



**SOCIAL MEDIA AS COMMUNICATION CHANNEL FOR INNOVATORS: A  
CASE STUDY OF INNOVATORS IN NAIROBI COUNTY**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT PRESENTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF  
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DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES.**

11/11/2022

# DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this project is my original work and has not been presented for a masters, degree, diploma or certificate in this or any other university.

## Student's Signature

Signature  .....

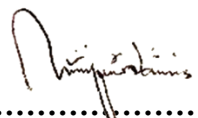
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22 November 2022

.....

**DATE**

## **DEDICATION**

To my daughter Linda whom I hope will realize her talents and dreams early enough for posterity. My husband John for the support and encouragement.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my family (John & Linda) who have stood by me, pushed me hard and encouraged me throughout this study. The family of Linda Cock for the immense support throughout my studies. My supervisor Dr. Addams Mututa for his patience, understanding and guidance. There are countless others that offered words of encouragement and prayers, accepted to be interviewed and facilitated this project to fruition. May God bless you all.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This was a case study examining the use of social media by innovators in Nairobi County. The general objective was to establish how social media is adopted as a communication channel on innovations, and the specific objectives were: (1) To establish how innovators use social media platforms as a communication channel, (2) to examine the challenges innovators face in using social media as the medium of communication in innovation, and (3) to explore the most preferred social media channel of communication among innovators. As a case study, primary data was collected using questionnaires administered to innovators and interviews were conducted to incubation managers. Under findings, first objective, the outcome was that innovators used social media for communication, networking, sharing ideas and challenges, conducting research, online mentorship and training, and soliciting raw innovation support for their ventures. As such, social media has become an important aspect of life and impacted different facets of businesses, including new ventures. In the second objective, under findings, innovators faced several challenges when using social media as the medium of communication in the innovation process - Internet downtimes, poor access in certain parts of the towns(s), and expensive Internet packages. Lastly, objective three findings revealed Facebook as the most prevalently used platform followed by Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter, then YouTube, and TikTok.

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Overview**

This introductory chapter discusses the background of the study, problem statement, research objectives and research questions. Further, it discusses the justification, significance, scope and limitations of the study.

### **1.2. Background of the Study**

Globally, the media plays a significant role in promoting the development of society (Bruns, 2014). Digital media has proliferated over the past decade (Mangold & Faulds, 2009) with over two billion people, or 34 percent of the world's population accessing the internet (Internet World Stats, 2013). This has given rise to social media. Cho & Kim (2011) define social media as a group of internet based applications founded on technological concepts of web 2.0 and that permitted the creation and exchange of user generated content. According to Nielsen (2012), social media has advanced, offering global consumers new methods of engagement and becoming an integral part of people's daily lives. Among the various social media platforms, Facebook enjoys the greatest popularity (Culnan, McHugh, & Zubillaget, 2010). One out of every seven people in the world owns a Facebook account and nearly four in five internet users visit other social media sites (Nielsen, 2012). The outcome of this media proliferation is enhanced communication as instant connectivity replaces physical boundaries with the virtual world (Menezes & de Quadros Carvalho, (2009). For innovators in Sub-Saharan Africa, this presents a great yet under-utilised opportunity (Swaans et al., 2013). This could be partly attributed to a



possible disconnect between technological hubs such as innovation incubation Centre's and social media platforms. Kenya, a developing sub-Saharan nation, is exemplary of this situation. According to Kiragu (2014), the challenge of inadequate information faced by innovators and the incubation Centre's in Kenya can be eased by using media to foster innovation development and sustainability, which is currently insufficient.

Social media networks consist of the bonding relationship or strong ties and the weak ties, known as bridging relationships (Bodin, Crona & Ernstson, 2006). Overall, studies about the role of networks such as resilience theory comment on their capacity to strengthen insights (Van Breda, 2011). Social media, an example of digital network infrastructure, are efficient in transmitting information, ideas, norms, or practices. Accordingly, social media sites, the hubs for contemporary social media networking, provide innovators with new opportunities to engage each other. Social media available to innovators platforms to discuss solutions to existing problems in the community. The number of users tweeting about TV content has increased to more than 33 percent as of June 2012. Watching television while accessing social media is a daily activity for 44 percent of tablet and smartphone owners in the U.S. Social media usage is more prevalent in Latin America than in the Middle East or Africa, where over 60 percent of consumers use social media while watching television.

The estimated internet penetration rate in Africa is approximately 15.6% with continued growth (Internet World Stats, 2012). The rates of internet penetration in East Africa stands at 12% in Tanzania, 1.7% in Burundi, 13% in Uganda, 7% in Rwanda, and 28% in Kenya (Internet World Stats, 2012). Kenya stands at the highest in internet connectivity in the above statistics which would translate to high rate of internet access and social media

accessibility (Sakali, 2013). This provides rationale that innovators may benefit from the high internet connectivity and internet audience through social media platforms. In tandem with this, innovators need to make use of the social media platforms to market their solutions and reach the customers. Most investors want to be associated with a start-up that has social media presence irrespective of the duration of the start-up's existence. It's believed that social media presence of a start-up is key in branding and building a customers' and an investors' confidence towards the start-up.

Moreover, innovators have a challenge of producing knowledge as a resource, and this has been attributed to global dynamics especially in instances of climate change that pose a challenge to existing technologies especially in agriculture (Carayannis, Barth, & Campbell, 2012). However, researchers argue that such changes should be viewed by innovators as opportunities rather than challenges especially in encouraging sustainable utilisation of natural resources for societal development (Carayannis et al., 2012). It's important for innovators to consider that the potential to produce knowledge solely depends on them and the initiatives they put to have new innovations in place. The society and the government provide the most needed resources and support but the ability to pin-point the problem and the solution is their prerogative. The effort to ensure that the solution is developed and rolled to the market for the target user depends on the innovators' interest to pursue the development of the product amidst resource availability.

Social media is predominant in producing opportunities for creative construction of a model of participation through education within social innovation processes. At the same time, journalists become mediators of democratic participation of citizens. The networks acquired in social media play a major role in disseminating

information, searching, marketing and influence discovery (Hadžialić, 2017). It takes a lot of assumptions even to be able to link and interact between social media and social innovation in a proper manner, for a society to create a steady stream of social innovations. As a starting point for the dissemination of social innovation, it is very difficult to control social media, regardless of the skill of the individuals involved.

According to Harri (2012), many researchers have argued that organisations that engage in innovative processes, increase diversity due to customers who come up with new ideas that they were not privy to. In social media, feedback from the audience can be used to stimulate and challenge the organisational perceptions. Consequently, by allowing audience feedback and views to be heard via social media, this helps organisations to see things in a new dimension and that organisations that have connected with customers are amazed at how quickly they can generate ideas. Whereas innovation involves impacting on social change, social media may be the most suitable means of reaching the community and borrowing or bringing up new innovative processes creating the much-needed impact in a society. It's against this backdrop that innovators need to realise the need to work on innovations from the available resources within and beyond their surroundings to provide simple solutions to societal needs through social media platforms.

### **1.3. Problem Statement**

Helpman (2004) argues that innovation is increasingly becoming important for economic growth, partly because of rising demands for types of economic growth that enhance instead of demanding human relationships. He further argues that the key growth sectors of the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy look set to be health, education and care which account between 20-30% of Gross Domestic

Product and more in some countries. Accordingly, the adoption of innovation by these industries seems incidental to the strategic growth of these sectors, positioning innovation as a key support tool for economic development. Bughin & Chui (2010) argue that social media was originally intended as a tool for friends to connect, communicate and share. It was subsequently adopted as a business communication tool. Presently, businesses use social networks to support their operational processes such as customer relationship management and marketing (Harris & Rae, 2009). Additionally, 70% of global populations learn about others' experiences via social media while 65% learn about products, brands and services on the various social media platforms (Nielsen, 2012). According to Roberts & Piller (2014), to obtain valuable new product development insights from social media platforms, companies need to take a unique approach to each platform, since people use different social media platforms for different purposes.

This is even more critical given the increase in social media platforms, internet connectivity, and access to smartphones; all enablers of social media activities. Given that previous studies have not demonstrated the link between social media and innovation, in Nairobi County, it is in this context that this study focuses on how innovators in Nairobi county could maximise on the use of social media platforms to improve on their innovation processes while, marketing and branding their innovations to position themselves for the market in order to ease the demand in job creation and overreliance of white collar jobs in the different sectors of the economy. The above scenario is also applicable with pandemics i.e. COVID-19 (which occurred during the period of this study) where economies worldwide experienced lockdown and social media played a significant enabler to societies.

#### 1.4. **Objectives of the Study**

This subsection outlines the research objectives and the guiding research questions that were applied in the study.

**General Objective:** To establish the role of social media as a communication channel on Innovation in Nairobi County.

#### **Specific Objectives:**

- 1) To establish how innovators use social media platforms as communication channels on innovation in Nairobi County.
- 2) To examine the challenges that innovators face in using social media as the medium of communication on innovation processes.
- 3) To examine the preferred social media channel of communication amongst innovators in Nairobi county.

#### 1.5. **Research Questions**

- 1) In what ways do innovators use social media as a communication on innovation within Nairobi County?
- 2) What are the challenges of using social media platforms as communication tools by innovators within Nairobi County?
- 3) What are the preferred social channels of communication to audiences amongst innovators in Nairobi County?

#### 1.6. **Rationale**

The emergence of new media has changed the traditional way of communication involving technology. Social media, for instance, has become a great enabler among entrepreneurs who are significantly contributing to economic development of all nations worldwide. This

marks a shift from the traditional communication approach of disseminating information to the use of social media, a shift which affects how innovators communicate with their audiences both locally and globally. Whereas there are studies about global use of social media as a communication channel for innovators, Nairobi County has remained largely ignored. This study on the use of social media as a communication channel for innovators seeks to address this gap. The anticipated benefit is to support the growth of Nairobi's innovation sector through research.

### 1.7. **Justification**

Innovation has been suggested as a major pillar of development. Developing nations like Kenya are still experiencing challenges like high levels of youth unemployment (Hartzenberg, 2011). Existing research suggests that innovation could be a solution to the current challenges of development faced by the developing world (Fukuda-Parr & Lopes, 2013). Kenya is among the developing nations that could benefit from fostering such efforts to boost innovation. Youth unemployment rates remain high especially in Sub Saharan Africa and Africa in general (World Development Indicators, 2018), hence the need for innovative approaches to respond to this problem. This study provides insightful information into how innovators interact with social media disseminating information on useful solutions to the problems faced by communities and how these innovators can engage the communities for feedback mechanism via social media. It informs innovators into how they could effectively use social media to impact the society via innovative solutions tailored for specific groups in communities.

This study contributes to a body of knowledge with regard to innovators. Such information can be useful in policy development towards achievement of vision 2030. The study could

be useful to innovators on how to package their information for dissemination on social media for their target audience. The study could be useful to social media creators to avail more platforms for content generation by innovators. The study could generate useful information on innovation to the youth, invoking their thoughts towards generating solutions that could create employment and provide solutions to some social problems faced globally. This study generates useful information towards operating sustainable business on social media platforms.

### 1.8. **Scope of the Study**

The study focuses on incubation Centres, hubs and accelerators within Nairobi County both public based and privately owned. Focus was on innovators who have already commercialized or at the commercialization stage and with prototypes. Bearing that innovators are in different sectors, the study focused on all sectors of entrepreneurs working towards social impact. This study involved enterprises that have been in existence for the last ten years to the day of the study, with less than 100 employees on regular or part time basis and specialising in providing goods and services. The study used the incubation centre managers and administrators to reach the innovators within their jurisdiction as most innovators are attached to an incubator, accelerator or hub which is the ecosystem that supports entrepreneurs in the country. According to VC4A 2018 Start-up Ecosystem Analysis Report in Kenya, there were 1,333 ventures in the ecosystem registered in the country, while there were 41 incubation centres in Kenya (Kinya, Wanjau & Omondi, 2018).

### 1.9. **Limitations of the Study**

One of the limitations encountered was the use of the case study methodology, which limited the findings of the study to innovators and social media use within Nairobi County. This would have limited interpretation of the findings given that innovators in other regions could be facing different challenges from those in Nairobi.

### 1.10. **Operational Usage and Definition of Terms**

- a. Social Media - Internet-based applications that allow user-generated content to be created and exchanged, based on the concepts of web 2.0 (Cho & Kim, 2011).
- b. Social Networking sites - People use these platforms to network, share, and interact with others online through web-based social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, zoom, and LinkedIn. (Taylor, Lewin & Strutton, 2011).
- c. Social Network - A social network refers to the set of relationships among individuals.
- d. Innovator – A Person who introduces new methods, ideas, or products.
- e. Innovation – “Is a new idea, creative thoughts, and new imaginations in form of device or method”. Application of better solutions that meet new requirements, unarticulated needs or existing market needs.
- f. Grant - These funds have no repayment obligation; they are typically used in ways agreed upon prior to disbursement (Scale Up! Entrepreneurs' Guide to Investment in Kenya).
- g. Accelerator – An accelerator program that takes in relatively early-stage start-ups, helps them develop their product, and provides mentoring and teaching as well as connections to investors and partners. At the end of the accelerator program,



companies are usually allowed to pitch their services to investors at a 'pitch day'. An accelerator usually operates for a limited timeframe from a few weeks to a few months, unlike an incubator (Scale Up! Entrepreneurs' Guide to Investment in Kenya).

