

**FACEBOOK AND TWITTER INFLUENCE ON YOUTH VOTERS'  
PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL PROCESSES: A STUDY OF YOUTH IN  
NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA**

**BY**

**CHONGWONY RENNO CHEPKWESIS**

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## DECLARATION

### DECLARATION BY THE STUDENT

This Thesis is my original research work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

Chongwony Renno Chepkwesis      Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**SHRD/PGC/018/16**

### DECLARATION BY THE SUPERVISORS:

This Thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as university supervisors.

Dr. Abraham Kiprof Mulwo      Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Department of Publishing, Journalism and Communication Studies

School of Information Sciences

Moi University,

**Eldoret- Kenya**

Dr. Erne Nyakundi      Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Department of Publishing, Journalism and Communication Studies

School of information Sciences

Moi University,

**Eldoret- Kenya**

## ABSTRACT

Social media has greatly transformed different aspects of human life including political processes. Among Kenyans, youths have enthusiastically taken up these platforms and are among the most vibrant users in Africa. Despite the rise in the use of social media in everyday life, no distinct research has been done on the communication dialogues that occur on Facebook and Twitter in the context of youth voters' participation in political processes in Kenya. The majority of studies available have been conducted in developed nations whose contextual characteristics are different from Kenya's. This study investigated how Facebook and Twitter influenced youth voters' participation in political processes leading to the 2017 elections. The study is guided by three research questions: What is the influence of Facebook and Twitter on youth voters' participation in political processes in Nairobi County? How does Facebook and Twitter influence voting decisions among youth voters in Nairobi County? How does online voter activity shape offline voting behaviour of young voters in Nairobi County? The study is grounded in adaptive structuration theory and the dialogic theory of Public Relations. The study was conducted in Nairobi County as it has the highest number of internet users in Kenya. Mixed methods approach using an explanatory sequential design is adopted for this study. The target population comprised registered youth voters in Nairobi who had Facebook and Twitter accounts. The Slovin's Formula is used to calculate the sample size, which came to 400 youths who were then selected through purposive sampling. The study selected 100 youths from each of the four sites in Buruburu, Jeevanjee Gardens, Kibra and Githurai 44. Purposive sampling was also used to identify 32 participants for the three Focus Group Discussions held at Jeevanjee Gardens, Kibra and Githurai 44. Survey questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data, while three Focus Group Discussions were used to collect qualitative data. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages and mean scores, while qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis in line with the respective research questions. The study found that Facebook and Twitter enabled youthful voters to engage in political discussions by interrogating political arguments from different political players. Young voters were encouraged to vote via Twitter and Facebook, and as a result, the two social media platforms influenced voting patterns by providing information on the candidates, poll opening times, and security situation in polling stations. Furthermore, Facebook and Twitter shaped offline political behaviour, including mobilizing attendance of political rallies and voting decisions. In conclusion, social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter provide youths with spaces to engage in political matters and, ultimately, have a significant role in influencing political participation and choices among the youth. The study thus recommends a focus on developing policy interventions to increase positive political participation through social media while curbing negative practices that undermine democratic participatory processes.

## **DEDICATION**

This research work is dedicated to all those Kenyans working to ensure sober political discussion online.

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**ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>EACC</b>	Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission
<b>EFCC</b>	Economic and Financial Crime Commission
<b>IAPC</b>	International Association of Political Consultants
<b>ICPC</b>	Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Matters Commission
<b>ICT</b>	Information Communication Technology
<b>IEBC</b>	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
<b>IED</b>	Institute of Education in Democracy
<b>KOT</b>	Kenyans on Twitter
<b>LDP</b>	Liberal Democratic Party
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Government Organizations
<b>RSS</b>	Simple Syndication
<b>SERVICOM</b>	Service Compact
<b>SPSS</b>	Statistical Product for Social Sciences
<b>STNV</b>	Single-Non-Transferable Vote
<b>STV</b>	Single Transferable Vote
<b>TV</b>	Television
<b>US</b>	United States
<b>WAPOR</b>	World Association of Public Opinion Research

## OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

- Campaign:** Refer to efforts by political aspirants seeking to influence decision making among voters and ultimately the outcome of electoral process (Tasențe, 2015).
- Dialogic:** The study uses the term dialogic to denote the political discussions and information exchange among young voters through Twitter and Facebook (Carim & Warwick, 2013).
- Decision:** The action or process of deciding something or of resolving a question.
- Young voter:** According to this study, the youth vote in the context of Kenya is the group of 18- 35-year-old as a voting demographic.
- Facebook:** Facebook is a popular free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues.
- Political:** Issues, activities and processes concerned with formation of government and how they govern the people.
- Participation:** Refers to activity by ordinary citizens that has the intent or effect of influencing political outcomes such as policies and government action
- Social media:** In this study, social media refers to interactive online-based communication and information sharing tools such as Facebook and Twitter (Obar & Wildman, 2015).
- Twitter:** Twitter is a free social networking microblogging service that allow registered members to broadcast short post-called tweets.
- Vote:** Is choice made by a particular person in an election.

**Voter turnout:** Is the percentage of eligible voters who cast a ballot in an election.

**Voting pattern:** Refer to a sudden change in voters' preferences in favor of a more preferred political party and against a less preferred one.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

#### 1.1. Introduction

This research examined the influence of Facebook and Twitter on youth voter's participation in political processes in Nairobi County, Kenya. Currently, messages can reach audiences and target groups in real time and they can generate changes and trends. Crowds are becoming more powerful and informed through technology, because technology has the ability to unite them.

Terranova and Donovan (2013) assert that the development of web 2.0 in the first decade of the first century was itself a revolution in the history of the internet, furthering the rising of social media and other interactive communication tools. They further argue that the internet is no longer related with information exchange alone: it is a multidisciplinary tool aiding individuals to create content, and communicate with one another. Now, we can transmit data from one end of the world to the other in a matter of seconds, create online presentations, live in parallel "game worlds," and use pictures, video, sound, and text to share our real lives, our genuine identity. Personal stories go public; local issues become global (Terranova & Donovan, 2013).

In addition, the users who interact with the web have increased. It has become much easier for a layperson to publish and share texts, images and sounds. A new topology of propagation of information has advanced, based in 'real' social networks, but also improved by casual and algorithmic connections. This has enabled technology to become



more advanced, expanded and accessible. Hence, transforming the modern forms of communication and taking advantage of the crowd-sourcing phenomenon.

In Kenya like any other country has been hit by new generations of young people coming from high schools with quite a modest knowledge about information technology and how to use its tools, especially cellular phones and computers. While any technology can be put to good or bad use, depending on the user, many parents have bought their children cellular phones and to some level Personal Computers (PC). Therefore, they may use them appropriately and effectively, mainly for learning purposes as well as knowing where they are at any time and come to their help if they need it.

### **1.1.1 Background of the Study**

According to United Nations on Trade and Development, social media is one of the technological innovations that have greatly transformed different aspects of the human life (UNCTAD, 2018). Further, largely it has changed different processes and engagement of human interaction. Today, the adoption of social media in different dimensions including the individual, business, corporate and government environments has taken great strides (Bertot, Jaeger & Hansen, 2012).

Further, social media has revolutionised the communication landscape within the twenty first century and spread out a dialogic various channel for a novel variety of mass communication to emerge (Uzochukwu, Oguegbe & Ekwughu, 2018). One in all the foremost fathers of recent Internet has theorised extensively on the construct of Networked Individual and Society. Professor Manuel Castells has referred to this evolving variety of

communication as, “mass self-communication”, an assertion that this can be a unique quality of communication in modern society. Castells argues that:

“It is mass communication because it can potentially reach a global audience, as in the posting of a video on YouTube, a blog with RSS links to a number of web sources, or a message to a massive e-mail list. At the same time, it is self-communication because the production of the message is self-generated, the definition of the potential receiver(s) is self-directed, and the retrieval of specific messages or content from the World Wide Web and electronic networks is self-selected. The three forms of communication [interpersonal, mass communication and mass self-communication] coexist, interact, and complement each other rather than substituting for one another...” (Castells 2009, p.55).

Social media therefore continues to be the latest and most celebrated communication and technological innovation nowadays (Uzochukwu, Oguegbe & Ekwughu, 2018). Its diffusion and use are growing dramatically the planet over (Uzochukwu, Oguegbe & Ekwughu, 2018). Note to mention that it is serving to form the concept of a “global village”, as first theorised by Marshall McLuhan in the Sixties.

Researchers of different backgrounds have diversely outlined social media. Verdegem (2011) describes social media as a unit open, web-based and easy application that offer new prospects once it involves the co-creation of content, social networking, the sharing of style and relevancy, property and collective intelligence. Auvinen (2011) has additionally defined the term as new info network and data technology that uses a kind of communication utilizing interactive and user-produced content, and wherever social relationships area unit created and maintained. Mayfield (2008) and Abubakar (2011) terms social media as an on-line or electronic media that have the capability to facilitate participation, openness, language, community, connectedness and at constant time, foster matter and audio-visual characteristic attractiveness amongst on-line users.

In addition, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization outlines social media in terms of its ability to foster human relationships through technology, giving a stronger, quicker and additional constant social interaction among net users (UNESCO) (2011). Paxson (2010) further states that social media is one in all the new media networks that provides users with the combo of social and mass communication capabilities that have not existed before, and that place stress on interactivity and quality (quoted in Adaja and Ayodele, 2013 and Uzochukwu, Oguegbe & Ekwughu, 2016).

Social media provides its own exclusive challenges as a new technology with a restricted timeframe from which to pull data. There are several social media options accessible. Examples of the main and most prevalent social media sites are; Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Blogs Tumblr, Pinterest, Instagram and WhatsApp. On the other hand, Uzochukwu, Oguegbe & Ekwughu, (2016) opined that the fundamental classes of the social media are; from Social Networking Sites, Content/Video sharing sites, Weblogs, Microblogs, to Wikis.

The prospect of social media begun in 2004 with the start of Facebook and July 15, 2006 Twitter (Arrington, 2016). Since then, membership to these sites has exploded in number. Twitter has over 400 million users worldwide (BBC News 2012). According to Statista Report, as at April 2022 there were over 14 M Facebook users in Kenya, which is equivalent to 24.4% of the population. 37.6 % of the users aged between 18-24 years and

33.4 % were aged between 25- 34 years. This makes Facebook one of most popular social media used by youth<sup>1</sup>.

Twitter users in Kenya account for 9.36% of social media users as of February 2019 (Statics Counter, 2019, Kabue, 2019). This makes it the third most widespread social media platform in Kenya, with Facebook primary at 67.42% followed by Pinterest at 17.65% (Kabue, 2019). According to the State of the Internet in Kenya 2017 Report published in February 2018 by the Bloggers Association of Kenya (BAKE), there are over one million active monthly Twitter users in Kenya.

Nendo (2018) further suggests that in an infographic that Twitter has 1.5 million active monthly users in Kenya as of May 2018. Soko Directory (2018) confirms the opinion that Twitter is indeed a powerful platform for pushing agendas and articulating issues. For example, Kenyans have used Twitter widely to hold government accountable, condemn injustice, or comment on various issues, indicated the Soko Directory article<sup>2</sup>.

In Kenya, there is increase and acknowledgement of the function played by social media in political campaigning and communication. There are a rising number of youths, virtual political groups and massive political information on social media. A good number of Kenyan politicians are using social media as a substitute means for political campaigns and engagement.

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<sup>1</sup> Kenya: Facebook users in 2023 by age group: [ps://www.statista.com/statistics/1029198/facebook-user-share-in-kenya-by-age/](https://www.statista.com/statistics/1029198/facebook-user-share-in-kenya-by-age/)

<sup>2</sup> BAKE State of the Internet in Kenya 2017 Report emphasized some of the major hashtags that have had the greatest influence in Kenya such as : #KenyaDecides, #ElectionsKE, and #DigitalGenderGap. This is a strong indication that politically active citizens are digitally involved and using Twitter to reach out to the government.

Social networks especially Facebook and Twitter played a key role in the 2013 and 2017 in presidential campaigns president campaigns as the key political parties , presidential candidates and parties among the political aspirants employed the social media such as You Tube , Facebook , Twitter and WhatsApp to inform their supporters and voters concerning their campaign activities and also have feedback. In Kenya, the first and second Kenya's Presidential debates trended on social media across the global. Based on this framework that the study had Facebook and Twitter focus because social media tools present the country with opportunities to communicate with citizens virtually, in a timely manner and reach more people at significantly lower costs.

Precisely, the study looked at Twitter and Facebook because of its ease of use and accessibility. Twitter and Facebook are also platforms most used by heads of state and for diplomacy (*Twiplomacy*, 2019). Twitter and Facebook were preferred for this study because of its elements that have made them exceptional and important part of building relationships, turning it into a critical aspect for reaching the masses (Stat Counter, 2018). In addition, they have many subscribers and followers particularly Facebook both locally and globally.

This study did not look at other social media platforms such as WhatsApp, or Instagram, but only focused on Twitter and Facebook—the platforms most used by government officials as identified in the *Twiplomacy* study. It is against this contextual that the study sought to critically investigate the influence of Facebook and Twitter participation in political processes in Nairobi County - Kenya.

### **1.1.2. Media Use in Political Processes among Young Voters in Kenya**

The Constitution of Kenya 2010 describes youth as any person between 18 and 35 years in age. Equally, many of the country's different young development programs have similar classification (Ochieng, 2019). Ochieng further argues that this categorization of the young constitute of the total population while nearly 80 percent of Kenyans are but 35 years old. In spite of this, youth formal political participation has been improving in Kenya (Ochieng, 2019). There is a remarkable growth in their participation mainly as voters from 2010 with the promulgation of the new constitution and supplementary youth laws (IED, 2015). That said, some of the struggles to develop youth political participation is materializing from National Youth Policy( NYP) which has led to the development of youth focused programmes and policies to address the needs of a specific category of people aged between 15-30 years, as defined by the Kenya National Youth Policy (NYP) (IED, 2015).

According to IED (2015), the population of Kenya's youth grows annually by an estimate of about 400,000. By the end of February 2017, there was a totally of 19.6 million registered voters out of which 50.7% of the total was the youth. That is 9.9 million voters (Ochieng, 2019). That is to say, youth in the Kenya's landscape thus characterize the largest demographic unit and political constituency. Moreover, effective participation of youth in politics is dire to democratic developments both in Kenya and generally around the global.

Ndlela (2018) asserts that Social media has speedily changed the dynamics of political communication in Kenya, presenting new views as well as challenges for the country's youth democracy especially among the youth voters. He further argues that the spread of

mobile telephones and use of social media in Kenya is mainly changing political communication landscape. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and WhatsApp are increasingly having an unbelievable influence on the creation, dissemination and consumption of political content (Emmer, 2018, Ndlela, 2018). In addition, the fast growth and acceptance of the platforms like Facebook, Twitter or You Tube in many countries indicates how much social media can add to the social lives of people (Ndlela, 2018). This recognition of the social media has made them relevant factor in many sectors of modern society- economy, politics and education (Emmer, 2018).

Emmer (2018) argues that social media are opening up a new sphere of action for ordinary citizens, growing the opportunities to gather, discuss and act on social and political issues in their individual social environment as well as on a national and global level. Control over matters debated in a society with the help of easy to use social media or mobile phones citizens now command manifold tools that allow them to interconnect in a self – determined way and their voice is to be heard in public domain (Emmer, 2018).

Participatory platforms like Change.org or Ushahidi are good examples of how efficient incorporation of a broad variety of digital tools, including social media, can have a robust and positive influence, making citizens a relevant factor in the political process. These two faces of social media – empowering people as citizens on one hand and being a tool for manipulation on the other – prove that technology alone most perhaps is not the solution for social problems. Social media as technologies have are taken by citizens in their everyday environments, which requires them to be skilful not only technically but also in respect to citizens’ norms (Emmer, 2018). Secondly, a technical and regulatory infrastructure is needed: giving people access to these technologies irrespective of their

economic and social status protecting their freedom of use and control manipulative interference by the state or other political actors in this participatory sphere (Emmer 2018, Ndlela, 2018). In such conditions, social media can be powerful tools and political participation in not only in Kenya but also globally.

### **1.1.3. Social Media in the Context of Politics in Kenya**

Social media could be a new and fluid mass media, which gives bigger access to data; modifies speedy information dissemination and seamless communication between individuals (Uzochukwu et al, 2018). Additionally, it helps within the development and maintenance of social relations with individuals outside one's immediate setting by aiding formation of virtual communities, construction of non-public identity and psychological development (Uzochukwu et al, 2016). Trusov et al (2009) contend that the core of social media lies within the indisputable fact that users will have individual profiles and private images; users are able to communicate their thoughts, feelings, interests (music, hobbies, preferences) and link to related to profiles (friends or skilled fan pages). They further argue that social media are used for leisure and recreation likewise as for learning and psychological feature development.

Social media is very different from ancient or industrial media in some ways. For example, with medium like newspapers and magazines communication might solely be consumed whereas within the physical possession of a reader. This might solely be watched when somebody is sitting in front of it. Within the digital world, content is not solely free from such constraints, however may be derived and repeatedly shared at very little (if any) value and with none degradation in quality (Mulhern, 2009). This capability for infinite copy



demolishes the normal business model of creating cash by mercantilism-duplicated content (Mulhern, 2009).

Xenos, Vromen and Loader (2014) assert that the influence of social media on politics is growing whereas the mainstream media is losing its power and its attractiveness. They further suggest that there is little doubt that social media has become a very vital part of our daily lives. In addition, according to them social media help to push political ideologies. Hence, social media has become part of any presidential, gubernatorial or Member of Parliament campaign tool in developed nations and even in the third world countries (Xenos, Vromen, & Loader 2014). For example, throughout the 2016 presidential election within the US, it was clear that the political candidates from each side, Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders, had a weighty resonance with Yankee voters that restructured the character of the campaign by victimization of social media.

Mazzoleni (2008) asserts that the importance of mainstream media within the field, such as TV, newspaper and broadcast is frequently declining. However, a survey conducted by The Pew Research Center in 2016 shows that the mainstream media still has a large influence on the older people whose ages range from thirty and forty-nine. Nevertheless, people from the age of eighteen to twenty-nine consider social media as the foremost useful news resource. It is not wrong however, to imagine that social media is also replacing the mainstream media as democracy's fourth pillar in the future (Mazzoleni, 2008).

