

Social Media Political Communication and Misinformation: A Case Study of the Youth in Kiambu County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Social media in recent times has proven to be extremely persuasive in influencing the public's opinion on political affairs. Since 2007, election campaigns have actively utilized several social media platforms in Kenya for communicating with, mobilizing, and organizing supporters. Politicians and political activists along with their parties make maximum use of it to interact and provide civic education to the public. However, few written materials are available on how Kenyan youth, particularly those who live in Kiambu County, use social media for political engagement. The objective of this research is therefore to explore patterns as well as practices characterizing social media use by young people in Kiambu County and how this affects their political involvement and discourse. This research is guided by Habermas's Theory of the Public Sphere, which asserts that public political discourse that is free from government interference is important for creating functional democracies. Social media, which acts as a public sphere, can allow the youth to engage in political discussions and other civic activities. The research employs a descriptive research design, utilizing an online survey as the primary tool for data collection, administered via Survey Monkey. The research's target population includes young people enrolled in institutions of higher learning in Kiambu County who use social media for communication. The sample size was determined based on the number of university students in Kiambu County. It utilized stratified random sampling on a target population of 115,330 to draw a sample of 380 youths using a Survey Monkey online sample calculator with a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. Initially, a pilot study was conducted on 10% of the sample, which is 38 respondents, to ascertain the reliability of the research instruments, eventually, from the 342 surveys sent out, 224 were completed and returned. For data analysis, Microsoft Excel was utilized in coding and organizing the data to create tables and graphs. The findings showed that X was the respondents' most used platform for political discourse. Most respondents were aware of and engaged in political discussions on social media, and believed that social media influenced their political attitudes and beliefs. Although most viewed social media as a source of civic education, they were skeptical about its reliability due to misinformation. The study concludes that many youths in Kiambu County are actively participating in political discussions online and therefore it recommends that better education should be provided to help the youth discern credible information from misinformation. Additionally, interventions should be established to curb digital crimes like cyberbullying and online fraud.

Keywords: Civic Education Tool, Digital Literacy, Political Participation, Social Media Platforms, X, Youth

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media has developed into the perfect medium for young people all over the world to interact with one another, take part in diverse dialogues, and express themselves through a range of thoughts and viewpoints. The primary cause of the trend is the increase in smartphone use among young people, who have access to a wide range of digital platforms that keep them constantly hooked to social media and engaged with their peers and the outside world. Online digital platforms can be defined in a variety of ways, but the definition used in this study is based on (D. O. Ong'ong'a, 2021), who describes them as applications that seamlessly work with the internet to make, create, adjust, and share information. WeChat, Facebook, Instagram, and other online digital platforms are examples of social media (Omotayo & Folorunso, 2020). Moreover, Matingwina (2018) states that the youth of today, particularly those between the ages of 16 and 25, cannot be compared to the youth of the past because they primarily rely on digital platforms for news consumption and political discourse. Furthermore, political parties everywhere are capitalizing on the growth of digital media, particularly those who are unable to connect with the younger demographic (Omanga, 2021). The youth are often characterized as apathetic and detached, and many parties have stated that they are not

interested in traditional political institutions or mainstream media politics. Instead, they prefer online representation (Saud et al., 2020).

Participating in social media also has several drawbacks, such as the propagation of false information. The dissemination of false information on social media platforms is gradually eroding its credibility. One notable instance is the latest Trump-Biden election, which sparked a lot of social media speculation particularly on Twitter and Facebook that the results were manipulated to support one candidate over another (Zhuravskaya et al., 2020). The information was intended to lower voter turnout, but it was later shown to be untrue. Furthermore, youth have been polarized toward a specific political candidate through the use of social media. An excellent illustration of this is the 2016 Trump campaign, in which one of the contenders, Donald Trump, utilized social media data obtained from an unauthorized source to incite young people to support him. This explains why political participation on social media is adversely affected. Experts such as Azis et al., n.d. and Giumetti & Kowalski (2022) address the risk associated with many young people abusing social media. Many concerns have been raised by young people's misuse of social media, particularly regarding the impact on their physical and mental health.

Kenya has also experienced a social media boom, particularly in the political arena. Since social media use is seen as being tech-savvy, the youth in Kenya are often associated with it. According to the Kenya Bureau of Statistics, a youth in Kenya is a citizen who is between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five. In Kenya, most of the voting public are young people. To guarantee a victory for any political seat, political leaders must thus engage with the youth. Therefore, political figures often use social media channels to connect with the Kenyan youth (Njuguna et al., 2020).

