LEVERAGING SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOOL FOR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG WOMEN IN KENYA

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Abstract: The use of social media has become an integral part of modern daily life. Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have been emerging as important sources of political information and as designed mechanisms for promoting behavior change in politics and civic engagement. The modern youth world over has taken up social media as a platform to voice their day to day political concerns. In Africa and particularly the East African region, 'The social media boom' has been witnessed with Kenya been ranked as the leading country in technology adaptation and social media use in East Africa and the seventh in the continent. This has seen young Kenyan women turn to social media for their political engagement making it an important tool for their political participation. However, past studies have shown that there is minimal offline political participation by these young women as evidenced by their minimal representation in political leadership. This offers an opportunity for research on the use of social media by young women in Kenya in view of enhancing their offline political participation. The purpose of this study therefore was to evaluate the effect of leveraging social media as a tool for political participation of young women in Kenya. The study was guided by the following specific objectives: to analyze the effect of leveraging social media as a campaigns tool for political participation of young women in Kenya, to assess the effect of leveraging social media as an advocacy tool for political participation of young women in Kenya, to examine the effect of leveraging social media as a voter education tool for political participation of young women in Kenya. The study population was composed of information rich respondents who were members the 'Hello Mama' Facebook group which was predominantly made up of young women. A sample size of 384 respondents was drawn using simple random sampling technique. The study adopted an online questionnaire presented as google forms. The quantitative data obtained was edited to ensure completeness and consistency. The use of Google forms allowed for analysis using descriptive and inferential statistics such as percentages, frequencies, mean and standard deviation. Google form responses presented the findings using tables and figures (bar charts and pie charts) for easier understanding and interpretation using inferential statistics. The study found that Young women rely on social media for political messages and information from their preferred politicians and leaders. Social media, while a great source of gathering volunteers and money, serves the main purpose of affirming political beliefs and strengthening a political base and therefore an important tool for communication during political campaigns. It concluded that leveraging social media had an effect on enhancing political participation of young women in Kenya.

Keywords: *campaign tool, advocacy tool, voter education tool, political participation*

Background of the Study

Social media is an evolutionary development that has transformed the way that individuals, organizations and political campaigns are able to communicate (Zavattaro & Sementelli, 2014). It has given ordinary citizens the opportunity to participate actively on the online forum and where they are not expected to be a politician, a famous person or an activist to engage in public debate but only needs to have basics of computer and content (Safranek, 2012). Coleman, (2001), with his techno-optimistic view asserts that the internet is becoming a "fifth estate". He explains that the internet is having a transformative effect in three ways. First, it is opening up to public scrutiny a wealth of inaccessible information which may enable citizens to engage on a more equal basis with political authorities. Secondly, it is developing spaces for unmediated public deliberation where citizens interact with one another, with communities and elites that were once less vulnerable to such direct engagement. Third, it is changing the way their representatives perform as the nature of their mandate is open to transformation making political participation a social practice due to the collaborative processes and knowledge being documented and passed around via the different social media platforms (Coleman, 2001)

Social media in the 21st century can be defined as a variety of networked technologies that emphasize on all social aspects of the internet as a channel for communication, collaboration and creative expression (Dabbagh and Reo 2011).Studies show that checking social media networks has become a daily routine for many young adults (Steinfield, Ellison & Lampe, 2008). This is mostly because social media facilitates immediacy and interactivity in communication, both of which are highly desirable among the youth (Kamau, S. 2013). According to Essoungou, (2010), Africa is experiencing the 'social media boom' with Kenya been ranked as the leading country in technology adaptation and social media use in East Africa (Macharia, 2015) and the seventh in Africa when counting the number of Facebook users (Internet world stats, 2012a).In addition to Facebook, the usage of Twitter is growing with Nairobi ranking as "the most active city in East Africa and the sixth most active on the continent" when it comes to tweets(Portland 2014), Ephraim, (2013) asserts that the increase in use of social media in African countries is evidence by young people being the most active users of the platforms.

Statement of the Problem

Young women in Kenya are faced by societal expectations and stereotypes that propagate patriarchy, insecurity and gender based humiliation as well as violence which often undermine their political ambitions (Mwatha *et al.*, 2013).Those that have political aspirations are restrained by their reproductive roles and are often made to choose between bringing up young families among other societal roles and engaging in politics and leadership without losing their political rights. (Mwatha *et al.*, 2013).The result of this is the absence of significant numbers of young women in positions of influence which denies them a chance to influence decisions and impact policy making. For this reason it is necessary to proactively enhance measures that may encourage them to benefit from the expanded political space and roles that have been granted to them through the Constitution. However young women cannot realize a fairer political landscape using the constitution on its own hence there is still need to create and expand opportunities to enable them to become more active and effective participants in the national and local political activities.

