organization. It can erode public trust, damage funding prospects and may even result in legal liability to the employer. Proliferation of social media forms and use has been unprecedented (Lenhart, Parcel, 2010). Social media tools, practices, and abuses create additional challenges within workplaces. This new medium does not change the medium, the reach, the speed, and the permanency of their actions, (Jacobson, 2013).

Ulrike, (2013) posits that gaining relevant resonance within social media depends on the ability to information and campaigns that users would forward within their networks, comment on and recommend to other users if information posted on social media does not have a specific viral quality that provoke users to spread it, it would not reach beyond a very circle of users.

Social media enable individuals to interact and connect whenever they want via mobile devices such as smart phones or tables per; whenever they are, (Bucher, et al, 2012). However, social media and mobile applications also create situations where individuals can be addressed and reached anytime and anywhere in professional life, this can lead to an apparent need to be connected and hooked to the conversation at all times. In many cases, this entails a blurring of the boundaries between work related and personal context (Taradas et al, 2007).

In work and communication environment increasingly shaped by social media, the invasion of work into individuals private lives is one three major mental challenges. They must overcome invasion can lead to increased distress, a less satisfying family life,

poor decision making particularly in the course of performing complex tasks and burnout syndrome (Woil & Rosen, 1997). Although social media offer a myriad of playful ways to interact, they also present countless opportunities for distraction and interruption (Bucher, 2012).

2.8 Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework is a compilation of interrelated concepts, such as a theory though not necessarily worked-out so well. A theoretical framework guides you in doing research, determining what kind of things you will measure, and what type of statistical relationships you will look out for. A theoretical framework is a compilation of thoughts and theories on a research topic. To write a theoretical framework, identify the core set of connectors within a topic showing how they are related to the research topic. When writing theoretical framework, include an outline of existing theories closely related to the research topic. Demonstrate that the topic addresses questions that interest those already researching the field then clarify how your research relates to the existing theories. Your own theoretical assumptions and loyalties should be as open as possible.

2.8.1 Uses and gratification theory

Uses and Gratifications Theory is a popular approach to understanding Mass communication. The theory places more focus on the consumer, or audience, instead of the actual message itself by asking, “What people do with media” rather than “what media does to people” (Kartz, 1959). It assumes that members of the audience are not passive but take an active role in interpreting and integrating media into their own lives. The theory also holds that audiences are responsible for choosing media to meet their needs. The approach suggests that people use the media to fulfill specific gratifications. This theory then implies that the media compete against other information sources for viewers’ gratification (Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974).

McQuail et al (1972) put forward a typology consisting of the following categories of audience needs that are gratified by the media: diversion (including escape from the constraints of routine and the burdens of problems and emotional release); personal relationships (including substitute companionship, gaining insight into circumstances of others, identifying with others and gaining a sense of belonging); personal identity (including gaining insight into one’s self, reality exploration, and finding reinforcement for personal values); and surveillance (finding out about relevant events and conditions in immediate surroundings, society and the world, seeking advice on practical matters or opinion and decision choices, satisfying curiosity and general interest and gaining a sense of security through knowledge).

A model of this process involved has been proposed by Palmgreen and Rayburn (1985), based on the principle that attitudes (towards media) are an outcome of empirically located beliefs and other values and (personal preferences).

The resulting ‘expectancy-value’ model is depicted below.

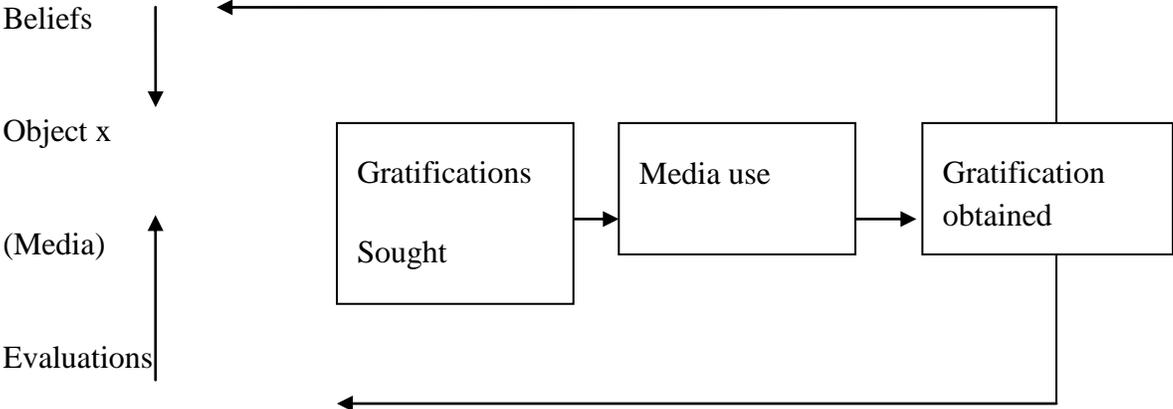


Figure 2.1: Expectancy value model (Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1985)