Social media gives a valuable chance for civil society organizations to succeed in their communication goals and to interact deeply with their audiences (Uzochukwu et al, 2018). They are used as tools to provoke a crowd of supporters behind a cause through on-line

policy (USAID, 2013). It is an occasional price methodology to broadcast a message to supporters and keep them up on and working on updates instantly in period (Uzochukwu et al, 2018). With enhanced data sharing through on-line tools, there is bigger chance for development, voters will quickly distribute essential data and play an instantaneous role in democracy building in their several communities (USAID, 2013).

Biswas and Roy, (2014) suggests that one of the main areas that social media have greatly influenced in the society is in terms of use by political players. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) have noted that the pioneers of the social media did not have an idea of the many ways that this new component could greatly affect the lives of others. Originally, social media developed as a way of bridging the communication gap between people in different geographical locations (Gucdemir et al, 2014). However, upon its extended use, social media has gained great significance in different field including enhancing communication between the politicians and the citizens (Livingston, 2013).

Obare (2014) affirms that politicians have adopted social media as a campaign tool where they communicate and engage with the citizens. In Kenya, the 2013 general elections saw monumental use of social media as a tool for mobilizing voters and supporters. The most widely used social media tools by political players include *Facebook* and *Twitter* (Obare, 2014).

According to Victor et al (2017) and Bode and Dalrymple (2014) social networking sites like Facebook, microblogs like Twitter and video-sharing sites like YouTube have not only given politicians a powerful opportunity for interacting with a more challenging citizenry. It has also have permitted them to offer more personalized images of the public and have

given less resourceful parties the opportunity to match well-funded campaigns against sophistication, using creative and relatively inexpensive strategy. Candidates, members of parliament, and local committee members worldwide are now providing information about their policy positions, invite followers to campaign events or meetings through Facebook, and interact with their constituencies “on the go” and through short messages on Twitter rather than long and time-consuming posts on their blogs or websites (Bode & Dalrymple, 2014).

Social media is particularly preferred because of fast and easy access to the electorate, one-to-one and intimate communication opportunity, providing correct information spontaneously and preventing rumours (Biswas et al, 2014). With expanded information sharing through online tools, there is better opportunity for development (Uzochukwu et al, 2016). Uzochukwu et al (2016) states further that citizen can speedily disseminate important information and play a direct role in democracy building in the respective communities.

Gucdemir et al (2014) argues that politicians exhaustively use the means of social media to strengthen the ties with their electorate, give ideas about their stance towards politics and ensure participation (Calderaro, 2018). In the 2013 and 2017 Kenyan elections, social media constituted one of the strongholds for campaigns during election periods. Mostly, Twitter as one of the channels of social media, was and is favoured in election propaganda due to offering instant messaging and effective communication (Gucdemir et al, (2014). Gucdemir et al (2014) emphasises that, it is in history that during the USA presidential election of 2008 and 2012, the former president Barack Obama used Twitter successfully and it played a significant part in his election. During his political campaigns, he proved

that the benefits of using social media to advance its message to supporters including advertising, advance work and fundraising (Biswas et al, 2014).

Overall, social media, in particular, has been a distinctive feature of contemporary election campaign strategies (Biswas et al, 2014). The social networks sites have become significant virtual communities in campaigns for the world (Biswas & Roy, 2014), being used commonly to give legitimacy to their influence over the political arena. The victory of Obama influenced many countries across the global. In India for example, social media was used to fight against Corruption. An anticorruption movement in 2011 successfully used social media in the movement (Biswas & Roy, 2014). The movement and supporters used social media to quickly broadcast information and organize protests (Biswas, Ingle & Roy, 2014). Hence, create awareness and attach people to the movement.

Shehabat (2015) argues that the Arab Spring Revolution in late 2010 and early 2011 was attributed to the use of social media especially Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. The Arab Spring was occasioned by shifting of power from the authoritarian Arab regimes to the ordinary people that were seeking freedom and social justice hence achieve political goals and promote democracy (Howard & Hussein, 2013). The power shift was attributed to the ability to share information and ideas especially among the young citizens thus their political activism and eventual ouster off long- serving leaders including Tunisian Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Egyptian Hosni Mubarak and Libyan Muammar Gaddafi (Howard & Hussein, 2013; Shehabat, 2015). Obare (2014) asserts that since 2007, social media has offered an opportunity for Kenyans to question candidates using short mobile phone messages, Facebook, and Twitter for sourcing information on political events and candidates (Obare, 2014).

Abshir (2013) states that negatively, social media has been associated with the flourishing of hate speech in political engagements to politicians and among voters (Abshir, 2013). Odinga (2013) affirms that implementation of the online/social media campaign in Kenya is in line with global changes in political campaign communication. These global changes is described as changes with a typology consisting of three forms of campaigns; the pre-modern, the modern and the postmodern stag (Lilleker, 2008).

In the pre-modern stage, political campaigns are localized and characterized by direct interpersonal communication between candidates and the citizens, with citizens playing an active role. In this stage, candidates and political party supporters undertake door-to-door campaigns and distribute pamphlets (Lilleker & Vedel, 2013, Lilleker 2008). Modern campaigns are coordinated by the party structures with advice from professional consultants (Negrine, 2008). In this stage, leading television channels are primarily utilized with other news media playing a supplementary role and thus the citizens are disengaged and passive (Vonderchamitt, 2012). In the postmodern campaigns, Lilleker and Vedel (2013) indicated that the postmodern campaign that they term as hypermedia campaigns built around digital technologies and are targeting to specific groups of voters.

Onduru (2013) stated that Kenyans are outspoken and politically charged in nature, which makes them unique in comparison to other African countries regarding to active usage of social media site. The study further indicated that due to this fact and the realization of the value of social media, many presidential candidates in the Kenyan 2013 elections had an official presence on both Twitter and Facebook. The study argued that the politicians' use of social networks has influenced the tone of communications with various audiences thus

making social media more interactive as it provides an opportunity to receive instant feedback from the audience.

Onduru (2013) further states that the users on social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook range are intellectually equipped to challenge what they are told meaning that politicians are judged by the promptness and relevance of their responses to questions posed to them. Poor (2005) suggests that these interactions are in line with the online public sphere, which is the ability of people to connect with the globe.

## **1.2. Background Information about Nairobi County**

Nairobi City County is found in Kenya and it is located 1.19 degrees south of the Equator and 36.59 degrees east of meridian. Its altitude fluctuates between 1,600 and 1,850 metres above sea level (Mitullah, 2003).

Nairobi is the commercial and cultural centre of East Africa and the capital city of Kenya. It host important international conferences and is the home of many embassies, and international organizations (Mitullah, 2003). It has a cosmopolitan feel that combines African, Asian, European and Middle Eastern cultures. Although it was founded in 1899, it has played an important role in the region (Mitullah, 2003). It was the epicentre of the nationalist movement, which eventually led to Kenya independence from Britain in 1963 and youth political movement (Mitullah, 2003).

Nairobi City County was selected because compared to other major towns it is lively, busy place to work, internet connectivity, and place with many institutions of learning, central business district hosting parliament and other administrative and commercial capital and

the national tallying centre for presidential results. As noted by Buhere (2014) the data from Communication Authority of Kenya, Nairobi County has the highest internet and subsequently social media usage in the country and thus was an appropriate site for the study. Starehe, Kibra, Mathare, Ruaraka, Embakasi North, Embakasi Central among other constituencies in this county represents the face of Kenyan youth in terms of ethnic and political composition. In addition, the population in Nairobi represents Kenyans of different social classes, diverse ethnicity and political association curtailing any chance of bias that would be linked with a mono-cultural setting. The study was conducted in Nairobi County because of this background.

### **1.3. Statement of the Problem**

The use of social media in politics has continued to grow over the years. In spite of its promising outlook the use of social media is yet to be properly harnessed for optimal communication between political players and the citizens of the developing world (Lilleker, 2006:78). The use of social media as a political campaign tool while being hailed as a transformative tool has been blamed for contributing to polarization of the nation. This has seen some users of social media ending up in courts facing charges associated with their political messages (Mutahi & Kimari, 2017).

According to Rothman (2011) in his reference to Twitter, it only takes 140 characters to damage a political campaign<sup>3</sup>. This is because the social media platforms have developed so quickly that any misguided remarks can instantly be read and shared by millions of people.

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<sup>3</sup>In November 2017, Twitter doubled the maximum allowed tweet length from 140 to 280 characters, a drastic switch on one of the world's most influential social media platforms (Chakraborty, 2018).

He further contends that blunders such as these are especially worrisome when candidates handle their own social media profiles without the help of staff.

In the Kenyan context and of significance, Martha Karua and Peter Kenneth, the two presidential candidates who were particularly active on social media during the 2013 campaigns registered a dismal performance in the actual elections (Wasswa, 2013). Several online polls conducted on social media indicated Peter Kenneth was the most popular candidate garnering support among 57% of the Facebook community with Martha Karua having a huge number of followers on twitter (Wasswa, 2013). However, in the actual polls, both candidates got far less votes than the number of supporters they had on social media platforms prompting questions on whether online popularity on social media can translate to actual support offline (Whitaker& Inyanji, 2015).

On the other hand, the candidate that was declared the eventual winner of the elections by Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission was President Uhuru Kenyatta. He was the most 'liked' and popular Facebook and Twitter page in Kenya and running an active campaign on social media giving rise to suggestions that social media may have helped him in the campaigns just like President Obama did in the 2008 and 2012 US presidential elections (Wassawa, 2013, Vonderchmitt, 2012).

These two contradictory scenarios described above make even more complex the question whether 'virtual support' online is correlated to offline actual support. Some scholars believe social media has no bearing on the actual support while others argue that online support is a positive predictor of offline support (Zhang et al, 2010). Additionally, it is already evident that politicians are listening to their constituents of Social Network Sites



and it is the clearest sign that the age of digital politics is with us (Kamau, 2012, Madiangi, 2012). A major question however is, if the political elite and the governed are continually engaging then why there exists so much apathy by the public especially the youth to political issues.

In spite of the rising number of young people and politicians consuming social media, it is not evident about its influence in participation in political processes. It is paramount to point out that the youth form the main population and voting bloc of the country. According to National Council for Population and Development (NCPD 2018: Buluma 2022) 70 % of Kenya's population is below 24 years of age, 28% are youth age 15-24. 51% of the total registered voters as per the 2017 voter register were the youth of age 18-35 years an improvement from 46% in 2013 (Ndlela, 2017). Hence, the young people are key population in Kenya's politics as they have numbers that can shape an outcome of elections both at the national, counties and constituency levels.

Equally, they play a significant role in politics in the country as they participate in political campaign meetings, work, contribute to a political party and persuade other voters. The Kenya survey of 2013 revealed that about 60% of the youth voted in the 2013 general elections, 47.8% attended campaign meetings, 14.2% worked for a candidate or a political party, 31.1% persuaded others to vote for either a certain political party or candidate, 9.95% contributed to a political party and 58.6% felt they were close to a political party.

In this regard, the existing academic scholarly works on social media and voting decisions have taken varied approaches and consequently divergent findings and conclusions. One prominent strand of the academic works have been undertaken to explore the features of

social media usage to influence voting decision of campaigns. These studies include Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan (2013), Shirky (2011), Gerodimos and Justinussen (2015) as well as Androniciuc (2016). Majority of these studies have reinforced the argument that social media usage in politics is gaining prominence with Facebook and Twitter being the mostly used platforms.

Another popular approach undertaken by scholars are the studies investigating nature of the link and relationship between social media and politics. Under this strand, there are scholars that have studied impact/role/influence of social media on politics. Studies under this segment include Sern and Zanuddin (2014), Shukla and Hasan (2015), Kurt and Karaduman (2012) as well as Taseñte (2015). Most of these studies have been conducted in the developed nations. In Kenya, two studies by Obare (2014) and Buchere (2014) fall under this category.

Despite the rise in use of social media in everyday life and in areas such as political campaigns, a necessity for investigation on how communication dialogues especially messages, information and interactions that occur in Facebook and Twitter influence voters' participation in political process (voting, voter turnout, and voting patterns) in Kenyan context arises. The majority of available studies have been conducted in the context of developed nations whose contextual characteristics are different from the Kenyan perspectives.

There are limited local scholarly works available with the study having identified Obare (2014) who explored the role of social media as a political campaign tool of the 2013 Kenya General Elections. The other study by Buchere (2014) investigated the impact on

social media on Kenya's presidential election outcome using Starehe Constituency as a focus point. These studies have not focused on how Facebook and Twitter influences decision making during political processes among voters, hence the prerequisite of undertaking this study.

#### **1.4. Aim of the Study**

The study sought to examine the influence of Facebook and Twitter on young voters' participation in political process in Nairobi County.

This study will provide recommendations to institutions such as Independent Electorate and Boundaries Commission(IEBC),Communication Authority of Kenya in collaboration with telecommunication companies, and civil Societies to utilize social media in sensitizing the youth on ways to improve on participation in political processes in terms of voting, voter turnout and voting patterns . Enhance youth engagement using Facebook, Twitter, and other social media platforms to educate youth on the positive aspects of Facebook and Twitter for political purposes.

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

The study answered the following questions:

1. What was the influence of Facebook and Twitter on youth voters' participation in political processes in Nairobi County?
2. How does Facebook and Twitter influence voting decisions among youth voters in Nairobi County?
3. How does online voter activity shape the offline voting behaviour of youth voters in Nairobi County?

### **1.6. Assumption of the Study**

This study's assumptions were as follow;

That both the youth and politicians are using the Facebook and Twitter sites for political purposes and that the use of these platforms influence participation in political process of youth in Nairobi County.

That the respondents will give honest, open, frank and truthful responses to the questionnaires, interviews, and participate actively in Focus Group Discussions that will provide reliable information to help form a conclusion on the study objectives data and finally, that the collection instruments would be adequate and reliable to collect data to answer the objectives of the research.

### **1.7. Justification of the Study**

Given the lack of research on the influence of social media on youth voter's participation in political processes in Nairobi County, this research analyzed the different benefits encountered by political players when they employ social media as a campaign tool effectively. It will further act as a guiding tool for any social media professional in Kenya who wants to excel especially in the field of political communication by revealing critical information on how they can use Facebook and Twitter as a campaign tool.

It is hoped that the findings of this study can bridge the gap of lack of ample information and literature on the influence of Twitter and Facebook on youth voters' political participation in Nairobi County - voter turnout, voting patterns and voting behaviour. The findings of this study may be helpful to the policy makers in numerous sectors of the

government and political players. For example, in the educational sector course of study developers are abreast of once developing course of study for the youth in the area of political science.

### **1.8. Significance of the Study**

The successful completion of the study will be beneficial to several stakeholders. This study may assist students and practitioners of political communication in identifying the gaps that currently exist in the use of Facebook and Twitter as a source of political information with a view of leading to more research in this area. The researcher hopes to contribute to the body of knowledge available to other students interested in political communication. The results of the study are likely to influence further scholarly research by other researchers who may be interested in this field of knowledge.

With the rapid growth and acceptance of social networking sites, and with the active involvement of the youth in social media, this study sheds important light to political actors, political parties and candidates on the value of these platforms, if any, in political mobilization and campaigning.

Additionally, the issue of hate speech has been on rise in Kenya due to the concerns raised by various stakeholders about the role of social media in propagating the vice, this study will therefore form the foundation on which a closer examination of this concept may be explored and effectively managed by relevant institutions such as Communication Authority of Kenya (CAK).

The study may offer insight to the policy makers with regard to social media usage in the political arena given the ever-increasing influence of social media in all spheres of Kenyan lives. The study findings can aid the audit, review and strengthening of existing policies aimed at ensuring accountability and good ethical practices in among political players and social media users.

In practice, this study will assist the political players in understanding how online activities influence political participation and voting decision. This will enable them to put in place strategies to enhance their social media activities. The study will also offer well targeted recommendations based on the findings, which can lead to better usage of Facebook, and Twitter, and consequently better leadership, which will improve service delivery in the nation. The study is also significant, as it will contribute to knowledge on the subject of voting decisions.

## **1.9. Scope and Limitation of the study**

### **1.9.1. Contextual Scope of the Study**

The study aimed at analyzing influence of Facebook and Twitter on voting decision among young voters in Nairobi County. As such, the units of analysis were young voters in County of Nairobi aged between the age of 18 and 34 years who were asked questions about how Facebook and Twitter influence their participation in political participation, voter turnout and voting patterns. How online voter activity shape their offline voting behaviour. The study did not seek to develop any theory or framework for analyzing the kind of messages and information the young voters receive, how they interpret them and how it influences the decisions they make regarding voting and political participation.

### **1.9.2. Methodological Scope of the Study**

The study adopted mixed methods approach to obtain broad information and different perspectives on the issue that was under study. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect data. This was to enhance the creditability of the findings (Creswell, 2014). The quantitative phase engrossed on obtaining descriptive numerical data using survey questionnaire on the research questions. The qualitative data was used in the succeeding interpretation and clarification of the results from the quantitative data analysis. The qualitative data was particularly important in addressing the question on how online political activities influence the offline political participation.

### **1.9.3: Geographical Scope of the Study**

The study was conducted within the geographical context of Kenya and specifically in Nairobi. Nairobi County was founded in 2013 on the same boundaries as Nairobi Province, after Kenya's eight provinces were sub-divided into forty-seven counties (Apiyo & Mburu, 2014). It is one of County governments envisioned by the 2010 Constitution of Kenya as the units of devolved government. It is governed by the County Government of Nairobi, under the leadership of a governor. The county is composed of 17 Parliamentary constituencies (Apiyo & Mburu, 2014).

### **1.9.4. Limitations of the Study**

The study was limited to youth voters of specific selected areas within Nairobi County. The population of Nairobi has varied characteristics depending with area. The study was precisely limited to the youth voters of specific selected areas; therefore, it excluded the other young voters from other areas of the county or countrywide. Therefore the results

produced may not be generalized on the whole of Nairobi population and the inclusion of total population is likely to produce different results especially as Nairobi political situation is quite divided and biased towards the well-known political figures. This study was also mainly interested in the collection of political data and not the total usage of the Facebook and Twitter sites. The study focused on the voters of Kibra, Githurai 44, Buru Buru and City Centre at the Jeevanjee Garden who formed the study population. One of the main limitations was uncompleted questionnaires. This was because out of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 363 were returned. However, the 363 returned questionnaires were still adequate to respond to the research question.

The researcher expected reluctance from respondents in providing required information, however, she explained that the research was purely for academic purposes and assured them of confidentiality of information provided.

#### **1.10. Structure of the Study**

Chapter one presents a review of background of the study; it discusses the problem of the study and provides the aim of this research. Further, it provides research objectives, assumptions, scope, and justification of the study. Finally, it presents the structure of the chapters and summary of the chapter. Chapter two examines the literature review. It provides a description of theories and a review of existing studies. Finally, it discusses the knowledge gap of the literature reviewed.