Other researchers, suggest that due to the new opportunities afforded by the internet for people to 'learn about, talk about, and take part in politics' has the potential to bring "new people into politics" (Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 2010). In her study of young women's use of the internet, Harris (2008) argues that the mere act of 'going online' allows women to create identities that are a first step for women to identify themselves as a citizen. The simple ability to create a public self provides young women with a capacity to play with gender

and to resist feminine stereotypes by enhancing their confidence as political actors. Similarly, Keller (2011) argues that blogs are particularly important online spaces for young women to forge political identities and confront sexist cultures. Blogs have the intention to entertain as well as mobilize young women into political action. In view of such propositions this study therefore sought to evaluate the effect of leveraging social media as a tool for political participation of young women in Kenya.

Objectives of the study

1. To analyze the effect of leveraging social media as a campaign tool for political participation of young women in Kenya.

2. To assess the effect of leveraging social media as an advocacy tool for political participation of young women in Kenya.

3. To examine the effect of leveraging social media as a voter education tool for political participation of young women in Kenya.

Literature Review

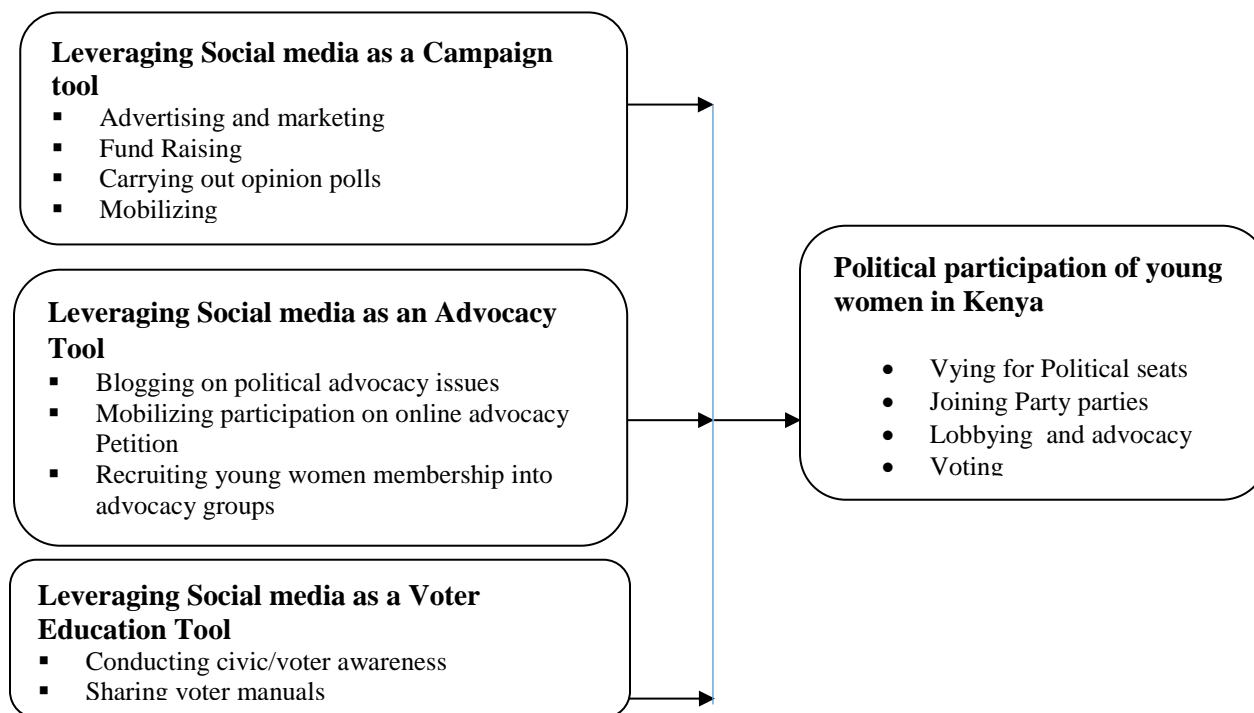The study was guided by the following theories;

Uses and Gratification Theory: Seeks to understand why and how people consciously seek out specific media to satisfy specific needs (Katz, Blunder and Gurevitch, 2011).UGT answers the question on why people use media and for what purpose they choose the media. The theory as propounded by Katz in 1970 is concerned with how people use media for gratification of their needs. It borrows from Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of needs which propounds the fact that people choose what they want to see or read and the different media compete to satisfy their individual's needs. Rosengren and Windahl (1972), assert that audiences can gratify these needs using both media and non-media sources such as family and friends and that these alternative sources are in competition with each other as potential sources of audience need gratifications. They refer to this phenomenon as the "functional alternatives" and that media are simply a portion of the possible sources we turn to for gratifications.