- h.** Incubator – Early-stage companies are taken in by incubators, which help them narrow down their business ideas and connect them to funding and partners; incubators, on the other hand, help start-ups build on their ideas rather than coming in after they already have a product or service in place. (Scale Up!) Entrepreneurs’’ Guide to Investment in Kenya).
- i.** Crowd funding - typically raising small amounts from a large group of people online.
- j.** Commercialization - the process of bringing new products or services into the market. This entails production, distribution, marketing, sales, customer support and key functions important to achieving the commercial success of the new product or service.
- k.** Startup-Companies under three years old in the growth stage and becoming profitable (if not already).
- l.** Seed funding- First round, small early-stage investment from family members, friends, banks or an investor.
- m.** MVP -Minimum Viable Product
- n.** Coworking- A shared working environment
- o.** Bootstrap – To self-fund without outside environment

- p.** Scaleup- A company that has already validated its product in a market and is economically sustainable.
- q.** VC -Venture Capital
- r.** Venture Capital-Financing from a pool of investors in a venture capital firm in return for equity
- s.** Pitch Deck- A short version of business plan presenting key figures generally to investors

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Overview**

The chapter explores social media development and existing scholarly literature on its role as a communication tool in impacting on social innovations. The chapter also reviews the existing approaches to social media use on social innovations, available social media platforms and challenges associated by using the channel while exploring more avenues on social innovations. A review of previous literature on the impact of social media on innovations has been undertaken.

### **2.2. The Use of Social Media by Innovators for Communication**

Research on the advent and growth of technology has been captured by many in Academia. According to scholars such as Younes & Al-Zoubi (2015), technology has impacted many areas of society. The largest impact of technological innovation on society is on communication and learning. Innovations on technology have made learning collaborative and more interactive. It has helped learners engage better with the materials they are studying. Innovation has made it easy for the learners to access materials and resources.

#### **2.2.1. How Technology Has Fuelled Innovation**

The invention of the Internet has made learning quicker and easier for many students (Younes & Al-Zoubi, 2015). Learners get access to information of any kind they are searching for at a twenty-four-hour rate and they can get access to anything they want. Another thing is that students can take exams and quizzes more easily and teachers are no longer troubled to attend physical classes; instead they can hold an online class more easily and effectively. Technology has also expanded classroom boundaries, learning now can be self-paced. Nowadays many people learn through

social media and YouTube. For example, when a person wants to learn how to make pizza, he/she does not require to attend a physical class, the person through his computer or laptop can search the cooking procedure on YouTube and learn. Online learning is more effective to more students than when they are seated in a classroom or reading from a textbook. The innovations in technology have made learning convenient and more fun.

The other impact technology innovation has had on society is on communication, how people communicate and talk with our friends and families worldwide. As Roztocki, Soja&Weistroffer (2019) put it, there are so many electronic communications that have come up as a result of technological advancement. Some of the electronic communication now in place are emails, social networking, FaceTime, Facebook, Instagram and video call. Video calling can be done on apps such as meet and zoom. The apps are used to hold meetings and conferences and the participants attend the meeting across the world (McCauley, 2013). The use of email is popular in school setting where the lecturer communicates to the students. Lecturers share notes and assignments to the students via email. Consequently, students hand in feedback on assignments given via emails. The two commonly used APPs zoom and meet can also be used in a classroom setting where lectures hold real time academic sessions instead of the traditional face to face classroom set up. The students interact on the platform during the lesson by asking the lecture questions or fellow students and also answering questions. Communication worldwide is now easier and faster due to of social media (Roztocki et al., 2019). Relationships are now maintained by family, friends and colleagues albeit residing in different locations through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or WhatsApp apps. They chat via text message, voice call or even video call. Another impact of technology on society is on the health industry. People now keep safe and stay healthy through the help of technology. Through some phone applications people can now watch their weight, monitor

their calories intake, and measure their heart rate at any time. Treatment is now easily accessible. Doctors can prescribe medication to a patient while he/she is at home.

Though innovation of technology has a positive impact on society, it also has some negative impact. According to Younes & Al-Zoubi (2015), The first negative impact is that through mobile communication, people making face-to-face conduct and sociable communication has reduced. The use of mobile technology can decrease relations and communication between individuals. The other negative impact is intrusion of privacy. When you store your personal data on your laptop for example, it can be hacked by other people and use the information to commit social crime.

Technology has come to be thanks to creativity and innovation. Also, there is a way through which technology enhances creativity and innovation. Therefore, there is a symbiotic connection between creativity/innovation and technology. Most in the scholarly world define creativity as the ability to come up with new and unique ideas whereas innovation refers to the implementation of those new ideas (Shah Bin Mazla et al., 2020). Therefore, creativity is deemed as the driving force behind innovation. Innovation and creativity have become critical skills for achieving impactful results in developed economies. As a result, the need for creative problem solving has arisen due to more and more management issues requiring creative insights so as to find favourable solutions. Shah bin Shah Bin Mazla et al. (2020) looks at the importance of creativity and innovation in various fields such as business and entrepreneurship and how to strengthen it.

There are several benefits of innovation captured in literature. First, it increases the productivity of an organisation. Encouraging employees to engage in critical thinking and thus giving them the time and resources to explore new areas for innovative ideas is a key determinant to a cost effective business solution. Through creativity and innovation, many businesses undergo a cost benefit analysis so as to minimise the costs of production with an aim of maximising profits (Juliana et

al., 2021). It enables a business to survive. All businesses across the globe are in competition with one another and they always tend to outshine the other in terms of productivity and efficiency of services they offer to its consumers. Businesses tend to adjust to changes in consumer demand of goods and services over a period of time. Therefore, it is required for a business to come up with creative and innovative approaches to counteract the changes brought about by consumer behaviour in the long run (Juliana et al., 2021). As a result, this will prevent the collapse of firms and thus enhance their survival.

Pillay (2014) also established that innovation promotes a good business reputation. In the competitive market, entrepreneurs need to come up with effective ways on how to attract customers. The products and services of a certain firm should have a distinguishing element that consumers identify with. For example, a business that deals with clothing and accessories tends to give discounts with an aim of attracting customers. This strategy enhances the reputation of the business to its targeted market. Creativity enhances problem solving (Pillay, 2014). This gives a firm that competitive edge that any business is striving to achieve. The need for creative problem solving arises from the problem of managing resources. More management issues that a firm undergoes require creative insights that can bring about a viable solution.

As for Harrington (2018), he argues that creativity and innovation promotes employment. It is well known that employment is very crucial in reducing income inequality and thus promoting economic growth in any given country. Through creativity and innovation, individuals are able to become productive and thus earn a source of living. For example, in Kenya, the introduction of the jua kali industry has led to an increase in employment among many youths thus mitigating the issue of unemployment in the country. It is through innovation that one can introduce new and a variety of goods and services into the market. Creativity and innovation, enables businesses to

compete effectively since they won't be selling homogeneous products (Harrington, 2018). For example, the Tesla Company has invented electric vehicles that don't consume fuel as opposed to regular car companies. The main aim of this invention is to mitigate environmental pollution that may lead to climate change. The main objective of a business is to yield returns as a result of their productivity. Through creative and innovative ideas, entrepreneurs are able to come up with ways of increasing their stock which will go hand in hand with increasing their revenue (Hua, Kabia&Arkady, 2015). As a result, this will enable businesses to increase their profit margin. Moreover, this positively impacts economic growth in a given country.

In summary, there is plenty of literature to show that creativity and innovation is without a doubt an important aspect in influencing entrepreneurship. However, there is a need to come up with measures that strengthen creativity and innovation (Hua et al., 2015). For instance, the government plays a crucial role in coming up with various policies that enhance entrepreneurship. Firstly, the government can offer a tax holiday to infant businesses to enable them to gradually grow in terms of their productivity without any pressure of high taxes. Secondly, provision of resources to start-up businesses. Authorities should involve and give emerging infant businesses the opportunity to grow by providing facilities that promote their growth. Finally, enabling industry bodies and the department of commerce to take lead in driving greater collaboration between businesses and start-ups.

Social networking sites are social media allowing users to create personal pages, provide other users with access to these pages, and exchange with them instant messages and emails. These personal pages otherwise called profiles contain various content created by users such as photos, videos, audio files and blogs (Kaplan &Haenlein, 2010). Examples of social networking sites include:Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, skype,

twitter, google, zoom and webinars amongst others. It is estimated that 4.48 billion people currently use social media worldwide (Statista Research Department, 2021). This doubled from 2.07 billion from the previous years. The growth rate of social media services as of 2015 was at an average of 12.5%. Despite the above figures, it was observed that the growth is on the decline with 2019-2020 data indicating a 9.2% growth rate. In various regions, it was observed that social media growth rate in 2019-2020 was leading in Asia by +16.98% followed by Africa which led by 13.92%, then South America +8.00%, North America +6.96%, Europe +4.32% and Australasia +4.9% (Statista Research Department, 2021). Moreover, it was observed that 60.99% of the 7.87 billion people around the world accessing social media sites are normally audiences aged +13 and of which 63% are deemed as active users. 93.33% of internet users were reported to be on social media, a titanic of 85% of mobile internet users are active on these networks. Out of the 4.48 billion people using social media, 99% access websites or apps through a mobile device with only 1.32% accessing the platforms through desktop (Statista Research Department, 2021). It was estimated that the average time a person spends on social media a day is 2hours 24 minutes and this is if an individual signed up at the age of 16 and lived up to 70, they would spend 5.7 years of their life on it. Facebook is the leading network at 2.9 billion monthly active users, followed by YouTube with 2.3 billion, then WhatsApp with 2billion, FB messenger with 1.3 billion and WeChat with 1.2 billion (Statista Research Department, 2021). In the United States of America, it was observed that 72.3% of the total population actively use social media, totalling a number of 240 million people. 54% of the population that uses these sites are females while the remaining 46% are males.



### **2.2.2. The Use of Social Media**

According to Merriam Webster dictionary,” social media is a form of electronic communication (as Websites for social networking and blogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (as videos). Chu & Kim (2011) define social media as a group of internet based applications founded on technological concepts of web 2.0 and that permitted the creation and exchange of user generated content. According to Kaplan&Haenlein (2010, p. 61), social media are ‘a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user Generated Content’.

In addition to SMS-based messaging platforms (like WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, WeChat), blogs and social networking sites (like Facebook, LinkedIn, Xing), social networking sites, microblogs, community media (like Instagram, Snapchat, Flickr, YouTube, Dailymotion), wiki-based knowledge sharing sites (like Wikipedia), aggregators of social news, and news sites (such as BuzzFeed, Huffington Post, Tuko News), Websites from traditional news organisations, social bookmarking sites, social curation sites, search engines (like Digg, Digg), forums, mailing lists, newsgroups, social question and answer sites (like Quora), user reviews (like Yelp or Amazon.com), and location-based social networks are some of the sites. Individuals, communities, and organizations are creating, sharing and consuming information in unprecedented ways thanks to social media. People have also been able to communicate more so thanks to social networks, which have removed geographical barriers that previously restricted instant communication, allowing successful collaborations facilitated by social media.

Kietzmann et al. (2011) opine that individuals and communities share user generated content through social media technologies. This has been made possible through the continued growth in internet connectivity, accessibility and affordability of smartphones (Internet World Stats, 2012). In Africa, Internet penetration rates are estimated at 15.6% in the continent and continue to grow with Kenya rating at 28% connectivity. In Kenya, the number of licensed Internet Service Providers (ISPs) increased by 24.9 percent from 177 in 2014 to 221 in 2015. The estimated Internet users also expanded by 35.9 per cent to 35.6 million users in the same period. Total wireless Internet subscriptions increased by 45.4 per cent to 23.8 million with the terrestrial mobile data subscribers having the largest share. (National Information Communication & Technology ICT Policy, 2016).

Social media has a variety of online formats for sharing information online, according to Mangold & Faulds (2009). Examples include social networking websites (SNSs), creative works sharing websites (e.g. YouTube, Flickr), collaborative websites (e.g. Wikipedia) and microblogging sites (e.g. Twitter). Among the most popular online activities, Social Networking Sites have recently surpassed email, according to Nielsen (2009), and they have allowed consumers to connect with one another and exchange opinions, thoughts, and information about products and brands, so social media has become a meaningful way of interacting with others. In contrast to websites where users are limited to passive viewing of content created for them, the medium allows users to collaborate as content creators in a virtual community. Additionally, Mangold & Faulds (2009) denote that social media has become a new hybrid component of integrated marketing communications (IMC) that allows organisations to establish strong relationships with their consumers. This means that consumers gain confidence in the brand through social media.

