

**SOCIAL MEDIA AS A STRATEGIC TOOL FOR COMMUNICATION IN
CORPORATES: A CASE OF CRESTWOOD MARKETING AND
COMMUNICATIONS, KENYA**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A MASTERS DEGREE OF
ARTS IN JOURNALISM AND MEDIA STUDIES
MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY**

MARCH, 2025

DECLARATION

DECLARATION

Declaration by the candidate

This project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University or for any other award.

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Sign Kihima Date 27/03/2025

Declaration by the supervisor

I/We confirm that the work reported in this thesis was carried out by the candidate under my/our supervision

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Sign [Signature] Date 27/3/25

DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this research work to my family for their unwavering love and exceptional dedication, as well as to my children and husband for their support and patience.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to acknowledge above all, the supreme God for strength and empowering me to complete my master's in good spirits. I thank my supervisor Dr. Daniel Ong'ong'a Oloo for the support I have received from him so far.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Mount Kenya University for granting me the opportunity to pursue my studies and to all my lecturers, whose invaluable guidance and dedication enriched my knowledge and skills. I am deeply thankful to my family members for their unwavering moral support and for their understanding of the demands of my academic journey. Additionally, I greatly appreciate the positive influence and inspiration of my classmates and colleagues, whose collaboration and assistance in sourcing information and materials were instrumental in the successful completion of this project.



ABSTRACT

In the contemporary digital landscape, social media has become a critical asset for organizations seeking to enhance communication strategies and connect to diverse audiences. Social media has transformed the communication landscape globally proving to be an extremely persuasive tool that heavily influences decision-making organs in organizations. Social media has transformed communication with organizations adopting social media as a strategic communication tool. However, few studies exist on how social media has been embraced in the Kenyan market as a strategic communication tool. The objective of this research is therefore, is to look at Crestwood's marketing and communications company utilization of social media platforms. Social network theory anchored the study which shows the relationships are based on the social networks that coexist. Performance is guided by the fundamental principles of reciprocity, exchange and similarity. Social relationships play an integral role in transmitting information, and channeling personal or media influence. Social media platforms propel an organization's online visibility, amplifying its brand and public relations and other strategic communication activities. The research employed a purposive sampling method because the study falls under a case study and seeks to identify the specific social media strategies implemented by Crestwood, the impact of social media engagement on brand perception and customer loyalty and explore the challenges encountered by Crestwood Marketing and Communications this communication tool. The research target population includes the management and employees at the Crestwood marketing and communications company who use social media for communication. The sample size was determined using judgmental method by selecting Crestwood marketing and communications because the research falls under a case study and uses guided interviews for data collection while analyzing the data thematically and presenting the findings from the emerging themes and quotes. The summary indicated that Crestwood employs a proactive and strategic approach to social media engagement, emphasizing responsiveness, platform-specific tactics, and resource management. Key themes include Responsiveness, with Crestwood generally providing prompt replies that strengthen customer relations, though limited resources occasionally hinder response times. The study identified several key strategies Crestwood uses to engage its target audience across social media platforms, focusing on four main themes. Targeted Advertising emerged as a significant tactic, with paid campaigns on platforms like Facebook and Instagram enabling Crestwood to reach niche segments effectively. The findings reveal that Crestwood Marketing and Communications' social media strategies have positively influenced brand perception and customer loyalty for their clients. The findings indicate that while Crestwood Marketing and Communications faces some initial challenges in aligning with client expectations, their strategies ultimately contribute positively to brand visibility, audience engagement, and client satisfaction. The recommended that Crestwood Marketing and Communications continue to prioritize flexibility and customization in their service delivery. Tailoring strategies to each client's unique brand voice and objectives can help avoid misalignment and improve campaign results.

Key Words: *Twitter, Corona Virus Disease, Television, Social media, Social Network Sites*

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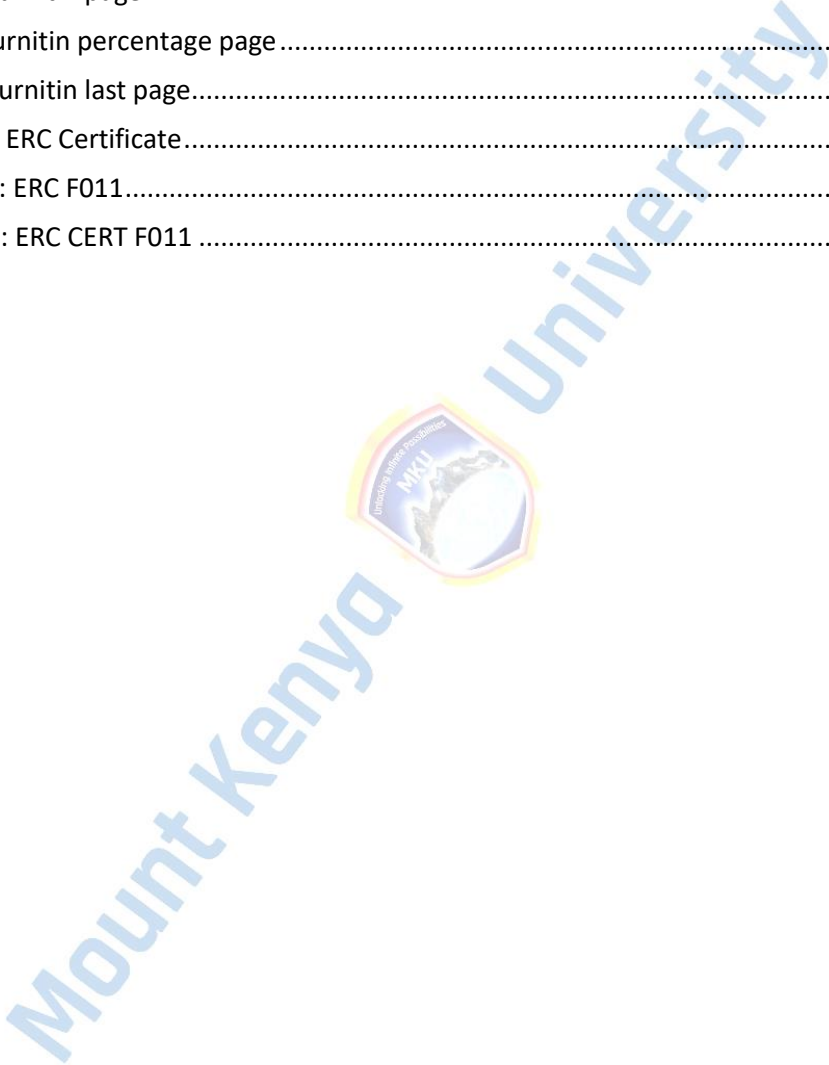
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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

X-	Twitter
COVID-19-	Corona Virus Disease
TV	Television
SM	Social media
SNSs	Social Network Sites



CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

This chapter explores the significant role of social media as a strategic communication tool. The introduction highlights the nature of this issue, citing instances where social media is adopted in organizations as a strategic tool for communication both domestically and internationally.

The evolution of digital technology and social media continues to shape the communication landscape with social media changing and impacting the dynamics of strategic communication (Agarwal, & Puppala, (2024). Technology has made the process of communication people-centred by making it an interactive, real-time process that is more diversified. Social media has greatly impacted theoretical applications within the public sectors.

Organizations are gravitating towards social media as a strategic communication tool. Its diverse nature continues to give it an upper hand compared to traditional communication platforms that heavily rely on and conform to bureaucratic patterns of communication. For instance, the rapid rise in the use of social media has attracted the attention of organizations and marketers. Consumers equally are migrating to social media platforms thus making it a preferred platform to source information, for marketing and communication. Social media presents a powerful platform bringing benefits on brand to engagement through interactive sessions of advertising (Macnamara and Zerfass 2012).

Organizations have redirected communication and advertising on the Internet shadowing all other forms of traditional media. Public relations professionals embrace social media positively concerning strategic communication. Holtzhausen and Hallahan (2007), define strategic communications as the "purposeful use of communications by an organization to fulfil its mission. Technology has evolved enhancing Social media's worldwide reach. Social media platforms enable instantaneous communication across borders. It has become a pivotal tool in various domains, including marketing, public relations, political campaigns, crisis management, and social activism. Different branches of information and communication technologies have undergone significant advancements recently, with notable progress in networking techniques involving the

introduction of satellites, the internet, and smartphone technology. Such developments have been greatly influenced by the widespread adoption of social networks (Macnamara and Zerfass 2012). Consequently, the social media landscape has ushered in a new phase, where internet users have emerged as key elements in the communication and media processes.

Globally, Social media platforms have changed from simple networking sites to key channels for communication and influence. With over 4.8 billion users globally as of 2023, platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and TikTok are important in personal, organizational, and governmental communication strategies. Globally, social media enables rapid information dissemination through its digital platforms shaping public perception of strategic communication processes. The last decade has seen a huge transformation in the social media landscape (Gede and Kawiana, 2023).

According to Gómez and Soto (2011), today's corporate landscape, social media has become an essential tool for organizations worldwide, serving diverse purposes such as customer service, marketing, internal communications, public relations, and corporate social responsibility. It has revolutionized the way companies and stakeholders communicate and interact, fostering real-time collaboration, engagement, and dialogue. By enabling businesses to participate in conversations and connect with diverse audiences, social media has evolved into a strategic communication partner, offering unique opportunities for organizations to build relationships, strengthen their brand, and actively involve stakeholders in meaningful exchanges.

The effectiveness of social media in achieving strategic communication objectives has become a focal point for organizations aiming to enhance their reach and engagement with target audiences (Konoplyannikova et al, 2024). Social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram, provide organizations with real-time access to vast networks of users, allowing them to communicate directly with customers, stakeholders, and the public. By leveraging social media, organizations can tailor their messages to specific audiences, foster brand loyalty, and increase visibility, all while monitoring and adapting to feedback. Furthermore, social media enables a more interactive approach to communication, offering opportunities for two-way conversations that can strengthen relationships and build trust. This ability to engage in real-time dialogue is a key factor

in achieving communication goals, as it allows for immediate response and the resolution of issues before they escalate.

In addition to fostering engagement, social media plays a crucial role in driving awareness and promoting organizational objectives. According to Enke, and Borchers, (2021), this allows for the dissemination of information to a global audience quickly and cost-effectively, which is especially important for campaigns aimed at raising awareness about social, political, or environmental issues. With its targeting capabilities, social media allows for the precise delivery of content to specific demographic groups, ensuring that messages reach the intended audience. Moreover, the ability to measure engagement through analytics provides organizations with valuable insights into the success of their communication strategies, allowing them to fine-tune their approaches for better outcomes. As a result, social media is not only an effective tool for achieving communication objectives but also a critical component in the broader strategic planning process for many organizations.

Furthermore, the rapid increase of social media platforms, as well as the public's capacity to use these platforms to disseminate information, has increased social media's impact on public opinion (Khalil & Storie, 2020). The rising prominence of social media and web applications has significantly influenced both companies and individuals, reshaping how they connect and engage. Platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, with their vast audiences, have become essential spaces where organizations can reach customers, prospective employees, and other key stakeholders. The advantages of leveraging social media are manifold, including the ability to establish new customer relationships, enhance knowledge sharing for educational purposes within organizations, enable faster dissemination of information, and foster greater collaboration across departmental boundaries. This dynamic shift underscores the critical role of social media in modern organizational strategies.

Hisseine et al., (2022), Social media has revolutionized global communication, offering a robust platform for sharing ideas, establishing business connections, and fostering innovative professional concepts. It has become a vital tool for collaboration and creativity across various sectors. However, the widespread use of social media comes with significant challenges, including the spread of misinformation, inadequate content moderation, digital piracy, data breaches, identity

fraud, and the proliferation of fake news. These issues highlight the need for enhanced policies and strategies to ensure the responsible and secure use of social media in today's interconnected world.

Akremiti, Perrigot, & Piot-Lepetit, (2015), the viral nature of social media content can affect public views thus influencing public discussions on various problems, from political events to social movements. Therefore, the background of this study looks at the influence of social media as a strategic communication tool on matters of image branding, customer service, product marketing, image branding, learning, creating memories, and how social media can modify information ecology, influence public mood, and influence decision-making processes globally. The result is to investigate this phenomenon comprehensively.

According to Khalil and Storie, (2020), women in Saudi Arabia adopted social media to conduct campaigns on their rights to be allowed to drive cars. They argue that women were banned from driving vehicles in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia unless they were accompanied by a male figure. Seeing the oppression caused, women decided to use social media to conduct a campaign. In response to mounting pressure, the Saudi Arabian government announced in September 2017 that women would be permitted to drive starting in June 2018. This landmark decision was heavily influenced by the strategic use of social media, as activists leveraged digital platforms to amplify their messages both locally and globally. The theory of connective action provides valuable insights into this movement, illustrating how social media served as a powerful tool for organizing campaigns, engaging audiences, and mobilizing support within Saudi Arabia and from the international community, ultimately contributing to this significant social reform.

In the African context, Fayoyin (2016), analyses how social media has been embraced by different institutions in Africa. He examines how the use of social media is transforming health communication in Africa. The study highlighted the growing array of intervention options made possible by mobile devices and innovative mobilization strategies in addressing diverse health challenges. The rapid advancements in digital media and communication technologies have reinforced the potential of social media to achieve significant developmental and public health outcomes on a global scale. Development institutions have harnessed the availability of digital devices and platforms to design and implement various social media-driven interventions aimed

at fostering social and behavioral change across different population groups, extending beyond young people, who are the predominant users of social media content. However, he cautions against “new media utopianism” or an overreliance on social media, urging users to view it as a tool for constructive development rather than one that could lead to self-destruction.

According to Rosa et al., (2021), communication plays a major role in responding to crises. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, social media was effectively used to communicate in real-time to different quarters. They argue that communication contributes to the spread of collective interpretations that evoke emotions from the community. There were multiple sources of communications across 10 countries from different continents including Europe, North America, Latin America, Asia and Africa. The analysis is done to highlight how efficiently social media platforms facilitate communications across different continents at just a click of a button.