Chapter three investigates the methodological view for the study. For instance, it consists of the research design, target population, the sampling design, data collection methods



and instruments, procedures for data collection, data processing strategies and ethical considerations. Chapter 4 examines the first research questions. The research question was on Facebook and Twitter influence on political participation among youth. The findings and discussions were presented thematically in the following order; social media used, most used social media, social media usage, nature of social media, political activities on social media and social media influence on voter turnout and voting patterns.

Chapter five presents a summary of the key findings, conclusion, and recommendations of this study. The chapter is organized in line with the research questions and the main findings of each research question. Therefore, first, it presents a detailed summary and conclusion of the findings from the first research question on the influence of Facebook and Twitter on youth voters' political participation in Nairobi County. Secondly, it presents findings of the second research question on how does Facebook and Twitter influence voting decisions among youth voters in Nairobi County. Thirdly, it presents the third research question on how does online voter activity shape the offline voting behavior of youth voters in Nairobi County. This is followed by recommendations of the study with the focus on policy and proposes areas for further studies.

### **1.11. Summary of Chapter One**

The chapter presents the background of the study where the issues under consideration have been outlined. The issues covered include the concepts of the study, the problem statement and objectives. The chapter also addresses the scope as well as the significance of the study. The next chapter discusses relevant literature and theories in relation to this study's objectives.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

The starting point for any research project is to investigate available literature on the subject area. This chapter explores literature related on how social media specifically Facebook and Twitter has influenced participation in political processes in Nairobi County in Kenya.

Literature review was critical in this study because it provided the researcher with synopsis of the current knowledge, permitting to identify pertinent theories, methods and gaps in existing research. It is an objective that brought the researcher with up-to-date current literature on the topic that shaped the basic justification of this research area. Finally, the researcher was able to analyse, synthesis and critically assess sources to give clear picture of the state of knowledge on the subjects.

In addition, this chapter covers the review of the related literature employed for this study. According to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2006), review of related literature involves the systematic identification, location and analyses of documents containing information related to the research problem. Gay et al explain further that, the importance of review is to discover research strategies and specific data collection approaches that have or have not been productive in specific research investigations.

The chapter is structured into several distinct sections. It begins by discussing the relevant theories used in the study, which were the Adaptive Structuration Theory and the Dialogic Theory of public relations. Further, it discusses the interlinkage between media and politics, how these two variables influence each other and proceeded to narrow down on the link

between social media and the society where social media in particular Facebook and Twitter influenced different spheres of society. The chapter narrowed down on the link between social media and politics and offered the knowledge gaps and a summary.

## **2.2. Theoretical Framework**

Adom et al (2018) defines theoretical framework as a guide for a research. They further reiterate, it is a framework grounded on existing theory in the field of inquiry that is related and/or reflects the hypothesis of a study. That is an outline that is often ‘borrowed’ by the researcher to build his/her own house or research inquiry. It functions as the groundwork upon which a research is built. Theoretical framework guides the researcher so that s/he would not deviate from the confines of the accepted theories to make his/her final contribution scholarly and academically (Adom et al (2018). The theoretical framework consists of theoretical principles, constructs, concepts, and tenants of a theory (Grant & Osanloo, 2014).

In this study, the researcher connected all aspects of the research to the theoretical framework (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). The researcher carefully selected the relevant theories that underpinned the knowledge base of the phenomenon to investigate. The researcher made a unique application of the selected theories and applied the theoretical tenets to the research study.

The theoretical framework was very relevant to this study in that it provided the several benefits to the researcher. This provided the structure on how the researcher defined the study philosophically, methodologically and analytically (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). The

researcher subscribe to the argument of Ravitch and Carl (2016) that the theoretical framework assist researcher(s) in situating and contextualizing formal theories into their studies as a guide. Hence, this positions studies in scholarly and academic manner. Additionally, the theoretical framework serves in this study as the focus for the research and it is linked to the research problem under study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Therefore, guided the researcher's choice of research design and data analysis plan.

The theoretical framework also guided the kind of data to be collected for this particular study (Lester, 2005). The theoretical framework, therefore, aided the researcher in finding suitable research approach, exploratory tools and procedures for the research inquiry. This made research findings more meaningful and generalizable (Lester, 2005).

Relevant theories on the other hand are important in research work as they give a framework of studying the identified variables/tenets and the relationship among these concepts. Theories are important to this study because they helped the researcher explain the linkage between the influence of Facebook and Twitter on youth voter in political processes and voting decisions as well as how online voter activity shape offline voting behaviour of young voters in Nairobi County.

The study was guided by the Adaptive Structuration Theory developed by DeSanctis and Poole in 1998, which extended Giddens' Structuration Theory in 1979 and Dialogic Theory of Public Relations as advanced by Kent and Taylor ranging from 1998 to 2002. The Adaptive Structuration Theory in particular is about interaction of meaning, standards, values, power and posits a dynamic relationship between education, religious and political institutions (Kent & Taylor (2002) while Dialogic Theory is all about dialogue.

### **2.2.1. Adaptive Structuration Theory**

This theory is accredited to DeSanctis and Poole who assume that understanding of how structures are created in groups to influence communication and decisions is very central. They further stress that, it is useful in probing the role that power plays in the growth of groups and in the success of their goals. While some scholars have reviewed structuration in groups and organizations have emphasized the importance of understanding the relationship between the inputs into groups in terms of resources, rules and the out puts as feedback (DeSanctis & Poole 1998). This further according to them important not only to understand the existence of resources but also to examine how these resources evolve and change because of the communication action that takes place within the group in making decisions. Hence, the theory reinforces how these resources are central in explaining and shaping individuals' participation in political processes (Odanga, 2022).

The basis of this theory that it is useful nearly to all social settings and communication interactions in both organizational communication and in-group decision making (DeSanctis and Poole). This therefore, reflects the interplay between human actors, technology, and social structures.

In overall, AST is used to define the role that ICTs play in affecting organizational change. DeSanctis and Poole agreed to a position that Orlikowski (1992) called the duality of technology, which is a theory in sociology that offers perspectives on human behavior based on synthesis and agency effects. They further reason that while an ICT is physically devised and manufactured by people who do so in a specific social context (with sets of rules and expectations), users of that ICT socially theorize different meanings around the features and

appropriate them accordingly. The social, organizational perspective of design and use are therefore, emphasized by this theory, and are thus necessary to understanding how technology is shaped by designers and reshaped by users.

According to Adaption Structuration Theory, standpoint social structures and interactions with a new technology create a technology-in-use that may be similar to or different from the way the technology was originally imagined by either the designer or the user. The theory holds that new technologies lead to new structures and roles (Sinclair & Vogus, 2011). Therefore, the more the politicians and the voters rely on Facebook and Twitter is not only necessary in lines of communication, but as rewarding parts of the communicative process, the more value and influence Facebook and Twitter tools have on political participation and decision making processes (Lee, 2012).

Turner, Morris & Atamenwan, (2019) suggest that the new social technologies have altered the structure of interaction between politicians and the public, and between politicians and the media. AST as applied to social media suggests that the original purposes associated with Web 2.0 platform technologies include the ability to interact with party members and contact with the voter, self-publishing; have expanded and evolved well beyond anything the original developers could have imagined.

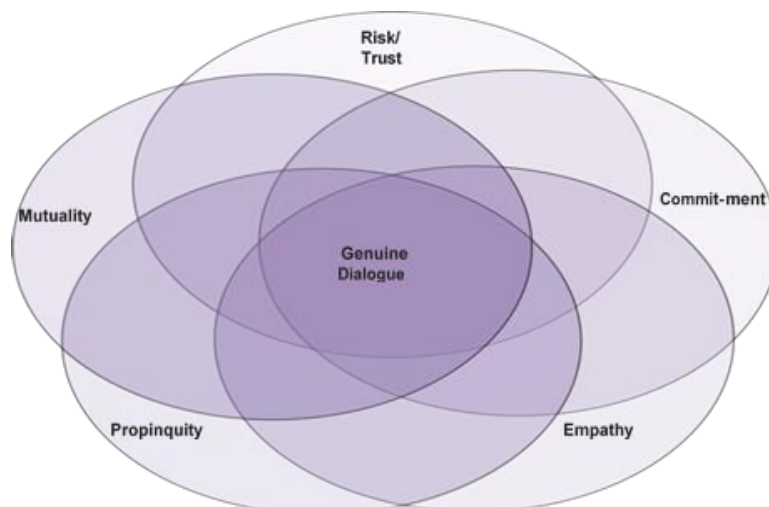
Adaptive Structuration Theory will enable the researcher understand that ICT tools have led to changes in organisations such as the Kenyan political landscape. The ICT tools such as Twitter and Facebook have altered the socialisation between voters and the politicians. In furtherance to the Adaptive Structuration Theory, Facebook and Twitter usage have also enhanced efficiency in political communication among varied players.

### **2.2.2. Dialogic Theory of Public Relations**

Dialogic Theory is one of the communication theory that is important when comes to online and offline activities in participation of political processes. This theory utilizes the knowledge from the field of public relations to explain political behaviour. Based on the need to filling the gaps in Adaption Structuration Theory, the theory stresses on public relations factors that shape participation in political processes. It concentrates on understanding what activities influences and reasons for participation,

Kent and Taylor ranging from 1998 to 2002 advanced this theory. The core argument of the Dialogical Theory of Public Relations is that there are five tenets that shape true dialogue between the stakeholders and organizations. The theory assumes that political aspirants, social media teams and citizens are key drivers of political processes.

One of the assumptions of this theory it is a body of communication tenets that were developed to expedite interaction between two people, or among a small group of individuals (Taylor & Kent 214). Dialogue starts from the postulation that various interpersonal communication features (e.g., risk, trust, positive regard, empathy, etc.) are necessary in order for people to have rewarding, honest, and important interactions (Kent & Taylor, 2002).



### **Dialogic model, Kent & Petra Theunissen & Kent**

The theory also believes that there are five main views of true dialogue between organizations and their stakeholders (Kent and Taylor 2002). Trust and risk is key determinant for political participation and is a product of interactions. Trust and risk in politics has a public relations dimension, which refers to vulnerability, being open to unanticipated experiences and consequences and recognition of strange others, which involves an unconditional acceptance of uniqueness of others (Kent, 2017). Risk and trust have two aspects internal and external. Internal being open to unanticipated experiences and consequences and external is recognition of others as strange other. It is therefore a necessity to be in an atmosphere of support and trust for a successful dialogue. Organizations or individual groups that wish to involve in dialogue with stakeholders inevitably take risks (Wang & Yang, 2020)).

The theory assumes that participation in political processes whether online or offline is determinant with commitment. This refers to genuineness, commitment to maintaining an open and ongoing conversation, and a commitment to interpretation or trying to make sense



of what others say and how they feel (Kent and Taylor, 2002, Kent, 2017). The parties must be dedicated to this dialogic process (Kent and Taylor 2002) which requires dedication by being active both online and offline which requires the use of social media (Carim and Warwick, 2013).

The theory proposes that empathy is determinant when comes to decision making when it comes political matters. Empathy here refers to confirmation of others, supportiveness and communal orientation, where the good of others matters as much or more than one's own good (Kent, 2017). Therefore, in politics there is no separation between social media teams, political aspirants and the citizens- voters. All these are groups are inseparably connected (Boston and Taylor2004).

Finally, this theory reflects the acceptance of the new media and its usage in the contemporary world (Scheufele, 2000). Hence, describes everyday political communication, political talk between friends, relatives and acquaintances as 'dialogic' since it does not have any certain goals, but rather helps to create and support social network and interpersonal relations. Scheufele (2000) further assumes that our everyday communication, even though short conversations and exchange of opinions on campaigns is good for information.

The following is a summary Tenets of indicators of the theories:

<b>Theory</b>	<b>Research Tenets</b>	<b>Research question</b>	<b>Tenet Indicators</b>
<b>Adaptation Structuration Theory</b>	Interactions	What was the influence of Facebook and Twitter among youth voters participation in political processes in Nairobi County.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Time</li> <li>2. Resources ( feedback and rules)</li> <li>3. Accessibility to internet</li> <li>4. Social media</li> </ol>
<b>Dialogue Theory</b>	Dialogue	How does Facebook and Twitter influence voting decisions among youth voters in Nairobi County?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Risk/trust</li> <li>2. Social media</li> <li>3. Online and offline political activities</li> <li>4. Empathy</li> <li>5. Commitment</li> </ol>

### **2.2.3. Situating the Study in the Field of Communication**

Facebook and Twitter is currently a big phenomenon in communication arena. That has promoted both professionals and government agencies in communications , marketing , human resources and information technology as well as small business owners , public officials , politicians and others who want to communicate with target audiences using these engaging and effective means. The researcher situated this study in the field of mass media communication and as while as interpersonal communication, the subfield of the larger discipline of communication studies.

As a mass media tool, Facebook and Twitter allows politicians to reach out large audience without spending a dime. In addition, it has allowed politicians to evade the traditional methods of reaching out the voters through paid or earned media. Similarly, personal

communication has reduced due to social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter which encourages interpersonal online conversations as opposed to face-face communication or in-person communication.

### **2.3. Review of Related Literature**

#### **2.3.1. Political Process versus Political Participation**

**Political process:** Bochaberi (2015) defines political process as a series of things or activities done in the political arena. These activities may include registering as voters, being elected for parliamentary or civic seats, voting in elections, debating issues that affect citizens, campaigning, attending civic meetings etc. Citizens have to participate in these processes. She further explains that if the citizens do not participate in one way or the other, there cannot be a democratic government because a democratic government includes citizenry youth included. Hence, it is important that the citizens are knowledgeable about their rights so that they are able to participate better.

According to Schimmer (2015), political process entails more than just voting. Political processes originates from freedom to speak out, assemble and associate , the ability to take part in the conduct of public affairs , and the opportunity to register as candidates, to campaign , to be elected and to hold office at all levels of government . For example, voting is a political process. Hence, political process is where the aspirations of people are communicated to the people who run their government.

**Participation:** The term “participation” in this research analysis shall be considered broad enough to include political speech and electronic dissemination of political information. In the perspective of participation that occurs over social media, it is necessary to use a

definition of participation that moves beyond simply referring to direct electoral behavior (Odanga, 2022) Political participation is essential and desirable for healthy democratic processes. When citizens are participating in political activities or feel attached to societal and political issues, they can create an association with their representatives (Kruikemeier et al., 2016). If citizens feel more connected to and interested in politics and their representatives, they are more likely to engage in political activities, such as becoming members of political organizations, voicing their opinions, and voting (Jha & Kodila-Tedika, 2019).

In this study, participation will be viewed at in terms of voting in general or by-elections, membership in political parties or interest groups, participation in political rallies, contacting a public official or political leader, being a member of a community based organization that seeks to influence youth among others.

#### **2.4. Media and Politics**

Media is a way in which communication is passed from person or place to another. There are several aspects of media used worldwide including newspaper, television and radio (O'shaughnessy & Casey, 2016). Politics on the other hand is the ability for one to acquire power and apply it for governance. Chadwaick (2017) argues that politics influence both humans and physical resources. He further opines that every political actor desire to be seen and heard in the media outlets as being visible is a key feature of politics. Media and politics are therefore two broad platforms that tend to influence each other.

According to Crosby (2018) politics is all a contest between candidates running for a specific post, between the rich and the poor and between those that want to gain fame and

those that are sincere for leadership position. McGregor, Lawrence & Cardona, 2017 suggest that the news media is essential in communicating and updating thousands and millions of citizens either at the urban or rural areas on every aspect that is going on in politics. They further argue that although these two disciplines greatly rely on each other, it is true to say that the effects vary from positive to negative as illustrated below;

McGregor, Lawrence and Cardona (2017) suggests that, power in the media results to power in politics. This means that when a certain political actor has influence in the media, all his/her moves will be aired in the media. This will in return make him famous, as almost all the citizens will be familiar with him. Such a political actor has the upper hand of winning in the elections (Rose & Miller, 2017). On the other hand, competitors who have no influence in the media will remain in the dark as almost all the citizens will not know him or them and therefore will not have confidence in voting for him. Such political actor with no media connections are therefore disadvantaged and ends up losing (Ashley, Maksl & Craft, 2017). For one to be a political giant you not only need to be good in politics, but also very influential and powerful in the media. For example, most political actors tend to appear always in political discussion where they table their achievements and what they aspire to do.

## **2.5. Social Media and Society**

The advanced technological development can be outlined in various forms. Some of the popular social media networking are mashups, blogs, and wikis. The development of social networking started because of people trying to find solutions to communication barriers since most companies are located in different parts of the world (Albu & Etter, 2018). Since the development of telephones in 1876 by Alexander Graham Bell, the human being has

come far to developing machines that are not only used to send audio communication but also sending visible information. Now people all over the world can share moments and realities on what is happening in their lives.

Thanks to the internet, those with marginal perspectives will always have those that support their ideas (Chukwuma, 2018). When people with the same concepts found each other through social media, they share their views through publication or create memes, which is a modern way of sharing their thoughts. Without social media, environmental, social, political, and ethnic groups would not be visible. Social media is killing real activism and superseding it with slacktivism (Bode & Dalrymple, 2015). This has become a new method of which most people air their concerns. Although slacktivism has brought an increased awareness of societal matters, the real question remains whether this awareness is interpolating into real change.

Research suggests that information is power. News keeps people updated on every aspect that is going on all over the world, for instance, about politics, education, religion, etc. During the old days, people had to go to church every Sunday to hear God's word (Hudgins, 2019). Nowadays, it is not necessary for one to be present at a particular church to become a member of that church. Preachers all over the world use social media as one way to spread the gospel (Hudgins, 2019).

## **2.6. Youth Participation in Political Processes in Social Media Era in Kenya**

Every five years, Kenyans have the opportunity to cast their ballots in the most direct form of political action: voting. However, the intense process leading up to an election is full of chance to be politically involved in ways that go beyond voting. The prospects to participate

is relatively difficult political system also includes contacting elected officials and demonstrating for a political cause. Yet, Kenyans involvement is relatively low. Despite all the opportunities to do so, Kenyans simply do not exhibit high levels of political engagement. In addition to being an essential component of a democratic society, political participation is also a crucial to appreciate how people interact with elections and the campaigns steering up to them (Burford, 2012).

In examining the relationship between media, specifically social media and participation, Ndlela and Mulwa (2017) claim that social media has created a platform for the youth to be involved in nearly all matters using the various platforms in their daily lives. Ndavula and Mberia (2012) find that the Social Networking Sites have the potential of motivating participation of the youth, more so in non-institutionalized democratic participation. On the other hand , Omanga (2018) examined how a pressure group by the name *Nakuru Analysts* in Nakuru County utilized WhatsApp to engage with elected leaders in the county and try having their concerns implemented.

