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The Kenyan Social Media Landscape:
Trends and Emerging Narratives, 2020

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Education to take you places

The Kenyan Social Media Landscape:

Trends and Emerging Narratives, 2020

Paul Watzlavick
The Counselor for Public Affairs,
U.S. Embassy, Nairobi

" The United States is proud to support SIMELab and their groundbreaking research into Kenyan social media. *The future is digital, so that's where we need to be*: generating innovative solutions to global challenges together."

International Symposium on Social Media
USIU-Africa, Nairobi / September 11-12, 2019

"Use of digital media and social media are connected to deep-rooting changes of citizens' self-concepts"

Prof. Dr. Martin Emmer (FU Berlin)

(From Left to Right) Dr. Geoffrey Sikolia, Mr. Robert Alai, Ms. Juliet Kanjukia, Ms. Ivy Mungai and Mr. Dennis Itumbi in a panel discussion on **"Social Media and Governance"** during the 2019 International Symposium on Social Media
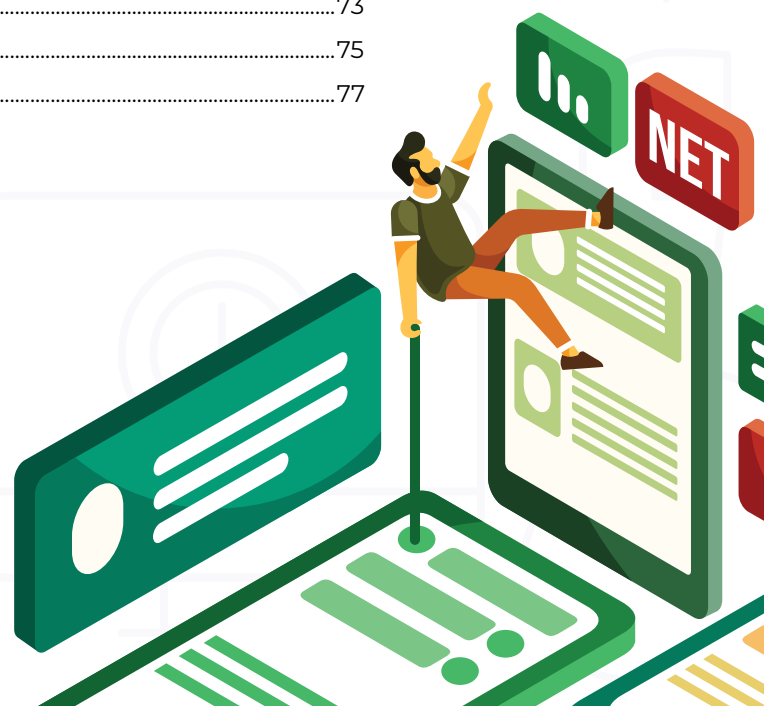

(From Left to Right) Mr. Alex Taremwa, Ms. Noella Musundi, Mr. David Gitari, Ms. Lucy Wamuyu and Martin Muli in a panel discussion on **"Social Media versus Mainstream Media"** during the 2019 International Symposium

In this report

About SIMElab Africa

SIMElab Africa (Social Media Lab Africa) is an interdisciplinary Center for research in Big Data and Social Media Analytics Research Lab housed at USIU-Africa's Freida Brown Innovation Center. SIMElab Africa offers a research and development environment to USIU-Africa faculty and students, civil society and corporate businesses, and policymakers in Kenya and beyond. SIMELab is jointly funded by USA Embassy in Nairobi and USIU-Africa.

The Objectives of the SIMElab are to:

- Provide an annual status on social media consumption in Kenya leading to an annual report;
- Conduct quarterly trainings on social media analytics to academics and private sector in Kenya;
- Develop a monthly data repository on social media consumption in Kenya; and
- Disseminate quality and reputable research through journal and conference publications.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect official position of any specific organization or government.

For more information, contact

SIMElab Africa,
simelabadmin@usiu.ac.ke | +254 730 116 821

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Ibrahim Hassan Hudle

A data collection assistant in Garissa County, taken during data gathering on March 18, 2020

Foreword

Welcome to the 2nd Edition of the Social Media Consumption in Kenya Report. Social media sites and apps have become the new home where Kenyan families, friends, influencers, brands, and bloggers converge multiple times daily to share updates and communicate. This year, we highlight trends on social media use in Kenyans' daily lives as well as newly emerging narratives on online misinformation, disinformation, and fake news, cyber harassment, social media use during the Coronavirus pandemic, Social Media Big Data Mining and the challenges with social media.

Social media usage patterns have changed over the last one year, with Facebook users having decreased by 6.8%, while the number of Snapchat users increased by 17.3% and Twitter users increasing by 13.4%. ***The surge in the use of IMO, Likee, Vskit, Telegram, and Vimeo as social media channels among Kenyans shows a change in social media users' priorities and interests*** among different demographic groups as people seek for ways to quickly check news and spread useful information.

Fake and negative news, false, incorrect, and inaccurate information and information that is biased or meant to mislead deliberately have become common on social media and many Kenyans are likely to share the same intentionally or unintentionally. Online harassment is also common and takes on many incarnations on social media with the aim of causing emotional distress to real or imaginary foes. ***Even though most Kenyans access social media using mobile apps, privacy concerns have made a good percentage of users access social media using mobile browsers which are presumed to offer more privacy features than standalone mobile apps.***

Even though the cost of internet in Kenya is considered to be among the cheapest in Africa, the average cost

of access has remained relatively high, making social media access generally unaffordable to many Kenyans. This could be the reason why 54.3% of the people living in urban areas access social media from the free public hotspots, while 46.1% of the people living in rural areas access social media from the cyber cafés and most of the people more than 25 years old access social media from offices.

Kenya has a robust blogger community with hundreds of active bloggers and a variety of stimulating blogs on politics, agriculture, technology, education, fashion, food, entertainment, sports, and travel. Online discussions and public debates using social media and apps have also become part of the daily life of many Kenyans. Online social media debates among Kenyans are known to influence individual attitudes and behaviors in relationships, politics, fashion, and how audiences engage with brands.

On opportunities and challenges with social media, we have reviews and research articles on anonymity and self-disclosure, social media addiction, hate speech, and a journey to the future of social media sites and apps. We also have an article on social media big data mining on Twitter. Organizations are trawling social media sites in search of information they can use for purposes of proper decision making. This is "***Social Media mining***", the ***process of representing, analyzing, and extracting actionable patterns from social media data to draw conclusions about the populations of the users.***

Patrick Kanyi Wamuyu, Ph.D.
SIMElab Coordinator

Acknowledgements

In developing the Kenya Social Media Consumption Report 2020, SIMElab received invaluable collaboration and input from key partners as listed below.

Data Collection Assistants

We would like to single these individuals who worked tirelessly during data collection phase of the project

Mr. Anthony Kiingati	Mr. Jacktone Momanyi
Ms. Diana Meso	Dr. James Karimi
Mr. David Lomoywara	Mr. James Monchoi
Mr. Ernest Mwanzi	Ms. Maribor Liza Orre
Ms. Faith Mudanya	Mr. Martin Wagura
Mr. Ibrahim Hassan Hudle	Dr. Quin Awour
Ms. Irene Ogutu	Ms. Risper Ndirangu
Ms. Immaculate Tallam	Ms. Susan Muchai

Commentaries

Ms. Ashleigh Jacobs	Ms. Immaculate Tallam
Mr. Augustine Kihiko	Mr. Japheth Mursi
Mr. Brian Kisuke	Mr. Kelvin Jonck,
Mr. David Lomoywara	Ms. Kristina Sutton
Mr. Ernest Mwanzi	Prof. Dr. Martin Emmer
Dr. Geoffrey Sikolia	Prof. Melissa Tully

Technical Support

Ms. Brenda Odhiambo
Dr. Gabriel Okello
Mr. Lawrence Okayo
Ms. Taigu Muchiri

Design, Layout and Production

Tonn Kriation

KEY DISCOVERIES IN 2020

6.8%
decrease in number of Facebook users among Kenyans

67% **63%** **61%**
in favor of
Kenyan youth have abandoned Facebook
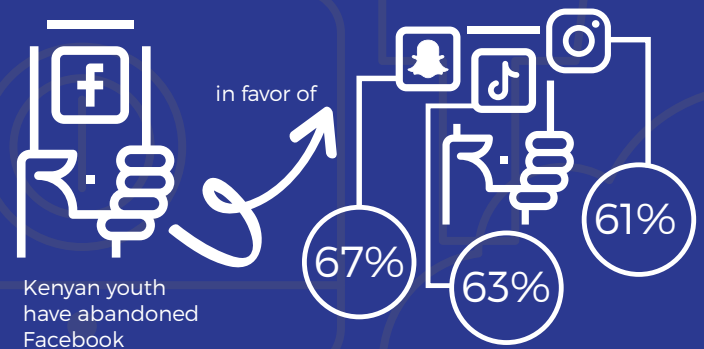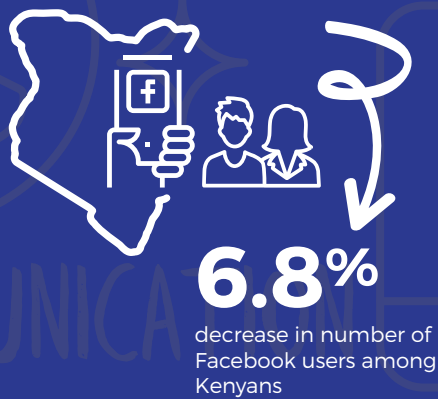
61%
Kenyan men use pseudonyms on Twitter

23.3%
prefer to access social media through their mobile browsers rather than using mobile apps

54.3%
people living in urban areas access social media from public hotspots

while **46.1%**
people living in rural areas access social media from cyber cafés
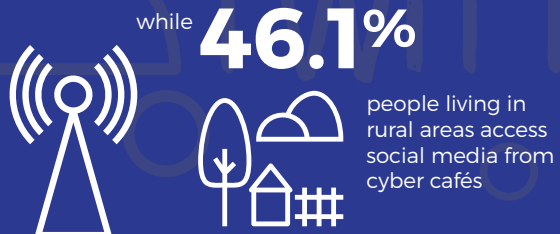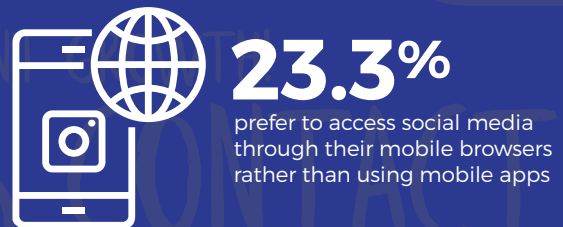
43%
of LinkedIn users only access it for less than thirty minutes daily.

83.5%
Kenyans who have come across fake news and are likely to have shared it

78%
follow and interact with brands on social media

Snapchat users have increased by **17.7%**

33%
have experienced online harassment

Twitter users have increased by **14.3%**

47.7%
use fictitious names when accessing social media

86.9%
read online blogs

KENYANS HAVE LEARNED TO RELY ON SOCIAL MEDIA REVIEWS AND BLOGS TO MAKE THEIR DECISIONS

Survey Sypnosis

The Kenyan Social Media Landscape:

Trends and Emerging Narratives, 2020

9 740

respondents
aged between 14 & 55yrs

17

counties

" *The use of social media has generated a lot of market and academic research over the years as researchers try to synthesize acceptance, appropriation, and adoption of social networking sites and apps.* "

Over the years, social media sites and apps have created opportunities for people to stay connected to family and friends and have enhanced the possibilities of making new friends from every corner of the world. Social networking sites have emerged as important communication channels used by individual consumers to create content, distribute materials, share ideas, express opinions, and use information and knowledge. With millions of daily active users, social media have become essential tools for organizations as they enhance collaboration, knowledge sharing, and increase productivity among workers. The use of social media has generated a lot of market and academic research over the years as researchers try to synthesize acceptance, appropriation, and adoption of social networking sites and apps. Interactions facilitated by social media have become an integral part of many Kenyans' daily lives for telling their stories and sharing narratives.

The report draws from a nationally representative survey of social media consumption patterns among different demographic segments, conducted between February and March 2020. The survey sampled 9,740 respondents aged between 14 and 55 from 17 counties drawn from Kenya's former eight administrative provinces – Nairobi, Coast, Central, Western, Nyanza, Eastern, Rift Valley, and North Eastern.

From the 9,740 sampled, 9,728 questionnaires were fully answered – representing a health response rate

of 99.9%. To provide a comparative analysis, a proportional number of counties were selected form each province. The counties with the highest access to the Internet in each province, as per the data released by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2016) were selected.

The 20 counties selected were Nairobi (Nairobi Province), Mombasa and Taita Taveta (Coast), Meru, Embu, Makueni, and Marsabit (Eastern), Bungoma and Kakamega (Western), Mandera and Garissa (North Eastern), Trans Nzoia, Kajiado, Kericho, Turkana and Baringo (Rift Valley), Kisumu and Kisii (Nyanza), and Nyeri and Kirinyaga (Central). Relatedly, the sample size per county were as follows: Mombasa (n=598); Taita Taveta (n=589); Bungoma (n=596); Trans Nzoia (n=586); Nyeri (n=642); Turkana (n=362); Kisumu (n=505); Kirinyaga (n=656); Embu (n=575); Garissa (n=393); Kajiado (n=559); Kakamega (n=550); Kericho (n=580); Kisii (n=589); Makueni (n=598); Marsabit (n=304) and Nairobi (n=1,058). Due to COVID-19 lockdown and curfew, it was not possible to collect data in the counties of Mandera (n=0); Meru (n=0); Baringo (n=0)

From the selected counties, one urban and one rural location with Internet penetration (as per KNBS 2016) report were selected for data collection. The locations selected for data collection except Nairobi were as follows: Mombasa (Mombasa Town and Changamwe); Taita Taveta (Mwatate and Wundanyi); Bungoma (Bungoma Town and Kanduyi); Trans

Nzoia (Kitale Town and Kiminini); Nyeri (Nyeri Town and Naro Moru); Turkana (Lodwar); Kisumu (Kisumu City and Nyando); Kirinyaga (Kerugoya, Sagana, and Kagio); Embu (Embu Town and Siakago); Garissa (Garissa town and Balambala); Kajiado (Kajiado Town and Loitokitok); Kakamega (Kakamega Town and Shinyalu); Kericho (Kericho Town and Londiani); Kisii (Kisii Town and Nyamache); Makueni (Wote and Kibwezi); and Marsabit (Marsabit Town and Laisamis). However, since there is no distinction between urban and rural areas in Nairobi, the capital city was sub-divided according to the socio-economic demographics used by the KNBS as follows: lower income, middle income, and high income. Specifically, for lower-income, the data were collected in (Mathare, Kangemi, Kawangware, Mukuru Kwa Njenga, Mukuru Kwa Reuben, Laini Saba, Korogocho, Kariobangi, Dandora, Kayole, and Kiamaiko. For middle-income, the data were collected in Parklands, Highridge, Mountain View, Lang'ata, South C, Nyayo Highrise, Nairobi West, Woodley, Westlands. Umoja, Imara Daima, Savannah, and Eastleigh and Westlands. Runda, Kitisuru, Kileleshwa, Muthaiga, Karen, and Kilimani represented high-income neighborhoods.

Map 1:
Data colletion sites
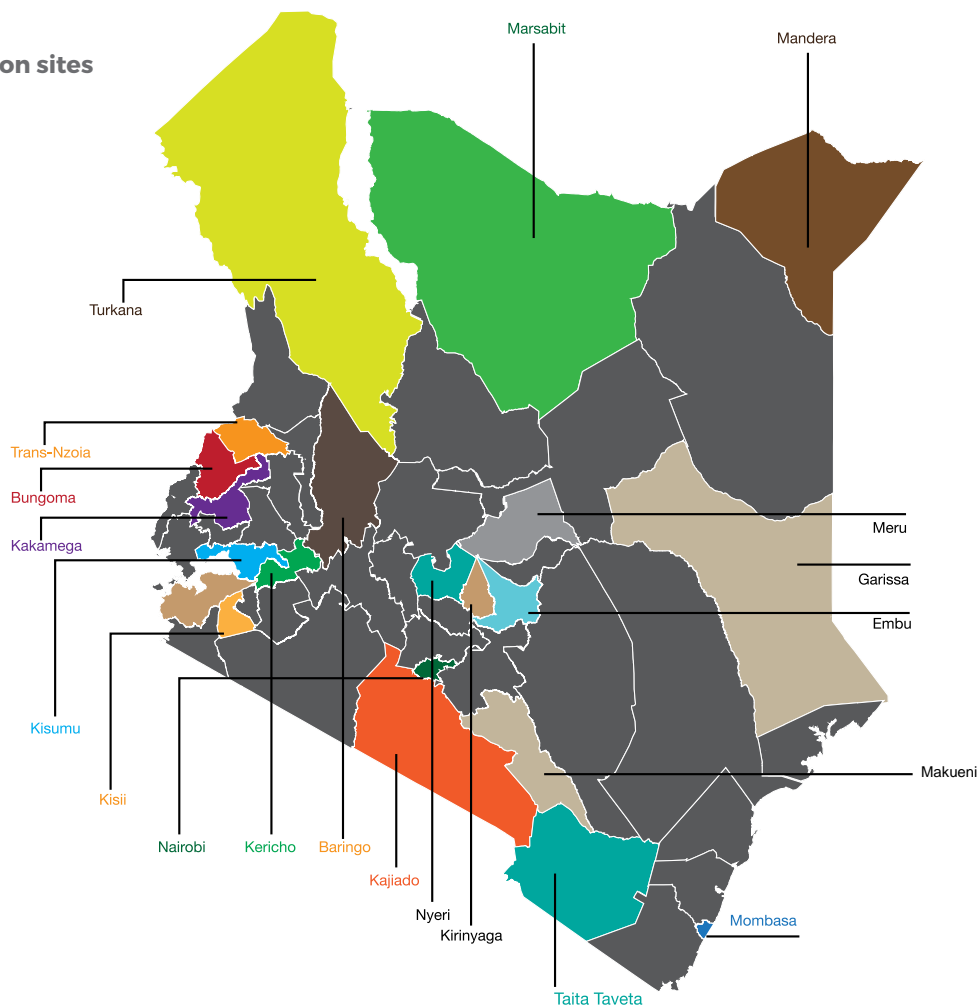
1. Social Media Consumption among Kenyans

Currently, there are many social media sites and apps dedicated to social networking. In today's digital age, most relationships are often begun and developed on social media sites and apps. Social media users create a public or semi-public profile and connect with other users within a bounded system. Social media sites and apps is the new home where families, friends, influencers, brands and bloggers converge multiple times daily to share updates and communicate.

1.1. Social Media use among Kenyans in 2020

Outside the corporate world, few people had used Microsoft Teams or Zoom in Kenya. However, with COVID-19 pandemic, these video conferencing and web conferencing platforms are now common vocabulary among ordinary citizens. Similarly, we find new types of social media being accessed locally that did not have much following before including TikTok, IMO, Likee, Vskit, Telegram and Vimeo. In terms of the most used social media among Kenyans, just as it was last year, WhatsApp (89%), Facebook (81.7%) and YouTube (51.6%), are still the top three most used social media. However, while the number of WhatsApp users have increased marginally in 2020, the number of Facebook users have decreased by 6.8%. Worth mentioning is the new entrants to the top ten most used social media in Kenya which now include TikTok (8.8%), Telegram (15.5%) and Facebook Messenger (37.4%). The other mostly used social networking sites and apps are shown in Figure 1. Twitter and Snapchat users have increased by 6.3%, and 4.4% respectively in 2020.

Most used social media apps

89%
81.7%
58.4%
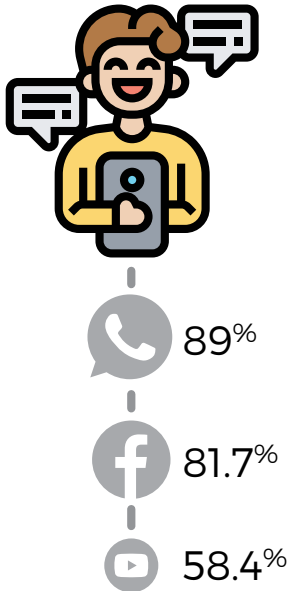
**Figure 1:
Use of Social
Media in Kenya**

WhatsApp 89%
Facebook 81.7%
YouTube 58.4%
Facebook Messenger 37.4%
Instagram 37.3%
Twitter 34.4%
Telegram 15.5%
Snapchat 13.5%
LinkedIn 9.1%
TikTok 8.8%
Skype 8.6%
Pinterest 6.0%
Vimeo 2.2%

Facebook users have decreased by 6.8% in 2020
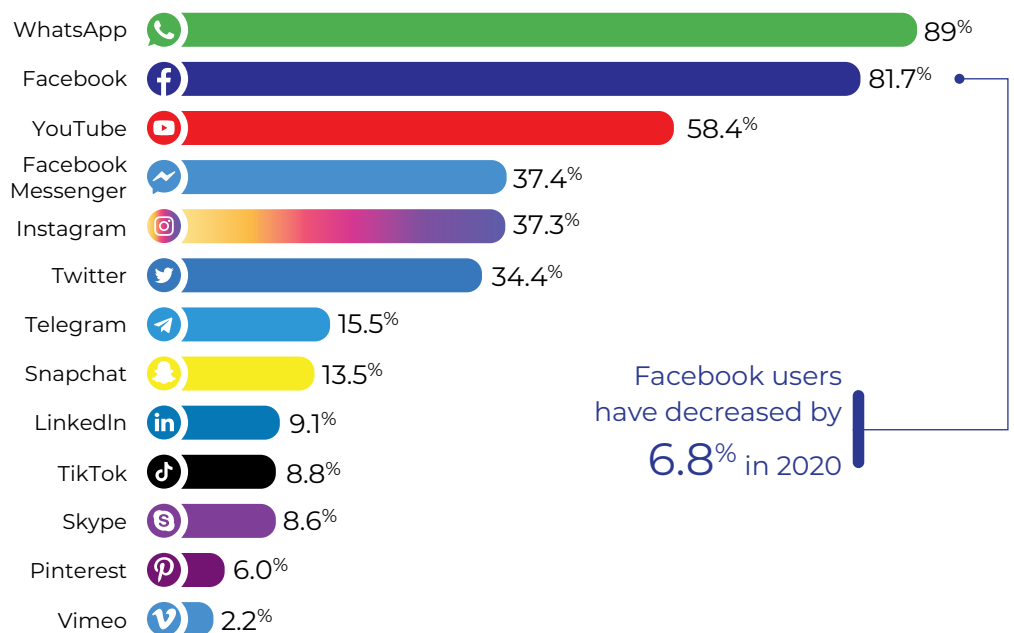
1.2. Trends and Emerging Narratives, 2020

With the uptake in visual content consumed from social media becoming highly popular, there is a surge in penetration and acceptance of other less commonly known social media sites and apps in Kenya. Figure 2 shows a comparison in the number of early users of these social networking sites and apps among the survey respondents.