In the Kenyan context, Mutai (2012), argues that the social media offers a wide range of platforms and some popular sites include Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, Linked, Flickr, and Foursquare. Other sites offer different services related to communication depending on a user's needs. Such sites include Digg, Delicious and Mixx, online platform sites. Some social media platforms even allow users to create their accounts for various tasks like video sharing websites, such as YouTube contributing to the larger social media landscape.

The growth of social media platforms has improved how information is shared, calling into question mainstream media's traditional function as gatekeepers of news veracity (Tessem, Nyre, Mesquita, and Mulholland, 2022). This situation is not tied down to one aspect but has become a global concern, calling upon varied cultures to prevent the spread of false information when sending out any form of information. Social media has also seen an increase in false information where people with malicious intentions take advantage of internet users by sharing false information with the intention to taint a competitor's image, gain views, and hack other users' accounts among other things. These are some of the worrying trends experienced on social media platforms that call for careful usage of internet platforms. Brands must ensure that they use verified accounts that users can trust as legitimate sources of information. Proper thoughts must be taken into account when creating and developing content for marketing, public relations, corporate social responsibilities and so forth.

Social media has changed how social media is used for communication in Kenya. Organizations are quickly adopting technology making it an essential tool not only for organizations but also for individual internet users and governments (Gede, & Kawiana, 2023). Organizations have embraced social media platforms for networking and internal communication. Platforms such as Facebook, and WhatsApp, Instagram are customized to facilitate such communication where internet users can open personal accounts or official pages where they can network with others or facilitate communication with different stakeholders for various reasons. These platforms provide environments to connect with families and share updates.

Ndeta, (2017), argues that government institutions in Kenya have adopted the use of social media to communicate. The study focuses close attention is paid to platforms like X(Twitter) and Facebook to analyse the engagements that were undertaken online in 2015 on Facebook and Twitter for the Respective Ministries. Narrowing down to 4 ministries to evaluate how they engage other people using Facebook and Twitter accounts. For instance, a platform like X(Twitter) was effectively used in Indonesia by 2 Indonesian ministers who effectively used their social media accounts to communicate with the public. According to Gómez and Soto (2011), Social media offers high accessibility and broad reach. With relatively low costs, social media can have access to a larger and mixed audience compared to traditional media. The research highlights the vital need to assess social media's unique strengths and weaknesses as a tool for communication.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The contemporary world of technology has transformed how social media is utilized globally. Social media has changed from just being used as a tool for personal interaction to a powerful tool for strategic communication. Businesses, governments, non-profits, and individual users are adopting to usage of social media to shape public perception, drive marketing campaigns, engage with audiences, and influence social and political outcomes. Just like any other innovation, technology experiences challenges depending on its consumption.

Despite the growing popularity of social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook and X among others, there is a persistent gap in understanding the factors contributing to effective communication using social media platforms, user perception, and brand loyalty. Lack of

engagement affects communication and reduces the overall effectiveness and impact of social media for communication. This research looks at brand perception and customer loyalty, challenges in using social media, and strategies for engaging on social media platforms. The study highlights some of the challenges that may need Further analysis on the benefits of social media as a strategic communication tool including the challenge of changes in algorithms as technology transforms, and authenticity in the information being shared, However, maintaining a balance between authenticity and professionalism is important. Organizations must approach these issues carefully to build trust without compromising their brand's integrity or messaging consistency.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The current study therefore seeks to establish the usage of social media as a strategic communication tool, a case of Crestwood Marketing and Communication- Kenya.

1.4. Objectives of the Study

The main research objective of this study is:

To look at Crestwood's marketing and communications company utilization of social media platforms in Kenya.

- i. To evaluate the effectiveness of social media in achieving the strategic communication objectives of Crestwood Marketing and Communications in Kenya.
- ii. To identify the specific social media strategies implemented by Crestwood Marketing and Communications to engage with its target audience in Kenya
- iii. To assess the impact of social media engagement on the brand perception and customer loyalty of Crestwood Marketing and Communications in Kenya.
- iv. To explore the challenges encountered by Crestwood Marketing and Communications in using social media as a strategic communication tool in the Kenyan market.

1.5 Research questions

- i. How effective is social media in enhancing the strategic communication objectives of Crestwood Marketing and Communications in Kenya?

- ii. What specific social media strategies has Crestwood Marketing and Communications implemented to engage with its target audience in Kenya?
- iii. What impact has social media engagement had on the brand perception and customer loyalty of Crestwood Marketing and Communications in Kenya?
- iv. What challenges has Crestwood Marketing and Communications encountered in using social media as a strategic communication tool in the Kenyan market?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The research results could potentially benefit corporate organizations dealing with branding, marketing and public relations. The insights collected could help organizations explore collaborations with social media experts and incorporate best practices such as integrating social media in branding, marketing, content creation and handling public relations. Through this, organizations can transform and adapt to the contemporary social media landscape.

Policymakers and regulatory organizations play an important function by defining the social media landscape, and study findings can help drive the development platforms for misinformation. Understanding the role of social media platforms allows legislators to create legislation that balances the values of free expression with the need for responsible information sharing, resulting in a more accountable social media space.

1.7 Scope of the study

The study scope refers to the borders and factors that define the scope and constraints of a research project. It defines the exact features, dimensions, and variables that the study covered, indicating what was examined. The present research was carried out in Kenya and focused on persons/organizations that engage with social media for communication, including both creators and consumers of social media content.

The study was guided by only three objectives, which are to identify the specific social media strategies implemented by Crestwood Marketing and Communications to engage with its target audience in Kenya, to assess the impact of social media engagement on brand perception and customer loyalty of Crestwood Marketing and Communications in Kenya and to explore the

challenges encountered by Crestwood Marketing and Communications in using social media as a strategic communication tool in the Kenyan market.

The target population for this study comprised employees, management, and customers of Crestwood Marketing and Communications, along with external users directly influenced by the company's communication strategies. A purposive sampling technique was employed, selecting 30 participants, including five key informants: a marketing manager, social media specialists, a customer service representative, a digital marketing consultant, and a public relations officer. This sample was drawn from top management, middle management, support staff, and customers to capture diverse perspectives. Data collection focused on those meeting inclusion criteria.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

Social media has been widely accepted by many organizations including businesses, governments, non-profits, and individuals as a strategic communication tool. However, few challenges are associated with its use just like it offers lucrative opportunities to its users. This study addresses some of the limitations that are likely to impact the effectiveness of social media as a strategic communication tool. The findings from this study may not accurately reflect the practices and the impact of social media as a strategic communication tool addressing its effectiveness, and challenges in achieving organizational or individual goals.

1.9 Delimitations

This study focused on utilization of social media platforms for communication particularly on regulations, policy, strategy frameworks, monetization and the overall outlook of social media landscape in Kenya.

The theoretical framework for this study is dependent on pillars of theories such as the social network theory which focuses on social networks and communication and brings out the active audience perspective. The study was constrained within the boundaries of social networking theory and the dynamic capabilities approach.

Nairobi County is selected as the study area owing to the locality of the case study. The case study which is Crestwood Marketing and Communication is also located within Nairobi County, therefore the researcher uses this as her research setting.

1.10 Assumptions of the study

The study makes assumptions that the participants involved in this study answered to the questions with maximum honesty. The researcher assumes that the sample population selected was knowledgeable regarding social media usage as a strategic communication tool. Assumptions about the representativeness of the sample are crucial. The researcher also assumes that the sample is sufficiently large to make conclusions about the broader population. There is also an assumption that the context in which the research occurs can impact future studies.

1.11 Operational definition of key terms

Evolution- is the gradual growth of something or a process.

Social media- represents interactive technologies that enhance content creation, sharing and aggregation amongst virtual communities and networks. This can be measured in terms Content Quality, audience analysis and platform selection

Versatility- refers to the ability to adapt to something in different functions, roles or activities

Utilization- refers to an action of making practical and effective use of something.

Dynamics- refers to the forces or properties which enhance growth, development, or change within a system or process.

Roadmap- this refers to a particular a plan or strategy adopted to achieve a particular goal.

Data-this represents data collected for statistics and analysis of a situation.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of both theoretical and empirical literature on social media as a strategic communication tool. It synthesizes and refines findings from previous research conducted in this field. The chapter begins with a theoretical review, exploring the key theories that underpin and relate to this study, offering a framework for understanding social media's role in strategic communication. It then transitions to an empirical review, examining existing research findings and comparing them to the study's focus, thereby identifying gaps, trends, and insights relevant to the field. Social media emerges as a high-powered and influential platform for communication, allowing internet users from individuals and organizations to access and easily share information, engage with audiences, and foster relationships. The use of social media as a strategic communication tool has been comprehensively studied in the literature.

2.2 Empirical Literature

2.2.1 Effectiveness of social media in achieving the strategic communication

Social media has transformed the way organizations communicate, engage with stakeholders and deliver on their strategies. The dynamic capabilities approach gives a framework to understand how organizations can effectively utilize social media platforms as strategic communication tools on behalf of the organization. It emphasizes the ability organizations have to build and consolidate internal and external competencies to address the changing work environment (Dixon et al., 2010).

Social media's versatility and reach make it an indispensable tool for strategic communication. It can enhance brand reputation, drive engagement, and contribute to overall business success when used effectively. Social media has changed the communication landscape offering unique speeds, reach, and engagement opportunities. Its coherence as a communication tool is evident in its ability to target specific audiences, provide real-time interconnection, and deliver cost-effective solutions. Though social media solves millions of connection and communication issues, challenges such as information overload, privacy concerns, and algorithmic biases must be addressed and maximize its benefits. For individuals, businesses, and organizations, leveraging the strengths of social media while addressing its limitations is critical to effective communication in the digital era.

Before an organization decides to integrate technology into its communication strategy. This helps to put in place the right mechanisms to support the new technology. An organization can pull resources and manpower that oversee these functions to enhance efficiency. The communication landscape includes the goals and objectives of an organization; point out clearly what the overall objective of the organization is by looking at the brand awareness, customer engagement initiatives, sales growth plan, or corporate social responsibility plans in the organizations. Some of the strategies in customer engagement include;

Customer engagement and relationship management; The internet has interactive platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn which offer interactive features like live streams, reels question-and-answer sessions which provide direct engagement with users. An organization may leverage such platforms to engage their audiences and communicate effectively. Also, community empowerment involves the engagement of the surrounding communities to maintain and build loyalty to the brand (Gede and Kawiana, 2023). Through Market research and consumer insights; Social media platforms have analytic tools used to monitor and track user engagements on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other platforms. This helps to analyze audience demographics and content consumption. There are other platforms used for social listening that an organization can use to monitor conversations on the internet about their brand and competitors in the market.

Content customization; is where communication is customized to a particular group of persons. In a society that has diverse audiences with diverse needs and preferences, Social media platforms uses algorithms to target specific audiences for specific content, making communication more efficient and personalized. Platforms like Facebook, X and Instagram use data to show users content that matches their preferences, creating an interest to engage with content creators. Content is customized based on users' liking and pushed across social media platforms using hashtags, mentions, and tags to reach specific communities or individuals. According to (Tsimonis and Dimitriadis, 2014), targeted communication opens opportunities for targeted advertisements that focus on demographics, interests, and online consumer behaviour, making advertising campaigns more efficient and cost-effective.

Map out who the target audience for this particular organization is; this helps to understand who in particular the communication is being sent to. Crafting a marketing message is easier when you

have in mind a particular person you are targeting. Understand their demographics in terms of age differences and gender, consumer behaviours of the current and potential audience, and understand the type of platforms your particular audience consumes information from. This information is critical as it determines the success and failure of a media campaign. Understanding your audience helps put in place the right feedback mechanisms.

Current Channels; have knowledge on which communication channels are currently in use, so that content is developed putting in mind different algorithms for different media channels or social media platforms. Innovation in technology keeps introducing new features to already existing ones, thus important to understand what new features have been added and how they function. Understand how they perform so that users can also upgrade their skills to match up to the new changes. Integration of these platforms goes along with ensuring efficiency and a coherent message. These might include traditional media, websites, email marketing, and offline events. According to Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014), Segmentation helps in critical decisions like setting price controls, announcing new products/services, interacting with fans, providing advice and useful information, and handling customer service issues. Social media landscaping assists in drafting the right strategies and policies.

2.2.2 Social media engagement on brand perception and customer loyalty

Social media plays a critical role in communication as it engages with the audiences directly; frequent engagement with the audience helps build trust and stronger relationships, thus increasing customer loyalty (Hisseine, Chen, & Yang, 2022). Social media helps with content creation and marketing through its platforms including blogs, websites, videos and infographics. Organizations can partner with influencers or communication firms that have expertise in handling this type of content to ensure quality stories are told about an organization. It can also be used to communicate a crisis that involves the organization where public relations managers must control and manage communication during or after a crisis to mitigate the negative effects on the company's reputation. Lastly, mobilize any resources and manpower to act on these opportunities and transform the opportunities into actual results. To identify opportunities and threats that exist in the market, organizations may adopt the use of social media platforms as their strategic communication tool to reach out to the masses and mobilize resources. Social media plays a critical role in

communication as it engages with the audiences directly; frequent engagement with the audience helps build trust and stronger relationships.

Social media monitoring tools to rate and track the opinions of specific social networking conversations; following up on online reactions to new announcements or developments; monitoring and analyzing what competitors are putting in the markets and monitor any mentions on social media spaces; online conversations and; (Ganley et al., 2009). Unified messaging is also part of cross-platform whereby social media account managers can be able to across check different platforms on how messaging has been distributed to target people. This is to ensure that the intended message is coherent with the intended purpose across all platforms. Also, the brand voice remains the same across all platforms regardless of the medium.