The model expresses the proposition that the media use is accounted for by a combination of perception of benefits offered by the medium and the differential value of these benefits for the individual audience members.

The theory explains how the audience seeks gratification with certain media. Social networking sites such as face book, Twitter as linked in have been embraced by the public as useful communication tools that satisfy their needs. Communication practitioners using social media therefore stand a better chance of getting their message across to a particular audience segment as well as interesting with the public more than they could hope for were they to use traditional media. Within the precincts of this theory, it is possible to identify the needs of different audiences and as such this theory is relevant in that it informs why different publics prefer different media from the others.

2.9 Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework refers to theoretical structures of assumptions, principles and rules that holds together the ideas comprising a broad subject.

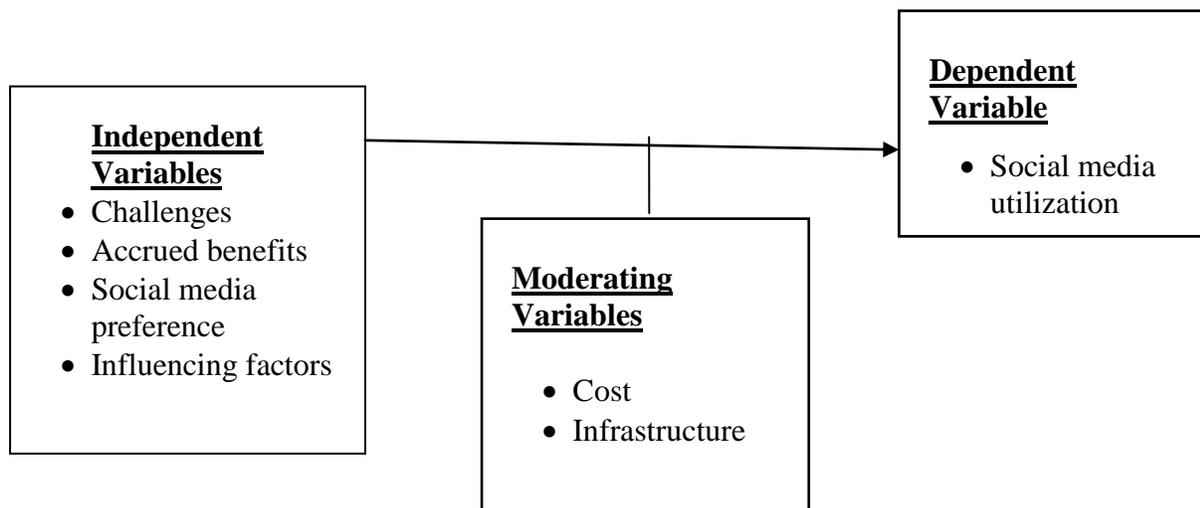


Figure 2.2: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author

From the above conceptual framework, the dependent variable is social media utilization. Utilization of social media can only be realized if challenges which can hamper full utilization are well taken care of. People are also likely to embrace social media if they are assured of reaping immense benefits from using them especially when compared to other means of communication. It's also easy to embrace technology which users are comfortable with and as such people are likely to use social media which they prefer.

The intervening variable has a strong effect on the relationship between independent and dependent variable if there are challenges that might be there while trying to incorporate social media, then organizations are likely to refrain from adopting this new technology. These challenges may range from exorbitant cost of computers as well as mobile phones, connectivity problems among other challenges

2.10 Research gap

The literature reviewed in the area of social media covered by other renowned scholars and researchers seems to highlight on aspects of social media from a general perspective. Gaps exist in the utilization of social media strategies in the academic settings. The current study undertakes to explore the utilization of social media communication in public universities in Kenya,

CHAPTER THREE:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section explains how the research was undertaken. It contains the following sections: the research design, target population, sampling frame, sampling procedure, sample size, data collection procedure and data presentation and analysis.

