The Agenda Setting Role Played by Citizen Journalists in Kenya

Ms. Lisper Kathure Mukuru, Dr. Christine Atieno, Dr. Henry Nabea

Chuka University

ABSTRACT

The Internet has become the fastest process to share or receive instant and timely news with the unique aspect being, that the news stories are not just from professional journalists but ordinary people in the society. These ordinary citizens also known as citizen journalists utilize social media platforms as a medium to disseminate any occurrence they come across in their day to day activities. This paper investigates the agenda setting role played by Citizen Journalists in Kenya and their influence in the society through shaping perspectives and opinions. The dynamic character and impact of Citizen Journalism on traditional forms of media and information is a developing phenomenon that has not been thoroughly studied. The paper establishes that citizen journalism platforms were used by members of the public to spark debates and set the agenda on social, political and economic issues affecting them. The findings are beneficial to media owners, media practitioners in regards to creativity in media and professional use of citizen journalism platforms, while to scholars and policy makers in formulation of new media curriculum that focuses on the platforms as well as media policies that will regulate the platforms following the legal and ethical challenges that come with the technological changes identified.

Keywords. Citizen Journalism, Internet, Social Media, Journalist, Media,

INTRODUCTION

Citizen journalism is the action where ordinary citizen or members of the public carry out a vigorous role of gathering, reporting, investigating and circulating news and information. By participating in citizen journalism, non- journalists engage actively by use of modern technology and the universal distribution of Internet to produce news stories but do not observe the professional guiding principle of media practitioners. Despite continued belittling, primarily from traditional journalism elites, citizen journalists like bloggers have assumed growing news gathering and distribution functions in not only the society but are a fundamental part in democracy's communal dialog (Baran, 2012).

There are two types of citizen journalism namely institutional and non-institutional. Institutional citizen journalism is the method that takes organizational forms and limiting characteristics where mainstream media now uses the platforms to continue practicing, gain benefits and grow their profession with the changing technology. Non-institutional citizen journalism centers on an individual that doesn't follow any framework or professional structures. They flourish as volunteers with no ethical constraints or regulations (Banda, 2009).

Citizen Journalism can take many forms from the cultivation bulletin that a hobbyist circulates in the weekly urban tabloid to consumer remarks bestowed to virtual stories or via the mobile handset audiovisual. Another form of citizen journalism is electronic video blog or Vlog that are used by use of audiovisual material posted on blogs. Independence of media currently is owned not by those who own printing media,"

noted journalism scholar Ann Cooper, "but also to anyone who uses mobile phones, audiovisual cameras, bloggers software and other technology to distribute news and opinions to the sphere (Fenton, 2010).

Previously, while talking about popular blogs our minds often rushed to professional or administrative blogs but nowadays unskilled bloggers have also become prominent by ensuring that traditional media remains alert in its operations. This is often accurate for the gatekeeper the day to day observer who reveals exploitation, bribery fraud or unprofessionalism. Online reporting has transformed how traditional media used to report News. Media scholars and thinkers foresee that untrained people will produce 50 % of news amongst themselves by 2021 (Keen, 2007).

The mushrooming on citizen journalisms content has not only been experienced in Asia, and America continents alone, but in Africa as well. The Citizen Journalism in Africa (CJA) program situated in South Africa, presented a system of established citizen journalism funded by the European Humanist Institute for Cooperation and Developing Countries (HIVOS). Its main mandate is to intensify the outreach in local media of unbiased, objective and educational reporting on the marginalized groups. It operates in Uganda, Tanzania, South Africa, Zambia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe focusing on the civil society and media organizations (Banda, 2010).

Citizen journalism is a standard of activities in the Internet that shows how members of the public in a country engage with each other, share ideologies with others on the platform to create a whole online community. In other scenarios, the citizen journalist creates content to look for followers and relevance by sharing and reposting content that had already been distributed by professional media houses agencies. With previous mainstream media patterns, communication is sourced from one specific point, meaning that, the information is conveyed from a specified trained journalists, then disbursed to a mass of isolated audiences. Note that the audiences are not groups of inactive receivers, but people who actively participate by reacting and respond to messages, produce and even distribute their own messages (Chang, 2013).

Many stories start out as rumours in the Internet and then creep into the mainstream media and are reprinted without attribution at several sites. Although they may have all the same original source, they can appear to be multiple instances of reporting, thus the story starts to acquire significance. Many blog owners have proved that they can spark the traditional media interests in a subject and even show or provide more information that the news stories missed by the mainstream media. This indicate that the Citizen journalism is gradually adopting the agenda setting role which has been a major role for traditional journalism and in general the mass media. The quantity of blogs continue to rise at a very high speed. (Bentley, 2005).

Competitiveness with the web has accelerated the manner in which rumours spread since anybody can produce and disseminate it. According to Journalist Jonathan Fenby, the web has a rifle on to the accountable media houses. If a journalist chooses not to produce news, the Internet will definitely do it." Web loggers and citizen journalists provide us an avenue to create another agenda in the restricted territory of the supposed 'blogosphere.' News reporting is being reintellectualized everyday as the media world attempts to adjust to the changing news scenario (Thornburg, 2011).

The emerging media environment is gradually developing where virtual populations scrutinize and deliberate on essential topics in the newscast as communities carry on with creation of citizen reporting, advanced journalism and interpretation. These environments become more justifiable since they do not go through not sieving like in mainstream media houses and on most occasions give information in their raw occurrences as they happen, making them believable. It will become increasingly extensive as portable devices and further innovative development continue to create avenues where anyone can disseminate texts, images and videos straight through handsets instantly (Loader, 2007).

According to Jurrat (2011) Citizen journalism contributes to news by providing information, photographs,

videos and audios where professional journalists or mainstream media has not been able to. It provides opportunities for democracy in media where traditional media is trying to survive and beat competition. Scholars have expressed concerns over the excess personal interpretations and risk of disregard of ethics.