According to Lim et al; (2015), in the case of the Internet, advertisers are starting to exploit the communication. However, cross-platform communication has its challenges when it comes to feedback, control of the messages, challenges of cross-ethnic values and beliefs, impact, and weakening or strengthening advertising due to a lack of incorporating creativity. Also, communication between deaf people and others who can hear and see visual graphics still proves a challenge. Organizations have not invested resources and time to produce content that caters to everyone in an equal way, communicators often focus on serving just those who can read and hear as compared to those living with different disabilities. Integrated campaigns ought to integrate several channels to communicate similar messages to diverse audiences. These channels include social media platforms that have attracted wider audiences across the globe.

Technology plays a crucial role in planning, adopting and implementing strategies, thus, social media plays a part by enhancing sending and receiving feedback from targeted groups. Social media campaigns require familiarity with internet algorithms; one must understand how certain platforms work; this helps communicators plan the delivery of the main message for an effective campaign. Also, technology helps organizations achieve their short and long-term objectives in terms of reaching out to the masses. Traditional media is losing its former glory of advertising but also opening up new opportunities for digital marketing (Sharma and Tripathi, 2023). In this case, digital technologies of targeted and interactive marketing are becoming the most effective and profitable because of the type of digital content being produced, if utilized well, technology

improves quality of life. The author analyses how technology was used to develop mega cities called Smart City projects in Kazakhstan. Therefore, the adoption of technology in organizations is a process that involves crafting good strategies that enhance efficiency.

Assessment is done to understand the process of integration and how it aligns with the objectives of an organization; attention is given to key areas on the integration of such platforms and how social media is incorporated into the broader communication strategies in organizations. The focus on integration is mainly on how social media communication is aligned with the overall objectives of the organization. This includes brand awareness of the organization, customer engagement on matters of service delivery and customer care, sales and growth of the organization, reputation management etc. There must also be coherence in strategic consistency from the social media messages to the company mission and vision of the organization.

According to Mohamed and Yassin, (2022), content on brands can be re-shared by anyone online creating the potential to go viral. This is a good strategy for marketing the brand to global markets. A combination of social media and technology helps create brand awareness. Organizations can create and post content that speaks to the brand and curate their own identity in the market via blogs, videos and infographics including user-generated content. Influencer partnerships are where organizations partner with celebrities who have huge followings on social media platforms to advertise and influence the audience's consumer behaviour.

Social media helps with content creation and marketing through its platforms including blogs, websites, videos and infographics. Organizations can partner with influencers or communication firms that have expertise in handling this type of content to ensure quality stories are told about an organization. It can also be used to communicate a crisis that involves the organization, public relations managers must control and manage communication during or after a crisis to mitigate the negative effects on the company's reputation (Okigbo, (2018). Current theories have not evolved to keep up with the latest developments in the field.

Lim et al., (2015). Synergy is where an evaluation is done to determine how different platforms are coordinated. An organization can adopt the usage of different channels for communication; they include the use of emails, traditional media, websites, in-person posts etc. Emails serve many

purposes including email marketing that targets specific accounts with direct messaging, and sharing private and confidential information that should not be accessed. Websites provide information about an organization, the type of services offered, and the physical location of an organization and this information serves a wide audience as compared to other forms of communication like one-on-one or even emails.

Influencer collaboration has become a critical strategy in modern marketing (Andrews,1987). Partnering with individuals who have attracted a huge fan base in a specific niche, gives them an upper hand to influence on behalf of a brand. These are partnerships formed with popular influencers who align with the brand's values to reach broader audiences and enhance credibility using their social media platforms. Through their platforms, brands can reach new audiences, build trust, and drive engagement. Influencer partnerships take into account not only the fan base but also the types of spaces the influencers have specialized in, the benefits that come with such partnerships, strategies to be used, and best practices in the market.

Influencer business has a lot of benefits both for an organization and for an influence especially when the right partners and strategies are adopted. Such collaborations lead to increased brand awareness because of the exposure received to wider audiences. Some influencers have followers around the globe and this pushes the brand to markets globally. Influence collaborations build a brand's credibility and trust among its users. A single endorsement can lead to millions of opportunities/sales within a short period. Also, it offers opportunities for direct engagements with your audience thus receiving instant feedback on what people think and feel about your brand.

Collaboration partnerships also enable a targeted reach whereby companies reach out directly to specific demographics effectively. Influencers have specialized in certain markets thus having a huge influence on those who follow their daily lifestyle via social media platforms. Companies take advantage of such platforms to push brands through influencer platforms. This is done through quality content creation for the specific brands in partnership, through social media mentions which can improve search rankings on websites, Facebook, and Instagram, this results in huge traffic on a company website.

2.2.3 Challenges encountered in using social media as a strategic communication tool adaptation and Innovation.

Utilization of social media platforms presents different challenges, especially with the adoption and innovation of new technology. Content overload on some platforms leading to delays in processing data, diversity in platforms resulting in challenges of integration, changes in consumer behaviours, and challenges of security and privacy for different internet users.

Communication is a costly process and requires proper thought factoring in the expenses involved in drafting, mediums for communicating the message to target audiences, and results ie feedback mechanisms. However, technology has solved some of the challenges that come with communication. Communicators can easily draft messages or create content, and share it using social media platforms at just a click of a button. Aside from the challenges, there are other benefits listed with the use of social media for instance; free user accounts that individuals have full control over them. These accounts are free allowing people to use them freely for businesses and other personal matters.

A rapid change in algorithms causes a challenge of adoption. Internet users must be flexible enough to adapt to the new changes. Flexibility means being able to experiment with innovations in the market. Internet users should not shy off from trying out new technologies for creating content, engaging new techniques, and aligning to new formats. This helps in understanding possible areas for corrections and improving content production. For instance, an organization that seeks to adopt new technologies must have a presence on TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and X among others. Adaptation to new technologies needs experimenting with new features that come with it and then integrating them with emerging platforms. Proper evaluation of the new social sites must be done to ascertain how practical they are for adoption as strategic communication channels. Evaluation should be done to see if they align with the existing strategies and organization in place. The new digital platforms must have the capacity to reach out to new audiences.

There is the challenge of diversity in platforms resulting in challenges of integration. Adaptation is the process of modifying something to operate according to the new environment, for example, living organisms adapt to their habitats to survive in the new environment. Organizations adapt to their environments and develop competitive advantage, Organizations strive to operate flexibly by

adapting to new technologies for survival in their markets. There are several tools to help in monitoring what is happening in the market, communication departments must keep an eye on new trends in the market, especially on the social media landscape. Early adoption of new trends gives an organization a competitive edge over others in the market.

The challenge of changes in consumer behaviours, and challenges results in expenses of developing platforms that can address different consumer needs. Social media has changed and revolutionized the communication landscape by offering platforms for instant and far-reaching interactions (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). People can communicate globally without physical movements. Communicators in organizations have a bigger role when planning to incorporate technology into their communication strategies. There are many advantages associated with using technology and social media as a strategic communication tool. Social media offers interactive engagement for real-time interactions, social media managers can interact and receive instant feedback, respond to comments, participate in discussions, and host live events, Community Management; These centres around building and nurturing community-centred brands. A company ought to have a personal touch with the communities it operates. Building a successful brand involves active listening to audience feedback and providing platforms for dialogue and connection. This helps improve services and develop the right strategy and policies that propelled an organization to the next levels of success.

According to Zebib (2022), social media communication can be integrated into many areas including political communication, marketing, branding etc. he says that Facebook was successfully used in Lebanon for political campaigns during the parliamentary election in 2018. Quantitative analysis was used to determine the number of posts and the number of users who viewed the posts and commented on them. He notes that digital platforms can be utilized for the intended purpose and misused in equal measures whereby people use certain platforms to spread hate and negative messages; he notes that during the parliamentary election in Lebanon, some political factions used Facebook.

The author demonstrates how millennials in Indosia adopted Facebook as their channel of choice for communication on matters that affected climate change in that country (Zein et al., 2024). From the study, mixed methods of data collection were used to combine data on climate from other

scholarly sources and to understand the communication strategies applied during the campaign. The authors suggest that platforms like WhatsApp and Instagram if properly used can facilitate quality climate change discussions among Indonesian millennials. Such platforms can customize and limit discussions based on topics of interest and only interested participants are allowed to participate. The latest social media platforms can influence users' decisions. There is a need to integrate different approaches towards social media communications as a strategic channel for communication in organizations.

2.3 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework describes existing theories of social networks and communication relevant to this study. The models provide a framework for identifying the reason for successful strategic communication in organizations. This study reviews the social network theory and the dynamic capabilities approaches.

This framework describes the structure and dynamics of social media relationships among individuals, groups and organizations. It is a concept in sociology that looks at how relationships between people form and how they operate. The social network theory has significantly expanded the horizon of media effects research, with increasing application of network analytic methods in various empirical contexts. It is anchored on the principle of reciprocity, exchange and similarity.

According to Quatman and Chelladurai (2008), the social networking theory is an emerging research approach, and people are slowly embracing and applying it in different fields for example, the theory of social networking can be applied overlapping interests. According to Mutai, (2012), It is paramount that users understand the impact caused by social media on communications practices as company activities increase with time. Daly, (2010) argues that the social network theory and education provide a provocative analysis of how social networks in educational institutions can impede or support the work of education reforms. He says that the success and failure of education reforms are not only dependent on the technical bits and blueprints but also a result of the rational relationships that support or frustrate the pace of implementing reforms, the depth and changes in direction. Companies around the globe have embraced and adapted to the utilization of social media for many different intentions: customer service, product marketing,

internal communications, public relations or corporate social responsibility, image branding, learning, creating memories etc.

These capabilities are critical for adapting to technological advancements and competitive coercion. This theory focuses on the development of strategies for senior managers of successful companies to help them adapt to radical discontinuous changes. The changes help organisations maintain skills that will ensure sustainability and survival in competitive environments. According to Akremi et al., (2015), the dynamic approach is a useful lens to understand why some chains are more likely to drive superior performance than others. The authors suggest that people must sacrifice for certain things to ensure the success of what they want. For instance, the franchise business model demands one to have experience before franchising, understand the length of training to sustain the business, chain age, pay for franchising fees, and level of internationalization to positively impact the performance of franchised chains. Failure to follow such steps may lead to failure in a business.

The dynamic capabilities approach is dependent on several clusters which include sensing, seizing and transforming. Organizations must identify any opportunities available to them, identifying and assessing opportunities and threats in the social media landscape (Dixon et al., 2010). Organizations dealing with communication may use media monitoring tools to collect data on emerging opportunities on social media, consumer behaviour, and market trends. This data helps them to understand their environment and develop the right strategies. This helps them understand the threats and opportunities present in the market. An organization may use sentiments to examine any shifts in consumer behaviour, and their preferences, which helps them to anticipate and predict demand for services and products. The context of social media, and dynamic capabilities demand that organizations have a sense of opportunities and threats existing in their environments, diversify and utilize these opportunities to change the status of the organisation either through sales, strategies, or growing networks for it to remain competitive in the industry (Dixon et al., 2010). For example, an organization that deals with communication ought to identify opportunities that social media presents and seize them. Develop actionable strategies, and policies, network with like-minded organizations, and create feedback channels that enabled their opinions from their target clients, this helps them remain competitive in their respective environments. Secondly,

scrutinize the opportunities well to evaluate the benefits that arise from such opportunities; identify opportunities and threats that exist in the market, use social media platforms as strategic communication tools to reach out to the masses and attract new audiences.

A social network gives a roadmap to all relevant ties between the nodes being studied. These networks may be used to determine the social values of individual actors in a network. These concepts are often arranged in a social network diagram, where nodes represent the points and ties represent the lines. They argue that social networking is applied to learning and knowledge contexts whereby conceptualization of context is categorized either as formal, or informal. Learning is integrated to build potentially lifelong learning activities where learners can experience them in different environments.

According to Krause et al., (2007) social networks concept is sometimes used to describe how companies network with their competitors distinguishing networks, which organizations can gather information on branding ideas, to collaboration. Social networks include different aspects; interlocking directorates whereby a person can serve as a director on different boards in different companies thus creating networks with others, old friends' networks, through strategic alliances and ventures, collaborations and competitions etc. Social media has enabled the collection and retrieval of data through social networks like Facebook, X, Instagram, TikTok etc.

Firms often claim that their social media (SM) presence is vital to success. Social media has helped organizations rethink the traditional one-way flow of their marketing messages and incorporate new interactive patterns into their marketing strategies and communications. Nevertheless, these tendencies involve problems of strategic shortsightedness especially when organizations fail to structurally integrate these necessary social media tools. Although social media has been in existence for several years, some institutions can barely differentiate between the various types of Social Media platforms (Csordás et al., 2014). Failure to move with trends renders an organization powerless and voiceless in the current age of technology and the ever-changing social media landscape.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework shows that social media strategies are the plans put in place by an organization to serve different functions. It serves both internal and external objectives of the organization to oversee the process of communication. Social media engagements in the concept refers to the interactions taking place with different stakeholders. Content is developed to serve different actions resulting in likes, interactions and feedback from the target groups, and sharing content to other internet platforms.

Continuous user engagement on the services being offered results in customer loyalty thus repeat purchases.

Feedback from the social media platforms highlights any challenges that users may be experiencing while interacting with an organization or platforms linking to the organization. Feedback helps create solutions to challenges encountered both internally and externally.

Social media strategies can be used to plan for marketing of an organization's services by partnering with influencers, promotional campaigns or either through direct marketing on social media platforms.

Also, strategies can be used to influence brand perception, influencing views and even brand association from different partners.

