

Social Media as a Tool For Political Branding among Select Politicians in Kenya

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Abstract

This study investigated social media as a tool for political branding among politicians in Kenya. A descriptive survey using a quantitative research methods approach was adopted while targeting social media managers operating social media pages of the Members of Parliament (MPs). Questionnaires were used to collect data. The study used a sample of 87 social media managers. The findings indicated that the most commonly used social media for political branding was Facebook followed by Twitter. Instagram and TikTok were ineffective for political branding. Moreover, the findings indicated that for effective social media campaigns, the social media manager should read online conversations, engage with influencers, respond to questions or comments, solicit user-generated content, and create opportunities for users to engage followers. The most essential social media technological factors were graphics and visuals, targeted content, regular updates, and engaging followers. The study recommends that politicians in Kenya should explore different social networks to enhance their branding and visibility. Facebook and Twitter can be highly effective as tools for political branding for Kenyan politicians.

Key words: Social Media, Political Branding, Politicians, Kenya

1.0 Introduction

Politicians extensively use social media in campaigns to aid in accessing their support base. They have turned to communication professionals to manage their social media pages. This is because they have realized that social media can enhance their campaign strategy and improve the democratic space (Vonderschmitt, 2012). The public visits social media pages to view what their candidate posts as well as their competitors. Social media use in political branding has been on the rise since the early 2000s when Barack Obama aggressively used it as a strategy to win elections in the U.S. Obama made his campaign more elaborate due to the strategic use of social media. Its use resulted in the establishment of more social media platforms like Myspace, Twitter, Facebook, and other social media as political tools (Tumasjan, et al., 2010). Social media evolved to become central among political campaigns to engage voters and impact their political behaviours and attitudes (Zhang, et al. 2010).

At the local level, social media is used by politicians in their branding due to its ability to reach many people. In the past decade, many Kenyan politicians have used these platforms to increase their visibility, reach, and influence among the electorate. They have become essential for political campaigns, allowing politicians to communicate directly with their constituents and build a strong online presence. This has enabled politicians to relate with their constituents and to promote their campaigns, policies, and ideologies. Ndavula and Mueni (2014) in their paper note that politicians in Kenya have adapted to new ways of reaching their target audiences with their campaign messages using new media platforms. The emergence of social media in political marketing and branding among politicians in Kenya has provided a unique opportunity to engage with the voters and build support for their campaigns (Ndavula & Mberia, 2012). In addition, social media has enabled politicians to be more responsive to their constituents, as well as provide them with greater access to information about their policies and ideologies. Social media has also enabled politicians to reach out to potential voters in a more cost-effective manner. For example, politicians can use social media platforms to send out messages regarding their

campaigns, policies, and ideologies without having to pay for expensive traditional advertising campaigns.

1.2 Problems Statement

Social media use for political branding among politicians has been a growing concern in recent years (Ahmad & Popa, 2014). With the increase of platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, politicians have been turning to these channels to engage potential voters and build a strong political brand. However, in Kenya, research has yet to address conclusively the benefits of social media for political marketing among politicians in depth. There has also been a marketing shift from marketing mix to relationship marketing, however, political marketing has not been revolutionized in Kenya. There is still marketing communication and branding happening through traditional communication media. This negates the benefits of exploiting social media for political branding as exploited in the global arena (Abid, Harrigan, & Roy, 2020). Additionally, political marketing literature especially in Kenya lacks comprehensive literature on the relational perspective of political branding (Ndavula & Mberia, 2012; Abid et al., 2020; Hamid et al., 2022; Hadziahmetovic, et al., 2021). Social media offers an easier link to voters and permits politicians to engage them (Hamid et al., 2022; Hadziahmetovic, Pintol, & Budnjo, 2021). Despite these benefits, most political brands have been unsuccessful in exploiting the potential of social media to build relationships virtually and continue to use traditional approaches to political marketing (Abid, Harrigan, & Roy, 2020). This study explored the use of social media as a tool for political branding among politicians in Kenya. Specifically, it investigated the extent to which politicians use social media platforms for branding purposes, the message types communicated, and the effectiveness of these efforts in political branding.

