BUSINESS BENEFITS OF SOCIAL NETWORKING IN GAINING LEVERAGE AMONG MEDIA HOUSES IN KENYA

By

Martin Nyaga

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been submitted for examination to any other university or college for the award of degree, diploma or certificate.

Signature.........................   Date..15|11|2010.

Name: Martin Nyaga

Reg: D61/8809/2006

Signature.........................   Date..15|11|2010

Supervisor: Peterson O. Magutu

ABSTRACT

Rapid changes in Information Technology and increase in use and adoption of Internet has led to a shift in how organizations conduct business. The use of internet has opened up many business opportunities that can enable businesses gain a competitive edge in the business environment they operate in.

The study aim was to analyze the business benefits of social networking in gaining leverage among media stations in Kenya. The objectives of the study were to determine how businesses/organizations harness the benefits made available by the existence of social networking websites and to establish business acceptable ways of mitigating risks associated with using social networking websites at a workplace

The study was conducted on all the media station that offers television services. It includes media station such as KBC, NTV, KTN, Citizen TV, K24 among others. A total of 12 questionnaires were administered. Each media station was given one to fill.

Data analysis was carried out by coding the questions and then feeding them into SPSS (Statistical package of social sciences). Data interpretation was done using frequency summary tables. Content analysis methodology was used to analyze qualitative data and interpretation involved deriving some understanding from the output relative to the subject matter.

Some of the findings showed that majority of the media stations have been in existence for over 5 years and have facebook, twitter and YouTube profiles. The findings also showed that most of the stations carryout advertisements on their social network profiles. Majority of the respondents said that they are logged into social networks most of the day and this has enabled achieve a better work life balance. Most respondents said that they had the sole discretion of deciding what to post onto the social networks when giving comments and opinions

The recommendation that came from this study were Since television stations admit that using social networking sites helps achieve better work-life balance they should embrace social networking as part of their business and operation strategy and therefore utilize social networking for internal communication. Social networking features should also be utilized fully so as to maximize returns. It's also important that policy makers come up with proper regulatory framework to mitigate risks associated with the use of social networks, especially leakage of company information

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The use of Information technology in all aspect of business has become a norm. When properly implemented, Information Technology has enabled businesses gain competitive advantage, cut costs, improved efficiency and eased communication by eliminating major barriers that were earlier caused by distance, different time-zone, cultural differences and also prohibitive costs. Networks that were earlier formed around relationship, goal, and projects have evolved and have incorporated information technology to make them more effective. Through the use of computer networks and internet, people in different regions are able to interact and exchange idea (IBM, 2007).

The use of internet to share information and carry out business activities is fast growing. Internet traffic has sharply increased and this has been attributed to the increase in network activity on social networking sites.

Membership to social networks has sharply increased. Most sites boast of millions of registered and active users who connect on daily basis. The sites offer a suitable ground for gaining competitive advantage if properly tapped and used efficiently since it's possible to reach a large audience fast and at minimal cost.

1.1.1 SOCIAL NETWORKING

A social network is an online platform enables the convergence of various technologies that allow people who share interests and/or activities to share information, communicate and form other networks. Through the growth, adoption and use of Information Technology and Internet, membership to social networks is growing at a fast rate. Social networking sites include Facebook, which focuses on friends; YouTube, which allows uploading of videos, Twitter and LinkedIn that enable professional to connect and exchange expertise and knowledge among other sites. Facebook alone has been identified as having 500 million users in 2009 (Wauter 2009). As

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Social Networks grow, businesses are realizing that this is a segment which can be tapped to gain competitive advantage.

Gartner Research shows a large increase in investment in social networking by businesses (Metz, 2008). Businesses are starting to rethink their strategies in adoption and use of social networks. Used effectively, social networking sites can enable marketing professionals, salespeople, and customer service agents to develop meaningful relationships with customers in new ways. The core business processes and customer management initiatives should be identified and the use of social networking should further enhance and extend the initiatives.

By utilizing electronic media and social network tools the ways of conducting businesses are rapidly changing and evolving. New business opportunities are emerging due to elimination of geographical barriers and the clientele being reached varies in age, culture and financial capability (Fu *et al.*, 2007).

1.1.2 LEVERAGING IN BUSINESS

The social networking provides leverage for small businesses because it has massively reduced the cost of marketing versus the traditional promotional mix. More specifically, it has created mechanisms whereby individuals can make use of other people's connections to raise their own business profile in a systematic way through blogging and online networking. Social networks have also eased advertisement for products since its now possible for social network users to set preferences hence data captured can be used to determine the advertisements to rely to a particular user.

Social Networks, RSS feeds, Blogs facilitate collaborative dialogue. The networked conversations can greatly ease collection of customer feedback, information sharing between business and its customers and would be customers, allowed for faster problem solving due to instant feedback and also create better relationships that can lead to better business opportunities (Fraser and Dutta, 2008).

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The importance of embracing social networking as an effective business leverage tool is summarized by Williamson (2009), who argues that companies need to think about setting up a web page comprising of profiles of team members, calendar, or a discussion forum.

1.1.3   MEDIA HOUSES IN KENYA

A media house refers to a company that is in the business of print media (such as newspapers or magazines) or electronic media (such as radio station or TV station) or both. The face of Kenya broadcasting has changed tremendously during the last 15 years which is currently a diverse and vibrant growing industry. There are more than 90 FM stations, 12 TV stations and unconfirmed number of print newspapers and magazines in Kenya. They mainly use English as the primary language, with some media houses using Swahili. (CCK, 2009).

KBC, NTV, KTN, Citizen TV, K24 are the biggest TV stations in Kenya in terms of coverage and viewers. Recently entertainment TV ventured in the Kenyan airspace with the inclusion of Kiss TV, a 24 hour Music TV Station and Classic TV which airs African content in terms of movies, programs and music. The media in Kenya is regulated by a statutory body called the Media Council of Kenya. (CCK, 2009).

Up until 1990, the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation held a monopoly on the television airwaves. Today there are several more stations in Kenya. Various TV Channels have been entered into the Kenyan Market and have created a niche for themselves more so in the area of entertainment. Most channels in Kenya broadcast both local shows as well as international favorites (Ogola, 2008).

NTV has embraced the Internet and started to air its programs and other video content on YouTube in 2007. Most stations also have Facebook profiles that enable viewers to give feedback on the programming and also comment on news items.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite the fast growth of social networks, businesses are slow in adopting this form of doing business and even upon adoption it's still difficult to realize the real business benefits.