The rate of Internet penetration in Kenya is 28% according to (Internet World Stats, 2012), while the ICT sector in the country has rapidly grown since the launch of the Internet in the 90's. Kenya today is viewed as Silicon Savannah because of its growth in ICT and emergence of the M-Pesa services that are globally recognized. According to CAK (2018), Kenya had 45.7 million internet subscribers by December 2018, with most using mobile phones to access the internet. With the growth of Internet-connected mobile devices, social networking sites have been reconfigured into more diverse ways of accessing and utilizing social media.

According to the Social Media Consumption Report (2018), the most commonly used social media in Kenya is WhatsApp (88.6%), Facebook (88.5%). The third most used social media is YouTube (51.2%) followed Google+ (41.3%) while both LinkedIn and Snapchat are the least popular at 9.3% and 9.0% respectively. According to the report, most Kenyans use social media platforms for entertainment, education, job related and social matters. The most commonly used platform for education is Google+ (57.1%),

while YouTube (74.4%) is commonly used for entertainment. WhatsApp is mostly used (40.0%) for family and (49.3% on social issues. LinkedIn is mostly used on job related issues (61.9%) and education matters (42.1%).

A majority of Kenyans access social media on a daily basis (Social Media Consumption report, 2018) with the mobile phone being the mostly used device to access the platforms. The report denotes that LinkedIn and Yahoo are accessed mostly from the laptop and desktop, while Facebook and WhatsApp are mostly accessed

from social media platforms via mobile phones (Social Media Consumption Report in Kenya, 2018).

### **2.3. Preferred Social Media Channels by Innovators for Communication and Interaction**

Owiny, Mehta & Marezki (2014) note that development of social media technologies has brought forth new partnership opportunities with communities, development organisations, social entrepreneurs and other bodies. Whether it is public–private partnerships, social media networks assist social entrepreneurs in reaching out to communities and other development partners towards pulling resources for economic development. Further, under the partnership amicable solutions to problems in the face of the community are easily arrived at. Social innovators will identify a problem and have the industry fund the process or rather the industry may also engage social innovators by identifying a problem in specific communities and have the innovators provide the solution. All these engagements may be through social media platforms with the internet playing the major platform for more formal engagements with the industry (Owiny et al., 2014). The social innovator, through social media platforms stands a great chance in engaging the community to assist him identify their problem and could further engage the same community to reach a solution through feedback mechanism via social media.

Alternatively, by immersing himself in the community in a bid to understand the solutions needed and come up with designs specific to the community's needs, the social innovator will be assisting the society in innovation creation and gap identification thus enabling them become social innovators in their own right (van der Vlist & Helmond, 2021). Thus, the communities will learn from direct interactions with innovators as well as observation

methods techniques applied by the innovator. The use of WhatsApp, Facebook page and Skype calls have more often than not been the major interlock between.

Further on engaging local or global partners is pertinent to social innovators. Partners are key in assisting the social innovator grow his venture to impact the society. According to van der Vlist & Helmond (2021), most partners largely emerge as investors willing to partner with the innovator and own a stake in the start-up. Interestingly most of these engagements have been sealed through social media engagements by both. In instances the investor may have known about the existence of the Start-up through the internet and vice versa. The emergence of social media has eased how communication and business is conducted globally (van der Vlist & Helmond, 2021). Celebrities, both locally and internationally have played influence in business and entertainment through social media partnerships. A number of these celebrities own Instagram accounts which they use towards influencing and educating their followers.

Most social innovators in their quest to seek financial support have applied for grants funding and engaged in competitions with financial rewards through the cloud. According to Mathews (2016), the Internet has continually played a major role for the social innovators who spend a considerable amount of time, searching for opportunities both locally and globally. Major funding for Start-ups and proposals have been sealed through social media; either via email, skype calls. The Social innovators raise proposals and business plans sharing them with potential partners. This may lead to major funding and potential partnerships after a rigorous social media channelling of feedback and communication. Partnerships have been sealed through skype calls, engagement and formal agreements signed and sealed electronically via email. Additionally, it's via social

media that an investor gets to win the trust of the social innovator (Mathews, 2016). How the social innovator profiles himself and his platform through a continuum process of informing and marketing his platform is what leads the potential partner or investor in making an informed decision.

Furthermore, a study report by Siemens foundation on entrepreneurship identifies partnerships as a strategic planning trend for small business survival, as they can provide small businesses with an opportunity to invest scarce resources for social impact in the local environment. The study recommends that policy makers should create favourable conditions that allow social partnerships to emerge, as these partnerships can help small businesses survive in resource scarce environments and at the same time have a social impact

According to Global Crowdfunding Market Growth (Status and Outlook) 2019-2024 Report, the major players in the global market include Kickstarter, Indiegogo, GoFundMe and CrowdCub amongst other twenty platforms. All available on social media platforms. This tradition, if multiplied, could see the country move towards the right direction in economic development through innovation and interaction via social media towards achieving the country's vision 2030. Crowdfunding platforms allow communities, charities and start-ups to fundraise for their causes. A percent of the money raised is taken away by the platform owners.

Social media will always go hand in hand with social networking because of its connectivity. The interlink between social media and sharing of content and information online with communities is what social innovators need to rely on to educate the

communities on the available solutions to their problems while slowly driving business and impacting society (Mathews, 2016). With the industry viewed as a major enabler to the ecosystem, the use of social networking sites as Facebook ,LinkedIn and community pages as Instagram, the industry is able to study the impact the social innovation is making, by following through the pages and seeking to support in the venture. Via social media, resource mobilisation, training and development and research partnerships are bound to happen in this sector. Alternatively, the innovator may also approach the industry for support through traditional media as email.

According to the Global Innovation Index (GII 2018), Kenya is amongst 20 countries that outperform on innovation relative to their level of development. Of these twenty, six out of the countries come from Sub-Saharan Africa. Kenya, Rwanda, Mozambique, Malawi and Madagascar stand out for being achievers in innovation three consecutive times. This is a clear indication that the country is moving towards the right direction. More jobs creation and a booster to investor confidence should be a trigger to innovators to robustly apply novelty in all aspects and especially towards the government agenda and globally towards Sustainable Development Goals.

In his address to the nation during the celebration of the 2019 Mashujaa day, the Kenyan President reiterated his support towards innovators and researchers striving to bring new knowledge and novelty contributing towards the country's social economic growth and recognizing them as modern day heroes (The STAR Newspaper, 2019). Although the government lacks a clear policy framework towards the country's Innovation agenda (as at the study duration), its commitment to the support of the same is evident in the number of institutions and agencies set up to catalyse the innovation effort.

A scenario is the National Research Fund, which has continued to support the work of researchers and innovators country wide through provision of research and innovation funds. At the same time, the research fund agency funds institutions of higher learning and innovators countrywide. This research output could further be commercialised by licensing, patent, trademarks and copyrights amongst others ([www.ku.ac.ke/chandaria-biic](http://www.ku.ac.ke/chandaria-biic)). While speaking at the Young Scientists conference and exhibition the president directed his trade minister to put in place a robust mechanism to secure innovative ideas and projects by Kenyan youth. “Furthermore, and to encourage linkages with industry, I similarly direct a waiver of trademark fees with respect to all innovations emanating from Young Scientists Exhibitions, beginning from 2018,” (The STAR Newspaper, 2019). The President said as he directed the state agencies to provide free patents and copyrights which were emanating from the Young Scientist Exhibitions held in Kenya since 2018.

The introduction and implementation of the Competency Based Curriculum by the government, is evident of promotion of innovation at early stages under a well sustained system of education. CBC is intended to keep up with the fast-changing science and technology environment, particularly those involving information, communication, and computing, which has been characterized by remarkable advances. Additionally, the president noted that the CBC system focuses more on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) than the traditional science and technology learning that characterized the old order (The STAR Newspaper, 2019). This therefore, coupled with the current existing institutions’; NACOSTI, KENIA, NRF, Micro & Small Enterprises Authority, NITA, Kenya Industrial Development Institute and Kenya Bureau of Standard



and with the launch of the competency based curriculum and a revamp of the technical vocational institutions is a clear indication of the governments support towards innovation growth in the country. However, proper mechanisms have to be laid down in the institutions and a show of commitment by the same otherwise it may just remain a blueprint and innovators will be left frustrated at their fruitless efforts crumbling down the economy.

The government agency responsible for dealing with innovation is the Kenya National Innovation Agency (KeNIA). It approves the supply of financial and other support to any institution or person, so that the person or institution is able to expand on technological innovations. It works together with other innovation enablers with an aim of nurturing innovative ideas from training institutions, individuals, private sectors and other institutions. KeNIA offers support through other forms that includes facilitates grant application, develops strategies that promote innovation programs and develops schemes to support and fund programs and innovation platforms. KeNIA also attempts to institutionalise linkages between research institutions, universities, the government, the private sector and other sectors. KeNIA has collaborated with other partners and is now establishing a database of investors, innovators, institutions, enablers and other relevant partners of the ecosystem. KeNIA supports the maintenance and establishment of regional and international cooperation platforms that would foster expertise and information sharing among institutions. The government works with key partners so that they can promote Kenyan innovators by running various programs. For each program, the innovators are called yearly to make a submission of their innovation so that it can be reviewed. The crown innovations are selected for the specific program.

#### **2.4. Challenges Innovators Face While Using Social media**

While a negative experience can influence the adoption of future innovations, hence innovation negativism can be an undesirable aspect of compatibility (Arensberg&Niehoff,

1964). For this reason, change agents should begin their efforts with a particular audience with an innovation that has a high degree of relative advantage to build successfully. Entrepreneurs use social media for market research, sale of product, access to new markets, collecting customer data and managing customer relations amongst others (Zach & Munkvold, 2012). Social media is associated with both the positive and the negative aspects. Like any other medium, the channel of communication has had its fair share of criticism especially in relation to enterprise (Ghobadian&Gallear, 1997; Zach & Munkvold, 2012) Small businesses are considered fundamentally different from large enterprises in aspects as resource availability, ownership type, structure, culture, and market orientation. Most enterprises face major risks in reputational, operational and data management risks.

#### **a. Limited Resources**

Notably, small businesses have limited resources and a small number of employees hence their use of socialmedia could differ considerably from that of large enterprises. Social media can be a challenging arena for small businesses to compete against larger businesses in the same industry.

#### **b. Adoption of Technology**

Start-ups are associated with facing major challenges in adoption of information technology due to limited human resources and finances (Olson & Staley, 2012). These enterprises struggle for a breakthrough even as they need to use social media for their operational purposes of marketing and branding hence are left with the option to use less sophisticated and expensive substitutes resulting in becoming less competitive in the market. The start-ups are majorly struggling for a breakthrough yet they need to

use social media for their operations for purposes of marketing and branding. They are left with no option than to use less sophisticated and expensive substitutes causing them to become less competitive on the market (Sarosa&Zowghi, 2003). Additionally, bad IT investments in small businesses cause damaging results in the business to the enterprises. In social media regular updates on content and information is critical and hence the lack of infrastructure as servers may hinder social entrepreneurs from regular updates of statuses.

**c. Access to information by all**

Social media is attributed to having all employees in a firm accessing all the contents and hence being less productive due to the amount of time consumed on social media. For this, some organisations have come up with social media policy and corporate offices to manage their social media presence (Kaplan &Haenlein 2010); This curbs the updates of an enterprise by any other employee and limited employees to spending more time on social media Small enterprises may not have specific employees in this but the task is left to one of the cofounder to manage the social media presence of the business.

**d. Honesty**

The use of face book, whatsapp, Instagram and other social sites use in businesses calls for honesty and openness with the customers and audiences hence the lack of transparency by social innovators could render clientele losing confidence in the Start-up and unfollowing (Kaplan &Haenlein 2010). Additionally, the clientele will spread the same information online causing serious damage to the Start-ups as social media information travels faster. The comments raised which are not reversible may raise serious credibility concerns to the struggling enterprise.

## 2.5. Theoretical Framework

One of the theoretical underpinnings of this study is the Diffusion of Innovation theory. According to Rogers (2003), Diffusion of Innovation theory is centred on understanding the use of technology in intake of innovations. Rogers (2003) defines diffusion as the process in which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time amongst the members of a social system. Key outstanding elements in the process of communication are: innovation, communication channel, time and social system. Rogers (2003) defines technology as a design for instrumental action that reduces the uncertainty in the cause-effect relationships involved in achieving desired outcome.” “A *technology* is a design for instrumental action that reduces the uncertainty in the cause-effect relationships involved in achieving a desired outcome” (Rogers, 2003, p. 13). It is composed of two parts: hardware and software. While hardware is “the tool that embodies the technology in the form of a material or physical object,” software is “the information base for the tool” (Rogers, 2003, p.259). Rogers (2003) also posits that “innovation is an idea, practice or project that is perceived as new by an individual, or other unit of adoption” (p.12). Additionally, “communication is a process in which participants create and share information with one another in order to reach a mutual understanding” (Rogers, 2003, p .5). He argues that communication takes place through channels, between sources, whereas the “source” is the organisation or individual in which the message originates.