Figure 2:
Social Media social networking sites and apps gaining in popularity among Kenyans

IMO	69%
Likee	15%
Vskit	6%
WeChat	6%
Google Duo	4%
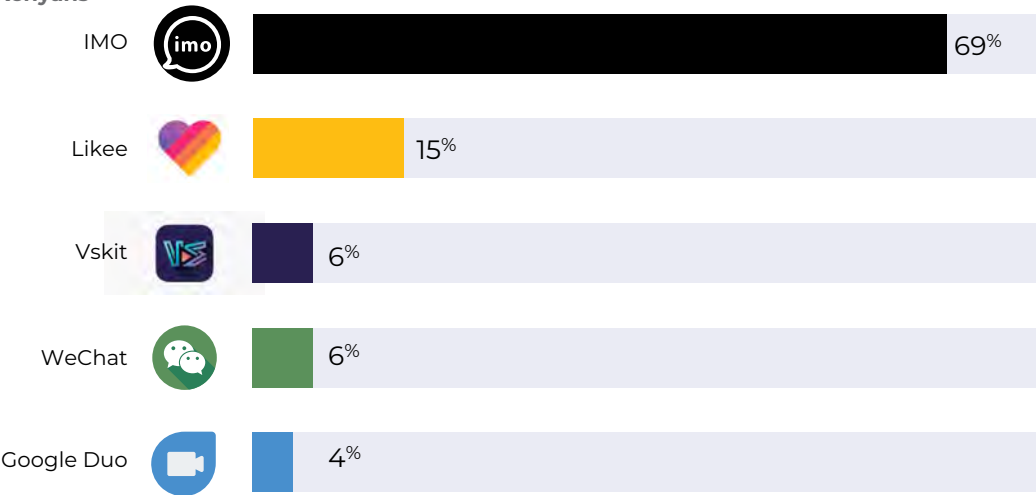
1.3. Use of Social Media by Age

Could it be that the youth in Kenya are beginning to abandon Facebook in favor of Snapchat, TikTok, and Instagram? From Figure 3 on the next page, Snapchat, TikTok, and Pinterest are much more likely to be used by users who are 14-20 years old, while the social media users who are 21-25 years old use Instagram, Snapchat, and Telegram. Social media users who are 26-35 years old are more active on the professional network LinkedIn, Skype, and Twitter. This is the age group where many people seek to establish their careers. 36-45 year-olds mostly use Facebook and WhatsApp, 26-35-year olds use LinkedIn and Skype while those 45 years and above use WhatsApp and Skype. Instagram and Snapchat are the social media social networking sites and apps of choice for most of the 21-25 year-olds, who are the most active age group on social media in 2020, unlike in 2019 where the most active age group was 26-35 years old.

Figure 3:
Use of Social Media by Age

26-35 yrs old are more active on the professional networks ***LinkedIn, Skype, and Twitter***

This is the age group where many people seek to establish their careers
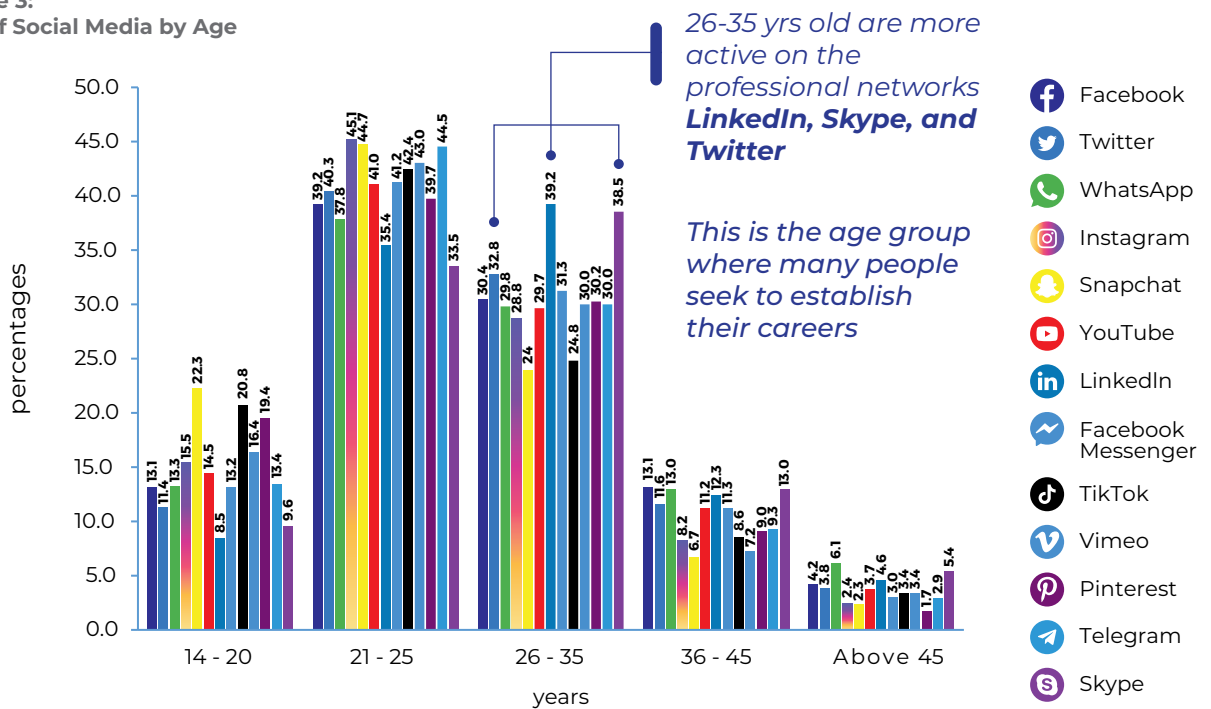
1.4. USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY GENDER

Kenyan men are more active in social media. As shown in Figure 4, men frequently use Telegram (66.1%), LinkedIn (62.1%), and Skype (61.6%). The women in Kenya are most active on Snapchat (61.9%), TikTok (53.6%) and Pinterest (50%).

Figure 4:
Use of Social Media by Gender

women are most active on Snapchat **61.9%**

men are most active on Telegram **66.1%**

20
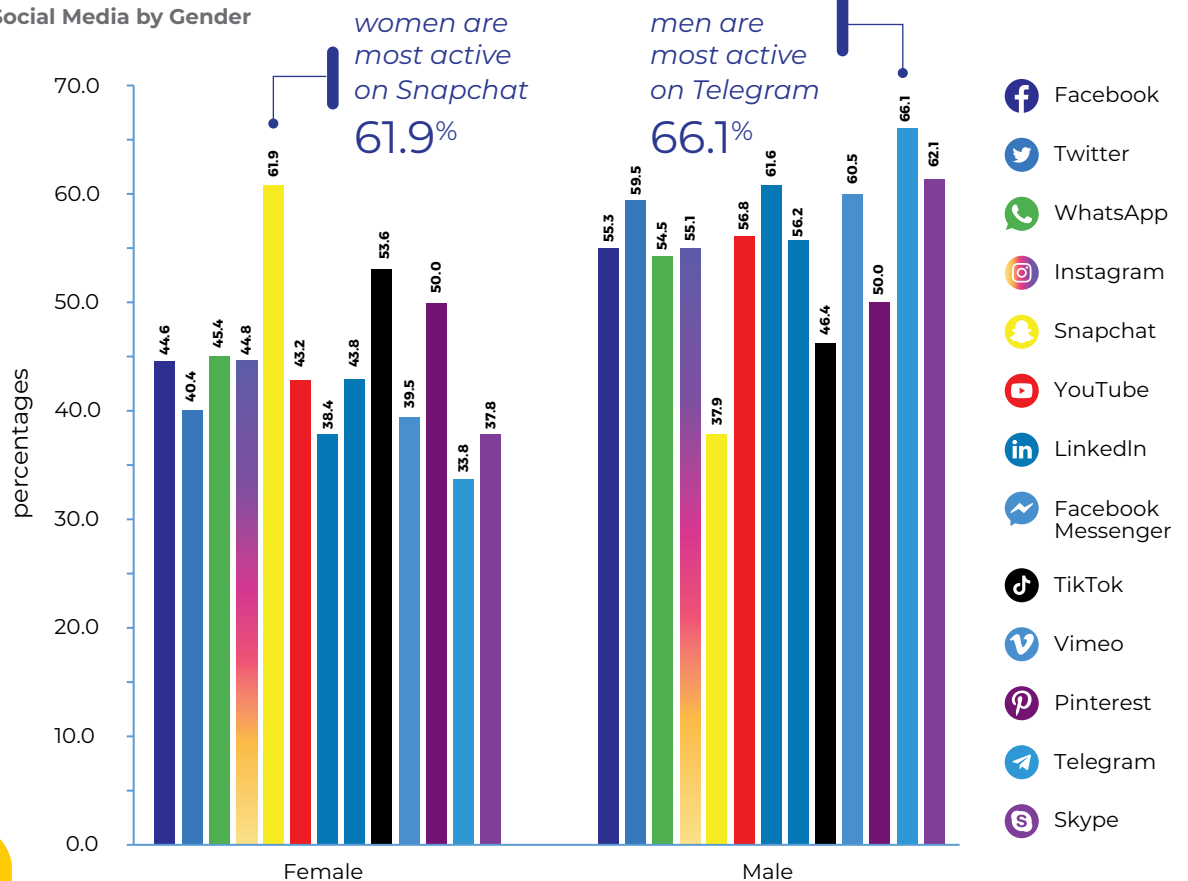
1.5. USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY GEOLOCATION

A majority of Kenyans in the rural areas use Facebook Messenger (45.3%), Facebook (44.5%) and WhatsApp (44.2%), compared to a majority of urban residents who use TikTok (67.9%), Vimeo (67.4%), and Pinterest (63.4%), as shown in Figure 5 below. There are several technological infrastructures challenges in the rural areas which prevent the use of high resource-demanding social media sites and apps. WhatsApp, and YouTube in rural areas could be attributed to being complementary services offered by the telecommunications service providers.

Figure 5:
Use of Social Media by Geolocation
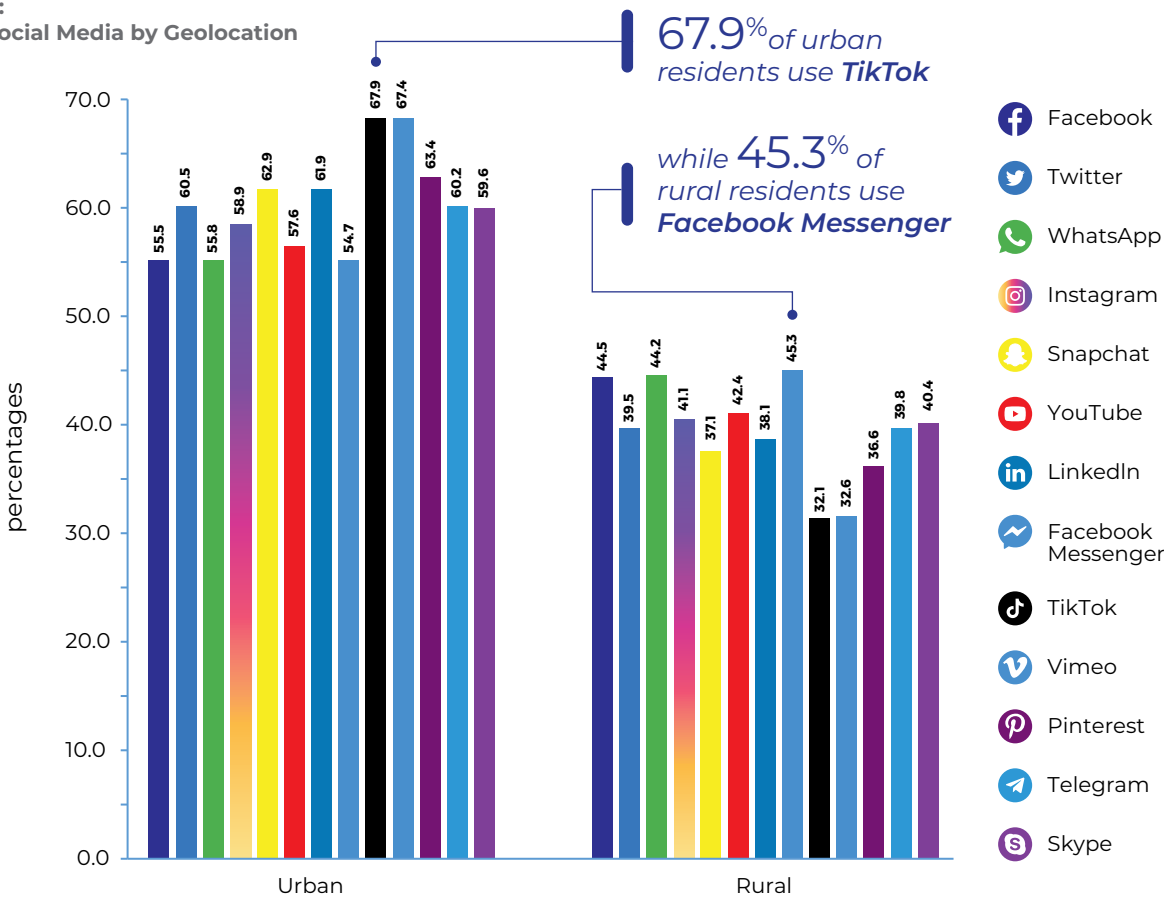
1.6. USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION

From Figure 6 on the next page, the use of Facebook is more common among those with primary school and high school levels of education. Among those with a higher education level (undergraduate and graduate), the most common social media platform is LinkedIn.

In the primary school category, the preferred social media channels are Facebook, WhatsApp, and Vimeo. For the high school graduates, the most dominant platform is Facebook (27.5%) followed by WhatsApp (26.7%) and YouTube is third with (24.1%). However, among those with college-level education, Facebook Messenger is the most preferred (40.8%). The second most popular social media platform among those with college-level education is Telegram (38.6%) followed by YouTube (38.3%). For the undergraduate category, the leading social media platform in use is LinkedIn (41.4%) followed by Pinterest (40.7%). Skype is the most used social media among those with masters and doctorate level degrees (14.9%) followed by LinkedIn (12.6%) and Twitter (9.5%). Overall, there is heavy use of social media among those with college-level education, while the least usage of social media is among the primary school graduates.

Figure 6:
Use of Social Media by Education
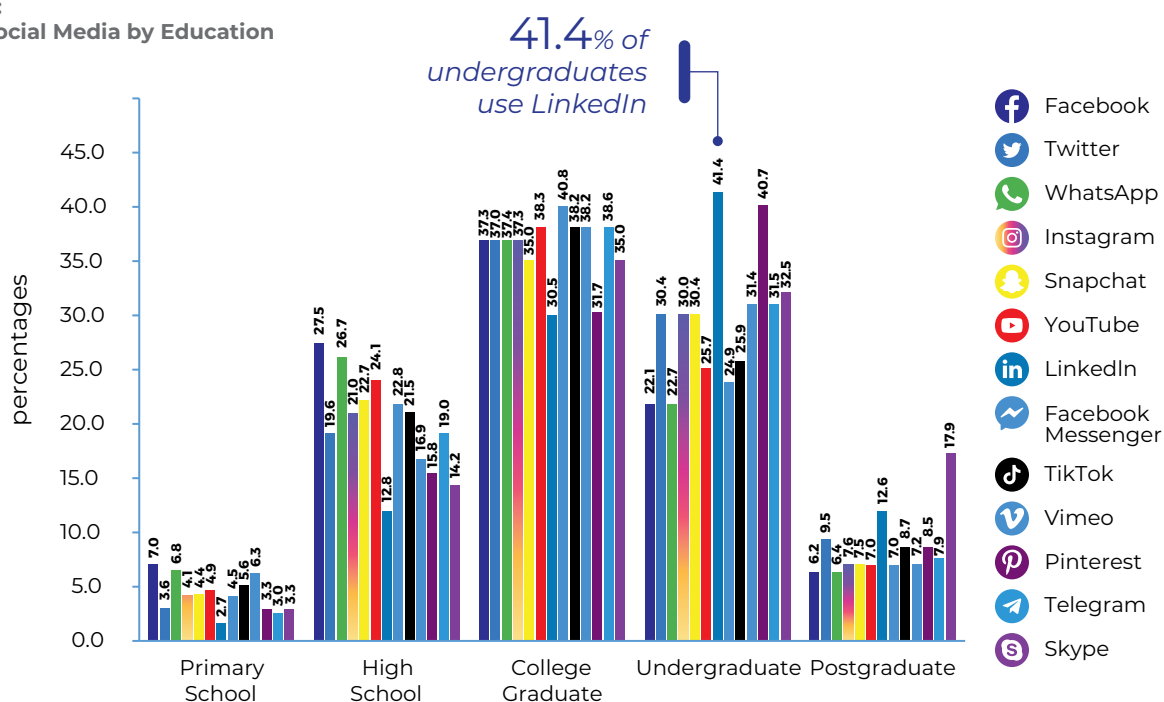
1.7.   USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY INCOME LEVELS IN NAIROBI

In Nairobi, the majority of residents, by population, live in urban slums. Thus, those who live in informal settlements or the low-income residential areas use Facebook (33.9%), WhatsApp (24.1%), and Vimeo (19.2%) as their social media platforms of choice as indicated in Figure 7. The middle-income residents of Nairobi mostly use Telegram (48.6%), Skype (48.4%), and TikTok (45.0%). The high-income Nairobi residents mostly use LinkedIn (55.2%), Vimeo (53.8%), and Snapchat (50.8%).

Figure 7:
Use of Social Media by income levels in Nairobi
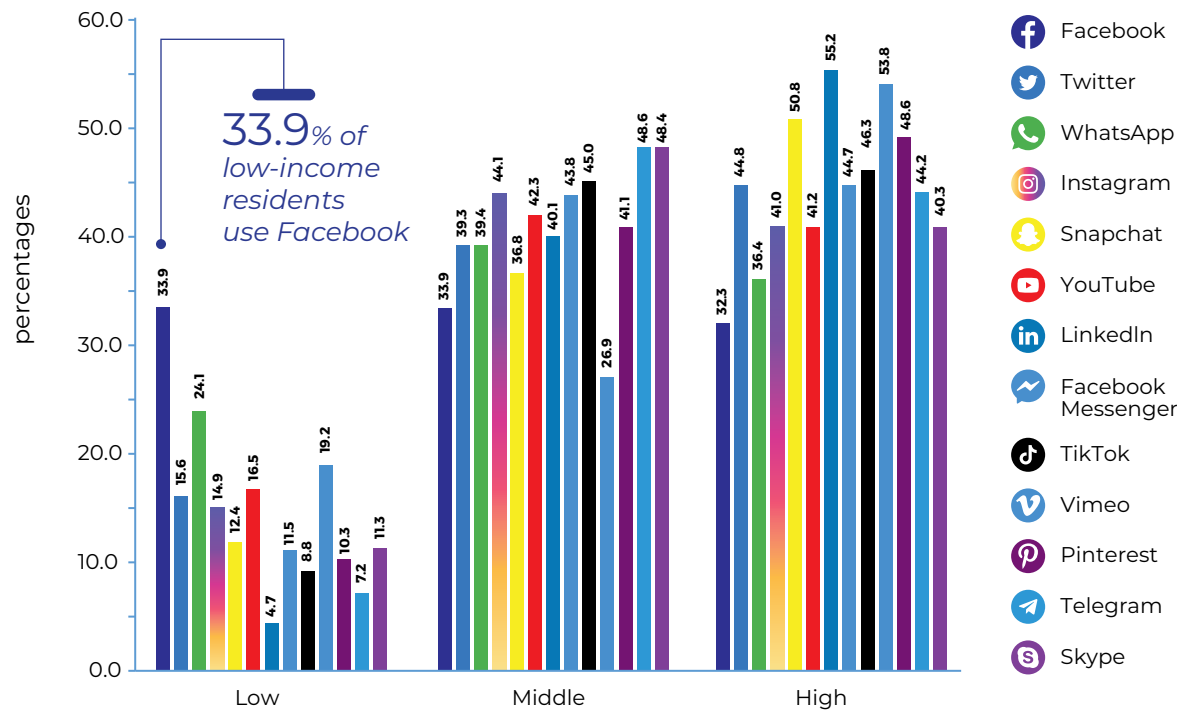
2. ISSUES OF FOCUS IN THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Most Kenyans are using social media for social issues, entertainment, education, jobs, politics, sports, religion, and environment and climate matter as shown in Figure 8. Facebook (64%), WhatsApp (80%), Facebook Messenger (30%), and Telegram (9.4%) are mostly used for social issues, while Instagram (27%), Snapchat (11%), YouTube (56%), TikTok (8%), Vimeo (1.4%), and Pinterest (4.2%) are frequently used for entertainment. LinkedIn (14%) and Skype (7%) are mostly used for job-related issues while Twitter (35%) is generally used for politics.