Democratic Participant Media Theory: The Democratic Participant Media Theory as proposed by Professor Mc Quail is in a way, the technological version of the libertarian theory which found its location mainly in rich, developed countries where the citizens had the scientific, technological and financial means to put the latest innovations into inter-personal communication. (Vil'anilam 2015). According to Baran, S & Davis, D. K. (2011), the central tenet of the theory is that mass communication doesn't need to be uniform, centralized, high-cost, commercialized, professionalized, state controlled or privately controlled, rather mass communication can take place without the mass media. The theory reacts against the centralism and bureaucratization of media institutions. It argues that mass communication can be multiple, small-scale, local, non-institutional, run by small communities or even individuals who have similar aims and goals. It advocates for media support for cultural pluralism at grass root level where media are to be used to stimulate and empower pluralistic groups. Mc Quail called for development of innovative "small" media that can be directly controlled by group members and that if the small groups cannot afford such media, then the government should provide them subsidies. The theory further propagates for emphasizes communitarianism and encourages citizens' participation in community affairs. The theory denotes that alternative media were technically made more efficient with the arrival of the Internet.

Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables   **Dependent Variables**

Leveraging Social media as a Campaign tool
- Advertising and marketing
- Fund Raising
- Carrying out opinion polls
- Mobilizing

Leveraging Social media as an Advocacy Tool
- Blogging on political advocacy issues
- Mobilizing participation on online advocacy Petition
- Recruiting young women membership into advocacy groups

Leveraging Social media as a Voter Education Tool
- Conducting civic/voter awareness
- Sharing voter manuals

Political participation of young women in Kenya
- Vying for Political seats
- Joining Party parties
- Lobbying and advocacy
- Voting

Leveraging Social Media as a Campaign Tool: Political campaign communication has over time experienced global changes. These global changes have been described as transformations with a typology consisting of three stages; the pre-modern, the modern and the postmodern stage (Farrell & Webb 2000; Plasser & Plasser 2002). Norris (2001) argues that the pre-modern campaigns were local, ad-hoc and inter- personal. He further states that the partisan press was the primary intermediary between the political parties and the citizens, and the electorates were characterized by stable social and partisan alignments. The modern stage which is the second level of categorization was characterized by campaign activities being increasingly coordinated at the central party level with the help of professional consultants. Television took center stage as the primary campaign medium and the electorate became detached from their traditional social and partisan ties (Blumler & Gurevitch 1995; Dalton, 2000; Norris 2001). According to Römmele (2003), the rise of the internet in the postmodern era has led to what has been initially referred to as Americanized style of campaigning, where the internet has been used in innovative ways. Evans-Cowley& Hollander, (2010); Hyden & Leslie, (2002); Scammell, (1995) assert that social media has created communicative spaces that enable a greater democratic culture to flourish. New media has seen increased improvements on the quantity and quality of information flow from the electorate to parties and candidates. Social media has potentially improved the channels of communication from politicians to the electorate through social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter; where political organizations and candidates not only have the possibility to directly communicate with their publics, but also to interact with them as it is a two-way communication. Voters are given a platform to share their opinions and to be heard.

Leveraging Social Media as an Advocacy tool: According to Schneider and Lester (2001); Advocacy can be understood as a process of actions with the aim of promoting change. Parsons, Jorgenson, Hernandez (1994); advance the notion that advocacy does not take the form of just one activity, but rather, is a pluralistic practice where active support of an idea, cause or policy is undertaken usually through the act of asking for or arguing for a particular outcome. According to Obar, Zube and Lampe (2012), advocacy suggests systematic effort by specific actors whose aim is to influence specific policy without exercising the formal powers of government. These specific actors form advocacy organizations which act on behalf of an individual, group, or at a systemic or structural level. These advocacy groups have been in existence world over as early as the 19th century with the U.S. having the likes of the National Rifle Association (NRA, founded 1871), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP, founded 1909), the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU, founded 1920), and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP, founded 1958).

Leveraging Social Media as a Voter Education Tool: According to UNDP Essentials, (2013) voter education is the dissemination of information, materials and programs designed to inform voters about the specifics and mechanics of the voting process for an election. It involves providing information on who is eligible to vote; where and how to register as a voter as well as how to check the voter lists to ensure they have been duly included. Voter education also gives information on the type of elections to being held; where, when and how to vote as well as who the candidates are; and how to file complaints. Civic education on the other side is a broader concept aimed at conveying knowledge of a country's political system and context. It may include information on the system of government; the nature and powers of the offices to be filled in an election; the principal economic, social and political issues facing the nation; the value of democracy; the equal rights of women and men; and the importance of peace and national reconciliation.

Research Methodology

This study employed descriptive survey research design using an online questionnaire targeting users of social media. The target population for this study was young women in Kenya aged between 18-35 years. This study employed a Simple random sampling technique where all the 384 respondents were given equal opportunities of being selected without any bias. This study used a structured online questionnaire to collect quantitative data. The online questionnaire had both open ended and closed ended questions. The online questionnaire were created using Google forms distributed to the selected sample population through sending it to the respondents' respective Facebook message inbox with the approval and help of the group administrators. Data analysis was done by organizing and interpreting data collected from the study which was in line with the research questions and objectives. A correlation analysis was conducted to test the direction of the relationship between variables. A multiple regression was also conducted to evaluate the strength of relationship between variables.