3.1.1 Research design

A research design is defined as an overall plan for research undertakings (Saunders, Lewis & Thorn Hill, 2009). This study adopted an exploratory research design. Exploratory research design is valuable means of finding out what is happening to seek new insights, to ask questions and to assess phenomena in new light. This type of research is also used when a research problem have very few or no earlier studies to which we can refer to for information (Robson, 2002). Social media is a new technological development that is being incorporated into the communication field especially in organizations and institutions.

Armstrong (2000) as cited by Mberia (2009) observed that this method is best suited for gathering descriptive data; where the researcher wants to know about people's feelings, attitudes, or preferences concerning one or more variables through direct query.

The study has the primary goal of looking into how utilization of social media can enhance communication in universities.

3.2 Study Population and Target Population

This is the whole group, individuals, events or objects having common observable characteristics (Kothari, 2004). The population for this study comprised the total number of academic, administrative as well as students of JKUAT at the main campus as indicated in the population distribution table below.

Table 3. 1: Population Distribution

CLUSTER	POPULATION	% OF TOTAL POPULATION
Staff(Both academic and administrative)	1480	6.3%
Students	22,000	93.7%
Total population	23,480	100%

Source: JKUAT APD division staff statistics; AA division student statistics 2013/2014

The target population comprised of lecturers, administrators, as well as both undergraduate and post graduate students

3.2.1 Target population

A study population is an aggregation of the elements from which the sample is selected (Babble and Morton, 2002). Kombo and Tromp (2006) as cited by Wachira (2013) define target population as a group of individual objects or items from which samples are taken for measurement.

The population of this study was composed of the university students of JKUAT, academic as well as administrative staff to which the researcher was interested in generalizing conclusions. Students were chosen because they are the ones who are into this new technology, academic staffs were chosen because they interact with students on a day to day basis while administrative staff communicates various issues to the students. These were the main focus of this study and were set to benefit from findings of the study.

3.3 Sample and sampling Technique

Sampling is the process of selecting a few cases from a large population for the purpose of studying them and generalizing on the large population (Kumar, 2005). Depending on the size of the population and purpose of the study, a researcher may study the whole population or subset of the population (Mugenda; 2007 cited in Wachira, 2013).

In this research, the researcher used stratified sampling technique where the researcher divided the population into different strata of subgroups. The three strata were students' strata, academic staff and administrative staff. It involved dividing the population into three significant strata based on the status of respondents' namely academic staff, administrative staff, Undergraduate as well as post graduate students. Dividing the population into a series of relevant strata means that the sample was more likely to be representative (Saunders et al., 2007).

The student sample was done using purposeful sampling of two colleges namely College of Human Resource Development (COHRED) and College of Engineering and Technology (COETEC). This is because the former represents the college with the highest number of students in JKUAT main campus while the latter has the least. Random sampling was applied to departments within these colleges. Students enrolled

for the Bachelor of Business and Information Technology (BBIT), Bachelor of Economics, Civil Engineering and Mechatronics respectively were selected for the study. These were identified as the departments with the highest and the least number of students within the selected colleges.

The researcher purposely selected the academic staff category, from the two colleges namely, (COHRED) and those from (COETEC) since they had the highest number and lowest number of staff. Lecturers from the departments of Entrepreneurship and Procurement (EPD), Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH), Civil Engineering and Mechatronics respectively were purposively selected for the study.

The administrative category was selected from two departments in the Academic division. These were library department and the academic section of the University. These departments were selected due to their characteristics in communicating to users. (see table 3.2)

Table 3.2 Sample size and Sampling technique

STUDENTS			
COLLEGE	DEPARTMENT	POPULATION	Sample size (10%)
COETEC	Civil engineering	350	35
	Geospatial engineering	15	1
COHRED	BBIT	1000	100
	Economics	44	4
Sub Total		1409	139
TEACHING STAFF			
COETEC	Civil engineering	30	3
	Mechatronics engineering	10	1
COHRED	EPD	34	3
	SSH	14	1
Sub Total		88	8
ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF			
Department		POPULATION	Sample size (10%)
Academic		8	1
Library		20	3
Sub total		28	3
CUMULATIVE TOTAL		1525	150

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) recommends that a sample size of more than 30 or at least 10% is appropriate for social sciences. The research therefore used 10% of students sampled in each of the above categories and same case applied to the both teaching and administrative staff.

