

**ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN TRANSPARENT  
GOVERNANCE**

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(COMMUNICATION STUDIES)**

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**DECLARATION**

This research project is my original work and has not been presented in and/or to any forum or audience, in any other university or examination body.

Signed.....

Date .....

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I confirm that the work presented in this research paper was carried out by the above named student under my supervision.

Signature ..... Date .....

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**Project Supervisor**

## **DEDICATION**

To my mum Roselida Orera

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

I would like to thank God the almighty for bringing me this far. I would wish to thank my friends and family for the encouragement, moral and financial support they gave me during the process of undertaking this research.

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*Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.”*

***Leo Buscaglia***

## **ABSTRACT**

In growing democracies like Kenya, the public has become more aware of their roles in the society. With that, there is need for the public to find a channel to communicate issues that as a society they need addressed.

In the last decade, social media played important role in information gathering and dissemination. Numerous organizations and government institutions have established their own social media platforms in order to provide communication channels for citizens. Advances in technology, especially social media channels provide alternative ways to monitor and report fraudulent practices. This has been assisted by the expansion of a well informed middle-class and tech savvy society.

However, there is little knowledge on the effects social media has on emerging democracies like Kenya in regards to governance. This study possibly bridges the knowledge gap.

The research examined the influence social media has on citizen participation especially on issues related to governance.

The research involved an understudy of the social media usage among the youth. Particular emphasis was on two social media platforms: *Facebook* and *Twitter*. The manner in which interactions occurred was given more prominence.

Qualitative and quantitative study designs were employed in the research. Data was obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Data was also analyzed scientifically. Emergent views regarding the role of social media were validated through comparison of views of respondents and data collected from the various organizations. Results from the study are significant to organizations interested in formulating proper communication strategies especially through social media.

## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

CDF-Constitution Development Fund

BBM-Black Berry Messaging

IEA-Institute of Economic Affairs

SNS-Social Networking Sites

CSO-Civil Society Organizations

MP-Member of Parliament

SMS-Short Message Services

## **DEFINATION OF KEY TERMS**

**Youth:** As used in this study it refers to the population aged between 17-26 years

**Citizen Participation-** a series of actions an individual or a group of people undertake to participate in the running and operation of the government

**Governance:** a new process of governing; or a changed condition of ordered rule; or the new method by which society is governed

**Social Media-** internet based tools and services that allows users to generate content, distribute and engage with each other

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Social media is said to play an important role in transforming governance. It has been taunted as a medium that promotes citizen participation in transparent governance. Citizen participation is a series of actions an individual or a group of people undertake to participate in the running and operation of the government. Participation can be viewed in two approaches; Direct and Indirect participation. The former, looks at the citizens as the owners of the government and should be involved in the decisions of the state. Indirect participation on the other hand acknowledges the electoral officials or professionals administrations to act on behalf of the citizens (Yang and Callahan, 2005). According to Yang and Callahan (2005), functional or practical citizen engagement or involvement includes economic development, public health, education, policy and public safety.

Early 1970's participation evolved into new forms that included interest groups such as unions, associations and neighborhood groups (Strange 1972, 457). Traditionally, citizen participation in Kenya was that of an indirect in nature. It involved physical attendance of meetings, hearings or even panels. The first concept of citizen participation just like many other countries in Africa was confined to community development projects (Wakwabubi and Shiverenje, 2003). In the 1983 the Kenyan government introduced the District Focus for Rural Development strategy. This strategy saw central government field workers plan and implement programmes on behalf of the citizen.

Other form of citizen participation in governance in the recent times can be seen through the introduction of the CDF Act 2006. The CDF act allows communities to participate in development through allocating positions in the various committees of which members are selected from the community.

In 2013 the CDF Act was amended and encouraged further participation. The Act stipulates that CDF committee chairman, in consultation with the area MP and the ward administrators shall at least once in every two years convene open forum public meeting to deliberate development matters

in their constituencies. Project implementation committee is also made up of local stakeholders (Odhiambo and Taifa, 2009).

The promulgation of a new constitution in August 2010 gave way to a strong legal foundation for development of participatory governance especially with the emergence of devolved structures. Article 1 of the Kenyan constitution, states that the sovereign power is vested to the people of Kenya. The same constitution in Article 10(2) also states that participation of the people is one of the country's values and principal of governance. Despite that, CDF and other public projects are seen as lacking a strong articulation mechanism. There is still little participation from the public. However, the emergence of social media has been taunted as a game changer especially in citizen participation. Social media include tools such as blogs, micro blogging sites such as Facebook, twitter as well as websites. Social media is considered fun and amusing attributes that are said to define redefine ways of citizen participation. Citizens are no longer consumers of information, but also the producers of content.

What began as a simple tool for businesses to market their products, social media has evolved into a platform that is rapidly impacting other sectors.

Social media has facilitated active political expressions such as demonstrations against unemployment, poverty and corruption. In July 2011, for instance, social media was crucial in the violent protest in the United Kingdom. The riot that took place in Tottenham in England, is said to have been organized by teenage gang members who used blackberry Smartphone app -BBM to communicate and organize crime. According to the Daily Mail Newspaper published on the 7<sup>th</sup> of August, the violence was fanned by twitter as an image of a burning police car was *retweeted* more than 100 times. The same could also be said about the Egypt's Arab spring in February 2011.

Closer home, in 2010, Uchaguzi – a crowd sourcing website allowed citizen to report events surrounding topics such as election violence and even irregularities witnessed in the constitution referendum. Nearly 45,000 Kenyans participated by sending tweets, facebook posts, sms, email and web. These examples explore the potential social media platforms have.

Encouraging citizen participation gives way for an improved accountability and ability to provide solutions to problems as well as increasing the number of community based initiatives (Oyugi and Kibua 2006).

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

During the colonial era Kenya, just like other African countries, approached citizen participation in governance through legislative steps. Participation was limited to local authorities hence discharge of laws incorporating citizen participation did not realize full potential. Several studies show that the role of citizens in public projects was limited and served mainly to provide information on the basis of which government makes decision (Michels and De Graaf, 2009).

In some instances, citizen participation was hindered through processes of postponement or lack of advertisement to the public (TISA 2011). The public was not aware of the happenings in regards to the running of public projects.

That notwithstanding, a majority of youth, middle class and the elite, rarely participated in project committees or attend public *barazas* or hearings. They depicted lack of enthusiasm and responsibility on citizen participation (TISA 2011). This is despite, the fact that the Kenyan constitution is mainly premised on citizen participation. Citizen participation is no longer a favor but an obligation. Omollo (2009) argues that one of the shortfalls of Kenyan leadership is the inability to take criticism positively. Citizens therefore are cautious in holding their leaders accountable for fear of persecution. This has then necessitated the search for alternative mediums for participation.

In the last decade, increased access to technology has gradually had an impact on citizen participation. Social media, burst on to the scene in 2004 and it has been taunted as the major catalyst to this process. The internet provides easy access to information as well as a sphere for communication which can enhance political interest and guide citizens into democratic process (Castells 1996). Social media comes with a promise of enhancing citizen participation through new, exciting, and easily accessible way and draws people who previously rarely participated in

governance. The pervasive and interactive aspects of social media technologies are said to have the ability to develop new ways for citizen participation, pressuring for new and better institutional structures as well as creating frameworks for transparency in governance.

However, despite government, non-government institutions having a presence in the social media arena, how active their pages are, remains a big concern. Another concern is how feedback obtained from these pages is used, is important in determining their significant impact on transparency in governance. This study will therefore investigate the role of social media in citizen participation in governance.

#### **1.4 Justification of the Study**

This study is aimed at identifying insights that can be used by organizations and the public as well to promote the use of social media for citizen participation especially in issues related to governance. This study is also necessary in identifying factors that influence the use of social media in citizen participation. The study will also offer recommendations to either promote or discourage the use of social media in citizen participation.

#### **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

The overall objective of the research is determining the role of social media in promoting citizen participation in governance. However this study is guided by the following objectives;

1. To investigate how citizens view social media as a platform for citizen participation
2. To investigate how social media is engaging citizens in governance.
3. To investigate the impact of social media on citizen participation in governance in Kenya.
4. To determine how the government and its leaders utilise feedback obtained from social media platforms.

## **1.6 Research Questions**

The main underlying research question

1. How do citizens view social media as a platform for citizen participation?
2. How is social media engaging citizens in governance?
3. What impact has social media had on citizen participation in governance in Kenya?
4. How does the government and its leaders utilise feedback obtained from the social media platforms?