Figure 8:
Issues of Focus in the use of social media

Top 3 Social media apps mostly used for *entertainment* are

⬤ 59% ⬤ 56% ⬤ 47%
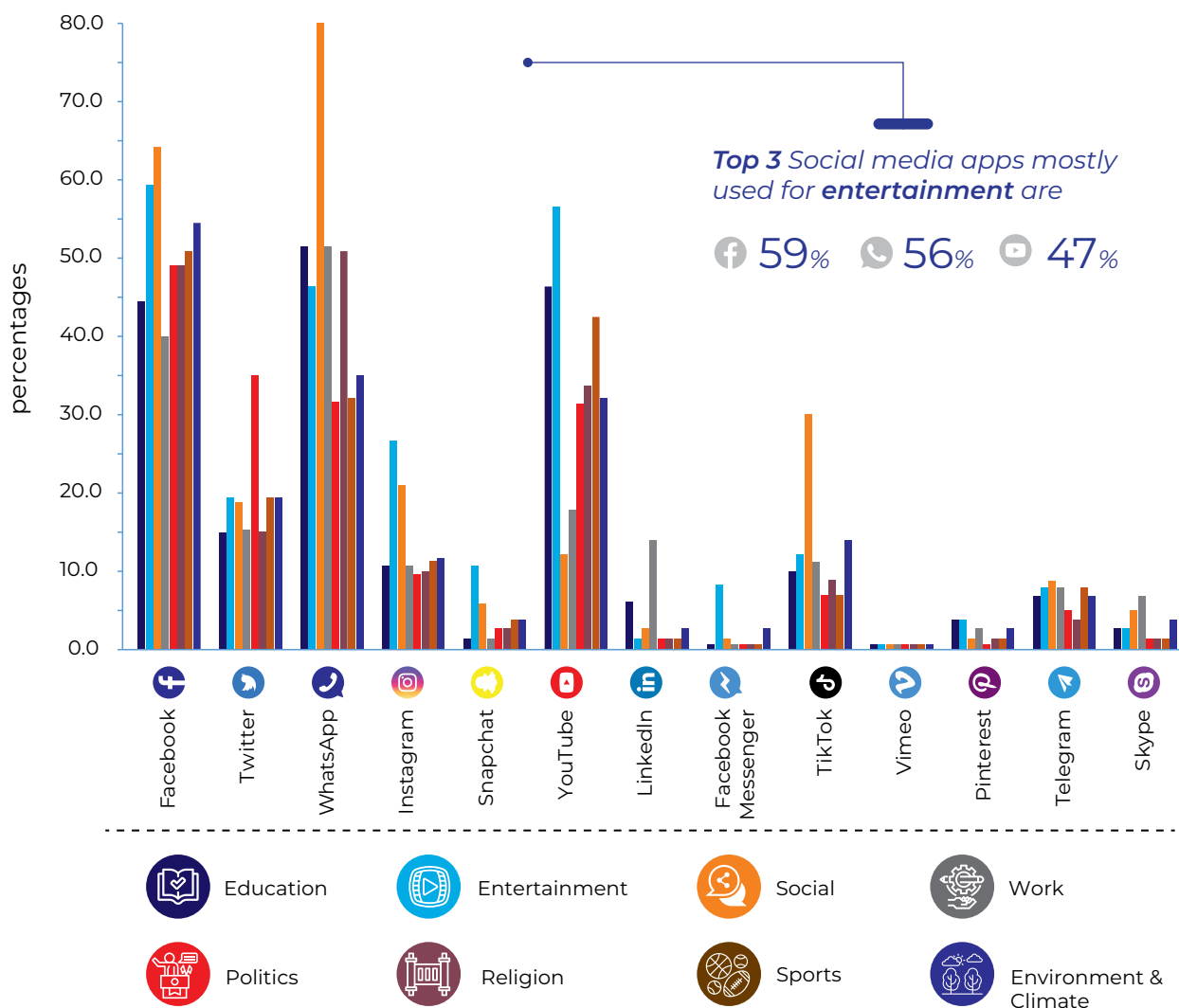
3.   FREQUENCY OF ACCESSING SOCIAL MEDIA

Most of the social media users in Kenya access more than one site and application daily, as indicated in Figure 9. The data on social media use shows that 91% of WhatsApp users access the channel daily, with 8% accessing it weekly, while 1% use it less often. Some 77% of Facebook users visit the site daily, 19% use the platform weekly, while 4% say they visit the site less often. 67% of YouTube users visit the site daily, another 28% say they use it a few days a week, while 6% say they use the video-sharing platform less often. More than two thirds (66%) of Snapchat users are on the platform daily, with 28% who say they check in weekly, while 6% visit Snapchat less often than that. Some 68% of Twitter users visit the site daily, another 26% say they visit a few days a week, while 6% say they check Twitter less often. Some 67% of Instagram users visit the site every day, another 26% say they use it a few days a week, while 6% say they use it less often.

Compared to the 2019 data, the number of Facebook daily users has decreased by 3.7% while the number of Snapchat users has increased by 17.3%, Twitter users have increased by 13.4% and Instagram users have increased by 7.2%.

Figure 9:
Frequency of Accessing Social Media

- Facebook
- Twitter
- WhatsApp
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- YouTube
- LinkedIn
- Facebook Messenger
- TikTok
- Vimeo
- Pinterest
- Telegram
- Skype
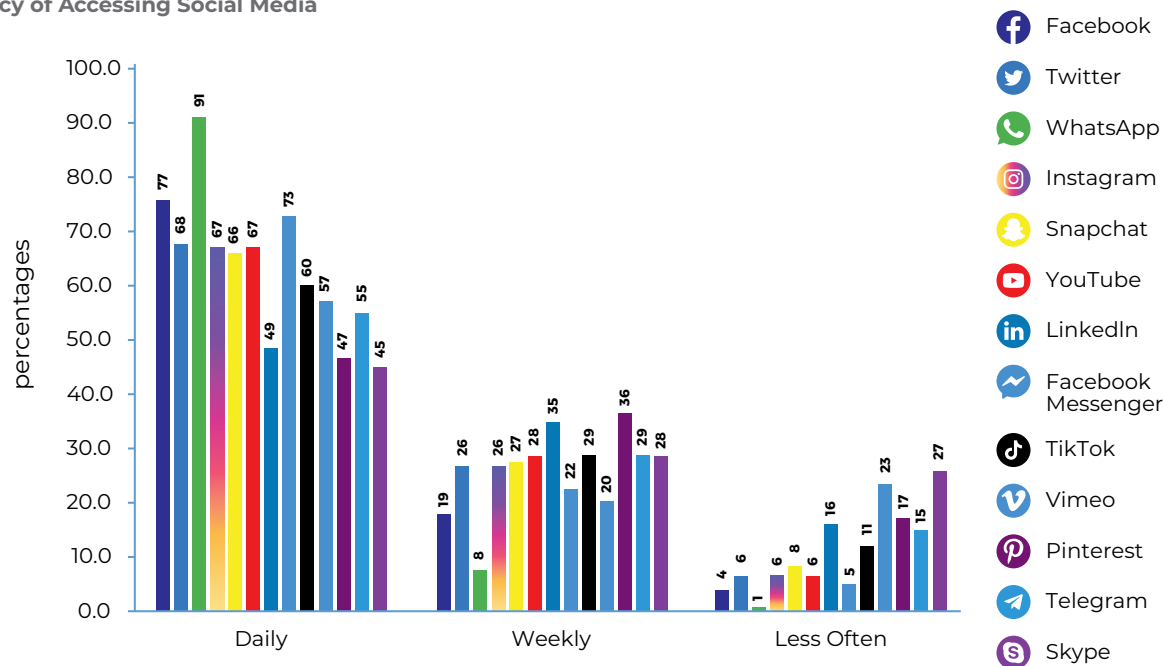
4. DEVICES USED TO ACCESS SOCIAL MEDIA

80% of the respondents stated that they accessed social media using mobile phones as compared to 78.6% in 2019, figure 10. However, the number of WhatsApp users who use social networking apps on mobile phones have decreased from 97.5% in 2019 to 90% in 2020 as many users' access WhatsApp social networking site from their offices, increasing the number of desktop (3%) and laptop (7%) users. Similarly, the number of Facebook users accessing the platform using mobile phones has decreased from 96.2% to 81% while those accessing Facebook using a desktop (7%) and laptop (13%) have increased. Skype, LinkedIn, Vimeo, YouTube, and Twitter also have a higher number of users who access the social networking sites or apps using laptops and desktops, with Skype at 49%, LinkedIn at 38%, Vimeo at 38%, YouTube at 29% and Twitter at (24%).

Figure 10:
Devices used to access Social Media

Legend:
- Facebook
- Twitter
- WhatsApp
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- YouTube
- LinkedIn
- Facebook Messenger
- TikTok
- Vimeo
- Pinterest
- Telegram
- Skype
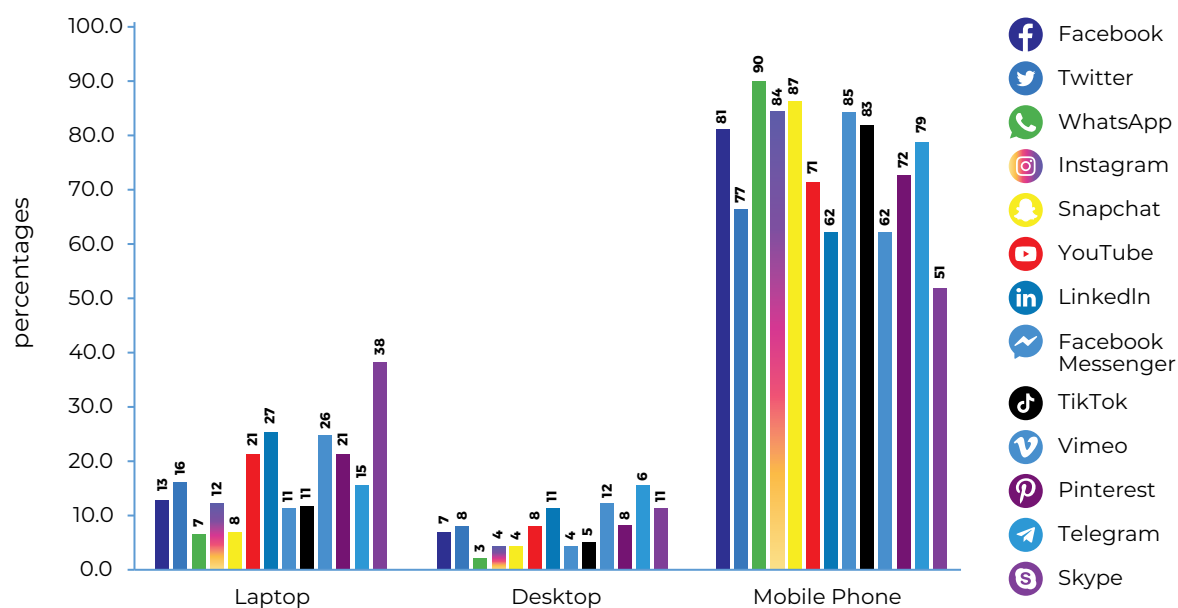
5. PHYSICAL LOCATION OF ACCESSING SOCIAL MEDIA

People access social media from different physical locations, including their homes (86.1%), public hotspots (29.2%), offices (22.6%), and cyber cafés (13.4%) as shown in Figure 11. Compared to 2019, the number of social media users who access the sites using public hotspots has increased significantly in 2020 by 5.9% while the number of users who access the sites from cyber cafés has decreased marginally by 1.1%. A majority of rural people (46.1%) still access social media using cyber cafés, while a majority of the people (61%) living in urban areas access social media from their offices. 44.9% of middle-income Nairobi residents and 45.1% of the high-income access social media in the offices, with 41.6% of the low-income population accessing social media in cyber cafés.

Figure 11:
Physical Location of Accessing Social Media
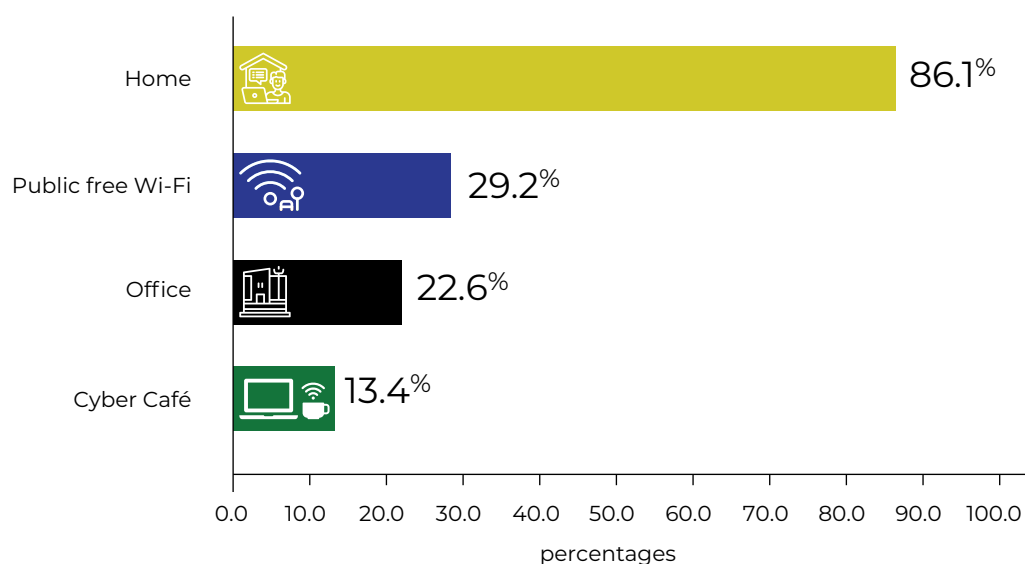
Figure 12, 45.1% of the young people aged 21-25 years old access social media from public hotspots while most of the people aged more than 25 years access social media from offices.

Figure 12:
Physical Location of Accessing Social Media by age
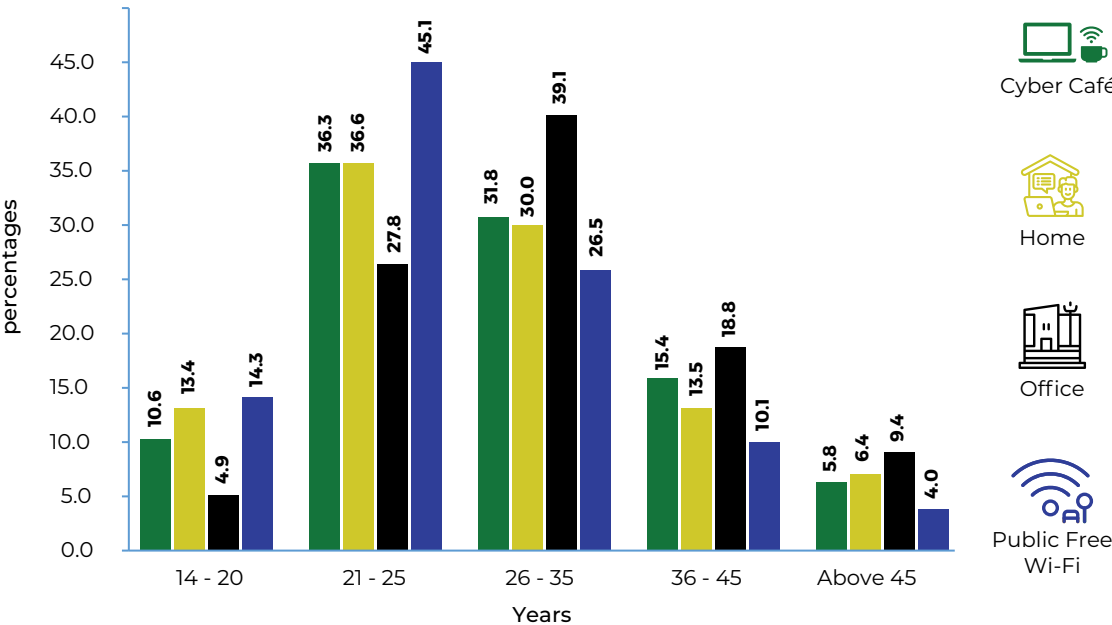
6. ACCESSING SOCIAL MEDIA USING WEB BROWSERS OR MOBILE APPS

As Kenyans become more aware of their online privacy, they are now choosing their mobile browsers to access social media over mobile apps. Those using a mobile browser to access social media indicated that the mobile browsers offer more privacy as compared to mobile apps that access personal data on users' location, contact lists and messages, and require permissions to access specified content in a user's phone to fulfill their functionalities. However, this is how mobile apps are built and monetized. 39.6% of women and 60.3% of men access their mobile networking sites using mobile browsers.

Figure 13:
Accessing Social Media using Web browser or Mobile App

Web Browser
23.3%

Mobile Apps
95.9%
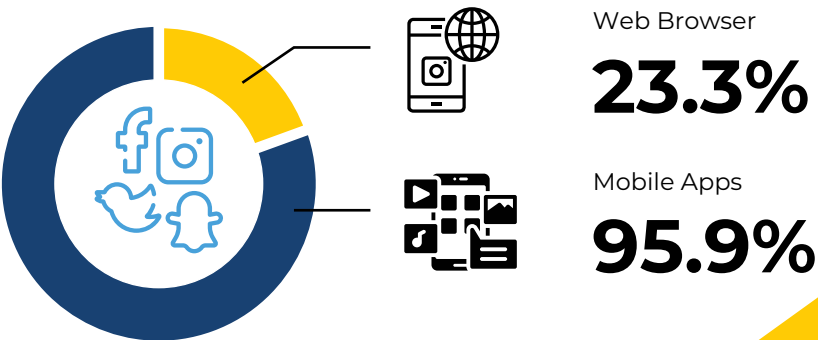
7. DAILY TIME SPENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

On average, a vast majority of Kenyans spend more than one hour daily on social media. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of social media users in Kenya spend more than two hours interacting with the social media on a daily basis as shown in Figure 14. However, a majority (54%) of Kenyans spend less than one hour on social media per day.

Figure 14:
Daily time spent on Social Media
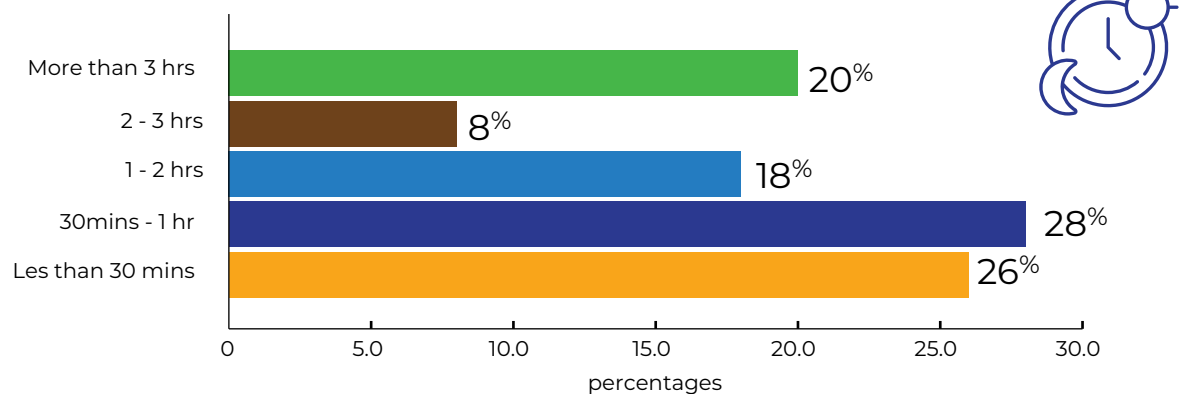
From Figure 15, 30% of WhatsApp users, 21% of YouTube users and 20% of Vimeo users spend more than 3 hours online daily on these social networking sites and apps, while 60% of WhatsApp users, 46% of Facebook users and 29% of YouTube users spend more than 2 hours online everyday as shown in figure 15. Quite surprisingly, LinkedIn has a relatively high number of users (43%) who use it for less than thirty minutes daily, despite its popularity in job-related issues.

Figure 15:
Daily time spent on Social Media

	Les than 30 mins	30mins - 1 hr	2 - 3 hrs	More than 3 hrs	1 - 2 hrs
Facebook	27%	32%	17%	7%	17%
Twitter	30%	30%	16%	8%	16%
WhatsApp	16%	25%	20%	10%	30%
Instagram	28%	28%	17%	9%	17%
Snapchat	34%	26%	15%	8%	16%
YouTube	18%	27%	24%	11%	21%
LinkedIn	43%	25%	14%	6%	12%
Facebook Messenger	38%	28%	14%	6%	14%
TikTok	33%	26%	19%	6%	16%
Vimeo	35%	25%	13%	6%	20%
Pinterest	38%	28%	14%	6%	15%
Telegram	38%	24%	16%	9%	13%
Skype	36%	25%	16%	9%	14%
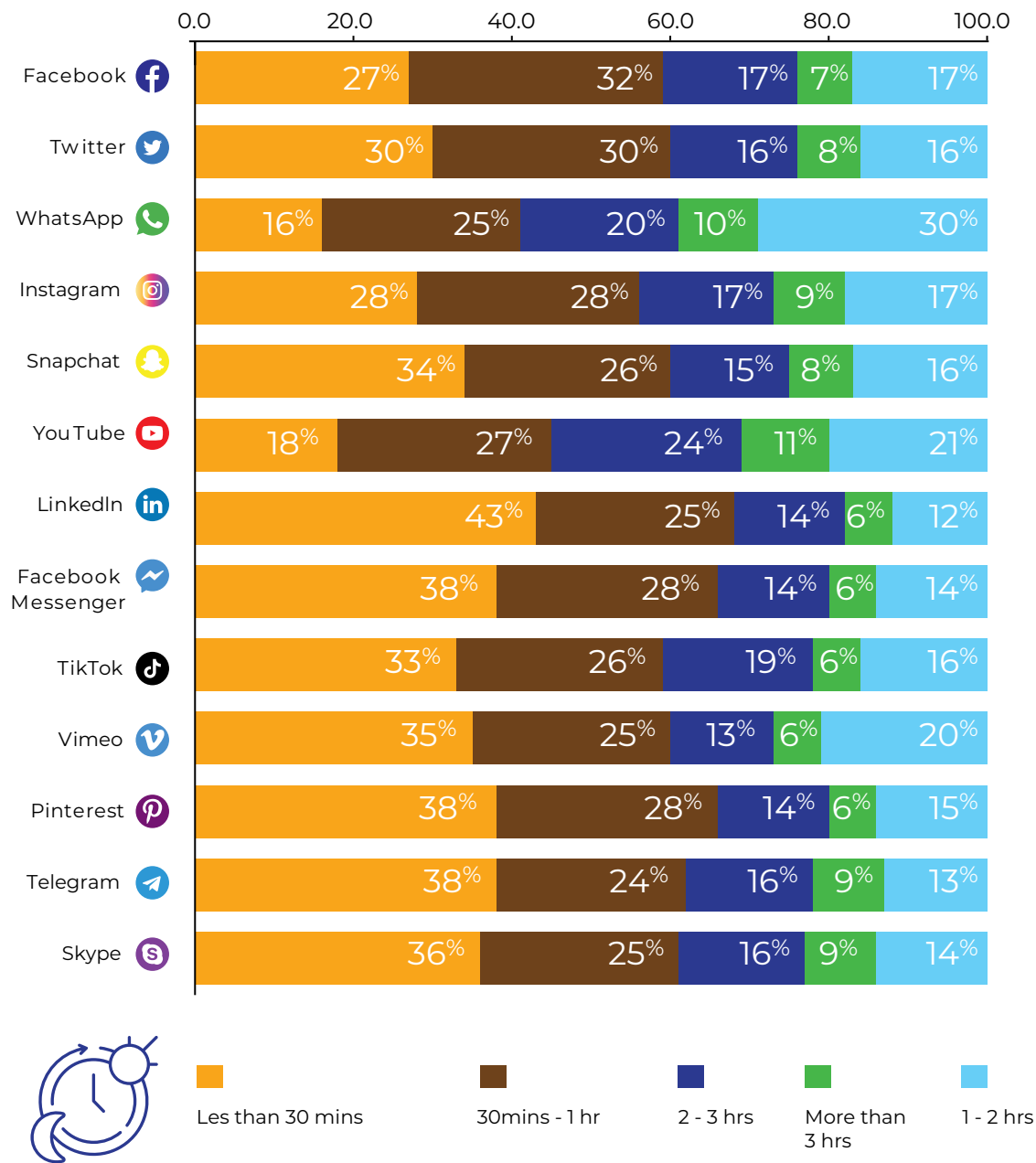
8. Following Brands Online

Social media users follow brands they admire to learn about products or services, to get updated with company news, to know about recent promotions or to connect with people who have similar tastes as themselves. Some people will also follow a brand as loyal customers who want to communicate with the organization or to reach out for customer service. Some social media users will follow a brand during a marketing campaign or when a brand is mentioned by influencers they like.

