

Social Media Platforms Usage for Entrepreneurship Sustainability: A Study of Selected Rural Women Entrepreneurs of Small Businesses

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Abstract— Social media platforms are sustaining technologies that are currently altering the economic and social landscapes by changing the way people live, do business and work. Social media platforms if used properly can provide effective tools to support sustainable entrepreneurial activities with the potential of empowering women entrepreneurs economically, socially as well as enabling them to contribute positively to environmental conservation and protection. This research study sought to evaluate social media platforms usage by women entrepreneurs of small businesses in rural areas for entrepreneurship sustainability. This was achieved by evaluating the usage of Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn by women entrepreneurs in selected rural market centres of Siaya County in Kenya. The study was premised on the fact that maximum utilization of the social media platforms by women entrepreneurs of small businesses in rural areas would provide opportunities to accelerate the country's social, economic and environment well-being. The study initially sought to predict the relationships between usage of Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn and entrepreneurship sustainability of women entrepreneurs of small businesses in rural areas, then explored the detailed views of these women concerning the use of these social media platforms and finally compared the relationship between their usage and entrepreneurship sustainability. The target population was women entrepreneurs of small businesses in Siaya County. A sample size of 272 was used and a response rate of 91.91% was achieved. Purposive, simple random and snowball sampling techniques were used to aid in data collection. Survey research design was used and questionnaires were used to collect data. Data analysis was done using PLS-SEM statistical model and descriptive, inferential and predictive statistics that encompassed regression and correlation were used to analyse the data. Ethical issues arising from the research such as informed voluntary consent, no harm to participants, confidentiality of information and data integrity were accounted for. The reliability of the research tool was arrived at using composite reliability test and Cronbach's Alpha test. Validity of the research instrument was assessed using factor analysis. The significance of the study lied in its ability to provide valuable insights into the aspects of social

media platforms usage in business and entrepreneurship sustainability.

Keywords— Social Media Platforms, Sustainable Entrepreneurship, Women Entrepreneurs, Small Businesses, Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media platforms are both disruptive and sustaining technologies that are currently altering the economic and social landscape by changing the way people live, do business and work. [1] report confirms that these technologies are key economic and social development enablers. Therefore, business organizations have to be careful to keep up with the pace of new developments, adapt to changes, innovations and improvements in order to remain relevant and competitive in an ever-changing world. A social media platform if used for the most appropriate business function can provide an effective tool to support all types of entrepreneurial activities. Just like its predecessor the Internet, social media platforms have become indispensable to develop business and increase competitiveness [2]. This has become possible because of high penetration of both mobile phones and the Internet globally as well as increased affordability of Internet services. According to [3] report, there were 4.1 billion Internet users in 2019, indicating an increase of 5.3% from 2018 usage figures. The report also indicates that the global penetration rate has been increasing steadily since 2005 with 17% in 2005 to above 53% in 2019. This has resulted into an increase in the number of Internet users with an average of 10 % per year between 2005 and 2019. Mobile-cellular and fixed broadband subscriptions have continued to grow with the former growing at a faster rate than the latter resulting into increased rate of penetration of mobile phones in developing countries. Increased mobile phones penetration rate together with the increased affordability of Internet services have brought about

remarkable opportunities for entrepreneurs to use social media platforms for innovations as well as to start and grow businesses.

ICTs have continued to provide humanity with a range of new communication capabilities [4] [5] [6]; one of them being social media platforms. Social media platforms have the potentials to increase social development, economic prosperity, environmental protection as well as development of new technologies that can bring out the best of the society [7] [8]. Furthermore, social media platforms can help connect the world by making real-time and instant communication easy, faster and affordable, thus creating a virtual community in which people can communicate with others across the world irrespective of their location.

Social media platforms have become indispensable platforms for economic development, innovation, creativity, communication and social inclusion. They provide means of communication, creativity and innovation that were not available before hence their ability to transform how businesses are conducted as well as offering novel ways of addressing business development challenges. Social media platforms offer immense benefits to the business community. With technological advancement, network coverage is growing stronger, advanced features are being incorporated in mobile phones, mobile phones are becoming cheaper and Internet usage in business growing. Internet services among them social media platforms which have become indispensable tools of today's businesses can help bridge knowledge and gender gaps, alleviate poverty, enhance social inclusion as well as help protect the environment. Since social media platforms are vital for business sustainability, women entrepreneurs of small businesses in rural areas should keep up with their use for business productivity and competitiveness. Social media platforms usage in business has the ability to bridge gender gaps, distance gaps and class gaps by connecting businesses to suppliers and customers in a cohesive manner. This can help in providing a range of services to businesses and their customers who were earlier not capable of accessing them either due to financial or location constraints. Because of their unparalleled benefits, women entrepreneurs of small businesses in rural areas should make social media platforms usage part and parcel of their businesses for sustainable business growth and development.