1.3 Objectives

1. To analyze the social media strategies adopted by social media managers and their influence on brand awareness of MPs in Kenya.
2. To examine social media technological factors that influence the use of Facebook for branding and image creation of Members of Parliament in Kenya in their political campaigns.

3. To explore the determinants of social media content posted by Members of Parliament in Kenya to inculcate brand loyalty among their target audience through social media platforms

2.0 Literature Review

Social Media as a Political Branding Tool

Political branding is creating and maintaining an identity for a political figure to build public trust and support (Fernandez, 2019). Klapper and Smith (2020) explain that it is a strategic process involving the use of marketing and communication techniques. Through branding, politicians can create a narrative that resonates with their constituents and sets them apart from their opponents. Branding permits politicians to differentiate themselves from their opponents and create an identity that voters can relate to. Social media allows political figures to leverage their power to reach their constituents, engage in conversations, and create a narrative that resonates with them (Brady 2017). It also allows politicians to be more accessible to their constituents thus fostering connection. Moloney (2017) explains that through social media, politicians keep their constituents informed on their policies, share beliefs, and create a resonating narrative. Social media can also help politicians build their brands by engaging their constituents and better understanding their beliefs and values. This allows them to tailor messages to their audience and create a narrative that resonates. Additionally, Cifuentes (2020) explains that it allows them to showcase their values and beliefs in a relatable way.

Political branding among politicians in Kenya is a phenomenon that has been in existence for decades. It entails the process of utilizing marketing tactics to influence the public's opinion of a political candidate or party. Branding is the development of a recognizable image or identity associated with a product, service, or organization. In Kenya, political branding has an impact on shaping the political landscape. As a complex process, it involves a variety of tactics and strategies. For instance, social media utilization for branding in the Kenya 2013 elections was a major aspect. All the presidential candidates had foregrounded themselves using Facebook and Twitter accounts using their photos (Ndavula & Mueni, 2014). These strategies were to advertise

them through online marketing using the colors of their political parties. The main tactic used in political branding was advertising. Politicians use advertisements to persuade voters to vote for them by promoting a political candidate or party's platform, policies, and achievements thus creating a positive image.

Another tactic in political marketing and branding in Kenya is the use of social media. Social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook are used to engage the public and spread political messages. Social media also promotes a political candidate or party's message and builds relationships with potential voters. Political candidates and parties use them to create a positive image and to reach a larger audience (Smith, 2001). In addition to advertising and social media, political branding in Kenya involves the utilization of traditional mass media such as radio and television. Political parties and candidates purchase air time to promote their message and reach a wider audience (Ndavula & Mberia, 2012). They can also purchase advertisements in newspapers and magazines to reach a larger audience. Political branding also involves events, such as rallies and campaign stops. Windeck (2010) explains that social media has become a necessity in the political campaigns in Kenya's elections used on a short-term basis.

Extent of Social Media Use for Political Branding Purposes

In recent years, research in political branding (Smith, 2001; Guzman & Sierra, 2009; Giasson, et al., 2012; Dahiya & Vohra, 2022; and De Asis, 2022) has made tremendous advancements globally. In the Philippines, research has yet to comprehensively consider the issue of political marketing using social media (Si, 2022). Social media use in Kenya has had a profound effect on the political landscape. Politicians have turned to it as a powerful tool for branding purposes. The use of social media for political branding allows candidates to communicate widely and create personal connections with voters. With high smartphone ownership, the application of social media for political branding purposes has become widespread nationally. In addition to social media use for political branding, Kenyan politicians use it to launch campaigns and push for reforms (Ndavula & Mberia, 2012). Moreover, politicians launch campaigns and inform the public about their policies and ideas. It also allows politicians to mobilize support for various causes and initiatives.