Independent variable

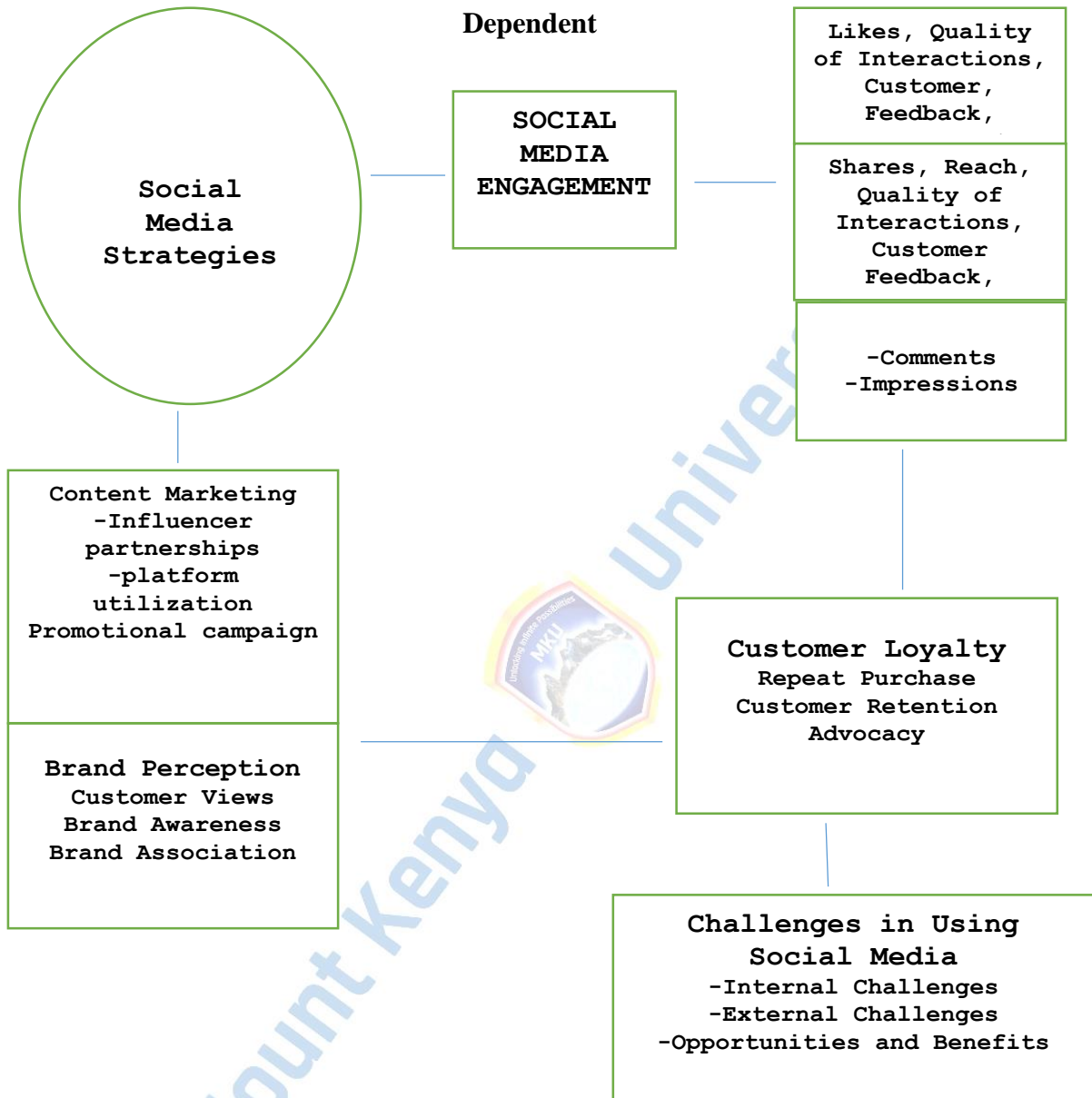


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology used to carry out the study. The methodology includes the research design, the target population employed, sample size, sampling techniques, the data collection methods employed, and the data collection instruments that was used in carrying out the study.

3.2 Research Methodology

The current study applied a qualitative method to research because it falls under a case study design. The study seeks to provide an in-depth analysis of the use of social media for communication and outline real-world scenarios to understand the cultural shifts in the adoption of social media as a strategic communication tool. According to Snyder (2019), research methodology is a methodical and structured strategy that researchers apply when conducting a study in a structured manner. The methodology chapter is a structured plan that outlines the systematic strategy and techniques you used to conduct your research. The study's goals, the features of the research subject, and the available resources all influence the choice of research methodology. According to Ishtiaq (2019), there are three main research methodologies which are employed in conducting scientific research: qualitative research methodology, which is an approach that seeks to study and understand human experiences, behaviours, and phenomena through non-numeric data collection and analysis methods; and quantitative research methodology, which is an approach to numerical data.

3.2.1 Research Design

This study applied a case study design because the study fits under a qualitative methodology using in-depth interviews and focus groups with employees and management of Crestwood to collect qualitative data. This study used a case study design to investigate and break down the use of social media as a strategic communication tool at Crestwood Marketing and Communications Company.

This design is appropriate as it ensured that the person conducting the research will not have to interfere with the variables or the respondents hence reducing biases. The method provided a comprehensive analysis of the adoption of social media as a strategic communication tool as a

source of information influencing service delivery by Crestwood marketing and communication. Gall et al.,(2003) argues that a non-experimental descriptive study aims at analyzing ‘*what is*’; therefore, it is considered appropriate for describing how communication strategy (leadership, technology, organizational structure, and practices) affect communication at this company.

According to Ishtiaq (2019), research design is an exhaustive plan, framework, and approach developed to address a research problem or appraise a hypothesis. It is as an examination, a plan or outlined set of methods used to collect and analyse variables to provide justifiable conclusions or answers to proposed research questions (Ishtiaq, 2019). The research design explains the methodical structure that a researcher uses when gathering, scrutinizing, and interpreting facts. The goals of the study, the features of the research subject, and the available resources all influence the choice of research methodology.

According to Gerring (2004), the case study method is widely regarded as one of the most effective and powerful forms of qualitative analysis. It involves a thorough and detailed examination of a social unit, regardless of its nature, providing a rich and comprehensive analysis. By focusing on an in-depth investigation of a single participant or entity, case studies offer extensive descriptions and insights into the subject under study. This research design was chosen for the study as it aimed to gather detailed information and descriptions from Crestwood Marketing and Communication managers, facilitated through an interview guide. Furthermore, case study research is invaluable for generating new theories, elaborating on existing ones, challenging outdated theories, and conducting pilot studies. As a qualitative approach, it emphasizes narrative and contextual understanding over numerical data and statistics, making it particularly suited for exploratory and descriptive research.

Another rationale for using a case study design is that it allows a description of behaviours, results, or characteristics as they occur naturally. Fraenkel and Wallen (1996) also state that a non-experimental case study provides a systematic empirical investigation of independent variables (i.e., changes in leadership, technology, organizational structure, and practices) that are not under the researcher's direct control. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), further state that a case study allows for an in-depth investigation of a person, group, or organization. Therefore, comprehensive

assumptions about the adoption of social media as a strategic communication tool can be made about Crestwood Marketing and Communications-Kenya without manipulating variables.

3.3 Location of the study

The current study was carried out in Kenya, specifically Nairobi County, where Crestwood Marketing and Communications Company is based. In addition, the justification for the location of the study is that the case study organization has one central office in Nairobi where all operations are carried out. The location of the study involves the physical demarcation where the research process took place.

3.4 Target population

This study used a case study approach, the target population comprised of Crestwood Marketing and Communications employees and company customers who have utilized services from the said organization. This study population was people influenced or directly affected by changes in strategies, technology including external users. The rationale for selecting this population is that Crestwood Marketing and Communications is the organization at the Centre of developing communication strategies on behalf of their clientele who are the people directly affected by organizational initiatives and therefore the conclusions of this study could be generalized to this population.

Stratton (2021), defines the target population as the total set of people or objects from which the researcher is interested in conducting a research process. A population refers to a large collection of objects, events, or persons to which a researcher intends to generalize the study's findings (Ishtiaq, 2019). It can be referred to as a group of people with similar traits as determined through a census but in most cases, a population is not identical.

Table 2. 1: Target population

Target Group	Number of Participants	Rationale for Selection
Key Informants (In-depth Interviews)	5	Chosen due to their strategic roles in social media adoption and communication management, providing expert insights.
Employees (Focus Group Discussions)	10	Selected to represent a broad cross-section of the workforce, including top management, middle

		management, and support staff, to gather diverse perspectives on social media use in communication.
Customers/External Users (Open-ended Questionnaires)	15	Chosen to capture a wide range of feedback from those directly impacted by the organization's communication strategies, ensuring diverse user experiences.
Total	30	The sample size was chosen to achieve data saturation and ensure a representative cross-section of respondents.

3.4.1 Sampling Design and Sample Size

A purposive sampling technique was used in this study. The participants was deliberately selected due to the linear structure of the organizations. The study used focus groups and open ended questionnaires to collect the necessary data for the study. A deliberate sampling strategy is considered appropriate to capture the scope of perspectives and views of the workforce and general consumers of their services. This technique is suitable and widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases using minimal resources.

This entails determining and selecting individuals or groups of individuals who are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Ishtiaq, 2019). Additionally, the respondents' availability and willingness to engage, and their ability to share experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner are important considerations. These are the inclusive criteria for this study. Given these realities, respondents was deliberately sampled from three categories: top management, middle management, and support staff.

A sample size of 30 people is sufficient to achieve data saturation and give a significant statistical capacity for the test was used. Qualitative focus groups was conducted with a few employees to assess perceptions and attitudes toward social media as a strategic tool for communication. It included only those respondents who meet the inclusion standard and are sampled properly from the three categories. This sample was drawn from the employees and general population of other companies using or using their services.

3.4.2 Sampling technique

A purposive qualitative sampling technique was employed in this study. Sampling is a fundamental technique in statistics and research, it entails selecting a subset of individuals or elements from a larger population to estimate characteristics or make an assumption about the entire population. The goal here was to collect data that represents your population without having to study the whole population. However, this was often impractical due to time, cost, or logistical constraints. Sampling involves various techniques.

According to Bairagi and Munot, (2019), the concept of 'research methodology' often evokes a sense of complexity and is widely regarded as challenging to grasp due to its principles and precepts. A critical aspect of research methodology is the careful selection of a sampling technique, as accuracy and precision in this process are essential to minimize sampling errors. Once data is collected, it undergoes systematic classification, arrangement, and analysis, enabling meaningful interpretation and the formulation of conclusions. These steps are integral to deriving insights and providing well-informed suggestions based on the study's findings.

3.4.3 Sample size

A sample size of 30 people is sufficient to achieve data saturation and give a significant statistical capacity for the test was used. Out of the total of 5 key informant were selected. The key informant include marketing manager (KII, 001), social media specialists ((KII, 002), customer service representative ((KII, 003), digital marketing consultant ((KII, 004) and pubic relation officer ((KII, 005). These helped to assess perceptions and attitudes towards social media as a strategic tool for communication. It included only those respondents who meet the inclusion standard and are sampled properly from the mentioned categories. This sample was drawn from the employees and general population of other companies using or using their services.

The study assumes a purposive sampling technique due to the linear structure at Crestwood. Due to the case study nature of the research, selection was done judgmentally on the sample size because the study falls a purposive qualitative method. Sample size involves the total number of observations that was involved in the research process to represent the total population (Bairagi and Munot (2019). A sample size that is too small may not yield justifiable results or adequately represent the reality of the population under study.

3.5 Data Collection Methods and Procedures

The study relied on primary qualitative data. Data collection processes will start with obtaining applicable permits from Mount Kenya University and the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). These permits allowed the researcher to access the respondents in line with the national requirements for all research works involving human participants.

Data collection involved the use of guided questions specifically for the participants of the key informant interview survey. It is desired that the employees was willing to engage and give meaningful answers but pre-notification emails and additional online reminders was used to ensure a high response rate.

The study employed in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and open-ended questionnaires to collect data. In-depth interviews targeted five key informants—marketing and public relations professionals, customer service representatives, and social media specialists—due to their strategic roles in social media adoption. FGDs involved selected employees and middle management to explore collective perceptions and shared experiences of using social media for communication. Open-ended questionnaires were distributed to customers and external users to capture diverse feedback on Crestwood's communication strategies. These methods were chosen to provide descriptive, perceptual, and contextual data, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of social media's role as a strategic communication tool.

3.5.1 Reliability and Validity of the Instrument

The study used guiding questions to give meaning to the findings so that the research is not only about reading but study-connected facts. The guiding questions to help the researcher to focus on the study structure to answer what when where and how questions in a study.

3.6 Procedure of data collection

The data collection process began with obtaining the necessary permits from Mount Kenya University and the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). Pre-notification emails were sent to respondents, introducing the study and its purpose to enhance engagement. Virtual meetings were conducted with employees and management at Crestwood

Marketing and Communications for preliminary introductions and to outline the data collection process. Participants were provided with informed consent forms to ensure ethical compliance, emphasizing voluntary participation and confidentiality.

In-depth interviews were scheduled with five key informants, guided by semi-structured interview questions tailored to their roles. Focus group discussions were conducted with selected employees and middle management in a structured setting, fostering interactive dialogue. Open-ended questionnaires were emailed to customers and external users, offering flexibility to respond at their convenience. Throughout the process, follow-up reminders ensured high response rates. The collected data were securely stored and prepared for transcription, coding, and thematic analysis. Moreover, data from the general public was collected through open-ended questionnaires emailed to customers and external users of Crestwood Marketing and Communications.

3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation

The qualitative method was used to analyze the data collected. The data provided as comments, transcription/coding and contextualization of these statements was done before verification for accuracy. This information was then be presented in tables for further subjective analysis. The first step entailed coding to organize the data into meaningful categories or concepts ((Ishtiaq, 2019). Subsequently, patterns and recurring phrases was identified to develop a list of emerging themes before inductively discovering the key variables for presentation.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Social media utilization calls for responsible usage keeping in mind the ethical values that internet users must always adhere to. The use of social media platforms has transformed how information is shared across different platforms. It is a crucial platform such that organizations must find a way to incorporate it as a strategic communication tool for effective engagement, communication including branding. Effective communication calls for responsible usage of the internet focusing on different ethical considerations on the usage and sharing of information online. Here are the key points to put into consideration;

Transparency where all internet users must be able to disclose any information that is either sponsored or is in partnership with other persons or organizations. For instance, if an influencer has been contracted to market for a particular organization, then there should be disclosure clause

that clearly state that the content is sponsored. Also, there must be honesty on the kind of information being shared online to avoid misleading information to users.