Rogers (2003) further argues that the channel is the means by which a message gets from the source to the receiver. To him, diffusion is a specific kind of communication that involves innovation, two individuals or other units of adoption and a communication channel. This theory relates to the study by the fact that the social entrepreneur is the

source of the message which he intends to send to his specific target (audience) in the form of a solution tailored for them through the social media channels of his choice (Sahin, 2006). The innovator through use of the social media channels keeps up dating the target over time even on attempts of educating the audience on the solution and or marketing the product or solution thus diffusion concept from Rogers. This information update further opens opportunities for discussion and marketing with the target.

This form of communication involves the innovator as the source of information and the public as the receiver of the information. The entrepreneur's intention is to have the information create social change in a community. While social media encompasses the use of technology "hardware" and "software" as pointed out by (Roger 2003), the use of computers, smartphones and tablets all encompass the technology required and social media APPs all involve technology application for communication and feedback mechanisms by the social entrepreneurs and their clientele base.

Another theory that informs this study is the grounded theory, which explains how the urge to use social media outlets and the internet is centred on the common beliefs of benefits that strengthen social relationships and creating opportunities for self-portrayal and sets grounds for self-determination (Hynan, Goldbart, & Murray, 2015). All of these are congruent to specific antecedents for society-based inclusion. The grounded theory on the desire to engage in the usage of social media can be supported by eight key factors: reported use, outlined support, online mishaps, technology accessibility, and issues concerning speech generating devices, self-determination, representation of self and the formation of online social bonds. These eight factors are mainly concerned with the people who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) and have been diagnosed with cerebral palsy (Hynan et al., 2015). They show great desire

to be involved in the internet and social media usage which is identified through the grounded theory. This desire is tied to the above factors.

Social media has become a key element of general day-to-day social life. Social media impacts personal characteristics, belief systems and values upheld by people. It also plays an important role in businesses and governmental organisations by forming a connection with the customers and citizens, respectively. This ensures the intended recipients make well informed decisions. The grounded theory is used in understanding social media usage in different ways. The theory is used to analyse content on social media (Hynan et al., 2015). This is achieved in the four stages of the theorem. First is having an identified goal and scope of a study. Second is the formation of a logical and orderly identification of social media platforms, the summation of the sample size and the sample size of each cited social media source. The third stage is infusing statistical methods to point out important aspects identified in the study. Lastly, the results of the study are interpreted and a theory concerning the content on social media is formulated. Another use of the grounded theory in social media usage is to disclose message layering in the various social media platforms (Linda, Lai & To, 2015). The theory uncovers a theory of message layering in social media communication which is done through comments on posted material, the posts made on platforms and online text messages shared among users.

Notably, the theory has been critiqued on several occasions in relation to social media usage analysis. Its identity as a theory itself has been highly questioned since it is perceived to be a systematic research method rather than an actual theory (Linda et al., 2015). Therefore, its use in trying to understand social media usage is doubted and its point is not understood since it only gives the mannerism of how to go about issues associated with a given issue. This aspect, which is what the theory is built upon, makes the theory to be confused with qualitative and quantitative

analysis and data generation methods, which is not taken to be a theory. Moreover, the inductive applied in the theory is inaccurate. This is because it is impractical to be out of sync with preconceived ideas while still coming up with the theory. All in all, the grounded theory is a tool that is used to understand various issues affecting society, including social media usage.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1. Overview**

This chapter contains the research design, method of data collection and analysis. These include the study design, research approach methods on data collection of the study, the target population and sampling techniques applied as well as the validity and reliability of the research instruments and techniques utilised during the data collection and analysis stage of the study.

### **3.2. Study Design**

Research parameters are formulated to ensure that data are collected and analyzed in a manner relevant to the study's objectives. It constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data (Kothari, 2003). This study employed descriptive survey to establish the role of social media, challenges and the most preferred social media channels while analysing how innovators in Nairobi county use social to enhance entrepreneurship. According Owiny, Mehta & Marezki (2014), a study becomes somewhat descriptive as data collected and analysed is described. Therefore, this study sought to establish the role of social media as a communication channel for innovators. The study further looked into how innovators used social media as the channel of communication towards innovation and the challenges of social media use as the medium of communication on innovation and the most preferred social channel of communication amongst entrepreneurs. It also analysed how innovators used social media regardless of their difference in their level of income, race, age, education background and the different categories of start-ups.



### **3.2.1. Study Site**

The research study was conducted in Nairobi County. Among the areas for data collection were the incubation centres in Nairobi County located within universities, both private and public. Other sites included privately owned innovation centres located in private entities.

### **3.2.2. Research Approach**

The research approach refers to the broad plan that the researcher seeks to use to answer the research question. To investigate the role of social media as a communication channel in social innovation, this study used mixed method research approach to collect both qualitative and quantitative data.

### **3.2.3. Research Method**

The research method can be defined as strategy, process, or technique of collecting data. This research was based on case study of social media and innovation among incubation centres and hubs in Nairobi County. It used exploratory and descriptive strategies which were most suited to the city's increased innovations and activities within the innovator's ecosystem.

### **3.2.4. Data needs, Types and Sources**

The primary source of data collection was through questionnaires sent to innovators and incubation centre managers or administrators. This data was quantitative in nature. Secondary data was collected through the use of online materials as books, journals and publications. Analysis of the social media pages, for instance, Facebook pages and others,

as a sample representative from those innovators that have used social media in their work previously.

### **3.2.5. Population and sampling needs**

According to Burns and Groove (2003), sampling is a process of collecting a group of people's events or behaviour with which to conduct a study. This study targeted Nairobi county entrepreneurs affiliated to incubation centres, accelerators, and hubs, which was a true representation of innovators within Nairobi County. The study used the incubation centre managers and administrators to reach the innovators within their jurisdiction as most innovators were attached to an incubator, accelerator or hub, which was the ecosystems support for entrepreneurs in the country. Each incubator has a number of innovators they support and work with. The hub managers provided contact details of the innovators upon understanding our population.

According to VC4A 2018 Start-up Ecosystem Analysis Report in Kenya, there were 1,333 ventures in the ecosystem registered in the country by the time of writing this report. Additionally, there were 41 incubation centres in Kenya (Kinya, Wanjau & Omondi, 2018). Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) have argued that a sample size of between 10 and 30 % is a good representation of the target population. A sample size of 133 innovators affiliated to the different incubators in the ecosystem were used for the study. The study adopted the stratified sampling method where entrepreneurs were placed according to the stage of their idea (commercialised, or prototype,) from their specific affiliated incubators. The sample population selected being the representative to the whole group of innovators at

commercialization or with a prototype because this was the group that most likely made use of the social media platform towards the growth of their venture.

After identifying the likely participants, the researcher engaged them by sending out emails and whatsapp messaging. The communication included the context of the study and their participation. The researcher then sent out questionnaires to the target group that was responsive. On interviews the researchers visited the incubation hubs and presented the University introduction letter upon personal introduction. The researcher and hub administrator then set likely days for the interview.

### **Data Collection.**

The researcher administered questionnaires to collect data with various incubation centres, hubs, and accelerators in Nairobi County. Interviews were administered to key informants purposely selected from various incubation centres, hubs and accelerators to generate both qualitative and quantitative data. Questionnaires were checked for completeness upon data collection to guarantee data fidelity.

### **3.2.6. Data Analysis and Interpretation**

For quantitative data, coding of completely filled questionnaires, and data entry was done on a statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. Consistency checks were done for data quality control using a research assistant. Results were tabulated using frequencies, percentages, and simple graphs to show the role of social media use, challenges innovators faced using social media and how innovators used social media in Nairobi County.

### **3.3. Reliability and Validity**

According to Orodho (2004), reliability is concerned with a particular degree to which a measuring procedure will give similar results after a number of trials. To ensure this, the researcher conducted a pilot study using the questionnaires on a few samples to ensure that it was valid and reliable as a research instrument. Data obtained was also triangulated by corroborating data from innovators with those from their supervisors and secondary research. Validity is concerned with establishing if an instrument measures what it was intended to do or measure (Orodho, 2004). Utmost care was put into consideration while constructing the questionnaires to ensure questions capture the objectives of the study.

### **3.4. Ethics**

The study followed and adhered to the professional research principles and ethics required throughout by the Post graduate school at University of Nairobi. Anonymity was maintained on the innovators and the incubation centres used in data collection. The research adhered towards protection through use of coded information to avoid disclosure. Innovators and incubation centres that participated were ranked anonymously during the data analyses. Respect and confidentiality of intellectual property was observed throughout the research process. Interviewees were made to understand that their participation in the process was voluntary; therefore, if any felt that they could not continue with the study at any point, they were free to quit without any repercussions. Additionally, the research process adhered towards observing honesty and integrity during reporting and data analysis to ensure transparency. The research proposal was presented at the postgraduate committee

of the School of Journalism and Mass communication and necessary corrections made in order to proceed to the field.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter outlines the results from the questionnaire distributed to two sets of respondents: the innovators themselves and incubation managers. The initial part of the questionnaire contained demographic data, followed by data about the start-ups. The data from the questionnaire was quantitative and the interviews from the incubation managers qualitative. Thereafter, the data will be analysed and interpreted.

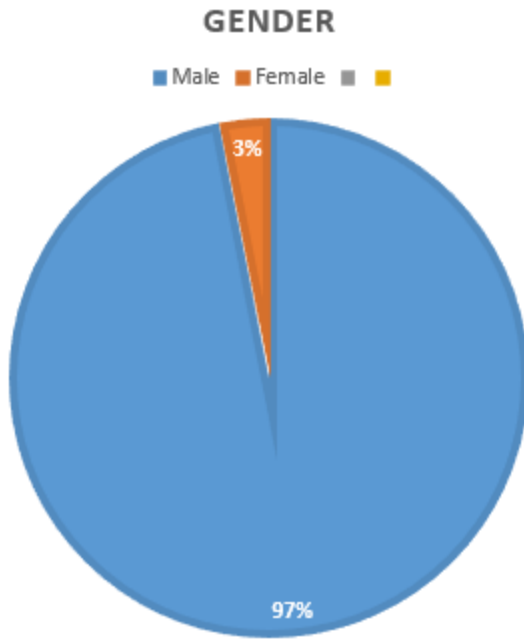
### **4.2. Results from Innovators**

#### **4.2.1. Demographics**

This part of the questionnaire sought to establish the demographic characteristics of the participants to understand many aspects of their business. Demographic data revealed the general make-up of the innovators, from gender to age to academic qualifications among other data types. This would reveal important information about the gender that is involved in innovation in Nairobi county, whether the level of education is a determining factor for one to come up with solutions in the society or innovate

#### **Gender**

*Chart: Gender of respondents.*



When it came to gender, the sample surveyed was predominantly male. Out of all participants, 97% were male and 3% were female. This data reveals that many innovators appear to be male. The reason for this would be STEM subjects tend to be dominated by the male gender, and it is here that innovation is encouraged and girls are asked to embrace STEM. Girls may require much support to engage fully in innovation unlike the male counterparts who have dominated the sector.

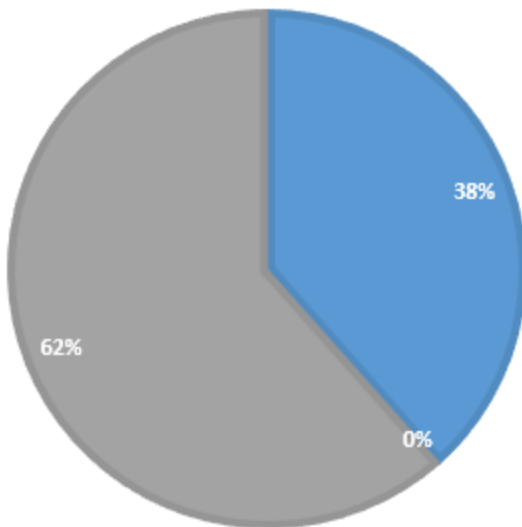
### **Academic Qualifications**

*Chart: Academic qualifications of respondents.*

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## ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

■ Diploma ■ High Diploma ■ Degree ■ Masters



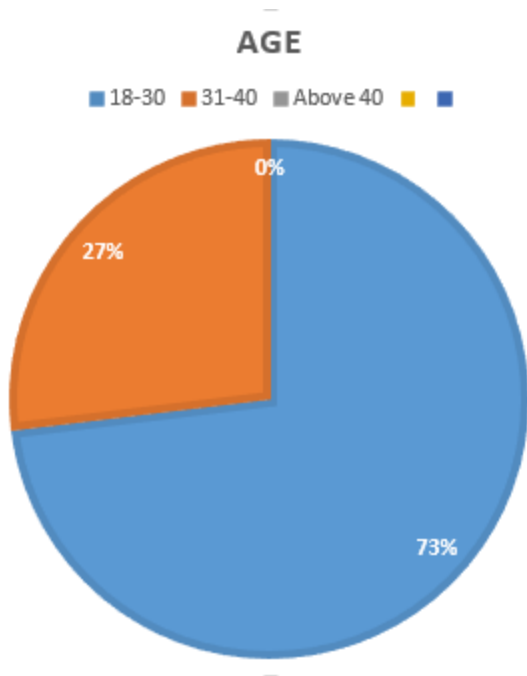
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With regards to academic qualifications, 62% of them had a bachelor's degree while the remaining had a diploma (38%). There were none with higher diplomas or masters. This data reveals that many innovators have college/university academic qualifications. Access to higher institutions of learning translates to access to resources that would aid innovativeness. Many institutions provide innovators with tools that can help them in several ways. This may mean that innovation is key regardless of your level of education.