Social Media Platforms Used by Kenyan Politicians for Branding

X, formerly known as Twitter, is one of the most used social media platforms by Kenyan politicians. As a platform, it allows users to share short messages with other users. It is an easy way for Kenyan politicians to spread the message quickly and widely. Politicians also use it to promote their policies and to engage directly with their followers. With its large user base and ability to reach a wide audience, Ndavula and Mberia (2012) explain that X (Twitter) is an invaluable tool for Kenyan politicians and their campaigns. Second, Facebook is another widely used social media platform by Kenyan politicians. It is the largest social media platform in the world and has more than 2.7 billion monthly active users. Kenyan politicians use it to build their brand, promote their policies and messages, and engage with their followers. They also use it to post photos, videos, and other content, as well as to host live events and debates. Third, Instagram is another popular social media platform used by Kenyan politicians. With its focus on visual content, it is an ideal platform for politicians to share photos and videos which help to build a positive image and create a strong online presence (Ndavula & Mberia, 2012). Politicians can also use Instagram stories to give their followers an inside look into their lives and campaigns. Fourth, YouTube is also used by Kenyan politicians. This platform is great for creating videos and live-streaming events, to engage potential voters and build a positive reputation. It allows politicians to share their messages, reach a wide audience, and interact directly with their followers. These are just a few of the popular social media platforms used by Kenyan politicians for marketing and branding their political campaigns.

Social Media Strategies Adopted and Their Influence on Brand Awareness of MPs

The strategies adopted by social media managers to increase the brand awareness of MPs include creating engaging content, building relationships with influencers, optimizing accounts for Search Engine Optimization (SEO), and running targeted social media campaigns.

First, creating engaging content. Content creation is a major part of social media strategy. Content can be used to engage constituents, build relationships, and increase an MP's visibility. It includes blog posts, videos, and images. Social media managers use content to educate constituents about the MP's platform, showcase their achievements, and promote their message. Second, building relationships with influencers. Influencer marketing is a powerful tool for increasing an MP's reach and visibility. Influencers are people with large social media followings

who can help spread an MP's message and increase their brand awareness. Social media managers can leverage influencers to create content and share it with their followers, which can increase brand awareness and reach. Third, optimizing accounts for SEO. SEO is an important part of social media strategy by helping to optimize a social media account for search engines, which increases visibility and reach. Social media managers can use it to increase an MP's visibility by optimizing their accounts for keywords, ensuring that their content is shareable, and increasing their followers. Lastly, running targeted social media campaigns. Social media campaigns are a great way for MPs to increase their reach and brand awareness. Social media campaigns can include targeted advertisements, sponsored content, and influencer campaigns (Papacharissi, 2014). Social media managers can use these campaigns to reach a wider audience and increase an MP's visibility.

Social Media Technological and Interactivity Factors Influencing Facebook Use for Branding and Image Creation

First, social media technological factors. Social media technological factors, such as platform design, platform accessibility, and the availability of tools and analytics, all contribute to the use of Facebook for branding and image creation by MPs in political campaigns (Goncalves, et al., 2019). Second, social media interactivity factors. Goncalves, et al. (2019) enlighten that social media interactivity factors, such as user engagement, user-generated content, and the ability to personalize messages, are also important factors in the use of Facebook for branding and image creation by MPs in their political campaigns.

Determinants of Social Media Content Posted to Inculcate Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is a customer's commitment to purchase a particular brand's products and services over time, despite the presence of other competitive brands in the market (Bhattacharjee and Bose, 2019). A business needs to build brand loyalty among its customers to ensure long-term success. This is because brand loyalty leads to higher customer retention and repeat purchases (Muniz, & O'Guinn, 2001). Similarly, MPs must strive to build brand loyalty among their target audience to remain in power. There are numerous determinants of social media content posted by MPs to inculcate brand loyalty among their target audience. Bhattacharjee and

Bose (2019) list these determinants as the type of content posted, the language used the frequency of posting, and the timing of posts.