Privacy is paramount when it comes to sharing information particularly about others. Organizations must adhere to the set frameworks that govern sharing of content online. For example, in Kenya, internet users must work within the data protection rights frameworks that outline how content is distributed to third parties. Users and creators must always seek permission before using someone else's work.

Accuracy and accountability ensure that users cross-check all facts about a story before sharing out. Also, accountability helps users to issue any corrections that may have errors and offer apologies where necessary. This enhances the aspect of accountability for every internet user.

Ethical advertising guides organizations to refrain from sharing manipulative content online in the form of adverts which can mislead others about different services being offered. For instance, advertisements that manipulate a brand's true image to suit a particular narrative. Also, guides people against child protection rights where minors are not supposed to publish images of children without proper consent from parents.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the actual findings according to the feedback from the respondents and links them to the study's objectives. The study sought to distinguish the personal characteristics of respondents who participated; this data included their age, department/sections, years worked at Crestwood marketing and communications and the Highest academic qualification attained by the participants. The general study objective was to establish the usage of social media as a strategic communication tool, a case of Crestwood Marketing and Communication- Kenya.

4.2 Response rate

The table presents the response rate for the study, with a total of 30 participants invited to respond. Out of these, 25 participants completed the survey, resulting in a response rate of 83.3%, while 5 participants did not respond, accounting for 16.7% of the total. This high response rate suggests a strong level of engagement from the target population, providing a reliable dataset for analyzing the effectiveness of social media as a strategic communication tool at Crestwood Marketing and Communications in Kenya

Table 4. 1: Response Rate

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Respondent	25	83.3%
Non-respondent	5	16.7%
Total	30	100

Source: field data (2024)

4.2 Demographic descriptions

This subsection presents the demographic descriptions of the respondents included in the study. The subsection presents the age bracket of the respondents, level of education, period they have been in the sector and

4.2.1 Age

4.2.2 Highest level of academic qualification?

Educational qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Certificate	4	16
Diploma level	7	28
Degree level	8	32
Postgraduate	6	24
Total	25	100

Source: Field Data (2024)

The table illustrates the distribution of educational qualifications among the 25 respondents in the study. The largest group comprises individuals with a Degree level qualification, accounting for 32% of the participants, followed by those with a Diploma level at 28%. Respondents with a Postgraduate qualification make up 24% of the sample, while those with a Certificate constitute the smallest group at 16%. This distribution indicates a majority of respondents with higher education levels (Degree and Postgraduate), providing a well-educated sample base for the study.

4.2.3 Whether you have come across Crestwood marketing and communication on any social media platform?

The respondent were also asked to indicate whether they have come across Crestwood marketing and communication on any social media platform. The distributions are as follows.

Table 4. 2: Have come across Crestwood marketing

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	23	92.45%
No	2	7.55%
Total	25	100%

Source: Field Data (2024)

The table shows that the majority of respondents, 92.45%, answered yes they have come across the advert, with only 7.55% responding that they have not come across one. This high percentage of Yes responses suggests a strong consensus or agreement among the respondents on that they have they have come across Crestwood marketing and communication on any social media platform.

4.2.4 Period of time the respondent has known the Crestwood Marketing and Communications.

The study sought to establish the period in years that the respondent had been in the sector. The distributions are as follows in the table below;

TABLE 4. 3: Period in years in the sector

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0-5 years	36	27.5
6-10 years	47	35.9
11-15 years	30	22.9
Above 15 years	18	13.7
Totals	131	100

Source: Field Data (2024)

Based on these distributions, the table reveals that a majority of respondents, 40%, have been in the sector for 0-5 years, suggesting a significant proportion of relatively new professionals. This is followed by 28% of respondents with 6-10 years of experience. Those with 11-15 years in the sector make up 20% of the sample, while only 12% have over 15 years of experience, indicating a smaller group of highly seasoned professionals. This spread provides a varied perspective on experience levels within the sector.

4.2.5 Have you ever utilized any service from Crestwood Marketing and Communication?

Respondents were asked to indicate whether, they have ever utilized any service from Crestwood Marketing and Communication. Result indicate that 22 (89.2%) agreed that they have while 3 (10.8%) indicated they have not utilized the service.

Table 4. 4: Utilization of any service from Crestwood Marketing and Communication

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	22	89.2%
No	3	10.8%

Total	25	100%
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Source: Field Data (2024)

Further those who responded yes were asked if yes, which platforms you used to contact the organization for engagement.

Table 4. 5: Type of social media utilized

Platform Used for Engagement	Frequency	Percentage of Yes Responses (%)
Facebook	8	36.4%
Instagram	5	22.7%
Youtube	6	27.3%
Twitter/X	3	13.6%
Total	22	100%

Source: Field Data (2024)

The table shows that among the 22 respondent who indicated that they have engaged with the organization, Facebook was the most commonly used platform with frequency of 8(36.4%), followed by YouTube with frequency of 6 (27.3%), Instagram was third with 5(22.7%), and the least was Twitter/X with frequency of 3(13.6%). This distribution highlights the popularity of various social media platforms for customer engagement with Crestwood.

4.3 Key Informant Responses

4.3.1 Effectiveness is social media in enhancing the strategic communication objectives

The study ought to establish the overall effectiveness of social media platforms in meeting the communication goals set by the company. To achieve these objective the researcher used four research questions to find responses regarding the effectiveness of the social media in enhancing strategic communication objectives of the Crestwood marketing and communications in Kenya

The first question was on how efficient is the organization on social media platforms while communicating with the public Crestwood marketing and communications in Kenya. The key informants gave their responses as follows;

“Crestwood is quite proactive on social media, especially in responding to customer queries. They manage to address most inquiries within hours, which has been beneficial for maintaining a strong public relationship.” KII, 001

“The organization uses targeted content effectively, adapting posts to match the platform’s audience. However, there are still some challenges in maintaining consistent engagement on less popular platforms.” KII, 002

“We try to provide prompt and personalized responses on all platforms. However, resource constraints sometimes cause delays, particularly during peak hours.” KII, 003

“Crestwood has invested in tools that streamline content scheduling and monitoring, making it easier to maintain consistency. Yet, there’s room for improvement in analytics to better measure and optimize engagement.” KII, 004

“Social media communication is generally efficient, but it’s heavily dependent on the platform. For instance, the team is more active and responsive on Instagram and Facebook, while LinkedIn engagement could be improved.” KII, 005

From the following responses, the study identified the following key themes from the findings regarding the question posed the several themes were identified and they are as follows;

Responsiveness

Respondents commonly highlighted that Crestwood generally provides prompt responses to public queries on social media, fostering strong customer relationships. However, limitations in staffing and resources sometimes affect response times.

Platform-Specific Engagement

The effectiveness of Crestwood's communication varies by platform. While they are highly active on popular platforms like Facebook and Instagram, engagement on platforms like LinkedIn and Twitter is less consistent.

Resource and Analytics Limitations

While Crestwood utilizes tools for scheduling and monitoring, there is room to enhance resource allocation and analytics capabilities. Improving these areas could help the organization further optimize its social media efficiency and engagement strategies.

Secondly, the key informant were asked to indicate the how does Crestwood marketing and communications currently use social media to achieve its strategic communication goals. The following were the responses:

“Crestwood uses social media primarily for brand visibility and audience engagement. We create targeted campaigns that resonate with different customer segments, using sponsored posts and organic content to reach a wider audience.” KII, 001

“Our social media strategy is aimed at building trust and credibility with our audience. We focus on creating educational content and industry insights that showcase our expertise, positioning Crestwood as a thought leader in the marketing space.” KII, 002

“Social media is an essential tool for managing the public perception of our brand. We regularly share success stories, case studies, and client testimonials to build a positive image and strengthen relationships with existing and potential clients.” KII, 003

“We use social media to drive engagement through interactive content such as polls, quizzes, and live sessions. This not only helps to keep our audience engaged but also allows us to collect valuable feedback on our services.” KII, 004

“We also use social media as a platform for customer support. It allows us to quickly respond to inquiries, resolve issues, and maintain a direct line of communication with our clients. It's a more personalized approach than traditional methods.” KII, 005

Based on the responses above, the following themes were identified following the question on how does Crestwood Marketing and Communications currently use social media to achieve its strategic communication goals:

Brand Visibility

A consistent theme from the responses is that Crestwood uses social media primarily to increase brand visibility and engage with its target audience through a mix of organic and paid content. They leverage various formats to connect with different customer segments.

Building Trust

Another key theme is the strategic use of social media to position Crestwood as an authority in the marketing and communications industry. By sharing valuable content like educational posts, industry insights, and client testimonials, the company aims to establish trust and credibility.

Customer Support

Lastly, the theme of customer support emerged where respondents emphasized the role of social media in providing customer support and gaining real-time feedback. Crestwood uses its platforms not only for promotional purposes but also to interact directly with customers, address their concerns, and improve its services based on feedback.

Also the request were requested give their opinion inion, what has been the most effective social media strategy used by Crestwood to engage its target audience. The following were their responses.

“I believe the most effective strategy has been the use of targeted paid campaigns on platforms like Facebook and Instagram. These allow us to tailor content to specific demographics, which has significantly increased engagement and conversion rates.” KII, 001

“Crestwood's success has largely been due to its focus on sharing valuable and insightful content. Educational posts, industry reports, and thought leadership pieces have not only

attracted attention but also helped us establish credibility and trust with our audience.”
KII, 002

“The use of client testimonials and success stories has been the most impactful. By showcasing real-world examples of how our services have benefited clients, we build social proof and create a deeper connection with our audience.” KII, 003

“Interactive content, such as polls, quizzes, and live Q&A sessions, has proven to be the most effective. This strategy encourages direct participation and keeps our audience engaged in a more personal and meaningful way.” KII, 004

“We have seen great success with our customer service efforts on social media. Responding promptly to inquiries and providing a personalized experience has not only solved problems but also built stronger relationships with our audience.” KII, 005

Based on the responses, a total of three themes were identified from the responses. These themes are as follows;

Targeted Paid Campaigns

Many informants highlighted the effectiveness of using paid social media campaigns on platforms like Facebook and Instagram, where Crestwood can adapt its content to specific audience segments for higher engagement and conversion.

Credible Content

Sharing valuable and insightful educational content is another recurring theme. This helps position Crestwood as an industry leader, fostering trust and credibility with their target audience.

Interactive

The use of interactive content and responsive customer service were also noted as key strategies. These approaches enable real-time engagement, making the audience feel more connected and valued.

In summary, key findings highlighted that Crestwood Marketing and Communications in Kenya effectively utilizes social media to meet its communication goals by prioritizing prompt responses to customer inquiries, enhancing brand visibility, and establishing trust through educational content and client testimonials. Key strategies identified include platform-specific engagement, where platforms like Facebook and Instagram are leveraged for higher interaction, while others like LinkedIn see less activity. Moreover, targeted paid campaigns and interactive content, such as polls and live sessions, have proven successful in fostering engagement and gathering valuable customer feedback. Resource allocation and analytics improvement emerged as areas for potential enhancement to optimize overall social media effectiveness. These findings resonates with those by Plowman, and Wilson, (2018) who found that Strategy and tactics in strategic communication included on Instagram and Facebook compared to LinkedIn.

4.3.2 Identify the specific social media strategies implemented by Crestwood Marketing in Kenya

The second objective was focused on examining the particular strategies used by the company on various social media platforms. Several question were used to assess this objective. A total five question were asked to examine this objective and their subsequent responses were as follows;

The key informant were asked to provide any specific social media strategies they know of that have been implemented by Crestwood Marketing and Communications to engage with its target audience. Their responses and the themes established were as follows;

“Crestwood has been using targeted ads on Facebook and Instagram, focusing on audience interests, behaviors, and demographics. This has allowed us to reach niche markets effectively, resulting in higher engagement and conversion rates.” KII, 001

“One of the key strategies has been the consistent use of branded content such as client case studies and behind-the-scenes looks at the company's processes. This not only keeps the audience engaged but also humanizes the brand and makes it more relatable.” KII, 002

“Crestwood leverages user-generated content (UGC) by encouraging clients to share their experiences and tag the company in posts. We then reshare these posts to build a sense of community and strengthen our brand presence.” KII, 003

“The organization frequently uses interactive content such as polls, live videos, and Q&A sessions. These types of content help to foster direct engagement and build real-time connections with our followers.” KII, 004

“Another strategy that stands out is Crestwood’s social media customer support. By offering quick and personalized responses through platforms like Facebook Messenger, we’ve been able to resolve issues efficiently and strengthen customer relationships.” KII, 005

From these respondents, a total of four themes were identified; they included targeted advertising, Value-Driven Content, User-Generated Content and User-Generated Content. They can be illustrated as below;

Targeted Advertising

A significant strategy is the use of targeted paid ads on platforms like Facebook and Instagram to reach specific audience segments based on demographics, behaviors, and interests, driving both engagement and conversions.

Value-Driven Content

Crestwood has focused on sharing branded content such as client success stories and behind-the-scenes looks, which helps build brand authenticity and reliability while engaging the audience.

User-Generated Content (UGC)

The use of user-generated content has been a major strategy. Encouraging customers to share their experiences and tag the company helps amplify brand reach and fosters a community-oriented atmosphere.

Interactive Engagement

The organization has effectively employed interactive content to engage its audience. Additionally, real-time customer support through social media platforms helps address client inquiries swiftly, enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty.