Previous studies have been largely confined to the issue of network through ICT adoption for performance improvement particularly the identification of the factors that support or inhibit successful adoption (Parker and Castleman, 2007). (Gray, 2009) draws upon a national survey of 1,168 SMEs in Britain, which clearly shows the more dynamic nature of cluster networks compared with supply-chains and business associations. A total 85 percent of the survey respondents belonged to a business network and they all derived significant benefits from their networks. The firms studied also placed a high value on social contact and cooperative business behaviour, particularly with regard to recruitment and technology advice. A report by Web Trends (2007) found that only 75 percent of UK corporations blogged on a regular basis,. In the US the situation was similar, with blogging only carried out by 6 percent of the *Fortune* 500 companies. Studies have also been carried out to establish the levels on internet diffusion in Kenya (Muganda, 2008). The study shows there is a potential for further internet diffusion in Kenya

Nonetheless, none of the above mentioned studies have dealt with social networking and how businesses use them to gain leverage. This study will therefore fill the existing void by answering the question: how do businesses/organizations harness the benefits made available by the existence of social networking without incurring considerable risk to productivity of staff?

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In an attempt to achieve the above objectives the researcher asks the following questions:-

  i.   How do businesses/organizations harness the benefits made available by the existence of social networking websites

ii. What are the business acceptable ways of mitigating risks associated with using social networking websites at a workplace

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

i. To determine how businesses/organizations harness the benefits made available by the existence of social networking websites

ii. To establish business acceptable ways of mitigating risks associated with using social networking websites at a workplace

1.5 IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

A study of this nature which cuts across major business areas may be important to the following groups:

All existing firms linked to the social networking websites in Kenya as it may assist them to put in place effective networking instruments for brand awareness as well as to enable players to develop and sustain competitive advantage in a changing environment.

Government agencies and policy makers may use the results to formulate positive National Policies based on a framework that is relevant and sensitive to the forces influencing business performance. Other government agencies whose interest lies on improved services delivery for economic development and creating investor confidence. The study will also help the government in formulating a policy on the regulatory process in the economy in the areas that necessitate brand protection, in order to ensure orderly economic growth and development.

The study will help the researcher to gain problem solving skills as well as the skills of academic report writing. The researcher will also benefit through the communication and writing skills that will be gained by the time the research project is completed. In the academic field, future researchers can use the study as a reference point if one is researching on related topics. The

findings of the study will be of use to trainers in marketing in that it will assist them in knowing the areas which should be given concentration when training managers on social networking.

1.6   SCOPE OF STUDY

This study will be limited on the value of social networking in gaining leverage among the television stations in Kenya. The scope will entail the TV viewers' ideas and opinion on the value they give to the social networks particularly when linking up with television stations in Kenya.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses past studies on social networking. In particular, the chapter discusses the evolution of social networks, role of social networks in businesses as well as benefits harnessed by a business by application of social networks.

2.2   EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

Social Networks can be traced to late 1980's and early 1990's. However, the impact was felt in mid 1990's when internet started to be better developed and computers became affordable and accessible to many people. The networks that existed, although not fully developed, enabled friends to interact. From the year 2001, interest in and growth of social network has been huge. Facebook alone topped 500 million users in 2009 (Wauter 2009) while twitter had 145 million users. Through the convergence of different technologies, social networks enable individuals to easily communicate, share information, and form new communities online. But the big question today is not what social networking is, but rather what it means for businesses and how businesses can be able to tap to realize the benefits offered by the convergence of these technologies. In business the popularity of social networking sites cannot pass unnoticed hence firms can no longer solely rely on traditional mediums (print, radio, TV, etc.) to enforce public perception of their product. Conversely, these new communication channels provide organizations with a way to discover and maintain a continuous connection with it customers and allow for instant and unfiltered feedback. By harnessing this social networking information, organizations can use it to help identify what consumer needs are, drive participation in product development, and improve brand sentiment (Wauter 2009).

Gartner Research shows a large increase in investment in social networking by businesses (Metz, 2008). Businesses are trying to capitalize on the fast growth of social networks and are searching

for specific strategies and tactics to derive value from it. In fact, Used effectively, social networking sites can enable marketing professionals, salespeople, and customer service agents to develop meaningful relationships with customers in new ways. The driving force in the adoption of this strategies has to be driven by the business's core business and the business processes. The business environment is fast changing and businesses that are able to quickly discover what its consumer's needs are, have a competitive advantage over either competitors.

The recent recession has also forced many organizations to shift their advertising budgets from the conventional media to Internet. Online advertisements targeting masses are now common and systems to analyze social networking user behavior on the web are in place to enable pass personalized and relevant advertisement to them. Research by Forrester Jennings (2007) found that audiences and attention is shifting to social networks as 52 per cent of Europeans are regularly online at home. Around 36 per cent of European internet users watch less TV, 28 per cent have reduced their newspaper and magazine reading and 17 per cent have decreased listening to the radio since going online. There is a lot of evidence that social networks are now becoming the mainstream. New users and regular visitors are on an increase. Time spent on social network sites has also been on an increase (Nielson Company, 2009).

Gillin (2007) observed that products that get positive feedback and review on the internet are more likely to be bought than those in the conventional media Online media is gaining trust among many online users and positive comments are very vital to marketing In one study, 25 per cent of internet users trusted reviews on a recognized review web site and 15 per cent trusted reviews written by customers or private individuals on a blog.

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2.3   ROLE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS IN BUSINESSES

Networking takes place when people interact or engage in informal communication to share information. Research in a number of fields has demonstrated that networks operate on many levels, from families up to the level of nations, and that they play a critical role in determining the way problems are solved, organizations are run, and the degree to which individuals succeed in achieving their goals. Dittrich *et al.* (2007) noted the role of networks in enhancing organisational capabilities.

Nielsen Company (2009) noted that there has been an increased activity on social networking sites and they accounted for one in every eleven minutes spent online. When properly tapped the businesses are able to pass across relevant marketing information that is vital in creating brand awareness and improving and maintaining customers networks.

The use of online social media has been at the expense of traditional media, and a study by Ofcom on the media habits of UK 15-24 year olds shows that since using such media for the first time, the amount of time they spent reading national newspapers declined by 27 per cent; reading local newspapers by 22 per cent; reading magazines by 21 per cent; listening to radio by 15 per cent and watching TV by 13 per cent (Ofcom, 2006). Social networks are very hardy in tapping the users drifting from the conventional media.

Boyd and Ellison (2007) notes that social networking sites are rapidly changing and It has been reported that many once widely used web sites such as Friendster and Friends Reunited have gone into decline, to be replaced by newer sites such as Facebook and Twitter.

Social networking sites have tools that are able to capture demographic and preference information of their users. This information is vital in generation of personalized information by businesses. However studies have noted that users are increasingly becoming aware and concern about their privacy and may be resentful of corporate intrusion (Croft, 2008; Hitwise, 2008).

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2.4 VALUE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS FOR BUSINESS LEVERAGE

The benefits that social networking can have for companies is not a recent development (Pickering and King, 1995). However, with the recent popularity of Facebook, My Space and in particular Twitter, people are beginning to see the strategic benefits that it can offer companies (Boyd and Ellison, 2007; Nardi *et al.*, 2002). One of the major benefits is the ease with which it is possible to communicate, collaborate and share information.