From Figure 16, 78% of Kenyans follow brands on social media. 38.9% of the users aged between 21-25 years old and 30.5% of the 26-25 year-olds follow their favourite brands online. The older social media users are less likely to follow brands on social media, with only 12.2% of the those aged between 36-45 years old and 4.9% of the users aged 46 years and above follow brands online. Urban social media users are more likely to follow brands online than their rural counterparts. 55.8% of the urban social media users say that they follow brands online, compared to 44.2% of the rural users.

**Figure 16:
Following Brands Online**

Not Following Brands
22%

Following Brands
78%
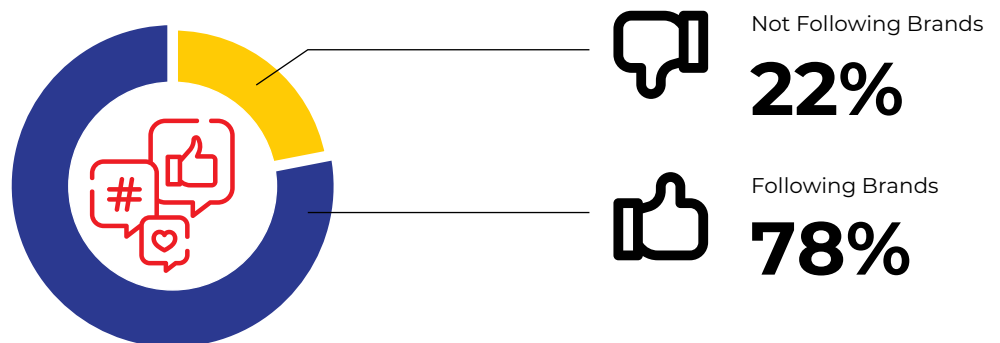
9. Time of day when Kenyans access Social Media

From Figure 17, a majority (52.2%) of Kenyans spend more time on social media at night and in the evening hours. This could be attributed to the fact that these are the times of the day when most Kenyans are at home after their day's work. Kenyans spend a small amount of time on social media in the mornings, with only 17.8% accessing these social media sites and apps, which could be linked to the fact that this is the period most people are busy with their daily routines. Most Kenyan men (56.4%) spend more time on social media at night, while most women (47.4%) spend their time on social media platforms in the afternoons.

A majority of the age groups 21-25 years old (40.3%) spend a lot of time on social media during the night while the older 36-45 year-olds access the social media in the morning hours. Kenyans residing in rural areas mostly spend their time on social media in the evenings (45.8%) and afternoons (45.5%), while urban residents access social media during the night (56.5%) and in the morning (59.5%).

Figure 17:
Time of the day when Kenyans access Social Media
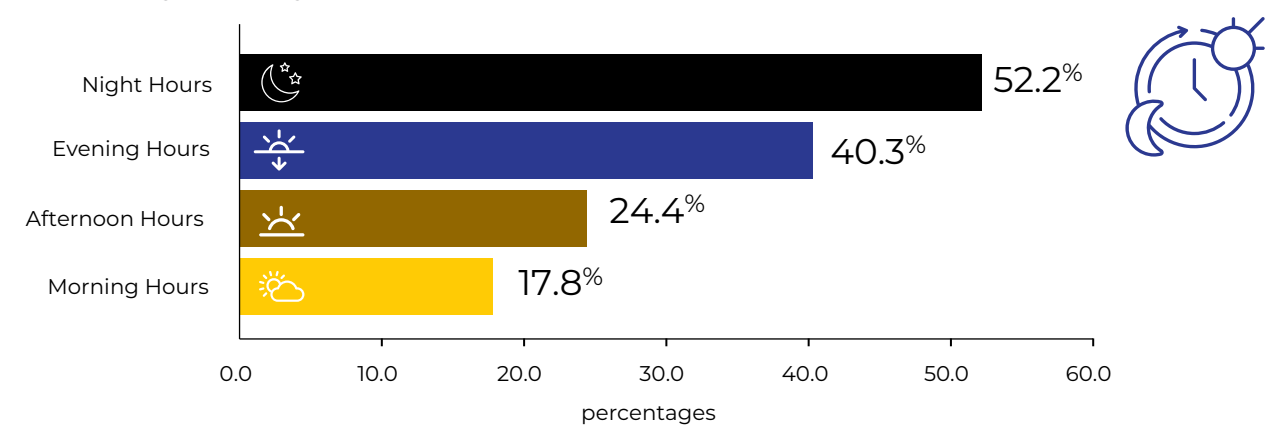
10. Online Harassment

Online harassment is a major problem faced by hundreds of people, including presidents. Some people have opted to remove their social media profiles in hopes of avoiding online harassment. The report adopted the characterization of "less severe" type of online harassment to include abusive behavior, offensive name-calling, impersonation and purposeful embarrassment on social media. The report also adopted classification of "more severe" types of harassment to include physical threats, stalking, sustained harassment and sexual harassment on social media.

10.1. Online Harassment – Less severe forms

The prevalence of "less severe" online harassment among Kenyans is high, with 33% of social media users in Kenya having personally had a negative online experience such as abusive behavior, offensive name-calling, impersonation or purposeful embarrassment in some way. The experiences with the "less severe" type of online harassment vary by age, gender and geolocation. From Figure 18, 40% of social media users aged 21-25 years old and 32% of those aged 26-35 years have personally experienced the "less severe" forms of online harassment. Therefore, the younger adults are experiencing an unusually high rate of online harassment as compared with the older people, as only 4% of social media users aged more than 45 years reported having experienced online harassment.

Figure 18:
Online Harassment by age – Less severe forms
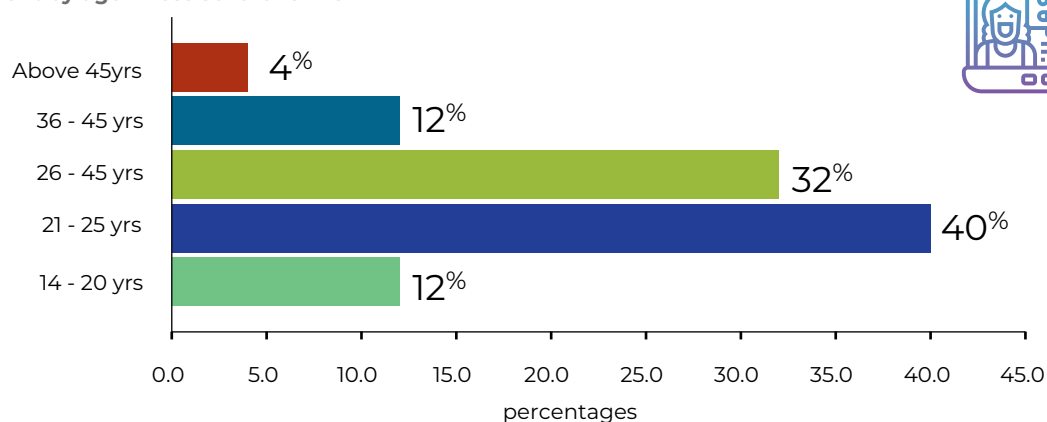
While using social media, men are somewhat more likely to experience certain "less severe" kinds of harassment such as offensive name-calling, impersonation or purposeful embarrassment compared to women. Fifty-six percent (56%) of men have had some sort of "less severe" online harassment experience compared with 44% of women. Urban residents are more likely to experience "less severe" kinds of harassment than those in rural areas. More than half (55.4%) of the social media users in urban areas have experienced some type of less severe online harassment compared to 44.6% of rural area residents. Still, online harassment is more common among the residents of low-income areas (47.6%) in Nairobi than those living in the middle-income (28.5%) and high-income (23.9%) areas (Figure 19).

Figure 19:
Online Harassment by income levels – Less severe forms
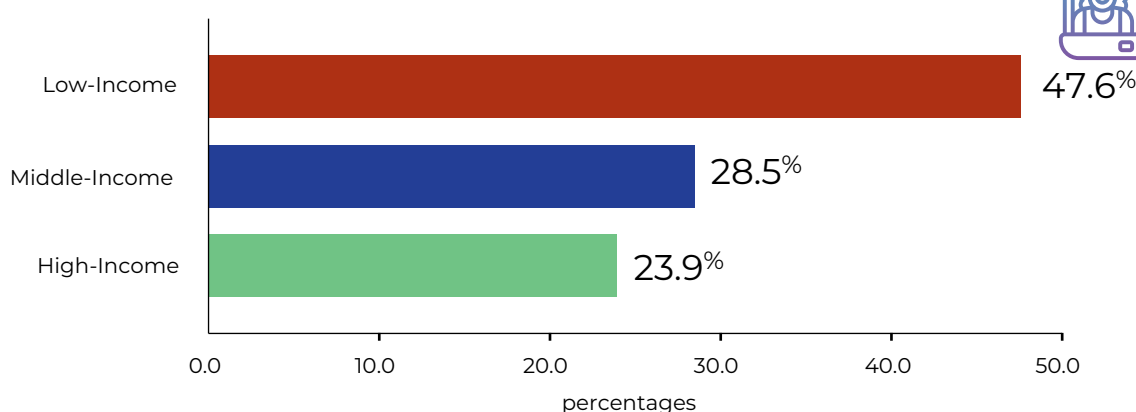
10.2. ONLINE HARASSMENT – SEVERE FORMS

Severe forms of cyber harassment can have serious consequences on the lives of the victims. Some 21.1% of Kenyans have experienced the "more severe" forms of online harassment. Over thirty-eight percent (38.4%) of social media users aged 21-25 years have personally experienced the "more severe" forms of online harassment, followed by 26-35 year-olds at 33.6%, 36-45 year-olds at 12.4%, 14-20 year-olds at 11% and 46 years and above at 4.6%. In addition, 53.5% of men and 46.4% of women indicate that they have experienced online harassment including physical threats, stalking, sustained harassment and sexual harassment on social media.

Social media harassment is increasingly common and with technology eliminating the traditional borders, perpetrators of social media facilitated crimes could be miles away from the victim. Social media facilitated crimes usually have dreadful real-world impacts on victims. More than two-thirds (61.3%) of the social media users in urban areas have experienced some type of severe online harassment compared to 38.7% of rural area residents. More than half (55.5%) of the residents of the low-income areas in Nairobi have experienced "more severe" kinds of online harassment, which is more than twice that (22.1%) of those living in the middle-income and high-income areas (22.4%), as shown in Figure 20.

Figure 20:
**Target of severe online harassment by income levels, Nairobi**
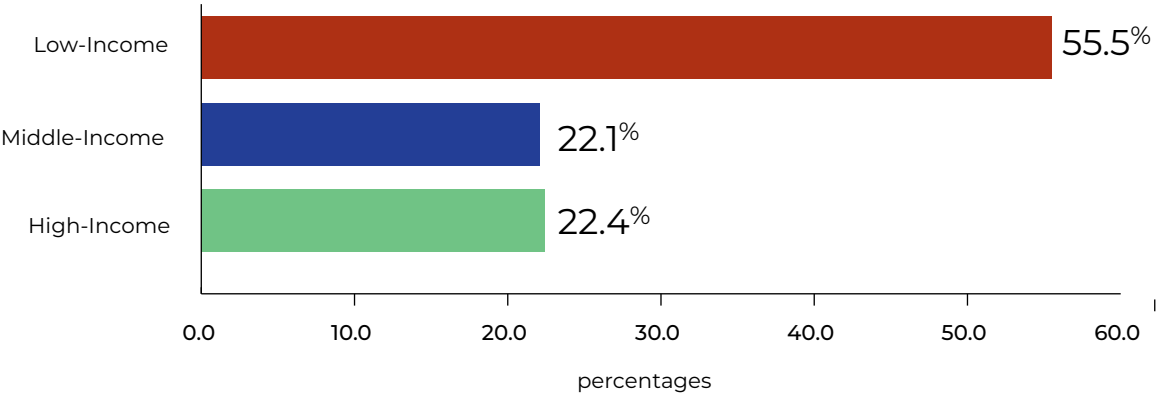
11. Use of Pseudonyms

A pseudonym is a fictitious name used by a social media account-holder to conceal his or her identity. Whether one should use anonymous online identity or their real-name when using social media has been a common debate over the years. The supporters of the use of pseudonyms have indicated that anonymous identity has its positive functions including its use by people with a dissenting point of view, whistleblowers, and victims of violence. The people who argue in support of the use of real names also point out that using one's real identity fosters civil discourse and discourages social media trolling, deceiving, spamming, and cyberbullying. Therefore, the question of whether using or not using pseudonyms makes one a better online citizen will continue to remain unanswered. The use of pseudonyms has become common, with 47.7% of Kenyans using pseudonyms when accessing social media.

The use of pseudonyms in some social and political roles can enrich online interactions by enabling unfiltered online conversations. Most influencers use their real names to stand out from the crowd. Most men (57.8%) have used pseudonyms in online conversations when using social media, compared with 42.1% of women. Over forty percent (40.5%) of social media users aged 21-25 years old have used pseudonyms in online conversations, followed by 26-35 year-olds at 28.8%, and 14-20 year-olds at 16.3%. 58.8% of the social media users in urban areas have used pseudonyms in online conversations compared with 41.2% of those in rural areas. The use of pseudonyms is common among Nairobi's low-income residents, with half of them (50%) having used anonymous identities in their online conversations. The number of people who have used pseudonyms in online conversations when using social media is lower among Nairobi's middle-income residents at 25.7% and high-income residents at 24.3%.

Research has shown anonymity can lead to negative behavior online, particularly against women such as trolling, flaming, lurking, and deception, as perpetrators may be less accountable for the consequences of their actions. Most men (63.1%) have used pseudonyms on Twitter, whereas most of the women (42.7%) have used pseudonyms on Facebook online conversations, as highlighted in Figure 21. Social media users aged 14-20 years old (18.2%) and 21-25 years old (43%) use pseudonyms on Instagram while those aged 26-35 years old (35.5%) and 36-45 years old (12.4%) use pseudonyms on Twitter. Many urban residents use pseudonyms in online conversations when using Twitter (64%), Instagram (63.1%), and Facebook (57.7%). 57.3% of Nairobi's low-income residents use pseudonyms on Facebook, with 23.6% using them on Twitter, and 20.4% on Instagram. The middle-income population in Nairobi uses pseudonyms on Facebook (19.6%), Twitter (46%) and Instagram (44%) while the high-income residents use pseudonyms on Facebook (23.1%), Twitter (30.3%) and Instagram (35.2%).

Figure 21:
Use of Pseudonyms on specific social media channels by gender
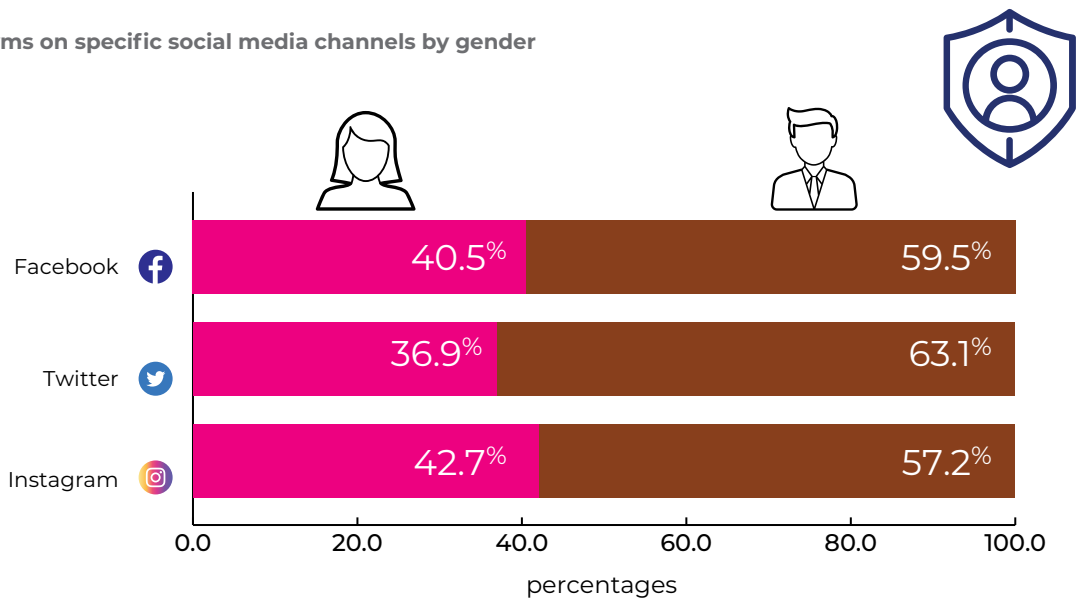
12. MOTIVATIONS FOR USING SOCIAL MEDIA

People use social media to get in contact with new people, to keep in touch with their friends, socializing, entertainment, information seeking, personal utility and social surveillance or voyeurism and self-promotion, and exhibitionism.

Figure 22:
Motivations for using Social Media
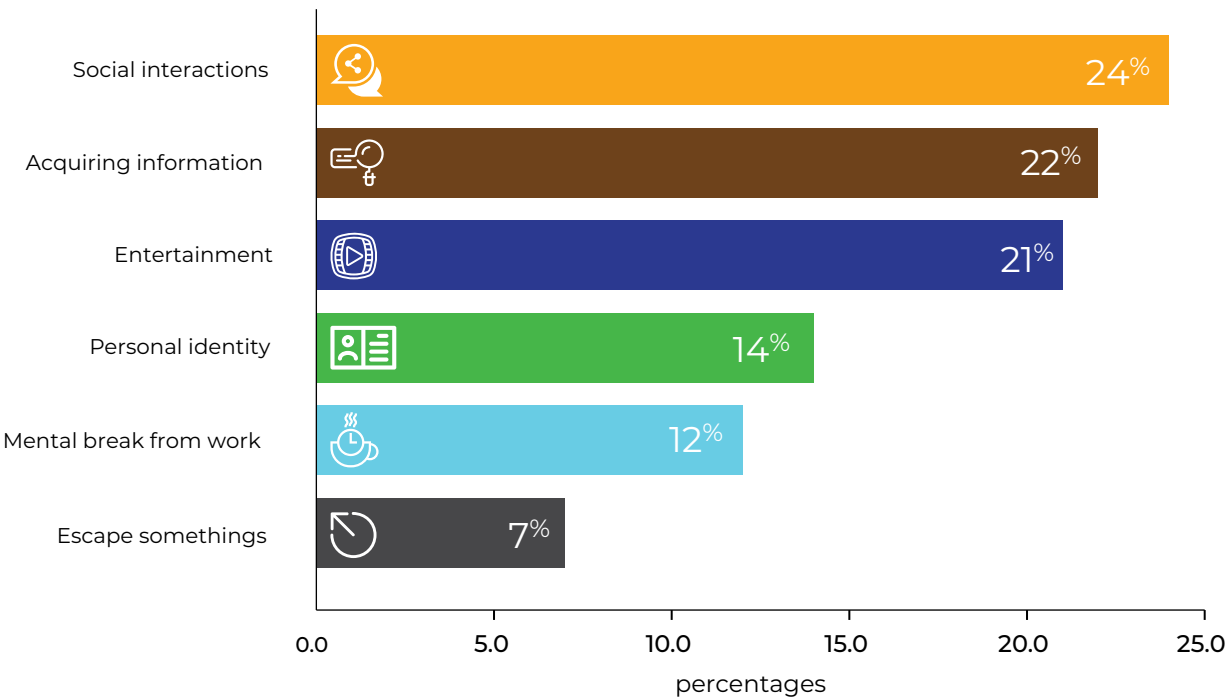
13. Motivations for using specific social media

The report identifies six motivations for using social media among Kenyans, which include information acquisition, entertainment, social interactions, personal identity, a mental break from work, and escaping social realities. The motivations for using Facebook Messenger (35.4%), WhatsApp (30.8%) and Telegram (25.8%) are social interactions with family members, friends, and connection with the outside world, while the motivations for using TikTok (37.1%), YouTube (33.9%) and Snapchat (30.9%) are for personal entertainment and pleasure (emotional experiences). On the other hand, the motivations for using Facebook Messenger (17.7%), Skype (16.5%) and LinkedIn (16%) are to create a personal identity (personal stability, social status, need for self-respect) while for LinkedIn (34.5%), Pinterest (25.6%) and Twitter (25.4%) is to acquire information (news, knowledge, exploration) as indicated in Figure 23. The motivation for using Vimeo (11.58%), Pinterest (10.6%), and TikTok (10.4%) are to escape societal realities (release tension, shifting attention from unpleasant happenings).