According to Verheijen et al (2020), social media has influenced youths to participate in politics. For youths, social media is part of their daily lives. They are always logged in either on Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter and Instagram. They therefore closely follow what is going on in the field of politics and most of them end up being interested in the same. For instance, a youth may learn in the social media about the failures of a certain political actor and hence become motivated to vie for the same seat so that he can rectify what was previously neglected.

According to Kruijemeier et al. (2016), interactivity is often believed as the most important style characteristic of social media, and is generally assumed a key variable when studying the effects of new media. Interactivity is a multidimensional construct; researchers use diverse conceptualizations to describe interactivity. Dommert (2018) argues that interactivity is both a product and a process. Dommert further asserts that interactivity is at two levels - between people and computers, and between people themselves. Interactivity makes social media different from traditional media unlike traditional media.

According to Robles-Morales's & Córdoba-Hernández, 2011 the internet age has generated with it improved avenues for political participation of not only the general population, but also the youth. This is due to its lower cost of producing content through the internet and the reduction of the participation spaces (Kamau, 2016). It is also attractive to the youth as a medium of participation since it is spontaneous, informal and less structured and also owing to the fact that it is fairly unregulated compared to other media platforms therefore making it possible for the youth to participate in online political discussions (Mukhongo, 2014). There seems to be a disconnect between online and offline channels as suggestion shows that the Kenyan youth are very active in using social media platforms to marshal for actions on a variety of issues (Kamau, 2016).

Over the years, the use of the internet in Kenya as a way of acquiring information on politics and participation in online discussions has been gaining momentum. A research on the developments and practices of digital consumption in the country showed that a majority of young people use social media to obtain information (SMIElab Africa, 2019). Kamau (2016) asserts that SNSs have played as vital possibilities for the political participation of the youth and stimulating political interest among the disengaged youth.



Mukhongo (2014) reasons that the Kenyan youth have also taken the online opening made available to create out their own political stories and presenting them in forums that accommodate their views without fear of censorship or regulation that characterizes offline communication channels. This can be seen for example in the use of memes, images and even songs or poetry that seek to send particular messages and inspire interest among the youth to keep checks on political progress in the country.

Kamau (2016) states that in Nairobi County, there is a high usage and reliance on social media by the youth at 98% with Facebook being the most popular platform. Further, research shows that individuals aged between 26 to 35 years are the most active in online debates, closely followed by those between 21 and 25 years (SMIElab Africa, 2019).

Online Platforms have also emerged as informal channels for political participation and activism among the youth. In Nakuru County for instance, the use of WhatsApp for political discussions has been observed. Nakuru Analysts, which is a WhatsApp-based group, has been engaging with county authorities and acting as a mobilizer for grassroots politics by shifting online dialogue to online collective action (Omanga, 2018, Odanga 2022).

Another very good example both at county and national level is Facebook. A number of groups have been formed and have large membership with the objective of keeping people engaged on present-day political debates in both at county and national level. Twitter has developed as a popular way of bringing matters of concern to the publicity with hashtags intended at capturing people's attention through twitter trends. Blogging is also used by the youth especially in promotion their favorite candidates.

Kamau (2017) did an investigation on democratic engagement using the internet, precisely focusing on Social Network Sites (SNSs) and finds that its use is absolutely related with political participation but does not transform their commitment in a far-reaching way. For instance, Wangui and Mberia (2018), social media is important in enhancing the political participation of young women as well as acting as an advocacy tool. All these investigations did not feature how social media specifically Facebook and Twitter influence on either voting decisions on online or offline behaviour of youth and this is a gap this study seeks to fill. These studies also specifically concentrated on a similar sample with Kamau's for example centering on University Students while Wangui and Mberia's targeting on young women Facebook users.

## **2.7. Facebook**

Facebook is an online platform that allows people to stay connected no matter the distance. Designed by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004, former Harvard university student, Facebook started as an online college student interaction platform (Dwivedi et.al, 2019). Later it opened to anyone around the world over thirteen years old (Dwivedi et.al, 2019). Today Facebook has become one of the most influential websites that comprises millions of users worldwide. Since its development, Facebook content covers almost everything a modern human being needs online (Quinlan, et al., 2016). People share information in various forms, and there is an allocation of work and entertainment.

Users can involve in a wide variety of activities ranging from photo sharing, commenting on friends' profiles, joining in discussions, and importantly from a political perspective, 'liking' brands (Quinlan, 2016). The conversation on Facebook is facilitated by posting content, and

partly by engaging with existing content with social buttons. These enables cross-syndication and fast dissemination of Web content (Gerlitz & Helmond, 2013). Basically, a post with many interactions has evidently attracted more attention and spread more widely, whereas a post with fewer interactions has not been deemed worthy or interesting to engage with.

A study by Lappas et al., (2015) on the use of Facebook by candidates running for the 2014 Greek Municipal Elections indicated that candidates running in large municipalities who had not been elected before exploited Facebook as a means of political marketing. Regardless of the low adoption rate, results recommended that candidates who made use of Facebook won more votes compared to non-Facebook candidates. Further, it was found that a candidate's Facebook page popularity was a good indicator of the candidate's vote share.

Gerodimos, (2016) indicated that Obama re-election campaigns in 2012 treated Facebook as a tool of top-down promotion, as opposed to a means of substantive civic interaction. Furthermore, while messages were highly personalized, both in terms of focusing on Obama's personality and in terms of directly addressing the user, they focused more on the symbolic and affective features of political communication than on political argumentation and issue-oriented campaigning.

Bronstein (2013) pointed out the strengths of Facebook as a political platform. It allows candidates to reach constituents and voters, increases communication venues by providing a public "wall" where people can send messages directly to politicians and provides candidates with the means to mobilize and organize large groups of supporters (Bronstein, 2013). Gathering many supporters on Facebook allows a politician to appear, as a candidate with

well-known public appeal, is significant element in any political campaign (Lappas et al 2015). In addition, candidates desiring to appear as the central node in a network of supporters could reach out to their supporters' friends and connections on that social network (Dalsgaard, 2008).

The use of Facebook and Twitter platforms also enriches personalized communication, which might also influence feelings of social presence, as personalized communication gives the impression of an informal personal conversation (Lee & Oh, 2012). Communicating with an individual politician makes link with the communicator easier, than communicating with a political party (Kruikemeier et al 2016). The perception of being in contact with a communicator (i.e. an actual person) mimics a real experience and helps readers to draw a “vivid picture” of the communicator (Kruikemeier et al 2016). Kruikemeier asserts further readers can create imagined intimacy and emotional closeness i.e. social presence with the communicator.

## **2. 8. Influence of Facebook in Political Participation**

The use of Facebook in the recent past has been used for online political participation globally has significantly increased, especially among youth and they are particularly using it to influence social and political change (Towner, 2012). Studies have proposed that youth are now using Facebook to seek for political information, mobilize like minds, create user-generated content and share political views.

Facebook has been used to mobilize individuals to participate in politics and protest around the world. This, however, propose that Facebook can help transform or mobilize the people that have been disengaged from offline politics to now participate in an online political

activity. This statement has collaboration with the work of Theocharis and Quintelier (2002), the author's credit that Facebook provides suitability and accessibility for a sufficient number of people, improved access to information, online opportunities for political expression and political action. However, studies have pointed out that Facebook is more powerful than traditional media (Gromping 2014).

Facebook provides comparable and developed features in terms of exposure to information but has the additional benefits and advantages of global reach, better quality and greater speed and also an interactive medium of online political discussion. With these features, Facebook shows a significant role in the formation of political knowledge (Gromping 2014). Moreover, youth today get their political information from Facebook rather than the traditional media. Facebook may highly motivate online political participation through the access to information particularly among youth in Kenya and Africa at large (Gromping 2014).

According to Nnanyelugo and Nwafor (2011), Nigerian politicians actively utilized social media in their campaigns. They sent bulk text and voice messages in exceptional numbers. They made great use of Facebook pages and other social media platforms to win supports and solicit for votes. President Jonathan for instance announced his intention to run for the presidency on Facebook and subsequently became the second most "liked" head of state in the world after US President Barack Obama.

This is evident that social media and politics are almost inseparable as one depends on the other for effectiveness. Social media updates and communicates what goes on in the political realm to the citizens. Politics in the modern world on the other hand highly depend on social

media for its progress. It is through social media that the political actors learn about expectations of the citizens, how they have failed, and what the citizens are happy and appreciating about the projects they have carried out.

### **2.9. Facebook and Twitter Influence on Voting Decisions**

The social media tools are also becoming a central feature not only before voting but also during the voting itself. Jiang (2016) notes that the political messaging and news on polling dates and process help mobilize the citizens into voting. Political players have been able to effectively recruit poll agents through Facebook and Twitter who in turn monitor the voting processes and update the party headquarters. This ensures that the party and politicians are able to deploy their social media platforms to urge people to turn out and vote. Photos of political candidates voting are posted on either Facebook or twitter.

Similar posting by the voters who want to prove that they have also voted follows this. On the downside, some of the voters post photos of marked ballots showing the candidate they have voted for which in itself is an elections offence.

Facebook and Twitter use party polarization in elections to clarify possibility to vote. Party polarization has increased rapidly since the mid-1970s and party discipline has increased, which is why Dodson contends that party polarization is becoming increasingly relevant for voter turnout. Strength of party identification is believed to be a significant factor in vote choice, and Dodson establishes that the increasing polarization is a consistent source of the change in voter turnout over the past decades. As he expounds, perceptions of polarization raise the likelihood of voting, and push citizens towards higher involvement. Growing political polarization is a substitute description for voter turnout.

The domino effect experienced by postings on social media prior and during the voting day are in line with the positive expectations of behaviour, which Stephen Medvic states in *Campaigns and Elections: Players and Processes*, which serve as control factors for the study. According to him, expect older citizens and those with certain levels of education to be more likely to participate more. He further noted that the young citizens are to be less likely to vote, although more likely to have a social media account. These assumptions are key to developing a model that controls factors that could influence the relationship between actual voting decisions and social media use.

## **2.10. Twitter**

Twitter is a micro blogging and networking service whereby users interact by sending messages in the form of tweets (Jungherr, 2016). Although the platform is similar to Facebook, Twitter has different regulations on the word limit. The company has a word limit of 280 characters or less broadcasted to all the followers. Everyone is allowed to share information in the form of pictures, wording, audio among others (Murthy, 2018). The company assures each account owner of their privacy since logins credential is required, which are unique for each person.

Boyd and Ellison, 2006 argues that one of the most prevalent Internet applications in the political arena of recent years is Twitter, introduced in 2006 as a hybrid of a micro-blogging service and a social network site. Interfaces to open Twitter are available for use on the web and the mobile phone. Twitter platform allows public or private messages (also called 'tweets', micro-blog entries or status updates) no longer than 200 characters that will be sent to the webpage each Twitter subscriber has. People can indicate whether they want to be

notified to messages sent by other people using Twitter, thereby becoming followers of others – in this case, candidates.

Users choose what content they primarily see by following and unfollowing other user accounts (Edgett, 2017). Boyd and Ellison (2006) affirm that users generate content on the platform by Tweeting original content, including text, hashtags, photos, GIFs, and videos. They may also reply to Tweets, Retweet content previously posted on the platform, and like Tweets and Retweets; the metric used to define such activity is “engagement”—the different ways, in which users are engaged with the content, they are viewing. Users can also exchange messages with users and accounts they follow or if their privacy settings permit, with any other user) through direct messaging (Edgett, 2017).

Twitter has within few years become a prominent “backchannel” for televised political discussions by making audience reactions visible online (Kalsnes, 2014). By adding a specific hashtag to their tweets, Twitter users can take part in larger, public conversations about an event, reaching outside their own network of followers to join the “virtual lounge room” (Harrington et al, 2012).

Harrington, (2012) asserts that the # character is used in concurrence with a word or a phrase to connect the tweet to a particular theme. It allows for harmonized distributed discussion on the Twitter platform. Hence, audiences can easily turn television watching into communal, social events. As social reactions to TV shows become evident through Twitter, it allows for examination of the Twitter users’ response to electoral debates in near real-time (Mascaro & Goggins, 2012).



However, Twitter tone and ad tone may be determined by similar factors, there are competing prospects about which one will be more negative. If Twitter is just additional medium that helps encourage an understandable campaign message, then tweets should be similar in tone to political advertising (Gainous & Wagner 2014). Gainous and Wagner suggest that a second possibility, however, is that tweets will be more negative, as the hyper-political audience would likely appreciate biased attacks more than would a less politically same audience, such as those exposed to television ads aired during news programming, talk shows, and game shows.

Gainous and Wagner (2014) states further that that opponent's names are one of the mutual keywords to appear in tweets, suggesting a negative bent. A final possibility is that Twitter may truly be more positive than political advertising because Twitter followers are likely prevailing supporters, which means that messages should comprise of less persuasion and more get-out-the-vote appeals and requests for donations, all likely positive in tone (Gainous & Wagner 2014).

### **2.10. 1. Use of Twitter in Political Participation in Kenya**

Twitter usage in Kenya account for 9.36% of social media users as of February 2019 (Stat Counter, 2019). This makes it the third most popular social media platform in Kenya, with Facebook leading at 67.42% followed by Pinterest at 17.65%. According to the *State of the Internet in Kenya 2017 Report* published in February 2018 by the Bloggers Association of Kenya (BAKE), there are over one million active monthly Twitter users in Kenya. Nendo (2018) additional postulates in an infographic that Twitter have 1.5 million active monthly users in Kenya as of May 2018. A further investigation by Sochin Ltd published by *Business*

*Watch* (2017) using geotagging, shows that of 728,074 tweets, 85% indicated Nairobi as their location, 6.1% Mombasa, and 3.8% Nakuru, while 2.5% referenced Kisumu.

Soko Directory (2018) has the view that Twitter is definitely a powerful platform for pushing agendas and articulating issues. Kenyans have used Twitter widely to hold government accountable, condemn injustice, or comment on various issues, stated the *Soko Directory* article. The *BAKE State of the Internet in Kenya 2017 Report* emphasizes some of the major hashtags that have had the greatest influence in Kenya as: #KenyaDecides, #ElectionsKE, and #DigitalGenderGap. This is a strong suggestion that politically active citizens are digitally engaged and using Twitter to reach out to the government.

Brummette, DiStaso, Vafeiadis, and Messner (2018) emphasized the rise in decisive participation between politically involved social media users and political movements referencing the case of the U.S. 2008 general election. Twitter was the chosen channel for this study because its elements made it a distinctive and important part of building relationships, turning it into a critical aspect in reaching the masses (Comm & Taylor, 2015).

Twitter permits people to follow anyone, unless in the few occurrences where one has been blocked. This allows for instant connections, resulting in some people becoming influencers based on their large followings, such as President Uhuru Kenyatta with 3.3 million followers as of September 18, 2018 (@UKenyatta, 2018). Twitter is a very vibrant social network because people tweet at anytime from anywhere.

### **2.11. How Voter's Online Activity Shapes Offline Behaviour**

The internet is playing an imperative part in imparting information to the public on political events, involving its users and them to get involved in offline political activities. Social media provides an opportunity for youth to discuss different multifaceted issues facing the society and encouraged them to participate in national elections, for better turnout in electoral process (Ahmad & Sheikh, 2013). The internet has become critical for political discussions and political participation. In the foundation, web was exploited as a unidirectional communication tool for political parties to enlighten the public through their websites (Ahmad, Alvi. & Ittefaq 2019). However, new media and technology have changed communication patterns in two-way communication (Emruli & Bacan, 2011).

The youth are the most active users of the Internet and social media. Online activities connected to politics are useful and inspire youth to participate in political event (Ahmad & Sheikh, 2013). Social media offers a chance to the youthful population for political discussion through various online groups, pages and accounts. Bimber and Copeland (2011) affirms that social media is providing the platform for political participation and changing their political efficacy. Facebook and Twitter users are active in politics and political dialogue. Facebook and Twitter has thus developed the interests toward politics of its users and improved political efficiency of the respondent that create their online and offline political engagements.

Jiang (2016) suggests that use of the social media platforms especially Facebook and Twitter have become the core basis of political efficiency and political participation, enhancing awareness about voting and campaigning. He further stresses that social media also raises

the ratio of voters' turnout among users as the platforms advances the method, which helps in voting and donating campaign for politics.

Users' efficacy helps them to appreciate the political affairs in a better way through the attainment of political information from social media. Social media has given a platform to individuals for information and communication with large audiences and a means to participate in political activities (Kahne et al, 2014). Zaheer (2016) also found that social media use among Punjab University students have been pivotal in changing the perceptions of youths towards politics and thus more active participation.

## **2.12. Knowledge Gaps in Reviewed Literature**

The literature review is an essential exercise for a research project as it provides a basis and rationale for research works. The study noted that while the existing literature adequately laid the ground for this study, there existed some shortcomings in the available research studies that has necessitated the need for this study. First, it was evident that majority of the studies had been conducted in contexts, which are different from the Kenyan experience, and thus they have not been able to document the unique characteristics of the Kenyan social media and political processes.

Additionally, it emerged that the reviewed studies have different findings depending on their different contexts. Some of the studies found positive implication of Facebook and Twitter on political participation while other found that had negative influence on voters' participation in political processes. These contradictory findings were a suitable ground for the current study. Further, majority of the studies have also not explored the link between online activities and offline decisions and actions such as political participation, voter

turnout and voting patterns, a line, which this study pursued. The relevant previous studies have not applied the theories, which the proposed study utilized in linking the concepts of Facebook and Twitter and voting decisions among youthful voters.

### **2.12. Summary of Chapter Two**

The chapter discusses the Adaptive Structuration Theory and Dialogic Theory of Public Relations showing their relevance to the study. The chapter discusses the link between media and politics showing how the two relate to each other. The section on social media and society shows how social media has become a transformative tool for individuals, businesses and organization through positive and negative aspects. The study then discusses role of social media in politics and political processes such as political mobilization and voting decisions concepts, which form the basis of the study. The chapter also highlights the knowledge gaps in the reviewed literature and offers the rationale on why the study was undertaken, which is to get an insight based on how Facebook and Twitter influence participation in voting and voting behavior among youth voters in Nairobi. The next chapter discusses the Research Methodology, which was applied in the study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0. Introduction**

Kothari (2014) defines research methodology as a way to analytically solve the research problem, thus research methodology refers to not only to the research methods but also deliberates the rationality and perceptiveness behind those methods used or not used (Vyas, 2013).