Regardless of all the sustainability benefits of social media usage in business and irrespective of the fact that the social media platforms in business can be great equalizer if properly used, many entrepreneurs even those in rural areas with high Internet penetration do not use them to the maximum. Although Internet access across rural areas of Kenya is increasing due to improvements in infrastructure and the availability of cheap mobile phone, notable shortcomings in social media usage still exist. Internet access and affordability remain big challenges to most entrepreneurs of small businesses in rural areas. Although a big percentage of Kenya is covered by 3G and to some extent 4G Internet services, these signals not extend to many parts of rural Kenya making it impossible for entrepreneurs who mostly access rely on

cellular networks to get maximum benefits from their use. Furthermore, majority of the Internet user access the Internet through their mobile phones making accessibility very expensive due to high cost of data bundles. The Internet gender gap present another challenge for women entrepreneurs of small businesses in rural area as fewer women compared men use the Internet [3]. Other challenges include lack of Internet access, lack of ICT skills, lack of awareness, lack of trust and inadequate infrastructure often coupled with the high costs of connectivity in rural areas. All these challenges inhibit many women entrepreneurs from fully benefiting from the use of Internet and social media services. Therefore, establishing a deeper and broader understanding of how social media platforms can be used to enhance entrepreneurship sustainability by women entrepreneurs of small businesses in rural areas is vital in achieving sustainable development goals.

A. Internet Social Media Platforms as a Catalysts for Entrepreneurship sustainability

This study examined social media platforms usage by women entrepreneurs of small businesses in a bid to identify their contributions towards business growth and sustainability. With billions of people using social media platforms daily, they continue being some of the most important Internet platforms for communication [9]. This is supported by [10] report that state that social media has changed people's ways of interaction in all aspects. Business are turning to social media for communication with customers and suppliers, marketing and promotion as well as market research. Social media present great marketing opportunities for all sizes of businesses and can provide better means of communication for women entrepreneurs of small business to connect with suppliers and customers [11]. Many businesses with success stories have been built on social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. Though a number of small businesses use social media platforms, majority are far much below average. The potentials of social media platforms for businesses growth and development still remain untapped [12]. This presents women entrepreneurs of small businesses in rural areas an excellent opportunity to be among the first movers in this area.

Women entrepreneurs can use social media in a variety of ways:

- (1) Promoting the name of their brand and business thus increasing the visibility of their business beyond their area of operation.
- (2) Telling their customers about their goods and services thus increasing their customer base.
- (3) Finding out what customers think of their businesses thus improving their services and products according the customers' demands and preferences.
- (4) Building a strong customer base by drawing new customers and building stronger relationships with existing customers by sharing links to resources that add value customers as well as engaging them in relevant communications.

B. Theoretical Framework

The study extend gratifications of Internet usage as proposed by [13] who identified three gratifications for Internet usage i.e. content, process and social and [14] identified seven gratifications of Internet usage i.e. information seeking, aesthetic experience, monetary compensation, diversion, personal status, relationship maintenance, and virtual community. The study has identified eight gratifications of using social media platforms in business. These gratifications are communication, marketing, market research, customer relationship, purchases, sales, online banking and online meeting.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Methodology

The study adopted survey research design approach by collecting data from 272 sampled women entrepreneurs of small businesses in rural market centres across Siaya County, Kenya. Market centres were selected using simple random technique while the respondents were selected using snowballing sampling techniques. Data was collected from the respondents using questionnaires. Data was quantitatively analysed using WarpPLS – SEM 7.0 for descriptive, inferential and predictive statistics.