2.4.1 SOCIAL NETWORKING FOR MARKETING

Marketing is one important business function that has benefitted immensely form the rapid growth and widespread usage of social networks. Social networks enhance launching online marketing programs that engage social customers in their preferred environment Organizations are able to launch products that target specific groups. This makes marketing more appealing to customers at a personal level in a way that was difficult through traditional channels. The advertisements also target the masses and they are passed at a lower cost. Barriers that were previously encountered when using conventional media have been greatly eliminated. Barriers that were previously experienced in launching products among varied culture have been reduced by using preferences set on social networking user profiles hence making it possible to offer personalized advertisements and messages and only products of interest.

Messages posted in social networks are able to spread very fast. Many companies are using this form of online marketing to advertise. A message spreads quickly from one person to a handful of friends, who each in turn inform their friends (Ferguson, 2008). As the network of friends continues to grow the information spreads wider. In one case, an online marketing firm distributed advance excerpts of a new book to online forum readers. When the forum readers read the pre-released chapters they quickly spread the excitement and anticipation for the book, which ended up being a bestseller (Cardwell, 2002).

Social networking provides a forum where customers are able to give instant, direct and unfiltered feedback on products and other marketing activities. The online conversations can then be translated into actionable insights. To do so, organizations will need ways to monitor, understand, and participate effectively in those conversations and leverage them in conjunction with existing marketing programs and processes. Social Networking sites offer a rich source of customer opinions and attitudes, the challenge is to capture this information in a useful form and in a way that benefits the business.

Social networks provide an excellent opportunity for online marketing initiatives due to their informal nature. Users are able to share the content of the online marketing freely amongst them and any positive review increases the chances of the product being used or bought. Negative criticism can also be quickly countered by the organization thereby reducing its spread.

This form of marketing does not replace traditional forms of marketing. Instead, it provides an additional channel that complements other marketing efforts. The ease of using social networks for marketing and the instant feedback helps enhance the effectiveness of all channels used for marketing.

2.4.2 DECISION MAKING

Information is key in any decision making. The instant feedback and the unfiltered feedback is very vital to business. Proper monitoring, collection and analysis of information is important to any business. Social network sites offer an informal setting where customers are able to give a review and also an opinion on the organization activities. The results of the analysed information are then be used to formulate the next action in regard to marketing initiatives.

Research by Harrison-Walker, (2001) Susskind, (2002) found that customer preference is guided by information from friends and personal contacts rather than company's formal production mix. Social networks have greatly contributed to peer group influence since they are formed amongst friends and close contacts (Wauter 2009). This influences the buyer's purchasing decision and

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behavior. Users compare their experiences and this affects the buying decisions of their friends in the group. Positive reviews have been shown to have a positive impact on sales. This has been attributed to the close ties that exist between friends hence being more trusted than conventional media As the use of social networks grows rapidly organization need to leverage on "free" positive promotion recommendation, and to limit the damage caused by negative feedback. This requires that constant communication is maintained and organizations strive to maintain good relations with its conventional and online customers.

Social networks are increasingly being used as referral sites (Hitwise, 2008). Users refer their friends to other groups and information they deem useful. The information referenced may influence the friend opinion and the decision made in regard to certain aspects within the environment. However the varying feedback may lead to a state of confusion especially when establishing the quality, accuracy and correctness of the information (Keegan, 2007; Wilson, 2007). For social network web sites, some commentators have noted the confusion in users' minds when commercially provided material is mixed with anonymously submitted material,

2.4.3 ENHANCED WORK-BASED COMMUNICATION

Social networking has been perceived with both fear and reverence (Ellison *et al.*, 2007; Richardson and Hessey, 2009). In spite of this, the growth of social networks is unrivalled. The diversity offered by the social networks enable communities to be developed across varying interest. Social networking sites include Facebook, which focuses on friends; YouTube, which allows uploading of videos, Twitter and LinkedIn that enable professional to connect and exchange expertise and knowledge among other sites. The sites focus on building online social networks for communities of people who share interests and activities, or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others. These sites provide a number of ways for users to interact and communicate with each other including instant messaging, chat rooms, e-mail, file sharing, blogging and discussion groups (Bell *et al.*, 2008).

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Contacts that are formed, are vital in work and personal lives. Nardi *et al.* (2002) argue that once contacts are in a network, they often require constant care. Mutual relationships are built overtime and this is vital especially in work setting whereby colleagues get to relate with each other easily in an informal setting. The relationships are important since they enable communication even after employee changes jobs.

social networks play an increasingly important role in the workplace, especially with the increasing need for professional and expertise knowledge when undertaking projects. When social networking entered the public domain, many recognised it as an opportunity to further enhance work-based communication practices (Nardi *et al.*, 2002). Earlier studies also support the view that enhancing communication and networking practices through technology can increase productivity. Ancona and Caldwell (1988) argue that outsiders are able to provide valuable information and expertise at minimal cost especially when communication is done via social networking sites. Earlier professional networks were labour intensive and required much effort to create and maintain (Nardi *et al.*, 2002). Lange *et al.* (2008) argue that social networks are efficient means of initiating and maintaining many contacts simultaneously and with little effort.

2.4.4   CREATION OF COLLABORATIVE NETWORKS

Social networks have converged various web technologies so as to make interaction and sharing of information easier. Granovetter (1973) argued that where weak ties exist there is an opportunity of connecting with new individuals. Social networking tools such as Wiki's, Chat room, wall and groups have enabled online collaborative discussion among groups. Groups that have been formed around a common shared interest are able to exchange information freely and in a cost effective way. Instant feedback or comments are also possible greatly reducing delays that were previously experienced when using conventional ways of communicating. Social networking enables open communication and information sharing. Employees are able to collaborate amongst themselves and also between the organization and its customers. Mutual

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networks tend to last long therefore social networks create a means of creating long term trusted online relationship between businesses and customers.

A study carried out by Pitt and Bennett (2008) found that social networks created a collaborative processed that improved employee productivity and eased interaction within the work environment.

2.4.5 SOCIAL NETWORKING FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

Social networks are being used by customers to find, receive, and communicate information about the products and services they use. This paradigm shift has posed new opportunities and threats in managing customers. With the increased use of social networks by customers, businesses have had to rethink of how best to interact with the users and offer them proper and timely feedback while still ensuring the business rules and processes are maintained. Studies show that adoption of social networks and creation and maintenance of online social profiles and company sponsored groups is on a steady increase. Organizations are now turning to social networks to give them a forum to easily communicate with its customers.

Users are getting online support and instant feedback on queries they post. Businesses have deployed employees to constantly monitor and participate in online collaborative dialogue. These employees pass the organization's message and attend to queries. Delay in sorting out customer's queries due to geographical barriers has been greatly eliminated. Language and cultural barriers have also been eliminated through use of social network tools that translate information to specific language.

Through the eased collaborative processes introduced by social networks, businesses are able to collect direct and unfiltered information from users. Analysis and taking actionable measures enable the business better respond to customers' needs and also provide it with vital information that is used in making strategic decision that affect a customer.

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2.5 SUMMARY

The importance of embracing social networking as an effective business tool can be depicted by the benefits and savings that businesses experience. Mutual relationship established through continuous use of social networks play an important role in offering market for businesses.