Research methodology is an important element in research and relevant in this study because it provided the structure that provides guidance in conducting this research (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, it describes how information relevant to the objectives of the study were collected. Hence, it defines the methods used for conducting research or studying a research problem; which includes research design, data gathering and data analysis with the aim of getting the best response to a research problem. The research methodology contributed to research validity provided scientifically, and sound findings to this study. It also provided a detailed plan that helped to keep the researcher on track, making the process smooth, effective and manageable. Therefore, research methodology allows the researcher or even the reader to understand the approach and methods to reach conclusions.

The previous chapter investigated documented research on the area of influence of social media in particular Facebook and Twitter on participation in political processes among youth voters in Nairobi County with the aim to add knowledge in the field of social media and political communication. This chapter outlines how the relevant data was generated and analysed in order to address the research objectives.

The research problem for this study was to find out how messages, information and interaction in Facebook and twitter influence participation in political processes (voting, voting patterns and voter turnout). The study followed a number of guidelines throughout the procedure of carrying out the research. Those guidelines included examination of the influence of Facebook and Twitter on youth voters' political participation, how Facebook and Twitter influence voting decisions and how online voter activity shape offline voting behaviour in Nairobi County.

The credibility of findings and conclusions largely depended on the quality of the research approach, data collection, data management, and data analysis. This chapter was dedicated to the description of the methods and procedures done in order to obtain the data, how the data was analysed, interpreted, and how the conclusion was met. The guidelines above defined the data collected and its application was to respond to the study problem.

### **3.1.1. Research Philosophical Paradigm**

Before developing a research methodology one of the critical decisions when designing a research study is the paradigm (or paradigms) within which the research investigation is situated (Maxwell, 2013). In research, a paradigm is the worldview and the beliefs shared by a certain group of researchers on how to undertake research and what this implies for the research process (Gliner & Leech, 2016).

Morgan and Leech mentions further that paradigm is a way of thinking and conducting research, not strictly a methodology, rather a philosophy that guides how the research might be conducted (Gliner, Morgan & Leech, 2016). This study is anchored on pragmatic

paradigm, which is good for analysing fully a phenomenon that is a real-world problem such as in the situation of this research (Creswell & Clark, 2011).

### **3.1.2. Pragmatic Approach**

The justification of following the choice of pragmatic approach is because of the research approach and research question, where the use of either quantitative or qualitative approaches does not completely address the research problem, while a blend of approach does (Creswell & Clark, 2011; Creswell, 2014). The pragmatic view provides for the use of both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to collect information and make inquiry into compound phenomenon of social and natural contexts (Morgan, 2014, Creswell 2014). Henceforth, the pragmatic philosophy provides for the adoption of mixed methods as the data collection method, which opens the opportunity to be objective and subjective in analysing the points of view of the participants.

Pragmatic view therefore provides the rationale and reason for combining methods and knowledge of providing uncertain answers to research questions for mixing approaches and method of study (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). It does not categorize the research as either quantitative or qualitative in nature. Hall (2013) suggests that a pragmatic approach provides a balanced point of the logical and inductive viewpoints of thinking, which offers practical solutions to mixing different paradigms. Creswell et al (2003) emphasizes that pragmatism enabled the researcher to use quantitative and qualitative approaches. It is on this point of view that the researcher adopted the above school of thought.



### **3.2. Research Approach**

Research approach involves the planning, organization, collection and analysis of data to provide answers to questions such as; what techniques will be used to gather data? What sampling strategies and tools will be used? In addition, how time and cost constraints will be dealt with? (Leedy, 1993). While Creswell (2014) defines research approaches, as strategies and methods for research that encompass the decisions from general assumptions to thorough methods of data gathering and reasoning. Hence, a rational systematic plan to resolve research problem. Hence, research approach ensured reliable, valid results that address researcher's aims and objectives. It incorporates what data the research is going to collect and where from, as well as how it is being collected and analysed.

There are basically three distinct approaches that are employed when conducting research; a qualitative approach, a quantitative approach or mixed method approach which is a combination of the two (Creswell, 2010, Creswell 2014). Research approach is usually determined on what type of information the researcher is looking for.

#### **3.2.1. Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches**

Mouton and Marais (1990) describes the differences between quantitative and qualitative approach base of the operational specificity of concepts, hypothesis and methods of observation.

Quantitative approach is research that is used to answer questions about relationships among measured variables with the purpose of explaining, predicting and controlling phenomena (Leedy & Ormrod 2005:94). Similarly, Qualitative approach is used often in

the humanities because it endeavours to portray the human meanings of social life as it is lived, experienced and understood by the participants. Another unique characteristic of qualitative research is that data is collected in their natural context and statements are analysed in the context of an extended answer or the total course of the interview (Flick 2004:8; Taylor 2000:90).

### **3.2.2. Mixed Method Approach**

A mixed methods approach is a procedure for collecting, analysing, and “mixing” both quantitative and qualitative research and methods in a single study to understand a research problem (Creswell, 2014). It is the “third wave” or third research movement as stated by (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004). John (2014) affirms that this is done to obtain breadth and depth of understanding, perspective, complexity, difference and collaboration. When one type of research (qualitative or quantitative) is not enough to address the research problem or answer the research questions. Practically, this provide multiple viewpoints (Creswell, 2012). Therefore, following -up a quantitative study qualitatively to obtain more detailed information to provide a more complete understanding than either quantitative or qualitative alone (Creswell, 2008, Creswell , 2012).

This approach enabled a researcher to combine elements of qualitative and quantitative approaches (viewpoints, data collection, and analysis and inference techniques) for the comprehensive objective of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration (Creswell, 2014). Mixed methods enabled collection of enriched data onto triangulation of sources and approaches (Jack & Raturi, 2006). According to Mangan, Lalwani and Gardner

(2004) methodological triangulation and using mixed methodologies increasingly provides multidimensional insights into diverse research problems.

It is on this motivation that mixed methods approach was preferred due to its ability to be comprehensive by getting the different perspectives on the issue under study (O’Cathain et al, 2007). It also deemed to enhance credibility of findings as the quantitative data is supplemented and explained by the qualitative data (O’Cathain et al, 2007). Creswell (2014) asserts this further that combining the two approaches (qualitative and quantitative) could yield more trustworthy and dependable results.

### **3.3. Research Design**

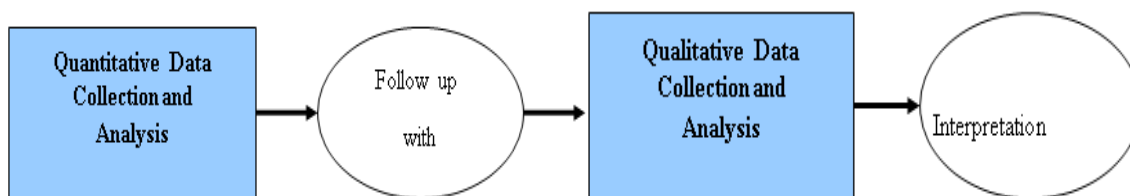
Research design is the choice and framework for choosing specific methods of data collection and analysis (Saunders, 2012, Kothari, 2017). In this study, the research design can be described as an overall plan about what the researcher will do to answer the research question. There are three major mixed method approach designs; convergent design, explanatory sequential design and exploratory sequential design (Kothari, 2017). In convergent design, the researcher collects quantitative and qualitative data concurrently analyzes the two data sets separately and mixes the two databases by merging the results during interpretation (and sometimes during data analysis) (Creswell, 2012).

The exploratory sequential design on the other hand, the researcher collects and analyses qualitative data first followed by quantitative data, and uses results to build to the subsequent quantitative phase (Creswell, 2008, Creswell 2012). This will connects the phases by using the qualitative results to shape the quantitative phase by specifying

research questions and variables, developing an instrument, and or generating a typology (Creswell 2012).

Besides, explanatory sequential design the researcher collects and analyses quantitative data first, then collects and analyses qualitative data in a second phase as a follow-up to the quantitative results (Kothari, 2017, Kothari 2004). This connects the phases by using the quantitative results to shape the qualitative research questions, sampling, and data collection. Creswell (2014) reasons that under mixed methods approach a researcher can opt for explanatory sequential design to address the research problem and answer the research questions.

**Figure 3.1: Explanatory Sequential Design**



**Source: Abraham Fischer University**

This research study employed and chose explanatory design because the qualitative data obtained in the second phase helped explain quantitative results that needed further exploration. The researcher used the quantitative results to purposefully select the best participants for qualitative study. Equally, participants were available for second data collection. The researcher had time to conduct two phases and because on the other she had limited resources and needed to collect and analyse one data type at a time.

### **3.4. Research Area**

The main area of study for the research was Nairobi County, which is the capital city of Kenya. It covers an area of 648 square kilometres. The county is further sub-divided into eleven governmental units (Sub-Counties) to enhance administration. It hosts majority of social media users in the country. The population in Nairobi characterizes Kenyans of different social classes, varied ethnicity and political association curtailing any chance of bias that would be linked with a mono-cultural setting. Nairobi is Kenya's largest county, which acts as the central business district hosting parliament and other administrative and commercial capital. Nairobi residents have access to internet through their mobile phone or Personal Computer.

The county has a population of 4.397 million people as per the 2019 Census: out of this, 1,791, 550 (47.28% males and 52.72% females) are in the youth bracket (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), 2019) making up 40.74% of the population. As per the 2019 population census (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (K.N.B.S.), 2019), the population distributed in the 11 governmental units that make up Nairobi County is as follows;

**Table 3.1. Population Distribution by Governmental Units**

<b>s/n</b>	<b>Governmental Unit</b>	<b>Population</b>
1.	Dagoretti	175,328
2.	Embakasi	432,428
3.	Kamukunji	109,362
4.	Kasarani	330,232
5.	Kibra	68,533
6.	Lang'ata	74,079
7.	Makadara	76,948
8.	Mathare	84,853
9.	Njiru	236,923
10.	Starehe	92,510
11.	Westlands	110,354
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,791,550</b>

**Source:** Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (K.N.B.S.), (2019), Odanga, (2022)

Though the study area is not that large enough for the findings, it can act as an explanatory of the county and national picture since the findings could be used as base for future research in the area.

### **3.5. Target Population of the Study**

According to Majid (2018) population is a total number of individuals, events or objects, having common observable characteristics. There are two kinds of population; target population and accessible population (Majid 2018). The former states the total set of subjects in a study where the research will be generalized while the latter refers to the set of subjects from which the sample of the study is to be derived. To allow for the collection of data that suits the study topic, the study targeted those in the youth age-bracket (18-35 years) in Nairobi County.

The study focused on youth in their individual capacity and not youth groupings/organizations. According to Youth Agenda (2017) and IEBC 2017 press release by the chairman Wafula Chebukati in February 2017, the Commission registered a total of 19.9M voters nationally. Out of this 51% (9,930,315) of the voters represented persons aged between 18-35 years.

The target population refers to the 2,250,853 voters registered in Nairobi according to IEBC 2017 report. Nairobi alone being the top five counties with the highest number of registered youth voters<sup>4</sup> comprised youth totalling to 1,147,935 who formed the accessible sample for the purposes of this study. The population distributed in the four accessible sample frame as per the KNBS (2019) is as follows:

**Table 3: Accessible Population**

S/n	Area	Constituency	Sub-county	Population
1	Jevanjee	Starehe	Starehe	262,323
2	Kibra	Kibra	Kibra	185,777
3	BuruBuru	Embakasi West	Embakasi West	988,808
4	Githurui 44	Roysambu	Kasarani	262,352

To ensure that the respondents were within the target age bracket, the researcher made sure that those tasked with data collection clarified the nature of the research and the target

<sup>4</sup> Nairobi alone being among the top five counties with the highest youth registered followed by Kiambu, Nakuru, Kakamega and Mombasa respectively (The Youth Agenda, 2017).  
[Youth Participation 2017 General Election pgs.pdf \(youthagenda.org\)](#) and  
[Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission \(iebc.or.ke\)](#)

group. The researcher also stated this in the questionnaire while also asking the respondents to tick against the age bracket as specified.

### **3.6. The Sampling procedure and Sample Size**

Sampling refers to the selection of sub set of persons or things from a larger population, also known as sampling frame with the intention of representing the particular population. Kothari (2017) suggests that a sampling frame consists of a list of frame, which the sample is to be drawn. Kothari adds that this frame either is constructed by the researcher for the purpose of study or may consist of the population. A subset of a population is known as a sample (Kothari, 2014). Ngulube (2005:132) explains, “by studying the sample, it is possible to draw valid conclusions about the larger group”.

Sampling procedures involve defining the sampling techniques, the population, the instrumentation and procedures used to obtain the data (Powell & Connaway 2004). The sample size for the youth population was calculated using the formula below:

The study first used the Slovin’s formula taking the 95% confidence level to find the accessible sample for the administration of the questionnaires for the quantitative data.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

N = Target Population = 1,147,935 youth voters

e = 1 - 95 = 0.05 –(margin error)

Therefore;



$$n = 1,147,935 / 1 + 1,147,935 (0.05)^2$$

$$n = 1,147,935 / 2870.8375 = 399$$

The 0.05% margin of error was arrived at due to constraints of resources. This 0.05% margin will ensure that the reliability and generalizability of the research findings are guaranteed. The sample size of 399 is similarly adequate in helping to establish variations among the units of analysis (respondents) in the data analysis level.

To guarantee that the research attains 100% response rate to remain within the 0.05% margin of error, 400 questionnaires were administered. In the event that the respondents would exceed the 399, the statistical impact of this would be reducing the margin of error since it decreases with an increase in the sample size.

### **3.6.1. Probability and Non-Probability Sampling**

According to Kothari (2014), there are two kinds of sampling techniques, namely probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling refers to the sampling technique in which members of the population has a pre-specified and equal chance to be in a sample (Remenyi et al, 2014). This technique is based on the principle called randomization where the procedure is so designed, which warrants that each and every individual of the population has an equal opportunity. This reduces the possibility of biases and increases chances of objectivity (Kothari (2014, Remenyi et al, 2014).

Equally, in non-probability sampling, not all individuals in the sampling are given an equal opportunity but rather selection is based on the subjective judgment of the researcher/sampler. It is therefore subjective and biased in nature. Therefore, non-

probability sampling is conducted without such knowledge about the sample being representative of the overall population. Lastly, Teddlie and Yu (2007:77) submit that probability-sampling techniques are primarily used in quantitative studies while non-probability techniques are used in qualitative studies.

It is on this backdrop that the study engaged probability-sampling technique for the first phase of data collection. Precisely, individual youth members from the general population was randomly selected from the general population expected to have taken part in the general elections in Nairobi County. The sample was picked randomly from selected locations of (Kibra, Githurai 44, Buru Buru and City Centre at the Jeevanjee Garden) within Nairobi County. From each location a 100 youths were selected. The youths were approached and informed on the purpose of the study.

The researcher utilized non-probability technique to select Focus Group Discussion participants selected by using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling means sampling with a purpose in mind that there are one or more specific predetermined groups being targeted (Kumar, 2005:179). Kumar (2005:179) further explains that purposive, is established by “the judgment of the researcher as to who can deliver the best information to achieve the objectives of the study.

### **3.6. 2. Criteria Used to Choose Participants for Focus Group Discussions**

As outlined above, purposive sampling was used to qualify the respondents based on the following criteria: The respondent had to be a youth aged between 18 and 35 years who had participated in the 2013 or 2017 General elections and who use Facebook and Twitter for political purposes. The study excluded the youths that indicated they had not

participated in any of the two General Elections and those who do not use Facebook and Twitter for political purposes. It also included youth voters who had Android phones that had freely installed apps of Twitter and Facebook. The youth voters accessed in various localities that include Kibra, Githurai, Buru Buru and City Centre at the Jeevanjee Gardens.

During the administration of the questionnaires, the most politically active youths and the youth leaders were identified. The researcher and the research assistant then requested this group on their willingness to participate in Focus Group Discussions. As noted by Guest, Namaely and Mckenna (2017), eight to twelve participants in Focus Group Discussions are adequate to bring out prevalent issues on the themes explored.

### **3.7. Data Collection Instruments**

Data collection refers to gathering specific information aimed at proving or refuting some facts (Kombo & Tromp 2006: 99). The study employed explanatory sequence design which consists of first collecting quantitative data and then collecting qualitative data to help explain or elaborate on the quantitative results (Clark , 2011) . The quantitative results inform the participants to be purposefully selected for the qualitative and the type of questions that will be asked of the participants.

The justification for choosing this approach is that the quantitative data and results provided the general picture of the problem, and more analysis was required specifically through qualitative collection was needed to refine, extend or explain the general picture (Clark, 2011). A predictable procedure therefore, involved collecting survey data in the first phase, analyse the data and then following up with qualitative interviews to help explain the survey responses.

There are many ways of collecting data and these depend on the purpose and aims of the research. This study collected data by means of questionnaires, Focus Groups Discussions and interviews.

### **3.7.1. Questionnaires**

The research study first used the research questionnaires, which had four sections. Questionnaires were made up of closed ended questionnaires, which were first administered to selected youth voters to gather quantitative data. The questionnaires included questions on influence of Facebook and Twitter on political participation, voting patterns and voter turnout among the youth voters.

The questionnaires were considered suitable because it permitted the respondents to complete them at a convenient time before the agreed deadline, and are easy and quick to answer. The main attraction of using closed ended questionnaires was because data was quickly coded, entered and less costly to analyse. In addition, the researcher had the ability to collect large amounts of data in a relatively short time (Kothari 2004:103).

Furthermore, when the content of the questions is believed to be threatening, the truthfulness of the self-report is compromised. In this case, there was concern that the respondents would not report accurately for fear of exposing themselves to censure on the use of the internet more especially on the social media and its applications. To reduce the effect of these limitations, the researcher adopted a strategy of distributing the questionnaire in person and with help of research assistants. The researcher engaged three research assistants to collect data. The three were university graduates, who were trained before engaging in the data collection process.

### **3.7.2. Focus Group Discussion**

To obtain qualitative data the study conducted three focus group discussions to explore further thematic issues. Focus Group Discussion involves gathering people from similar background or experiences together to discuss a specific topic of interest, which is led, by a moderator or interviewer (Baral, Uprety & Lamichhune, 2016). Questions are asked about beliefs, opinions, attitudes or perceptions (Baral, Uprety & Lamichhune, 2016).