Results and Discussions

Social Media as a Campaign tool: Elections are decided by small percentage of the population that consists of undecided voters. Mastering the art of social media strategies is essential for political campaigns to sway these voters. Political campaigns have become more intentional about where and with whom they invest their money. Each social media networking site targets a different audience and uses different tools to allow people to share ideas, videos, photos and links to form a network of people connected by common interests. The increasingly large number of users on these sites has attracted companies to include internet advertising in their marketing plans, due to social media's targeting capabilities and that it is often less expensive than TV or print advertising. Companies are not the only ones who realized the advertising and networking advantages of these

sites. The researcher posed various statements regarding social media use for campaigns and the results were summarized in table 1.

Table 1 Social media for as a Campaign tool

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	TOTAL
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Social media is the most appropriate media for young women political candidates to use for their political advertising	32	43	9	6	10	100
Social media is the most effective avenue for soliciting campaign funds/donations /sponsorship of young women who intend to vie for political seats	38	41	21	-	-	100
Party officials/Members or other political figures are increasingly using social media in recruiting and mobilizing young volunteers/members and supporters through online outreach	35	52	8	6	4	100
Young women rely on social media for political messages and information from their preferred politicians and leaders	16	39	6	23	17	100
Social media is the most appropriate avenue for conducting opinion polls on support base from young women	34	49	8	5	6	100

For the purpose of this study campaigns are deliberate measures/actions/activities put in place seeking to influence the voting or supporting of preferred candidate by specific person/group. Social media was the most appropriate media for young women political candidates to use for their political advertising was the first statement. Majority (43%) of the respondents agreed with the statement, an indication that social media was the most relied tool of passing campaign material and information for the young women who participated in political activities. On the other hand, 32% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement. About 10% of the respondents strongly disagreed, maybe because they may not have involved themselves in social media, or they have a feeling that for them to participate in social media, they did not get the advertisement or information from social media. On the other hand about 6% of the respondents disagreed while 9% were neutral. Social media can be used as an effective campaign tool but often goes unmonitored or misused as it floods supporters with irrelevant advertisements and requests.

Social media was the most effective avenue for soliciting campaign funds/donations /sponsorship of young women who intend to vie for political seats. Majority of the respondents (41%) agreed while 38% of them strongly agreed. The most convenient way for a voter to engage with a campaign is online. At the click of a button, one can donate money or solicit for funds to help in campaigns. In this case, anybody who is convinced by the policies that the woman politician gives will donate without much knowledge of the exact individual. On the other hand, 21% of the respondents were neutral about the statement, and this could be because their

participation in contributions to people they don't know was limited. Equally, they may have never involved themselves on political funding. None of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed to this statement.

Party officials/Members or other political figures are increasingly using social media in recruiting and mobilizing young volunteers/members and supporters through online outreach. Social media is changing the nature of communication because it is a tool that is being used to mobilize users in new ways. Users are able to connect directly to politicians and campaign managers and engage in political activities in new ways. Politicians have a platform to communicate with that is different from the mainstream media. Politicians have the ability to raise large amounts of money in relatively short periods of time through social media campaigns. In this case, majority (52%) agreed with the statement while 35% of the respondents strongly agreed. On the other hand, 8% of the respondents were neutral while 6% of them disagreed. About 4% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Young women rely on social media for political messages and information from their preferred politicians and leaders. Majority of the respondents (39%) agreed while 16% strongly agreed. About 6% of the respondents were neutral while 23% of the respondents disagreed. Only 17% of the respondents strongly disagreed. The researcher also asked whether Social media was the best tool for conducting opinion polls on support base from young women. Majority (49%) of the respondents agreed while 34% of them strongly agreed. About 8% of the respondents were neutral while 5% of the respondents disagreed and 6% strongly disagreed. Social media therefore has been used in political campaigns ranging from small local elections to larger-scale presidential elections. According to Eilperin (2016), social media can reinforce pre-existing beliefs rather than promote new ones. Social media, while a great source of gathering volunteers and money, serves the main purpose of affirming political beliefs and strengthening a political base and therefore an important tool for communication during campaigns.