The interned has led to the emergence of web communities, a collective of people online with various social dynamics, personal and professional wants. It offers unique opportunities for netizens to expand distance and time boundaries making it easy for them to have deep relations and connections. There is a blend of anonymity and closeness easy to track behaviors of the users and their online patterns (Kim, 2006)

LITERATURE REVIEW

To develop proper news or information to disseminate to the mass one must identify their audiences so at distinguish proper media channels that will be accessed easily and in a short span of time. According to Dennis (1994) audiences in mass media are receivers of a mass communication process that includes the source, channel, message, receivers and the effect. They can be viewers, listeners or readers that get news from media channels.

Media has a significant impact on the perceptions that form prominent news of the day. This is explained in the way the audience learns of the importance of the information relayed to them by the manner in which the media has organized and put emphasis on the topics. The agenda setting of media has an impact on the behavioral patterns of the audience and shapes their opinions. The most crucial issues affecting the country get increased and repeated coverage to make them current (McCombs & Reynolds, 2002).

Agenda setting is the creation of community consciousness and interests of noticeable issues by mass media. It labels the manner in which mass media tries to identify a chain of command in news dominance over an emerging issues in the society and influence the audience. There are three agenda setting prototypes used by Max McCombs: the awareness model, the priorities model and the salience model. There are also three forms of agenda setting, one is the public agenda where the public agenda is the reliant variables (the traditional assumption), the media agenda, which is usually treated as the dependent variables (agenda building) and finally the policy agenda scenario whose elite law makers agendas are assumed as the dependent variable (political agenda setting) (Rogers & Dearing, 1988).

There exits various agendas in the society today for the mass audiences and social media users. Social media scholars foresee audience disintegration that will reduce or end agenda setting due to the high level of individualism in citizen journalism. This is because there is a lot of information and news available and the media agenda which netizens religiously adhere to is gradually becoming diverse (McCombs, 2005).

Proper understanding of the audience informs on what tool to use for the purpose of communication formation and for organization of media messages. It is from the audience that one is able to predict the effect the messages might have on the audiences. Audiences consist of many intersecting systems of social associations centered on locality and social concerns which the media must incorporate for proper communication (Dennis, 1994).

The arrival of social media and blogging platforms has led to the increase in the task by citizen journalism turning to be increasingly valued since ordinary people have platforms where they can share extraordinary opinions and bring in renewed energies in to a community shepherded by traditional media. Citizen journalists provide instrumental content which can be used to drive democracy to the media and the society. They contest to generate a knowledgeable society where online media takes up the role of moral police while encouraging the voiceless and forgotten communities to have a say and claim their place by telling and account of their own stories courageously (Washbourne, 2010).

Baran (2012) state that agenda setting is the notion that that mass media does not tell people what to think but tells them what to think about. This indicates that there exist a crucial correlation between what the media generates on the internet and the audience's classification of community concerns where the netizens get to know not just the specific issue but also the importance connected to it the quantity of content in a story and its placement. Mass media is naturally attracted to conflict with certain media personalities taking advantage of their status to contest a particular person or crowd while some exaggerate matters to get them out of hand thus triggering conflict in the community.

Bruns (2008) says that gatekeeping in journalism identifies what news needs to be gathered and disseminated from all the available stories in a community. It is identifying what is worth being investigated and covered. The news the audiences consume therefore depends on the its relevance judgment of the journalist according to various factors that range from importance of the news, limitation of space in newspaper columns or broadcasts, and what is likely to attract and spark interests form the audience.

Similar to mainstream media citizen journalists participate in current time media forms where they act as gatekeepers to the information that they share or disseminate. It focuses on messages and information that has been provided by the author and the news that passes to the public is mostly based on the author's interests, values and concerns. The news is organized in a way that highlight different interpretations based on the platform author directed to the audiences (Boler, 2008).

People are controlled by various psychological and sociological factors that they are not even aware of where media messages are designed to manipulate the audience to particular social realities as compared to others. The audience is deemed powerless as far as the media is concerned. The mass culture in social media now gives an avenue for audience participation where they can gather and share content that they have produced themselves for reuse (Creeber & Hoybes, 2003).

METHODOLOGY

This study was a qualitative research and it used the focused descriptive research design. It was most suitable in the study of human behavior since it exposes a deep accommodation of such conduct (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Descriptive research was a suitable choice for the work because the researcher aimed to identify characteristics, frequencies, trends and categories. A content analysis on engagements and posts inYou-Tube, Facebook, Twitter, and Blogs as citizen journalism platforms was conducted. Cohen & Manion (1994) maintains that descriptive study can be utilized when gathering facts about human's attitude, views, traditions or social issues. It can be described as an investigation towards a societal or humanity matter, grounded on analysis made up of variables, gauged numerically and evaluated using numerical processes so as to conclude if analytical generality of the theory is real.

The target population was 10.55 Million social media users as stipulated by Communication Authority of Kenya (2017) while accessible population were 350 social media users on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Blogs. The study used the purposive sampling procedure to obtain a representative sample of the contents. The researcher sampled citizen journalism platforms posts in the period of two years which was, May 2016 to May 2018. The instrument used for data collection was a guiding criterion which was used to identify the platforms that were used mainly in Kenya for Citizen Journalism, those that contained the agenda setting roles and the legal and ethical challenges. The instrument contained a pre-established category that has thematic components which informed the principle criteria of choice namely: Public Agenda, Media Agenda and Policy Agenda Setting. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data guided by The agenda setting role played by citizen journalists in relation to traditional media.