The second question the key informant were asked was the kind of social media platforms does Crestwood Marketing and Communications primarily use to engage with its target audience. The respondent gave their responses. Thus, four themes were identified from the responses. From key informants regarding the social media platforms that Crestwood Marketing and Communications primarily uses to engage with its target audience. The following were the responses;

“Crestwood primarily uses Facebook and Instagram for engaging with its target audience. These platforms allow us to reach a wide range of demographics, and they provide great tools for both organic and paid content.” KII 001

“In addition to Facebook and Instagram, LinkedIn is another important platform for us. It’s especially useful for reaching corporate clients and sharing more professional, thought-leadership content.” KII 002

“We also use Twitter, you tube, ticktok to keep our audience updated on the latest news, trends, and quick updates about our services. It’s a great platform for real-time engagement and for managing our public image.” KII 003

“Besides the major platforms, we’ve been experimenting with LinkedIn, TikTok to engage a younger audience. Short-form, creative content seems to work well for us on this platform, and it’s been effective in raising awareness about our brand.” KII 004

“Facebook and Instagram, YouTube are the go-to platforms for direct interaction with our clients. We handle customer inquiries, feedback, and engage with our audience through these platforms more than others.” KII 005

From the above responses, several themes were identified. These themes are highlighted as below.

Facebook, Instagram and YouTube

The dominant platforms for engagement, according to most informants, are Facebook and Instagram, and YouTube. These are seen as the most versatile for reaching a broad and diverse audience through both organic posts and paid advertisements.

Professional Networking through LinkedIn:

LinkedIn is highlighted as the platform used to engage with corporate clients and share professional content. It's considered particularly valuable for establishing thought leadership and connecting with business professionals.

Real-Time Updates via Twitter

Twitter is used primarily for sharing quick updates, industry news, and engaging in real-time conversations. It is also mentioned for managing public relations and maintaining a dynamic brand presence.

Exploring New Audiences with TikTok.

TikTok has been identified as a platform for experimenting with creative, short-form content to reach younger demographics. This reflects Crestwood's efforts to diversify its social media strategy and engage with a more youthful audience.

Further, the key informant we asked to respond on what types of content are most frequently used by Crestwood to engage its audience on social media. They gave the following responses from which four themes were identified.

“Crestwood frequently uses visual content, such as high-quality images and videos, to showcase our services, client testimonials, and behind-the-scenes glimpses of our team in action. This type of content tends to generate more engagement and shares.” KII 001

“We create and share a lot of educational content, including blog posts, infographics, and industry reports. This content helps establish Crestwood as an authority in marketing and communications, adding value to our followers.” KII 002

“Client success stories and testimonials are frequently used. Sharing real-world examples of how we’ve helped clients has been very effective in building credibility and trust with our audience.” KII 003

“We focus on creating interactive content, like polls, quizzes, and live sessions. This encourages engagement and conversation with our audience, and helps us get real-time feedback and ideas for future content.” KII 004

“Customer support content, such as FAQs, tips, and guides, is another type of content we share. This helps us respond to common inquiries, and it also serves as a resource for our audience, fostering better communication.” KII 005

Based on the responses the following themes were identified.

Visual Content

A dominant strategy is the use of visual content, including images and videos, to showcase services, client success stories, and behind-the-scenes content. Visuals help capture attention and increase engagement.

Educational and Informational Content:

Educational posts such as industry reports, blog articles, and infographics are a key content type. These posts help position Crestwood as a knowledgeable leader in the marketing industry, providing value to followers.

Client Testimonials and Success Stories

Crestwood frequently uses client success stories and testimonials as content to build credibility. By showcasing real examples of their work, the company strengthens its reputation and fosters trust with its audience.

Interactive Content and Customer Support

Interactive content, including polls, quizzes, and live sessions, is used to drive engagement. Additionally, Crestwood provides customer support content like FAQs, tips, and helpful guides, enhancing communication and addressing common inquiries.

The key informant were also asked to give their opinion on factors that prompted utilize services from Crestwood Marketing and Communications. The key informant gave the following responses from which the themes were identified.

“I decided to use Crestwood's services after hearing positive feedback from industry peers. Their expertise in digital marketing and their ability to deliver targeted results for specific campaigns was a key factor in my decision.” KII 001

“The main reason I turned to Crestwood was their reputation for innovation. I was impressed by their creative approach to solving marketing challenges and their use of up-to-date strategies and tools.” KII 002

“Crestwood’s approach to customer service was a big factor. They listened carefully to my business needs and tailored their solutions to fit. The personal touch they offered, coupled with their industry knowledge, made them stand out.” KII 003

“What drove me to engage Crestwood was their extensive portfolio of successful projects. I wanted to work with a company that demonstrated clear results in both brand building and customer engagement, and Crestwood had a proven track record.” KII 004

“I was particularly drawn to Crestwood because of their ability to leverage multiple social media platforms effectively. Their comprehensive strategy and data-driven approach to marketing were exactly what I needed for my business growth.” KII 005

Reputation and Positive Referrals

Several informants mentioned that positive feedback and recommendations from peers or colleagues played a significant role in prompting them to choose Crestwood for their marketing services.

Innovative and Creative Approach

The creative solutions and innovative strategies employed by Crestwood were frequently highlighted as key factors. Clients were attracted to the company's ability to think outside the box and address marketing challenges in fresh ways.

Customer Service and Tailored Solutions

Many respondents noted that the personalized service and ability of Crestwood to understand and address their specific business needs made them choose the company. The tailored solutions helped foster a sense of trust and reliability.

Proven Track Record and Expertise

The decision to use Crestwood's services was also influenced by their demonstrated success in past projects. Potential clients were attracted by the company's clear results in building brands and engaging audiences, making them feel confident in Crestwood's expertise.

Which engagement tactics does their organization use to increase interaction with its audience on social media? The key informant provided several responses.

“Crestwood uses interactive polls to engage with our audience. These tactics encourage followers to participate actively, providing us with valuable insights while also keeping them engaged and interested in our content.” KII 001

“We frequently organize live Q&A sessions on platforms like Instagram and Facebook. This tactic gives us an opportunity to interact with our audience in real time, answer questions, and address concerns, creating a sense of community and direct communication.” KII 002

“We have implemented user-generated content (UGC) campaigns, encouraging our followers to share their experiences with our services. This creates organic engagement and helps build credibility through social proof.” KII 003

“Contests and giveaways are another key tactic we use to boost interaction. These promotions create excitement and encourage participation, as users are motivated by the potential rewards and recognition.” KII 004

“We also prioritize prompt responses to customer inquiries through social media platforms. By ensuring quick replies and engaging in direct conversations with clients, we foster a stronger connection and build trust with our audience.” KII 005

Based on these responses, four themes were identified. These themes include;

Interactive Content

Crestwood uses interactive content like polls and quizzes to encourage active participation from their audience. These tactics help gather feedback while maintaining user interest.

Live Engagement

Hosting live Q&A sessions on platforms like Instagram and Facebook is a significant tactic. It provides real-time interaction, allowing Crestwood to address audience questions, build community, and increase trust.

User-Generated Content (UGC)

Crestwood actively encourages user-generated content by asking followers to share their experiences and tag the brand. This not only enhances engagement but also serves as social proof, strengthening brand credibility.

Contests and Giveaways

These contests and giveaways are used to spark excitement and drive higher interaction. These tactics create incentives for users to engage with the content, fostering increased participation and visibility.

In summary, the platform commonly used includes Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube as the primary channels for broad engagement, LinkedIn for professional networking, Twitter for real-

time updates, and TikTok for reaching younger demographics. For content types, Crestwood prioritizes visual content, educational material, client testimonials, and Interactive Content to sustain engagement. Influential factors for clients choosing Crestwood include Positive Referrals, Innovative Approaches, Customer-Centric Solutions, and a Proven Track Record. Effective engagement tactics identified include Interactive Content, Live Sessions, User-Generated Content, and Contests/Giveaways, each designed to increase interaction and build trust with the audience. These findings are supported by Saydan, and Dölek, (2019), who found that social media is key in creating brand awareness, brand image, brand attitude and brand loyalty.

4.3.3 Impact of social media engagement on the brand perception and customer loyalty of Crestwood Marketing and Communications in Kenya.

This objective aims to understand how social media interactions influence customers' views of the brand and their loyalty. A total of four questions were used to explore this question. The key informant responses were as follows;

the first question sought to establish how the service from social media impact the overall branding, marketing and selling of your company's products/ services after engaging Crestwood marketing and communications. The following were the responses and the theme identified.

“Crestwood’s social media strategies significantly enhanced our brand visibility. Their approach to consistent branding across platforms helped reinforce our brand identity, which increased recognition and customer trust.” KII 001

“After engaging Crestwood, we saw a clear improvement in our online engagement metrics. Their campaigns translated into higher website traffic and, eventually, more conversions. The alignment of social media content with our sales goals proved invaluable.” KII 002

“One of the key impacts was on our audience reach. Crestwood helped us leverage targeted ads, which meant our products were being seen by potential customers who were genuinely interested, increasing our sales leads.” KII 003

“Crestwood’s content strategy has made a noticeable difference in our brand’s credibility. By sharing industry insights and case studies, they helped position us as thought leaders, which strengthened our brand perception in the market.” KII 004

“Crestwood’s emphasis on customer engagement transformed how we connect with our clients. Their quick response tactics and community-focused approach on social media improved our customer satisfaction, which in turn increased our customer retention.” KII 005

Based on these responses a total of four themes were identified summarize the responses. The themes are as follows.

Enhanced Brand Visibility and Recognition

Crestwood’s social media services have boosted brand visibility and consistency, helping clients establish a strong, recognizable brand identity that resonates with audiences.

Increased Customer Engagement and Retention

The emphasis on direct and quick customer engagement on social media platforms has improved customer satisfaction and retention, creating a loyal customer base for Crestwood's clients.

Targeted Advertising for Higher Sales Leads

Crestwood's expertise in targeted advertising allowed clients to reach interested potential customers, improving lead generation and driving sales.

Positioning as Industry Leaders

By sharing high-quality, informative content such as case studies and insights, Crestwood has helped clients enhance their reputation as industry leaders, positively impacting brand perception and attracting a more engaged audience.

The key informant were asked to explain the impact social media has had on branding, marketing and selling of companies' products/ services. The key informant gave the following responses;

“Social media has revolutionized branding by allowing companies to build an authentic brand image directly with their audience. We can convey our values, engage with customers, and create a loyal community, all of which strengthens brand identity.” KII 001

“From a sales perspective, social media has created direct selling channels. Through targeted ads and shoppable posts, we can convert followers into buyers with ease, significantly increasing our reach and sales potential.” KII 002

“Social media has shifted the focus from traditional to digital marketing, providing companies with instant feedback. This responsiveness allows us to adjust our strategies in real time, making our branding and marketing efforts much more agile and effective.” KII 003

“In terms of customer interaction, social media provides an excellent way to offer real-time support. Addressing customer concerns publicly helps build trust, while positive reviews and testimonials also boost our brand’s credibility.” KII 004

“Social media platforms allow for creative, engaging content that appeals to different audiences. We can showcase products, share tutorials, and create influencer partnerships, all of which enhance both brand visibility and product sales.” KII 005

The main themes established base on the response are as follows;

Enhanced Brand Identity and Customer Loyalty

Social media allows companies to build a strong, authentic brand image, fostering a direct connection with the audience that leads to increased brand loyalty.

Direct Sales Channels and Increased Conversion Rates

Through targeted advertising and interactive posts, companies can turn social media platforms into effective sales channels, increasing both reach and conversion rates.

Agility in Marketing and Brand Strategy

Social media enables real-time feedback and adaptability, allowing companies to refine their branding and marketing strategies based on audience reactions, making campaigns more responsive and impactful.

Building Trust and Credibility

There was a theme of engaging with customers directly and publicly on social media enhances trust, especially when companies provide support, share customer testimonials, and highlight positive interactions.

Finally, the key informant were asked to respond on the impact has social media engagement had on the brand perception and customer loyalty of your organization after engaging Crestwood Marketing and Communications. The key informants gave the following Responses;

“Crestwood’s social media strategies have significantly improved our brand perception. Their emphasis on consistent and visually appealing content made our brand appear more professional and reliable, which has enhanced how customers view us.” KII 001

“The engagement tactics Crestwood introduced, like interactive posts and real-time responses, have fostered a stronger connection with our audience. Customers feel valued and heard, which has translated into increased loyalty.” KII 002

“Since working with Crestwood, we’ve noticed more positive feedback and user-generated content, which reinforces our brand’s reputation. Our customers are more engaged, and their support online has led to greater trust among potential clients as well.” KII 003

“Crestwood’s approach to storytelling and customer-centered content has made a big difference. Sharing client stories and company values through social media has improved our brand’s authenticity, making customers more loyal and committed.” KII 004

“By using social media to highlight our social impact and community initiatives, Crestwood has helped build a more favorable brand image. Customers now perceive us as not only a service provider but also as a brand with a strong social conscience, which has fostered loyalty.” KII 005

Based on the following responses the following themes were identified to support the narratives.

Improved Brand Professionalism and Reliability:

Crestwood's strategic use of consistent, high-quality content has helped elevate the professional image of client brands, enhancing customer trust and reliability in the brand.

Strengthened Customer Connection and Responsiveness

Interactive content and prompt responses to customer inquiries have created a sense of community and direct connection, making customers feel valued and boosting their loyalty.

Positive Feedback

Crestwood’s tactics have increased positive online feedback and user-generated content, which has reinforced a strong, trustworthy brand perception.

Enhanced Brand Authenticity

By focusing on storytelling, community engagement, and social impact, Crestwood has helped clients build authentic brand identities, appealing to customers’ values and strengthening loyalty.

In summary, the key findings reveal that Crestwood Marketing and Communications has had a significant positive impact on brand perception and customer loyalty through its social media strategies. Clients reported enhanced brand visibility and recognition, with consistent branding and targeted advertising leading to higher engagement, increased sales leads, and improved customer

retention. Social media also allowed for real-time feedback and more direct interactions, which fostered a stronger connection with customers and built trust. The emphasis on customer-centered content, storytelling, and community-focused initiatives further improved brand credibility and positioned clients as industry leaders, resulting in increased loyalty and positive brand perceptions.