Social Media as an Advocacy Tool: For the purpose of this study advocacy is the deliberate influence for active support of an idea, cause or policy through the act of asking for or arguing for a particular outcome or opinions within political systems. Social media advocacy on the other hand means leveraging the social networks of the people who are invested in your continued success who include your followers and supporters or publics. By turning as many of these people as possible into advocates, people who proactively talk up and advocate for your political ideas to their own networks you can extend your reach and generate greater affinity. That's because the advocates will work for your idea and share positive sentiments with their community. This can be more credible than advertising methods, including influencer marketing. Because the best advocates either work for you or are already supporters, they generally have a deeper connection with your ideas than influencers, who are often for hire to the highest bidder. In relation to this study therefore, the researcher asked the respondents if they used social media for advocacy and the findings were summarized in figure 1.
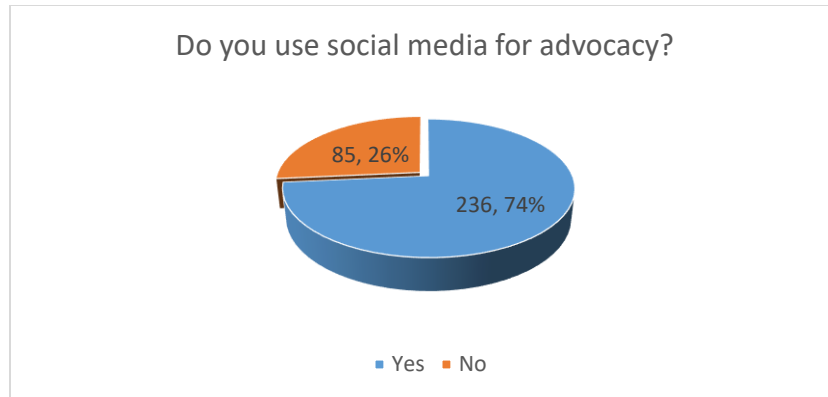
Figure 1: If the respondents use social media for advocacy

The findings from figure 1 indicated that majority (236, 74%) had used social media for advocacy while the remaining 85, 26% had not used social media for advocacy. This therefore prompted the researcher to go deep to those who had encouraged on how they encouraged their social media networks to participate in online advocacy. The results were summarized in table 2.

Table 2: How respondents encouraged social media networks to participate in online advocacy?

	Frequency	Percent
By recruiting them to membership of official advocacy websites through online invitations	64	19.9
By mobilizing them to participate in online petitions	35	10.9
By participating so that they can follow the example	32	10.0
By educating them on the importance	128	39.9
N/A	62	19.3
Total	321	100.0

The findings from table 2 had given a mixed reaction on how respondents encouraged their social media networks to participate in online advocacy. Majority (39.9%) of the respondents indicated that they did it by educating them on the importance of online advocacy. This was followed by 64% of the respondents who indicated that they did it by recruiting them to membership of official advocacy websites through online invitations and through this, they will be encouraged. On the other hand, 35% of the respondents indicated that they did it by mobilizing them to participate in online petitions and through this, they got encouraged. Finally, about 32% of the respondents indicated that they did it by participating themselves so that the rest can follow their example. The researcher therefore asked the respondents to show the extent to which they agreed or disagreed to the fact that social media is the best tool for use by young women in advocacy on issues affecting them. The findings were summarized in table 3.

Table 3: Social media is the best tool for use by young women in advocacy on issues affecting them.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	58	18.1
Agree	146	45.5
Neutral	76	23.7
Disagree	21	6.5
Strongly disagree	20	6.2
Total	321	100.0

Social media has arisen as a powerful tool for online communities to raise awareness and mobilize campaigns on a wide range of issues. Women's voices whether individual or collective have proven to be fundamental to advance women's rights at national and international levels. In particular, social media has become essential for women's rights groups to push for greater accountability and action on their political participation.

Women increasingly take part in different social media outlets and use them as avenues to raise awareness, discuss policies or mobilize campaigns on their political participation and the use of social media on their advocacy. The findings as indicated in table 4.9 shows that majority (45.5%) of the respondents agreed with the statement while 18.1% strongly agreed. This gave the researcher the knowledge that social media is a best tool that can be used by women on advocacy issues. On the other hand, 23.7% of the respondents were neutral to the statement while 6.5% of the respondents disagreed. Only 6.2% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement.

Social Media as a Voter Education Tool: Social media is also an effective tool in voter education efforts designed to ensure voters are well informed and can effectively exercise their voting rights. In the digital age, social media has the potential to become a hugely valuable and effective voter education tool for any woman participating in politics. The researcher begun this by asking if the respondents had received any form of voter education through the social media and the response was summarized in figure 3
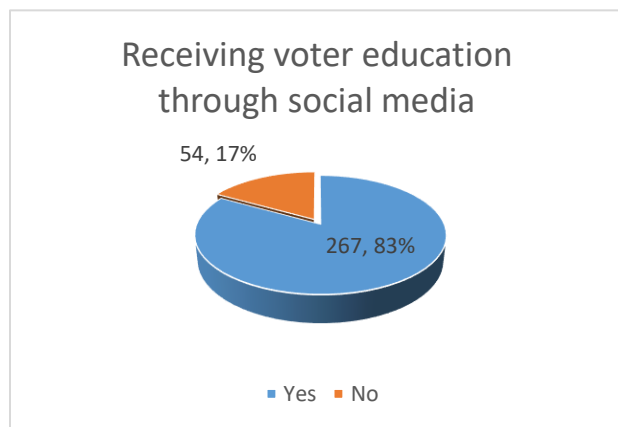

Figure 3: Do you receive any form of voter education through the social media?