Most Kenyans access social media from their offices. One of the reasons employees use social media while at work is to take short mental breaks to refresh themselves and their minds. The social networking sites and apps mostly used by employees when they want to take breaks from their work are TikTok (37.1%), YouTube (33.9%), and Snapchat (30.9%). The use of social media at work could also help employees in making or supporting their professional connections and in getting information that could help them solve work-related problems.

Figure 23:
Motivations for using Social Media
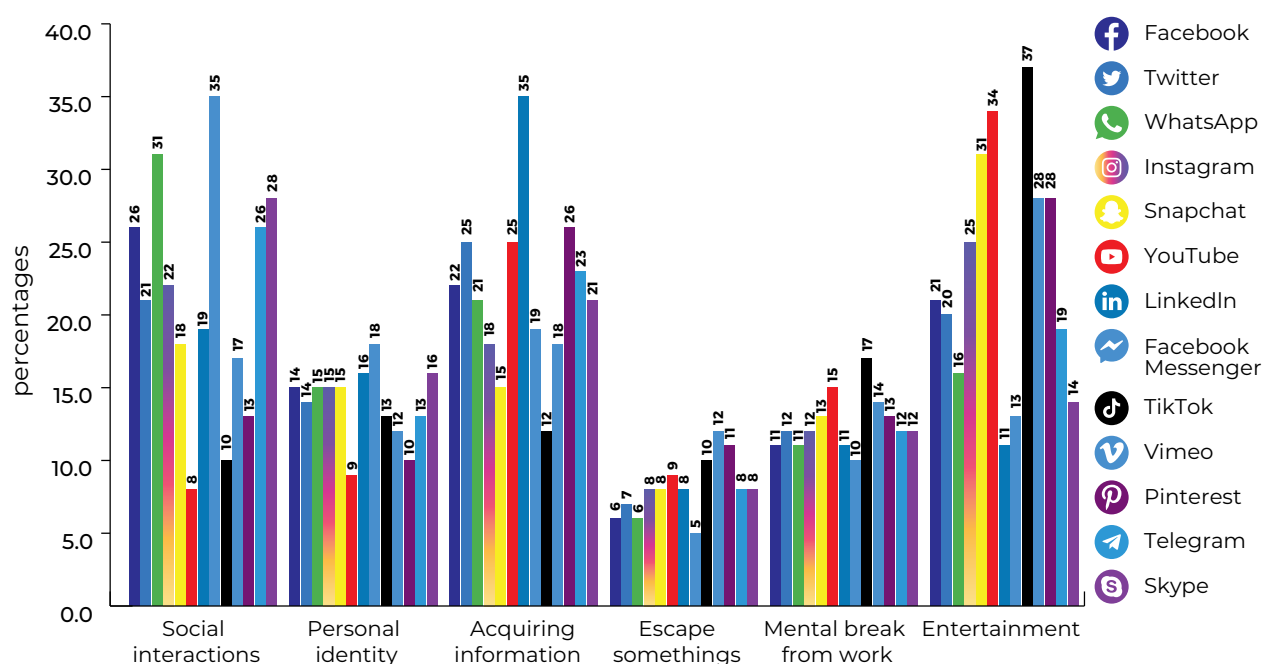
14. Reading of Online Blogs Among Kenyans

Kenya has a robust blogger community with hundreds of active online bloggers. Blogs allow individuals and organizations to engage in discussions with the blog authors and readers over time, facilitating the exchange of ideas. As such, Kenyans are increasingly turning to blogs for news, information, politics, and entertainment. Compared with last year's data, the number of Kenyans who read online blogs has increased by 12.9% from 74% in 2019 to 86.9% in 2020. Figure 24 shows the top ten types of online blogs Kenyans read including Entertainment, Education, Business, Sports, Politics, Agriculture, Food and Fashion, Health, environment, and Travel.

Figure 24:
Types of online blogs Kenyans are reading

Type	Percentage
Entertainment	69.9%
Education	59.9%
Business	47.6%
Sports	42.7%
Politics	41.3%
Agriculture	40.0%
Food & Fashion	34.3%
Health	34.3%
Environment	22.3%
Travel	16.7%

percentages
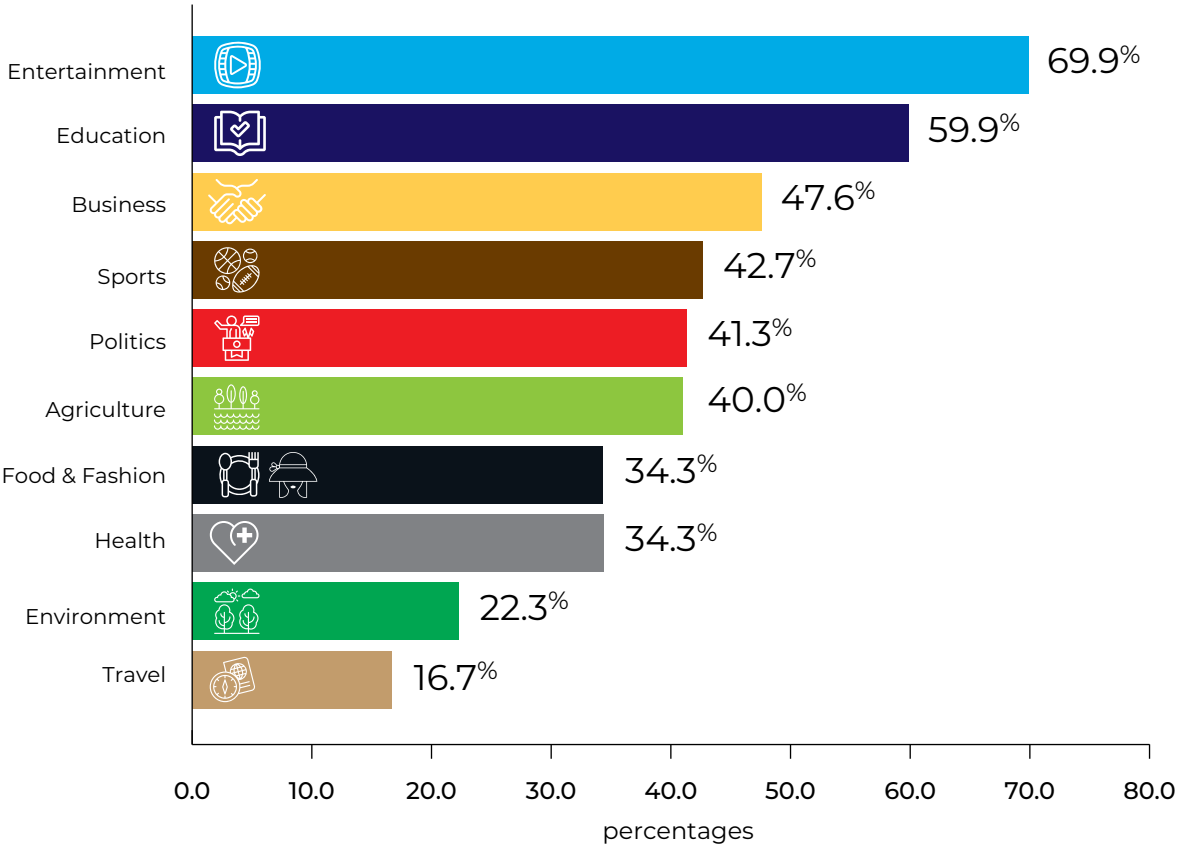
14.1. Reading of Online Blogs by Gender

Blogs can attract attention and exert considerable influence on individuals, politics, fashion, and consumer goods. As indicated in figure 25, most Kenyan women are reading Food and Fashion (60.4%), Travel (52.1%), and Health blogs while Kenyan men are regularly reading Sports (69.7%), Politics (64.5%) and Business blogs (56.7%). While most men read Sports blogs, very few women read them, and whereas most women read Food and Fashion blogs, and very few men read them, which is a direct opposite in likes and preferences of the two genders regarding the type of the online blogs they read.

Figure 25:
Reading Of Online Blogs by Gender
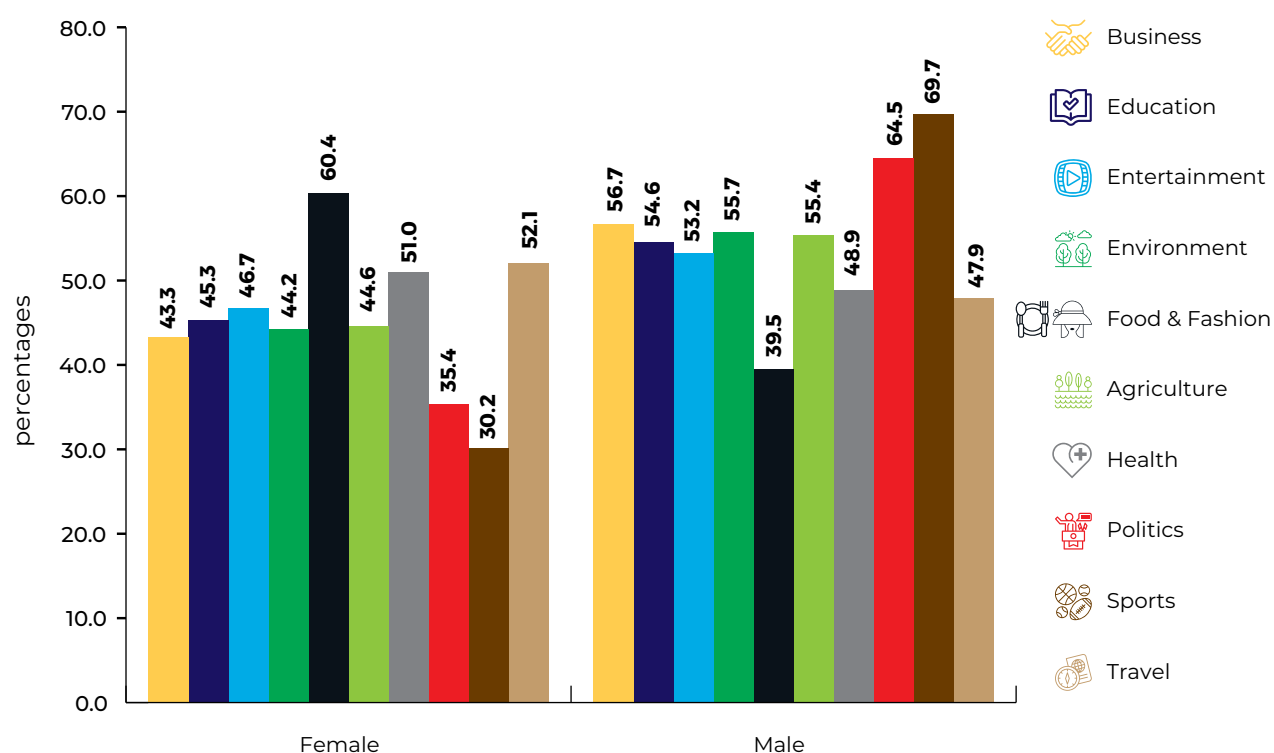
14.2. Reading of Online Blogs by Geolocation

The rural population mostly read the Travel (48.6%), Health (46.6%) and Entertainment (46.4%) blogs as compared to the urban residents who mostly read Business (58.2%), Environment (57.7%) and Education (56.9%) blogs as indicated in Figure 26.

Figure 26:
Reading of Online Blogs by Geolocation
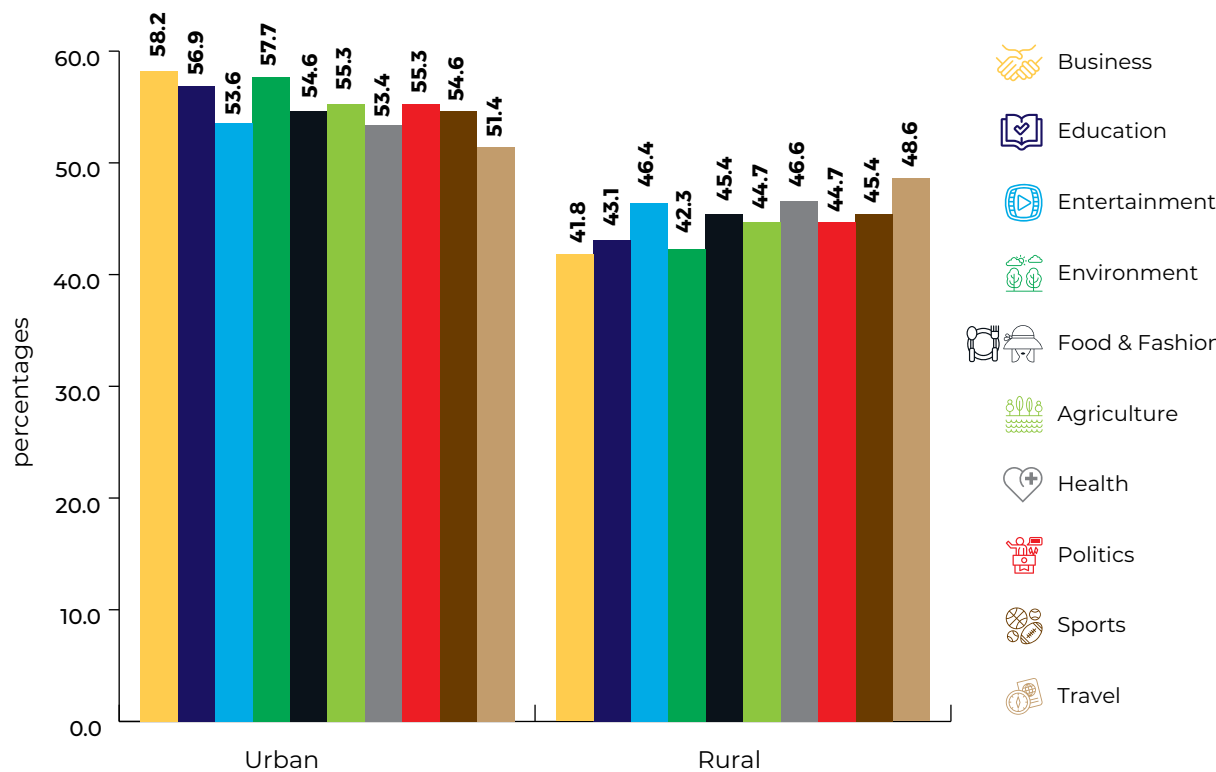
14.3. Reading of Online Blogs by Income levels in Nairobi

Nairobi's low-income area residents mostly read Entertainment (31.2%), Sports (29.5%), and Education (28.1%) blogs. The residents of middle-income areas in Nairobi read Travel (43.5%), Politics (40.5%), and Health (39.7%) blogs as shown in Figure 27. Residents of Nairobi's high-income areas read Environment (53.9%), Travel (47.5%), and Health (45.2%) blogs.

Figure 27:
Reading of Online Blogs by Income levels in Nairobi
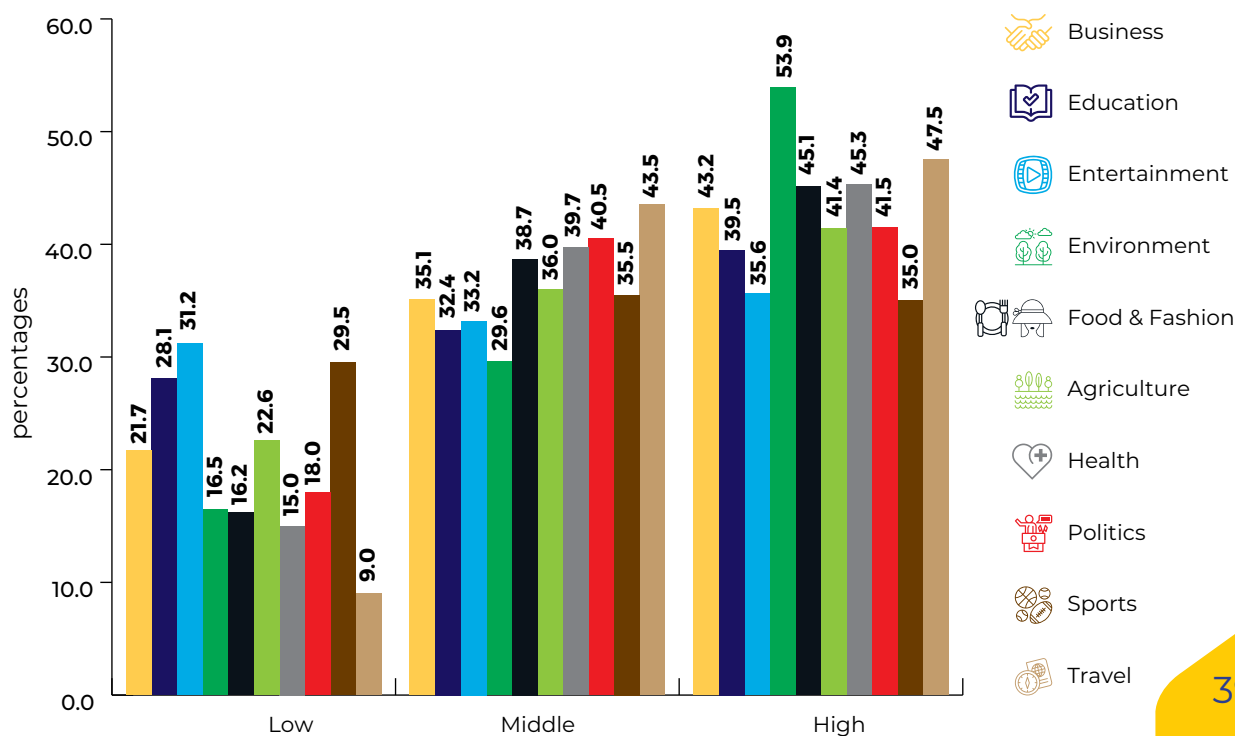
14.4. FREQUENCY OF READING ONLINE BLOGS

Besides facilitating online discussions, communicating information, and opinions, blogs help individuals to establish identity, status, authority, and connections among online communities.65% of the blog readers in Kenya read their favorite blogs daily, 19% read blogs weekly, 5% read blogs monthly while 1% say they read blogs less often.

Figure 28:
Frequency of reading online blogs

Less often	**1**%
Daily	**65**%
Weekly	**29**%
Monthly	**5**%
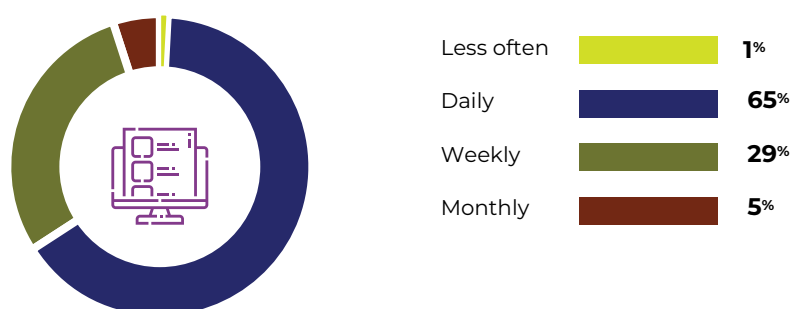
15. ONLINE DISCUSSIONS AND DEBATES

Social media is increasingly becoming an important forum for public engagement. Social media sites and apps offer people the opportunities to have online discussions and the creation of productive online communities with the potential for asynchronous online debates. However, engaging in conversations at a distance on social media is also characterized by a general intolerance for differences in ideas. It is a common thing for Kenyans to have robust online debates surrounding contemporary issues in the Kenyan society on social media. More than fifty percent (57.6%) of the respondents indicated that they have used social media at least once for online discussions and debates as shown in Figure 29.

Figure 29:
Participation in online discussions and debates

1 - 5 times	**1**%
6 - 10 times	**65**%
10+	**29**%
Not participated	**5**%
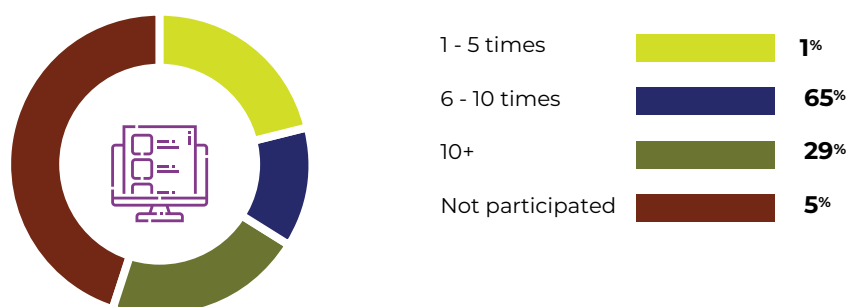
Public debates are known to influence individual attitudes and behaviors. SIMElab held thirty-seven focus group discussions with 258 participants in four different counties in 2019. From these focus group discussions, 43% of the participants indicated that their decisions have been influenced through online social media debates in four areas:

● **Politically** - shifting from one political party to another.

● **Personal relationships** - when making decision regarding personal social relationships.

● **Careers and jobs** - when faced with tough career decisions, online conversations over social media help one to regain self-control and make the best choice.

● **Life** – when one is making decisions while frustrated, their online contacts influence the choice one makes.

The focus group discussions also identified thirteen main themes on use of internet and social media as highlighted in Figure 30.