## **1.7 Significance of the Study**

This study is aimed at determining the effectiveness of social media in promoting citizen participation in transparent governance. The study will identify insights that can be used by organizations and the public as well to promote the use of social media for citizen participation especially in issues related to governance.

It will also establish factors that limit citizen participation. The results will be useful for governments especially when planning or implementing public programs. This study is also necessary in identifying factors that make social media an appealing medium for citizen participation. It will also offer recommendations on processes by which feedback or other forms of participation should be incorporated, scrutinized and acted upon.

## **1.8 Scope of the Study**

The study was limited to Nairobi County. The study focused on social media users aged 18 to 25 years. The respondents had at least college education and had to be users of at least one social media site. It also focused on interactions on social media pages of county leaders, opinion shapers in the social media arena. The research period was between the months of March and April 2014.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter outlines a number of schools of thoughts on what constitutes citizen participation in matters related to governance. Secondly, it will also highlight on literature on the use of social media as a platform for citizen participation. This chapter will also analyze literature on aspects influencing the use of social media on citizen participation.

#### **2.1 The Concept of Citizen Participation**

The word ‘participation’ has been widely used in the continuum of development. However, defining citizen participation is relative. It means different things to different people or organizations. In some cases it has been used in relation to the rights of citizenship and democratic governance. For instance, Cunill (1997) noted that citizen participation refers to political participation. However, it slightly distances itself in two ways. First, it abstracts participation arbitrated by political parties and secondly, one exercised by citizens when they elect political leaders. Citizen participation itself is a concept that is all about power and how it is exercised by various social actors in the arena provided for interaction between citizen and authorities (Gaventa and Galderama 1999).

Citizen participation can be viewed in two ways; it can be both a goal of and a means for effective governance. Participation is seen as a goal when it governance for instance creates opportunities for participation by bringing government to the people (Robinson, 2007). It (citizen participation) is a means to effective governance when citizen through their collective action provide the demand side input of services they prefer. Not only that, but when they also pressure the authority to perform their roles appropriately.

Langtong (1978) argues that citizen participation is initiated by both the government and the public. The government initiates the process through state legislatures. Participation is also initiated by law to ensure continuity of leadership and a stable government relationship.



Gaventa and Galderama (1999) also note that the control of structures and processes for participation- space, actors, agendas, procedures- are more often than not in the control of government or the authority and this could become a hindrance to participation.

There are two ways of looking at participation. First, participation that focuses on social participation whereby citizens are beneficiaries of the authorities' programmes. Secondly, participation through which citizens engaged in traditional forms -voting, political parties and lobbying- of political involvement (Gaventa and Galderama 1999). According to Sario and Langton, (1987) argue that, when looking at citizen participation certain factors need to be looked into. They include questions such as appropriateness, what kind and who should be involved.

### **2.2.1 Elements of Citizen Participation**

#### **2.2.2 Citizen Awareness**

For participation to be successful citizens must be cognizant and have access to information on issues that affect them. Failure to access of information regarding local development alienates citizen from participating in development projects as well as provides an environment for corruption to take place (TISA, 2010). A study by IEA on CDF showed that the program is well known by the citizens in the country. However, the report shows that despite people having the knowledge on CDF in general, only 21 percent of the population had the knowledge of regulation as well as specifics of the projects. Communities for instance, were unaware of the cost of projects and the amount of money disbursed by the central government (Oduor and Muriu, 2006).

Citizen awareness requires citizens that understand and are able to voice their interest as well as working collectively to hold government accountable. Omolo (2010), notes that it is not only about citizens being aware of their rights and responsibilities but also identifying the channels through which they can exercise these rights. They also need to have the desire to exercise their rights. The space to do so should be without unnecessary resistance or intimidation from the government or authorities.

### **2.2.3 Capacity Building**

For communities to actively participate in governance they need more than just be aware of their roles and responsibilities. They need the intelligence and skills on how to carry on their responsibilities. Capacity building according to Eade (1997) is an ambiguous idea both in conceptualizing and implementing it. It is hard to point a widely accepted good practice framework either for citizens or those attempting to engage citizens (Epstein et al. 2002), Okello et al, (2008) describe capacity building as consisting of developing knowledge, skills and operational capacity so that individual groups may achieve their purpose. Eade (1997) says that current thinking about capacity building is most influenced by concepts about participation, empowerment, civil society and social movements. She also argues that capacity building is influenced by ideas related to concerning participation, empowerment civil society and social movements. Eade(1997) says capacity building is illustrated by four examples of ‘what it is not’. Capacity building should not mean creating a dependency in which we see government projects seeking to find most expedient ways of solving a particular problem. Capacity building should not also be deemed as weakness on the part of the government. Third, Eade (1997) says capacity building should not be a separate activity rather it is something done instead of providing services in areas such as health, welfare and education.

### **2.3 Citizen Participation in Governance**

Governance, according to Minogue (1997) is a broad reform strategy and a particular set of initiatives to strengthen the institutions of civil society with the objective of making governments more accountable, open and transparent, and more democratic. Rhodes, (1996) says- to others, governance refers to a new process of governing; or a changed condition of ordered rule; or the new method by which society is governed. In Kenya, citizen participation in governance is given prominence by the constitution. Article 10(2) (a) for instance, clearly states that participation of people in Kenya is one of the core values and principles of governance. The same constitution also in Article 232 (1) (d) instructs government or public servants to involve citizens in matters regarding policy making. With the promulgation of the constitution a new

systems or structures of governance was introduced. The devolved government for instance requires much of citizen participation.

### **2.3.1 Mechanism for Citizen Participation**

Mechanisms can be defined as the instruments that are used to achieve an intended purpose. Kauzya, (2007) argue that citizen participation mechanisms can be categorised into vote or voice. Voting is the process in which people select their leaders. Kauzya (2007) further explains that voting can sometimes be limiting as participation is only interpreted as elections- a process that happens after an interval of three to five years. Voice on the other hand is where citizens have the power to inspire or shape the making of decisions that relate to their social, political and economic wellbeing and to demand accountability from the government or local leadership (*ibid*,78).

Kauzya (2007) argues that voice is facilitated by decentralization meaning where there is a transfer of power and authority for making socio-political and economic decisions from the central to local government or communities. Cheema (2007) further advances that citizens are likely to participate in the local political process where local government is thought to be autonomous in making decisions affecting them. Azfar et al. (1999) explains that the benefits of citizen participation are optimised when both voice and vote mechanisms are institutionalised in a decentralised system. Citizen participation and responsiveness to citizen's needs and preferences are important mechanisms of democratic governance. Other tools for citizen participation include civil societies and citizen fora which in Kenya are provided for under the urban Areas and cities Act and development pacts signed by the representatives of the of the citizens and service providers .

### **2.4 Social Media**

Social media can be defined as internet based tools and services that allows users to generate content, distribute and engage with each other. Erkkola (2008) defines social media as

technology bound and structural process where individuals and groups build common meaning with the help of content, communities and web based technologies. Kangas et al, (2007) concur with Erkkola's definition and add that social media cannot be defined without stating three elements; content, communities and web 2.0. Social media is said to have an impact on society, economy and culture this is because they have been able to change the established models of production and distribution. Initially social media was introduced to consumers for the use in their leisure time, and free and easy to use were the attributes that made it attractive to use.

#### **2.4.1 Characteristics of Social Media**

Mayfield (2008) identifies four characteristics of social media.

1. Participation- in social media, contributions and feedback is encouraged from interested parties.
2. Openness-most social media services are always free and open to feedback and participation.
3. Conversation: Mayfield (2008) argues that social media unlike traditional media is all about two way communication.
4. Community: social media allows users to quickly form communities and communicate effectively.
5. Connectedness; Mayfield (2008) says that most social media platforms make use of links to other sites, people or resources.

#### **2.4.2 Web 2.0**

O'Reilly (2005) refers to Web 2.0 as easy to use technologies and applications that make communication and content sharing possible for ordinary people. They enable this by voice, online or video. Coleman (2005,p.209) notes that the framing of the 20<sup>th</sup> century politics by broadcast media led people to believe that democracy amounted to the citizens watching and listening to the ruling class thinking aloud on its behalf. Web 2.0 applications can be able to

make government operations more of a participatory process that utilises views knowledge and resources of the public. Emergence of web 2.0 creates an unprecedented opportunities for a more inclusive public participation in the deliberation of policy issues.