First, type of content. The type of content posted by MPs on social media platforms dictates brand loyalty among the audience. Research by Chen et al. (2018) indicate that posts which are informative, entertaining, and interesting are more likely to be shared and liked. Additionally, posts that are related to a particular issue are more likely to have an impact on the target audience (Zhang et al., 2015). Second, language. The language used by MPs in their posts determines the loyalty of the audience. Chen et al., (2018) explain that the use of simple language increases the likelihood of posts being shared and liked. Additionally, the use of positive language is more effective in engaging the target audience (Zhang et al., 2015). Third, frequency. The frequency of posts on social media platforms determines brand loyalty among the audience. Posting too frequently can be counter-productive because it leads to followers becoming desensitized to the content (Chen et al., 2018). Fourth, timing. The timing of posts determines the loyalty of their audience. Posts that are posted during peak hours are more likely to be seen by the target audience (Chen et al., 2018). Additionally, posts that are posted at specific times of the day, such as during the lunch break or in the evening, are more likely to be noticed by the target audience (Zhang et al., 2015). Therefore, MPs should post at the right time to maximize engagement.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The user and gratifications theory and the technological acceptance theory were the theoretical frameworks for the study. The uses and gratifications theory was coined by Blumler and Katz in the early 1940s. The uses and gratifications theory explains the reasons why people select and use a particular type of media. It further explains the role of their needs in influencing their choice of media and the satisfaction attained. In the context of political branding, this theory suggests that users may engage in social media use for different purposes, such as to gain knowledge about political candidates and issues, to engage in dialogue and discussion about these topics, and to express their political opinions.

The technology acceptance model was first proposed by Fred Davis in 1989. It measures how much people are willing to accept and use novel innovations in information and technology. This theory postulates that technology acceptance evolves in three phases. The system design factors trigger cognitive responses which in turn form an effective response. The feature that a technology has always affects how people understand and perceive it after which the perception determines whether the technology will be used or not. The theory helps to understand the successful implementation of technology. To apply to this study, the theory looks at the features of social media that are distinct and unique to social media that in turn influence how the MPs understand their use after which seek to apply social media for political branding purposes.

3.0 Research Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey study design. The sample population comprised the social media managers managing MPs' social media accounts. The study focused on the social media managers attached to each MP. The total projected population size was 290 respondents. The study adopted systematic sampling and purposive sampling. Systematic sampling was by using a list of the entire population of 290 elected MPs to select the 87 whose social media managers filled out the questionnaires. The study used quantitative techniques to obtain primary data from the respondents. To collect the quantitative data, the social media managers completed questionnaires administered.

4.0 Data Analysis and Interpretation

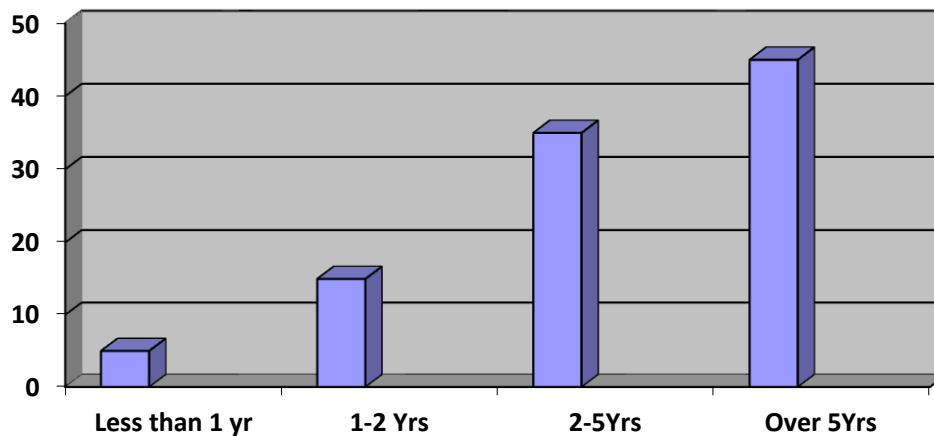
Response Rate

In total, 50 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents. Only 40 were completed and returned by respondents indicating a response rate of 80%. According to Baruch and Holton (2008), "the level of response rate (RR) is an important factor in assessing the value of research findings". Therefore 80% was a valid response rate and thus acted as the basis for data analysis for the study.