### Age

*Chart: Age of respondents*





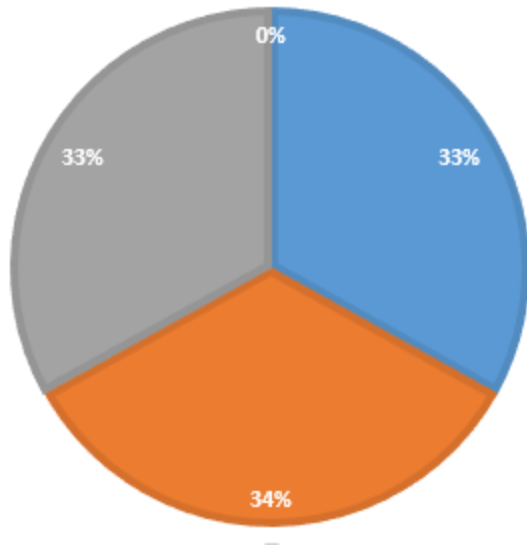
In terms of age, 73% of them were between ages 18 and 30 while 27% were between 31 and 40 and none above 40 years of age. This data reveals that many innovators are young people compared to the older generation. Arguably, the younger generation has been brought up with more access to the Internet, thus they are more inclined towards using social media to promote innovativeness. They will also exchange ideas over the Internet, compared to the older generation.

### **Age of Business and Time Being Incubated**

*Chart: Age of business*

### AGE OF BUSINESS

■ Less than a year ■ 1-3 years ■ 3-5 years ■ 5-10 years ■

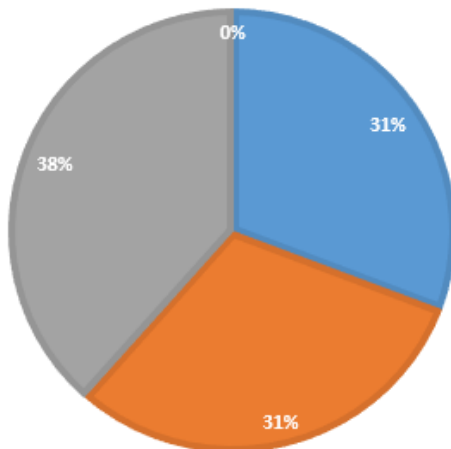


When asked how many years their businesses had been in place, almost an equal number of them said less than a year, between 1 and 3 years, as well as between 3 and 5 years. However, there were none that were beyond 5 years.

*Chart: Length of business being incubated*

### INCUBATION

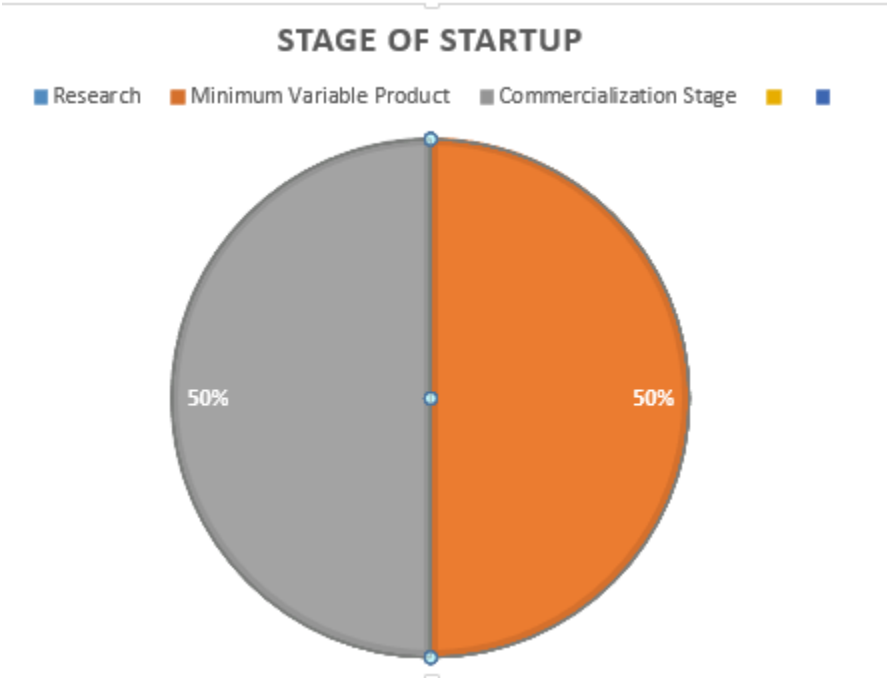
■ Less than a year ■ 1-3 years ■ 3-5 years ■ 5-10 years ■



When asked how long their businesses had been incubated, 31% mentioned less than a year, 31% between 1 and 3 years, and 31% were between 3 and 5 years. None had been incubated for more than 5 years. This data reveals that many of the innovative and start-up ideas are still very young. They will require a lot of support persistence from the innovators to ensure success of the businesses.

**Stage of Start-up**

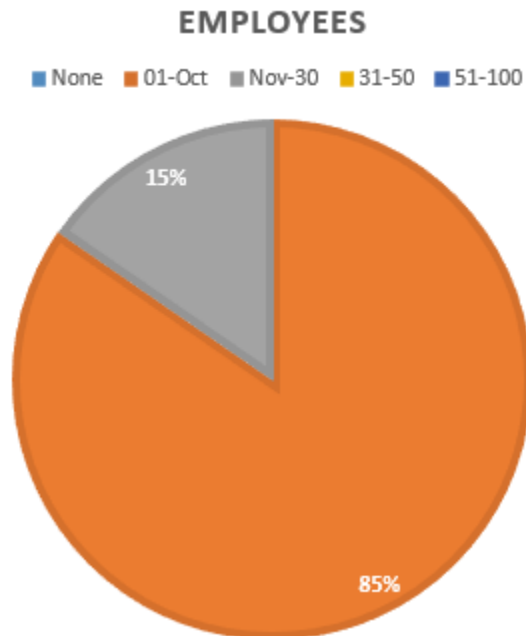
*Chart: Where the start-up is (stage)*



In this category, half were at the Minimum Variable Product stage while the other half were at the Commercialization Stage. This data was important to show the number of start-ups that are ready to be commercialized. Although thousands of start-ups get founded every year, very few will reach the final stage.

## Number of Employees

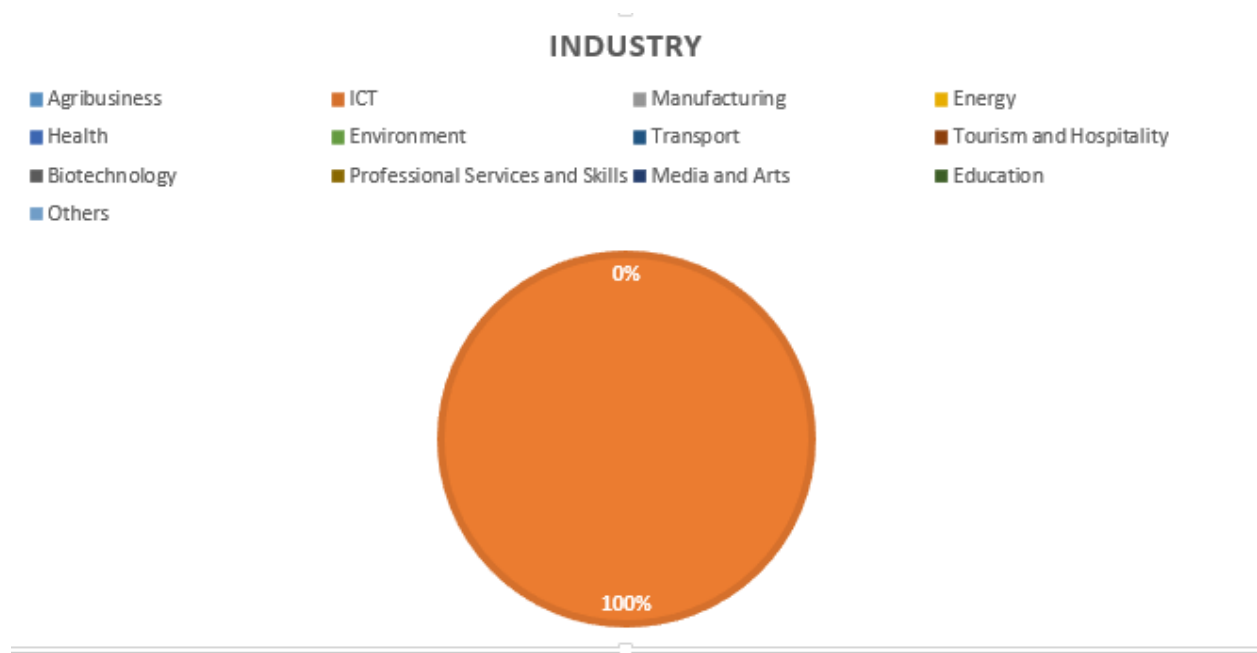
*Chart: Number of employees in company.*



In terms of number of employees, 85% of the start-ups had between 0 and 10 employees and 15% had between 10 and 30 employees. This data reveals how typical start-ups will have few employees because they are still growing.

## Industry

*Table: Industry worked.*

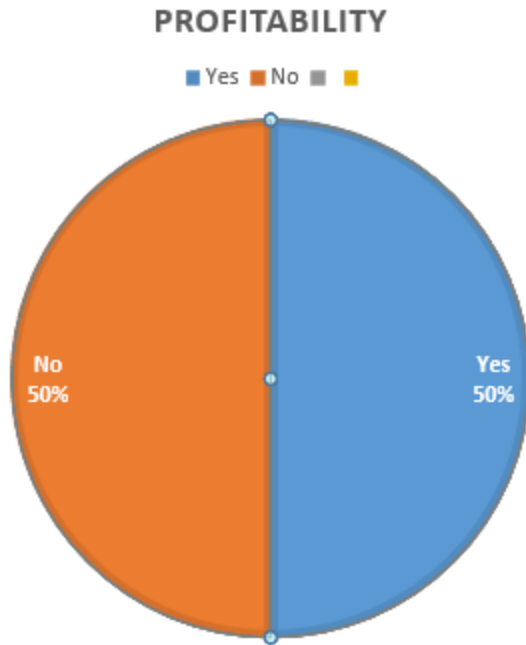


All of the start-ups were in the ICT sector. The reason for this could be that many of the start-up ideas are inclined towards the ICT sector. There is a need for stakeholders to encourage innovativeness in other areas as well.

### **Profitability**

This parameter sought to establish the connection between successful and profitable ventures and social media use.

*Chart: Profitability*



Half were profitable and the other half not. The innovators were asked whether they were using social media for communication, and all of them said yes. They were then asked whether their ventures used social media as well, and all of them said yes.

#### 4.2.2. How innovators use social media to aid innovation in their start-up

This section of the survey on innovators touched on how they applied social media on their start-up and the following were the findings:

*Table: How innovators use social media.*

Item	Outcome
Customers /audience inquire about my business venture through social media	67% were in the middle of this statement, 58% agreed, and 17% disagreed
I often communicate to my customers/audience through social media	88% agreed with this statement while 17% were in the middle undecided.
I use social media as a marketing platform for my products and services	75% agreed with this statement and 25% were lukewarm about it.
Social media has had a negative impact in my business venture	94% disagreed with this statement and only 1 remained in the middle unsure.