The researcher chose to use Focus Group Discussion because it is a qualitative method to gain a depth understanding of social issues. Further, the FGDs were structured and directed but also expressive, hence yielded a lot of information in relatively short time (Baral, Uprety & Lamichhune, 2016). The FGDs is also a good way to gather depth information about youth or community's thoughts and opinions on a given topic. In addition, the researcher easily encouraged the respondents who were active to not only express their opinions but also responded to other member's questions posed by the moderator. This offered a depth, distinction and variety to the discussion that was not available in the survey.

The aim was to obtain data from purposively selected individuals rather than representative sample of a broader population. The use of questionnaires, interviews and Focus Groups Discussions enabled the researcher to obtain convincing and credible information to meet the study objectives.

### **3.7.3. Interviews**

In order for the researcher to generate information in the Focus Group Discussion and to seek an understanding of how online activities on Facebook and Twitter influence offline

decisions related to politics and voting , interviews were also used to collect data for qualitative data (**Appendix II**). The researcher adopted interviews because it involves one on-one verbal interaction between the researcher and the respondent (s) (Kumar 2015; Kothari 2014). This enabled the researcher to explore, in depth information collected from other election methods.

During the interviews, the respondents had the chance to think about their own experiences and choices as well as offering the researcher chance to investigate participant's answers. In addition, the researcher considered interviews as a means of collecting data because it was relatively economical to the researcher in terms of time and resources given that in this study both time resources were limited an essence (Silverman, 2016). The structured interview with open-ended questions were employed. The youth who were active in politics in their respective locations and youth leaders were the respondents that were interviewed in the FGDs. This group were knowledgeable of both the politics and conversant with their jurisdictions.

### **3.8. Data Collection Procedure**

Jointly, primary and secondary sources of data were used. The former was gotten from the field research that was carried out. This is after obtaining a data collection authorization letter from Moi University to allow the data collection and a NACOSTI permit (**Appendix IV**). This included the collection of the qualitative and quantitative data using questionnaires. This was organised in a logical manner to ensure that the objectives suggested out were attained.

Primary data focused on gender background, Facebook and Twitter usage influence on political participation, social media influence on voting decisions, social media on voting patterns and how voter's online patterns shape their offline voting behaviour. This data was collected between February 2019 and April 2019. Secondary data was collected by studying published scholarly books and articles. It also entailed a review of policy documents on the youth produced by the government and other stakeholders and was done with a view of capturing literature concentrating on participation in political processes exactly that of the youth .

### **3.9. Validity**

This involves the integrity of conclusions that are generated from research work (Bryman, 2012). It can also denote to the degree to which differences found in a measuring instrument exhibit true differences among those being tested (Kothari, 2004) or as that degree of correspondence between the measure and that idea it is thought to measure (Johnson, Reynolds, & Mycoff, 2016). Validity has different dimensions as used in research and the study pursued to realize validity in the following means;

#### **3.9.1. Internal and External Validity**

Internal validity is concerned with whether the independent variable causes the expected corresponding change in the dependent variable while external validity is concerned with generalizability of the study results (Yang & Miller, 2008). External validity was achieved by ensuring right sampling methods are employed and randomly selected respondents to eliminate selection bias while internal validity was achieved by adopting impartiality in

the data collection process by ensuring all youth had a probability of being sampled, interpretation and analysis of data collected.

### **3.9.2. Face Validity**

This is concerned with the quality of a measuring indicator being a reasonable measure of the variables under study (Babbie, 2016) or appearing to measure that concept it's supposed to measure (Johnson, Reynolds, & Mycoff, 2016). Subsequently, this cannot be measured empirically; face validity was attained by having the data collection instrument depict the fundamental indicators of Facebook and Twitter on youth political participation, Facebook and Twitter influence voting decisions and voting patterns that captured the tenets indicators for political standing and activities

### **3.9.3. Content Validity**

This is in reference to the degree to which a measure covers the series of meanings included in an idea (Babbie, 2016). In this study, the measure for Facebook and Twitter has included both the internal and external dimensions of the concept while participation in political processes indicators covered both the conventional and conventional dimensions.

### **3.9.4. Criterion Validity**

This denotes to the extent to which a measure relates to some external criterion (Babbie, 2016) and has projecting and concurrent dimensions. Predictive validity is attained when the measure created for predictive purposes reasonably predicts what is going to happen while concurrent focuses on testing the measure against existing measures of the concept (Robbins, 2009). The study predicted that there exists a positive influence on dialogue and



interactions through Facebook and Twitter whether it is online or offline activities on participation in political processes of the youth.

### **3.9.5. Construct Validity**

This denotes to how the measuring indicators relate back to the general theories being tested (Yang & Miller, 2008) or as the degree to which a measure relates back to other variables as expected within a given system of theoretical relationships (Babbie, 2016). In this study, the usage of Twitter and Facebook to engage in dialogue both online and offline is expected to translate to greater political participation. The data collection instrument was devised in a manner that ensured it captured the tenets intended to be measured and avoid researcher bias.

### **3.10. Reliability of the Study**

This is a measure of the research instrument being able to deliver results that are consistent and trustworthy (Kothari, 2004). To ensure the study findings are reliable, the researcher used a uniform questionnaire and FGDS interview guide that was administered to all the respondents. The questionnaire and interview guide was also fashioned using straightforward English for the respondents to have like understanding of the questions. The consistency and uniformity of the test results that was a creation of this study was used to guarantee the reliability.

### **3.11. Data Analysis Strategy**

Data analysis entails examining, categorizing, tabulating or otherwise recombining the evidence to address the initial propositions of the study. The study analysed the data using

quantitative and qualitative techniques. The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires was coded and entered using the Statistical Product for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23. The SPSS was used to analyze the quantitative data by generating descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentage, mean and standard deviation.

Qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis based on the study research questions. During the Focus Group Discussions, the researcher with the help of research assistants kept notes on the discussions based on the key issues, which were being investigated. These notes formed the basis for the thematic analysis of the qualitative data. Humphreys, Gill and Krishnamurthy (2014) used the same approach and indicated its appropriateness when studying social media platforms as it provided rich information. The researcher took notes from the open-ended questions from the Focus Group Discussions. The qualitative data was used to explain the issues that were not clear about the closed questions as well as reinforce the quantitative data.

### **3.12. Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations are fundamental part of any research activity. To guarantee this credibility is observed. The research did not include the use of experiments that may be destructive to individual respondents as the subject of the research. The researcher also explained at the beginning of the research task that the study is only for scholarly purposes before administering the questionnaires. The researcher also ensured the confidentiality of the respondents to ensure they provide the information sought without fear of suffering from unplanned consequences.

Most importantly, consent of all participants was sought prior to their involvement in the study. The potential participants were provided with adequate information about the study ahead of time before asked to take part. A consent letter was prepared and only those who give consent were able to complete the questionnaires. The respondents' participation was voluntary without any coercion and the respondents allowed to opt out at any stage of the research.

The researcher requested consent to the potential respondent before administering the questionnaire and holding the focus group discussions. The researcher informed the participants in Focus Group Discussions that they would not be audio or video recorded.

#### **3.12.1. Data Collection Authorization Letter**

After the study was successfully defended, a data collection authorization letter was obtained from Moi University. The letter stated the purposes of the study and explained why the respondents were selected. The letter also assured the respondents that the data collected would be used for academic purposes only.

#### **3.12.2. Research Permit**

The field study was approved by Kenya's National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and issued with a research clearance permit number NACOSTI/P/19/66866/28337 for the period ending 21<sup>st</sup> February 2020. The research permit confined the study to the County of Nairobi.

### **3.13. Summary of Chapter Three**

This chapter discusses the methodology applied to conduct the study. The areas discussed included the research design, the study area, population of the study and the sampling procedures. The chapter has also provided the data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, trustworthiness and the ethical considerations adhered to in the duration of the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the results and discussions of the study after exploring how respondents responded to questions on how Facebook and Twitter influences youth voters' participation in political processes in Nairobi County. The study sought to answer the following questions: What was the influence of Facebook and Twitter on youth voters' participation in political processes in Nairobi County?; How does Facebook and Twitter influence voting decisions among youth voters' in Nairobi County?; and how does online voter activity shape the offline voting behaviour of youth voters in Nairobi County?

This chapter presents data presentation, analysis and interpretations of the results as guided by the the research questions. The responses obtained from the respondents were analysed using quantitative approaches while those from key Focus Groups Discussions were analysed using qualitative methods. The quantitative data was analysed using SPSS Version and Microsoft Excel programs. Descriptive statistics were generated including frequencies, percentages.

The Focus Group Discussions participants were given codes, which are attributed to the direct quotes explaining various issues in the findings. The participants in the Jeevanjee Gardens FGD were conducted on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2019 and given codes JVG1 –JVG12. The participants in Githurai 44 FGD were conducted on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June , 2019 and given codes GIT1- GIT9 while the participants in Kibra Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2019 were assigned codes ranging from KIB1-KIB11.

## 4.2. Response Rate

The response rate is the percentage of questionnaires returned out of the total sample. Four hundred questionnaires were distributed to the respondents and three hundred and sixty-three were returned, which were satisfactorily filled for use in the study. This translated into a response rate of 90.75% as shown in Table 4.1. According to Mugenda (2008), a response rate of more than 50% is acceptable to a descriptive study. In view of this research thesis, the rate of 90.75% is considered adequate for the analysis, discussion, and reporting.

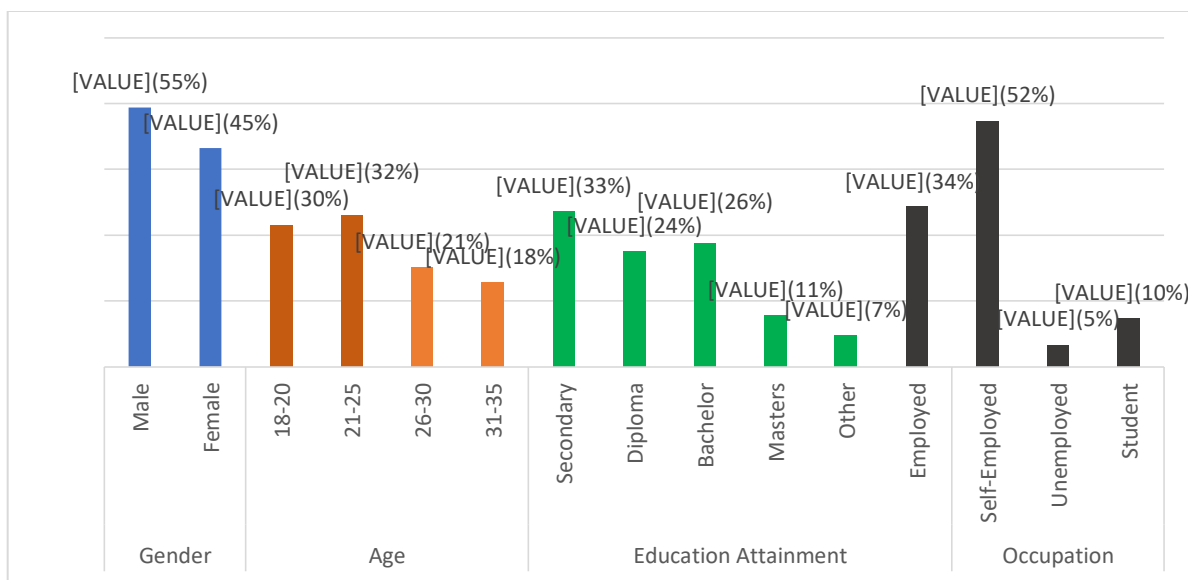
**Table 4.1: Response Rate**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Satisfactorily Filled	363	90.75%
Unsatisfactorily Filled	37	9.25%
Total	400	100%

Source: Field Data (2019)

## 4.3. Background Information

This section provides the demographic information of the respondents to the study. The background information included the respondent's gender, age, experience and academic qualification at recruitment and currently.



**Figure 4.1: Background Information of the Respondents Source: Field Data (2019).**

As shown in figure 4.1, the surveyed voters were fairly distributed across both genders where male formed 197 (55.3%) of the respondents, while 166 (45.7%) were female. This indicates that the data and the findings do not have gender bias as the researcher obtained representative views from both genders. The results show that the age of the youth voters sampled is evenly distributed as 115(32%) were aged between 21 and 25 years; those aged between 18 and 20 years were 108 (30%) of the surveyed voters; those between 26 and 30 years were 76 (21%) while those aged between 31 and 35 years were 64 (18%) of the voters surveyed. The results show that the youth voters were well represented across the age ranges of 18 to 35 years.

The results also show that 118 (33%) of the surveyed voters had attained secondary school level of education; 94 (26%) of the surveyed voters had attained a bachelor's degree; 88 (24%) had diploma as their highest level of education; 39 (11%) had a master's degree and 24 (7%) had attained other levels such as postgraduate level of schooling. The results

indicated that the surveyed had satisfactory academic qualification, which enabled them to respond satisfactorily to the research questions on the use of social media and their voting decisions. With regard to occupation of the respondents, the findings indicate that the majority 187 (52%) of the surveyed voters were self-employed; 122 (34%) indicated that they were employed; 37 (10 %) were students while 17 (5%) indicated that they were unemployed. This implies that the information obtained is representative of youth voters across their varied occupations.

#### **4.4. Facebook and Twitter Usage Influence on Political Participation**

The study sought to answer three research questions; the first research question sought to find out the influence of Facebook and Twitter on youth voters participation in political processes in Nairobi County. Several questions were posed as questionnaire administration in a bid to answer this question. The first question sought to find out the prevalence of Facebook, twitter and usage.

##### **4.4.1. The Most Used Social Media**

**Table 4.2: Social Media Accounts Used**

<b>Social Media Account</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Facebook	363	100
Twitter	363	100
Instagram	37	10.2
Google Plus	-	-

**Source: Field Data (2019)**



The results show that all the respondents (100%) were using Facebook and Twitter. On the other hand, 10.2% indicated that they were using Instagram as a social media tool. The study made a follow up on the most used social media account used by the respondents.

**Table 4.3: Most Used Social Media Account**

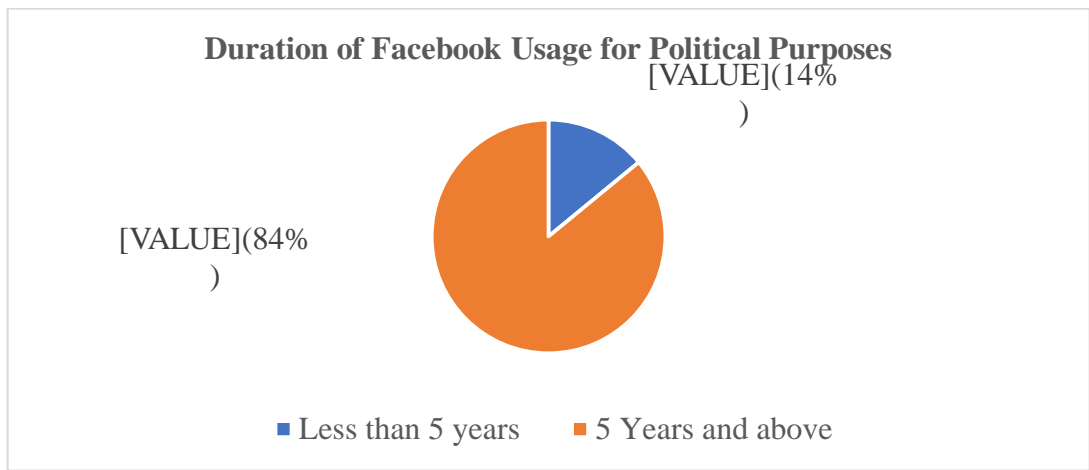
<b>Social Media Account</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Facebook	254	70
Twitter	106	29
Instagram	3	1
Google Plus	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Field Data (2019)**

The results from Table 4.3 show that Facebook is the most widely used social media account as indicated by 254 (70%) of the respondents; Twitter was the second most widely used social media account as indicated by 106 (29%) followed while 3 (1%) indicated that they are heavy users of Instagram. The focus group discussions participants indicated that Facebook and Twitter were widely used for interactions and this was because their friends had these accounts unlike in the case of Instagram where only a few people within their circles were using Instagram for interactions about entertainment events and fashion.

The study then moved to asking the respondents whether they use Facebook for political purposes and all the respondents were affirmative, which prompted the question on the duration the respondents have used Facebook platform for political purposes.

#### 4.4.2. Duration of Facebook Usage for Political Purpose

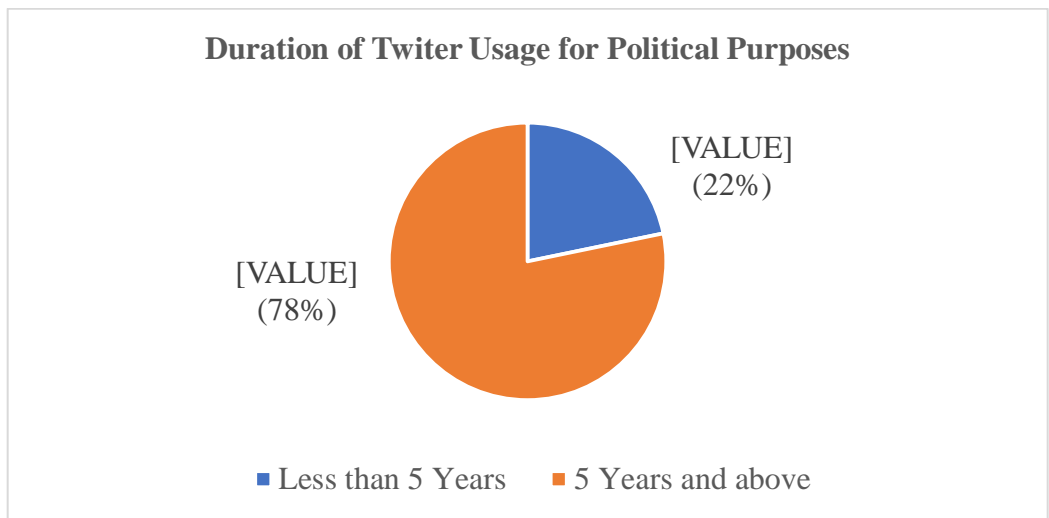


**Figure 4.2: Duration of Facebook Usage for Political Purpose**

**Source: Field Data (2019)**

The results from Figure 4.2 show that 312 ( 84% ) of the respondents indicated that they had used Facebook for political purposes for over five years while 51 (14%) indicated that they had used Facebook for less than five years.

#### 4.4.3. Duration of Twitter Usage for Political Purpose



**Figure 4.3: Duration of Twitter Usage for Political Purpose**

**Source: Field Data (2019)**

The study sought from the respondents how they use Twitter for political purposes and all the respondents were affirmative, which prompted the question on the duration the respondents have Twitter platform usage for political purposes. The results from Figure 4.3 show that 284 (78% ) of the respondents indicated that they had used Twitter for political purposes for over five years while 79 (22 %) indicated that they had used Twitter for less than five years.