Moreover, according to Salman and Mohamad Salleh (2020) and Saud et al. (2020), social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, and Linked-In are all used in political discussions. Youth use social media platforms, among other things, to get in touch with leaders directly. Kenyan youth are not scared to take direct action, putting forward their concerns, confronting authorities about corruption, and failing to meet the needs of the people (Wamuyu, 2021). Kenyan youth even ask the president about manifesto delivery and accountability.

On the other hand, leaders have made sure they stay in contact with the younger generation. Politicians, the president, and members of parliament have all started social media pages to engage and inform the youth about matters critical to their general welfare. In Kenya, social media platforms have been utilized as campaigning tools in every political seat (Saleh, 2020). The president using social media to promote himself as a national leader is a prime example. On social media platforms, particularly Facebook and X, young people nationwide interacted with the president (Khasabu & Rahmanto, 2023). According to Muswede (2022), young people are increasingly using social media platforms to seek information regarding political issues. Hence, Kenya's election body, The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) often uses social media sites to promote voter turnout (Njuguna et al., 2020). Additionally, social media platforms are used by leaders to inform or update their young constituents about their current projects.

1.1 Problem Statement

The problem addressed in this study revolves around the use of social media among the youth of Kiambu County for political engagement and its related challenges. Empirical data shows that social media is a crucial medium for young people, especially those between the ages of 16 to 25, to engage in political discourse. However, the significant concern is the spreading of false information which can polarize young people and erode social media as a credible and reliable source of information. The study highlights the gap in understanding how social media influences political engagement among the youth of Kiambu County and how misinformation affects this. Hence, the study offers insight into the kinds of policies that need to be implemented to ensure that Kenyan youth engage in supportive online political discourse.

1.2 Research Objective

The goal of the study is to determine how the youth in Kiambu County utilize social media platforms for political engagement.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Empirical Review

Social media usage in the political landscape has significantly increased in recent years, and this has given opportunity to young people, who are the majority of users of social media, an opportunity to participate in political discourse, voice their opinions, and engage with politicians. Azis (2022) uses the communication mediation model to

assess how social media use affects political engagement. The study assessed the relationship between the young Chinese residents of Singkawang's motive, social media use, political participation, and efficacy. Data was gathered for the study using questionnaires with 125 participants. The findings indicated that motivation played a crucial role in political information and included social utility, amusement, rules, and surveillance. In order to assess young people's online political engagement, the study used a communication mediation model and was quantitative. The primary goal of the study was to assess how Chinese youth used social media for political engagement. In the local context, Kipkoech (2023) highlights several studies that have shown how social media influences news and political engagement. The study employed a survey research design to address the gap in knowledge regarding social media platforms' influence on political participation and the bivariate analysis demonstrated a positive correlation between political engagement in Kenya and the use of social media and the internet for current events. Moreover, other studies such as Ahmad et al. (2019), Hamid et al. (2022), Oral (2023) and Penney (2019) assert that the use of the internet for news reduces physical political engagement but agree that it increases virtual political interaction. Political orientation, digital media use, and demographic variables did not significantly correlate with political participation in Kenya after controlling for traditional news consumption.

Abror et al. (2022), Bosch (2013) and Sharif et al. (2020) highlighted the essential role of using digital networking platforms for civic engagement. These studies demonstrate that the use of social media platforms influences individual efficacy whereby young people acquire more insight into political issues and engage with politics adequately. By analyzing the study of McCombs and Shaw (1972), it is factual to say that media in all its forms has a level of impact on our opinions as this is the agenda-setting function of media.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Habermas's Theory of the Public Sphere