3.4 Data collection procedure

Silverman (2006) and Kombo and Tromp (2006) identify questionnaires, personal interview, observation and focus group discussions as instruments of data collection. Silverman (2006) on the other hand identifies interviews and observations as key instruments in qualitative research design and adds that questionnaires can be used to inform meaning to a situation under study. For the purpose of this research, data was collected using questionnaires and personal interviews.3.6. Instruments

3.4.1 Questionnaires

A written questionnaire (also referred to as a self-administered questionnaire) is a data collection tool in which written questions are presented. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), questionnaires are commonly used to obtain important information about a population under study. In quantitative research, data generated by questionnaire is useful in achieving greater validity. The main research tool was a structured questionnaire because questionnaires provide high amounts of data standardization (Mberia, 2009). The questionnaires were administered on a ‘drop and pick later’ technique. Every effort was made to ensure personal delivery and administration of the instrument in order to ensure a higher return rate of the questionnaires. To collect this data, the researcher distributed the questionnaires to the respondents.

3.4.2 Interview

The researcher also used semi-structured interviews as a source of data collection. The main advantage of this form is its capacity to probe the respondents further. It provided an opportunity for the respondents to expound on some of the questions appearing on the questionnaire (Tsuma, 2012). An interview schedule was prepared (appendix 1). Two

respondents were selected from the university academic and administrative staff. They were drawn from SSH, EPD, Library and Academic section. They provided data on the use of social media in their respective locations.

3.5 Data Processing and Analysis

Upon completion of the research, the researcher processed and analyzed data. According to Kothari (2004), data processing involves editing, classification, coding and tabulation of collected data so that they can be analyzed. The data was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively and descriptive statistics used to analyze, present and interpret data. The SPSS tool was used in analysis which was presented in form of frequencies, pie charts, tables, percentages and graphs

3.6. Ethical issues

The study ensured that ethical requirements in research were upheld while collecting data. The research instruments used ensured authenticity since it had a covering letter from the department which indicated the researcher's intentions and assured confidentiality of information provided

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretations of the data collected. The researcher had a sample size of 150 of which 30 were staff members while 120 represented the students. However, out of the issued questionnaires, 92 were returned duly filled in making a response rate of 61.33%, which was sufficient for statistical reporting. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) noted that a response rate of 50% and above is a good response rate.

4.2 Demographics

The study sought to ascertain the information on the respondents involved in the study about the gender, age, Designation in the organization and duration of working. The bio data points at the respondents' suitability in answering the questions and looks at the employment demographics of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology.

4.3 Demographics/Bio-data



Figure 4.1 Gender of respondents

From the findings, 56.67 % of the respondents were male and 43.33 % were female. This implied that majority of the respondents from staff were male.

Table 4.1 Age of the respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
18-30 yrs	50	54.33
31-40yrs	30	32.67
41-50yrs	10	9
Above 50 yrs	2	4
Total	92	100

From the findings, most of the respondents (54.33%) were between 18-30 years old, 32.67% were between 18 and 30 years old, and 9% were aged between 41 to 50 years while 4% were over 50 years of age. The findings indicate that majority of the staff at JKUAT are young and energetic and thus belong to the “digital “generation. It’s worth noting is that the big percent of the 18-30% is due to the student respondents.

Students were also categorized according to the year of study. This was critical in finding out which year of study is social media heavily utilized. The following were the findings:

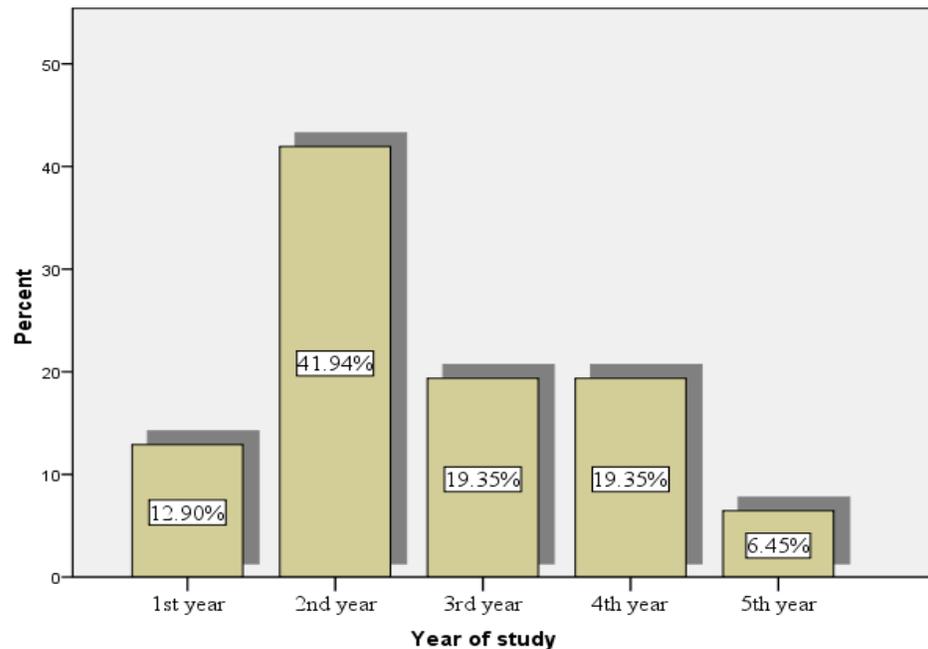


Figure 4.2 student population respondents

From the findings, majority of the respondents were from the second year of study at 41.94%. They were followed by both third and fourth years at 19.35% first years were 12.90% while 5th year were 6.45%.

4.4 Frequency of use

Respondents were asked to state how often they used social media and below are their responses:

Table 4.2 Frequency of use

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Daily	13	56.5
	Once a week	6	26.1
	Monthly	4	17.4
	Total	23	100.0
Missing	System	7	
Total		30	

As shown, 56.5% said that they used social media on daily basis. 26.1% said they used it at least weekly while the 17.1% said monthly.

4.5 Perception of social media by staff

The study asked the respondents to indicate their perception on social media. Their general feelings would be a pointer to the factors that affect the usage of social media. The responses were rated on a five point Likert scale where: 1 - Strongly disagree 2 – disagree 3 – neutral 4- agree and 5- strongly agree.

Table 4.3 Opinion on social media by staff

Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation
Have brought positive change in communication practice	3.9	0.176
Are a more trusted source than transitional mainstream media	3.32	0.853
Offer organizations a low cost way to develop relationships	3.53	0.566
Help members solve various strategic problems	3.29	0.374
Have no future in communication, they are just fids	2.29	0.173
Complement traditional channels of communication	3.56	0.154

From the findings, most of the respondents agreed with the statement that social media has brought positive change in communication practice. This is shown by a mean score of 3.9, are a more trusted source than traditional mainstream media at 3.32, Offer organizations a low cost way to develop relationships at 3.53, Complement traditional channels of communication at 3.56. However, they did not agree that social media has no future in communication. It is worth noting that there is a general appreciation of the role of social media and its low cost compared to other channels.

4.6 Cross tabulation age and frequency of use

A cross tabulation of age among the respondents and frequency of use was done and below were the findings.

Table 4.4 Cross tabulation age and frequency of use

Variable	AGE	Daily	Weekly	monthly	Total
age	18-30	48 (96%)	2 (4%)	0	50
	31-40	20(67%	8(27%)	2(6%)	30
	41-50	4 (40%)	5 (50%)	1(10%)	10
	Above 50		0	2	2
Total		72	15	5	92

From the findings, majority of the respondents' aged between 18-30 years used social media on daily basis at 96% with the frequency going down by increase in age.

4.7 Channels of communication used in public universities

The researcher asked the respondents to indicate how they communicated to students and below were the findings:

Table 4.5 Channels of communication

Variables	Frequency	Valid Percent
Posters	15	50%
Websites	5	17%
Face to face	8	27%
Social media	2	6%
Total	30	100

From the findings, majority of staff respondents said that they communicated using posters placed on notice board. Only 6% of the respondents said they used social media to relay information. Majority of those who used social media used it for socialization purposes.

4.8 Challenges of using social media in public institutions

Respondents were asked to state the challenges they face in using social media. The target respondents were mainly staff of the University. Below were their responses.