#### **4.4. 4. Frequency of Social Media Account Usage**

The study sought to understand the frequency of the respondents' social media usage for political purposes. Results in Table 4.4 shows that most of the respondents were using Facebook and Twitter; while most were using the social media accounts on a weekly and daily basis as shown by 178 (49%) and 125 (34 %) of the respondents. Thirteen percent of the respondents indicated that they used social media for political purposes monthly while the rest 14 (4%) indicated that they used social media politically daily. The results show that the respondents were majorly using Facebook and Twitter social media accounts for political activities.

**Table 4.4: Frequency of Social Media Account Usage**

<b>Social Media Account</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Hourly	14	4
Daily	125	34
Weekly	178	49
Monthly	46	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Field Data (2019)**

#### 4.5.5. Nature of Political social Media Usage

**Table 4.5: Nature of Political Social Media Usage**

<b>Social Media Account</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Listener	114	31
Active participants	230	63
Spammer	3	1
Troll	16	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Field Data (2019)**

The study then inquired on how the respondents described their social media usage for political interactions and activities. The results from Table 4.5 show that majority 230 (63%) of the respondents deemed themselves as active participants when using social media for political purposes. 114 (31%) of the respondents indicated that they were more listeners; 16 ( 4% ) indicated that they used social media politically as trolls while (1%) admitted that they were spammers.

#### 4.4.6. Political Activities on Social Media

**Table 4.6: Political Activities on Social Media**

<b>Social Media Account</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Posting comments /replies	356	98
Posting photos and videos	230	63
Tagging others on posts and comments	318	88
Starting or joining political groups/pages	83	23
Contributing to political groups/pages	363	100
To access current news on politicians and political activities	271	75
Watching live streaming of political events	27	7

**Source: Field Data (2019)**

#### 4.4.7. Social Media Influence on Political Participation

**Table 4.7: Social Media Influence on Political Participation**

Political participation	Scale Rating					
	0	1	2	3	4	5
Notification about political rallies	53%	30%	9%	4%	6%	2%
Reminders about political rallies	54%	33%	2%	1%	7%	3%
Discussion on the political parties manifestoes	8%	5%	18%	19%	16%	34%
Discussion on the candidates manifestoes	12%	15%	18%	36%	13%	6%
Discussions on national political current affairs	0%	3%	5%	6%	39%	47%
Discussions on global political current affairs	0%	14%	25%	57	3%	1%

**Source: Field Data (2019)**

To ascertain the influence of social media on political participation the study used Likert scale where the respondents were asked to rate a list of given items. The Likert scale was given where: 0 = Not at all; 1 = To a very little extent; 2 = To a little extent; 3 = To a moderate extent; 4 = To a great extent; and 5 = To a very great extent.

Percentages were used to interpret the data. On one hand, the scores for ‘To a very little extent’ and ‘little extent’ were combined and were interpreted to mean negligible role of social media on public participation. The scores for ‘To a great extent’ and 5 = ‘To a very great extent’ were interpreted as showing significant notable influence of social media on political participation. The scores for ‘not at all’ and moderate extent were taken, as they were to mean inexistence of the issue and modest extent. The margin for conclusion was taken as 50%.

Based on the findings provided above, the results of Table 4.7 show that the respondents were not notified on social media and reminded about political rallies as indicated by 53% and 54% of the respondents. There were mixed reactions on whether the nature of discussions on personal candidates manifestoes as 12% of the respondents indicating non-engagements on the issue; 33% of the respondents indicating engagements only to a negligible scale; 36% indicating moderate engagements and 19% indicating the held engagements on candidates manifestoes to a notable extent. There were notable discussions on national political current affairs as indicated by 86% of the respondents. There were moderate discussions on global political current affairs as indicated by 57% of the respondents. Around 10% of the respondents also indicated other ways through which they participate politically through social by direct chatting with family and friends through personal messages/inboxes.

#### **4.5. How does Facebook and Twitter influence voting decisions among youth voters in Nairobi County?**

The study's second question sought to answer the question about how Facebook and Twitter influence voting decisions including voter turnout and voting patterns among youth voters in Nairobi County. A list of issues related to Facebook and the respondents on scale rated Twitter use role on voter turnout similar to the one in Table 4.7. The interpretation followed the same approach.

#### 4.5.1. Social Media Influence on Voter Turnout

**Table 4.8: Social Media Influence on Voter Turnout**

Social Media and Voters Turnout	Scale Rating					
	0	1	2	3	4	5
Notification on your polling stations opening time	0%	6%	11%	13%	33%	37%
News on problems in opening a polling station	0%	0%	0%	4%	38%	58%
Calls to get out and vote on social media	0%	0%	0%	13%	31%	54%
Messages of ridicule to those who have not yet voted	15%	39%	13%	14%	12%	7%
News on violent incidences during voting at your polling station	64%	19%	14%	9%	6%	2%
News on violent incidences during voting at other polling stations	58%	17%	11%	8%	6%	0%
Threats of violence for voting	73%	26%	1%	0%	0%	0%
News on voting progress in other areas	0%	0%	0%	16%	61%	23%

**Source: Field Data (2019)**

The results of Table 4.8 showed that Facebook and Twitter were notably used to notify youth voters on polling stations opening time as indicated by 70% of the respondents. The youth voters also heavily relied on Facebook and Twitter for news on problems in opening polling stations as indicated by 96% of the respondents. There were significant calls to get out and vote by social media as indicated by 85% of the respondents. There were limited messages ridiculing those who had not yet voted as indicated by 52% of the respondents. There were no news on violent incidences of voting by the surveyed respondents' polling station and in other polling stations during voting as indicated by 64% and 58% of the respondents. Threats to violence did also not manifest on Facebook and Twitter because of respondents voting as indicated by 73% of the respondents. The results however show that

there was notable news on voting progress accessed Facebook and Twitter as indicated by 84% of the respondents.

The study also sought to understand the influence of social media on voting patterns of youth voters in Nairobi. To this end, a list of items listing issues showing a link between social media used and voting patterns was presented for rating to the respondents. The scale, interpretations approach similar to the ones used in Table 4.7, 4.8 were applied, and the results presented in Table 4.9.

#### 4.9.2. Social Media Influence on Voting Patterns

**Table 4.9: Social Media Influence on Voting Patterns**

Social Media and Voting Patterns	Rating Score					
	0	1	2	3	4	5
Constant campaign updates by specific candidates and their followers	0%	0%	0%	0%	47%	53%
Lack of constant campaign updates by specific candidates and their followers	17%	10%	15%	23%	19%	16%
Biased post and comments on certain candidate(s)	0%	0%	4%	14%	47%	35%
Paid adverts by political aspirants	0%	1%	14%	5%	49%	31%
Paid adverts by political parties	2%	1%	4%	3%	51%	39%
Opinion polls on Facebook and Twitter	0%	0%	3%	0%	62%	35%
Sharing of marked ballots in favour of certain candidates	16%	28%	9%	17%	12%	18%
Early reports of polling results	0%	0%	3%	0%	62%	35%
Threats of violence for voting	75%	16%	3%	4%	2%	0%
Threats of violence for not voting	61%	17%	0%	2%	9%	0%

**Source: Field Data (2019)**



Constant campaign updates by specific candidates and their followers was found to be notably manifest and thus likely to influence voting patterns as indicated by all the respondents.

There were mixed reaction to the extent to which lack of constant campaign updates by specific candidates and their followers would influence voting patterns as indicated by 17% of the respondents that indicated it was impossible; 25% who indicated negligible influence; 23% who indicated moderate influence and 35% who indicated that there was notable influence of this issue on voting patterns. Biased post and comments on certain candidate(s) were found to have a notable influence on voting patterns as indicated by 82% of the respondents. Paid adverts by political aspirants and the political parties as played a key role in voting patterns as confirmed by 80% of the respondents.

Opinion polls on Facebook and Twitter had a significant role towards voting patterns as confirmed by 97% of responses respectively. There were mixed reaction to the extent to which sharing among marked ballots in favour of certain candidates does influence voting patterns as indicated by 16% of the respondents that indicated it was impossible; 37% who indicated negligible influence; 17% who indicated moderate influence and 30% who indicated that there was notable influence of this issue on voting patterns. Early reports on polling results were found to determine voting patterns as confirmed by 97% of responses. Threats from violence for voting and for not voting were found not to influence voting patterns as indicated by 91% and 77% of the responses respectively.

#### **4.6. How Voter's Online Activities Shape Their Offline Voting Behaviour**

The third research question which this study answered was about the circumstance under which voters' online activities shape the offline voting behaviours. Three Focus Group Discussions were conducted and the participants presented their views on how their online activities as voters shape their real voting experiences. This section presents an analysis of the key themes, which emerged from the Focus Group Discussions. The FGDs were essential as they provided qualitative data that explained the issues that were not captured in the closed questions, and further reinforced the quantitative data.

The first subject that was discussed in focus groups was about usage of Facebook and Twitter in the everyday life of participants. The participants indicated that Facebook and Twitter have become a key aspect of their lives as it enables them keep track of their friends and the world at large on many issues. The participants noted that politics is quite a dominant feature of their Facebook and Twitter experiences. The participants noted when they log in to Facebook and Twitter; they usually get newsfeeds and discussions from politicians, media houses, bloggers and their friends on political happenings. It also emerged that people get directed to Facebook and Twitter for political information by friends with phone calls or during physical meetings. One participant (JEV) opined:

“It is common to get calls telling me to check my Facebook about a certain candidate am interested in. This also happens when we meet in the streets and we start discussing what has been posted online by the politicians, bloggers and or my friends regarding current hot topic, elections, the candidates or the voting process.”

This statement aptly captures how online activity of voters can, does shape their offline activities, and stretches the argument further by showing how the reverse takes place. Other participants (GIT4, GIT7, JEV3, KIB1, KIB2 and KIB5) shared the similar sentiments.

The participants further indicated that the vast information available on Facebook and Twitter on political issues and the political aspirants influences their voting behavior. Some of the participants for instance indicated that their passion for attending political rallies especially at Uhuru park and Kasarani were largely due to Facebook and Twitter. The participants indicated that Facebook and Twitter influenced them in attending the rallies, as those who arrive early in these rallies usually post photos of themselves showing the lively atmosphere. The participants also indicated that posts and comments about such rallies on Facebook and Twitter are also able to offer an assurance of security situation. One of the participants (JEV1) indicated that;

“Because of my passion in politics, when I see people post pictures of the crowds in political rallies, am carried away by that euphoria especially when it involves the political party that I support. When I see photos of people in the rally trending on Facebook or Twitter, am encouraged to attend that political rally if it’s within Nairobi”.

During the voting day(s), the participants observed that Facebook and Twitter played a determining role as they put pressure on people to go out and vote with ‘online registers’ being marked by people showing the voting queues and for those showing their inked fingers and marked ballots. It was notable that this happens despite the election laws forbidding showing of marked ballots. One of the participants (GIT8) indicated that:

“In the last election (2017), I had decided not to go and vote. But after seeing most of my friends taking photos while on queues, and others showing inked fingers after voting, I didn’t want to be left out and I decided to go and vote later in the day.

My friends' posts on Facebook made me go and vote, even though I had decided I will not go".

Some participants indicated that early results influenced on whether they would turn up to vote especially when they were tied up in working during the voting day. These participants indicated that if the early results showed their preferred candidate by a large they tended not to vote but if the results showed a tight race they did all they could to vote before the closing of the polls. It was thus evident from the Focus Group Discussions that the influence of online activities on Twitter and Facebook was manifest in the offline voting behaviours of youthful voters in Nairobi County.

In explaining the types of social media users, several reactions were obtained from the participants in the Focus Group Discussions. One of the participants in the Jevanjee FGD also indicated that the youths were not only recipients of the social media political campaigns but that they were actively in setting up the Facebook pages for the politicians as well as managing the accounts.

"I have been active in various social media campaigns by the politicians. From setting up their websites, designing posters for online and physical use to posting daily on their platforms. These days, youths are also streaming the live events of the politician's meetings and rallies." (JEV3).

These sentiments were shared by other participants including JEV7, KIB2, KIB6, GIT1 and GIT 9 who indicated that they were actively helping political players run their Facebook pages and by posting on their personal Facebook and Twitter pages. When probed on what was the motivation for their active participation in running politicians' Facebook pages and posting on their personal pages, the participants indicated that it was due to passion, personal satisfaction, favor as well as monetary consideration.

“I feel good when my post is liked by many people. It feels very good. You wake up and find people have been discussing your post overnight. It is quite satisfying.”KIB6.

“Whenever my post gets trending, I get a call from my boss and an M-Pesa message follows. It gets me really fired up to post more messages.” (GIT7, KIB3, JEV11 and JEV12).

The participants also explained that trolling was prevalent especially from supporters of political competitors and rival. According to the participants, the trolls can be irritating but sometimes they provoke the social media users on looking at different perspectives.

“I get very irritated by trolls. They are some known trolls who will change the topic by unnecessary topics and arguments. Others just want to make people angry. Wanaudhi kweli (Very annoying!)” JEV1.

Some of the participants also accepted that they also trolled their political rivals.

“I also enjoy trolling my political rival and see their reactions. At times my trolling comment gets more attention than the main posting especially in the popular pages such as those of national newspaper, TV stations and the national political leaders.” (KIB7)

The study then inquired on how the respondents used social media politically and the results from Table4.6 show that contributing on political groups/pages posting comments in addition to tagging others on posts and commentswere the most widely undertaken political activities on social media.

#### **4.5. Interpretation and Discussion of Findings**

The first research question of the study sought to establish the influence of Facebook and Twitter on youth voters’ participation in political processes in Nairobi County. The first research question was based on Adaptive Structuration Theory that focuses on the role played by internet accessibility and ICT tools in understanding youth participation in

political activities. The internet and resources tenets used in the study were education level, time and social media –Facebook and Twitter.

The study found that education level is absolutely linked with participation in political processes of the youth, which corresponds between education level and specific activities of political participation indicating ‘a very great extent’. This was reinforced with the reviewed literature and theory that connects youth with relatively moderate high education status with moderately high levels of participation. The influence was statistically significant was 32.5% and 25.9 % respectively.

In relations to time, the study founded that there is existence of usage of both Facebook and Twitter on daily, weekly or monthly. There is therefore relationship between time and specific types of political activities. Youth who tend to create or have more time to follow up on political progress in the county were found to be the most active. This study agrees with the theory and literature that envisages those who have more time to follow up on political progress were most likely to participate in political activities.

The theory and reviewed literature also highlighted on the role played by social media in influencing participation in political processes among individuals especially in activities that require utilization of social media over time by youth. The theory hypothesizes how these resources in terms of feedback and rules develop and change because of the communication activity that takes place within the group in decision-making. The findings have reinforced the theory’s perspective that ICT tools such as Twitter and Facebook have altered the socialisation between voters and the politicians. In furtherance to the adaptive

structuration theory, Facebook and Twitter usage have also enhanced efficiency in political communication among varied players.

The study's second question was to investigate the influence of Facebook and Twitter among youth voters' participation on political processes in Nairobi County. The second question was anchored on Dialogic Theory which focuses on the role dialogue factors unique to youth shaped voting patterns and voting turnout. The tenets were considered; Risk and trust. Further, from the reviewed literature and theory there are convincing circumstances under which voters' online activities shape their offline political and voting decisions. An interesting observation was made, where it was found that offline activities also led to online activities by youth voters, which in turn influence voting related decisions. This cyclical influence was in line with the Dialogic Theory as applied by Carim and Warwick (2013), who held that interactions in the social media dialogues are inextricably related to offline activities.

When it came to social media usage on online and offline activities, the findings reinforced the theoretical assumptions and literature that associated the level of trust with social media involvement. The study found that those youth who were active participants were more active online across the different social media platforms in political participation activities in providing feedback. This encourages vulnerability of youth to risks in the use of Facebook and Twitter. The association was also statistically significant at 98%. However, this finding is not unique as a positive relationship was also seen in a study conducted Zaheer (2016) who studied the link between online and offline political participation is also explained by who found that social media use among Punjab University students have been

pivotal in changing the perceptions of youths towards politics and thus more active participation.

#### **4.6. Summary of Chapter Four**

The chapter presents the results and discussions of the study after exploring how respondents responded to the questions through analysing the respondent rate and gender. It presents data analysis and interpretations of the results and discusses how voter's online activities shape their offline voting behaviour by highlighting some of the phrases written in the Facebook and twitter platforms.

This chapter provides information on the influence of Facebook and twitter on youth voters' political participation in Nairobi County and the voter turnout patterns with the circumstances which the voter/s online activity shape their offline behaviour regarding to voting. Chapter Five sums up the finding, conclusions and gives the recommendations of the influence of Facebook and twitter on youth voter's political participation and voter turnout in Nairobi County.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY OF FUNDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

The principal purpose of this study was to find out the influence of Facebook and Twitter on youth voters' participation in political processes in Nairobi County. To achieve that goal, it became necessary to reach some principal goals. The research sought to establish influence of Facebook and Twitter on youth voters' participation in political processes in Nairobi County. The research also strived to find out the influence of Facebook and twitter on voting decisions among youth voters' in Nairobi County. Related to that, it was important to examine how online activity shapes the offline voting behavior of youth voters' in Nairobi County. Once these essential steps were realized, this research was able to go forward. This chapter presents the, summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations that resulted from this study.

#### **5.2. Summary of the Findings**

As stated above, the study sought to find out the influence of Facebook and Twitter on youth voters' participation in political processes in Nairobi County. The research questions for the study were devised and drawn from the objectives. It adopted a mixed method research design, espoused qualitative and quantitative research methods. The research used questionnaires and Focus Group Discussions to collect data. The researcher also distributed 400 questionnaires to research participants.

Quantitative data collected was then coded and entered in Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The results were analyzed and presented to represent the actual situation on the ground. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis based on the study research and questions. The summary and conclusions were derived from the findings of the study.

As a result, the use of the survey instrument was developed for this study, data was collected which tackled the research problems posed in the first chapter of this dissertation. The key empirical findings are chapter specific and were summarized within the corresponding empirical chapters (Chapter 4). This portion synthesized the empirical findings to answer the study's three research questions.

#### **What was the influence of Facebook and Twitter on youth voters' political participation in Nairobi County?**

The research findings in chapter 4 indicated that Facebook and Twitter were notably used to notify youth voters on polling stations opening time as indicated by of the respondents. The youth voters also heavily relied on Facebook and Twitter for news on problems in opening polling stations as indicated by the respondents. There were significant calls to get out and vote by social media as indicated by 85% of the respondents.