The public sphere, a concept developed by German philosopher Jürgen Habermas in 1962, is a crucial aspect of a democratic society. A national public sphere that is free from the control of government and state is created when citizens can participate in rational discourse and debate on issues of interest outside the interference of the government (Finlayson & Rees, 2023). The relevance of this theory to this study is that it narrows down to how social media platforms like Facebook, and X, among others have promoted the contemporary public sphere in Kenya where young people are involved in political discussions as well as civic activities. 5 billion people around the world are on social media, making it a relevant tool in political discussions (Amjad et al., 2020). In this light, the research will assess how these platforms are integrated into political participation specifically targeting the youths' involvement in political participation. Kenya's most popular social media platforms are Facebook and Twitter, and political leaders extensively use these platforms to engage with the citizens. Kenyan leaders and youth use social media platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and WhatsApp to appeal to citizens during campaigns and engage them in grassroots politics. Social media has been a vital enabler of democracy and citizen participation since 2007. Habermas's theory is functional to this study because it allows for the creation of a digital public sphere, enabling young people to communicate politically through social media platforms that act as independent variables in the digital public sphere. Next, it highlights discourse quality. The youth's political discourse is influenced by intervening variables such as perceived reliability, engagement tactics, and reception of campaign messages. Lastly, it discusses political participation. The degree of political participation, the perception of political power, and the effects of civic education are dependent variables that are influenced by the quality of discussion and patterns of participation. Three main reasons support the choice of this particular theory: first, it is necessary; the theory offers a structure that enables us to comprehend how social media functions as a modern public sphere, which is consistent with the setting of this study of political interaction on social media; second, it is easily applied; the theory is well-documented and well-researched, making it available for use in this study; and third, it has explanatory power; by enabling us to comprehend the complexities of online political discourse, the theory enhances our understanding of the study.

III METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study used a quantitative research method. It explores the youth's engagement in political discourse on social media in Kenya's Kiambu County using a descriptive survey research approach. The study aims to understand the prevalence of social media use among young people and its impact on political engagement. The independent variable is social media networks, while the dependent variables include youth political involvement, social media identification, social dynamics, and political discourse. The study uses a quantitative research methodology to assess



the impact of social media on political involvement among young people in Kiambu County, gathering, evaluating, and calculating quantitative data from the sample size.

3.2 Target Population and Sample Size Determination

The total number of people who are being considered for a specific study is known as the target population. This study assessed young people enrolled in Kiambu County higher education institutions who are known to use social media as a communication medium. Furthermore, the youth use social media as a forum for political involvement and participation, as they are the most active age group on these platforms (Roca Trenchs et al., 2023). According to the 2017–2018 Commission for University Education report, there are 41,350 students enrolled in private universities and 73,980 students enrolled in public universities in Kiambu County (Commission for University Education - Universities Data, n.d.) totalling 115,330 learners, who are this study's target population.

Table 1
Target Population and Sample Size Determination

Proportion	Intuitions	Population per institution	P=Total Population	n=total population	p/n	T otal sample $\left(\frac{p}{n}\right) 342$	Sample per institution $n^h = N^h \left(\frac{n}{N}\right)$
Public universities	JKUAT	4,6956	73,980	115,330	0.6401	219	214
	KU RUIRU	1,000					5
Private Universities	MKU	27,935	41,350	115,330	0.3599	123	115
	GRETSA	1,832					8
Total	Intuitions	77,723	115,330	-		342	342

Stratified random sampling was employed to calculate the sample size according to Creswell (2018) using the formula $n^h = N^h \left(\frac{n}{N}\right)$.

3.3 Data Collection

This study used a structured questionnaire to gather quantitative data on social media usage, political campaign effectiveness, and civic education perceptions among youth. The online questionnaire was chosen due to its accessibility and exposure to various internet devices. Surveys were used due to their quick, easy, and affordable nature, making them suitable for the target population. The online survey was cost-effective, flexible, and increased response rate.

3.4 Data Analysis

The study utilized Microsoft Excel for data analysis, analyzing survey data from the Survey Monkey online questionnaire. Excel's powerful capabilities allowed for inferential analyses to explore the relationship between political participation and social media platforms. Descriptive statistics were computed to identify central tendencies, while visual representations were created to present trends. Microsoft Excel's robust inferential analysis capabilities were used to explore relationships between variables. The user-friendly interface ensured accuracy and consistency in data cleaning and transformation.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Response Rate

The study planned to incorporate 380 participants however, 224 surveys were completed and returned on time.