Figure 30:
Uses of internet among Kenyans

percentages
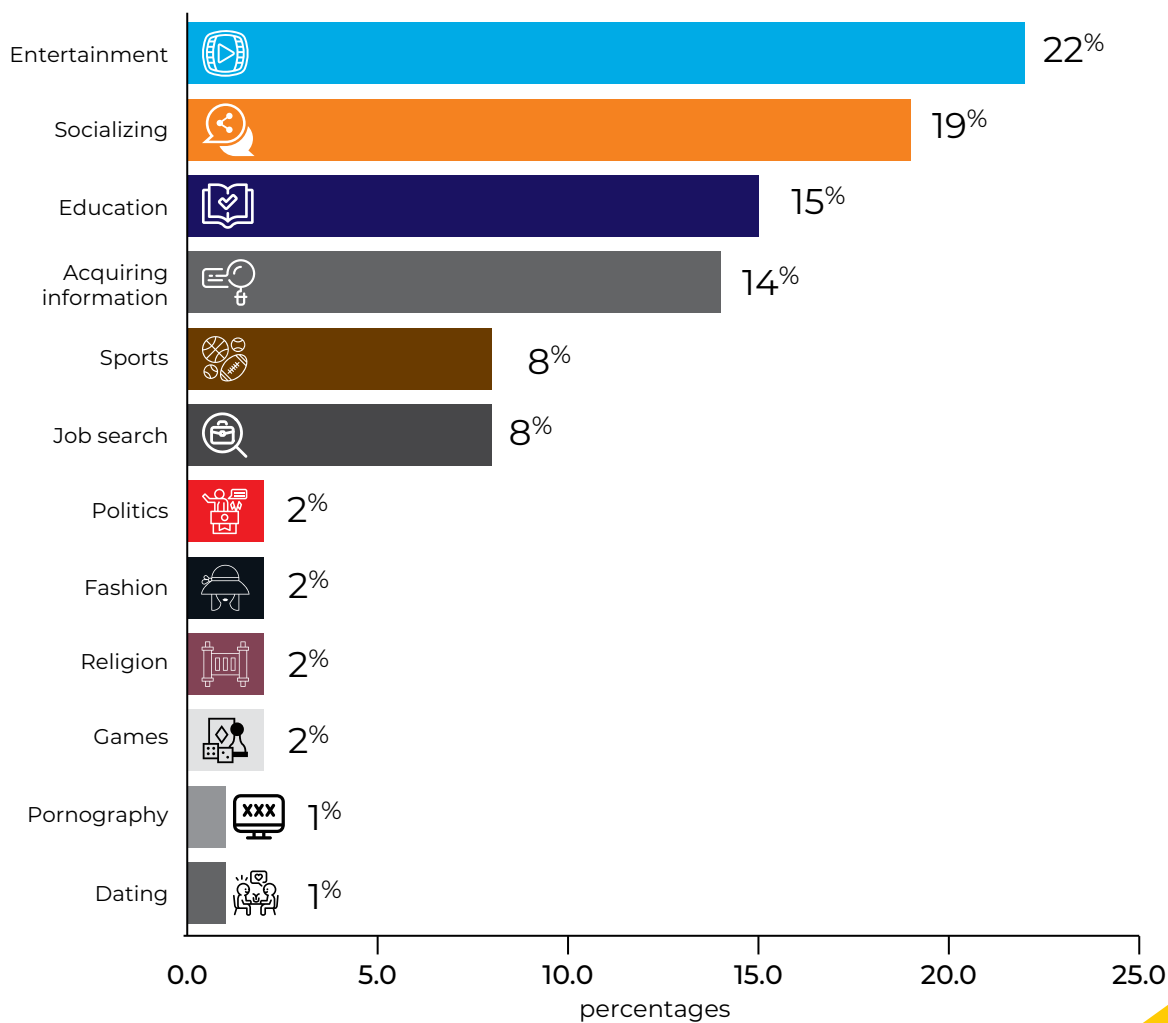
16. Online Misinformation, Disinformation and Fake News

Social media has largely facilitated the creation and dissemination of inaccuracies and falsehoods online. The widespread dissemination of these inaccuracies and falsehoods on social media has been made worse by the lack of tools for verifying photos and videos, or for quickly checking the sources of the stories when they appear on an individual's Facebook feed, Twitter timeline, YouTube playlist or any other posts on social networking pages. Most people fail to check the source of the 'information that they view on social media before sharing it, which can lead to fake news spreading quickly or even "going viral". The only way to stop spreading misinformation, disinformation, and fake news is for social media users to stop sharing it. However, the situation is worsened by the use of social media bots or artificial social media profiles. Social media bots are easily built using artificial intelligence algorithms to spread inaccuracies and falsehoods online. For example, social media bots on Twitter are known for tweeting fake news items, and replying to or commenting on the posts of real social media users. With Twitter's deep learning algorithm prioritizing content with greater prior engagement rather than recent tweets, it is easier to spread fake news through social media bots as they will keep replying to content that has already gotten a lot of retweets and mentions. Twitter also provides a summary of the most interesting Tweets you might not have seen, labeled as "In case you missed it".

Misinformation (unintentionally misleading) is false or inaccurate information that is deliberately created and is intentionally or unintentionally propagated. Disinformation (intentionally misleading) also refers to inaccurate information which is usually distinguished from misinformation by the intention of deception, while fake news refers to false information in the form of news and which is not necessarily disinformation since it may be unintentionally shared by innocent users. However, inaccuracies and falsehoods such as gossip, hoaxes, propaganda, and satire have long been in existence offline and it is only that social media has created a platform for them, making them accessible by both human users and artificial bots, deliberately or unintentionally. "Social media change the self-concept of "citizenry" not only in terms of action (social media activism) but also in terms of citizenship norms and participatory demands towards established actors" (Prof. Dr. Martin Emmer, International Symposium on Social Media, 2019).

16.1. False, Incorrect or Inaccurate Information

Most social media sites have been stepping up their efforts to combat the spread of fake news on their social networking sites and apps. However, this does not prevent individuals from propagating false and inaccurate information. Most Kenyans have seen news and information that is false, incorrect, or inaccurate on social media. Figure 31 shows that over eighty-six percent (86.2%) of Kenyans say that they have come across false, incorrect, or inaccurate news on social media and are likely to have shared the misinformation, with only 13.8 % reporting that they have not come across any false and inaccurate information.

Figure 31:
False, incorrect or inaccurate information

Finds false, incorrect or innaccurate information

FREQUENTLY — **33.8**%

OCCASSIONALY — **52.4**%

HAVE NOT — **13.8**%
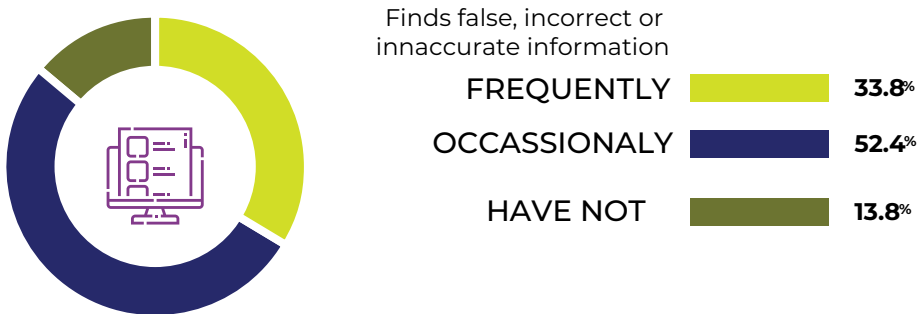
16.2. INFORMATION THAT IS BIASED OR MEANT TO MISLEAD DELIBERATELY

Some social media users post information that they know is deliberately misleading, biased, or has manipulated narratives or facts. This could be in the form of entirely fabricated content created to intentionally disinform for revenue or influence or to whip up emotions. 83.2% of Kenyans indicate that they have seen biased and deliberately misleading information on social media, with 28.3% saying that they do find misleading and biased information on social media frequently. Just 16.8 % of social media users report having not seen any deliberately misleading information, while 54.9% find this kind of information occasionally, as shown in Figure 32. Some of the most common misleading information on social media include propaganda, clickbait, satire and hoaxes, conspiracy theories, and pseudoscience.

Figure 32:
Information that is biased or meant to mislead deliberately online

Finds information that is biased or mean to mislead deliberately

FREQUENTLY — **28.3**%

OCCASSIONALY — **54.9**%

HAVE NOT — **16.8**%
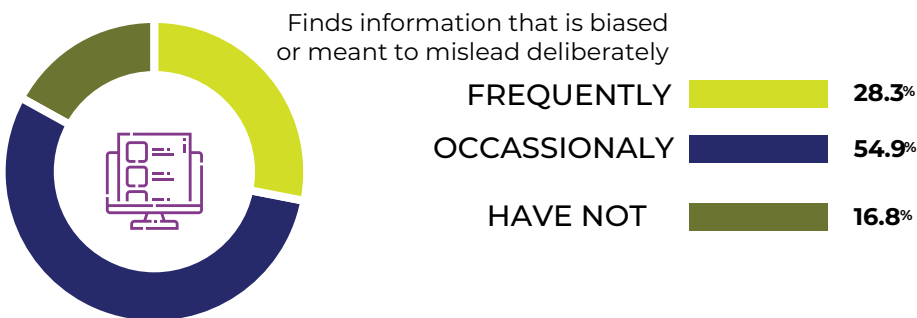
16.3. FAKE NEWS

Social media is among the primary sources of news in Kenya. Fake news are stories that are not true or have some truth, but are not 100 percent accurate and are entirely designed to make people believe something false. However, some people claim that factually accurate stories are fake news, just because they do not agree with them or find them uncomfortable. It is not easy to spot fake news as most of the time as fake news also contains a mixture of correct information and could have been shared by trusted friends, family, colleagues or influential users in the social network, making it difficult to spot what is true and accurate. People are also likely to react to content that taps into our existing grievances and beliefs. About 83.5% of Kenyans on social media have come across fake news on social media, and are likely to have shared the same (Figure 33). 33% have spotted fake news on social media frequently, while 51% find fake news on social media at least occasionally, with 16% having not come across fake news or not being able to spot the fake news.

Figure 33:
Fake News Online

Finds Fake News

FREQUENTLY	33%
OCCASSIONALY	51%
HAVE NOT SEEN	16.8%
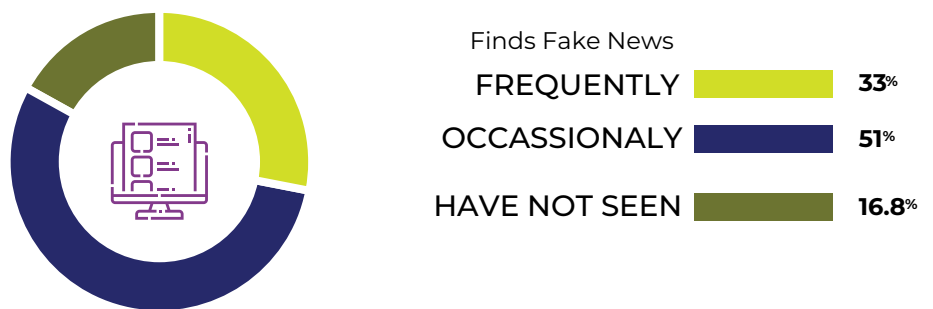
16.4. NEGATIVE NEWS

News is typically biased towards negative content. Therefore, social media users are often inundated with negative news stories such as violence, conflicts, crime, bad economy, natural disasters, terrorism, war, pandemics, and other upsetting events. Bad news usually stands out and people pay more attention to it and habitually find it easy sharing it on social media. Young people are more receptive and react more emotionally to negative political news on Twitter. Research has shown that negative or unfavorable news can spread very quickly on social media as one negative post by someone influences twice the negative posts by their online contacts. 81% of Kenyans indicate that they have seen negative news on social media and are likely to have shared it, with 28% saying that they do find negative news on social media frequently. Just 19 % of social media users have not seen any negative news, while 53% find this negative news occasionally (Figure 34). Therefore, the majority of news coverage concerns negative topics and is usually directed towards people's emotions.

Figure 34:
Negative news online

Finds Negative information

FREQUENTLY	28%
OCCASSIONALY	53%
HAVE NOT SEEN	19%
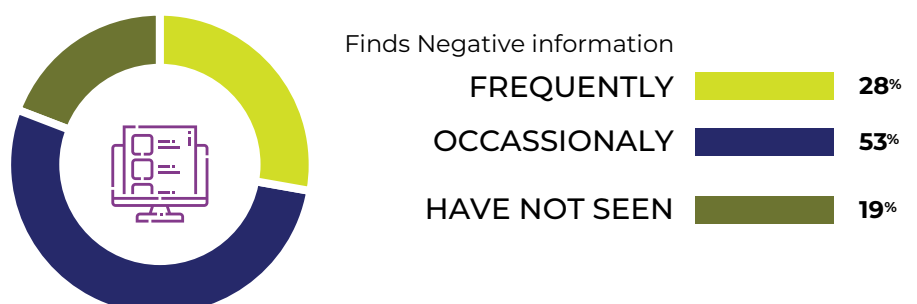
CALL FOR PAPERS AND DEMOS

2nd International Symposium on Social Media 2020

Theme: Advances in global social media landscape: trends and newly emerging narratives

USIU-Africa | **September 9 - 10, 2020**

Social media have become invaluable tools in nearly every aspect of our daily lives. However, there are potential and significant risks associated with the use of social media. Globally, the subject of social media and social media networks have gained interest with most researchers because of their impact on building virtual communities and networks. Many researchers are now interested in learning more about the social media platforms and their effects on communities. Therefore, papers are solicited on all aspects of Social Media and Social Networks with a special emphasis on evidence-based practice and academic papers.

Conference themes and topics of interest include (but not limited to):

Theme 1.
Behavioral Approaches to Social Media Research
- Barriers to social media use.
- Drivers for individuals and firms to use social media.
- Social media use for social support, advocacy and awareness-building.
- Social media in disinformation and fake News.
- The unintended or unanticipated consequences of using social media.
- New theoretical perspectives to explain the use of social media.
- Risks associated with using social media.
- The dark sides of using social media.
- Ethical and governance issues related to the use of social media.
- The use of social media for new product development, innovation management and knowledge management.
- Recommendations and advertising in social networks.
- Social media intoxication, addiction, self-Esteem, and life satisfaction.
- Use and abuse of social media by adolescents.
- Social media commerce.
- Social media brand engagement.
- Social media Effects on our culture.
- How social media influences on daily lives.
- Cyberbullying on social media platforms.
- The dark side of social media.
- Trends in the diffusion of social media platforms (statistics on consumer adoption and usage).
- Social media in education.
- Politics and social media.

Theme 2.
Computational Approaches to Social Media research
- Leveraging social media data to inform decisions.
- Social media-related cybercrimes.
- Sentiment analysis in social media contents.
- Threat and vulnerability analysis in social networks.
- Prevention of malware propagation in social networks.
- Centrality/influence of social media publications and authors.
- Machine learning in social media analysis.
- Generating Business Intelligence through Social Media Analytics.

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This is a blind peer-reviewed conference. All submissions will be subject to double-blind peer-review process. If interested in participating, submit through the conference website a technical paper (up to 12 pages), or demo description (up to 2 pages) by the deadlines given below.
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Conference papers

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Reviews sent to authors: April 30, 2020

Revised paper due: May 30, 2020

Notification of acceptance: June 30, 2020

Camera-ready due date: July 30, 2020

Conference dates: September 9-10, 2020

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Demo Submission: March 30, 2020
Demo Acceptance: April 30, 2020
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17. Social Media Data Mining and Analytics

Normally, social media data mining utilizes machine learning, mathematics, and statistical techniques to uncover hidden patterns and trends from social media sites and apps and to visualize the results in a way larger audiences can understand. This is achieved through automated software programs that sift through massive amounts of raw social media data in order to discern patterns, and trends. The identified patterns, trends and metrics can be used in designing organizational growth strategies.

17.1. A Social Network Analysis of the #KomeshaCorona Hashtag

By Patrick Kanyi Wamuyu, Jacktone Momanyi and David Lomoywara,

SIMELab

SIMElab as an interdisciplinary Center for research in Big Data and Social Media Analytics has a team that works on social media data mining and analysis on various topics. The team works with both graduate and undergraduate students, civil society, and corporates on social media data mining and analysis. The team has been monitoring conversations on the #KomeshaCorona hashtag on Twitter and did a Social Network Analysis on the hashtag.

Through social network and graph theory lenses, this article explored Twitter data shortly after the announcement of the first COVID-19 case in Kenya and the use of #KomeshaCorona hashtag. The study used social media analytics tools 'Network Overview, Discovery and Exploration for Excel (NodeXL) and Brandwatch to extract and visually present knowledge from pairwise relations between actors in the #KomeshaCorona hashtag social network. In social network analysis, a large number of measures have been developed to characterize and compare network structures and positions in networks. Data collected for Social Network Analysis (SNA) are analyzed by means of several techniques that illustrate the relationships. The analysis can be focused on differences in centrality, on the investigation of strongly connected clusters, of positions that are structurally equivalent in networks, or of unique positions or a comparison of network structures as a whole. The use of network metrics helps identify who is most important or central in a network, subgroups (i.e., network clusters) of tightly connected people, and the overall network structure (e.g., the density of a network). Social networks are made up of vertices (e.g., people) that are connected to one another via edges (e.g., friendship ties).

The purpose of the study was to identify the social media users who were the influencers in the #KomeshaCorona online discussions between March 2020 and June 2020. The study objective was to determine the key influential actors

on the Kenyan social media in the #KomeshaCorona conversation and the distributions of relationships between social media users in the #KomeshaCorona conversation. The study approach was quantitative research methodology with data collection done using Social media data mining through NodeXL and Brandwatch APIs. Data analysis was achieved through the interpretation of quantitative social network graph metrics. These graph metrics include vertex metrics related to networks such as degree, in-degree, out-degree, betweenness centrality, eigenvector centrality, closeness centrality, PageRank, and clustering coefficient that can be used to identify unique or important people within a network.

Twitter is considered as one of the most dominant and persuasive social media platforms today (Sanawi, Samani & Taibi, 2017). Twitter is a microblogging site created in 2006. Microblogging is a form of blogging that allows users to send brief text (microposts) updates or micromedia such as photographs or audio clips. Other microblogging services include Plurk, Tumblr, Sina Weibo, and Soup.io. Twitter currently has a text limit of 280 characters. Twitter supports social networking through "friending" or "following" and large-scale sharing and diffusion of information (Bruns & Burgess, 2011). Twitter users use hashtags, which consist of brief keywords or abbreviations with a prefixed hash symbol for effective communication with an ad hoc community sharing the same concerns or topics of interest.

Opinion leaders are those individuals who are more connected than others and thus are more likely to influence the flow of information by facilitating the dissemination of media messages to audiences. Network analysis techniques have been adopted to explore opinion leaders within the structure of social relationships as opinion leaders take up strategically beneficial positions in a network (Xu et al., 2014). However, there is no standard way to identify and define influential users' in online social networks (Mahmoudi, Yaakub & Bakar, 2018). Opinion leadership in this study is measured using in-degree centrality, betweenness centrality, and eigenvector centrality.

The Network Overview, Discovery and Exploration for Excel (NodeXL) is a Microsoft Excel add-in template which allows users to generate social network graphs for social media network analysis and visualization. NodeXL can harvest data from a variety of sources including Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, email, and WWW hyperlinks. The study used NodeXL Version 1.0.1.433.

Data was collected using the NodeXL Twitter Search Network data collector to get tweets having each of the study blogs hashtags, tweets, retweets, or mentions of the hashtag #KomeshaCorona. The network structure was analyzed quantitatively and represented visually using the Clauset-Newman-Moore Cluster layout algorithm and the Harel-Koren Fast Multiscale layout algorithm.

The mine generated the #KomeshaCorona network structure which contained a total of 13323 edges (including 6098 unique edges and 7225 edges with duplicates) and 3848 vertices identified using NodeXL. The edges in this study were all presented as directed edges. These mined edges included Replies to, Mentions, Retweet, Mentions in Retweet, and Tweets. Figure 35 illustrates the network graph according to the Harel-Koren multiscale layout algorithm, a visual representation of the overall networked data from the #KomeshaCorona hashtag showing the clusters and indicating the influencers on the social network. Each circle corresponds to a node or Twitter user, the size and opacity of each user is proportional to their Eigenvector centrality value, while the color corresponds to sub-

communities or clusters automatically identified. The larger circles made of connected nodes represent a group. These groups are clustered according to their relative network density, displaying users with high network density. The users with a lesser degree of network density are isolated cases at the bottom right-hand corner of Figure 35 as they fail to impact the overall visualization of the clusters because they do not communicate with others in the network.

Identifying the most important vertices (users) in a graph is usually based on the ranking in the social network graph centrality metrics (Struweg, 2020). Degree centrality is a count of the total number of connections linked to a particular vertex (user), i.e. the total number of edges it has. Nodes with high centrality degrees also have high centrality by other measures. Out-degree is the number of arrows directed away from the vertex (user). Out-degree centrality is the measure of influence in the network. The user with the highest out-degree calculation is then referred to as the main influencer in the network. In-Degree is the number of edges (arrows) that point toward the vertex (user) of interest in the network. In-degree value is the number of Twitter users that replied to or mentioned the study hashtag, #KomeshaCorona. In-degree centrality is a measure of popularity in the network. Ministry of Health (@MOH_Kenya) is the top user in both the out-degree and the in-degree an indication of opinion leadership in both popularity and influence.

Figure 35: #KomeshaCorona Eigenvector Centrality graph
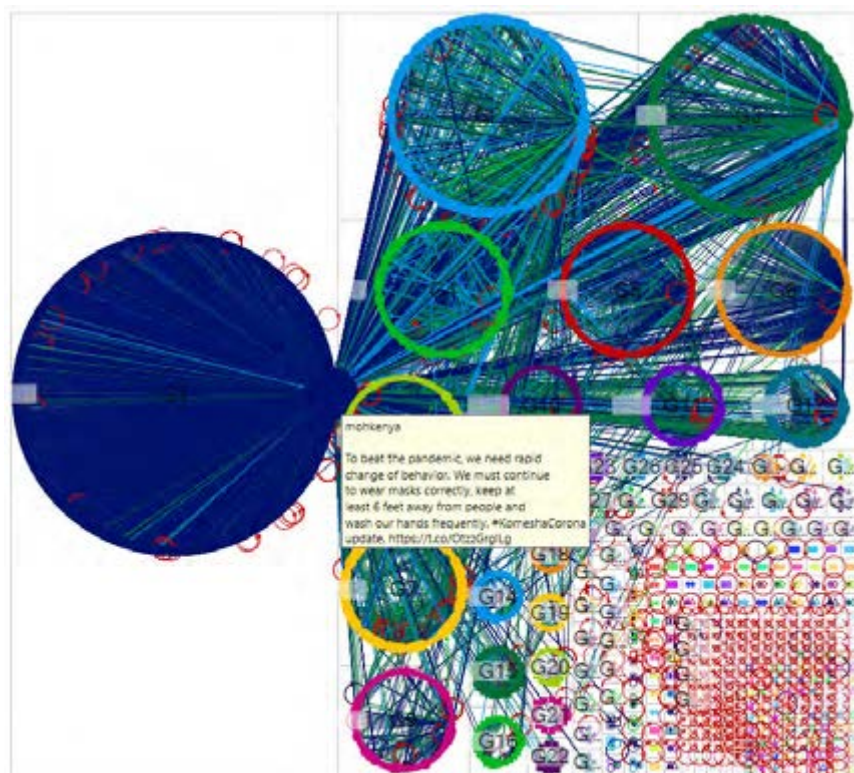
Eigenvector centrality measures a user's importance while considering the importance of the neighbors in the network structure, i.e. a user is important if they are linked to other important users. Higher eigenvector centrality indicates quality connections with other users who are well connected. Therefore, being connected to certain users in a network structure is more beneficial than a connection to others. High Eigenvector centrality value indicates a strong influence over other nodes in the social network structure. Betweenness centrality measures the extent that the user falls on the shortest path between other pairs of users in the network.