Messages relied to such networks can be easily spread across networks and friends interact and share information. In order for organizations to experience business value of social networking tools, proper adoption and use of the social networks has to be incorporated in the organisation's culture. Effective utilization of the Information technology resource within the organization need to be considered and the business processes have to be considered. This will lead to increased brand reputation, a more open, transparent culture and a more effective and efficient way of working.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This research adopted a descriptive survey design. Descriptive research portrays an accurate profile of persons, events, or situations, Robson (2002). Surveys allow the collection of large amount of data from a sizable population in a highly economical way. It allows one to collect quantitative data which can be analyzed quantitatively using descriptive and inferential statistics, Saunders et al. (2007). Therefore, the descriptive survey was deemed the best strategy to fulfill the objectives of this study.

3.2 POPULATION

The target population for this study was all of the 12 media houses listed by the Communication Commission of Kenya as at December 2009. These are organizations that are involved in providing media services (Television) in Kenya. The entire population was chosen because only one questionnaire would be given to each media house, therefore a total of 12 questionnaires were filled. The Media sector was selected largely because of its viewership that cuts across several age-groups, cultural background and has a large audience.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected from the managers of the media houses. Primary data was collected using structured questionnaires. A sample of the questionnaire is attached in Appendix II. This method usually has higher chances of having low response rates. To counter this, several visits and reminders were made to the media house premises to enhance the response rate.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data was checked for errors and omissions, accuracy, uniformity and completeness and then tabulated before analysis is carried out, Cooper and Emory (1995). Statistical software was used for analysis. Use of software is invariably for this study. The analysis was done in terms of descriptive statistics such as mean scores and standard deviations. Other statistics such as the inferential statistics were also used to interpret the data. The results were presented using tables, graphs and charts for ease of understanding. This allowed for the interpretation of the findings generated and a recommendation from the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the data analysis, findings, interpretation and presentation. The objective of the study was to investigate value of social networking in gaining leverage among television stations in Kenya. The researcher targeted top and middle level management of the media houses in Kenya. The study realized a response rate of 100%.

The chapter is organized into three sections where the first section is presentation of the demographic outlook of the respondents while the second one discusses the benefits of social networking websites. The last section presents the mitigating factors on risks associated with access of social networking websites at workplace.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Demographic information was based on the position held by the respondents in their respective organizations and the period their organization had been in existence. In addition, the period in which the respondent has worked with the organization as well as the audience reach for their organizations was also established.

Table 4.1: Position Held in Organization

Position Held in Organization		
	Frequency	Percent
Top management	1	8.3
Middle level management	11	91.7
Total	**12**	**100.0**

Table 4.1 illustrates the position held by the respondents in their respective organizations. From the findings, majority (91.7%) are in the middle level management while 8.3% are in the top level management. This indicates that majority of respondents were drawn from middle level management. Designation of the respondents was important to determine capability, level of experience as well as the competence of the respondents in handling the research questions

Figure 4.1: Period the organization has been in existence

Figure 4.1 illustrates period the organisation has been in existence where 41.7% of the organisation were less than five years in existence while 16.7%, 16.7%, 16.7%, were five to nine years, ten to fourteen years and twenty to twenty four years old respectively. Only 8.3% are 25 years and above old. This is an indication that majority of media stations have been in existence for atleast 5 years.

Figure 4.2: Period the respondent has worked with the organization

Period the respondent has worked with the organization

6 -8 years 17%

3 - 5 years 33%
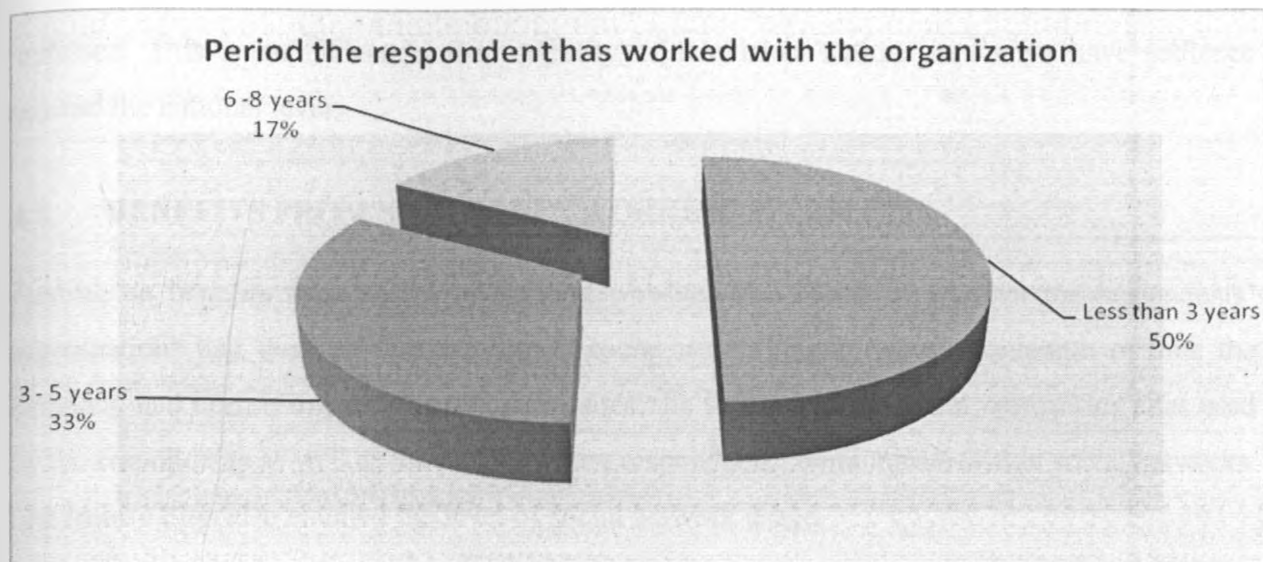
Less than 3 years 50%

Figure 4.2 illustrates the period the respondents has worked with their respective organisation. From the 50% of all respondents had worked with their organisation for less than 3 years while 33% were in thir respectice organizations for three to five years. Others (17%) had worked with their organizations for six to eight years. This indicates that half of the respondents had been working with their respective organizations for at most five years.

Table 4.2: Respondents' Audience Reach

Audience reach		
	Frequency	**Percent**
International	6	50.0
Regional	1	8.3
National	5	41.7
Total	**12**	**100.0**

Table 4.2 shows the audiences reach for the respondents' organizations where 50% were found to be international while 41.5% had only national audience. Others (8.3%) had regional audience. This is an indication that majority of television stations in Kenya have audience beyond the national level.

4.3 BENEFITS FROM SOCIAL NETWORKING WEBSITES

Finding on benefits from social networking websites was based on whether the respondents' organizations had their profiles on certain social networking services; the length of time the company had been using social networking sites; the features of the social networking sites used by the respondents as well as the people whom respondents communicate within social networks. The information also entailed the level of social network usage.