I use social media to research about my innovation	50% agreed with this statement, 44% remained in the middle, and 8% disagreed.
I would recommend or hire a social media personnel for my business	87% agreed with this statement while 13% disagreed.
I have acquired new clientele/ business through social media	A half of the respondents agreed with this statement while the other half were lukewarm about it.
I learn about business meetings and events through social media	63% agreed with this statement, 19 were not sure, and the rest disagreed.
The presence of social media in my business is of great importance	All the respondents agreed with this statement.
The incubator i am affiliated to encourages social media presence for start-ups	75% agreed with this statement while the rest were lukewarm about it.
I spend more time on social media platforms than on building my business venture	19% were unsure about this statement while the rest disagreed.
Social media has allowed transparency in how we conduct business	63% agreed with this statement, 19% were unsure, and the rest disagreed
I review all social media feedback from my clientele	75% agreed with this statement while the rest disagreed.
I would recommend a social media presence of business ventures to all innovators	All agreed with this statement
I would recommend a different social media platform tailored for start-ups only	23% agreed with this statement, 27% were not sure, another 27% disagreed while the rest did not answer.
Social media is a friendly to use platform	81% agreed with this statement, 6% disagreed, and the rest failed to answer.
Social media is expensive to maintain in business	Half were unsure about this item but the rest disagreed with it.

To summarize, this study established that they used social media for reasons such as communication, networking, sharing ideas, sharing challenges, conducting research, online mentorship and training, and soliciting raw innovation support. This finding corresponds with what Radhakrishnan, Ugalde & Rogelio (2019) did to find out that social media has become an important aspect of life and has impacted different facets of everyday interactions. Communication is among the primary roles of social media. It is a widespread medium of communication with over 3.2 billion users across the world. Social media has significantly changed how people communicate and increased accessibility, making the world a ‘global village’. It has also impacted

communication within the business world (Miriti, Kenneth & Humphrey, 2018). Advertisement of business-related functions is easily communicated via the various social media outlets, increasing the number of people it reaches (Radhakrishnan et al., 2019). Organisations tend to lean strongly on social media to create brand awareness and to sell their product owing to the large population that engages in social media.

Social media offers a platform where clients and business operators connect and form professional relationships. This rapport is essential in social networking which is built on the online conversations that are between the two users. Social media plays a hand in bringing a brand to life and building a connection with the community by interacting with them through their personal social media accounts. Radhakrishnan et al. (2019) also added that social networking helps the youth to discover their interests and find other like-minded people, with whom they work collaboratively on projects that benefit, not just them, but the general society. Ideas are easily and more efficiently shared on social media in a variety of ways. Ideas, with respect to the target audience, can be shared through blogs and articles. They are published and posted on related websites for users to consume and share the information with others. Additionally, these ideas can also be shared by reposting popular content online so as to refresh the users' minds on the ideas once highly acknowledged.

Similarly, social media can be used to share business-oriented and general life challenges (Abuhashesh, 2014). This is done through the mentioned blogs where an organisation shares some of the downing moments in their journey. It can also be done by posting personal or organisational memoirs online for users to read and get an insight of some of the life and business challenges faced. This information gotten from the various online sites can also be shared among friends, co-workers and/or family members through the social media apps on a more personal level. Many



social media outlets, like Twitter or Facebook, present various ways to study trends and to carry out research (Abuhashesh, 2014). Looking up fresh posts and the popular colloquialisms can provide insight on the current and upcoming trends and popular interests so as to get with the current times and build a conclusion on related research. Social media can help market researchers get information about their competitors. Social media research outlines how consumers are adapting to their products in comparison to the reception of competing products of other brands.

Social media also enables online mentorship (E-mentoring) and training. E-mentoring, carried out via social media, allows participants to communicate expediently without being at a disadvantage of factors such as the different time zones since they need not necessarily be in the same geographical location (Abuhashesh, 2014). This is thanks to the virtual platforms of communication. This convenience increases the participation in the mentoring and training programs. Social media gives its users a chance to air their opinions and give innovative ideas on issues. These innovative ideas are received by the general public, who support them and give unbiased opinions on how to improve on them, if need be. These ideas could be taken up by organisations to build on existing ideas so as to better the enterprises.

The findings under this objective reveals both what is already known as well as new information on the use of social media. What is largely known is that social media aids communication among users. However, little was known about how it aids innovativeness especially in Africa. Therefore, this finding contributes novel knowledge on the idea that social media aids innovation as well.

### **4.2.3. Challenges of using social media platforms as a tool in innovation within Nairobi County**

The second section of the survey delved into the use of social media platforms by innovators. The factors considered were access to internet, frequency of internet access, devices used to access, and products and services marketed by the innovators. The findings indicated as follows. When it came to access to the Internet, all innovators said they had access. As for the frequency of use, they mentioned they used the Internet on a daily basis. They also had gadgets that they used to access the Internet, namely smartphones, laptops, and desktops. Here, the study found it important to identify challenges that innovators came across in their use of social media with regards to innovation.

One of the most prevalent challenges was downtime. In Kenya, most of the internet providers do rely on subsea cable systems on the east coast of Africa. This is the main reason why at times there is internet downtime because when this is disrupted, the internet connection will be poor. The biggest internet provider in Kenya being Zuku, It recently released statements indicating that the downtime mainly is due to the 'seacom' interruption and there is nothing in their capable hands they can do to solve it. Outages such as this are normally due to the inconveniences happening abroad. For instance, a cable issue in the Mediterranean, can cause much damage to Kenya and have real down time on the internet connection. This is a problem that the ICT team from Kenya cannot solve but just wait until it is solved from abroad.

The lack of access to the Internet by Innovators residing in the outskirts of the city or in poor neighbourhoods. The cable Internet spread across the city has low coverage and slow in certain areas.

This is because building a broadband network across the entire city is very expensive. The providers through their research believe that potential customers are low. The providers may also go ahead to give it a try but the internet mapping by the government still remains unclear. Modern internet providers like Faiba have established their business around urban regions being their speculated target market. These providers have laid down Internet cables around city estates and major towns leaving behind rural areas. Such practices result in those in the urban regions having a good internet connection and those in the rural regions lagging behind.

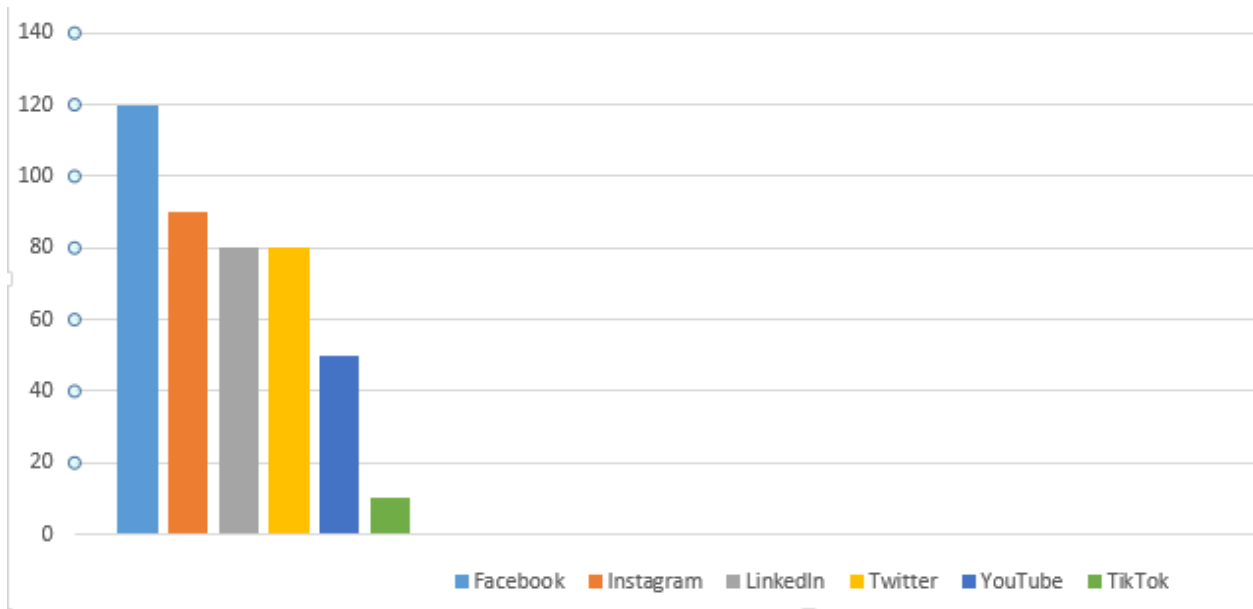
Internet in Kenya is somewhat expensive, not every user or innovator can afford the monthly subscription or purchase bundles. In comparison to other African countries, purchasing bundles in Kenya is deemed to be the most expensive due to high taxation and high set up cost that the providers mostly undergo in an effort to set up good internet connections like the Faiba Company. Therefore, this makes it hard for innovators, who are still struggling with the business to purchase bundles on a daily basis for their innovative ventures.

Overall, this objective is worthy considering bearing its importance to stakeholders especially government to Internet companies, to understand these challenges and solve them. The rolling out of 5G Internet, for instance, will enhance Internet speeds. More so internet providers as Safaricom and Airtel may also lower the cost of bundles or give attractive offers so that innovators who cannot access cable and still use the Internet for their innovative activities. This is novel knowledge considering the uniqueness of the African continent when it comes to Internet problems. Additionally, Internet providers may provide solely packages for innovators and entrepreneurs at a subsidized rate.

#### 4.2.4. Preferred Social Media Channels

Moving on, the third section of the survey touched on several aspects of the most preferred social media channel use by the innovators as shown below. It was important to understand platforms that were considered useful by innovators given that there are hundreds of different social media platforms to choose from. There had to be reasons behind the use of certain platforms over the rest.

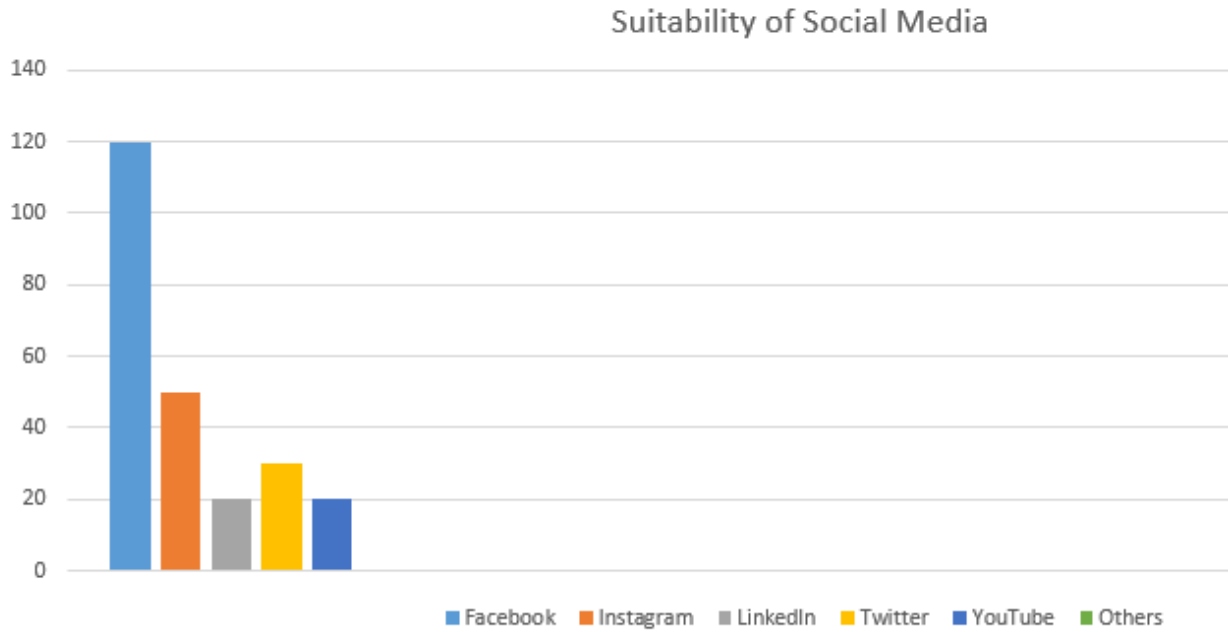
*Graph: The kind of social media used.*



As shown above, Facebook was the most prevalently used platform followed by Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter, then YouTube, and lastly TikTok.