Data analysis involves inspecting, cleaning, transforming and modelling data in order to discover useful but otherwise hidden information, suggest conclusion and support decision making. Data was collected using five point Likert ordinal ranked data questionnaire. To prepare the data collected for analysis, data was cleansed and cleaned and missing values identified. The data was then coded and entered in MS Excel and PLS-SEM in readiness for analysis. Data was then analysed for significant information using descriptive, inferential and predictive statistics. Descriptive statistics are measurements used to summarize data in a systematic way by describing the relationship between variables in the study [15]. Descriptive statistics were analysed first before making inferential statistical comparisons and prediction. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were presented in table forms and charts. Measures of central tendencies such as mean was used to describe the characteristics of collected data as well as answering research questions. Inferential statistics such as correlation analysis and regression analysis were done to analyse the relationships between the dependent variable; sustainable development of women entrepreneurs of small businesses and the independent variable; social media platforms usage. Inferential statistics encompass using descriptive statistics for a sample population to make conclusions or approximations about the value of a corresponding population parameter [16]. Predictive statistics which are statistical inferences connecting future observations to the given observations were done to social media platforms usage in business would predict future usage of Internet in business for entrepreneurship sustainability.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study aimed at evaluating social media platforms usage for entrepreneurship sustainability by women entrepreneurs of small businesses in rural Kenya. To help understand factors that could influence social media platforms usage for entrepreneurship sustainability, data about the following constructs were collected from the respondents; type of social media platform used in business, the frequency of usage and gratifications.

A. Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics of social media platforms usage in business.

TABLE I
SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Statistics	Social Media Platforms					
	Facebook	WhatsApp	Twitter	Instagram	LinkedIn	YouTube
N	200	200	200	200	200	200
Frequency	129	154	43	39	8	58
Mean	2.86	3.40	1.44	1.39	1.091	1.62
Median	3.00	4.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Mode	1	4	1	1	1	1
Skewness	-0.040	-0.654	1.838	1.869	5.085	1.461
Std. error of skewness	0.172	0.172	0.172	0.172	0.172	0.172
Kurtosis	-1.594	-1.050	2.030	27.527	0.790	
Std. error of Kurtosis	0.342	0.342	0.342	0.342	0.342	0.342

The findings show that 36.0% (N=154) use WhatsApp platform, 30.0% (N=129) use Facebook platform, 13.0% (N=58) use YouTube platform, 10.0% (N=43) use Twitter platform, 9.0% (N=39) use Instagram platform and 2.0% (N=8) use LinkedIn platform.

TABLE II
SUMMARY OF DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Social Media Platform	Summary of Descriptive Statistics				
	Mean Usage	Median Usage	Mode Usage	Skewness	Kurtosis
Facebook	Sometimes	Sometimes	Never	Moderately	No outliers
WhatsApp	Sometimes	Mostly	Mostly	Moderately	No outliers
Twitter	Never	Never	Never	Extremely	No outliers
Instagram	Never	Never	Never	Extremely	No outliers
LinkedIn	Never	Never	Never	Extremely	Excess outliers
YouTube	Seldom	Never	Never	Extremely	No outliers

Findings show that skewness of social media use was distributed as follows: The distributions of use of Facebook and WhatsApp in business is moderately skewed with a distribution of -0.040 and -0.654 respectively. On the other hand, skewness of the use of Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube were highly skewed with values of 1.838, 1.869, 5.085 and 1.461 respectively. The kurtosis distributions for Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube are -1.594, -1.050, 2.605, 2.030, 27.527 and 0.790 respectively. The kurtosis values for Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube are Platykurtic i.e. kurtosis < 3 which is a sign of no outliers because the extreme values are less than that of the normal distribution. Kurtosis values of LinkedIn is Leptokurtic (Kurtosis > 3), an indication of excess outliers.

B. Social Media Platforms Usage in Business

Data about what the entrepreneurs use the social media platforms for and the extent in which they use them in their businesses were collected and analysed. The entrepreneurs used the social media platforms to support the following eight business functions; sales, purchases, marketing, customer relationship services, communication services, market research, online banking, services and online meetings.

The benefits of using social media platforms for business sustainability are numerous, however, not all social media platforms are suitable for every business. The findings are presented in the following section.