DISCUSSION

During the 2017 elections in Kenya "Githeriman" a male voter was used to spread the spirit of peace and harmony after the nullification of elections. A photo of a man queuing to vote while munching "Githeri" was shared online and played a great role in averting the attention of Kenyans from the tension resulting from election re-run. He was termed by Kenyans as a national hero as they united to share jokes about him at a time the nation was facing hard political time. Following this public uproar, the man was awarded the 'Head of State Commendation by President Uhuru Kenyatta. That was a great example of how a random picture shared on Facebook and Twitter was used to set the agenda for Kenyans and the government.

Figure 1: Photo of Githeri Man Queieng to Vote During the 2017 General Elections (Facebook, 2017)

Figure 2: A Blog Post on News of the Award by President to Githeri Man (Kahawa Tungu Blog, 2017).

In May 2018 the Facebook was filled with comments about a case of a mother who had been harassed for breastfeeding her baby at a Nairobi restaurant. She was quoted by several social media pages saying, "I am very disappointed by xxxx restaurant after humiliating me when breastfeeding my baby. Those waiters, should be aware not all babies are covered while being fed. The approach was pathetic, it was raining outside and 'siwezi nyonyeshea mtoto kwa choo' (I cannot nurse my baby in the toilet)!" She wrote. She claimed that the waiters told her she was giving a bad impression and gave the toilet as an alternative to go and feed the baby.

Figure 3: Facebook Post over a Mother Gets Bullied in a Restaurant (Facebook, 2017)

This simple Facebook post trended all over with women calling for mass boycotting of the restaurant. Women posted their images as they breastfed their children and called upon the government, workplaces and even restaurants to have breastfeeding booth for nursing mothers. It is through various Facebook pages and posts that a peaceful protest was organized and hundreds of women matched the streets of Nairobi demanding breastfeeding rights for women. Bloggers also picked up the trending topic, wrote about it and had it discussed on their blogs.

Figure 4: Social Media Users' Comments over the Issue (Facebook, 2017)

Figure 5: Blogger's Story About an Incident Posted a Facebook Page that Resulted from Citizen Uproar (Diaspora messenger, 2017)

The incident became a big story and news that the mainstream media which include Newspapers, Radios and Television stations also picked it and aired it. The uproar brought other topics on respect for women, how nursing mothers need to be treated at work and even call for policies to introduce crèches in places of work. The social media platform created an agenda that influenced not only normal social issues but governance.

Figure 6: Social Media Post Calling for Mass Action (Facebook, 2018).

There were Facebook posts mobilizing people for the protests against the restaurant. The restaurant was also forced to write and apologize to the woman and Kenyan women. This is a classic example of how social media posts can be used for public demands calling for action. In 2017, IEBC actively used Facebook and Twitter for voter registration mobilization. They made posts with messages encouraging Kenyan citizens to register as voters and to come out and vote for the leader of their choice. A video post made would then be re-shared to target a large number of people. Through the likes comments and views one would see the number of people who had come across the video which was over 500.

Figure 7: IEBC Facebook Page With a Post on Voting Process (Facebook, 2017).

This video posted on IEBC Facebook page had eleven comments but it was shared 62 times this totalling to 1,400 views. A simple post had a multiplying effect and reached anyone who did not click on the specific post by IEBC but through the few who clicked or commented
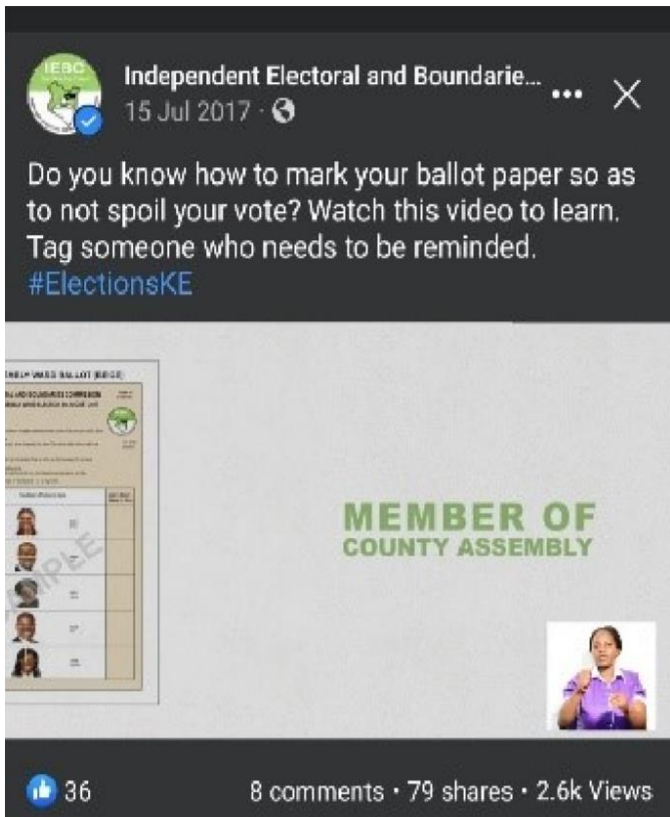

Figure 8: IEBC Facebook Post Sensitizing People on How to Mark Ballot Paper (Facebook, 2017)

The facebook post had eight comments but was shared 79 times and had 2,600 views.

Figure 9: IEBC Facebook Post on Election Preparedness (Facebook, 2017)

This is a Facebook page with 24 comments, shared 114 times and reached 8,700 people. A simple post was

made in regards to the election preparedness as a way of assuring Kenyans on the fairness of the election process. Through Facebook, the electoral commission was used to reach and mobilize a large number of people by posting one short video to reach a mass population.

Figure 10: IEBC Tweet Urging Kenyans to Come Out in Large Numbers and Vote (Twitter, 2017).