Response rate

Sent questionnaires	380
Returned questionnaires	224
Percentage Turnout	58.95%

According to (Commission for University Education - Universities Data, n.d.) data, 115,330 learners, form this study's target population. The online survey was shared with 380 students from institutions of higher learning in



Kiambu County; Mount Kenya University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture, and Kenyatta University Ruiru campus. Only 224 of the 380 survey questionnaires that were distributed were finished and submitted on time. The 41.05% non-respondent rate is linked to unidentified factors because the researcher followed up with the respondents via email but did not receive a response. Since Luck and Gaspelin (2017) contend that a response rate of 50% or above is appropriate for projects in the field of social sciences that employ statistical analysis, it is appropriate to conclude that this had no bearing on the study's findings.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

4.2.1 Gender

Based on the availability of study respondents, females were 119 representing 53.13% of the total participants and males were 105 representing 46.88% of the total participants.

4.2.2 Age

The participants were young, with ages ranging from 18 to 35. Still, the study separated participants based on age to make analysis much simpler. Thus, the following is a presentation of the respondents' makeup:

Table 2

Participants Age Distribution

Age	Frequency
18-24 years	163
25-30 years	36
30-35 years	25

The majority of participants, according to the statistics supplied, were between the ages of 18 and 24, which represented the distribution of the population in Kiambu County, particularly among the youth. The research also took into account participants' ages between 25 and 30 and 30-35 to prevent bias.

4.3 Presentation of Findings

A sample of 224 participants was included in the study to assess the three primary goals. The three primary components of the research findings are derived from the objectives of the study. Prior to delving into specifics, it is imperative to address the usage of social media in political discourse. Several social media sites were used for political discourse. The following are the research findings:

Table 4

Social Media Usage in Political Discourse

Social Media Platforms	Number of Respondents Using the Platform
Facebook	38
Instagram	55
Ticktok	1
Tiktok	2
Twitter	1
WhatsApp	25
X	101

The data can be presented as follows:

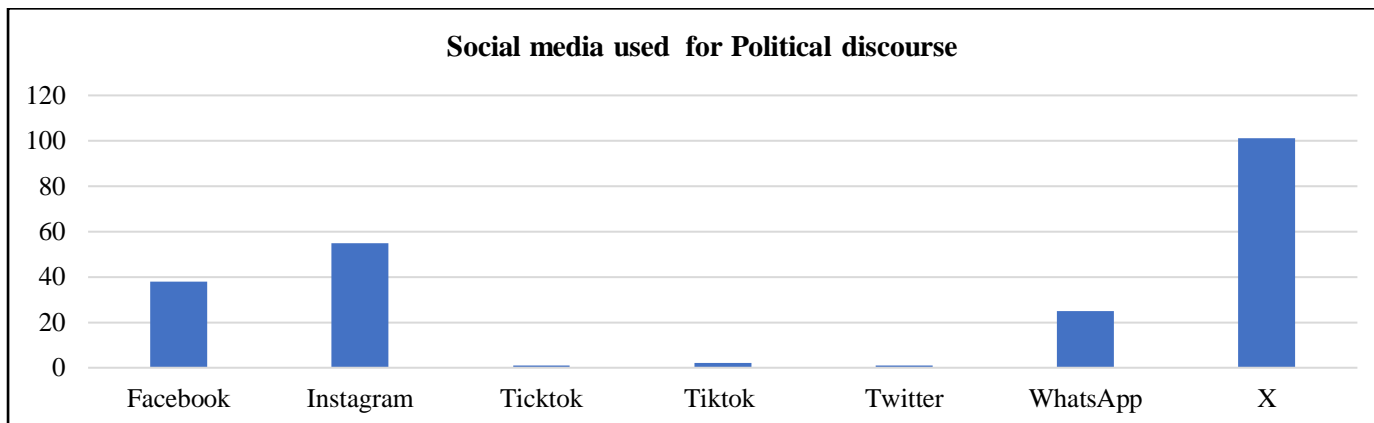


Figure 1
Social Media Usage in Political Discourse

X was the most often utilized application among participants in political conversation, according to research findings. The majority of young people in Kiambu expressed confidence in using X when talking about politics. Furthermore, the majority of leaders have significant participation and were likewise connected to the public through X. For political involvement, information, and participation, X was therefore perfect. Politics was discussed on other social media sites, such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. Facebook and WhatsApp, among other channels, gave Kiambu youth the opportunity to create groups where they could talk about politics, interact with various leaders, and have their voices heard. Conversely, X and Instagram gave leaders the opportunity to interact with Kiambu youngsters in real-time and answer their queries by going live. The descriptive analysis from the Likert Scale