The findings from figure 3 indicated that majority of the respondents (83%) had received voter education through social media while the remaining 19% indicated that they had not receives voter education through social media. The fact that majority of the respondents had received voter education through social media was an indication that most of the respondents had relied on social media on most of the news. The researcher on the other hand was concerned with the format that the news had come to the respondents and the results were summarized in table 4.

Table 4: What Format does it come to you?

	Frequency	Percent
Online Adverts	42	13.1
Online Manuals	84	26.2
Periodicals	30	9.3
Online video scripts	111	34.6
N/A	54	16.8
Total	321	100.0

Results from table 4 indicated that majority of the respondents (111, 34.6%) had received the voter education materials in the form of online video scripts. This was because online video scripts had a higher coverage rates. Video isn't just flashier; it really does give the respondents a broader opportunity to obtain the goals and purpose of the video script. With both video and audio working together, an individual can more effectively communicate information and ideas. This was followed by 26.2% of the respondents who indicated that they received education materials from online manuals while 13.1% of the respondents indicated that they had received voter education materials from online adverts that were sent to social media. About 9.3% of the respondents had received voter educational materials from periodicals available on social media. The researcher went ahead to determine the extent to which respondents agreed or disagreed with statements regarding social media leveraging as a voter education tool and the response was summarized in table 5.

Table 5: Social Media leveraging as a voter education tool

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	TOTAL
	%	%	%	%	%	%
The use of online voter education adverts would encourage young women to participate in voting	19	47	20	10	4	100
Online voter education manuals would help increase civic awareness among young women	40	35	9	9	6	100
Social media is the most appropriate avenue for conducting voter education among young women	15	57	13	9	6	100
IEBC should adopt social for voter education in order to enhance civic participation among young Kenyan women	71	19	4	1	5	100

Social media are the ultimate in disruptive technology. They change information delivery, business organization, online content, news coverage, and the manner in which an individual process new developments. Despite social networking's track record for generating democratic engagement, though, it has proven difficult to sustain political interest and activism online over time and move electronic engagement from campaigns to governance. Faced with a polarized political environment and arcane debates over legislative provisions, a good number of people have opted out of the civic participation which was so prolific during the election cycle. Many voters remain cynical and disengaged from the political process at the very time when the electoral stakes are very high. The use of online voter education adverts would encourage young women to participate in voting. Regarding this statement, majority (47%) of the respondents agreed while 19% of the respondents strongly agreed. This was followed by 20% of the respondents who were neutral to the statement, probably because they had not taken a stand on whether social media helps in voter education or not.

Online voter education manuals would help increase civic awareness among young women. Regarding this statement, majority of the respondents (40%) strongly agreed while 35% of the respondents agreed. About 9% each were neutral and disagreed respectively while about 6% of the respondents strongly disagreed. On the

other hand, as regards to the statement that Social media was the most appropriate avenue for conducting voter education among young women, majority (57%) of the respondents agreed while 15% of the respondents strongly agreed. About 13% of the respondents were neutral while 9% and 6% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. In a world of information over-flow, it is hard for people to evaluate competing claims. Politicians often disagree not just on interpretations, but on the facts. Increasingly, people are using their personal networks to fact-check claims, evaluate the quality of information, and alert them to what is important in the world.

Political Participation of Young Women in Kenya: Women's political participation in Kenya, especially among young women, has been one of the key areas of interest for women's rights organizations. Politics plays a vital role in influencing the policy making process, and the absence of significant numbers of women in positions of influence denies them a chance to influence decision and impact policy making. Although the population of women and men at all levels is almost equally matched, political representation is heavily skewed in favor of men. The researcher begun by understanding the capacity that the respondents participated in politics and public affairs of the country and the findings were summarized in table 6.

Table 6: Capacity do you participated in the politics and public affairs of the country

	Frequency	Percent
Political candidate	8	2.5
Party member/official	22	6.9
Voter/Citizen	251	78.2
Civil society member/lobbyist	20	6.2
Government official	20	6.2
Total	321	100.0