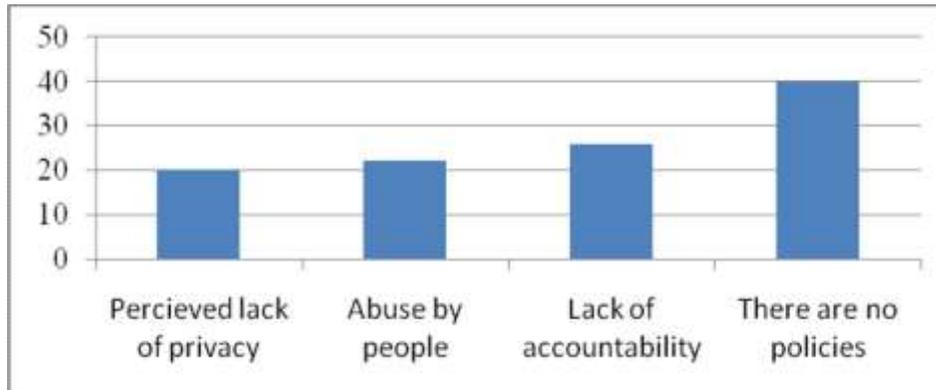


Figure 4.3 Challenges of using social media in public institutions

From the findings, majority of the respondents cited lack of policies as being the hindrance to the use of social media. Lack of accountability was also cited as a challenge. People are not willing to take responsibility for information on social media and have therefore no one to be accountable to. They also said that social media is prone to abuse by people and has no privacy.

In addition, the need for specialized phones, at least a 2G phones which are costly and also the existing network infrastructure were cited as the drivers of social media usage in the public universities.

4.9 Benefits of using social networks in public universities.

Respondents were asked to indicate their benefits of using social media and below are their responses:

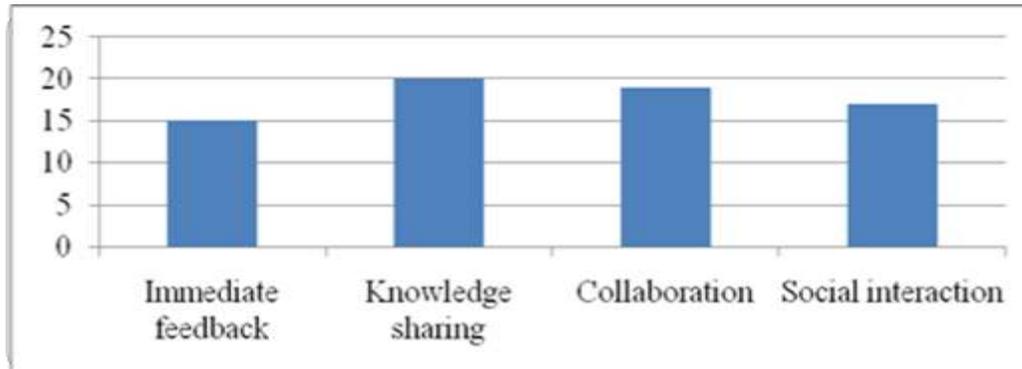


Figure 4.3 Benefits of using social networks in public universities.

From the findings, most of the respondents cited knowledge sharing, collaboration, social interaction and immediate feedback as the proven benefits of social media in public Universities. The findings from the interview tool, indicated that there were proven benefits of using social media such as collaborative learning; assisting each other when needed; exchanging resources and documents; classifying complex knowledge, sharing existing knowledge with others as well as giving and receiving reflections and feedback from others. This has been confirmed by this study.

4.10 Preferred social networking sites

The study further sought to find out which of the social networks was more preferred by the staff and students. Below were the findings:

Table 4.6 Preferred social networking sites

	Variables	Frequency	Percent
Valid	Linked in	8	12.9
	Twitter	12	19.4
	Google+	4	6.5
	Facebook	24	38.7
Missing	System	14	22.5
Total		62	100.0

From the findings, Facebook is the most commonly used site by respondents. Notably, many universities have created Facebook pages that they use to communicate to stakeholders. Once you like the page, you automatically become a recipient of information on that page. Linked in which is meant for professional or experts in particular fields in Academia is not yet common among students and staff alike and so is Google +.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the findings, and it provides the conclusions and recommendations of the study based on the objectives of the study. The main objective of this study was to determine how social media was being used in Kenyan Public Universities in the absence of a communication policy.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

This study found out that social media is not used to relay important information but for other use, notably, just to interact.