According to Coleman and Blumler (2009) they (web2.0) also have the ability to enable citizens to interact with the authorities from a secure and familiar place which, in most cases, are the spaces where political opinion formation and exchange are formed. The accessibility of social media platforms present a chance for citizens to interact directly and actively with the system (Chatora, 2012). Godin, (2009) argues that increase in accessibility enables ordinary citizens to challenge status quo. Key web 2.0 services or application include; blogging, tagging and social book mapping, multi media sharing, audio blogging and podcasting.

Gilroy (2006) gives the characteristics of Web 2.0 as follows;

1. Web is a channel for publishing and creating content- Anyone can publish what they know on the web.
2. Web is a collaboration space whereby people are able to access distributed web services that allow them to work collaboratively.
3. The web has a whole economy built on search meaning people can search for information they want.

Sharma (2008) adds other features that Gilroy (2006) missed out on. He says that the web is user centred. Meaning the web is created in a way that it satisfy possible need of the end users as well as empower the user perform customizations within the design. Most importantly Sharma (2008) adds another feature of the web which he defined as crowd sourcing. According to Sharma crowd sourcing is the gathering and collecting of information from many different people as opposed to one source.

### **2.4.3 Content**

Content refers to videos, status update, links, tags that people share. According to Chatora, (2012) social media is driven by passion. Citizens make comments on and react to issues that

directly affect them. The scale in which authority seeks to use social media depends on the degree on which the authority wants to give power. What makes social media different to traditional media is that, it allows users to easily change their role from consumer to content creator and participant (Shao, 2009).

#### **2.4.4 Communities**

Communities refer to the communication, networking as well as collaboration. Owyang (2008) defines a community as an interactive group of people joined together by a common interest.

Baass and Strauss categorise online communities into four categories. Open communities: these are communities that accept an unlimited number of members. There are also closed communities that normally have restrictions on the type of member who can join. One must meet certain criteria in order to join. Third type of community is the themed communities these are built on around a certain theme which may include general interest or even course. The final type of community includes social networks. Owyang (2008) defines social networks as an online community where user relationships are the core focus and activity. The members introduce themselves with profile pages, create lists of their friends, meet friends and communicate in various ways.

### **2.5 Basic forms of Social Media**

#### **2.5.1 Blogs**

Blogs are online journals with entries that usually provide commentary or information on a particular issue or event (Stokes 2008). Blogs are usually maintained by a single person or a small group of contributors. People who visit blogs have the opportunity to comment on entries made or respond to comments made by the page visitors. Blogs can either be photos, sounds or film.

### **2.5.2 Wikis**

Wiki is a website built through contributions of different individuals and is open to all. Usually it is a free, online and publicly editable encyclopaedia. Over the years it has become one of the most prominent reference sites of the web (Interactive Advertising Bureau 2008).

### **2.5.3 Social Networks**

Mayfield (2008) defines social network as sites that allow people to build personal web pages and then connect with friends to share content and communication. He further explains that building of social networking sites requires the use of software. Among the popular sites include facebook, instagram, and whatsapp among others.

### **2.5.4 Microblogging**

Stokes (2008) defines microblogging as a form of blogging whereby users can publish short text updates usually limited to 200 characters that can be viewed by anyone or restricted to a specific community. The common micro blogging service is twitter which limits its users to posting only 140 characters.

### **2.5.5 Forums**

These are areas for online discussion. Often the discussions are based on distinct topics and interests (Mayfield 2008).

## **2.6 Social Networking Sites as Expanding Democratic Sites.**

According to Bourgalt (1995), democratic practice in Africa emphasises a non-hierarchical, dialogical communication through popular participation. He notes that there has been a shift in democratic thought in Africa. Governments in the past controlled the flow of information in order to make information more attuned to what it conceived as its national priorities. However the current approach promotes a discursive process (Hyden & Leslie 2002). Social networking sites (SNS) play a significant role in mediating state and society in contemporary Africa even though they may not be in direct dialogue with agents of the state (Ndavula and Mberia 2012). Communications produced in SNS are not visible and public and they are not explicitly formulated and followed through as if they were part of direct engagement (Ndavula & Mberia 2012). The new spaces for communication created by SNS can be best comprehended as vital pervasive undercurrent and reservoirs of political commentary, critique and potential mobilization. Hyden & Leslie (2002) argue that SNS are crucial part of the civil society and the public sphere, understood most broadly as the arena where the public discuss state authority, political accountability and representation. The two scholars also argue that SNS have political content and they have potential emancipator function. They allow producers of messages to be consumers and receivers and to act as distributors.

Spitulnik (2002) argues that SNS draw upon established communication networks and established genres of communication. They function more expressive devices in the formation of group identity and community or sub-cultural solidarity. Ndavula and Mberia (2012) conclude by saying that the increasing access to SNS has meant that topics that could not be previously be reached are now within the boundary of the public arena or discussion and scrutiny.

## **2.7 Social Capital Theory**

The term Social Capital is a new term for an old concept. It can be widely used to refer to the accrued resources derived from the relationship between people within a certain context or network (Coleman, 1988; Bourdieu, 2001; Putnam 2000). It can be traced to the intellectual roots in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century economics and sociology. Robinson et al 2002, notes that though the



concept has been there for a while, there is no commonly agreed definition of social capital and the definitions adopted by any given study seems to rely on the discipline and or level of investigation. The concept articulates the sociological spirit of communal strength. A solution to the problem of common action and opportunism presupposes the development of voluntary collective action, and it's connected to the inherited social capital in the community (Siisiäinen 2000).

There are two schools of thoughts to social capital. There are scholars like Putnam (2000) who view social capital as an individual or a collective level phenomenon (Linn 2001). Other scholars view it as the result of having an abundance of strong or weak ties (Burt 2000).

Different scholars have in the past made contributions to the study key among them Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam. In his studies Bourdieu (1986) defines social capital as the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition or to a membership in a group which provides each of the members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital which entitles them to credit.

Coleman (1988) defines Social capital by its function. It is according to him, a variety of entities having two characteristics in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures and they facilitate certain actions of actors. On the other hand, Robert Putnam an American political scientist played a major role in publicising the concept through the study of civic engagement in Italy (Boggs 2001).

In drawing conclusions about the reforms by the Italian government, his purposes are theoretical and his method empirical. This study will focus on his theoretical inferences mainly about civil society. During his study, his main concern was the preconditions for the development of a strong, responsive representative institution and prosperous economy.

Putman (2000) conceptualizes two definite forms of social capital. One emanating from weak ties that he christened bridging social capital and the second one is derived from the strong ties such as family relations and he named it bonding social capital. The third type of social capital is linking social capital which refers to that which is generated among people with uneven levels of

power within a hierarchy. This type of social capital is helpful for acquiring success from formal institutions.

According to Boggs (2001) forms of social capital are general moral resources of the community and are divided into three: trust, social norms and obligation and lastly social networks of citizens' activity especially in voluntary activities.

According to Newton (1999), trust in modern societies refers to the generalized trust. Actors in a society, do something for the overall good not because they know other interactors but because they trust that their own action will be remunerated through positive development of communal relationship. Luhmann (1988) says that in the modern world trust is needed when we leave the sphere based on familiarity and enter a world dominated by contingency, complexity and risk. Trust is needed when role expectations and familiar relationships no longer help us to anticipate the reactions of our individual or collective interaction partners (Seligman 1997). Voluntary association on the other hand influences both social interaction and cooperation between actors in several ways (Putnam1993, 173-174).

### **2.7.1 Levels of Social Capital**

Social capital can be viewed in different levels depending on the approach taken by different scholars. It can be viewed at the individual, informal social group, community, or even the nation (Putnam1995). There are other scholars that conceive social capital at the community level, others at the individual while some view it at with a dynamic perspective.

Kilby (2002) say that social capital exists within the level or scales as one feels belonging to family, community, profession country, simultaneously. While agreeing with Kilby, Alder and Kwon (2002), adds that social capital's sources lie in the structure within which the actor is located. According to Kilpatrick et al.(1998) say that social capital belongs to the group and can be used by the individuals within the groups.

### **2.7.2 Determinants of Social Capital**

There are several studies that have suggested that social capital can trace its origin from the cultural evolution (Fukuyama 1995). Others have suggested that social capital can be created in the short term to support political and economical development (Brown and Ashman 1996).

The main determinants of social capital according to Aldridge, Halpern et al (2002) include History and culture: strength and characteristic of civil society, social class, residential mobility, patterns of individual consumption and personal values among others. Pantoja (1999) identifies family and Kinship connections, social norms, networks, political society institutional and policy framework.