Respondents' Work Experience

The researcher sought to establish the number of years that the respondent had managed the social media pages of the MPs. This was essential in assessing valuable, reliable, and valid information on social media usage at work based on years of experience. The work experience was valuable in understanding how social media can be used to brand politicians and their campaigns in Kenya. The social media managers identify trends and opportunities, as well as develop content strategies that are essential for engaging audiences. The results are presented in the figure below

Figure 1: Years worked as social media manager of Member of National assembly



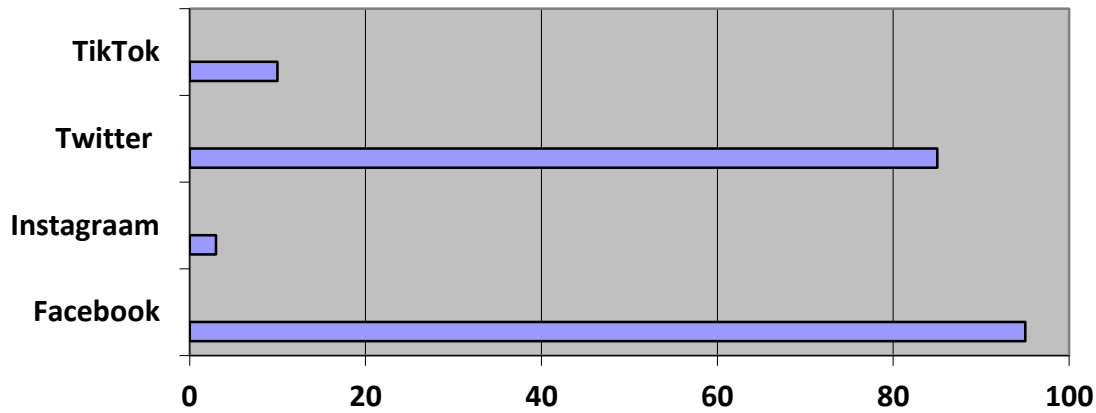
The findings reported that 5% of the social media managers had worked for less than a year, 15% for two years, 35% for five years, and 45% for more than five years.

Analysis of the Social Media Strategies Adopted and their Influence on Brand Awareness

Social Media Used

The research sought to understand how social media platforms are used to manage MP's political branding. The results are presented below.

Figure 2: The social media used

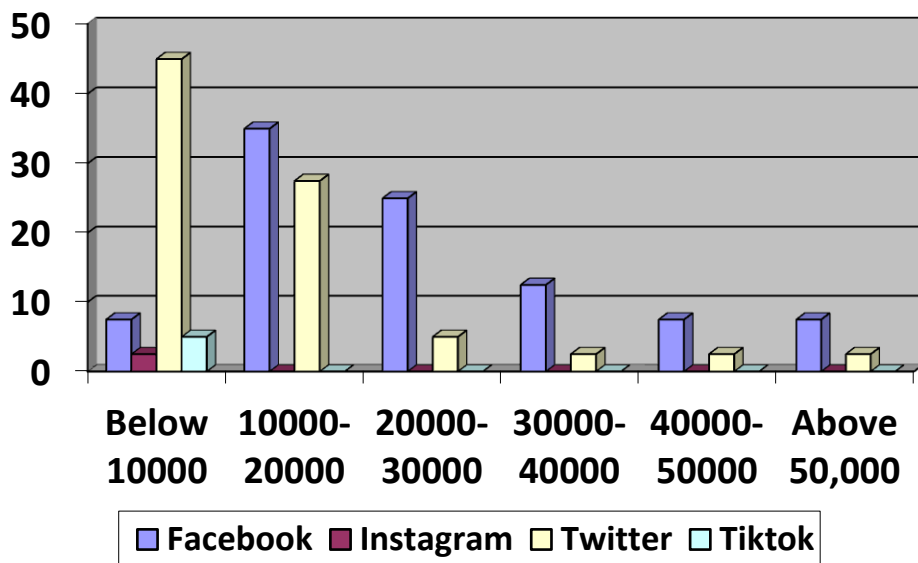


The findings indicate that Facebook had the highest percentage of use at 95%, followed by Twitter at 85% then Tiktok had 10% and the least was Instagram at 2.5%. By understanding which social media platforms are used, the researcher had a better understanding of which platforms have the greatest impact, and which need to be targeted more to reach the greatest number of voters.