On twitter this post attracted 263 retweets or sharing with 30 responses and 500 likes.
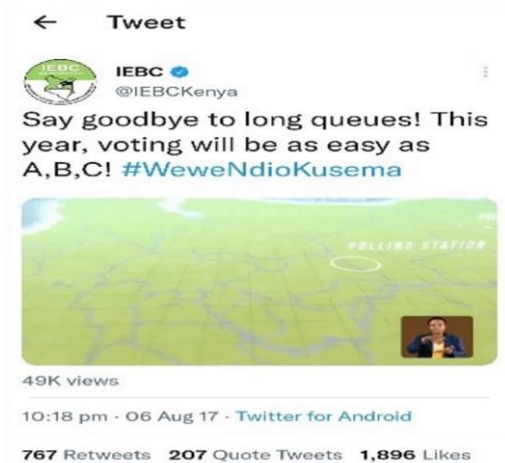

Figure 11: IEBC Tweet on Their Efforts to Maintain Calm and Ease for Voters During the Voting Process (Twitter, 2017)

This tweet was made to assure voters on the promised ease during the election day. IEBC made a post with the message and it was retweeted 767 times, had 207 comments, 1,896 likes and 49,000 views. The number of people reached was is an indication of the power social media has by a single post.

During the 2017 campaign period IEBC official was murdered in cold blood and Kenyans took to social media to condemn the act with various opinions and allegations on what could have been the reason behind it. While some said that it had to do with planned rigging of elections, others called for investigation into the matter on social media. Various leaders went to condole with the family and Kenyans posted various opinions concerning the issue. The nezitens raised concerned on the safety of officers and preparedness to
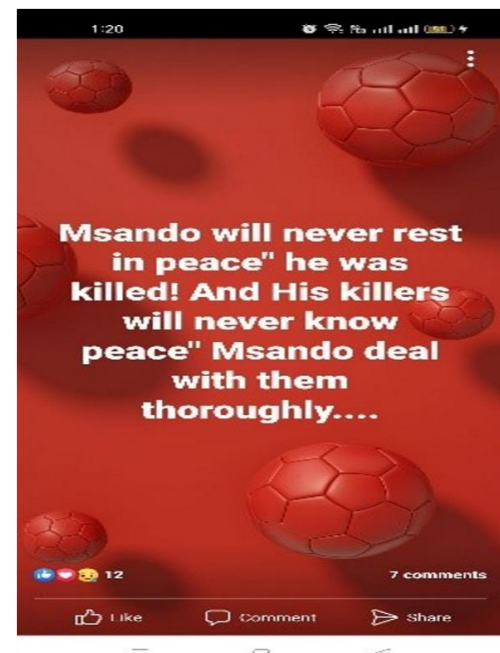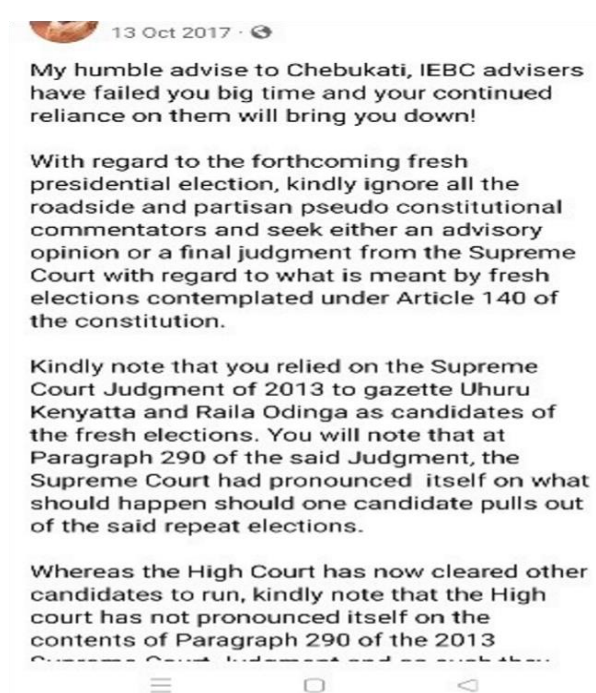
prevent vote rigging.

Figure 12: Social Media Posts by Netizens as They Reacted to Various Issues During Campaign (Facebook, 2018)