### **2.8 Civil society and Governance**

According to Connor (1999), civil society is made up of autonomous associations that develop a sense, diverse and pluralistic network. Civil society organisations (CSO) have been largely recognized as an essential third force in government.

As it evolves, it composes of groups or specialised organisations and linkages between them to amplify the corrective voices of civil society as a partner in the governance and the market. Veneklasen (1994) defines CSO as spheres of social interactions between the household and the state manifested in the norms of community cooperative, structures of voluntary association networks.

CSO's are said to further good governance by engaging in a number of things. For example they can promote good governance through policy analysis and advocacy, regulation and monitoring of state performance and the action behaviour of public officials.

CSO's can also play a role in promoting good governance by mobilizing particular constituencies particularly the vulnerable and less marginalised. According to Vaneklasen (1994)

civil society can also help by building social capital and enabling citizens to identify and express values, beliefs, civic norms and democratic practices.

Apart from political and policy concerns, civil society also give a broader expressive function providing an avenue through which artistic, spiritual, cultural, ethical, occupational, social and recreational sentiments find expression.

## **2.9 Youth participation in Governance**

*“The future of any nation depends on the current prospects of its youth”* John F Kennedy

Youths in Kenya have for a long period of time remained at the periphery of the country’s affairs. Their needs and aspirations have also been ignored (Oduor and Muriu, 2010). In developing countries like Kenya the youths are a major asset and can contribute immensely towards enhancing governance. The lack of an operative youth participation in governance and development interventions destabilizes the achievements of the international development aspirations for the fight against and good governance policy.

Belamy (2000) argues that though the youths are the majority, any development intervention that marginalises the youth from effectively participating cannot achieve any significant impact. Putnam (2000), argues that effective participation in governance activities depends on the quality of civic competency. In his studies Putnam emphasizes the role of social capital in enhancing youth participation in good governance. Mabor (2013) argues that in democracy and good governance, there is a political, social and economic accountability of people in positions of power for their actions. He adds that good governance and democracy is central for development. Mabor (2013) identifies principles that guide good governance which include: Transparency, accountability, inclusively, fiscal responsibility, good leadership, respect for human rights and rule of law, democracy and fair competition for public offices.

The main challenge is however, to mobilize youths in order to participate meaningfully in governance (Oduor and Muriu 2010). Furthermore effective participation demands capacities in the forms of skills, knowledge and resource.

### **2.9.1 Factors contributing to poor Youth Engagement in Governance in Kenya**

Oduor and Muriu (2010) identify a number of factors that limit youth participation in Kenya and they include; inadequate education and training that fail to adequately equip the youth with knowledge in decision making. Therefore, denying the youth necessary analytical skills for critical thinking.

Lack of direct access to institutional systems and structures within government affects the youth ability to significantly contribute during the formation of public policies and programs (Oduor and Muriu 2010). Other factors identified by the institute are; perceptions that their (Youth) voices will not be heard, lack of information such as information on policies, programs etc. on available avenues for participation in governance. There is also the lack of a direct access to institutional systems within government. The youths may also not see the need to participate due to the lack of engagement or complacency by their peers.

### **2.9.2 Opportunities for Youth Participation in Development in Kenya**

Oduor and Muriu (2010) identify two areas in which the Kenyan youth can participate or engage in developmental activities. With the devolved system of governance, the youths can either participate as beneficiaries where they make use of all the opportunities economic development offers like increased space for business, innovation and enterprise development. The other area in which they can participate include innovation and delivery of ideas that facilitate development.

### **2.9.3 Social Activism and Volunteering**

*“We know that the MDGs cannot be achieved without the active engagement of the world’s citizens as volunteers and activists. We must therefore work together to dismantle barriers like those that still exist between ‘volunteers’ and ‘activists.’” -Liz Burns former IAVE President*

Civic participation can take different forms. It can be used to cultivate trust and accountability between citizens and the government. Petrisky (2007) argue that civic participation contributes to fostering social inclusion and establishing social cohesion within communities. The lack of engagement between citizens and the government reflects the lack of citizen participation, trust and accountability. Pertrisky (2007) argues that the challenge is to recognize the contribution of citizen action, regardless of how small in creating inclusive and equitable social reality.

Leadership provided by social activists is critical in mobilizing people as part of a larger course (Bickford and Reynold 2002). A good leadership can be a good boost to efforts of channeled towards developmental challenges. It is also important to note that social activist are in most scenarios volunteers and that social activism often depend on volunteers.

The two groups are complementary in encouraging participation. Volunteers can serve different roles in social activism for example serve on the advisory groups, board members of CSO’s as well as serve on organizing committees.

Social activism requires exact identification of the real needs and challenges that people have. Volunteers at the grassroots level can assist social activist to align their actions with the community oriented needs and in return gain greater legitimacy in communities they are trying to assist. Creating space for citizen participation through social activism and volunteering creates opportunities for engagement of all kinds (Naidoo 2006)

### **2.9.4 Limitations to Social Activism and Volunteering**

Though social activism and volunteering are complementary, there are several factors that may limit them. (Naidoo 2006) mentions factors such as ethnicity, racial and religious prejudice as well as stereotypes. For instance, volunteers from marginalized groups may encounter racism in

their attack. The disabled may on the other hand be concerned about being perceived as passive recipients of aid rather than provider.

### **2.9.5 Citizen Journalism**

Citizen journalist according to Rosen (2009), are the people formerly known as audience are those who were on the receiving end of a media system that ran way, in a broadcasting pattern, with highly entry fees and a few firms competing to speak loudly while the rest of the population listened in isolation from one another- and who today are not in a situation like that at all.

Citizen participation in the media or citizen journalism has been growing phenomenon in some ways. Citizen journalism involves a lot of analysis and debate of issues occurring on mainstream media. Lieb (2009) says that though citizen journalism encompasses many aspects and comes in different forms- blogs, forums, uploading photos or videos, citizen journalism have one fundamental basis.

Hamilton (2000) argues that when talking of citizen participation people ought to talk about *deprofessionalization*, *decapitalisation* and deinstitutionalization. Meaning, alternative media must be accessible to 'ordinary' people without the necessity of professional training and excessive capital outlay and must take place in an environment other than media institutions. Downing (1984) privileges media that are produced by non-professionals, by groups that are primarily constituted for progressive, social change.

Rodriguez (2000) argues that when people create their own media they are better able to represent themselves and their communities. Rodriguez views "citizen media" as projects of self-education. Such participatory media production can be believed to provide people with an alternative public sphere where agendas are set and deliberations developed through journalism of social movement and communities.

The spread of internet and the increase in the intake of mobile phones has led to the emergence of citizen journalism in many African countries. Citizen journalists are using digital technologies such as social network, microblogs, video sharing and blogs (Mutsvairo and Columbus, 2012).

According to Zuckerman (2009) citizen journalists do not only merely relay critical information – blogs, microblogs and fora also serve as means to express emotions and spaces for discussion.

### **2.9.5.1 Cases of Citizen Journalism in Kenya**

The role of citizen journalists in Kenya can be seen during times of crisis. In 2007 after the much contested elections violence broke out in the country. Over 1000 people lost their lives and many more were left homeless. Goldstein and Rotich (2008) point out that it is during the post election violence time that social media was used to incite riots; bloggers documented human rights abuses and created Ushahidi- a crisis mapping software.

Blogs and twitter are the commonly used outlets for citizen journalists as well as the social network facebook; but the use of mass SMS and emails for citizen journalism have also been reported (Moyo 2009)

During the aftermath of 2007 PEV the apparatus and practices of citizen journalists were utilized both to incite violence and document it. Though citizen journalists may at times provide important information, they may at times be used to spread fear and panic on the people (Moyo 2009).

### **2.9.5.2 Ushahidi**

Ushahidi is an online platform that was developed initially to map reports of the 2008 violence in Kenya. The platform is a result of collaboration between Kenyan citizen journalists and technological experts. At the height of the post election violence, the platform enabled citizens to share information on the violence through their mobile phones.

Ushahidi had close to 45,000 users in Kenya and had been made the go to point for mapping out rescue efforts. The team running the site was composed of people with a wide variety of experience both on salary and volunteers.

The success of the platform has seen it role out similar versions of the same in countries such as Congo, India, Philippines, Pakistan and by major media houses like the Washington Post and



Aljazeera. Though the platform was developed at a time of crisis, corporate firms have adopted it to receive information from the public.