Base of Followers of MP Social Media Pages

The researcher sought to determine the number of followers MPs have on their platforms.

Figure 3: Number of social media followers



Facebook had the largest base of followers followed by Twitter. Instagram and Tiktok registered the lowest number of followers. This could be because the two have limited reach which makes it difficult for politicians to target specific constituencies with their message, as the platform is dominated by users from larger urban areas. Thus, Instagram and Tiktok are not effective or cost-effective ways to reach a wide audience. Politicians should use platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to reach a broader audience and increase their influence in the political sphere.

Social Media Strategies

The study investigated the impact of social media strategies used on the political branding of select politicians in Kenya. The respondents had several statements for them to rate from strongly agree to strongly disagree on a Likert scale of 5-1. The data is presented below:

Table 1: Social Media Strategies

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Neutral | | Disagree | | Strongly Disagree | | TOTAL | |
|---|----------------|-------|-------|-------|---------|------|----------|------|-------------------|-----|-------|-----|
| | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| Social media strategies used by the social media manager help in fostering better branding of politicians | 23 | 57.5% | 11 | 27.5% | 3 | 7.5% | 3 | 7.5% | 0 | 0% | 40 | 100 |
| Social media is effective in creating brand awareness about politicians and political parties among electorates | 12 | 30% | 18 | 45% | 2 | 5% | 8 | 20% | 0 | 0% | 40 | 100 |
| Social media strategies have an impact on brand awareness of political parties and politicians | 9 | 22.5% | 15 | 37.5% | 4 | 10% | 8 | 20% | 4 | 10% | 40 | 100 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----|-------|----|-----|----|-----|---|-----|---|------|----|-----|
| Social media is useful in creating better communication avenues for political awareness | 17 | 42.5% | 14 | 35% | 2 | 5% | 4 | 10% | 3 | 7.5% | 40 | 100 |
| Social media analytics help to measure the success of your political branding and marketing efforts on social media | 7 | 17.5% | 12 | 30% | 10 | 25% | 8 | 20% | 3 | 7.5% | 40 | 100 |

Table 2: Technological Factors Influencing Facebook Use for Branding and Image Creation

Table 1: Frequency of engagement in Activities through the Social Media form image creation

| | Very Rarely F(%) | Rarely F(%) | Occasionally F(%) | Frequently F(%) | Very Frequently F(%) | Total F(%) |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Reading to conversations | 0(0%) | 0(0%) | 0(0%) | 6 (15%) | 34 (85%) | 40(100%) |
| Engaging with influencers | 12(30%) | 12(25%) | 10(25%) | 6(15%) | 0 (0%) | 40(100%) |
| Responding to questions or comments | 18(45%) | 12(30%) | 10(25%) | 0(0%) | 0(0%) | 40(100%) |
| Soliciting for user-generated content | 22(55%) | 9(22.5%) | 9(22.5%) | 0(0%) | 0(0%) | 40(100%) |
| Creating opportunities for users to engage with their followers | 5(12.5%) | 6(15%) | 11(27.5%) | 18(45%) | 0(0%) | 40(100%) |

Reading of conversations had the highest level of percentage at 85% for very frequently. Most of the respondents reported reading conversations frequently. It was also reported that 30% of social media managers very rarely engaged with influencers on social media, 55% reported that they very rarely solicit for user-generated content, 45% reported that they frequently respond to questions and comments while 45% reported that they frequently create opportunities for users

to engage with the followers. This was important in the study because it highlighted the strategies used by the social media manager to engage the audience. It also helped assess the effectiveness of the social media manager in creating and maintaining relationships with the followers. Additionally, it helped determine the level of engagement of the social media manager to create a successful online presence for the politician.