Table 4.3: Company has its profile on certain social networking services

Company have its profile on certain social networking services		
	Frequency	Percent
Facebook	12	100.0
Twitter	7	58.3
YouTube	7	58.3
LinkedIn	1	8.3

Table 4.3 illustrates the social network website the respondents' organization has a profile. Findings indicate that, 100% media houses had their profile on facebook 58.3% of the respondents were in twitter, 58.3% were in YouTube while 8.3% had their profiles Linkedin. This indicates that Facebook prevails over all other social network sites as far as television stations are concerned. By revealing that Facebook alone topped 500 million users in 2009 while twitter had 145 million users, Wauter (2009) confirms that facebook and twitter carries the largest share of social networking websites.

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Figure 4.3: Length of time the company has been using social networking sites
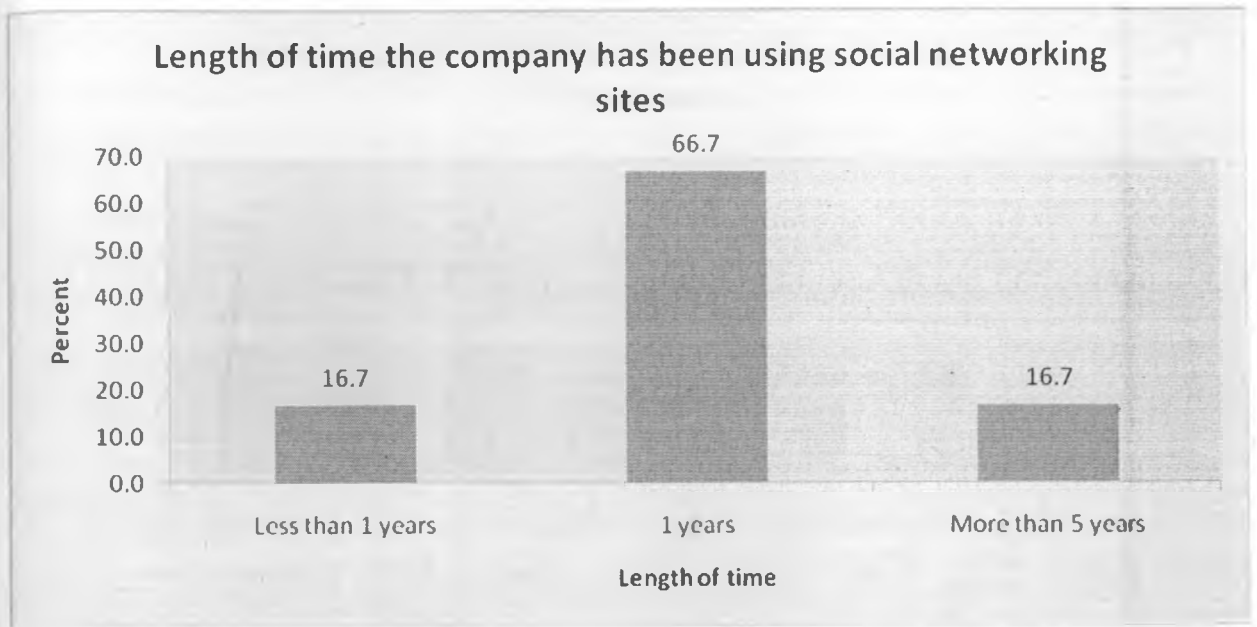
Figure 4.3 illustrates the length of time the company has been using social networking sites where majority (66.7%) have been using them for one year, 16.7 percent for more than five years while 16.7% have been using social networking sites for less than one year. This indicates that most companies have been using networking sites for at least one year implying that the social networking sites have gained their popullality within the previous one year.

Figure 4.4: Features of the Social Networking Sites Used by the Respondents
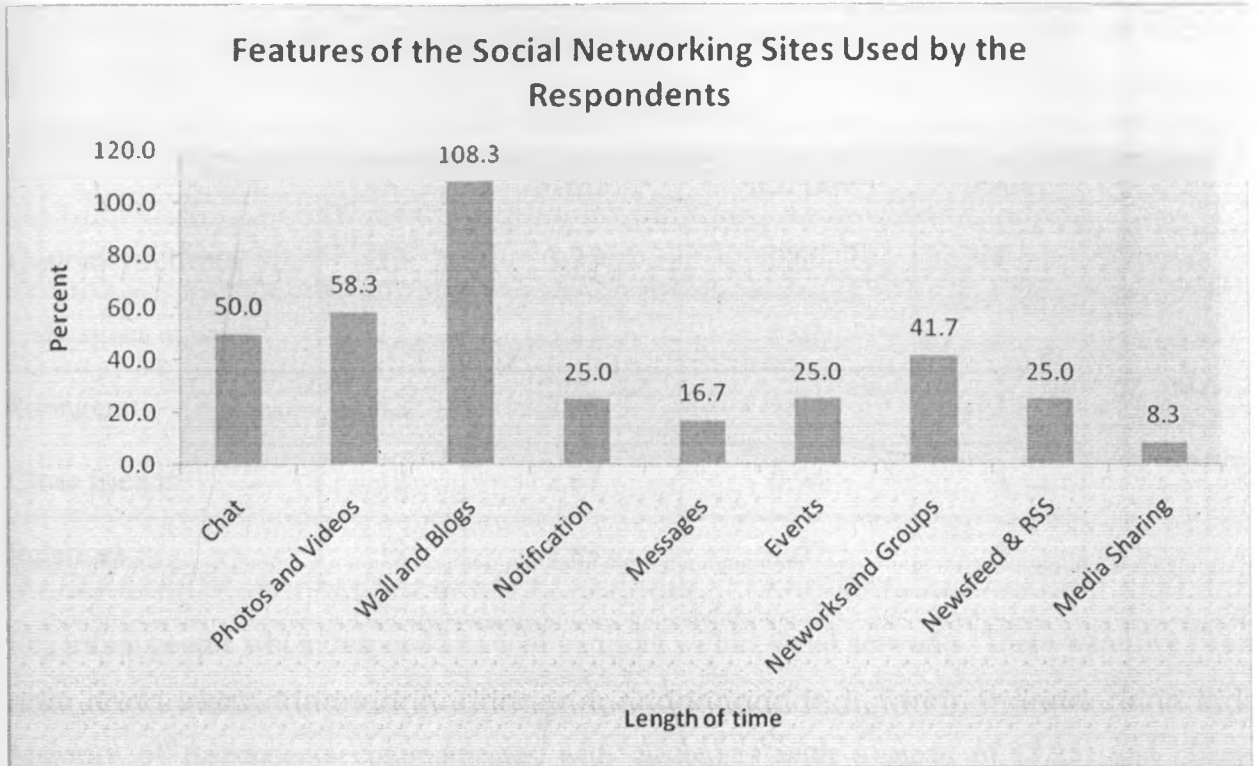
Figure 4.4 illustrates feature of the Social Networking Sites Used by the Respondents where majority all respondents (100%) use wall and blogs, 58.3% uses photos and videos networking sites, while 50% uses chat networking sites 41.7% uses networks and groups networking sites. This indicates that most respondent use a variety of networking sites with a majority using wall and blogs. Gillin (2007) observed that products that get positive feedback and review on the internet are more likely to be bought than those in the conventional media. Online media is gaining trust among many online users and positive comments are very vital to marketing.