### **2.9.5.3 Mzalendo.com**

Mzalendo is a project run by volunteers who are keen on monitoring parliament, keeping it in check. The site ([www.mzalendo.com](http://www.mzalendo.com)) started when a group of individuals from Gatundu North constituency started sharing their frustrations on the internet little did they know the effect the site would have during the 2007 general elections in Kenya. The founders believed that Parliament should be one of the most open institutions in the government

### **2.9.5.4 Ma3 route**

Mathree route is a mobile, web and SMS crowd sourcing website for transport data and provides users with information on traffic, directions and driving reports. The site aims to make travelling easier in developing countries by democratizing timely transport information ([www.ma3route.com](http://www.ma3route.com)) Ma3route is also available in on twitter (@ma3route) facebook as Ma3route. For Smartphone users, Ma3route is also available for downloads as a mobile application.

### **2.9.5.5 I Paid A Bribe**

[www.ipaidabribe.or.ke](http://www.ipaidabribe.or.ke) is a crowd sourcing website that aims to tackle corruption through the gathering the collective energy of Kenyans. The citizens have the opportunity to report corruption and where it happens and who are the guilty parties. One can report on the nature, the number, pattern, types, location, location, frequency and values of actual corrupt acts on the website. The data reported is then used to argue for improving governance systems and procedures, tightening law enforcement and regulation and thereby reduce the scope for corruption in obtaining services from the government ([www.ipaidabribe.or.ke](http://www.ipaidabribe.or.ke)). Since its establishment the site has received thousands of hits and records more than 500 reports.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter describes the research design and specific methodology that will be adopted by this study in examining the role of social media in citizen participation in transparent governance. This chapter will provide the study's sampling procedure and sample size, target population, research location, research instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis.

#### **3.1 Research design**

Kothari (2004) defines research design as a framework that shows how problems that are under investigation will be resolved. Orodho (2003) defines research design as a scheme, outline or a plan used to generate answers to research questions. This study will use descriptive study design. Descriptive studies are used to answer descriptive questions like what is happening. This design was encouraged by the fact that it allows for the collection of large amount of data for detail analysis.

#### **3.2 Target Population**

Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) define a population as an entire group of individuals, events or objects, having common observable characteristics. The target population for this study was youth aged between 17-26years. The population was drawn from three Institutions; University of Nairobi, Nairobi Institute of Business Studies-Ruiru campus and Nairobi Aviation College.

#### **3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure**

Sampling is the process of gathering people, places or things to study. Researchers select a number of individuals or objects from a population such that the selected group contains elements representative of the characteristics found in the entire group (Orodho 2002). This study will use a mixture of purposive and stratified random sampling.

Purposive random sampling involves hand-picking subjects on the basis of specific characteristics. This technique ensures a balanced group size when multiple groups are to be selected. Stratified random sampling technique involves a process of stratifying a segregation of the population in the homogeneous groups.

The groups are then further randomly selected from each stratum. The population was divided into mutually exclusive groups relevant and appropriate in the context of the study. The researcher divided the population into groups: youths using social media and those that do not. The researcher also employed purposive method to identify government officials or governing bodies that use social media in their operations.

### **3.4 Instruments for Data Collection**

This research study used questionnaires which were administered to the study population. The questionnaires involved both structured and unstructured questionnaires. Respondents were asked to select responses from among the choices presented in the structured sections of the questionnaire. The unstructured questions were intended to give the respondents an opportunity to respond to the information required in their own words.

### **3.5 Validity**

Research validity according to Mbwesa (2006) is defined as the extent to which a test or instrument measures what it was intended or supposed to measure. Concurring with Mbwesa, Mugenda Mugenda (1999) adds that validity is a degree to which the results obtained from the data represents the phenomena being studied. This study adopted content validity.

Content validity according to Bollen (1989) is the qualitative type of validity where the domain of the concepts is made clear and the analyst judges whether the measures fully represent the domain.

### **3.6 Reliability**

Reliability test is way of making the test reliable by pre-testing the instruments. Pre-testing is important it identifies errors that may occur in the study which can be later corrected (Mugenda 2008). One of the advantages of this method is that it helps to estimate time required to administer the instrument. This study used the Test retest reliability method. This method measures the degree to which the scores are coherent over time. This method will involve administering the same questionnaire to the same population twice after an interval.

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedures**

After sampling and ensuring content validity the researcher obtained permission from the University of Nairobi through the academic supervisor. The permission included an introductory letter that introduced the researcher to the target population. After, acquiring the necessary documents the researcher then set out to conduct a pilot that enabled him to evaluate the usefulness of data. During the process the respondents were assured of the confidential treatment of the information provided. Once the data is verified and deemed to be valid and reliable, the researcher headed to the field for the actual research.

### **3.8 Method of Data Analysis**

Kombo and Tromp (2006) refer to data analysis as examining what has been collected in a survey or experiment and making deductions and inferences. Activities involved summarizing large quantities of raw data collected that will have been collected from the field. The data was arranged, categorised and ordered. This study adopted descriptive statistics to analyze data obtained. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) argue that the purpose of descriptive statistics is to enable the researcher to meaningfully describe distribution of scores using few indices. The researcher analysed the data and presented them in bar graphs and frequency tables.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4.0 DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents data, analysis, presentation and interpretation of results on the data collected from the youths in Nairobi County based on the Role of social media in citizen participation in governance. The study sampled 200 youths, mainly drawn from four post-secondary institutions, University of Nairobi, Nairobi Institute of Business Studies-Ruiru and Nairobi campuses, Nairobi Aviation College. The data were interpreted as per the research questions. Frequency tables and percentages were used to present the findings.

#### **4.2 Questionnaire Response Rate**

In the study, the researcher targeted 200 respondents. Out of the questionnaires given to respondents, 167 questionnaires were returned fully filled. This represent 83.5 per cent return rate. All the 167 questionnaires, all were fully filled representing 100% response rate. The high response rate can be credited to the data collection procedures. The researcher notified the potential participants prior to the actual data collection.

#### **4.3 Composition of the Respondents**

In the study, the age distribution of the respondents was as follows: 49.1 % were aged between 17-20 years, 33.5 % were aged between 21-23 years while the remaining 17.4% were between the ages of 24-26 years. Table 4.0 represents the composition of the respondents by age.

**Table 4.1 Age Distribution**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 17-20 Years	82	49.1	49.1	49.1
21-23	56	33.5	33.5	82.6
24-26	29	17.4	17.4	100.0
Total	167	100.0	100.0	

The study illustrates that social media users are generally active between the age of 17-20. It is also in agreement with Anett’s theory that suggested that emerging adulthood is when one is more likely to be active in social media.

**4.4 The composition of the respondents by gender is represented in the table below.**

**Table 4.2 composition Sex**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	77	46.1	46.1	46.1
Female	90	53.9	53.9	100.0
Total	167	100.0	100.0	

The study revealed that 53.9 percent of the respondents were female as compared to 46.1 percent who were male. Gender is the only major demographic variables, touching on social media use as there are some disparities between utilisation by men and women. The response agrees with Tufekci (2008) who argues that women were four to five times likely to use social media than their male counterparts. The findings are further supported by Baym, Zhang, Ledbetter and Meichen, (2007) who argue that women in college were likely to use the internet than men especially for relational communication.

From the study we can also make several inferences the population slightly corresponds with the Kenya Demographic profile. Data from the countries demographiic profile indicate the ratio of boys to girls in population aged between 15-25 years is slightly 1:1.

#### **4.5 Composition of the Respondents by Level of Education**

The respondents' level of education was measured to find out whether education plays any role in influencing citizen participation using social media. When asked about their level of education, 10.8 percent of the respondents indicated they had or were pursuing University Degree, 70.7 per cent had a Diploma level while the remaining 18.6 per cent had certificate level of education. Educational experience of the respondents seemed to play a role in the use of social media. Lenhart et al. (2010) found that both men and women were likely to use social media more often if they had at least college education. Table 4.2 further illustrates the data

**Table 4.3 level of education**

	Frequency	Percent
Degree	18	10.8
Diploma Level	118	70.7
Certificate	31	18.6
Total	167	100.0

#### **4.5 Use of Social Media**

A majority of the respondents 96.4 percent admitted to using social media. Only 3.6 percent did not use social media. Social media sites over the past have grown in popularity fast and in particular among the youths (Pempek, Yermolayeva& Calvert, 2008). The findings support a study conducted by Lenhart, Purcell and Zickuhr (2010) that reported that at least 72 percent of the students in college are among a large proportion of social media users. It is clear that social media have created novel ways for the youth to interact with each other.