Majority (78.2%) of the respondents were just voters or merely citizens who just participated in the electoral process as voters but not occupied positions to be voted for. About 6.9% of the respondents participated as party members and party officials while 6.2% each participated as civil society members and lobbyists and government officials respectively. About 2.5% of the respondents participated as political candidates, a very small percentage. This therefore indicated to the study that majority of the women do not actively participate on political activities as candidates but rather as ordinary people who only participate in voting and observing the exercise. The researcher went ahead to determine how the respondents rated young women in political participation in the country and the results were summarized in figure 4.
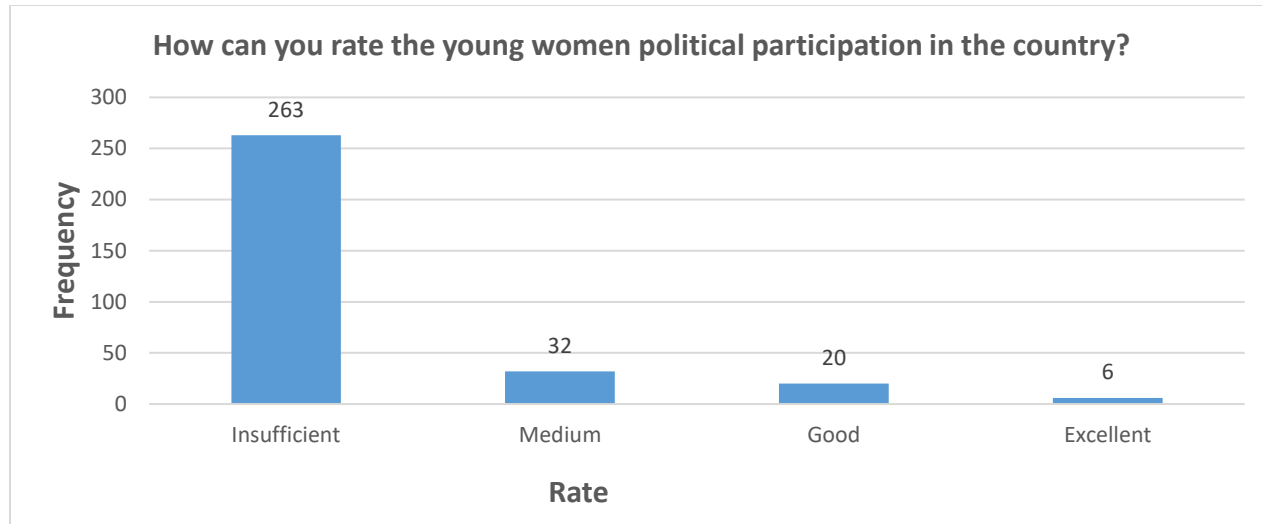
How can you rate the young women political participation in the country?

Figure 4: Rate the Young Women in Political Participation in the Country

The rate of young women in political participation had mixed reactions with the indication that it was not sufficient from majority (263) of the respondents. This was followed by 32 respondents who indicated that it was medium, 20 respondents indicating that it was good while only 6 respondents indicated that the participation of young women in politics was excellent. This case gave the impression that majority of young women do not in most cases actively engage in political activities. In a bid to understand the political participation of young women on politics, the researcher posed various statements for the respondents to express the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statements and the results were summarized in table 7.

Table 7: Political participation of young women

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	TOTAL
	%	%	%	%	%	%
There has been an increase in both the number of young women vying for political seats as well as their membership in political parties in Kenya	8	7	18	45	23	100
Young women in Kenya are participating in advocacy as well as lobbying on political matters affecting them	7	6	14	54	18	100
More young women in Kenya are increasingly taking part in the election voting exercise	24	57	9	5	6	100

Young women have for a long time been excluded from decision-making processes – from the basic to the highest levels of policy making in the country. Additionally, even with calls for young people to engage in governance structures and political activities, it is young men who still dominate and take up opportunities that result from such lobbying in which young women are sidelined. The study indicates that there very few young

women with the power to make decisions at local governance structures and political participation, compared to young men. Further, engagement is weak as structured consultative processes often fail to engage women sufficiently. In the statement that there has been an increase in both the number of young women vying for political seats as well as their membership in political parties in Kenya, majority (23%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, 45% of the respondents disagreed, 18% of the respondents were neutral, 7% of the respondents agreed while 8% of the respondents strongly agreed. This drove an indication that young women in Kenya were not effectively vying for political seats as well nor increasing their membership in political parties. On the other hand, the researcher asked if young women in Kenya are participating in advocacy as well as lobbying on political matters affecting them. Majority (54%) of the respondents disagreed, 18% of the respondents strongly disagreed, and 14% of the respondents were neutral to the statement, 6% of the respondents agreed while 7% of the respondents strongly agreed. These results also drove an indication that young women in Kenya are yet to effectively participate in advocacy on political matters affecting them. Voting among young women in Kenya has largely increased. Majority (57%) of the respondents agreed, 24% of the respondents strongly agreed, 9% of the respondents were neutral, 5% of the respondents disagreed while 6% of the respondents strongly disagreed, an indication that young women in Kenya participate in the capacity of voters.

Correlation Analysis

A correlation analysis therefore was conducted and the results were summarized in table 8.