Table 4.4: People whom respondents communicate within social networks

People communicate within social networks				
	Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Rank
Customers/clients	12	3.75	0.60	1
Colleagues at work	12	3.25	1.01	2
Strangers	12	3.08	1.04	3
Close friends	12	2.67	0.94	4
Relatives	12	1.83	1.07	5

Regarding people whom respondents communicate within social networks. There were five likert scale levels where Always is 5, Often is 4, Occasionally is 3, Rarely is 2 and Never is 1. Majority of respondents communicates with customers with a mean of (3.25) and clients followed by colleagues at work with a mean of 3.25 while those who communicate with strangers were third with a mean of 3.08. Those who communicate with close friends and relatives had a mean of 2.67, and 1.83 respectively. This indicates that most respondents communicate with customers or clients as the networking sites are solely based on the media houses listeners. According to Nielsen Company (2009), there has been an increased activity on social networking sites and they accounted for one in every eleven minutes spent online. When properly tapped the businesses are able to pass across relevant marketing information that is vital in creating brand awareness and improving and maintaining customers networks.

Table 4.5: Level of social network usage

Level of social network usage	N	Frequency			Percent		
		True	False	I don't know	True	False	I don't know
The company has a Facebook or Twitter or Youtube profile	12	12	-	-	100.0	-	-
Social Networking is part of our business and operation strategy	12	1	6	5	8.3	50.0	41.7
We utilize social networking as a tool to manage and build our brand	12	10	-	2	83.3	-	16.7
We utilize social networking for internal communication	12	1	11	-	8.3	91.7	-
We post News, corporate videos on social networks	12	10	2	-	83.3	16.7	-
We have company - sponsored social networking groups	12	8	2	2	66.7	16.7	16.7
Advertisements are placed on our social network profiles	12	9	2	1	75.0	16.7	8.3
Viewers are able to post feedback, comments on our social network page, profile, wall	12	12	-	-	100.0	-	-

Table 4.5 illustrates level of social network usage by respondents where the responses were True or false. All respondents admitted that, their respective companies have either Facebook or

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Twitter or even YouTube profile, All respondents said it was true that viewers are able to post feedback, comment on the social network page, profile, and wall while 83.3%, 83.3% said it was true that respondents utilize social networking as a tool to manage, build the brand and that they post news, corporate videos on social networks respectively. This indicates that most companies use social networking sites to post their profile, communicate with viewers through the wall as well as they use it to manage, build a brand image and post news on the site.

4.4 MITIGATING RISKS IN ACCESSING SOCIAL NETWORKING WEBSITES AT A WORKPLACE

Mitigating risks in accessing social networking websites at a workplace was based on how often the respondent log on to social networking media(s), whether the respondents access them during working hours as well as whether respondent's company's official policy when it comes to employee use of social networking.

Figure 4.5: How often the respondent log on to social networking media(s)
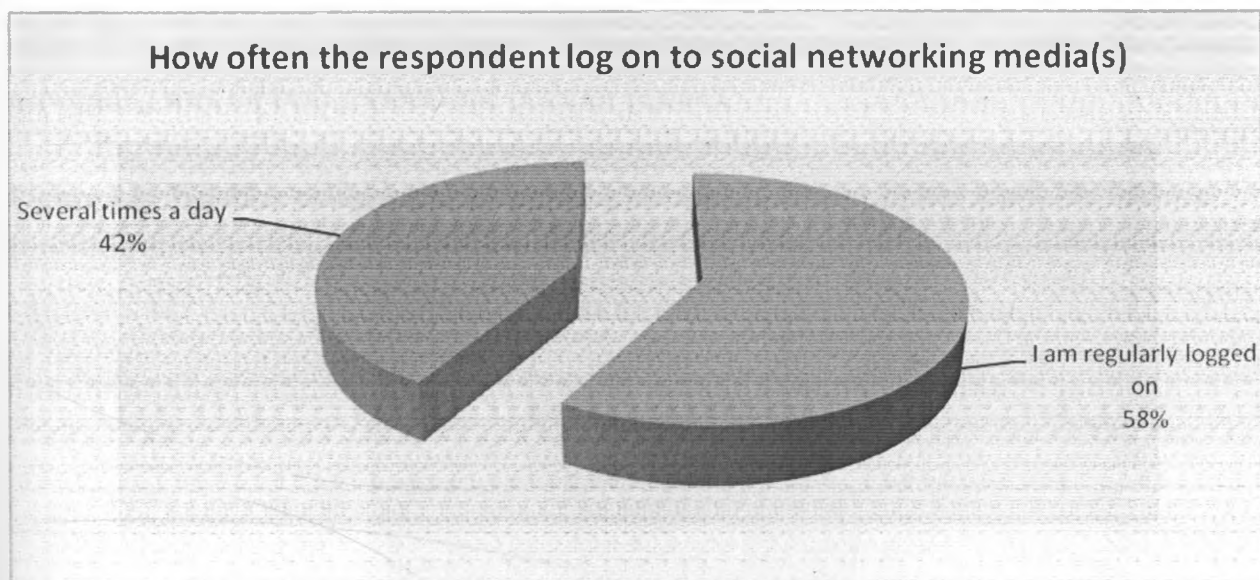
Figure 4.5 illustrates how often the respondents log on to social networking media(s) where majority (58%) of the respondents were regularly logged on social networking site while 42%

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were logged on networking sites several times a day. this indicated that most respondents were logged on regularly to the social networking sites.

Table 4.6: Whether the respondents access them during working hours

Whether the respondents access them during working hours		
	Frequency	**Percent**
Yes, for business reasons only	1	8.3
Yes, for both personal and business reasons	9	75.0
No, the company's network prevent it	2	16.7
Total	**12**	**100.0**

In addition the researcher wanted to know whether the respondent's access social networking sites during working hours, where majority (75%) respondents agreed that they use it for both personal and business reasons while 16.7% said disagreed by saying the company prevents it while 8.3% use it for business reasons. This indicates that most of the respondents use social networking sites for both personal and business reasons.