Table 4.3 illustrates further

**Table 4.4 use of Social Media**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	161	96.4
No	6	3.6
Total	167	100.0

#### **4.5.1 Type of Social Networking Site used**

The researcher also set out to find out, among the respondents which social media platforms they used most. A majority 44.3 percent used facebook regularly. They reported to have their own profiles on facebook their personal facebook pages. Further 43.1 percent either had their own blogs or were frequent readers of blogs or websites. From the data it is clear that facebook is among the popular sites. The findings tend to agree with findings of a research conducted by Lenhart et al. (2010) that mentioned facebook as the most popular social media. This could be attributed to the fact that Facebook makes it simple to communicate with many people at a time. In addition, it may also make it easier for the users' themselves track activities of people they have not been in contact with in a while as well as reconnect with new and old friends (Quaahaase & Young, 2010).



**Table 4.5 shows the various social media platforms and their frequency of use.**

	Frequency	Percent
Blogs/Websites	72	43.1
Facebook	74	44.3
Twitter	16	9.6
Whatsapp	5	3.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>100.0</b>

#### **4.5.2 How Respondents accessed Social Media platforms**

**Table 4.6 below shows the different devices the respondents used to access social media**

	Frequency	Percent
Smartphones/handheld devices	131	78.4
Personal Computers	26	15.6
School lab/cyber cafe	10	6.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The survey indicated that social media use is high among those who had smartphones. Among the respondents 78.4 % of the respondents indicated that they used handheld devices on a regular basis. The study agrees with the finding of Kinetic (2013) that reported that social media users aged between 18-24 use their smartphones as their main device for social networking.

Perhaps this could be attributed to the easy access of smartphones. Over the years, mobile phones and other handheld devices have increasingly become cheap. However, it is worth to note that though that social networking is a popular activity for the youths, the youth themselves are

not using it for just chatting, but also for activities such as shopping or entertainment as will be mentioned later on in this chapter.

From the findings we can make inferences that for one to use social networks to their full potential it is important that you access them from your handheld devices from there one can share their favorite moments as they occur as well get up to the minute update of what is going.

### **4.5.3 Usage of Social Media**

As far as the usage of social media is concerned, the researcher attempted to understand how the respondents use the social media and the following observations were made: 58.7% of the respondents posted, read or commented on posts that interested them. 21.6% only read comments posted by other people. They themselves did not post. These activities of browsing through other individuals profiles or posts or news feeds according to Pempek et al. (2009) are performed frequently. Such kinds of behavioral patterns constitute of one-sided communication.

The study also revealed that 1.8% of the respondents reported to have blocked comments or posts that did not interest them. 18% of the respondents also reported to share with other people, social media posts they found of interest to them.

The findings concur with Chatora (2012) who argues that social media is driven by passion. The findings indicate that though young people used social media to communicate by posting information, the user's enthusiasm on a particular was a key driver to the online interaction.

Among the areas the respondents reported to have been interested in when using social networking sites include; entertainment and socialising. Only a handful of the respondents mentioned governance as among the areas they were interested in.

**Table 4.7 indicating social media use among respondents**

	Frequency	Percent
1. Only read comments posted by other people	36	21.6
2. Posted, read or commented on posts that interested them	98	58.7
3. block those posts that do not interest me	3	1.8
4. shared posts as well as other peoples posts that interest me	30	18.0
Total	167	100.0

#### **4.5.4 Respondents and Citizen Participation**

The researcher wanted to find out whether the respondents belonged to any of the following groups. Civil society, political party, labor organisation or community based organisation.

**Table 4.8 shows youth registartion in politics**

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Yes	9	5.4
No	158	94.6
Total	167	100.0

When asked if the respondents belonged to any political party and it was reported that only 5.4% was while the remaining 94.6% weren't. The findings are consistent with a study conducted by the United Nations Development Programme in 2013. The report indicated that age related exclusions typically reach beyond 24 years (UNDP, 2013). The report further indicate that youth wings of political parties and young leaders' programmes often have age limits of 35 years. The findings of this study indicate less interest among the young people. This is attributed to the

structural constraints which include factors such as high eligibility to contest elections as well as cultural or social norms that inhibit them from participating.

#### 4.5.6 Governance and Social Media

The researcher wanted to know if the respondents had seen government, civil society or elected officials using the social media in their daily operations. A majority of them 62.3% indicated that they were aware of the government, civil society and elected officials use of social media. However, about (37.7%) admitted that they were not aware. Among the ways the respondents identified the government used social media; publicising a certain course, addressing a national crisis or disaster, selling policies or propagandas. The findings are consistent with a study conducted by (Bertot, Jaeger &Grimes 2010) that indicated that much of government activities are now focused on social media. Social media has become a central component of e-government in a very short time. By its nature, social media is collaborative and participatory as defined by social interaction.

**Table 4.9 shows the response on whether citizens identified the government using social media**

	Frequency	Percent
No	63	37.7
Valid Yes	104	62.3
Total	167	100.0

#### 4.5.7 Citizen Engagement on Social Media.

The researcher set out to find out how citizens, government and elected leaders engaged on social media. In the last six months prior to the date the questionnaires were given to the respondents, 25.1% of the respondents indicated that they had followed or became fans of government or governmental organisations on social media. The data further shows that 74.9%

had not. Data analysed also shows that 29.1% admitted to having interacted and engaged the government, civil society and elected leaders on social media on different issues.

The table below shows various activities the respondents engaged in on social media.

**Table 4.10 respondents that reported to have engaged the government on social media**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	50	29.9
No	117	70.1
Total	167	100.0

The findings of the study concur with the findings of a study undertaken by Boyd (2010) that revealed that young people do not want to be the government’s friend on social media. The youths according to Boyd (2010) are not likely to welcome an official dropping into an online discussion uninvited. Though the youths have been encouraged over time to participate through interactions with the government; the officials are more of strangers.

From the study the researcher realised that there are three categories of non participation among the youths. There are those that are discontented who lack access either due to the structural limitations or social barriers. There are also the conscientious objectors who do not participate though their decision is usually based on socio-structural factors. The final is the category of former users who once participated, but stopped.

Social media only works for the people that are already engaged. The key is to engage the young people in the narrative created for young people (Boyd 2010). The government should write tools for the politically-engaged to reach out those that are not politically-engaged. It is, however, clear that not all teenagers lack the wish to engage in publics. It is just that they lack the means to participate in larger cross-generational publics controlled by adults.

**4.5.8 Respondents’ opinion on social media as an agent of change**

Table 7.0 shows the respondents perception of social media as a medium to propose and bring about change. On a scale of 1-5 with 1 indicating strongly agree and 5 being strongly disagree.

38.9 percent of the respondents strongly agreed that social media could provide a better opportunity to propose and bring about change in the society. 26.3 % did not believe social media could be used to bring about change. The findings agree with the findings of a study conducted by Enjolras, Steen-Johnsen, and Wollebaek (2012).

Enjolras, Steen-johnsen, and Wollebaek (2012) say that social media sites have distinct intrinsic properties conceptualized as affordance and network functionalities. These are the characteristics are seen to cut on cost of civic and political engagement. The inference that can be made here is that for online communication the cost of information retrieval and communication in citizen engagement is less costly. Resources for political participation are mainly expressed in the form of time, civic skills such as communication and organizational ability and money. The technologies can also be helpful in that they may be used by citizens that may not currently be informed about what the government or elected leaders may want to do or are doing.

**Table 4.11 opinion on social an agent of change**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	65	38.9
Agree	19	11.4
Not Sure	20	12.0
Disagree	19	11.4
Strongly Disagree	44	26.3
Total	167	100.0

#### 4.5.9 Social media as a tool for promoting Good Governance

**Table 4.12 shows the opinions of the respondents regarding whether social media is a tool for promoting good governance.**

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	59	35.3
Agree	18	10.8
Not Sure	24	14.4
Disagree	20	12.0
Strongly Disagree	46	27.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Most of the respondents were of the opinion that social media and especially social networking sites were proving to be useful in promoting good governance. 35% of the respondents strongly agreed while a significant percentage (27.5%) strongly disagreed with the statement that social media could be used to promote good governance. The findings study concurred with Shim & Eom (2008) that social media can promote good governance, strengthen reform-oriented initiatives, reducing potential for corrupt behaviors, improving relationship between government and employees and citizens. With the findings from the study, social media can allow for citizens to track activities and by monitoring and controlling behaviors of government leaders or even employees.

The existing social media networks for instance, require very little technical know how in addition to the fact that they have little to no cost of use. By being part of social media, elected leaders or government officials show the society they are ready to connect with the public in a two-way communication in addition to improving their image and status.