Table 3: Social Media Technological Factors

| Technological factors | Essential | | High priority | | Medium priority | | Low priority | | Not a priority | | TOTAL | |
|-------------------------|-----------|-----|---------------|-----|-----------------|-----|--------------|----|----------------|----|-------|-----|
| | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| Graphics and visuals | 32 | 80% | 8 | 20% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 40 | 100 |
| Targeted content | 36 | 90% | 4 | 10% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 40 | 100 |
| Engaging with followers | 26 | 65% | 10 | 25% | 4 | 10% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 40 | 100 |
| Regular updates | 38 | 95% | 2 | 5% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 40 | 100 |
| Quality content | 12 | 30% | 18 | 45% | 10 | 25% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 40 | 100 |

This section was relevant because it highlighted the types of content that are most effective for creating engagement as used by social media managers for political branding. The most popularly used are graphics and visuals at 80% and targeted content at 90%. Quality content reported the lowest percentage at 30%.

Measure of Success for Social Media Branding Campaigns

The researcher sought to know how the respondents measured the success of their social media branding campaigns and the responses are presented below. This information helped to determine the effectiveness of the social media campaigns in creating a favourable public image

for the politicians during the branding campaigns. Therefore, the main indicators for success are the number of likes and shares, the number of followers, and the number of comments on a post.

Effectiveness of Social Media for Political Branding and Campaigns

The study sought to measure how effective social media is in political branding campaigns. The respondents indicated the extent to which they agreed with the given statements.

Table 4: Effectiveness of social media for political branding and campaigns

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Neutral | | Disagree | | Strongly Disagree | | TOTAL | |
|--|----------------|-------|-------|-------|---------|-----|----------|-----|-------------------|----|-------|-----|
| | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| Social media for branding and image creation of your political campaign has been beneficial to your campaign | 13 | 32.5% | 19 | 47.5% | 2 | 5% | 6 | 15% | 0 | 0% | 40 | 100 |
| Social media has changed how political campaigns are conducted in Kenya | 32 | 80% | 6 | 15% | 2 | 5% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 40 | 100 |
| Social media is a game changer in image creation and political branding | 32 | 80% | 6 | 15% | 2 | 5% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 40 | 100 |
| Social media content posted for branding and image creation of your political campaign has been beneficial to creating brand loyalty for your campaign | 6 | 15% | 16 | 40% | 8 | 20% | 10 | 20% | 2 | 5% | 40 | 100 |

Determinants of Social Media Content Posted By MPs for Brand Loyalty

Posts and Brand Loyalty

The study sought to know how often the respondent, as the social media manager, posts content on the following social media of the Member of Parliament. The results are presented

Table 5: The Frequency of Posts

| | Never F(%) | Almost Yearly F(%) | Almost Monthly F(%) | Almost weekly F(%) | Almost daily F(%) | Total F(%) |
|-----------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Twitter | 6(15%) | 0(0%) | 4(10%) | 4 (10%) | 26(65%) | 40(100%) |
| Facebook | 2 (5%) | 0(0%) | 0(0%) | 6(15%) | 30(75%) | 40(100%) |
| TikTok | 38(95%) | 0(0%) | 0(0%) | 2(5%) | 0(0%) | 40(100%) |
| Instagram | 39(97.5%) | 0(0%) | 0(0%) | 1(2.5%) | 0(0%) | 40(100%) |

Table 6: Type of Content Posted

The researcher sought to know the content the respondent posted on social media sites. The results are presented below.