Figure 4.6: Whether using social networking sites helps achieve better work-life balance
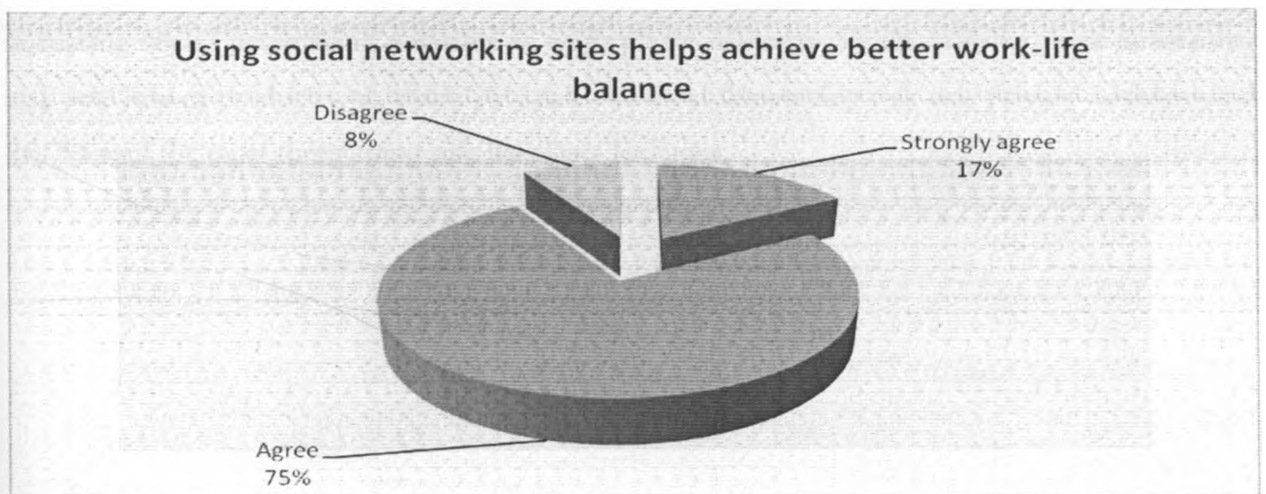
Figure 4.6 the researcher was interested to know whether using social networking sites helps achieve better work-life balance where majority 75% of the respondents agreed that social networking sites helps achieve better work-life balance, while 17% strongly agreed that social networking sites helps achieve better work-life balance. This indicates that majority of television stations admit that using social networking sites helps achieve better work-life balance.

Table 4.7: The most threatening risk associated with accessing social networking websites at work place

The most threatening risk associated with accessing social networking websites at work place		
	Frequency	**Percent**
Data leakages	2	16.7
Loss of productivity	7	58.3
Privacy concerns	3	25.0
Total	**12**	**100.0**

Table 4.7 illustrates some of the risks associated with accessing social networking websites at the work place. The researcher was interested to know the most threatening risk associated with accessing social networking websites at work place. Majority 58.3% said the most threatening risk was loss of productivity, while 25% said the most threatening risk was privacy concerns and 16.7% said the most threatening risk was Data leakages.

Figure 4.7: Respondent's company's official policy when it comes to employee use of social networking

Respondent's company's official policy when it comes to employee use of social networking

Figure 4.7 illustrates respondent's company's official policy when it comes to employee use of social networking sites where majority (58.3%) of the respondents' company policies allows employees to use their discretion when posting comments and opinions 25% of the respondents said that they didn't know what the policy says. This indicates that majority of the companies policy was for employees to use their discretion when posting comments and opinions.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The aim of this study was to establish the value of social networking in gaining leverage among television stations in Kenya where targeted respondents were the top and middle level management of the various television stations. From the findings, majority (91.7%) is in the middle level management while 8.3% are in the top level management. 41.7% of the respondents' organisations were less than five years in existence while the rest had at least 5 years in existence.

Regarding the period at which the respondents had worked with their respective organizations, 50% of all respondents had worked with their organisation for less than 3 years while the other 50% were at least 3 years old in their organizations. Regarding the audiences reach for the respondents' organizations 50% were found to be international while 41.5% had only national audience. Regarding the social network website the respondents' organization has a profile, 100% media houses had their profile on facebook 58.3% of the respondents were in twitter, 58.3% were in YouTube while 8.3% had their profiles Linkedin. On the length of time the company has been using social networking sites majority (66.7%) have been using them for one year. All respondents admitted that, their respective companies have either Facebook or Twitter or even YouTube profile.

On whether the respondent's access social networking sites during working hours, where majority (75%) respondents agreed that they use it for both personal and business reasons where majority the company policies allows employees to use their discretion when posting comm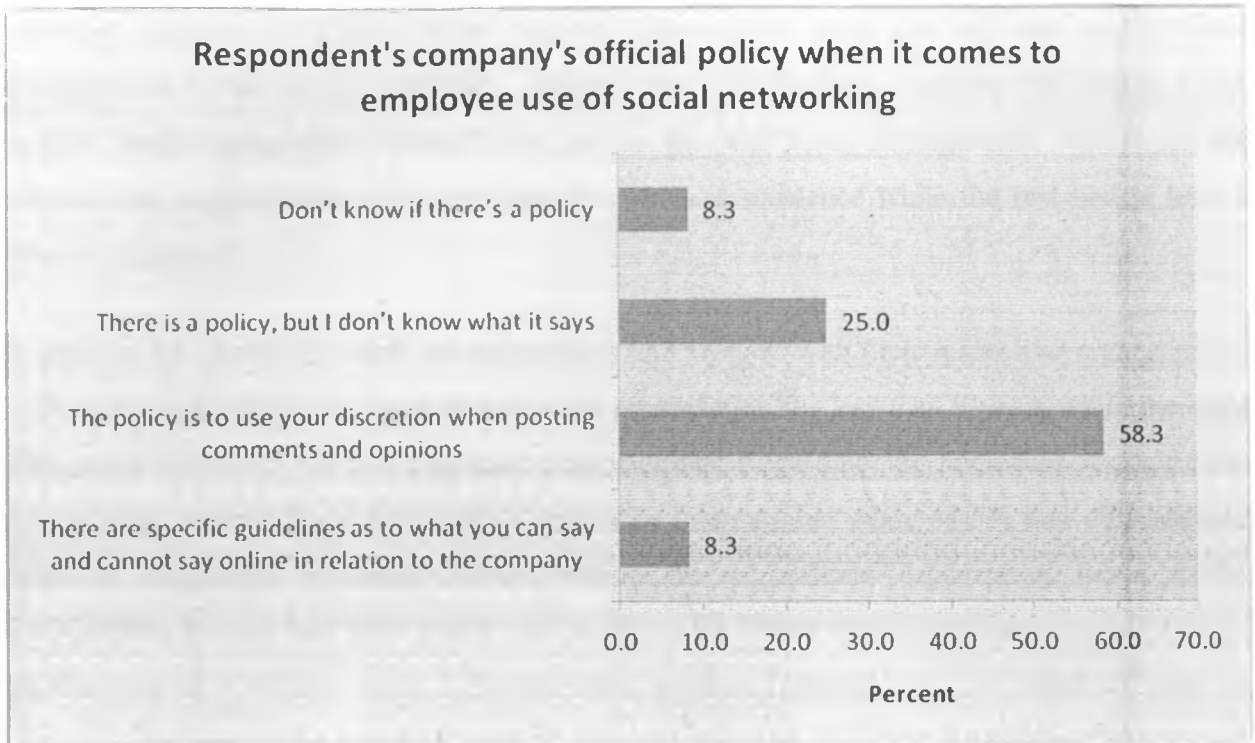ents. On company's official policy when it comes to employee use of social networking sites majority (58.3%) of the respondents' company policies allows employees to use their discretion when posting comments and opinions

5.2   CONCLUSION

Facebook prevails over all other social network sites as far as television stations are concerned. most companies have been using networking sites for at least one year implying that the social networking sites have gained their populality within the previous one year. For corpoprate organizations, social networking websites are used for communication with customers. When properly tapped the businesses are able to pass across relevant marketing information that is vital in creating brand awareness and improving and maintaining customers networks.