5.2.1 Factors that affect social media use in public universities

The study found out that, in the absence of a communication policy, usage of social media in public universities is just as in the outside world. While staff and students were found to use social media on daily basis, no important communication pertaining to the institutions was made. Most of the respondents agreed with the statement that social media has brought positive change in communication practice and is a key factor in its growth. They also said that the usage is due to the fact that social media complements traditional channels of communication. In addition, age was found to be a key factor in the usage of social media.

5.2.2 Challenges of use of social media

Challenges faced in the utilization of social media are that it is not used to relay important information but for other use, notably, just to interact. Majority of the respondents cited lack of policies as being the hindrance to the use of social media. Lack of accountability was also cited as a challenge. People are not willing to take responsibility for information on social media and have therefore no one to be accountable to. They also said that social media is prone to abuse by people and has no privacy.

This findings are consistent with Bucher, (2012) who said that along with the new possibilities also come challenges as professionals are engaging in real-time conversations with their audiences on Facebook twitter, blogs and the like, they have to learn to cope with an oversupply of possibly relevant information, with an invasion of work matters into the private domain and with changing work contents and structures. On education, the findings seem to agree with Wang, (2013) who found out that social media has posed enormous challenges and released its potential as a venue to communicate with stakeholders. The role of social media in building social capital, string of legal issues arises when social media has made its way into education. In light of the venue of free speech provided by social media, institutions social media policy makers need to be aware of inherent danger in the infringement on social media users' freedom of speech.

5.2.3 Benefits of use of social media

Knowledge sharing, collaboration, social interaction and immediate feedback as the proven benefits of social media in public Universities as per the findings of this study.

The findings of this study totally agrees with Johnson and Johnson (1996) as quoted by Aghae (2010) who postulates that there are many advantages of using social media in collaborative learning; assisting each other when needed; exchanging resources and documents; classifying complex knowledge, sharing existing knowledge with others as well as giving and receiving reflections and feedback from others.

5.2.4 Preferred social networking sites which are in use in public universities

The research established that users studied preferred to use the Facebook as the most friendly and interactive platform. The study confirmfinding that of all social media platforms the facebook attracts more users than other social networks.

5.3 Conclusion

The nature of communication has undergone a substantial change in the past 20years and the change is not over. Email has had a profound effect on the way people keep in touch and have therefore found switched to social media as the preferred medium. The ability to communicate effectively has a great impact on an organization's success. This is because it affects teamwork and collaboration. Effective communication enables positive interaction between two or more individuals working together to solve problems; create novel products and master required skills. Social media has emerged as a powerful tool in facilitating effective communication. Seemingly everybody is experimenting with some form of social media and therefore it's a reality that we can't run away from.

Public Learning institutions are key not only as impacting knowledge but as also in meeting communication needs of its stakeholders. As per the findings of this study, social media is yet to be appreciated by the management of these institutions. This is shown by the fact that majority of the staff and students use social media on daily basis

yet important communication is relayed via notice boards, institutional websites and face to face basis. It thus remains ineffective medium thanks to it's under utilization. Lack of a policy to incorporate it is partly to blame for this impasse.

Massey and Montoya-weis (2006) says that utility of social media is affected by three imperative factors: geographical dispersion of participant; availability of recipients and accessibility of media. These factors are mentioned by many learners in empirical data findings as important issues in the use of social media and participation in online learning.

When there geographical dispersion in online learning tendencies of using web-based techniques for their interactions. Hrastinaki (2007) as cited by Aghae (2010) shows that by using synchronous and asynchronous communication tools students seldom meet face to face in geographical dispersion.

5.4 Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are suggested to make social media more appreciated and consequently utilized by public institution of Higher learning. In order to benefit from social media, students ought to turn to more professional social networks. Many of the respondents said that they used Facebook and twitter which are for communication and fun. To connect with professionals in academia, sites like LinkedIn help develop relationships with these professionals.

Secondly, this study recommends communication policy be defined. This will dictate what is to be communicated and will thus prevent cases of abuse and privacy infringement from arising.

5.5 Suggestion for further studies

Further research is necessary in organizations that have clear policies to study how social media has made communication more effective.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Interview guide questions

The following would act as guide questions for the interview to ensure that aims of the research are achieved:

1. What channels do you use to communicate to your students?
2. Do you know what social media is?
3. Do you social media in the course of your duty?
4. In case you use social media what challenges do you face when using social media?
5. In your opinion do you think social media can bridge communication gap between you and the students?
6. What in your opinion do you think is the future of social media as alternative channels of communication?