There were limited messages ridiculing those who had not yet voted as indicated by 52% of the respondents. There was no news on violent incidences of voting by the surveyed respondents' polling station and in other polling stations during voting as indicated by 64% and 58% of the respondents. Threats from violence did also not manifest on Facebook and Twitter because of respondents voting as indicated by 73% of the respondents. The results

however show that there was notable news on voting progress accessed Facebook and Twitter as indicated by 84% of the respondents.

The study further found that constant campaign updates by specific candidates and their followers was found to be notably manifest and thus likely to influence voting patterns as indicated by all the respondents. There were mixed reactions to the extent to which lack of constant campaign updates by specific candidates and their followers would influence voting patterns as indicated by 17% of the respondents who indicated it was impossible; 25% that indicated negligible influence 23% who indicated moderate influence and 35% who indicated that there was notable influence of this issue on voting patterns. Biased post and comments on certain candidate(s) were found to have a notable influence on voting patterns as indicated by 82% of the respondents. Paid adverts by political aspirants and the political parties played a key role in voting patterns as confirmed by 80% of the respondents.

### **How does Facebook and Twitter Influence Voting Decisions among Youth Voters in Nairobi County?**

From the findings, it emerged that opinion polls on Facebook and Twitter had a significant role towards voting patterns as confirmed by 97% of responses respectively. There were mixed reactions to the extent to which sharing with marked ballots in favor of certain candidates does influence voting patterns as indicated by 16% of the respondents that indicated it was impossible; 37% who indicated negligible influence; 17% who indicated moderate influence and 30% who indicated that there was notable influence of this issue on voting patterns. Early reports on polling results were found to determine voting patterns as

confirmed by 97% of responses. Threats to violence for voting and for not voting were found not to influence voting patterns as indicated by 91% and 77% of the responses respectively.

**How does voter's online activity shape the offline behavior voting of youth voters in Nairobi County?**

Finally, from the findings it emerged that participants indicated that Facebook and Twitter have become a key aspect of their lives as it enables them keep track of their friends and the world at large on many issues. The participants noted that politics are quite a dominant feature of their Facebook and Twitter experiences. The participants noted when they log in to Facebook and Twitter; they usually get news feeds and discussions from politicians, media houses, bloggers and their friends on political happenings. It also emerged that people get directed to Facebook and Twitter for political information by friends with phone calls or during physical meetings.

The participants further indicated that the vast information available on Facebook and Twitter on political issues and the political aspirants influences their voting behavior. Some of the participants for instance indicated that their passion for attending political rallies especially at Uhuru park and Kasarani were largely due to Facebook and Twitter. The participants indicated that Facebook and Twitter influenced them in attending the rallies, as those who arrive early in these rallies usually post photos of themselves showing the lively atmosphere. The participants also indicated that posts and comments about such rallies on Facebook and Twitter are also able to offer an assurance of security situation.

During the voting day(s), the participants observed that Facebook and Twitter played a determining role as they put pressure on people to go out and vote with 'online registers'

being marked by people showing the voting queues and for those showing their inked fingers and marked ballots. It was notable that this happens despite the election laws forbidding showing of marked ballots. Some participants indicated that early results influenced on whether they would turn up to vote especially when they were tied up in working during the voting day. These participants indicated that if the early results showed their preferred candidate was ahead by a large margin, they tended not to vote but if the results showed a tight race, they did all they could to vote before the closing of the polls. It was thus evident from the focus group discussions that the influence of online activities on Twitter and Facebook was manifest in the offline voting behaviours of youthful voters in Nairobi County.

### **5.3. Conclusions**

Facebook and Twitter emerged as the most used social media platforms for political participation. This can be attributed to their ease of use and wide acceptability among the youths and the political class. Other social media platforms such as Instagram do not have substantial usage in political matters, as they are popular with lifestyle issues such as fashion, travel and food.

Facebook and Twitter were found to influence participation in political campaign activities such as attendance of rallies and discussions on manifestos by the political parties and candidates. It also emerged that Facebook and Twitter influence voting decisions by providing real time updates on the situation in the polling stations. The social media political activities are sustained and robust given the ease of use of tools including

Facebook and Twitter. The social media platforms are also cost effective and easy to deploy to a large pool of young voters unlike physical rallies.

Overall, the study holds that social media is an exceptionally powerful communication tool that political players are utilizing to ensure young voters interest are increased participation in political processes. The social media tools have totally changed the political processes and structures such as political rallies that can be accessed live on social media. The social media platforms have also made the political dialogues very robust. Despite risks such as trolling and spamming in social media,

This study concludes that there is indeed exists a relation between interaction and dialogues among the youth in Nairobi County that influence their participation in political processes which is very strong and active when it comes to tenets like information of interest to the public, public engagement outcomes of reactions , likes , shares and comments and creating dialogue loops. However, this participation in political processes has not been fully embraced.

#### **5.4. Recommendations for the Study**

This study suggests course of action and plan for the three research questions as well as recommendations for further research as presented below based on the findings of the study and the literature.

**What was the influence of Facebook and Twitter on youth voters' political participation in Nairobi County?**

This section presents policy recommendations based on the encounters faced by the youth in Nairobi City County when using Facebook and Twitter for political participation and processes. Buluma (2022) asserts that social media has become an important source of information and a communication tool for young Kenyans. As examined in chapter four of the study, a substantial number of young Kenyans have routed to communicate through social media such Facebook and Twitter and receive political information.

This study strongly holds that social media especially Facebook and Twitter are exceptionally powerful communication tools that political players should be utilizing to ensure young voters interests are increased in political processes. This social media tools have totally changed the political processes and structures such as political rallies that can be accessed live on social media. Therefore, the IEBC, civil society and interested parties in youth political participation can enhance young people engagement through these platforms.

As explored in the preceding chapter, fake news is widespread in Facebook and Twitter just like any other social media platform. Sometimes this type of news finds its way to our mainstream media, which is one of the basis of information in the country. Therefore, there is a need for the government to come up with counter measures in terms of policies that would enable it to deal with fake news that sometime could hurt the image of the country, the political leaders, and any Kenyan citizen. Fake news could also create hostility, hatred, animosity to national cohesion, security and peace.

**How does Facebook and Twitter influence voting decisions among youth voters in Nairobi County?**

Primary, in as much as benefits have been realized in the use of social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter in the field of public communication especially in the arena of politics; maximization on the use of Facebook and twitter in political participation and decision making especially in voting has not been embraced fully. The civil societies and IEBC should tap and enhance this by sensitizing the youth voters on some of the possible ways to improve on political processes in terms of voter turnout and pattern among young voters. Emphasis should be in line with youth voters be sensitized on positive aspects of Facebook and Twitter usage for political purposes and disdain the negative aspects such as bullying and hate speech. Additionally, Political players need to innovatively to enhance their engagements on Twitter and Facebook not only for campaigns but also in continuous engagements.

Further, the Communication Authority in collaboration with telecommunication companies including Safaricom, Airtel and Telkom, also need to design frameworks to monitor violent propagation on Facebook and Twitter and formulate machinery of abating such messages, which may be foundation of animosity among youth voters. There is necessity to educate the youth on either Facebook or Twitter and other social media networks on the need for genuine posting to clear propaganda during the electioneering period by the government through government institutions such IEBC. There is necessity to invest in fact checking forums on Facebook and Twitter where ‘trending’ political messaging and propaganda are verified and counter checked by Communication Authority of Kenya. This will ensure that misinformation is cleared out and thus enable the youth voters to make voting decision based on up-to-date information.



**How does voter's online activity shape the offline behavior voting of youth voters in Nairobi County?**

Ministry of Sports, Gender and Youth in collaboration with Communication Authority (CA) need to identify youth influencers who can promote youth involvement on Facebook and Twitter. These influencers need to use and educate the youth voters on social media platforms on the importance of political participation to ensure that they register as voters and are actively involved in political activities. This will go a long way in addressing voters' apathy among the youths in Kenya. There is also need for institutions of higher education to incorporate social media in their courses to ensure useful usage of the social media to improve not only political issues but also other issues on personal, family and national benefits.

Lastly, based on the findings of this study, there is growing interlinkage between online and offline political activities and a large number of youths are not knowledgeable of the laws that govern social media usage in Kenya. Nevertheless, the knowledgeable count on rumours that some time is spread online or through peers. Consequently, this study recommends that the government come up with public sensitization programmes that will enable the public to be conversant with the information and communication laws that are in line with the use of social media. An informed public will be in a position to use the social media platforms as required by law, the end logic will be better especially on what should and not be communicated through the social media sites, and respect will be better in the online community.

### **5.5. Recommendations for Further Studies**

This study provides opportunities for future studies in area of political participation and social media usage. Several subjects have been featured in the course of my research.

- a) Further studies can be conducted to help understand the role of the new communication Tools such as Facebook and Twitter on voting decisions among other voters' age groups in Nairobi and across the country.
- b) Studies can be conducted to help understand the role of the new communication tools such as Facebook and Twitter on decision making in other areas such as education, finance and policy making.
- c) There are grounds to study influence of WhatsApp and Instagram on voting behaviours among various groups of voters in Kenya.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: Research Questionnaire

#### PART A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Please give your answers to each of the following questions. Read all the answers first and choose the appropriate answer box by ticking (✓) clearly or circling against one item for each question.

1. Kindly indicate your gender:      Male       Female
2. Please select your age range: 20 and below  21-25  26-30     31-35
3. What is your highest level of education?    Secondary     Diploma   
    Bachelor's Degree        Master's Degree        
    Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Kindly state your occupation: Employed  Self Employed  Unemployed  Student

#### PART B: USAGE OF FACEBOOK AND TWITTER FOR POLITICS

5. Which of the following social media accounts do you use? (Can tick more than one)  
    Facebook  Twitter  Instagram  Google Plus   
    Others: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you use Facebook for political purposes?      Yes       No
7. How long have you been using Facebook for political purposes?  
    Less than 5 Years       Over 5 years
8. Do you use Twitter for political purposes?      Yes       No
9. How long have you been using Twitter for political purposes?  
    Less than 5 Years     Over 5 years

10. What is the frequency of your social media usage for political purposes?

Hourly [ ] Daily [ ] Weekly [ ] Monthly [ ]

11. How would you describe you the nature of your social media usage for political purposes?

Listener [ ] Activist [ ] Spammer [ ] Troll [ ]

12. Indicate how you have been using Facebook and Twitter for political participation. You can tick multiple uses.

<b>Social Media Use</b>	
Posting comments /replies	
Posting photos and videos	
Tagging others on posts and comments	
Starting or joining political groups/pages	
Contributing to political groups/pages	
To access current news on politicians and political activities	
Others:	

### **PART C: SOCIAL MEDIA AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

13. The list includes usage of Facebook and Twitter in political participation. Rate these political participation issues using a scale where: 0 = Not at all; 1 = To a very little extent; 2 = To a little extent; 3 = To a moderate extent; 4 = To a great extent; and 5 = To a very great extent.

<b>Political participation</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Notification about political rallies							
Reminders about political rallies							
Discussion on the political parties manifestoes							
Discussion on the candidates manifestoes							
Discussions on national political current affairs							
Discussions on global political current affairs							
Others (Specify and rate)							

### **PART C: SOCIAL MEDIA AND VOTER TURNOUT**

14. The list includes voter turnout issues related to Facebook and Twitter use. Rate extent to which you feel Facebook and Twitter usage influence voter turnout due to the listed issues using a scale where: 0 = Not at all; 1 = To a very little extent; 2 = To a little extent; 3 = To a moderate extent; 4 = To a great extent; and 5 = To a very great extent.

<b>Social Media and Voters Turnout</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Notification on your polling stations opening time						
News on problems in opening a polling station						
Calls to get out and vote on social media						
Sharing of marked fingers and marked ballots						
Messages of ridicule to those who have not yet voted						
News on violent incidences during voting at your polling station						
News on violent incidences during voting at other polling stations						
Threats of violence for voting						
News on voting progress in other areas						



Others (Specify and rate)							

#### **PART D: SOCIAL MEDIA AND VOTING PATTERNS**

16. The list includes voting patterns issues related to Facebook and Twitter use. Rate extent to which you feel Facebook and Twitter usage influence voting patterns due to the listed issues using a scale where: 0 = Not at all; 1 = To a very little extent; 2 = To a little extent; 3 = To a moderate extent; 4 = To a great extent; and 5 = To a very great extent.

<b>Social Media and Voting Patterns</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Constant campaign updates by specific candidates and their followers						
Lack of constant campaign updates by specific candidates and their followers						
Biased post and comments on certain candidate(s)						
Paid adverts by political aspirants						
Paid adverts by political parties						
Opinion polls on Facebook and Twitter						
Sharing of marked ballots in favour of certain candidates						
Early reports of polling results						
Threats of violence for voting						
Threats of violence for not voting						
Others (Specify and rate)						

**Thanks for the time and input**

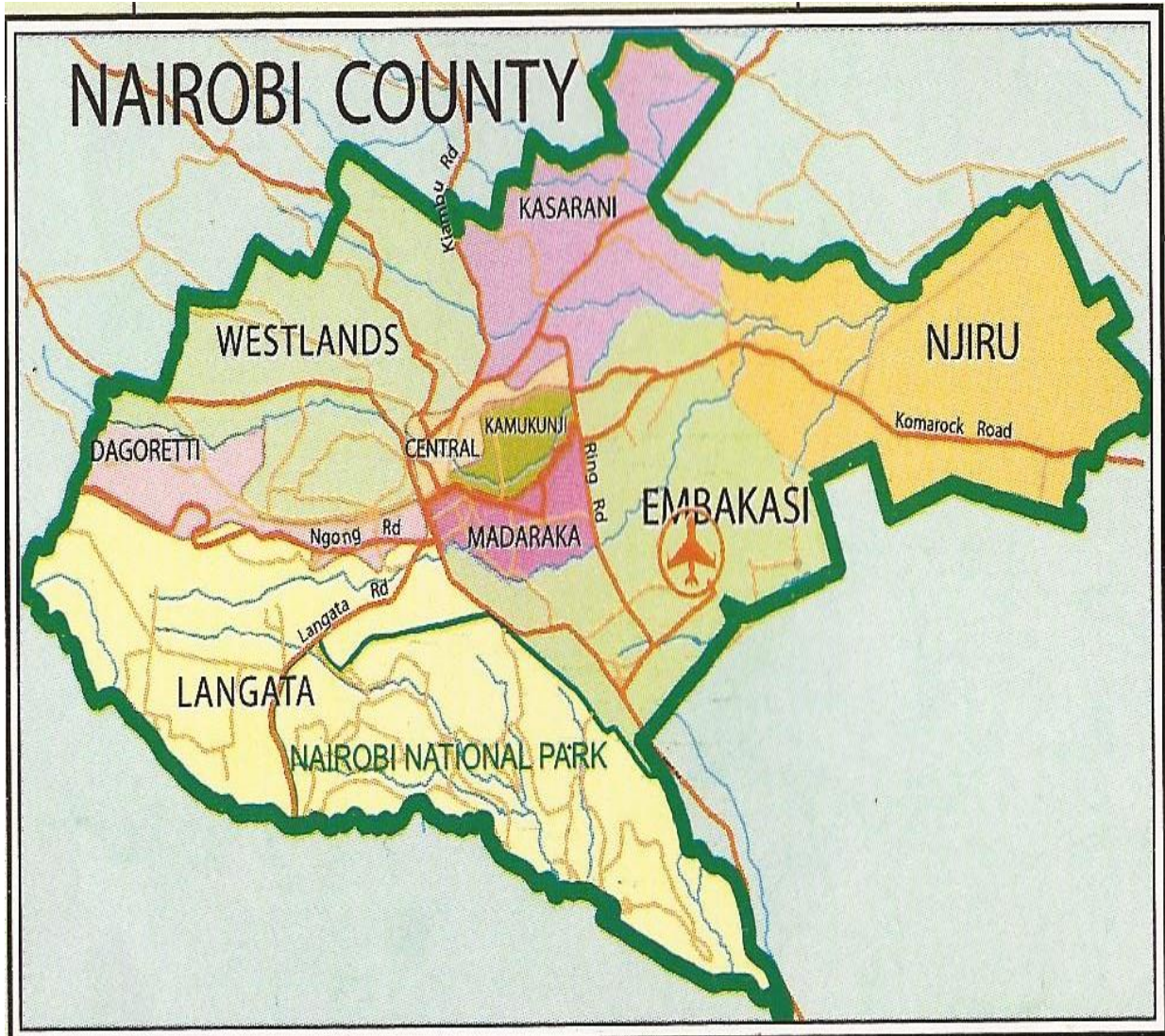
## **Appendix II: Focus Group Discussion Interview Guide**

The purpose of this focus group discussion is to seek an understanding of how online activities on Facebook and Twitter influence your offline decisions related to politics and voting. Let us be civil in addressing each other and adhere to the moderator's guidance.

The discussion will be between 20 to 30 minutes.

The issues, which we will be discussing, are:

1. Tell me about how you use Facebook and Twitter in your everyday life.
2. In what ways do you use Facebook and Twitter for political purposes?
3. How has use of Facebook and Twitter influenced your political views?
4. How has use of Facebook and Twitter influenced your involvement in political activities?
5. How has the use of Facebook and Twitter influenced you during polling day(s)?
6. Tell me about the effect of Facebook and Twitter on your voting preferences.

**Appendix III: Map of Nairobi County**

Source: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/33/NairobiCounty.jpg>

## Appendix IV: NACOSTI Permit



### NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

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Date: **21<sup>st</sup> February, 2019**

Renno Chepkwesis Chongwony  
Moi University  
P.O Box 3900-30100  
**ELDORET**

#### RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *“Influence of social media on voting decisions among young voters in Nairobi County, Kenya”* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Nairobi County** for the period ending **20<sup>th</sup> February, 2020**.

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Nairobi County** before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit a **copy** of the final research report to the Commission within **one year** of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.

  
**BONIFACE WANYAMA**  
**FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO**

Copy to:

The County Commissioner  
Nairobi County.

Approved  
11/3/2019

The County Director of Education  
Nairobi County.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER  
NAIROBI COUNTY  
P. O. Box 30124-00100, NBI  
TEL: 341666

## Appendix IV: Plagiarism Report

SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE ON YOUNG VOTERS' PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL  
PROCESSES: A STUDY OF YOUTHS IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

### ORIGINALITY REPORT



### PRIMARY SOURCES

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