4.3.4 Challenges encountered by Crestwood Marketing and Communications in using social media as a strategic communication tool in the Kenyan market.

This objective sought to uncover the challenges and potential benefits the company faces when using social media for strategic communication purposes in Kenya. Several questions were asked in to achieve this objectives.

The first question that the key informant were asked was what are the challenges encountered by their organization when engaging Crestwood Marketing and Communications for any services using their social media platforms and how did you overcome them. The key informants gave the following respondents;

“Initially, there was a challenge with delayed response times, which affected our communication flow. To overcome this, we established a dedicated communication channel outside of social media for urgent inquiries, which helped us streamline communication.”
KII 001

“One challenge we faced was the lack of customization in their initial approach, which didn't fully align with our brand. We addressed this by scheduling a strategy session with Crestwood to clarify our brand voice and ensure our specific needs were integrated.” KII 002

“At first, there were some misunderstandings about campaign goals. We realized that setting up clear performance metrics and having regular check-ins with the Crestwood team helped clarify objectives and keep both parties aligned.” KII 003

“One issue was the volume of customer inquiries directed at us through Crestwood’s campaigns. Our team wasn’t fully prepared for the sudden influx. We overcame this by collaborating with Crestwood to create FAQ content that could help address common questions directly on social media.” KII 004

“We found that the frequency of posts didn’t always match our audience’s peak engagement times. After sharing our analytics with Crestwood, we were able to adjust the posting schedule, which resulted in better engagement.” KII 005

Out of these responses, a total of four themes were established

Communication and Response Time

Initial delays in response were a challenge for some clients, but establishing alternative communication channels and frequent follow-ups helped streamline interactions with Crestwood.

Alignment with Brand Identity

Some clients experienced challenges with ensuring brand alignment in Crestwood’s approach, but strategy sessions and clarifying brand voice and values helped overcome this.

Clear Goal Setting and Metrics

Misunderstandings around campaign goals initially created confusion, but setting up specific performance metrics and scheduling regular check-ins helped align expectations and objectives.

Resource Preparedness for Increased Engagement

A few clients noted that Crestwood’s campaigns led to an unexpected rise in customer inquiries. Developing FAQ resources and collaborating with Crestwood for better content support helped manage the influx.

Further, respondents were requested to respond to whether they would recommend other organizations to Crestwood marketing and communications based on their current social media presence and interactions?

“Absolutely, I would recommend Crestwood. Their social media team is highly responsive and creative, which has really helped boost our brand’s visibility. They bring a fresh approach that I think other companies would benefit from.” KII 001

“Yes, I would recommend them, especially for organizations looking to establish a strong online presence. Crestwood has a good understanding of audience engagement, and their campaigns have been impactful in terms of reaching the right audience.” KII 002

“I’d recommend them for sure. Crestwood has helped us build a more engaging online persona, and their focus on customer service through social media is very impressive. They are reliable and understand how to connect with the public.” KII 003

“Definitely, especially if the organization wants an innovative social media strategy. Crestwood uses unique methods to drive engagement, which has helped us attract more customers. I think other companies could benefit from their creative approach.” KII 004

“Yes, I’d recommend them, particularly for brands looking for professional and consistent social media management. Crestwood has been a valuable partner, and I’ve noticed a big improvement in our social media interactions since we started working with them.” KII 004

Out of these responses, the following themes were identified.

Improved Brand Visibility and Reach

Many respondents highlighted Crestwood's ability to boost brand visibility and reach the right audience, making it a recommended choice for organizations looking to grow their social media presence.

Strong Audience Engagement and Interaction

Crestwood's approach to customer engagement and their responsiveness on social media were praised, making it appealing to organizations focused on building interactive online relationships.

Creativity and Innovation in Social Media Strategy

Crestwood's use of creative and unique strategies was noted as a strong point, encouraging clients to recommend them for their fresh perspective on social media marketing.

Professionalism and Consistency in Content

Consistency and professionalism in social media management were also cited, with clients observing improved brand perception and reliable interactions.

Lastly, the informants were asked to comment on the level of satisfaction with responsiveness and interaction on social media experienced in this company and the overall impact your loyalty to the brand. The key informants gave the following responses:

"I'm very satisfied with Crestwood's responsiveness. They are prompt in handling inquiries and issues, which gives us confidence in their support. Their attentiveness definitely strengthens my loyalty to their brand." KII 001

"The interaction level is excellent. Crestwood's team is proactive in engaging with our audience, which makes us feel like valued partners. Their consistent communication builds trust, and I'm likely to remain loyal because of it." KII 002

"I'd rate their responsiveness highly. They're quick to address feedback and adjust to our needs, which enhances our overall experience. This kind of commitment positively impacts my loyalty to Crestwood." KII 003

"Crestwood's attentiveness on social media is one of their best qualities. They respond fast and effectively, which has boosted our confidence in them. Their responsiveness keeps me invested in working with them for the long term." KII 004

“Their interaction level is impressive, and they’re always engaging with our audience in a friendly, professional way. It’s this reliability and approachable nature that makes me feel loyal to Crestwood’s brand.” KII 005

High rate of satisfaction with Responsiveness

Many respondents expressed satisfaction with Crestwood’s quick response time, which they view as a key aspect of the brand’s reliability and professionalism.

Strengthened Loyalty through Consistent Engagement

Crestwood’s proactive approach in engaging clients and addressing inquiries has built a sense of partnership, fostering loyalty among clients.

Creation of confidence in Brand

Crestwood’s commitment to adjusting to client needs and providing timely feedback has increased clients’ trust and confidence in the brand, enhancing long-term loyalty.

Reliability

The approachable and professional nature of Crestwood’s social media interactions has contributed positively to client satisfaction and loyalty.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the summary of the based on the focus of the study that is social media as a strategic tool for communication incorporates: a case of Crestwood marketing and communications, Kenya. The chapter present the summary of the themes emerging from the findings of the study regarding the major questions of the study. Lastly the chapter presents the conclusions and the study recommendation on areas for further study.

5.2 Summary of the findings

The focus of the study was based on the following study objectives these objectives which include;

- i. To establish the effectiveness is social media in enhancing the strategic communication objectives of Crestwood Marketing and Communications in Kenya
- ii. To identify the specific social media strategies implemented by Crestwood Marketing and Communications to engage with its target audience in Kenya
- iii. To assess the impact of social media engagement on the brand perception and customer loyalty of Crestwood Marketing and Communications in Kenya.
- iv. To explore the challenges encountered by Crestwood Marketing and Communications in using social media as a strategic communication tool in the Kenyan market.

The key informant interview was done on five respondents comprising of the key informant include marketing manager, social media specialists, customer service representative, digital marketing consultant and public relation officer. The summary of the findings were given in based on the research objectives.

On the first objective to establish the effectiveness is social media in enhancing the strategic communication objectives of Crestwood Marketing and Communications in Kenya. The summary indicated that Crestwood employs a proactive and strategic approach to social media engagement, emphasizing responsiveness, platform-specific tactics, and resource management. Key themes include Responsiveness, with Crestwood generally providing prompt replies that strengthen customer relations, though limited resources occasionally hinder response times. Platform-

Specific Engagement was also notable, as Crestwood shows stronger activity on Instagram and Facebook compared to LinkedIn. Challenges in Resource and Analytics Limitations suggest room for improvement in allocating resources and enhancing analytical tools to optimize engagement. In terms of achieving communication goals, Crestwood focuses on Brand Visibility through targeted campaigns and diverse content, Building Trust by sharing educational and client-centered content, and Customer Support through direct interactions that address customer needs. Effective strategies include Targeted Paid Campaigns on major platforms, Credible Content that establishes industry authority, and Interactive Content for real-time audience engagement, which fosters deeper connections with their audience. These findings resonates with those by Plowman, and Wilson, (2018) who found that Strategy and tactics in strategic communication included on Instagram and Facebook compared to LinkedIn.

The second objective was focused on examining the particular strategies used by the company on various social media platforms. The study identified several key strategies Crestwood uses to engage its target audience across social media platforms, focusing on four main themes. Targeted Advertising emerged as a significant tactic, with paid campaigns on platforms like Facebook and Instagram enabling Crestwood to reach niche segments effectively. Value-Driven Content is another cornerstone, where branded posts, client success stories, and behind-the-scenes content help build brand authenticity. Additionally, User-Generated Content (UGC) plays a critical role, as Crestwood encourages clients to share experiences and tags, enhancing brand presence and fostering community. Interactive Engagement through polls, live Q&A sessions, and real-time customer support also helps drive meaningful connections and direct engagement. These findings are in line with those by Li, Larimo, and Leonidou, (2021) who found that YouTube and tiktok has remained to be the best alternative channels of advertisement.

On the third objective to establish the impact of social media engagement on the brand perception and customer loyalty of Crestwood Marketing and Communications in Kenya. The findings reveal that Crestwood Marketing and Communications' social media strategies have positively influenced brand perception and customer loyalty for their clients. Key impacts include enhanced brand visibility and recognition through consistent, high-quality content, which has strengthened brand identity and customer trust. Targeted advertising has improved customer engagement and sales leads, while real-time interaction has fostered direct customer connections, increasing satisfaction

and loyalty. Additionally, Crestwood's focus on storytelling, community engagement, and social impact initiatives has positioned clients as industry leaders with authentic brand images, driving customer loyalty and a more favorable brand perception. These findings are supported by those by Zephaniah, Ogba, and Izogo, (2020) who indicated that customers' perception of bank marketing communication on customer loyalty.

The last objective was this objective sought to uncover the challenges and potential benefits the company faces when using social media for strategic communication purposes in Kenya. Several questions were used to achieve this objectives. The findings indicate that while Crestwood Marketing and Communications faces some initial challenges in aligning with client expectations, their strategies ultimately contribute positively to brand visibility, audience engagement, and client satisfaction. Key challenges reported include delays in response times, misalignment with brand identity, unclear campaign goals, and a need for better resource preparedness to handle increased customer inquiries. Clients overcame these issues through open communication, brand alignment sessions, and proactive content adjustments. Clients widely recommend Crestwood, praising their creativity, professional consistency, and innovative social media strategies that enhance brand reach and engagement. High satisfaction with responsiveness and proactive client engagement has strengthened loyalty, as clients feel confident in Crestwood's reliability, attentive support, and commitment to adapting to their specific needs, fostering a strong sense of partnership. These findings are supported by those by Lovari, Bowen, (2020) who found that the main challenges affecting advertisement include aligning with client expectations, their strategies ultimately contribute positively to brand visibility, audience engagement, and client satisfaction.

5.3 Conclusion based on the findings

Crestwood Marketing and Communications has demonstrated a clear impact on client branding, marketing, and sales through their social media services. Their focus on consistent brand messaging has significantly enhanced client brand visibility and recognition, creating a unified brand identity that resonates with target audiences. Moreover, Crestwood's strategies around targeted advertising and data-driven content creation have effectively supported clients' sales goals by reaching potential customers and increasing sales leads. Clients have also appreciated Crestwood's emphasis on credibility-building, as social media content that shares industry insights

and success stories has positioned them as thought leaders, positively influencing brand perception.

Crestwood's social media engagement tactics have notably improved brand perception and fostered customer loyalty. By implementing visually appealing and consistent content, Crestwood has elevated clients' professional brand image, making them appear more trustworthy and credible. Furthermore, Crestwood's use of interactive posts and real-time responses has built a stronger connection between brands and their customers, enhancing customer satisfaction and retention. Their storytelling and community-focused content have effectively created a sense of authenticity around the brands they manage, strengthening customer loyalty as clients perceive the brands as both socially responsible and reliable.

Clients encountered challenges in adapting to Crestwood's social media strategies, particularly in areas such as response time, brand alignment, and managing increased customer inquiries. Initial response delays were mitigated through alternative communication channels, while brand alignment issues were addressed through strategy sessions that helped clarify brand voice and objectives. Regular check-ins and performance metrics further facilitated goal alignment, while the influx of customer inquiries led to the development of FAQ content, improving customer interaction efficiency. These adaptations underscored the importance of collaborative problem-solving, which ultimately strengthened the relationship between Crestwood and their clients and optimized the effectiveness of their social media campaigns.

Client satisfaction with Crestwood's responsiveness and interaction quality is a testament to their effective engagement strategy. Many clients expressed high satisfaction with Crestwood's prompt and attentive responses, viewing them as key indicators of reliability and professionalism. This proactive communication has fostered a strong sense of partnership, with clients feeling valued and well-supported. Crestwood's commitment to adjusting to client feedback and maintaining a friendly yet professional tone in social media interactions has not only improved client trust but also strengthened long-term loyalty. The reliability and approachability Crestwood offers have built client confidence in their brand, ensuring a positive and lasting impact on client satisfaction and loyalty.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the study made the following recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of social media strategies, it is recommended that Crestwood Marketing and

Communications continue to prioritize flexibility and customization in their service delivery. Tailoring strategies to each client's unique brand voice and objectives can help avoid misalignment and improve campaign results. Regular strategy sessions and check-ins should be maintained to ensure alignment with clients' evolving needs, fostering a collaborative environment where performance metrics are frequently reviewed. Additionally, increasing the adaptability of response times and creating clear escalation channels for urgent queries further improve communication flow and responsiveness, ensuring that clients feel well-supported.

Furthermore, Crestwood should consider developing a scalable approach to manage increased customer engagement, especially during high-traffic campaigns. This could include preparing additional resources, such as FAQ documents and self-service tools, to help clients manage inquiries effectively. Leveraging automation for repetitive responses while maintaining a personal touch on significant issues could balance efficiency with customer engagement. By continuing to innovate with creative and engaging content that emphasizes authenticity and social impact, Crestwood can further solidify their clients' brand loyalty and expand their reputation as leaders in strategic social media management.