Table 5
Research Findings from the Likert Scale Comments

<i>Reliability of civic education information shared on social media</i>		<i>Social media as a significant source of civic education for me</i>		<i>Social media and local politics</i>		<i>discerning credible civic education information from social media sources</i>		<i>Engaging in political discussions on social media platforms as an important aspect of my civic duty</i>	
Mean	2.549107	Mean	2.691964	Mean	2.794643	Mean	2.696429	Mean	2.571429
Standard Error	0.07426	Standard Error	0.076685	Standard Error	0.080108	Standard Error	0.075846	Standard Error	0.079644
Median	2	Median	3	Median	3	Median	3	Median	2
Mode	2	Mode	3	Mode	3	Mode	2	Mode	2
Standard Deviation	1.111416	Standard Deviation	1.147713	Standard Deviation	1.198941	Standard Deviation	1.135164	Standard Deviation	1.192008
Sample Variance	1.235246	Sample Variance	1.317245	Sample Variance	1.43746	Sample Variance	1.288597	Sample Variance	1.420884
Kurtosis	-0.40928	Kurtosis	-0.56382	Kurtosis	-0.70433	Kurtosis	-0.48325	Kurtosis	-0.6479
Skewness	0.409148	Skewness	0.338195	Skewness	0.292533	Skewness	0.414392	Skewness	0.398105
Range	4	Range	4	Range	4	Range	4	Range	4
Minimum	1	Minimum	1	Minimum	1	Minimum	1	Minimum	1
Maximum	5	Maximum	5	Maximum	5	Maximum	5	Maximum	5
Sum	571	Sum	603	Sum	626	Sum	604	Sum	576
Count	224	Count	224	Count	224	Count	224	Count	224



4.3.1 How Youth in Kiambu County, Kenya, Use Social Media for Political Participation

We will choose the following as our main question: "I feel well-informed about local politics due to social media interactions." This indicates that young people in Kiambu County frequently utilize social media to participate in politics. It is important to highlight that the participants were questioned, "Have you heard of political discussions on social media?" before delving into the results. The following was the outcome.

Table 6

Results of Awareness of Social Media Political Discussions

Years	Awareness of political discussions on social media	No	Yes	Grand Total
Row Labels	Maybe			
18-24 years	5	9	149	163
25-30 years	1	1	34	36
30-35 years			25	25
Grand Total	6	10	208	224

208 out of a possible 224 respondents said they were well aware of the political conversations taking place on social media. As a result, the assessment of social media's role in political discourse was excellent. We can estimate the mean of 2.8, which is close to 3, as a neutral position for the young participants based on the data. Thus, half of the participants use social media to participate in politics, and the other half do not use it at all. As demonstrated below, X, Instagram, and Facebook are thought to be the primary social media sites for political activity by 50% of those who use them for such purposes.