#### Suitable Social Media Platforms

*Graph: The choice of most suitable social media platforms.*

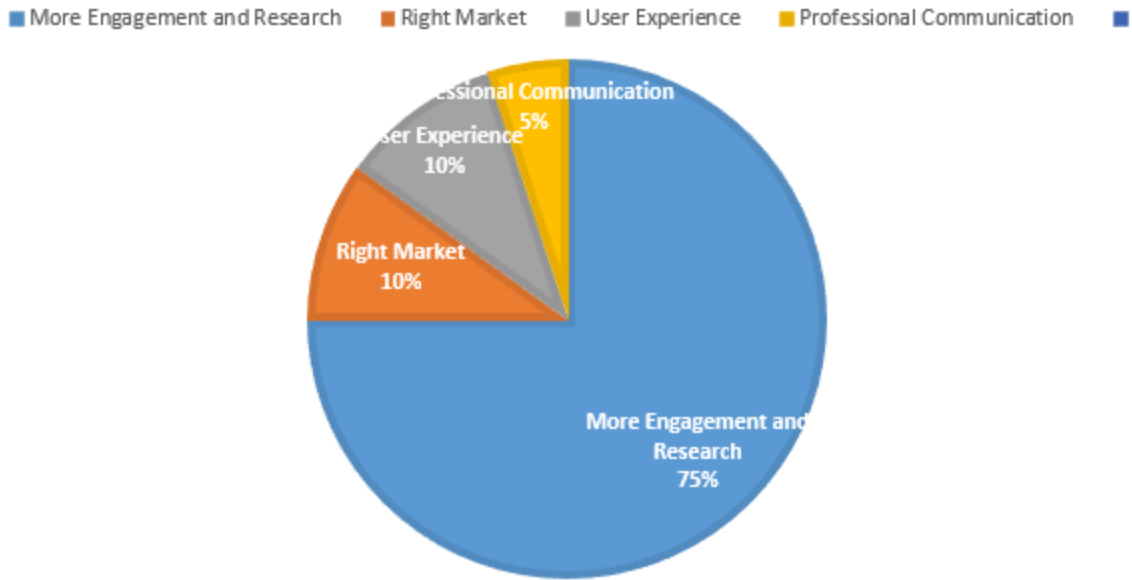


The most suitable platform was Facebook, followed by Instagram, then Twitter, and YouTube and LinkedIn last.

### Reasons for Preference

*Chart: Reasons why they prefer certain social media platforms.*

## REASONS FOR PREFERENCE



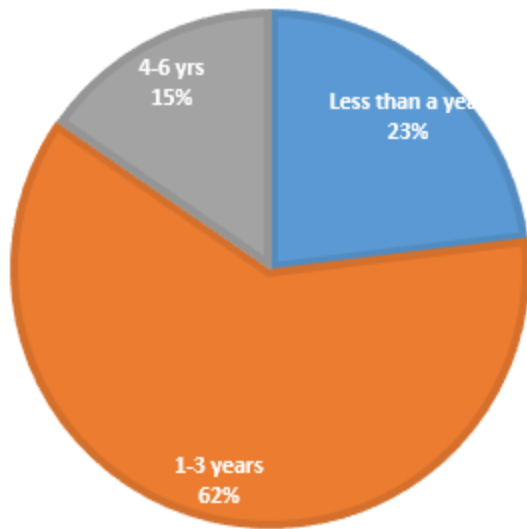
When asked why they preferred the platforms above, a majority said it is because it offered them an avenue for more engagement and conducting research. A few said it helped them reach their target market and created excellent user experience.

### **Length of social media use**

*Chart: How long they have used certain social media.*

**LENGTH OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE**

■ Less than a year   
 ■ 1-3 years   
 ■ 4-6 yrs   
 ■ 6-10 yrs   
 ■ Not Yet



When asked how long they had been on social media, a majority were between 1 and 3 years of age. None were above 6 years.

**Number of social media users reached**

*Table: Social media users reached*

Item	Number
Less than 100	20
200-1,000	36
Above 1,000	45
Above 5,000	12
Above 10,000	20

On the number of social media users reached, 20 of them had less than 100, 35 had between 200 and 1,000, 45 had over 1,000, 10 had over 5,000, and 20 had over 10,000.

**Frequency of response to social media engagements and inquiries**

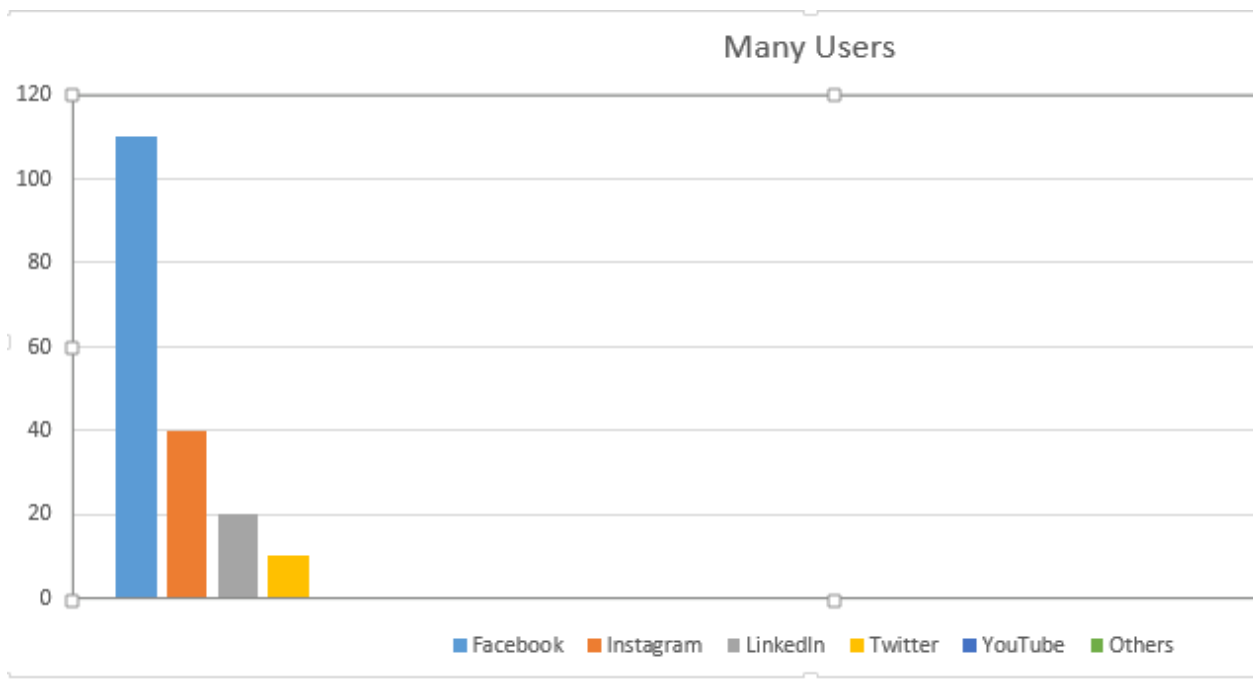
*Table: Response to social media engagements*

Item	No.
Daily	76
Weekly	67
Fortnight	0
Monthly	0

A good number of innovators had daily engagements with social media users while others had weekly of the same.

### Social media with the most audience engagements

*Graph: Social media with the most audience engagements*



On this aspect, Facebook had the most users followed by Instagram, then LinkedIn before Twitter.

The following reasons were given for the above social media preference.



*Table: Reasons for social media preference.*

<b>Item</b>	<b>No.</b>
Accessibility	111
Networked	20
Cheap	19
Availability	1
Others	0

When asked why they chose the above platforms, many of the innovators stated that it was because of accessibility, while others mentioned networking and the cheap cost of social media platforms.

Some of the features that make Facebook users love it is that it builds an online brand for the business users (Wong, 2021). Facebook gives the online business users the best opportunity to meet their customers especially during the time where there is limited physical interaction between sellers and their potential buyers. The second feature is that it builds meaningful friendship between new individuals. In-person meeting is generally preferred because it boosts mental wellbeing than having an online conversation. Facebook is a platform where meaningful relationships can be fostered especially for the individuals who are housebound. Facebook is globally the biggest social network with about 2.89 billion active users every month.

Some of the features that make Instagram users love it is that first it is easy to target and retarget your audience (Wong, 2021). To have a successful online business it is important to target the right audience which is easier on Instagram. Also it automatically offers one an audience which is a head start in audience creation. The second feature is that apart from it being a business oriented platform it also offers entertainment for other users. The platform has features where one can post short videos that can entertain the audience. Also it is a communication platform. Friends can chat on Instagram or even video chat and have a chance of seeing the one who they are speaking to.

Instagram is the second most used traditional social network after Facebook with around 1 billion active users every month.

These are the characteristics that make Twitter users love it (Wong, 2021). First, there is the grouping of followers and friends. One is able to create groups of those they are following and therefore reduce unnecessary twitter feeds. With twitter feeds, one is able to get real time updated from particular groups. Second, it has an auto complete feature in tweets. When a person is texting, autocomplete suggestions of what he was about to say pops up and when the person finds the correct one he can just click on it. This speeds up the process of tweet writing and saves time. The other feature is that it is a platform where one can get information and a forum where people can discuss various trending topics. Twitter has 396.5 million users.

The following are some of the features that make YouTube users love it (Wong, 2021). First, YouTube users love it because of the dashboard channel feature. This feature enables the user to keep a record of how his channel or video is performing. It can also inform the user about comments news and trends that are posted by the viewers. Also this feature enables one to see how his channel is progressing, which video-upload performed the best and which one did not perform. The second feature is that it is a commercial platform where one can get money by posting creative content or videos that can attract many viewers. YouTube users are now paid depending on the amount of subscribers and views they get on a posted content. YouTube has more than 2 billion active users. Social Innovators are bound to use this form of communication to educate the society on their products and services they are offering. Because of its nature to engage both in picture form and its ability to create a series of events one episode after another, the social innovator could engage a client with immediate feedback mechanism. Additionally, the innovator may take

the client through the process of product/service development episode to episode with feedback mechanisms engaged too. Through the platform a number of people are able to learn about the product /service development and engage the innovator. Additionally, the social innovator could raise his profile and chances of income generation through advertisements. When a product is tailored towards some customers in a certain population, it's also easier for advertisers to use this platform depending on the number of downloads and viewers or the ability of innovators to attract viewers depending on the content generated.

The feature that makes LinkedIn lovable by its users is that it helps one to stay in touch (Wong, 2021). LinkedIn offers one with the opportunity to stay in touch especially in this world where maintaining contact is becoming harder. LinkedIn has about 600 million members.

When asked why they chose the above platforms, many of the innovators stated that it was because of accessibility, while others mentioned networking and the cheap cost of social media platforms. Teenagers share a variety of information on social media sites about themselves. The sites are designed in a way that enables the users to publicly share their information. For example, in Facebook, there is a friend request feature where one is enabled to friend-request another user even if they don't know each other. This makes it possible for one to access more people worldwide both known and unknown. On Instagram there is a following feature where one is able to follow other people and get access to their posts or information. Social media platforms, for example Facebook, Instagram and twitter enables one to increase his circles of trust and expand his/her horizons (Wong, 2021). When one only allows those people he knows into his circle, he will be building trust in the ones he already has. This platform also allows one to come into contact with people he has never met or he doesn't know about and never worked with. By doing so an

individual will be leveraging the scale of his business worldwide. Also, entrepreneurs should not take this platform as a sales tool or friend's get-together, they should view the platform as a global summit where they can meet with business professionals.

Opening a social media account is absolutely free. What you need are your details for example email, form number, gender, year of birth and others depending on the type of platform. Thereafter you set your password and username for your account. Cost is incurred during running of campaigns or advertisements for example on YouTube. Statistics suggest that an average amount to run an ad on social media is between \$4,000 and \$7,000 per month (Wong, 2021). Running an advertisement on some social media platform like Facebook and twitter is very cheap

Apart from the usual social media platforms, respondents were asked to mention any other alternative channels of communication that they used and the responses included the use of emails, the usual phone calls, slack, telegram, and traditional marketing channels (billboards, radio and TV). The reason for this is that social media has its own challenges. These alternatives have characteristics and advantages that social media lack.

### **Qualitative Data from the Interviews**

Apart from innovators, incubation managers at each of the stations within Nairobi were also surveyed for their responses on the use of social media in their innovation centres. As managers, it was important that their views regarding social media use in their organizations be sought. 99% of them stated that they found social media to be useful to innovators within their reach. All the managers mentioned that the incubators utilised social media to communicate with their clients. They encouraged innovators to deploy social media for their use in the ventures for reasons such

as communication, networking, share ideas, share challenges, conduct research, online mentorship and training, and solicit raw innovation support.

From their points of view, the most preferred social media platforms included Facebook, WhatsApp, Zoom, and email. Innovators had different reasons for using social media as communication channels, for instance, ease of use, availability, ease of operations, and cheap to utilize. Some of the most prevalent challenges identified with the use of social media by innovators included Internet downtimes, poor access, and expensive Internet packages. The alternative channels of communication that innovators used includes email, mobile calls, short scribes, analogue telephones, handwritten letters and notes, newspaper publication, radio and TV, as well as word of mouth. However, these alternatives were not as effective as they would be because of poor connectivity, time consuming, and inconvenience, being outdated, ineffective, and costly.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1. Summary, Discussion, and Conclusion**

Social media gives its users quick electronic communication of various content such as personal information, photos, documents and videos. The internet plays a significant role enabling interaction and communication globally. Moreover, internet sites such as Google plus, Facebook and Twitter have prompted different forms of government around the globe to join these sites with a view to benefit from the new wave of communication and human interaction done virtually. The number of people using social media services as of 2021, is over 4.48 billion worldwide with the average user having access to 6.6 social media platforms on a monthly basis. Further, social media sites such as Facebook were estimated to have over 65.86% of their monthly users logging into the site daily (Statista Research Department, 2021). The main aim of this study was to establish the role of social media as a communication channel on innovation in Nairobi County.