APPENDIX1I

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STAFF

SECTION A –GENERAL INFORMATION

Name of department:-.....

Designation

(Academic/Administrative).....

Age

.....

SECTION B: COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

1) What channels do you use to communicate to students?

(You can tick more than one channel)

Face to face communication

Newsletter

Posters

Websites

Others (specify)

2) What channels do you use to communicate amongst colleagues in the department?

(You can tick more than one channel)

Face to face communication

Newsletter

Posters

Websites

Email

Social Media

Mobile phones

Social Media

Others (specify).....

3) How effective are the channels that you use?

Very effective

Effective

Somewhat effective

Ineffective

4) How do you rate the level of communication in your department?

Excellent

Very good

Good

Fair

Poor

If answer to question 3 is poor, what can be done to improve?

Briefly

explain.....
.....
.....
.....

SECTION C: FACTORS AFFECTING THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

1) What channels do you use in your department to communicate?
(You can tick more than one channel)

Memoranda

Social media

Notice board

If you use social media, how often do you use social media in your line of duty?

1. Daily

2. Once a week

3. Twice a week

4. Monthly

2) Which is your preferred social networking site?

Face book	
flicker	
Linked in	
Twitter	
Google +	
Flip to	
Other please specify	

2) Using the scale below, indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with the statement below regarding social networking sites 1= strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=uncertain 4=agree 5=strongly agree

Question	1	2	3	4	5
Have brought positive change in communication practice					
Are a more trusted source than transitional mainstream media					

Offer organizations a low cost way to develop relationships					
With members of various strategic problems					
Have no future in communication, they are just fids					
Complement traditional channels of communication					

3) What are the disadvantages of using social networking site in your department?

- a) Lack of privacy
- Cyber security
- b) Illegal postings
- c) All the above

Other

reasons(specify).....

4) How have social networking site benefited your organization?

- a) Instant feedback
- b) Cheaper
- c) Personalized Messages

.....

APPENDIX 1II

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

SECTION A GENERAL INFORMATION

Sex

Age

Year of study

Department/course

SECTION B: COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

(Tick more than one)

1) How do you communicate with the university staff?

Letters	
Mobile phones	
Blogs	
Others (specify	

2) What channels do you use to communicate to fellow students?

Emails	
Letters	
Social media	
Mobile phones	
Others (specify	

How do you rate the level of communication by university staff?

Very effective	
Effective	
Less effective	
Poor	

3) If an answer to the above question is poor, what can be done to improve? Please explain briefly

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

SECTION C: SOCIAL MEDIA

1) Do you know what social media is?

Yes

No

If yes, enumerate social networking sites that you know.

.....
.....
Does the university or department use social media to communicate to you?

Yes

No

If yes, which of the following social networking site do they use?

Face book	
flicker	
Linked in	
Twitter	
Google +	
Flip to	
Prodigits	

2) Which is your preferred social networking site?

Face book	
flicker	
Linked in	

Twitter	
Google +	
Flip to	
Prodigits	

3) Why is the above you preferred social networking site?

(Givereasons)

.....

.....

.....

In your view

4) What are the disadvantages of using social media communication? Tick where appropriate

a) No privacy

b) Illegal postings

c) Cyber related crimes

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

5) How have social networking sites benefited you? Tick appropriately

a) Immediate feedback

b) Personalized messages

c) Knowledge sharing

Other reasons please
specify.....
.....
.....

6) For what reason do you use social networking sites (please explain)

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

SECTION D: CHALLENGES

1) Do you face any challenges when using social media?

Yes

No

If yes what are these challenges? (Briefly explain)

.....
.....

.....If your own view, what should be done to improve the use of social media? Please explain

.....
.....

.....What is your level of ICT Literacy (Tick where appropriate)

Very literate	
Literate	
Average	
illiterate	

- 2) Using the scale below, indicate the extent of your agreement disagreement with the statement below regarding social networking sites 1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=uncertain 4=agree 5=strongly agree

question	1	2	3	4	5
Have brought positive change in communication practice					
Are a more trusted source than transitional mainstream media					
Offer organizations a low cost way to develop relationships					
With members of various strategic problems					
Have no future in communication, they are just fids					
Complement traditional channels of communication					