TABLE III
SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS USES IN BUSINESS FUNCTIONS FREQUENCIES

Business Function	Social Media Platform					
	WhatsApp	Facebook	YouTube	Twitter	Instagram	LinkedIn
Sales	106	82	5	5	8	3
Purchases	81	61	7	4	5	3
Marketing	150	107	24	26	37	3
Customer relationship	148	114	10	23	15	6
Communication	152	119	6	33	19	9
Market research	80	106	58	12	20	6
Internet Banking	5	4	1	3	1	2
Online meetings	84	57	0	7	6	0

TABLE IV
SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS RANKING AND PREFERRED USES IN BUSINESS

Rank		Frequency	Contribution	Common Uses	Rare Uses
1	WhatsApp	154	0.360	Communication, marketing & customer relations	Internet banking, purchases & online meetings
2	Facebook	129	0.300	Communication, customer relations & Marketing	Internet banking, online meetings & purchases
3	YouTube	58	0.130	Market research, marketing & customer relations	Online meetings, Internet banking & sales
4	Twitter	43	0.100	Communication, marketing & customer relations	Internet banking, purchases & sales
5	Instagram	39	0.090	Marketing, market research & communication	Internet banking, purchases & online meetings
6	LinkedIn	8	0.020	Communication, customer relations & market research	Online meetings, Internet banking, sales, purchases & marketing

It was evident that social media platforms usage by women entrepreneurs of small businesses in rural areas to support business functions was above average for only two platforms; WhatsApp and Facebook and far much below average for YouTube, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. WhatsApp which was position one with 154 out of 200 users was mostly used for communication services, marketing and customer relationship services and least used for online banking, purchases and online meetings. Facebook which was position two with 129 out of 200 users was mostly for communication services, customer relationship services, market research and marketing and least used for online banking, online meetings, sales and purchases services. YouTube which was position three with only 58 out of 200 users was mostly used for market research, marketing and customer relationship services and least used for online meetings, online banking and purchases. No respondent apparently used YouTube for online meetings. Twitter which was position four with only 43 out of 200 users was mostly used for communication, marketing and customer relationship services and least used for online banking, online meetings and purchases. Instagram which was position five with only 39 out of 200 users was mostly used

for marketing, market research and communication services and least used for online banking, purchases and online meetings. LinkedIn which was position six with only 8 out of 200 users was mostly used for communication services, customer relationship services and market research and least used for online meetings, online banking, sales, purchases and marketing.

C. Relationship between Social Media Platforms Usage in Business and Sustainable Entrepreneurship of Women Entrepreneurs of Small Businesses

The study also sought to investigate whether social media usage in business would predict sustainable entrepreneurship of women entrepreneurs of small businesses in Kenya. Hypotheses were formulated and data analysed using inferential statistics for correlation and regression. Results are summarised in Table V and Table VI.

TABLE V
SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESES

S/No	Hypothesis Code	Hypothesis Description	Supported/Not Supported
1	H1 ₁	Facebook usage positively predicts sustainable entrepreneurship of women entrepreneurs of small businesses in Siaya County, Kenya	Supported
2	H1 ₁	Facebook usage does not positively predict sustainable entrepreneurship of women entrepreneurs of small businesses in Siaya County, Kenya	Not Supported
3	H2 ₁	Twitter usage positively predicts sustainable entrepreneurship of women entrepreneurs of small businesses in Siaya County, Kenya	Supported
4	H2 ₁	Twitter usage does not positively predict sustainable entrepreneurship of women entrepreneurs of small businesses in Siaya County, Kenya	Not Supported
5	H3 ₁	WhatsApp usage positively predicts sustainable entrepreneurship of women entrepreneurs of small businesses in Siaya County, Kenya	Supported
6	H3 ₁	WhatsApp usage does not positively predict sustainable entrepreneurship of women entrepreneurs of small businesses in Siaya County, Kenya	Not Supported
7	H4 ₁	Instagram usage positively predicts sustainable entrepreneurship of women entrepreneurs of small businesses in Siaya County, Kenya	Not Supported
8	H4 ₁	Instagram usage does not positively predict sustainable entrepreneurship of women entrepreneurs of small businesses in Siaya County, Kenya	Supported
9	H5 ₁	LinkedIn usage positively predicts sustainable entrepreneurship of women entrepreneurs of small businesses in Siaya County, Kenya	Not Supported
10	H5 ₁	LinkedIn usage does not positively predict sustainable entrepreneurship of women entrepreneurs of small businesses in Siaya County, Kenya	Supported
11	H6 ₁	YouTube usage positively predicts sustainable entrepreneurship of women entrepreneurs of small businesses in Siaya County, Kenya	Supported
12	H6 ₁	YouTube usage does not positively predict sustainable entrepreneurship of women entrepreneurs of small businesses in Siaya County, Kenya	Not Supported

1) Strength of Relationship Between Social Media Platforms Usage in Business and Entrepreneurship Sustainability