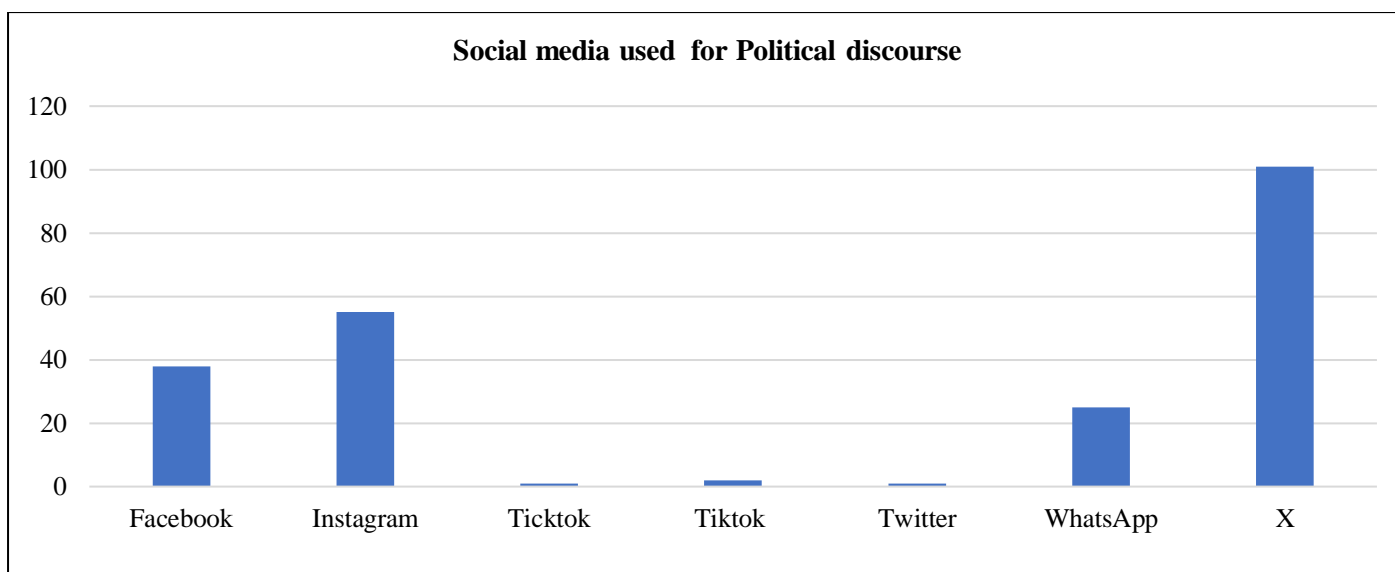


Figure 2

Results of Awareness of Social Media Political Discussions

The inquiry posed by participants, "How often do you engage in political discussions on social media?" can be used to support a neutral stance on the use of social media for political engagement. These were the outcomes.

Table 7

How Participants Engaged In Political Discussions

Row Labels	Timestamp
Not at all	80
Once a day	63
Several times a day	36
Twice a day	17
Very often even daily	28
Grand Total	224



The majority of participants did not use social media for political discourse, according to the results as shown in Table 7.

4.3.2 How Do Youth In Kiambu County, Kenya, Respond to Political Campaign Messages Delivered Through Social Media?

It is imperative that we assess the following question in order to determine whether or not "participating in political discussions on social media platforms is a vital component of my civic duty." The mean, which tends to be 3, indicates another neutral component that was noted in the question, according to the research findings. 50% of participants used social media to the fullest extent possible for political campaigns, while the remaining 50% did not concentrate on political messaging. Participants responded to the question, "Do you feel social media discussions have changed your political beliefs?" in order to better ascertain the findings. The following unexpected results were obtained from the question.

Table 8
How Social Media have Impacted Political Beliefs

Row Labels	Social media and political beliefs
	Frequency
No, not at all	26
Yes, significantly	57
Yes, to some extent	141
Grand Total	224

The results unequivocally demonstrated that the majority of participants believed social media had a significant influence on their political ideas.

4.3.3 How Youth in Kiambu County, Kenya, Perceive Social Media as a Reliable Source of Civic Education

It is essential to assess the function of social media in civic education to assess this goal. By analyzing the inquiry, "For me, social media serves as a major source of civic education," The research findings' mean was 2.7, with a tendency toward 3, denoting neutral feedback. Of the participants, half thought social media could be used for civic education, and the other half didn't think so. It is important to assess the veracity of the news found on social media, as 50% of the participants thought of social media as a tool for civic education. To get an understanding, consider asking yourself, "I feel confident in the reliability of civic education information shared on social media." Most participants dispute that social media offers poor reliability for civic education, as indicated by the mean of 2.5. Furthermore, in response to the question, "Which of the following provides misinformation or fake news?" participants The majority of participants concurred that disinformation and fake news were most likely to be found on social media. Assessing the statement, "I am confident in discerning credible civic education information from social media sources," is also essential. The data indicates that 50% of participants find it difficult to distinguish authentic civic education from social media, with a mean of 2.7 and a tendency of 3. "How often do you encounter misinformation or fake news related to politics on social media?" was another question posed to the participants. The following were the outcomes:

Table 9
Occurrence of misinformation in social media

Count of Timestamp	Column Labels	Misinformation or fake news related to politics on social media			
		Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Grand Total
18-24 years	1	48	85	29	163
25-30 years		11	20	5	36
30-35 years		13	9	3	25
Grand Total	1	72	114	37	224

According to the study's findings, just one person has never come across bogus news on social media. Consequently, the remaining 223 individuals reported having encountered fake news on social media, indicating the prevalence of fake news on social media.

Political participation implies the level of involvement of individuals in political processes such as engaging in political discussion. From table 6, the study indicates that a significant portion of the youth in Kiambu County are aware of political discussions on social media. The study also suggested a high level of engagement with political content on social media platforms, particularly X, Facebook, and Instagram. Table 7 highlights the frequency of political discussions on social media among the youth. It shows that while the majority engaged “not at all” or “once a day,” there was still a significant portion of the youth engaging in social media political discussions several times a day.