#### 4.6 Public Opinion on Social Media

A majority of the respondents felt that public opinion on social media was playing an important role in promoting accountability among elected leaders and government officials. However, many of the respondents (29.3) felt that though public opinion was important, it had little or no impact on promoting accountability.

**Table 4.13 Public opinion on social media**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	49	29.3
Agree	47	28.1
Not Sure	29	17.4
Disagree	6	3.6
Strongly Disagree	36	21.6
Total	167	100.0

#### 4.6.1 Online Interactions

The researcher wanted to find out how freely respondents interacted with the government or elected leaders on social media.

**Table 4.14: Online interactions**

	Frequency	Percent
Not Freely	66	39.5
Somewhat Freely	34	20.4
Neither Free nor not freely	18	10.8
Very Freely	49	29.3
Total	167	100.0



The data shows that 39.5 percent of the respondents revealed that they did not express themselves freely on social media especially when interacting with elected leaders or government officials perhaps fearing retribution or condemnation. However, about 29.3 % admitted to freely interact with elected leaders.

The findings indicate that not all youths use social media confidently and to the extent some have ended up creating virtual identities. The findings are in line with Urista et al. (2009) who found out that young people created virtual identity in which they deemed ideal self so that they can either impress or hide their real identities. This technique of improving social capital and appearance boosted one's self concept and esteem (Urista et al. 2009).

It can therefore be inferred that for citizen participation among the youths to fully function there is a need to create a welcoming environment for voluntary participation. The demand for social justice, accountability and good governance by citizens at times could come across as a threat to some government officials or elected leaders. The conventions for operating social media are different from traditional media. Social media tends to be open, authentic, frank, transparent and immediate.

#### 4.6.2 Rate of Response

**Table 4.15 shows the rate of response from government officials or elected leaders.**

	Frequency	Percent
Immediate	23	13.8
Within 1 day	40	24.0
A week	38	22.8
More than a week	45	26.9
Never	21	12.6
Total	167	100.0

The data from table 7.2 shows the rate at which the respondents who had interacted with government and elected officials. The data analysed indicated that very few government leaders, civil societies were keen on delivering feedback to the public. The study showed that 13.8% of the respondents received immediate response when they queried or demanded service. At least 12.6% indicated they did not receive feedback. This could be an indication that at times the respondents were frustrated or discouraged for not getting feedback.

The findings implied that though social media provided two way communication lack of inadequate feedback showed one-sided communication from the public. Citizens are accustomed to the immediacy, interactivity and more relaxed tone of social media. The findings also concur with Jiang et al. (2011) that say obtaining social media feedback from others on pictures or wall posting for instance, improves images that people have on themselves. Urista et al. (2009) argues that a timely response draws out satisfaction and good feelings of self gratification of personal and interpersonal needs.

This implicates that failure to give feedback for instance on the government side leads to demoralising of the population especially the youth and hence limited participation. When using social media several factors should be given priorities, accuracy, authenticity, timeliness as well as openness. For government and elected leaders, responding fast and in a friendly manner with accurate information presents an opportunity to build trust within the citizen.

#### **4.6.3 Feedback Efficacy**

When asked how useful the information posted on social by the government is to the respondents and it was observed that 13.8% felt it was useful while 26.9% found the feedback not useful. When asked, the respondents had ever recommended something on the social media; it was observed that only 9 percent had while the remaining 91.0 percent had not. Those who indicated as having had recommended ideas to the authorities reported the following; reporting corruption, poor service delivery, insecurity among others.

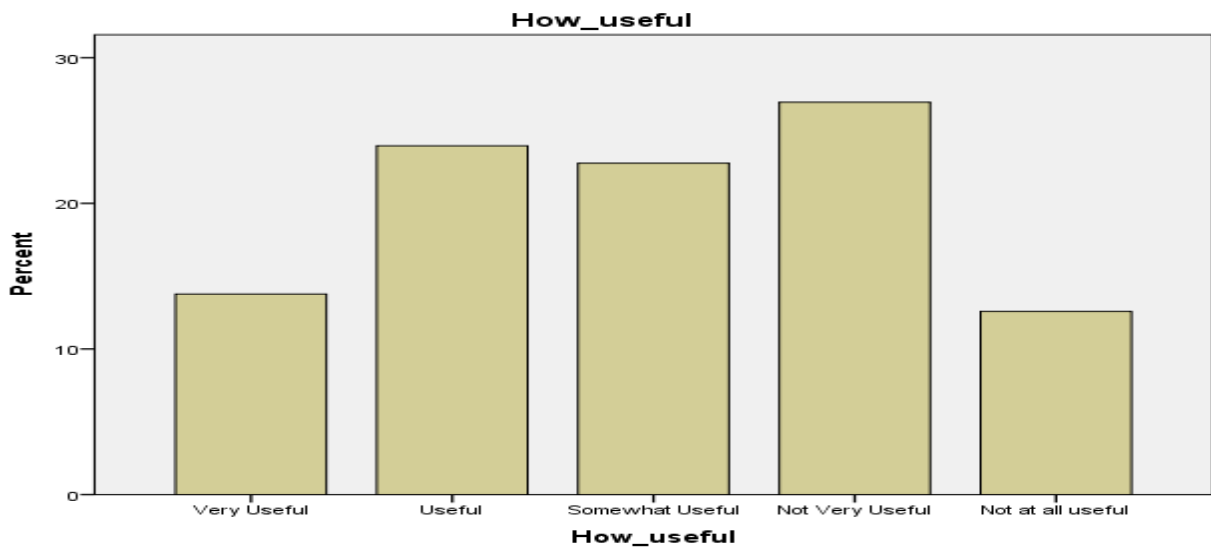
The respondents revealed the lack of a sufficient feedback system discouraged them from further interactions with the government. The findings concur with studies conducted by Munter, (1992)

that showed that audience communication and interaction ought to be two way. If people are heard, then they are likely to talk or speak again.

Feedback obtained from the public can be great assets to governments in terms of charting forward the course of the government for instance. In the same way feedback obtained from government or elected officials are important for the citizens.

From the data analysed we can make inferences that communications need not to be limited to distributing information or requesting services. Communication theorists have placed communication and interaction in four contexts, namely selling, consulting and engaging (Munter, 1992).

Though allowing anonymous contributions could result in non-residents participating or sometimes general degradation of the quality of participation, it sometimes allowed people fearing retribution to participate freely and openly. The graph below shows the distribution.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the findings, discussion, conclusions reached and recommendations based on the objectives of the study. Social media enables people and organisations to communicate using internet-based tools. The study set out to investigate the role social media plays in citizen participation,

#### 5.2 Summary of the Findings

Based on the responses given by the respondents the researcher came up with findings which were used to make conclusions and provide recommendations. The key findings of the study are based on the results of data analysis in the previous chapter as revealed in table 5.1 below.

**Table5.1 summary of the findings**

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Findings</b>
1. To investigate how citizens view social media as a platform for citizen participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Most of the respondents were of the opinion that social media could be an important channel for enhancing citizen participation.</li><li>ii. Social media offered cheaper and easily accessible on mobile devices (78.4%) and computers (15.6%).</li></ul>
2. To explore the opportunities provided by social media for citizen participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Most of the respondents felt that social media offered an open or free medium of expression.</li><li>ii. Most of the respondents also saw social</li></ul>

	<p>media as a channel that brings them closer to the elected leaders or government officials.</p>
<p>3. To investigate the impact of social media on citizen participation in Kenya.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Passion is a key driver of social media. People comment or post on issues that involves them.</li> <li>ii. Most respondents 91% who reported to use social media had not been involved in recommending policies on governance on social media.</li> <li>iii. Most respondents used social media to ask for services mainly from corporate organisations or companies. Social media offers a cheaper, easily accessible and faster way of asking or demanding for services.</li> </ul>
<p>4. To determine how the government utilises feedback obtained from social media.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Most respondents reported that the government or elected leaders delayed in sending back feedback.</li> <li>ii. Most of the respondents 36.6% reported that most of the feedback or reports they received were not helpful.</li> <li>iii. Majority of the respondents 34.4% reported to rarely trusted information put on social media</li> </ul>

### 5.3 Conclusions

From the study the researcher found out that social media is quite popular among the youths. Among the reasons as to why it is popular is because it offered a faster, cheaper, easily accessible medium to go about their business. Among the common reasons for using social media include entertainment, communication or catching up with friends. Similar to findings made by Pempek et al (2009) the study found out that most students spent their time lurking on social media looking at friends profiles to see what is happening in other person's life even though they may not interact with them at that time. We can therefore conclude that even though social media is increasingly becoming popular among the young people, they rarely used it as a tool for citizen participation. Interesting is also the fact that a majority of the respondents suggested that it could be a good platform for citizen participation.