Table on the Type of content posted

| content | Very Small Extent | | Small Extent | | Some Extent | | Great extent | | Very great Extent | | TOTAL | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|----------|---------------------|----------|--------------------|----------|---------------------|----------|------------------------------|----------|--------------|----------|
| | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| Political | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 6 | 15% | 34 | 85% | 40 | 100 |
| Personal/Lifestyle | 4 | 10% | 32 | 80% | 4 | 10% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 40 | 100 |
| Brand Promotion | 28 | 70% | 12 | 30% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 40 | 100 |
| Motivation/inspiration | 0 | 0% | 2 | 5% | 10 | 25% | 26 | 65% | 2 | 5% | 40 | 100 |

From the data, brand promotion and personal/lifestyle are the least shared content by the MPs. These members value privacy and want their personal life private. A good number post inspirational content. This is to ensure they can maintain a broad number of followers.

Brand Loyalty

The respondents were instructed to indicate the extent to which they agree with given statements. This was to determine the impact of social media posts on the brand loyalty of Facebook users. The results are presented in the Table below.

Table 7: Brand Loyalty

| Statement | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|--|------|--------------------|
| Social media content influences the brand loyalty to a particular politician | 4.58 | 0.28795 |
| Social media is a game changer in brand loyalty creation and political branding | 4.10 | 0.5018 |
| The content posted by MPs on social media platforms influences your opinion of them | 3.82 | 1.51640 |
| The content posted by MPs on social media platforms influences your decision to support them | 3.25 | 1.0734 |
| The content posted by MPs on social media platforms has the potential to increase brand loyalty among their constituents | 4.22 | 0.56061 |

From the data, most respondents strongly agreed that social media content influences brand loyalty to a particular politician. The small standard deviations indicated that the dispersion was small. The data also show that the respondents agreed that social media is a game changer in brand loyalty creation and political branding and the content posted by MPs on social media platforms has the potential to increase brand loyalty among their constituents. This is a strong indication that social media use has an impact on brand loyalty.

4.1 Summary

In this study, it was noted that the most commonly used social media for political branding was Facebook followed by Twitter. Instagram was the least used social media. Instagram has limited reach making it difficult for politicians to target specific constituencies, as the platform is dominated by users from larger urban areas and low numbers of rural populations. Facebook and Twitter however have users spread across ages and locations. It was also observed that social media fostered better branding of politicians. The findings also indicate that Facebook had the largest base of followers followed by Twitter. The forms of messages used frequently were video content, text, and photos. Another observation was, that Tiktok had never been used for political branding and marketing as well as Instagram. Twitter and Facebook reported high percentages of daily use for political branding. Therefore, this study concluded that the most commonly used social media platforms for political branding are Facebook and Twitter.

As a result, social media is an effective tool for political branding and campaigns. The findings indicated that social media is beneficial for branding purposes. It has changed how political campaigns are conducted in Kenya. Moreover, content posted for branding and image creation of political campaigns has been beneficial to creating brand loyalty.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

The study concludes that the most commonly used social media for political branding is Facebook followed by Twitter. Instagram and Tiktok are the least used social media. Evidently, social media fosters better branding of politicians. Facebook has the largest base of followers followed by Twitter. The messages used frequently are video content, text, and photos. The study also concluded that both Instagram and Tiktok are not effective for political branding and marketing. For effective social media campaigns, the social media manager should engage in several activities: reading online conversations, engaging with influencers, responding to questions or comments, soliciting user-generated content, and creating opportunities for users to engage with their followers. The common activity was reading conversations. The study also

concluded that the most essential social media technological factors when using Facebook for political branding and image creation were graphics and visuals, targeted content, regular updates, and engaging followers. The main indicators for success are the number of likes and shares, the number of followers, and the number of comments on a post. Social media for branding and image creation for political campaigns has been beneficial.

Based on the findings, the study recommended the following.

1. Politicians should explore different social media platforms to enhance their branding and visibility.
2. For political branding purposes, the study recommends Facebook followed by Twitter.
3. For effective social media campaigns, social media managers should engage in several activities: reading online conversations, engaging influencers, responding to questions or comments, soliciting user-generated content, and creating opportunities for users to engage with their followers.
4. The study recommends the use of social media for branding and image creation for political campaigns.

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