There were three research questions to this effect: (1) in what ways do innovators use social media as a communication of innovation within Nairobi County? (2) What are the challenges of using social media platforms as a tool in innovation within Nairobi County? (3) What are the preferred social channels of communication to audiences amongst innovators in Nairobi County? The rationale for pursuing this study was that the emergence of social media has changed the traditional way of communication involving technology. Entrepreneurs and innovators now use social media to contribute to the economic development of their countries. However, there are few studies conducted in the context of

Kenya as far the use of social media by innovators is concerned. The anticipated benefit is to support the growth of Nairobi's innovation sector through data-driven research.

After sending out surveys to both innovators and incubation managers, the study established the following; Under first objective on how innovators use social media platforms as communication channels on innovation in Nairobi County. The finding here was that innovators use social media in their ventures for communication, networking, sharing ideas and challenges, conducting research, online mentorship and training, and soliciting raw innovation support. As such, social media has become an integral part of life and has impacted different facets of businesses, including new ventures. The medium has improved how people communicate and increased accessibility, making the world a 'global village'. The interpretation here is that social media is a useful tool in enhancing innovation.

The second objective touched on the challenges that innovators faced when using social media as the medium of communication in the innovation process. The study established the challenges with the use of social media as; internet downtimes, poor access in certain areas of the town, and expensive Internet packages. As a developing country, the Internet is spread mostly in the major urban areas. In rural areas, systems have not been put in place to ensure robust supply of Internet. The use of bundles from telecommunication companies such as Safaricom is also expensive, thus making it expensive to operate from rural areas. Nairobi, however, has cable Internet from providers such as Zuku, Safaricom and Jamii Telkom, thus making it easy for innovators to use social media. The implication to be made here is that there will be challenges in the use of social

media even with expansions in the rural areas. The innovators may probably explore other alternative medium that are cheap to run hand in hand with social media too.

The third objective of the study touched on the preferred social media channel of communication amongst the innovators. Facebook was the most prevalently used platform followed by Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter, then YouTube, and lastly TikTok. Facebook makes it possible for them to build an online brand and access potential consumers. Instagram allows the posting of product photos, thus easy to target and retarget their audiences. Twitter users love it. First, it allows the grouping of followers and friends. One is able to create groups of those they are following and therefore reduce unnecessary twitter feeds. As for YouTube, the dashboard channel feature enables the user to keep a record of how his channel or video is performing. Further it informs the user about comments, news and trends posted by the viewers. LinkedIn helps one to stay in touch. The inference to be made here is that some platforms more likeable by many because they promote accessibility, enabling networking with fellow innovators and customers, and are equally cheap to use.

## **5.2. Recommendations**

Having established the findings above, there are several recommendations that the researcher places to aid innovators and entrepreneurs to successfully use social media for their innovative ventures.

- a. First, it is recommended that they use social media for not only communication but as a medium for product development and innovation, a vehicle for accessing knowledge, forming ideas and concepts with others, developing customer insights, and supporting



launching of new products. Success stories on social media have been widely shared highlighting some of the impacts that social media can have on the fortunes of a company. An example is a London based luxury fashion brand, Burberry Group plc, which heavily relies on social media platforms to reach fans and platforms. The brand started investing heavily on social media as far back as 2011 (Phan, Thomas & Heine, 2011). Many other companies are increasingly trying to emphasise the social media landscape and enhance their business performance by the use of social media. This increase on the social media spending has been found out by surveys that some organisations have increased establishment and social media spending on important social media functions. According to Phan et al. (2011), these platforms promise to accomplish all the above mentioned though it has not yet been put into practice. The rate at which companies are using social networks to develop new products is far behind the rate at which the public is utilising the platforms. Some companies have tried to use social media to come up with new insights that have enabled them to successfully come up with new products but there are still a large number of companies that are not aware of how they can utilise social media for innovation. The worst is that there are some companies that have been negatively affected by the innovation performance. Some waste resources by not being able to validate the reliability and source of information.

- b. The second recommendation is that innovation depends on three elements: collaboration, inspiration and research. Social media platforms had made contributions from customers and employees and collaboration maximisation easy. One needs to integrate social media into an innovation strategy because of its potential to reach not only thousands, not hundreds but millions of customers (Roberts & Piller, 2016). Driving innovation by use of

twitter, facebook or what's up amongst other platforms can be done through the following tips. Firstly, filtering and interpretation of consumer data. Monitoring trends of industry and gathering of data is now cheap, straightforward and quick because information is readily available, with the touch of a button one may get access to mass data. However, innovators should bear in mind that they are not the only ones holding the invaluable information and should effectively and wisely monitor and use the information.

- c. Crowdsourcing. -With social networks, all organisational stakeholders have an equal opportunity to participate in a decision making process. In so doing a variety of ideas are generated and from a range of inputs business decisions that are key can be shaped. Furthermore, challenges may be put forward to participants and a variety of solutions founded and provided and this makes the problem-solving process easier and faster (Roberts & Piller, 2016). The other tip is to give customer engagement a priority. The rise in social media use has consequently led to a shift in consumer attitudes and now changes have to be made to meet their new expectations that revolve around responsiveness and transparency, customers will be glad when their shared opinions are considered, and by considering the feedback of the customers it will lead to a successful innovation.
- d. Thirdly the Kenyan government needs to spearhead deliberate efforts to make Kenya an innovative hub. The current efforts appear to be little and slow. Some innovative startups are often slapped with very huge tax bills and also require approvals and documentation from many agencies, making it hard for innovators to facilitate their ventures. The responsible government agency for dealing with innovation is the innovation Agency (KeNIA). It approves the supply of financial and other support to any institution or person, so that the person or institution is able to expand on technological innovations. It works

together with other innovation enablers with an aim of nurturing innovative ideas from training institutions, individuals, private sectors and other institutions. KeNIA offers support through other forms that includes facilitates grant application, develops strategies that promote innovation programs and develops schemes to support and fund programs and innovation platforms. The government can directly or indirectly support innovation nonetheless. Direct support could be through provision of tax incentives, grants or indirect support by coming up with policies and laws that innovation-enabling in the ICT sector. The government also use IP on the leveraging of ICT to support innovation. The ICT National Policy 2010 has encouraged an economic system. According to Kenya's vision 2030, the government is focusing on generating knowledge by building communication structure and leverage on innovative innovation that is capable of communicating, processing, and accessing knowledge.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX I: Innovators Questionnaire**

The questionnaire is submitted for research purposes towards the award of a Master of Arts Degree in Communication studies at the University of Nairobi.

All information collected will be treated with utmost confidentiality and used only for the intended study.

### **SECTION I: Demographic Information**

**Tick appropriately**

1. Please indicate your gender?

Male ( )

Female ( )

2. What is your highest academic qualification?

Diploma ( )

Higher Diploma ( )

Degree ( )

Master's Degree ( )

3. What is your age group?

Between 18-30 years ( )

Between 31-40 years ( )

Above 40 years ( )

4. How old is your business

Less than one year ( )

1-3 years ( )

3-5 years ( )

5-10 years ( )

5. How long has your business been incubated?

Less than one year ( )

1-3 years ( )

3-5 years ( )

5-10 years ( )

6. At what stage is your startup?

Research ( )

Minimum viable product ( )

Commercialization stage ( )

7. What is the number of employees in your Startup?

None ( )

1-10 ( )

11-30 ( )

31-50 ( )

51-100 ( )

8. In what industry is your venture?

Agribusiness ( )

ICT ( )

Manufacturing ( )

Energy ( )

Health ( )

Environment ( )

Transport ( )

Tourism and Hospitality ( )

Biotechnology ( )

Professional Services & Skills ( )

Media and Arts ( )

Education ( )

Others ( )

**SECTION 11** Challenges of using social media platforms as a tool in innovation within Nairobi County.

1. Do you have access to internet

Yes ( )

No ( )

a. If so, how often do you access the internet?

Daily ( )

Weekly ( )

Fortnightly ( )

Monthly ( )

b. If No to above, kindly state the reason

---

2. Does your business venture have access to a laptop, desktop or use an android phone?

Yes ( )

No ( )

3. Are your products / services already in the market?

Yes ( )

No ( )

4. Does your business venture make profits?

Yes ( )

No ( )

5. Have you previously interacted with any social media platform?

Yes ( )

No ( )

6. Does your venture own any social media platform?

Yes ( )

No ( )

a. If yes to the above, please tick appropriately

Facebook ( )

Instagram ( )

Linkedin ( )

Twitter ( )

Youtube ( )

Others \_\_\_\_\_



b. If No to the above kindly state why\_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION 111.** What are the preferred social media channels of communication to audiences among innovators in Nairobi County?

1. How long has your business venture been engaged in social media platforms

Less than a year ( )

1-3 years ( )

4-6 years ( )

6-10 years ( )

Not yet ( )

2. What social media platform best suits your business venture, please tick appropriately

Facebook ( )

Instagram ( )

Linkedin ( )

Twitter ( )

Youtube ( )

Others\_\_\_\_\_

3. Why do you prefer the above-mentioned platform? -----

4. Is the platform already in use by your business venture?

Yes ( )

No ( )

a). If yes to the above quantify the number of social media users who can be reached basing on the membership in your various groups as below:

Less than 100 ( ) 200 -1000 ( ) above 1000( ) above 5000 ( ) above 10,000 ( )

5. How often do you respond to inquiries and engagements in your social media platforms?

Daily ( )

Weekly ( )

Fortnight ( )

Monthly ( )

6. Which social media platform has more audience engagements in your business venture?

Facebook ( )

Instagram ( )

Linkedin ( )

Twitter ( )

Youtube ( )

Others \_\_\_\_\_

7. Why do you think your audience /customers prefer the above social media platform for communication over the others?

- a) Accessibility
- b) Networked
- c) Cheap
- d) Availability

Others \_\_\_\_\_

7. What is the alternative channel of communication for your startup?

\_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION 1V.** How do innovators use social media towards innovation in their startup?

1. In a scale of 1-5 rate the following where 5 is the highest and 1 is lowest

Customers /audience inquire about my business venture through social media	
I often communicate to my customers/audience through social media	
I use social media as a marketing platform for my products and services	
Social media has had a negative impact in my business venture	
I use social media to research about my innovation	
I would recommend or hire a social media personnel for my business	
I have acquired new clientele/ business through social media	
I learn about business meetings and events through social media	
The presence of social media in my business is of great importance	
The incubator i am affiliated to encourages social media presence for startups	
I spend more time on social media platforms than on building my business venture	
Social media has allowed transparency in how we conduct business	
I review all social media feedback from my clientele	

I would recommend a social media presence of business ventures to all innovators	
I would recommend a different social media platform tailored for startups only	
Social media is a friendly to use platform	
Social media is expensive to maintain in business	

## **APPENDIX 2: Incubation Managers Questionnaire**

The questionnaire is submitted for research purposes towards the award of a Master of Arts Degree in Communication studies at the University of Nairobi.

All information collected will be treated with utmost confidentiality and used only for the intended study.

1. Do you consider social media useful to innovators within your reach?

Yes ( )

No ( )

2. Does the incubator communicate to the clients through social media?

Yes ( )

No ( )

(a) . If **No** to above,

**Why?**\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Do you encourage your innovators to use social media platforms?

Yes ( )

No ( )

(a). If yes, for what purpose do they use it

---

(b). If No, why?

---

4. Do you monitor how innovators use their social media platforms towards their innovations?

Yes ( )

No ( )

(a). If yes to above, how do they use social media as a communication channel towards their innovations?

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5. Which is the most preferred social media platform amongst your innovators?

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6. What are the reasons for using social media as a communication channel by innovators?

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7. Are there any challenges that have been cited by your innovators on social media use?

8. If yes, kindly indicate. \_\_\_\_\_

9. What are the alternative effective communication channels for innovators other than social media. Kindly list below

10. How effective are they?

**Thank you for your participation**

## Appendix 3: Authorization Letter



**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**  
*COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES*  
*SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM & MASS COMMUNICATION*

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P.O. Box 30197  
Nairobi.  
Kenya

OUR REF:  
YOUR REF:

**DATE:** August 13, 2020

### **TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

#### **RE: PAMELA KATHAMBI MBAE - K50/74808/2014**

This is to confirm that the above named is a bonafide student at the University of Nairobi, School of Journalism and Mass Communication pursuing Master of Arts degree in Communication Studies.

MsMbae has completed her course work and is currently going to collect data for her research project leading to a Master of Arts Degree in Communication Studies.

**RESEARCH TOPIC:** Social Media as Communication Channel for Innovators. The case of Nairobi County.

Any assistance accorded to her will be highly appreciated.

**Wendy Cheron**  
Senior Administrative Assistant



**School of Journalism & Mass Communication**