It is the degree to which a vertex plays the bridging role in a network. The more people depend on a user to make connections with other people, the higher that user's betweenness centrality becomes. Twitter accounts with many short paths have high betweenness centrality and are considered as influential information gatekeepers (Struweg, 2020). Users with high eigenvector centrality in the network are centers of attention, whereas users with high betweenness centrality in the same network are information brokers. The user @MOH_Kenya has the highest eigenvector centrality and betweenness centrality among the Twitter users in the #KomeshaCorona network structure. "Betweenness

and eigenvector centralities have very desirable properties for the location of an influencing potential" (Litterio et al., 2017, pp. 355). A member of the Online Social Network Structure who simultaneously meets the highest values of both betweenness and eigenvector centrality are classified as influencers, hence @MOH_Kenya is an influencer among Twitter users in the "Komesha Corona" online conversations in Twitter. Table 1, provides a summary of the #KomeshaCorona hashtag social network graph metrics. The most popular Twitter user accounts in the #KomeshaCorona conversations on Twitter are;

@MOH_Kenya,

@SpokespersonGoK,

@WHOKenya,

@Consumers_Kenya,

@CrimeSiPoaKenya,

@KeCheza ChezaKe.

Using in-degree values, the Twitter users with the highest value in the #KomeshaCorona online conversations were the Ministry of Health, followed by the Official Twitter account of the Government of Kenya Spokesperson, and World Health Organization in Kenya. Therefore, the Ministry of Health is the most popular and influential Twitter user in the #KomeshaCorona social network.

Table 1: Graph Metrics for the #KomeshaCorona

Top 3 Twitter Users, Ranked by In-Degree	In-Degree
@MOH_Kenya	2005
@SpokespersonGoK	151
@WHOKenya	116
Top 3 Twitter Users, Ranked by Betweenness Centrality	**Betweenness Centrality**
@MOH_Kenya	9301840.638
@Consumers_Kenya	302209.2472
@SpokespersonGoK	291757.3067
Top 3 Twitter Users, Ranked by Eigenvector Centrality	**Eigenvector Centrality**
@MOH_Kenya	0.020667
@WHOKenya	0.002182
@SpokespersonGoK	0.002065
Top 3 Twitter Users, Ranked by Out-Degree	**Out-Degree**
@MOH_Kenya	40
@Crimesipoakenya	34
@kecheza	28

Based on the out-degree values generated by NodeXL, the top three most popular Twitter accounts are the Ministry of Health, followed by Crime Si Poa (crime is not cool), an anti-crime advocacy and lobby group, and a Twitter user using a pseudonym ChezaKe. Therefore, the Ministry of health is the most popular and influential Twitter user in the #KomeshaCorona social network.

Using Betweenness Centrality values, the Twitter user with the highest value in the #KomeshaCorona online conversations was the Ministry of Health, followed by the World Health Organization in Kenya and the Official Twitter account of the Government of Kenya Spokesperson. Therefore, the Ministry of Health is the most popular and influential Twitter user in the #KomeshaCorona social network.

Based on the Eigenvector Centrality values generated by NodeXL, the top three most popular Twitter accounts are Ministry of Health, followed by the Consumer Grassroots Association, a consumer protection, education, and advocacy organization and lobby group, and the Official Twitter account of the Government of Kenya Spokesperson. Therefore, the Ministry of Health is the most popular and influential Twitter user in the #KomeshaCorona social network.

With the names of individuals and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) outside the government and government agencies appearing among top influencers, it is a good indication of public interaction in social media concerning the Coronavirus pandemic.

From the Twitter data mined using Brandwatch, it is clear that the online conversations among Kenyans on Coronavirus is fizzling out as evidenced by the number of mentions of the hashtags #KomeshaCorona, #staysafe and #COVID19KE on Twitter discussions in the month of June 2020 as shown in Figure 36.

Figure 36: #KomeshaCorona Mention Volumes for the last three months
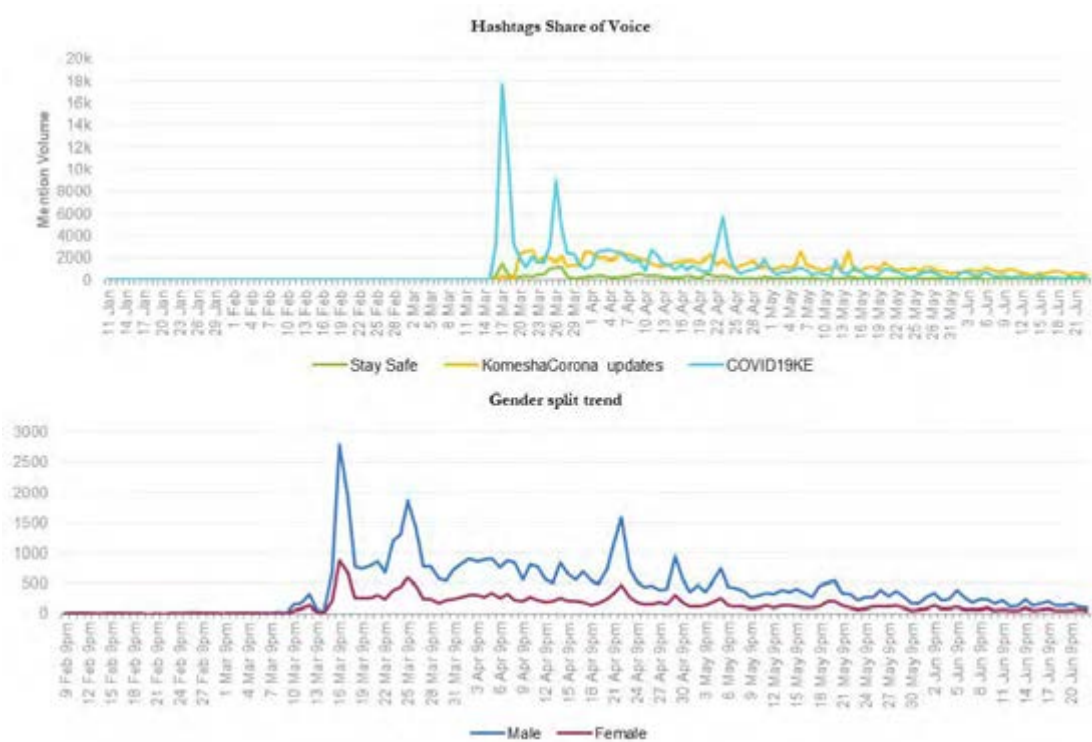
The word cloud below, Figure 37, generated by Brandwatch, shows that the #KomeshaCorona hashtag was the most mentioned "word" among Twitter conversations between individuals based on #covid_19KE, #KomeshaCorona, #COVID19KE, #MOH_Kenya and #WHOKenya between March 2020 and Jun 23, 2020. The names of individuals outside the Government and Government Agencies appearing in the cloud are a good indicator of public participation in social media discussions about the Coronavirus pandemic.

Figure 37: Word cloud generated from randwatch for the online conversation on COVID-19 in June 2020

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18. Commentaries

Preface

Social media has enormously developed in the past decade, from rudimental social media sites offering low-level services to high-tech mobile social media sites and apps with a vast number of services, attracting millions of daily users. Social media was once seen as a communications channel between family, friends, and colleagues at work, but now has transformed all spheres of everyday life from social interactions, news and journalism, food and fashion, entertainment, business, and research with incredible influence on people's lives.

It is therefore important to think about where social media is heading and the trends that are defining the current and future generation of users. Hate speech, addiction to our digital identities and social media use, anonymity, privacy, social media marketing, entry of new social media channels, changes in social media consumer demands and how all these will define the future of content creation and consumption in social media are some of the areas of interest that have been highlighted in this report.

The commentaries put together by a knowledgeable team of experts all seek to answer this question: Social media use has grown beyond personal use, what next? Consequently, we have commentaries on: social media as a cause of hate speech; trends in social media marketing; how social media will be in the new decade; social media addiction; understanding online consumer audiences; user anonymity on social media; and what brands can learn from listening to consumers' online conversations.

The commentary also addresses the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic, with a focus on misinformation and COVID-19; influencer marketing and consumer behavior post-COVID-19; harnessing social media consumption in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic among the youth; dealing with COVID-19 pandemic stigma; social media usage during COVID-19 in Kenya; and fake news on social media during the pandemic.

18.1. MISINFORMATION AND COVID-19

Melissa Tully

Associate Professor, School of Journalism and Mass Communication

University of Iowa, USA

It should come as no surprise that misinformation around COVID-19 is spreading on social media and chat apps, like WhatsApp, given our everyday experience with health misinformation online before the pandemic. Misinformation surrounding how diseases spread, vaccinations, cures, diets, exercise and other personal and public health are commonly posted and shared on social media sites and chat apps. Although misinformation surrounding vaccines has led to well-known fears and anti-vaccination movements, other kinds of health misinformation circulates, often unchecked, leading to misperceptions and unsafe behaviors.

March 2020 survey data show that Kenyans, Nigerians, and South Africans get much of their news and information about COVID-19 on social media, with 47% of respondents saying that social media is a primary source for information about the coronavirus. In addition, 75% of respondents said they had seen information about coronavirus on WhatsApp; and many were skeptical about this information, with 66% of respondents rating it as only "somewhat truthful" (Elliott, 2020). While this skepticism is important and shows that respondents are not taking posts at face value, it does not tell us how people find quality information that is critical for understanding the virus and for making informed health choices.

While government regulations and social media company policies have been suggested as a means of combating the spread of misinformation online, and have received renewed interest given the spread of COVID-19 misinformation, these steps often come at the cost of free speech (in the case of many laws governing "fake news" around the world) or are too minor to create real change (in the case of many social media policies). Although well-thought out and developed regulations and policies should be part of a response to misinformation, social media users can also be mobilized to stop the spread of misinformation and to correct it when they see it (Bode & Vraga, 2020).

Importantly, we, as social media users, can develop knowledge and skills that make us more savvy news and information consumers, enabling us to discern low- and high-quality information, to verify and seek additional information when we're unsure of the veracity of a post, and to correct misinformation when we see it by providing evidence and links to quality news and information (Tully, Vraga, & Bode, 2020). If we take steps to improve our knowledge and skills, we can part of the solution to stopping misinformation rather than the problem.

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18.2. INFLUENCER MARKETING AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOR POST-COVID-19

Japheth Mursi

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Consumer behavior has evolved drastically since the advent of COVID-19. COVID-19's global rise has disrupted people's way of living and has changed their personal and professional lives. These new behaviors will change the way people engage and will certainly continue to lead changes in consumer preferences. For companies, marketers and advertisers will need to revisit their marketing strategies before COVID-19. According to Mathew (2020), Marketing after a pandemic will be a challenge, as companies will need to be sensitive and cognizant of what consumers have been through. In order to adapt to this new norm post- COVID-19, businesses will have to increase their digital presence and adopt modern marketing approaches like influencer marketing. Influencers play a unique role of being actors in this diversion through content creation, which takes away consumers' minds from isolation (Media Update, 2020).

A report by Takumi (2020) posited that 60% of 16 to 24-year-olds credit influencers for a recent purchase. According to Media Update (2020), present consumers are more accustomed to using digital technology to socialize and have been conditioned to buy products from people they have used or trust. Therefore, going forward, social media influencers will continue to be a credible source of information and an effective form of marketing that is crucial to new consumer behavior. Consulting company Kantar found that social media engagement in later stages of the pandemic has increased by 61 percent over normal usage rates. The use of video platforms is

also steadily increasing as celebrities and brands leverage social media Live platforms to entertain and connect with their audiences. In March, TikTok saw a 27 percent increase in downloads from February, with 6.2 million downloads. This implies the increase of social media use won't fade after 'lockdowns' are lifted in various countries (Johnson, 2020).

As people continue to social distance, influencer marketing provides a feeling of community that others lack. As people isolate themselves socially, influencer marketing provides a sense of community that others require. Mostly when companies are promoting a product or service, the ultimate purpose is to create a community around this product or service that can now be done easily by Influencers. Post COVID-19, consumers will look for brands that can translate their online experiences, bring communities together, facilitate participation and encourage emotional engagement. Influence Central, a marketing firm, found that consumers appreciate brands that have shown a focus on consumers' needs during a difficult, unprecedented time (Pastore, 2020). Fifty-eight percent of consumers said they were thrilled by brands providing a necessary service, and 55 percent said they treasured brands that have made changes to help consumers. Therefore, as consumer behavior continues to change due to the ongoing pandemic, influencer marketing will further strengthen its position as an essential and a necessary marketing strategy post-COVID-19. Companies must be ready to serve a consumer base with a completely different preference, behavior, and opinions with different strategies.

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18.3. Social Media as a Cause of Hate speech?

Martin Emmer

Freie Universität Berlin & Weizenbaum Institute for the Networked Society

Social Media opened up not only the gates for new forms of self-expression and participation, it has at the same time flooded the internet with harmful content like fake news and hate speech. New data from a survey in Germany show that more than half of all internet users in the country have encountered hate speech online (Schaetz et al., 2020, p. 9). As there are quite similar developments in many countries around the globe, including Kenya (Kimotho & Nyaga, 2016), it is widely discussed whether political culture might be eroding, with the internet as the cause of radicalization of online users and public discourse.

However, there are characteristics of social media that may mitigate such concerns. First, when focusing on the source side of harmful content, a different picture emerges: Studies show that it often is only a small number of accounts that is responsible for posting and sharing the majority of propaganda or hate postings (Grinberg et al., 2019; Schaetz et al., 2020). Second, we must not underestimate the fact that social media are blurring the boundaries between private and public. A large amount of incivility and rumors on social media may not be a completely new phenomenon caused by radicalizing social media, but may be a quite frequent and normal form of social interaction that just has suddenly been made visible for the public in the new digital media environment. Third, indicators of social trust and support for democratic norms in our societies is still high and yet seems not to be affected by this potentially dangerous content on social media (Schaetz et al., 2020, p. 7).

Even if we should be careful to not draw superficial conclusions from social media content on possible causes, there still are reasons for concern: First, all data currently available just cover a short period of time since social media emerged, and effects of harmful content on users and societies still may be possible in the long run. Second, even if just a small number of users are affected, this still may cause dramatic harm to citizens and societies in the case of misled individuals being mobilized to violent action and committing excessive crimes like in the Christchurch mass murder of March 15, 2019. While there is no reason for panic, hate speech and other harmful content still represent a danger to modern society, that needs further and thorough research.

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18.4. Social media in the new decade

Brian Kisuke

COMZTECH

Elaborating the difference between a fact and a truth, Martin Luther King Jr. in a 1965 speech to UCLA students and faculty said 'a fact is the absence of contradiction. Truth is the presence of coherence, the relatedness of facts'. Little did he know that 55 years later, we would be sharing alternate facts in media outlets. Conveniently, social media platforms have seen the brunt of excessive use of alternate facts. This is because posts are rarely monitored and put to task for authenticity. The non-monitoring is nevertheless an advantage since it allows for discussions which bring to light underlying conditions in the society.

The new decade 2020 – 2030 will experience introductions of new social media apps into the market as others fade out. The apps which will survive the decade will have to adhere to user privacy, keep up with security and design flaws and innovate constantly.

First, the implementation of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in May 2018 on privacy and data protection for European Union members was a wakeup call to social media giants. Considering the law is about user data, social media sites are adversely affected as they are hoarders of personal information. The law imposes fines to companies that flout it. In fact, Google is in the top five list of companies fined for violating the law. And other cases are under investigation. Essentially social media companies to stay relevant will have to follow the regional and global privacy regulations.

Secondly, security and design flaws will continue to be important features on new apps. Before the rhyming name app, TikTok was born, there was YikYak. YikYak was an anonymous messaging app based on user's geographic vicinity. Unfortunately, its

anonymity of users contributed to its downfall. It was the norm to have cyber bullying, hate speech, gun and bombing threats from users. Understandably, unable to address the security issue it was forced to shut down. Lastly, the latest culprit of engineering flaws was Google+ which was closed in April 2019 due to low user engagement and design flaws.

Innovating with emphasis on features which users find relative is the third and important factor for relativity in the new decade. A case in point of the last decade was Meerkat app which had an innovative idea of live-streaming in social media feeds. However, Meerkat was slow in adding other features and this saw Instagram and Facebook duplicate the feature and render Meerkat worthless. It closed in 2016.

Another app was Vine which was shut down by Twitter in 2016. For those who do not remember, it was a video loop app that offered users a platform to make and share six second videos. Unfortunately, most people started using Instagram instead because in addition to posting videos users could post pictures and it had a friendlier user interface.

Currently there are competing apps in the messaging realm. Telegram, an alternative messaging app to WhatsApp offers more secure chats from features like secret chats, self-destructing messages and larger group capacity. The features have an audience who prefer to toggle back and forth between the two.

And as recently as June 18 2020, Google announced a new service, Google Keen. Keen is "a place to grow and share your interests with loved ones, and find things that will help in making this precious life count". Basically, a competitor to Pinterest.

Innovation includes other salient features like curbing the propensity of alternate facts posts from users. The global events of 2020 like COVID-19 and Police brutality protests have forced Facebook and Twitter to initiate a policy for tagging misleading information and alternate facts, which is a feature demanded and initiated by users. Another feature initiated by Facebook allowing users to opt out of election advertisements in the upcoming US general election will make it stay relevant with end users. Innovating as fast as users' request will enable apps stay relative and hence keep users.

A Pew research survey conducted in Spring 2017 titled Global Attitudes survey indicated that the global median use of social media use is 53% of adults. Although Kenya ranked below the median at 30% it is expected that the usage will climb up through the decade because majority of the users at the time of the survey were young adults aged between 18-36. As the decade progresses surely these young adults will pave way for teenagers to be counted as adults in their use of social media. Therefore, the usage of social media will continue to grow in the new decade.

In summary, the social media apps which will last through the decade must stay relevant by addressing user privacy and adhering to regulatory bodies, security and design flaws and innovation of its users.

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18.5. Harnessing Social Media Consumption in Fighting the COVID-19 Pandemic among the Youth

Dr. Geoffrey Sikolia

Assistant Professor of Mass Communication, USIU-Africa

In December 2019, the first case of the respiratory disease coronavirus (COVID-19) was reported in Wuhan, Hubei province of China. This led to a global disruption of all sectors and upgrading of the disease to a pandemic, with global infections and fatalities spiraling significantly. Africa has not been spared. The weak healthcare systems across the continent present a serious threat.

The continent therefore could harness the use of social media, whose consumption keeps rising, to stem the spread of this pandemic and manage the areas already affected. The youth population in Africa is among the highest globally. As a consequence, social media consumption continues to raise concern among key stakeholders as to the user needs and gratifications sought by the youth.

The Internet is primarily intended for learning and research and has become an important component of life. However, from time to time, cases of over-involvement with the Internet among the youth raise alarm. Although research reports an upward trend in the penetration of new media technologies in Africa, several obstacles to access are outlined. These include income disparities between rural and urban populations, limited bandwidth and consistent power outages, high costs associated with acquisition and maintenance of mobile phones, and infrastructure constraints.

The youth are generally motivated by the desire to bond and bridge social capital, entertainment, and escape through the consumption of social media. That the youth in Africa are seeking these gratifications in their social media usage is encouraging. These technologies could be harnessed to enhance contact tracing and COVID-19 behavior change campaigns among the youth on the continent. Social media can also enable the mapping of existing healthcare resources to ensure preparedness among health workers.

18.6. Dealing with Pandemic Stigma: Social Media Usage During COVID-19 in Kenya

David Lomoywara

SIMElab

Since the time coronavirus erupted in Wuhan, China, the issue of social stigma has become a bigger global problem than the virus itself. According to the World Health Organization, social stigma is the negative association between a person or group of people who share specific characteristics. Goffman, one of the influential sociologists, defined stigma as an attribute that conveys devalued stereotypes. It is a phenomenon in which a person with a deeply discreditable trait is seen as different from those who believe they are healthy.

Kenya reported the first case of the virus in March 2020. To many Kenyans, the virus was an alien disease only found in China. Reality hit Kenyans hard when the first case was reported in Nairobi. This caused a lot of panic and fear of uncertainty. Those suspected of having contracted the virus were quarantined at Mbagathi Hospital for testing, and those whose results turned positive were taken into isolation. As the number of infected people increased, the issue of social stigma worsened.

The first incident happened in Kilifi County, where a person suspected of having the virus was lynched by youth at night while he was going home. The issue continued to worsen, and the mainstream media reported cases of discrimination and neglect meted against those suspected of having the virus. In Murang'a and Naivasha, some individuals were neglected by their families, due to the suspicion that they had contracted the virus. In Nairobi and Mombasa, those who wanted to travel upcountry felt stigmatized because of the increased cases reported in the two cities.

Nonetheless, to avert the situation, Kenyans on social media platforms joined the bandwagon to create awareness about the coronavirus. A young girl by the name Salome Wairimu sang a song dubbed "Janga La Corona," (coronavirus catastrophe) in April, which garnered more than one million views on YouTube within a week. Twitter trended with famous hashtags such as KomeshaCorona, Covid19KE, Covid19, StaySafe, Stay Home. These hashtags were used by Kenyans on Twitter to discuss the pandemic and how to normalize the virus' effects.

Facebook users actively deviated from the usual ways of doing things and adapted to the new normal. Some showed their skills by posting short videos on cooking recipes, while others taught students key lessons such as Chemistry and Mathematics. An emerging TikTok became a platform where many escaped realities and posted short, entertaining videos. All the strategies employed on social media were vital in normalizing the stigmatizing effects of coronavirus.