Table 8: Correlations

		Politicalpart	Campaigns	Advocacy	Education
Politicalpart	Pearson Correlation	1	.624**	.585**	.642**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	321	321	321	321
Campaigns	Pearson Correlation	.624**	1	.944**	.734**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	321	321	321	321
Advocacy	Pearson Correlation	.585**	.944**	1	.708**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	321	321	321	321
Education	Pearson Correlation	.642**	.734**	.708**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	321	321	321	321
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	321	321	321	321

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlation analysis was conducted in order to determine the direction and the strength of the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables. In this study Pearson correlation coefficient was used to determine the magnitude and the direction of the relationships between the dependent variable and

independent variables. Results from table 8 indicate the correlation between the independent variables and the dependent variable. As regards to social media use in campaigns and political participation of young women, the results indicated a strong positive correlation with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.624 which was significant at 0.01 significant level. This therefore meant that social media in campaigns had a significant weight in determining whether young women could be involved in participating in political activities. On the other hand, the researcher wanted to determine the relationship between Social Media use in Advocacy and young women participation in politics. Another strong positive relationship was identified from a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.585 which was also significant at 0.01 significant level. In this case, it was therefore noted that social media is important for advocacy because in turn, it boosts the political participation of young women. On the other hand, the researcher wanted to determine the influence of social media on education and its effect to political participation of young women in Kenya. Another strong positive correlation was identified from a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.642 which was equally significant at 0.01 significant level. This elicited an indication that as you increase the use of social media, women will be more educated and therefore making them actively participate in political activities.

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis can be used determine the strength of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables and to determine the combined effect of all the independent variables on the dependent variable. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to measure the change in dependent variable explained by the change in independent variables. F–test was carried out to evaluate the significance of the overall model and to define the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables; t- test was used to test the significance of the individual independent variables to the dependent variable. In fitting the multiple linear regression model, a regression analysis conducted was summarized in tables 9, 10 and 11

Table 9: Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.681[a]	.463	.457	2.51854	.105

a. Predictors: (Constant), Internet access, Education, Campaigns, Advocacy
b. Dependent Variable: Politicalpart

The R-squared statistic provides a measure of how well the model is fitting the actual data. It takes the form of a proportion of variance. R^2 is a measure of the linear relationship between predictor variable and the response/target variable. As can be seen from Table 9, the value of our R^2 is 0.463, which means that 46.3 percent of the total variance in social media has been explained. The coefficient Standard Error measures the average amount that the coefficient estimates vary from the actual average value of our response variable which is 2.51854 in this case.

Table 10: ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1730.297	4	432.574	68.197	.000[b]
	Residual	2004.394	316	6.343		
	Total	3734.692	320			

a. Dependent Variable: Politicalpart
b. Predictors: (Constant), Internetacces, Education, Campaigns, Advocacy

Table 10 is the table that shows the output of the ANOVA analysis and whether there is a statistically significant difference between social media and political participation of young women in Kenya. The findings indicate that there a significance value of 0.000 (i.e., p = .000), which is below 0.01 and, therefore, there is a statistically significant effect of social media use on political participation of young women in Kenya. The results therefore indicated that social media use greatly influences the decisions made by young women when it comes to political participation. In as much as there could be any other factors that may influence them, social media use is also significant.

Table 11: Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	7.29	.560		13.02	.000	6.19	8.399
Campaigns	.401	.126	.414	3.173	.002	.152	.649
Advocacy	-.097	.129	-.102	-.750	.454	-.351	.157
Education	.402	.066	.396	6.104	.000	.272	.531

1. *Dependent Variable: Politicalpart*

Table 11 shows the coefficients of the predictor variables which included campaigns, advocacy and voter education .The first variable represents the constant as the Y intercept. The column for B is the values for the regression equation for predicting the dependent variable from the independent variable. The coefficient for campaigns is 0.401 which indicated that for every unit increase in online campaigns, 0.401 units in political participation of young women is predicted. On the other hand, the coefficient for advocacy is -0.097 which indicated that for every increase in online political advocacy, there is a decrease in political participation of young women in Kenya. Social media use in voter education also had a coefficient of 0.402 which was an indication that for every unit increases in online voter education, political participation of young women in Kenya increased by 0.0402.

Conclusion

The study derived its conclusions from the findings. The study sought to examine leveraging social media as a tool for political participation of young women in Kenya. Young women have for a long time been excluded from decision-making processes from the basic to the highest levels of policy making in the country. Additionally, even with calls for young people to engage in governance structures and political activities, it is young men who still dominate and take up opportunities that result from such lobbying in which young women are sidelined. Social media has always been considered as a best tool to use in political participation mainly because it is a tool that reaches to a large number of the electorate. Concerning leveraging social media as a campaign tool and political participation among young women in Kenya, the study concluded that most young women rely on social media for political messages and information from their preferred politicians and leaders. On the other hand, social media as an advocacy tool was seen as an important tool because it boosted political participation. The study made a general conclusion that leveraging social media for political activities had an effect on the participation of young women in Kenya.

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