Various discussions done via social media during the study period warranted feedback. This was done through replies, comments and likes. The more heated the discussion was the more responses it got from people who came across the debate. One of the most discussed topic on Twitter was the freezing of funds by USAID to Kenyan Government where the US Embassy suspended $ 21 Million (2.1 Billion Kshs) to the Ministry of health. The US gave corruption and weak accounting procedures at the ministry as reasons for the suspension. Citizens took to social media to express their anger over the issue discussing it amongst themselves while questioning the government. This was a topic that prompted a hashtag bringing in a lot of comments as the government officials tried to explain.
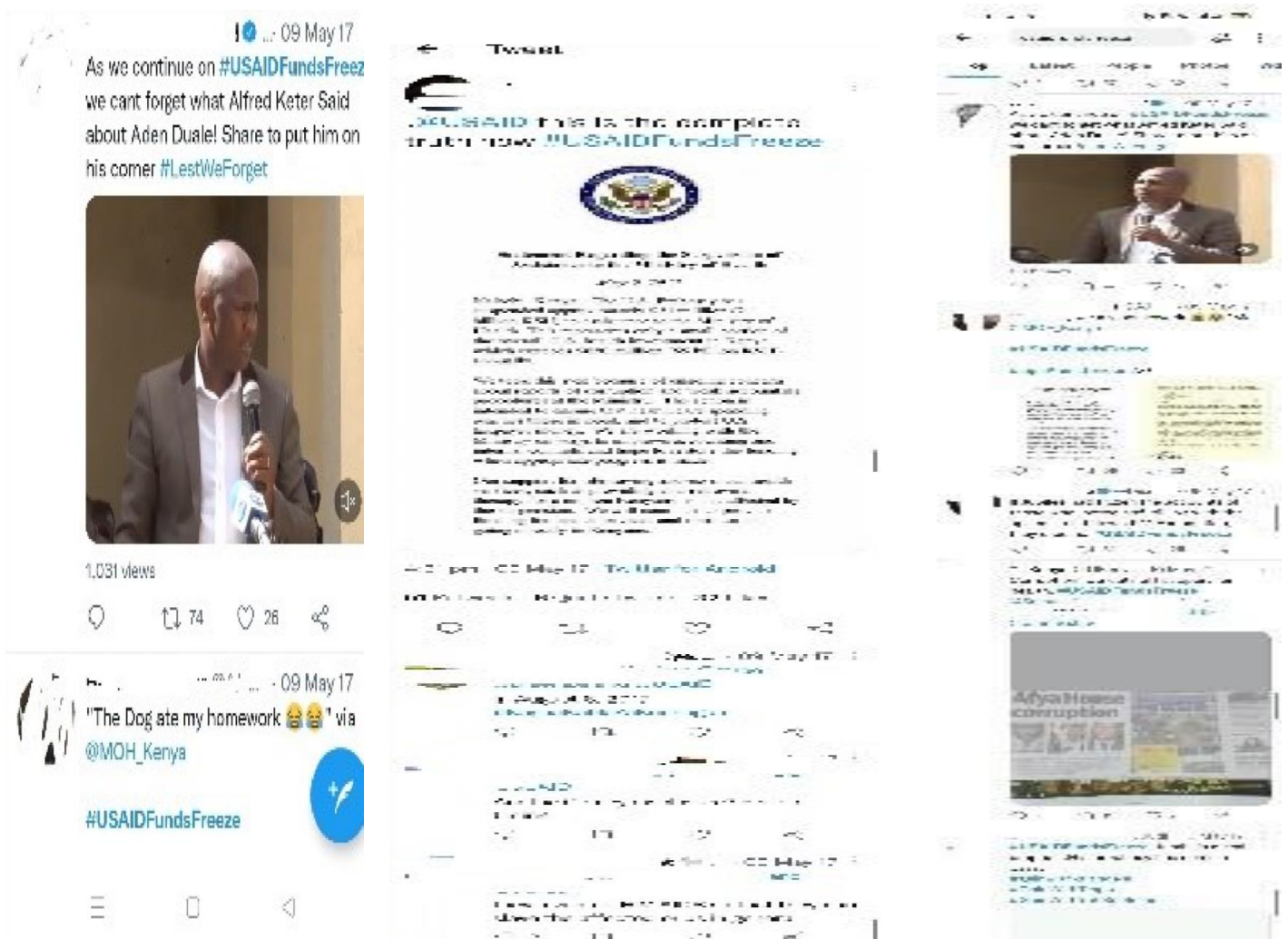
Figure 13: Twitter Posts with Comments and Replies over a Topical Discussion (Twitter, 2017).

The media plays a critical role of influencing the public agenda thus shaping it. Most of the people, topics, occurrences and issues discussed by the media are expected to spark the interests of the public. The media is termed as a medium that 'tells' people what to think. This was witnessed during the election period where there were related issues affecting the society day by day. The social media in particular has shaped public agenda due to its ability to reach many people at a short span of time.

Twitter is a good example of a platform that has had social control by online groups such as the Kenyans on Twitter (KOT) who come up with a certain agenda and create hashtags to mobilize other users on the platform to discuss the agenda. Researchers have termed this group as the 21st Century meeting place for Kenyans due to their strength and powerful control over issues on Twitter. They debate over government policies and actions, elections, trending human interest issues in the country and even make online war or attacks to other countries that seem to belittle Kenya.

In a report dated by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) described KOT as the most vicious bullies online, having thrown their missiles at CNN after it reported Kenya as a hot bed of terror ahead of the then President Obama's visit to the country. By use of the hashtag #someonetellCNN, KOT was able to mobilize other Kenyans attracting 75,000 tweets in which they demanded that CNN should apologize for 'demeaning' their country by suggesting that there were security gaps thus unsafe for any visiting American. The online uproar forced the Kenyan Government to officially write to the network forcing the station to apologize.
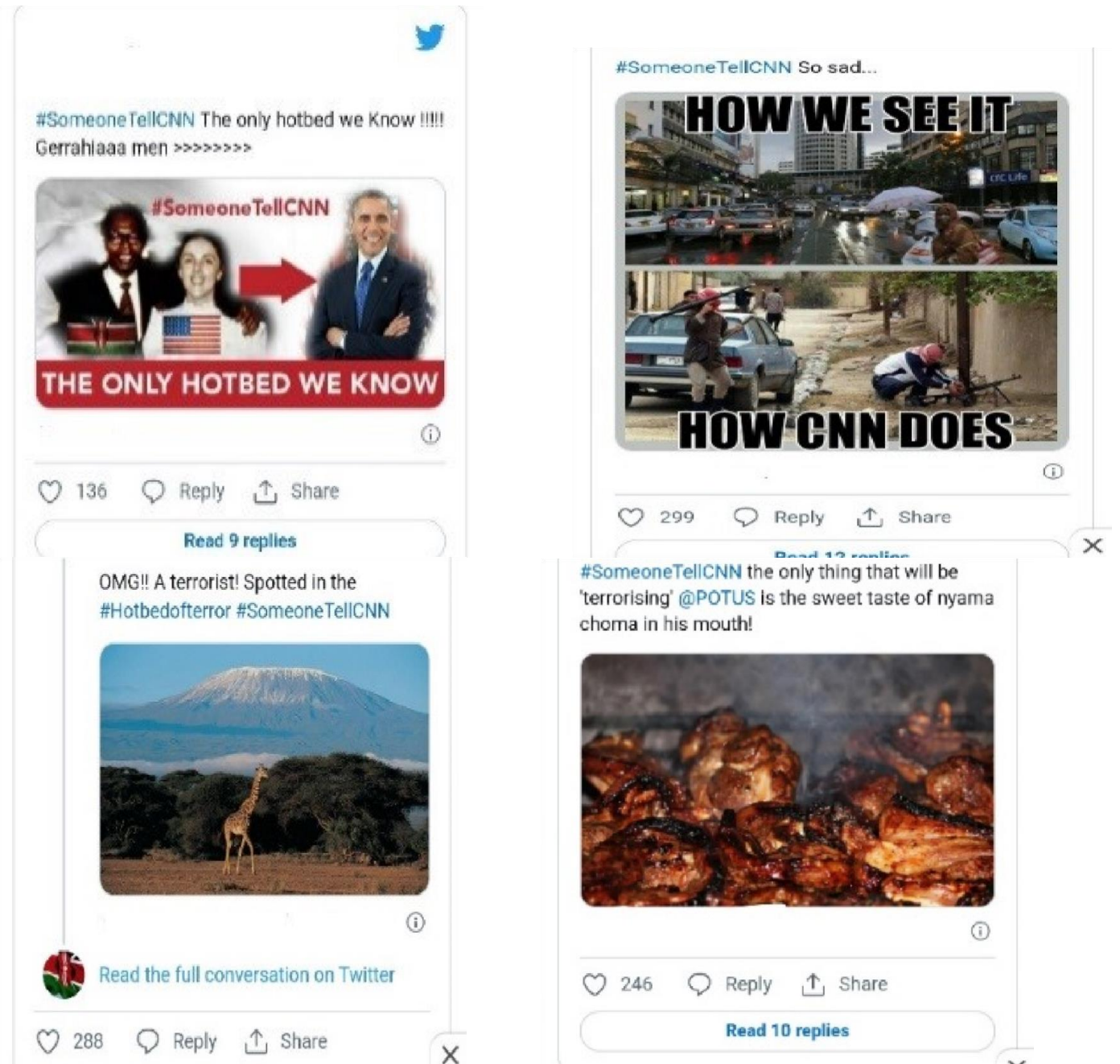
Figure 14: Twitter screenshots on KOT Online War Against CNN During the 2017 General Elections (Facebook, 2017).