18.7. Social Media Fake News in times of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Ernest Mwanzi

Senior Digital Marketing & Communications Officer

USIU-Africa

Dictionary.com defines Fake News as false news stories, often of a sensational nature, created to be widely shared or distributed for the purpose of generating revenue, or promoting or discrediting a public figure, political movement, company, etc. However, some writers have argued that the term False Information is more appropriate as "Fake News" is mostly appealing and used in the political arena.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, various reports have shown that fake news has taken root all across the world. For instance, US President, Donald Trump, has been quoted as saying that ingesting disinfectants could potentially be used to treat coronavirus. Locally, there was information widely circulating saying that the coronavirus could not survive the tropical climate, reducing our risk of exposure to it.

The Ministry of Health in Kenya (MOH) and the World Health organization (WHO) have been on the forefront in fighting fake news by providing platforms which people can verify any information about COVID-19. The Ministry of Health, for instance, has been active on Twitter, providing frequent updates and information on the coronavirus, while the World Health Organization has an automated WhatsApp line through which people can get information on the virus instantly and at any time. Social media companies such has Facebook and Twitter have also taken the lead in fighting this pandemic by having anchor posts on their respective platforms with verified information related to the virus.

For this reasons USIU-Africa through the Social Media Lab realized the need to host a webinar to tackle the emergent issue on "Social media Fake News and Mental Health in the Age of COVID-19". The webinar which was held on Thursday, June 4, 2020, brought speakers from both the Academia and industry experts to discuss Fake News and their effects on mental health

Prof. Melissa Tully, Associate Professor, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Iowa noted that the pandemic presented a set of unique communication challenges due to the level of uncertainties revolving around health issues and thus making it easy to spread fake news.

She reiterated the dangers of spreading fake news, adding that governments should invest on practical research that can help in coming up with practical solutions to empower people not to share misinformation and how to find quality information.

"There are many ways of ignoring online information that can't be authenticated in circulating, but we all need to take responsibility and politely advise any users, especially those on closed sites such as

WhatsApp, against spreading fake news without substantiated facts. Now, more than ever, it is crucial to ensure that we use our time constructively by doing things that take our thumbs away from our smartphones, "she said.

Dr. Stephen Ndegwa, a clinical psychologist noted that fake news was like adding salt to injury, as it multiplied the anxiety that came with COVID-19. "As social beings, when we are put in isolation, and are unable to verify any information received, it causes stress, thereby affecting our mental health even further, "he said. Mr. Philip Ogolla, Founder Digital Humanitarian and New Media Consultant indicated that our Health workers are strained and battling fatigue and that misinformation on COVID-19 demotivates them further.

"Fake news in the country is spread by individuals who want to be first to break news, with some of them going to the extent of creating screenshots and fake quotes. I know some families affected by coronavirus who no longer go online or visit social media sites, because of the misinformation around the pandemic," he noted.

He also underlined the need of using all digital platforms to capture testimonies that can educate and create awareness of the pandemic and to all who deliberately think they won't become victims – adding that for most Kenyans, this pandemic only becomes a reality once it hits closer home. Philip urged all to use the available credible resources, such as the WHO website, which has real time statistics and facts of the ongoing pandemic.

According to the UNESCO Handbook for Journalism Education and Training; Fake News is an old story, fueled by new technology; mobilizing and manipulating information was a feature of history long before modern journalism established standards which define news as a genre based on particular rules of integrity. An early record dates back to ancient Rome, when Antony met Cleopatra and his political enemy Octavian launched a smear campaign against him with "short, sharp slogans written upon coins in the style of archaic Tweets. "The perpetrator became the first Roman Emperor and "fake news had allowed Octavian to hack the republican system once and for all".

18.8. Trends in Social Media Marketing

*Ashleigh Jacobs*

African Product Manager for Hootsuite

YOU KNOW Digital

The evolution of Social Media Marketing has progressed remarkably over the last few years, and after COVID-19, we're about to see further pivots in digital evolution. What does this mean for businesses engaging in this form of marketing? We break down some of the facts below.

While the Big 5 of social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube) have maintained majority share in markets in Africa, there are several other networks gaining interest. Pinterest, Snapchat, Twitch, TikTok are just a few that are catching up. These networks bring added value to users by focusing on niche elements, often using short-form video content as the hook. On a global scale, video platforms like Snapchat and TikTok are quite popular, but what is the landscape in Kenya?

The below graph compiled from **We Are Social's 2020 Digital Report,** shows the most used social networks in Kenya as of the beginning of this year.
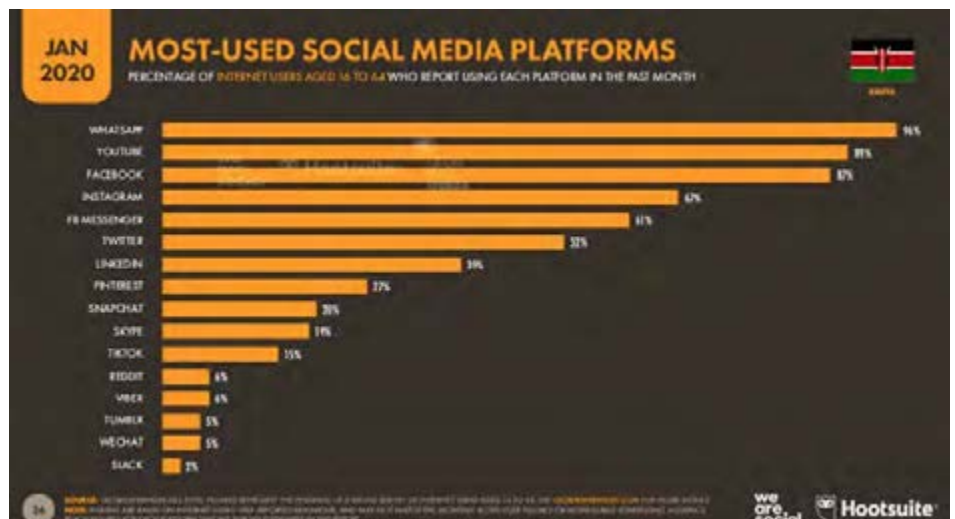
At the top of the list, WhatsApp is the favourite communication platform in Kenya, with YouTube and Facebook close behind. A key development is the uptake in visual content consumed from social media users has become highly popular.

As a marketer- where is the most impactful place to create awareness for your brand? The below graph from the We Are Social report shows that ads in Social Media and Television are ideal for Kenyan markets. Social Ads especially provide a great way for marketers to advertise their brand or product via niche targeting and affordable costs.

From the above findings, it's evident that the Big 5 are still the golden key in social marketing. With the threat of the new platforms catching on, how are these networks pivoting to be more innovative and own the market?

Let's break down some recent developments from a few platforms:

Facebook - Enhanced live streaming features via Facebook Messengers such as group calling sessions (similar to Zoom);

Instagram - 'Instagram Shops' a new e-commerce feature and virtual storefront for businesses where consumers can make purchase directly from the app;

Twitter - When tweeting, users can choose who has the ability to reply.

Along with the above, social networks are also working on curbing the spread of fake news and abuse. Networks have built-in new options such as red-flagging users or comments, easier fact-checking, and limiting the ability for users to reply. These are all ways in which social networks are limiting the spread of misinformation.

To conclude, what does this mean for Kenyan marketers?

↘ Before marketing on new platforms consider where your target audience is consuming content the most, and where they discover new brands

↘ It is important to keep up to date on social platforms changes, as in some cases there could be monthly updates to enhance your marketing efforts

↘ Reporting is key to see if you're getting the value you need from social networks. Platforms like Hootsuite (a social media management tool) aids in the analysis of your marketing efforts.

18.9. SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION

Augustine Kihiko

University of KwaZulu-Natal

In Kenya, mobile network coverage stands at 89%. This presents an opportunity for technological advancement through social media while also posing a challenge in over-use of social media. Addiction to social media use comes with the behavioral traits that may compare to substance consumption and addiction like alcoholism and smoking. Such behavioral characteristics may include conflict, relapse, social withdrawal, and mood swings.

In Kenya, extroverts appear to use more social media tools for enhancement, whereas their introvert counterparts use them for social compensation. Notably, any of these addictions in Kenya need to reach certain levels before experts consider them pathological behavior. Social media addiction is notably visible among Kenyan youth, especially college and university students. In 2008, the World Health Organization (WHO) categorized video games on social media as a

disorder. In addition, researchers indicate that internet gambling and social media addiction have been gradually increasing.

Social media addiction panders to two of the most compelling human psychological instincts that are exhibitionism and voyeurism. Research is already proving that the uncontrolled increase in the use of social media correlates with a gush of mental affluence such as anxiety and depression.

According to a report from the Nation Media Group, Mr. Fabio Ogachi, a psychologist at Kenyatta University in his research, noticed a peculiar trend in social media use. The report confirms that people addicted to the internet had several symptoms of depression, i.e., pathological internet users' exhibit negative consequences of bad social relations (Lamenager et al., 2018). Furthermore, they have psychological disturbances and poor academic performance.

In his publication, *"Relationship between pathological internet users and depression,"* Mr. Ogachi argues that 17% of Kenyan university students have a severe addiction to the internet (Waithaka et al., 2018). Moreover, 23% of the participants in his study were fighting the mental effects of addiction to the internet and severe depression condition (da Silva et al., 2019). These study findings prove that addiction to the internet is a significant cause of mental illness among youths. Thus, social media becomes the main culprit in the increased prevalence of personality and social disorders. The matter ripe for discussion now is whether depression is a cause of increased use of social media, especially among the youth.

Chronic addiction to social media affects our relationships, health, careers, and studies. More in-depth discussions and research ought to focus on whether to blame social media on the rise depression among the youths in Kenya and around the world. Therefore, we all need to educate ourselves on how to take control and lead digitally minimal lives if we want to have holistic experiences. We should not live in fear of missing out but direct our energy on the proper use of social media to improve our lives and economy.

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18.10. A Pandemic Conundrum: Social Media and Misinformation

Kevin C. Mudavadi, USIU-Africa

When Canadian media theorist Marshall McLuhan foresaw a connected world without any boundaries, he spoke of the 'global village' in 1960s, that is, a society interconnected through media technologies. A platform that afforded everyone around the world a chance to communicate and experience issues around the world from the comfort of their sofas. These media technologies such as social media have even seen the rise of citizen journalism. This has meant that people are ready to share information first and fast.

However, this leaves a gap on the authentic nature of information and gives rise to questions such as; whom can we trust? What information is true or false? What can be done to reduce spread of misinformation so prevalent on social media accounts? In a time of crisis, individuals do rush to friends, the media, and organizational sites for information - majority choosing the media. Social media has served as a platform that affords individuals the chance to share information and open room for discussions.

These social media platforms however, do not have means to limit spread of fake news. Many users do not have time to check if the information is true or false. As such, they are likely to be victims of fake news or misinformation. The Covid-19 pandemic has seen multiple of conversations on social media - many of which have been misinformation. Fake news has a big role on how individuals interpret health information. In fact, in this pandemic, one blogger countered government information and sparked a lot of muddle online. Research done in Kenya has shown that citizens encounter misinformation and many a times, they are likely to share it with their friends or those close to their networks. As such, there is need to train the public on media literacy and ways to verify information online lest we risk a jumbled society!

18.11. The Battle in understanding Consumer Audiences

Kelvin Jonck

MD, YOUKNOW Digital

There are two opposing, yet ironically complementary, forces at play in the social data space at the moment.

On the one side, you have the social analytics and social intelligence companies such as Brandwatch, Buzzsumo, Netbase and others wanting to provide their clients with richer and more valuable insights based on analysing social data from social networks, such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

On the other side, you have the data departments of these exact same social networks.

Leading up to, and after, the Cambridge Analytica scandal, social networks have been under a lot of pressure to reduce the amount

of individual user data which they make public, or which they make accessible to 3rd parties (such as app developers and the social intelligence companies.) However, to allow their partners to enrich the user and marketer's experiences there does need to be the ability to share some of that data.

In the world of social media intelligence providers, it becomes increasingly valuable to allow their customers (marketers and researchers, for example) to be able to understand what consumers want through what they say publicly on social platforms: their needs, desires, preferences and grievances. It helps to be able to segment those audiences into tangible groups which can more easily be addressed. It helps to know that the Gen Z entrepreneur, from Soweto, needs better network signal to build their business. Or that new mothers, under the age of 28, in certain urban regions, prefer same-day delivery over discounts when doing their online shopping.

With this in mind, not all social networks are created equal, or have the same views on how their user's data should be leveraged. Facebook (and hence Instagram and WhatsApp) cares more about leveraging that data to sell advertising on their platforms. They don't make much money off of the sale of data to 3rd parties, such as the social listening companies. Twitter, on the other hand, does have a robust data strategy. Being, for the most

part, a public network, Twitter still provides access to public conversations on its network for the purposes of market research, brand reputation analysis and other forms of insights. They do, however, restrict where that data can be used - such as their restrictions on working with governments from countries deemed to be "not free".

These changing attitudes to how social data can and should be used has led to many organisations looking elsewhere for complementary, collective data; the merger of concepts such as solicited and unsolicited data. There is an increasing awareness that to have a better view of the consumer, the need to combine social data, behavioural analytics, market research data and other sources in your evaluations and planning is essential.

Brandwatch, the social listening giant, for example, realised this and acquired a market research, polling technology, called Qriously. Qriously works by purchasing programmatic display ads and presents users with short, interactive polls - the results of which are instantaneously analysed and presented back to the researcher. This market analysis can then be overlayed with social data to understand what people think when you ask them a question (solicited), as well as when you don't (unsolicited).

There is a distinct difference between what people will advertise about themselves on public social networks, as opposed

to what they'll admit to via anonymous survey responses. For example, via surveys, respondents may disclose their household incomes, their credit ratings and even marital status (single, married, divorced). On social, some may be less willing to share those insights, but will gladly tell you their view on the latest Marvel movie before you need to ask.

At YOUKNOW, we've seen an increased requirement from our clients to look at solicited market research at speed. We recently partnered with GlobalWebIndex to provide their unique approach to understanding digital audiences to South Africa.

At the end of the day, insightful human analysis is still required to find the nuggets of gold in the data. But it's become increasingly clear that one source of truth is not going to cut it. The winners look at multiple views of their consumers and are able to combine that with the knowledge of their industry to take their organization to the next level.

Kelvin's final thought to the industry: ***The data will get you 50% there. Invest in smart people to take you the rest of the way.***

18.12. Anonymity and Social Media

Immaculate Tallam

SIMElab

Since the dawn of Web 2.0, social media has significantly matured, developing specific strategic uses within society. This growth has adopted the use of anonymity, which has created immense benefits for its users on a personal and societal level. Though beneficial, conflicting views remain its continued use going forward.

Johan Helsingius, a digital pioneer, stated that anonymity is beneficial as it gives an outlet for the unreserved expression of opinions, including controversial ones. Our society is conservative, often making it 'unsafe' for netizens to make absolute statements or hold unpopular opinions. Thus, in our context, anonymity has been used as a tool to break out of our conservative shells.

Anonymity has become an invaluable

tool in controlling discourse surrounding societal issues. Netizens have been able to find a voice within online spheres, which has, in many cases, enabled them to broker significant political changes. For instance, the ongoing 'Black Lives Matter' campaign against police brutality has led to legislative changes in the United States of America. Similarly, local campaigns have run in Kenya, in hopes of initiating changes. Connected to this is the observed increase in political participation caused by the perceived power wielded by online users to foster democratic change.

In recent years, blogging and microblogging alike have influenced the political participation of previously unengaged citizens. Locally, the Twitter and Facebook platforms have been used as a political campaign

tool, confirming the correlation between online politics and votes cast. Pseudonyms have served to protect against unwarranted prejudice. Online views may, sometimes, be used against its holders by both public and private persons. Significant concerns lie when expressing views contrary to the government's, which may lead to arrests, prosecution, or non-legal retribution. Though not wholly capable, some individuals have successfully shielded themselves from government surveillance through the use of anonymity.

In conclusion, the two conflicting views arise from the use of anonymity online. On the one hand, anonymity is a tool used to facilitate the freedom of expression, while on the other hand, it is also seen as an impediment to genuinely free speech, with some stating that convictions should be made known without having to hide behind a veil. Whichever side one agrees with, the benefits of anonymity, such as advancing public discussion, protecting political disputes and furthering due process, cannot be denied.

18.13. Social Listening - What can brands learn from online conversations?

Kristina Sutton

Senior Account Executive for Brandwatch

YOUKNOW Digital

Let's face it - conversations on social media can be intense. Protected by the barrier of a screen, dozens of emotional discussions are happening daily about everything from frustrations with telecoms providers, preferred delivery services, fast food debates, insurance, healthcare, retailers and fashion giants.

Businesses who leverage **social listening** - *the ability to search out and aggregate conversations mentioning a brand or competitors* - have the upper hand in understanding consumers' perceptions of them. Social-listening gives businesses a real-time window into sentiment, reputation and competitive share-of-voice.

Brands in Africa that keep a close ear to the social-sphere include MTN, Multichoice, Vodacom, Tiger Brands, Samsung, Standard Bank and major agencies that represent consumer brands - all with the end goal to **report on marketing efforts** and to **achieve relevance with their customers.**

However, in 2020, branded conversation is just one piece of the puzzle. Statistics tell us that **96% of online conversation is unbranded.**

Why does that matter, and how can brands harness the 96%?

When brands zoom out into the wider industry conversations, using industry-leading listening and consumer research tools, like Brandwatch - amazing things can happen. We've seen our clients pivot strategies on the fly from these insights.

TymeBank - South Africa's first digital bank - decided not to focus on what consumers might dislike about their brand, but instead zoomed out to beg the question, "What do South Africans hate about banking in our country?" The answers helped inform their marketing strategy for months to come.

Coca-Cola moved beyond looking at competitors and focused on a key factor in their growth and strategy - Sugar. They answered questions like: How are consumers talking about sugar? What is the impact of the sugar tax? How can we position our offering with this data?

Tesla, when looking to expand into a new market, listened for the conversations around electric cars to inform, geographically, where the most interest was concentrated. They then segmented the data further on 'What *about* electric cars resonates with this market the best' in order to inform their go-to-market strategy.

The best businesses are approaching social listening with a wider lens. What do all of these businesses have in common? The technology they use: Brandwatch Consumer Research.

Bottom line: We all know predicting the future is difficult, but research is less work than guess work. Social-listening, both branded and unbranded, can provide answers to even the biggest consumer questions.

SIMELab Team

Patrick Kanyi Wamuyu, *Ph.D.*
SIMElab Coordinator

David Lomoywara

Patrick Kanyi Wamuyu is an Associate Professor of Information Technology at United States International University-Africa, Nairobi, Kenya. Dr. Wamuyu earned his Ph.D. degree in Information Systems and Technology from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa. He completed his postdoctoral research at the Indian Institute of Information Technology, Allahabad, India and the Freie Universität, Berlin, Germany. His research focuses on a broad range of topics related to Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D), Digital Media in Civic and Political Participation in Developing Countries, e-business infrastructures, ICT Innovations and Entrepreneurship, Wireless Sensor Networks and Databases. He has published in Six of the premier publishing houses namely: Elsevier, Springer, IEEE, Wiley-Blackwell, Emerald and Taylor & Francis as well as in various other Information Systems and Technology journals. His academic publications include a book, book chapters, peer reviewed journal articles, and conference proceedings. He has over twenty years of experience in the computing and information technology industry that have taken him from software development, running his own Information Technology Enterprise to the academic world. He has advised many graduate (Masters and Ph.D.) and undergraduate students. He is Chair, Department of Computing in the School of Science & Technology at USIU-Africa.

David Lomoywara works at SIMElab as a researcher. Before joining SIMElab, David worked for two years as a Graduate Assistant School of Communication, Cinematics, and Creative Arts at USIU-Africa. He is a registered member of The Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), and he has presented conference papers in Kenya on social media and health communication. David is also a reviewer- he was among reviewers who reviewed articles for the ICA Health Communication section for the conference held in May 2020 in Australia. David pursued B.A in Journalism and a Masters of Arts in Communication Studies both at USIU-Africa.

Jackton Momanyi

Immaculate Tallam

Austin Owuor

Jacktone Momanyi is currently pursuing an MSc. in Information Systems and Technology at USIU-Africa. He also holds a bachelor's degree in Information Systems and Technology from USIU-Africa. Momanyi has also covered classes on database administration, online marketing (Google digital skills for Africa) and Web analytics (Google Analytics). As a Data Scientist at USIU-Africa's SIMElab, he specializes in Social Network Analysis (SNA), Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Big Data Analytics. He also serves as technical assistant and trainer to both industry and academia for Brandwatch Consumer Research and NodeXL. Prior to joining SIMElab, he worked as business intelligence intern at USIU-Africa's Business Application department where he was involved in visualizing data and creating dashboards for managerial decision making. He also worked at Child.org, a non-governmental organization as a data analyst in the M&E department.

Immaculate Tallam is a graduate student at USIU pursuing an MSc. Information Systems Technology and serves as a research assistant at SIMElab, utilizing her competencies to gravitate towards impactful research. Her role is to extract data, diagnose, critique, and catalog data to derive significant insights. Immaculate's role in the data science field (Afterwork Data Science Fellowship) is to derive meaningful acumen from data and conducts weekly trainings on Social Media Analytics.

Austin Owuor is a researcher at SIMElab and is a graduate student pursuing MSc. Information Systems Technology at USIU-Africa. Austin is a Certified |Cisco Network Analyst with expertise also in programming and big data. He is passionate about analysis of the social media networks and interpretation of the advanced network metrics. He also has an interest in human-computer interaction and knowledge management. He has participated and presented papers in both local and international conferences, including SIMElab's annual International Symposium on Social Media and African Higher Education Research Institute (AHERI) conference.

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Social media, "Fake News" & Mental Health in the age of COVID-19

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Prof. Melissa Tully,
Associate Professor, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, The University of Iowa

Misinformation in Social Media during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Dr. Stephen Ndegwa'
Lecturer, Daystar University

COVID-19 Fake News and its Impact on mental Health

Philip Ogola,
Founder Digital Humanitarian and New Media Consultant

Fake health news in the age of COVID-19: Case of Kenya

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USIU AFRICA SIMElab

United States International University - Africa
Off USIU Road, Off Thika Road (Exit 7)

P. O Box 14634 - 00800
Nairobi, Kenya, East Africa

+254 730 116 821
+254 730 116 166

simelabadmin@usiu.ac.ke