On the level of social networking usage, majority of television stations has a either facebook or twitter or youtube profile in which they utilize as a tool to manage and build our brand through posting news, corporate videos on social networks. They also utilize them for company - sponsored social networking groups. Advertisements are placed on our social network profiles where viewers are able to post feedback, comments on our social network page, profile and wall

However, social networking websites have not been fully embraced as part of our business and operation strategy and rarely are they used for internal communication in the television stations in Kenya.

5.3   RECOMMENDATIONS

Since television stations admit that using social networking sites helps achieve better work-life balance they should embrace social networking as part of their business and operation strategy and therefore utilize social networking for internal communication.

The features offered by social networks allow organizations to do a lot on the profiles. Placing advertisements on their profile pages need to be given a serious thought and ways of maximizing returns from the adverts devised.

Policy makers should come up with proper regulatory framework to mitigate risks associated with the use of social networks, especially leakage of company information.

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5.4   SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The study focused on the business value of social networking in gaining leverage. A study could be carried to investigate what draws viewers to particular social networking pages. That will offer better understanding of the trends and hence assist in becoming more responsive to different segments.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: LIST OF TELEVISION CHANNELS

1. EATV

2. Citizen TV

3. Classic TV

4. TBN Family TV Kenya

5. K24

6. KBC (Kenya Broadcasting Corporation)

7. STV

8. Kiss TV

9. KTN (Kenya Television Network)

10. Metro TV

11. Nation TV Kenya

12. TV Africa

APPENDIX II: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION.

University Of Nairobi

School of Business

Department of Business Administration

Master of Business Administration Program

Dear Sir/Madam,

REF: MBA Research Project

I am a student at the University of Nairobi pursuing a master's degree in Business Administration. I am currently carrying out research on value of social networking in media houses in Kenya as part of academic requirements.

I would be grateful, if you could spare sometime from your busy schedule and fill the attached questionnaire.

The information you provide will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be used solely for the research project; however the findings of this study can be availed to you upon request on completion of this research.

In case you have any queries or need clarification on any of the questions please do not hesitate to contact me on 072073643

Thank you for taking time to fill this questionnaire

Yours Faithfully

Martin Nyaga.

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APPENDIX III: QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION *(TICK WHERE APPLICABLE)*

1. Television station you work for: _____

2. Position held in the organization

   a) Top Management   [ ]

   b) Middle Level Management   [ ]

   c) Subordinate Staff   [ ]

   d) Any other (Kindly specify) _____

3. Period the organization has been in existence

   a) Less than 5 years   [ ]   d) 15 – 19 years   [ ]

   b) 5 – 9 years   [ ]   e) 20 – 24 years   [ ]

   c) 10 – 14 years   [ ]   f) 55 years and above   [ ]

4. Period the respondent has worked with the organization

   a) Less than 3 years   [ ]   d) 9 – 11 years   [ ]

   b) 3 – 5 years   [ ]   e) 12 – 14 years   [ ]

   c) 6 – 8 years   [ ]   f) 15 years and above   [ ]

5. What is your audience reach?

   a) International   [ ]   c) National   [ ]

   b) Regional   [ ]   d) Local   [ ]

SECTION B: BENEFITS FROM SOCIAL NETWORKING WEBSITES

(Tick where applicable)

6. Does the company have its profile on any the following social networking services?

   a) Face book [ ]   d) MySpace   [ ]   g) Friendster [ ]

   b) Twitter   [ ]   e) YouTube   [ ]   h) Flikr   [ ]

   c) Hi5   [ ]   f) Bebo   [ ]   i) Google Buzz [ ]

   j) Any other? Kindly indicate _____

7. How long has the company being using social networking sites?

   a) Less than 1 year   [ ]   d) 3 - 5 years   [ ]

   b) 1 - 2 years   [ ]   e) More than 5 years [ ]

   c) 2 - 3 years   [ ]

8. What features of the social Networking sites do you use?

   a) Chat   [ ]   e) Messages   [ ]   i) Newsfeed & RSS[ ]

   b) Photos and Video   [ ]   f) Events   [ ]   j) Bulletins   [ ]

   c) Wall and Blog   [ ]   g) Marketplace [ ]   k) Media Sharing [ ]

   d) Notification   [ ]   h) Networks & Groups[ ]

9. Please indicate your view on the following statements. Pleases tick the answer that applies to you

    a) People communicated with in social networks

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Always
Colleagues at work					
Close friends					
Relatives					
Strangers					
Customers/clients					
Any other					

    b) Level of social network usage

		True	False	Don't Know
1	The company has a Facebook or Twitter or Youtube profile			
2	Social Networking is part of our business and operation strategy			
3	We utilize social networking as a tool to manage and build our brand			
4	We utilize social networking for internal communication			
5	We post News, corporate videos on social networks			
6	We have company – sponsored social networking groups			
7	Advertisements are placed on our social network profiles			
8	Viewers are able to post feedback, comments on our social network page, profile, wall			

SECTION C: MITIGATING RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH ACCESSING SOCIAL NETWORKING WEBSITES AT A WORKPLACE
(Tick where applicable)

10. How often do you usually log on to social networking media(s)?
    a) I'm regularly logged on   [ ]

    b) Several times a day   [ ]

    c) Once in few days   [ ]

    d) Once a week   [ ]

    e) Occasionally   [ ]

11. If you use social networking sites, do you access them during work hours?

    a) Yes, for business reasons only   [ ]

    b) Yes, for personal reasons only   [ ]

    c) Yes, for both Business and Personal reason   [ ]

    d) No, I choose not to use social networking sites during working hours [ ]

    e) No, the company's network prevents you from accessing these sites   [ ]

12. Using social networking sites helps achieve better work-life balance?
    a) Strongly agree   [ ]

    b) Agree   [ ]

    c) Disagree   [ ]

    d) Strongly disagree   [ ]

    e) Don't Know   [ ]

13. In your opinion, what is the most threatening risk associated with accessing social networking websites at work place

   a) Viruses   [ ]

   b) Data Leakage   [ ]

   c) Loss of productivity   [ ]

   d) Privacy concerns   [ ]

14. What is your company's official policy when it comes to employee use of social networking channels?

   a) There are very specific guidelines as to what you can say and cannot say online in relation to the company   [ ]

   b) The policy is to use your discretion when it comes to posting comments and opinion on the social Networking sites   [ ]

   c) There is a policy, but I don't know what it says   [ ]

   d) There is no policy   [ ]

   e) Don't know if there's a policy   [ ]

15. In your opinion, what would you recommend as a way to mitigate the risks associated with accessing social networks in the workplace?

   _____

   _____

Thank you.