With the growth of social media as the fastest and simplest way to pass a message to a large number of audience in a short period of time, many news sources have turned to social media. These news sources include and are not limited to politicians, government officers and agencies, public figures or celebrities, experts on various issues and witnesses to occurrences. They are agencies or individuals that can be interviews or give reliable information that can make a news story.

The office of the president, governmental agencies, public figures and non-governmental organizations have been using their social media handles to break news, announce something, spark debates or make clarification online. Many Journalists and bloggers have been picking the tweets and making stories. Most of those handles have a mark to show they are real accounts which is called a verification to prove that it was the official handle and not a pseudo account.

Figure 15: A Kenyan County Governor Twitter Handle During the 2017 Elections Campaign (Twitter, 2017).
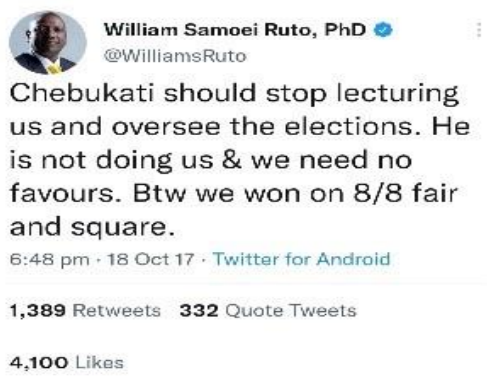

Figure 16: Kenya's Deputy President's Twitter Handle Calling to Action IEBC Chairman During the 2017 General Elections Campaigns (Twitter, 2017).

Figure 17: Government's Communications Directors Twitter Handle Sharing Government's Work (Twitter, 2018).

Figure 18: An International Diplomat's Twitter Post Over President's Visit Aimed at Showing the Progress of the Government (Twitter, 2018).

Figure 19: Kenya's First Lady Social Media Post on Twitter Highlighting Her Work (Twitter, 2018).

Most public figures ranging from politicians, the clergy, musicians, Chief Executive Officers (CEO) in organizations, government ministries and departments among others are using social media platforms which are personal or company social media accounts to share useful informations. The press statements are written, signed and shared on the social media platform which in most cases reaches a lot of people. Journalists and other users pick the information and share or repost it with credits to the original poster. This is the same case in mainstream media where journalists have to attribute the information to the specific source.

However the issue of fake accounts impersonating prominent people has been an issue raising alot of anguish, embrassment. This has led to the increase and advancement of fake news and deceitful information spread. Due to this, management systems of some social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to introduce verification of accounts where accounts belonging to celebrity or prominent personality are added a blue tic by the name to confirm that indeed the account belongs to the person and not to an imposter.

The risk of embarassment and hacking is also an issue that is mushroomed where an account of a prominent person or organization is hacked and embrassing content posted. It is dangerous for the individual and difficult to prove they did not post the particular message. In any case the post is shared to many people who

are ignorant or innocently believe the post and before the owner arrests the situation and proves the account has been hacked, a lot of damage has already been done. The message can be deleted on the platforms but not on the minds of the people and screenshots made of the posts cannot be stopped from being shared.

Social media users can now generate their own topics and content either in written, audio or visual forms. Blogs are a great platform for individuals to write down their ideas for their target audience. These topics range from lifestyle, education among others and can be in written form or visual commonly known as Vlog.