Table 8 shows that the majority of the participants believed that social media had impacted their political beliefs.

Table 9 explored whether social media is perceived as a reliable source of civic education, and as the table demonstrates, although participants perceived social media as useful for civil education, there was still skepticism concerning its reliability due to misinformation and fake news. A perception that further influenced how the youth perceived the role of social media in civic education and influenced their overall political participation.

4.4 Discussion

This research aimed at understanding how youth in Kiambu County utilize social media platforms for political engagement. To study this effectively, the interplay of the independent variables; social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, X, and Tiktok, and that of the dependent variables; youth political participation and engagement and social media identity and group dynamics, had to be explored. Social media platforms have been integrated into today’s information age because one can communicate with more than one method within an instance according to (O. Ong’ong’a, 2021).

According to the findings explored above, the respondents believed that social media had influenced their political beliefs and stance thus reflecting how social media platforms shape and influence people’s political perspectives as highlighted by (Oral, 2023). Additionally, Kipkoech (2023) shows that social media platforms can shape and influence the political perspectives and attitudes of young people, and this study demonstrates that this influence further promotes active engagement in political discourse via social media. Nevertheless, the study’s independent variable, which was social media platforms as a digital public sphere that enabled the youth to engage in political communication identified X as the most often used application by the participants for political conversation. Additionally, the majority of the youth in Kiambu expressed confidence in using X for political discussion. Other social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp also served as avenues for political discussion. However, X stood out as the most utilized and effective platform, making it the key independent variable that influenced political engagement among the young people of Kiambu County.

From the results analyzed, it is fit to say that this study supports the empirical literature which highlighted that social media has become increasingly popular in facilitating political interactions among the youth (Azis et al., n.d.). Since most previous similar studies employed a qualitative or mixed-method approach, to contrast with this, this study opted to adopt a quantitative approach to explore whether a different outcome could be achieved by approaching the problem with an analytical angle that could foster the uncovering of new findings in this field. It was observed in this study that social media platforms acted as an educational tool to train, and inform young people on political matters and this in turn encouraged them to interact and engage peer-to-peer and with political figures as well, just as scholars like Bosch (2013) and Omotayo and Folorunso (2020) had previously discussed. Similar to previous studies, it was established that the youth’s engagement with political content on social media is on the rise and specifically in Kiambu County, in Kenya. This study was able to contribute to the gap in the empirical literature by finding out the most influential social media platforms that make an impact in conveying political information among the youth in Kiambu County, and the study also brought to our knowledge that misinformation and fake news greatly affects the level of political engagement of the youth on social media. Therefore, it is fair to say that this research is vital in addressing the gaps and concerns that keep on arising in this field of study as the political sphere continues to evolve in Kiambu County and the country at large.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

Social media platforms, such as X and Twitter, have become crucial for politicians in Kiambu County to engage with voters. Youth, particularly on Instagram and Facebook, have also adopted these platforms to make their opinions and hold politicians accountable. A significant number of the youth are not interested in online political discussions as this study shows that only 50% do, and these use X and Facebook for political discussions. Research

shows that Kiambu youth respond to campaign messages equally, with 50% ignoring them and the remaining half responding accordingly. Kiambu County youth strongly believe social media has influenced their political beliefs, suggesting that politicians need to explore alternative methods to reach grassroots politics. They believe social media is an ideal source for civic education, but are skeptical of messages and the spread of fake news. Additionally, 50% of the youth cannot discern the truthfulness of political information, making it difficult to reach voters. Therefore, politicians must consider alternative strategies to engage with the youth.

5.2 Recommendations

Social media offers numerous opportunities for politicians and the youth to engage in political discourse. Leaders should take the opportunity to engage in political discussions seriously and ensure their voters are well-engaged online. Leaders should create time for online engagement to understand the needs and requirements of their voters. Social media platforms have become a source of gossip and fake news, and it is crucial for youth to trust information from verified accounts, especially in X where most rely on political news. Kenyan government policies should be implemented to curb false information from social media platforms. Future investigations should evaluate the impact of false information on elections. Currently, investigations are ongoing into whether misinformation from the US and the UK influenced the BRICS vote. It is important to analyze how social media can be engineered to bring about change.

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