The findings also indicated that social media offered an open or a free medium for expression and also a medium that brought the citizens closer to the elected leaders or the government. On social media everyone has an equal platform for participation. Though there could be restrictions online, they are quite minimal compared to conventional forms of participation. Traditional forms of participation for instance have mainly been to services and government staff who possibly send information out in a newsletter or email. Social media allows one to directly reach out to people. We can therefore conclude that though social media is an alternative to the traditional media, the use of social media should not be viewed as a replacement for other forms of engagement rather it is a tool that complements other modes of participation.

The researcher also found out that passion is a key driver for interactions on social media. Users commented or posted on matters they were passionate about just as the study conducted by Chatora (2012) had indicated. From the low levels of citizen participation among the respondents we can then conclude that a majority of the youths in that age bracket were less enthusiastic about issues governance. This could be perhaps they may not be aware of their roles as citizens. Social media can help elected leaders and government identify key influencers in groups who in turn inform the social media programs that the leaders or government employ. Using the same forms of media which the youths are comfortable with will help them participate more.

The researcher also finds out that as much as there were a few youths that engaged in citizen participation through social media, a majority complained of lack of timely or adequate feedback from government, civil society or even elected officials. This made them feel that they are not being heard or listened to. The findings also concurred with literature on citizen participation showing that governments still underutilize the possibility of active participation programs (Reddick 2011: Royo, Yetano and Acerete 2011: Scott 2006: Yang and Callahan 2005). The findings were also in line with Munter (1992) that governments or elected leaders ought not to see social media as a medium to transmit information to the public, but also a medium to get ideas. Among the major success of social media is perhaps the increased interaction between its users. By giving citizens an opportunity to create a marketplace of ideas and fully engage them on governance, citizens gain control over how service is delivered. We can therefore conclude that social media is best used when the users themselves go beyond just getting a message to the youths, rather engage in meaningful exchange.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study the researcher came up with the following recommendations.

- 1) There should be a regular check on the youth's perception of change that has resulted from their engagement if any. Regular feedback should also be provided on ways which the youths have been listened to or contributed and the results or outcomes of their suggestions. It is imperative to note that good youth engagement should result into real change in their lives.
- 2) The empowerment of the youth should be viewed to as well be equally as important in improving citizen participation. The ability of the youths to participate on issues to do with governance and transparency should not be ignored. In addition to allocating resources for service delivery there should also be resources for awareness raising or capacity building for both the youths as well as government officials or elected leaders.
- 3) The relationship between youths and political parties or civil societies is edgy. In order to avoid the series of scepticism and distrust political parties or civil societies should be encouraged to develop space for the youth by removing barriers to youth engagement.

Despite the current legal and political imperatives for political parties to engage the youths there are variations in the degree in which the process is taking place in the country. The youths need to be informed about what governments and civil society are doing in the society.

- 4) This study also recommends that strategic approach to using social media should be taken by governments and elected leaders as well. This includes setting up policies, training as well as resources to ensure that the users can capitalise on the opportunities presented by social media.
- 5) From the findings above, in order to engage and provoke their interest in citizen participation, capacity building should be lively and interesting. The use of celebrities or public figures that the youths can will be important. Governments and elected leaders also can show interest in the youth by pursuit of issues that they care about. In addition to showing them the significance of politics within their lives.
- 6) There is also a need to develop a structure that supports youth's participation in governance. Such structures should be able to match the needs of the youths and that of the government. Governments should listen to the voices of the youth and establish an open line of communication with the youths.

## **5.5 Suggestions for Further Research**

- 1) While social media has developed into a huge phenomenon over the last few years, Facebook has emerged as one of the popular social media sites. It would be interesting to know why facebook is the most preferred site.
- 2) There should also be research on gender and the usage of social networking sites to perhaps better understand the effects upshots of male and female using social network sites.
- 3) There should also be studies about the roles of citizens and how they can effect change. study should look at audiences and their responsiveness.



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I

#### Introduction Letter

Tullah Stephen,

P.O Box 501-00300,

Nairobi.

Dear Sir/Madam,

#### Re: Participation in Research

I am a student pursuing a Master of Arts in Communication Studies at the University of Nairobi. I am conducting a research on the role of social media in citizen participation in transparent governance in Kenya. To this end, I kindly request that you complete the following questionnaire regarding your habits, preferences and attitudes towards transparency and governance on social media. It should take 10-15 minutes. Your response is of utmost importance to me. Please note that you are not required to write your name or contact details on the questionnaire. It remains anonymous.

Should you have any queries or comments regarding this survey, please contact me via 0721795609 or email [tullastephen@yahoo.com](mailto:tullastephen@yahoo.com).

---

Yours sincerely,

Tullah Stephen

University of Nairobi

## Project Questionnaire

### SECTION 1: RESPONDENTS BACKGROUND

1. AGE:(tick (√) one that applies)
  - a. 17-20
  - b. 21-23
  - c. 24-26
2. SEX:(tick (√) one that applies)
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
3. LEVEL OF EDUCATION (In Progress) (tick (√) one that applies)
  - a. Degree level
  - b. Diploma level
  - c. Certificate

### SECTION 2: SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND FREQUENCY.

1. Do you use social media? (Tick (√) one that applies)
  - a. YES
  - b. NO
  
2. Which ones of the following do you use? (Tick (√) all that apply)
  - a. Blog/web
  - b. Facebook
  - c. Twitter
  - d. WhatsApp
  - e. Youtube
  - f. LinkedIn
  
3. How often do you use any of the ticked above?
  - Daily
  - Once a week
  - One in a month
  - Rarely
  
4. What devices do you use to access the social media platforms?
  - Smartphone
  - Personal Computers
  - School lab/cyber café
  
5. For what purpose do you use social media? (List all)  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

6. Which of the following statements do you agree with?
- a. I only read comments and posts by other people
  - b. I read and comment on topics that interest me
  - c. I block those posts that do not interest me
  - d. I do share my posts as well as other people's posts that interest me?

**SECTION 3: SOCIAL MEDIA AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

1. Are you a registered member or a volunteer with any of the following groups? (Tick (√) all that apply)

Civil Society Organisation	
Labour Organisation	
Political Party	
Youth Club	
Community Based Organisation	

2. How have you seen governments, large and small, use social media? (List all)

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. In the last six months have you done the following? (Indicate Y for Yes and N for NO)

- a. Followed or become a fan of a government agency or official through their page on a social networking site?
- b. Read the blog of a government agency, civil society or elected official
- c. Attended any public rally or forum you were invited via social media?
- d. Attended a political demonstration?

4. To what extent do you agree with the following statement? (On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being strongly agree and 5 strongly disagree)



	1	2	3	4	5
Social media provides a better opportunity to propose inputs or ask about policy and community issues in Kenya?					
People who use social media are more likely to show a higher level of their assessment of transparency in governance than those who engage in other citizen participation programs?					
Social media is a useful medium for good governance and citizen participation?					
Social media offers powerful and mostly free tools for organization, mobilization and daily work by citizens and associations?					
Public opinion via social media is improving accountability and policy makers' behaviour.					
At best, social media tools enable transparency of processes in the collaboration with the public					

5. While participating in online discussions do you sign up with your official details or using a false identification?

Yes  No  Sometimes  Never

6. When posting or interacting with government officials or elected leaders how freely do you express yourself?

Not freely  Somewhat freely  Neither free nor not freely  Very freely

7. How much attention do you feel the following pay attention to what people want?

	Much attention	Some attention	Neither much nor No attention	Not much attention	No attention at all
Government officials					
Elected officials e.g. Mps, MCAs					
Civil Society Organizations/NGOs					

8. What was the rate of response from government officials or elected leaders?

Immediate  Within 1 day  A week  More than a week,  Never

9. Was the feedback you received after posting or interacting with government officials/ elected leaders useful?

Very useful  Useful  Somewhat usefu Not very usefu Not at all usefu

10. How useful was the information posted on social media by the government officials or elected officials?

Very useful  Useful  Somewhat usefu Not very usefu Not at all usefu

11. Have you ever recommended something on any social media platforms and the concerned authorities picked it up? (If YES, then kindly explain what it was if NO proceed to the next question)

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

12. How much of the time do you think you can trust info posted by the government or CSO on social media?

Just about always Most of the time,  Only some of the time  Never

*Thank you for taking part in this research*