Award Winning blogger Jackson Biko has used his platform Bikozulu to influence, share real life stories that cut across marriage, family, parenthood among others. His blogs have been used to bring new perceptions about life. This platform is an example of how social media is used to create unique social media messages and glue people to their blog. You can be able to identify how many people reached the page through the feedback on the articles by monitoring of comments and likes.
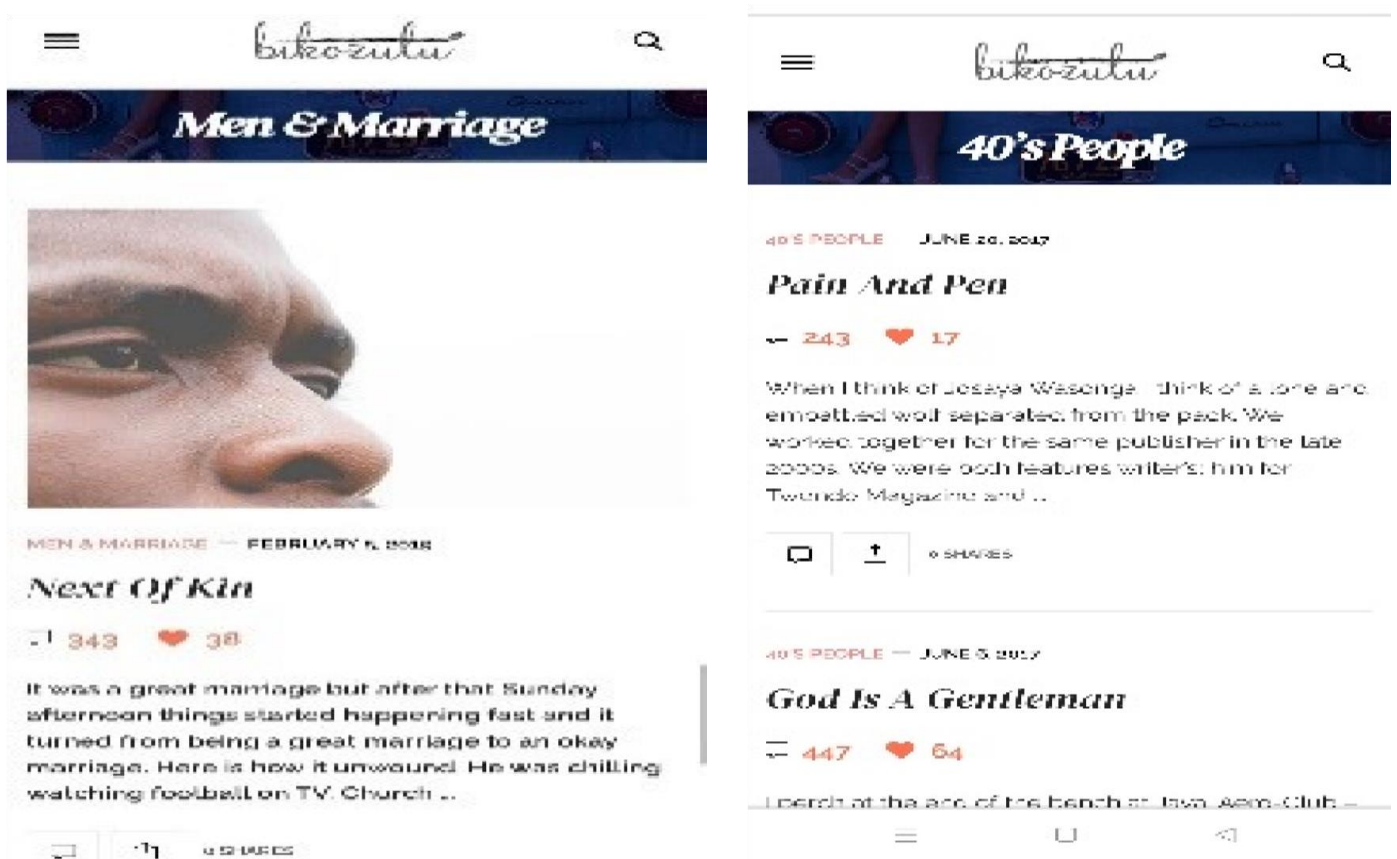

Figure 20: An Example of a Blog Used as a Platform for User Generated Content in Text Form (Bikozulu blog, 2017)

Vlog is the short terminology for video blog. This is content generated and showcased in visual form to support images or text. The most commonly used or popular platform for vlogs is the YouTube channel where anyone with an email address can create a YouTube channel account and generate content for the world to see. They use the platform to share videos containing messages or activities for their followers which can also be shared to many more users.