5.5 Areas for further study.

Further study can be done on the following areas;

1. Examine how sustained social media engagement influences long-term customer loyalty and brand retention.
2. The effectiveness of social media strategies with traditional marketing methods in shaping brand perception.
3. Examining how brands handle crises on these platforms and the resulting impact on brand image would be valuable.

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Appendix I. Introduction letter

My name is Amelia Liavoga Kihima, a student at Mount Kenya University. Pursuing A master of Arts degree in journalism and media studies, at Mount Kenya University. As a requirement, am required to conduct a research study to complete the course. Am currently doing a study titled “SOCIAL MEDIA AS A STRATEGIC TOOL FOR COMMUNICATION IN CORPORATES” You have been recognized as one of the pivotal participants in this study. Your cooperation in completing the questionnaire provided will greatly assist our research efforts. Please remember that participation is entirely voluntary, and there was no repercussions if you choose not to consent. Additionally, your privacy was strictly safeguarded, so please refrain from providing any personal information or identification. The data gathered was used solely for academic research purposes and was handled with the utmost confidentiality.

Your cooperation is highly valued and appreciated.

Thank you,

Yours faithfully

AMELIA LIAVOGA KIHIMA



Appendix II: Informed Consent Form

My name is Amelia Liavoga Kihima, a student at Mount Kenya University. Pursuing A master of Arts degree in journalism and media studies, at Mount Kenya University. Kindly, acknowledge whether you have understood the information provided in this consent form of your rights.

I Confirm and understand that my participation involves providing feedback and opinions related to communication project under evaluation. I am aware that my responses was used solely for research and academic purposes and will remain confidential. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary, and I am free to withdraw at any time without any consequences. I also acknowledge that my identity was kept confidential, and my responses was reported in aggregate, ensuring anonymity.

I agree to participate in this evaluation, and I provide my consent for the use of the information I provide for research purposes related to the project's feasibility.

Signature.....



Date.....

Appendix III: Interview Guide Section A: Background information:

My name is Amelia Liavoga Kihima, a student at Mount Kenya University. Pursuing A masters of Arts degree in journalism and media studies, Mount Kenya University. This questionnaire was designed to gather information on social media as a strategic tool for communication in corporates. Kindly respond to the questions as guided.

1. Age (in years):

2. For how long have you worked at Crestwood Marketing and Communications?

3. What is your highest level of academic qualification?

4. Which is your Department?

Section B: Social Media and Service Delivery

5. What are the specific social media strategies implemented by Crestwood Marketing and Communications to engage with its target audience in Kenya?

6. What factors prompted you to adopt the social media tools selected above in your organization?

7. How have you adopted social media in the branding, marketing and selling of the company's products/ services?

8. Can you explain the impact social media tools have had on branding, marketing and selling of companies' products/ services?

9. How do you use social media tools in communication with your clients on matters concerning the company?

10. How is the social media tool used efficiently enough while communicating with the public?

11. What are the specific social media strategies implemented by Crestwood Marketing and Communications to engage with its target audience in Kenya

12. What impact has social media engagement had on the brand perception and customer loyalty of Crestwood Marketing and Communications in Kenya?

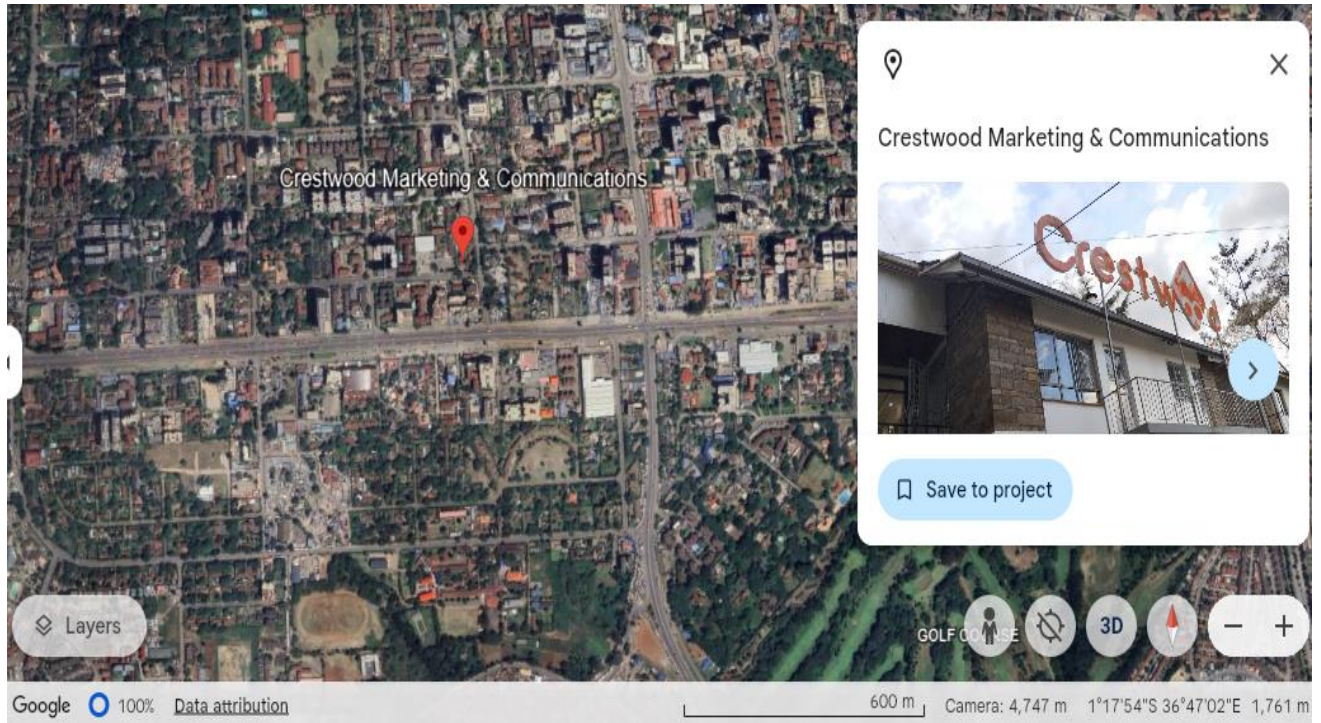
13. Challenges encountered by Crestwood Marketing and Communications in using social media as a strategic communication tool in the Kenyan market and how do you overcome them.

Thank you for your cooperation.



Mount Kenya University

Appendix IV: Map of the location



Mount Kenya

Appendix V: Budget

Budget Item	Estimated expenditure
Proposal Typing	4,500
Printing	6,000
Binding the proposal and project work	6,000
Travelling expenses	15,000
Data Collection	28,000
Miscellaneous expenses	20,000
Total	79,500

Appendix VI: Number of employees at Crestwood

POSITION	NO MEMBERS	
BOARD OF DIRECTORS	4	
SENIOR MANAGEMENT	5	
GENERAL EMPLOYEES	16	
SUPPORT STAFF	5	



Appendices VII: Introduction Letter



DIRECTORATE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

MJMS/2023/50146

25th September, 2024

*National Commission for Science Technology & Innovation (NACOSTI)
Off Waiyaki, Upper Kabete
P.O Box 30623- 00100
NAIROBI, KENYA*

Dear Sir/Madam,


RE: AMELA LIAVOGA KIHIMA - REGISTRATION NO. MJMS/2023/50146

The purpose of this letter is to introduce the above named student who is pursuing **Master of Arts in Journalism and Media Studies** in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication in the School of Social Sciences.

The title of the research is **"Social Media as a Strategic Tool for Communication in Corporates: A Case of Crestwood Marketing and Communications, Kenya."** It has been cleared by the University's Ethics Review Committee (Certificate attached) and now has to proceed to the field to collect data between **October, 2024 and December, 2024.**






Any assistance accorded to the student will be highly appreciated.

Thank you.


Dr. Samuel M. Karenga, Ph.D
Director, Graduate Studies
Enc.


Main Campus, General Kago Road, P.O. Box 342-01000 Thika.
Cell: +254 709 153 000 / +254 709 153 200
Email: info@mku.ac.ke, Web: www.mku.ac.ke
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Appendices VIII: Research Permit


 REPUBLIC OF KENYA	 NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
Ref No: 528220	Date of Issue: 11/October/2024
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
This is to Certify that Ms. AMELIA KIHIMA LIAVOGA of Mount Kenya University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Nairobi on the topic: SOCIAL MEDIA AS A STRATEGIC TOOL FOR COMMUNICATION IN CORPORATES: A CASE OF CRESTWOOD MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS, KENYA for the period ending : 11/October/2025.	
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528220 Applicant Identification Number	 Director General NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
	Verification QR Code 
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See overleaf for conditions	

Amelia Liavoga Kihima

SOCIAL MEDIA AS A STRATEGIC TOOL FOR COMMUNICATION IN CORPORATES: A CASE OF CRESTWOOD...

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 Quick Submit

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Appendices X: Turnitin percentage page





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Appendices XI: Turnitin last page


Appendices VIII: Research Permit

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: **408228** Date of Issue: **11/October/2024**

RESEARCH LICENSE




This is to Certify that **Ms. AMELIA KIRIMA LIAYOGA** of **Moiest Kenya University**, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provisions of the **Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2012 (Rev.2014)** in Nairobi on the topic: **SOCIAL MEDIA AS A STRATEGIC TOOL FOR COMMUNICATION IN CORPORATES: A CASE OF CRESTWOOD MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS, KENYA** for the period ending: **11/October/2028**.

License No: **NACOSTIP/24/0000**

408228
Applicant Identification Number

[Signature]
Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

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Appendices XII'': ERC Certificate



REF: MKU/ISERC/4421
TO: AMELIA LIAVOGA KIHIMA

Date: 23 September 2024

REG: MJMS/2023/50146

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: SOCIAL MEDIA AS A STRATEGIC TOOL FOR COMMUNICATION IN CORPORATES: A CASE OF CRESTWOOD MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS, KENYA

This is to inform you that **Mount Kenya University** has reviewed and approved your above research proposal. Your application approval number is **3141**. The approval period is **23/09/2024 - 22/09/2025**.

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements:

- i. Only approved documents including informed consents, study instruments, MTA will be used
- ii. All changes including amendments, deviations and violations are submitted for review and approval by **Mount Kenya University**
- iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to **Mount Kenya University** within 72 hours of notification
- iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affect the safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to **Mount Kenya University** within 72 hours
- v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions
- vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval must be at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal
- vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days of completion of the study to **Mount Kenya University**

Prior to commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). <https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke> and also obtain other clearances needed.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Alfred Owino, PhD
Chairman, Mount Kenya University ISERC

MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY
ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE
P. O. Box 342 - 01000,
THIKA

MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY
P.O. Box 342-01000, NAIROBI CAMPUS
25 SEP 2024
DIRECTOR
Graduate Studies
RECEIVED

Appendices XIII’: ERC F011

MKU/PG/F011

Mount Kenya University

SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

MKU/PG/F011: RESEARCH PROPOSAL CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTIONS
(NB: This Research Proposal Certificate of corrections should be submitted to the Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies for clearance before the Student proceeds to collect data)

PART I: CANDIDATE PARTICULARS
Name of candidate Dr./Mr./Ms. AMELIA LIANOVA KIHIMA
Registration No: MIMS/2023/50146
Department of study: JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION
Cell phone No: 0714710122
School: SOCIAL SCIENCES
Degree Title (MA, MED, PHD): MA JOURNALISM AND MEDIA STUDIES
Area of specialization: CORPORATE COMMUNICATION
Title of Thesis/PROJECT: SOCIAL MEDIA AS A STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION TOOL FOR CORPORATES
Date of Meeting/Examination: JUL 1 2024
Signature of candidate: [Signature] Date: 23/07/2024

PART II: DECLARATION OF SUPERVISOR(S) OVERSEING CORRECTION / REVISION
I/We, the undersigned supervisor(s) overseeing corrections of the research proposal as advised by the candidate's evaluation panel do hereby declare that all the corrections have been effected satisfactorily as required.
Any other remarks

Names of Supervisors	Signature	Date
1. Dr. O Luo Ong'ongu	[Signature]	13/7/2024

PART III: CONFIRMATION BY THE CAMPUS/SCHOOL POSTGRADUATE COORDINATOR
I hereby do confirm that the supervisor(s) appointed to oversee the candidate effect the corrections on the research proposal have done so as per the instructions of the candidate's evaluation panel.
Any other remarks

Name of Coordinator: Dr. Judy Mwangi

Appendices XIV'': ERC CERT F011

Signature *[Handwritten Signature]* Date *13/09/2024*
Stamp Mount Kenya University
School of Postgraduate Studies
Nairobi Campus

PART IV: CONFIRMATION BY THE DEAN OF THE RELEVANT SCHOOL

I hereby do confirm that the supervisor(s) appointed to oversee the candidate effect the corrections on the research proposal have done so as per the instructions of the candidate's evaluation panel.
Any other remarks

OK

Name of Dean *Prof. R. Mutundu*
Signature *[Handwritten Signature]* Date *13/09/2024*
School Stamp **Mount Kenya University
Dean, School of
Social Sciences**

PART V: CLEARANCE BY THE UNIVERSITY ETHICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE (ERC)

The candidate will be issued with a Certificate of Ethical Clearance by the Directorate of Research and Development.
NB: Two (2) copies of the corrected/revised research proposal should accompany this Certificate of corrections

PART VI: COMMENTS BY THE DEAN SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

The candidate is granted/not granted permission to proceed to the field to collect data (delete where applicable)
NB: One (1) copy of the corrected/revised research proposal should accompany this certificate of corrections

Name of Dean *Dr. Samuel M. Kirengi*
Signature *[Handwritten Signature]* Date *25th Sept 2024*
School Stamp **Mount Kenya University
Office of the Director
School of Postgraduate Studies**