Joy Kendi is a well know Kenyan fashion and lifestyle blogger who used her page to influence and teach people how to be fashionable in terms of dressing, hair, make up among others. By going through her YouTube channel one can see the number of people subscribed to her 1 channel which is 65,900 and how many people follow the video she posts by the number of views, likes and comments.
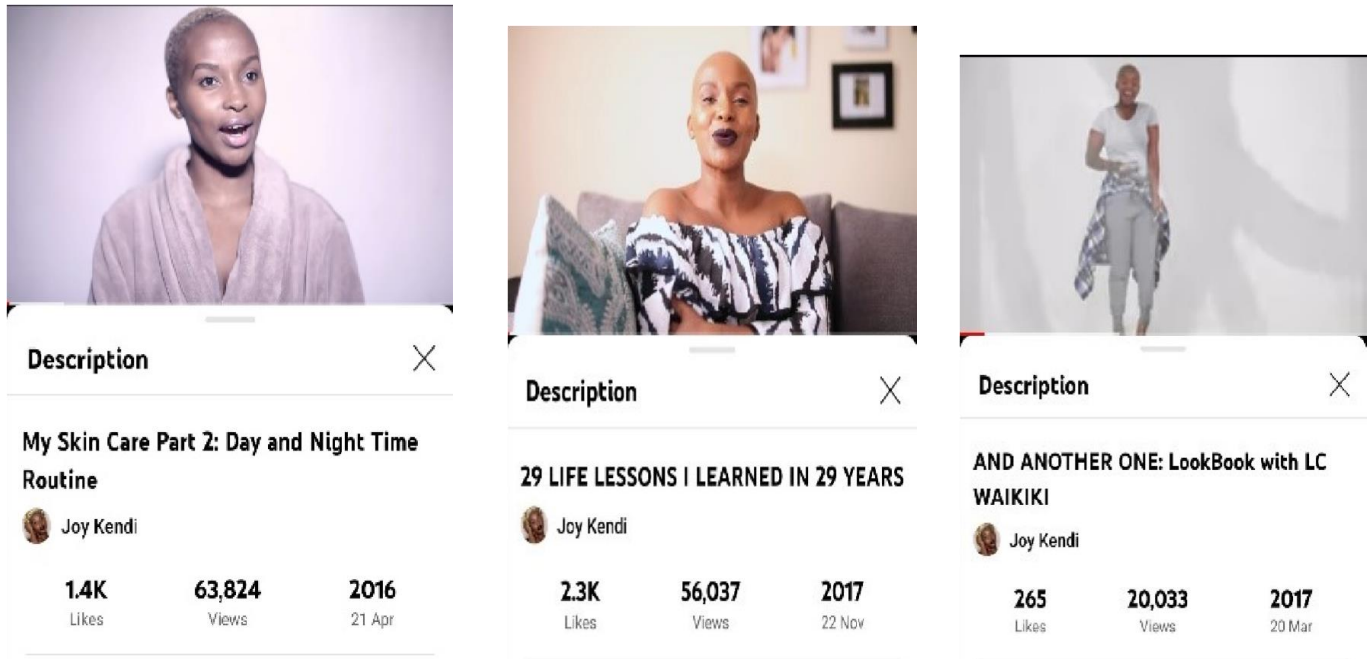
Figure 21: An Example of a Vlogger on a You tube Channel with Views and Likes by Subscribers (YouTube, 2017).

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

The study found out that Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Blogs were used by netizens to spark discussions that were affecting them. They used the platforms to reach out to leaders and authorizes concerned. Facebook was used to share information, Photos and videos which could be shared and re-shared on various pages to reach many other platform users and spark more discussions. The number of views, likes, comments and re-sharing revealed the estimated number of people who had been reached by the information. This does not leave out the possibility of the gadget used being used by more than one netizens where the reaction made on the post will count as one reaction. A netizens could access the information seen on the platforms using their mobile phones while in an office or at home and show it to family or friends then discuss and even participate by commenting on what they discuss. It means that one message posted on the one personal page was seen and discussed by a group of three or five but the reaction will be from the single and specific platform. This scenario repeats itself in the other three platforms studied because it includes sharing of videos as in the case of YouTube while photos or writings on Twitter and the blogs.

The study showed that the information shared on one page of the platforms could reach tens and hundreds of other users in a short span. The users also shared information from a different platform to another where one could share a link from YouTube to their Facebook or Twitter pages. The inter-sharing between platforms increased the number of people reached and through the views, comments, likes and re-sharing was calculated and shown below or beside the specific post made.

The study found that the spread in the use of social media platform in introducing and pushing for a specific agenda has been widespread with online users and consumers taking maximum advantage to set and push for their targeted agenda to specific audiences. Notably, the use of YouTube channel in agenda setting has been evident in the use and sharing of videos on emerging issue enabling the audience to be there in present time, seeing, hearing and feeling which reaches out to their mind and emotions thereby influencing or change their attitude towards something or someone. Politicians have turned to social Media platforms to try and reach out to the voters as a campaign tool in a bid to convince them to vote in their favor. This include

payment of administrators of most followed platforms. It is believed that most of the voters have access to social media and internet and the political message is able to reach many potential voters in a short span of time as opposed to political rallies. This is where political agenda is set through social media.

The citizens can respond to political campaigns, vote pitching by politicians, campaigners or political parties and are able to make a decision from direct online interaction with them. This no doubt shows the capability of social media platforms to mobilize political opinions even to the most remote areas. In the terms of politics and development, the study also showed that the use of social media has made a great impact to push for development agenda and also to enhance democracy.

CONCLUSION

Kenyans used Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Blogs as Citizen Journalism platforms for mass mobilization over social, economic and political issues that affected them. The Citizen Journalism Platforms were used to attract the attention of specific targeted group of the community and specific issues affecting them.

Kenyans used social media platforms to spark debates over trending issues which united them for a common goal, mostly to get attention of leaders or people in authority. Kenyans used social media to exchange opinions and sensitize each other unfair policies and treatment, made public demands and called for action on those by the Kenyan Government.

Social media platforms affiliated to government, prominent or influential people was used as a source of news with effective attribution by media practitioners without direct interaction or one on one interview. Failure or inability various governments or agencies to properly instill regulations on use of social media has led to increase cybercrimes, bullying and disregard of media ethics.

The success in the audience reach by social media post or user was measured by the number of reactions either by number of people who liked the post, those that read it, those that viewed what was posted in cases of videos and the number of people that shared it.

Online users or netizens are being fed and facilitated through the internet and online interactions are structured to kindle reactions, push for active listening and participation in unending discussions to engage and exchange information freely. It provides the same opportunity for any user to be heard therefore maximizing their freedom from the state and corporate interest. More debates and discussions allows the existence of many more independent voices.

Subscribing to various social media platforms has become a type of status symbol with a rush of everyone running to ensure they have many subscribers and followers or to subscribe to certain platforms. There are frantic efforts to acquire large numbers of followers and subscription. The Citizen Journalism platforms have very limited accountability on users. As stakeholders strive to maintain their relevance on social media they end up negatively interfering with the lives of others and risking their own credibility. There is little that is done through number of likes, reposts and re-sharing by users and followers to control any fake information and any anonymous posts. This is had increasingly made a negative effect in regulations of these platforms.

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