The P-values and path coefficients were used to determine whether the relationship between each social media platform usage and sustainable entrepreneurship was statistically significant as well as to determine the nature of the relationships. The path coefficients are used describe the mathematical relationship between an independent variable and the dependent variable while the p-values for the coefficients are used to indicate whether the relationship is statistically significant or not. This is important for generalization because the p-values determine whether the relationships that are observed in the sample population also exist in the entire population. If the p-value for a variable is less than the significance level (p<0.05), then there is enough

evidence that the sample data is a true representation of the entire population. This implies that the sample data favour the null hypothesis suggesting a non-zero correlation. As a result, changes in the independent variable are the cause behind the changes in the dependent variable at the population level. However, in a case where the p-value of a variable is greater than that of the significance level ($p > 0.05$), then there is insufficient evidence that the sample data is a true representation of the entire population. For the results of this study, Instagram and LinkedIn are not predictors of sustainable entrepreneurship of women entrepreneurs of small businesses that were studied. See Table VI.

TABLE VI
PATH COEFFICIENTS AND P VALUES

S/No	Variable Name	P value (p)	Path Coeff (β)	Significance of path
1.	Facebook	< 0.001	0.266	Significant
2.	Twitter	0.003	0.190	Significant
3.	WhatsApp	< 0.001	0.426	Significant
4.	Instagram	0.450	0.009	Insignificant
5.	LinkedIn	0.225	0.053	Insignificant
6.	YouTube	0.003	0.165	Significant

The sign of a regression coefficient determines whether there is a positive or negative correlation between each independent variable the dependent variable. A positive coefficient indicates that as the value of the independent variable increases, the mean of the dependent variable also increases while a negative coefficient suggests that as the independent variable increases, the dependent variable decreases. All the six coefficients in the study are positive suggesting that an increase in the independent variable causes an increase in the dependent variable.

The findings from Table VI, indicate that:

- 1) Facebook is a positive and significant predictor of sustainable entrepreneurship ($p \leq 0.001$, $\beta = 0.266$). Accordingly, as Facebook usage in businesses increases, the mean of sustainable entrepreneurship of women entrepreneurs of small businesses also tend to increase.
- 2) Twitter is a positive and significant predictor of sustainable entrepreneurship ($p = 0.003$, $\beta = 0.190$). Accordingly, as Twitter usage in business increases, the mean of sustainable entrepreneurship of women entrepreneurs of small businesses also tend to increase.
- 3) WhatsApp is a positive and significant predictor of sustainable entrepreneurship ($p = <0.001$, $\beta = 0.426$). Accordingly, as WhatsApp usage in business increases, the mean sustainable entrepreneurship of women entrepreneurs of small businesses also tends to increase.
- 4) Instagram is a positive and insignificant predictor of sustainable entrepreneurship ($p = 0.450$, $\beta = 0.009$). Although, the relationship between Instagram and sustainable entrepreneurship of women entrepreneurs of small businesses is positive, an increase in Instagram usage is not certainly the cause of an increase in sustainable entrepreneurship of women entrepreneurs of small businesses. This increase could be due to indirect effects.

- 5) LinkedIn is a positive and insignificant predictor of sustainable entrepreneurship ($p = 0.225$, $\beta = 0.053$). Although, the relationship between LinkedIn and sustainable entrepreneurship of women entrepreneurs of small businesses is positive, an increase in LinkedIn usage is not certainly the cause of an increase in sustainable entrepreneurship of women entrepreneurs of small businesses. This increase could be due to indirect effects.
- 6) YouTube is a significant predictor of sustainable entrepreneurship ($p = 0.009$, $\beta = 0.165$). Accordingly, the relationship between YouTube and sustainable entrepreneurship of women entrepreneurs of small businesses is positive and significant. Thus an increase in YouTube usage increases sustainable entrepreneurship of women entrepreneurs of small businesses.

2) Best Fitting Diagrams

The best fit diagrams were used to determine the correlation or relationships between the six social media platforms usage and sustainable entrepreneurship of women entrepreneurs of small businesses. The line of best fit that roughly passes from end to end but in the middle of all the data points on the graph was generated as shown in Figure 1. Correlation is stronger if the data points are closer to the line of best fit.

The findings show that relationship between WhatsApp and sustainable entrepreneurship is very strong, that of Facebook and YouTube are strong while that of Twitter is fairly strong. On the contrary, the relationship between LinkedIn and Instagram and sustainable entrepreneurship are weak.

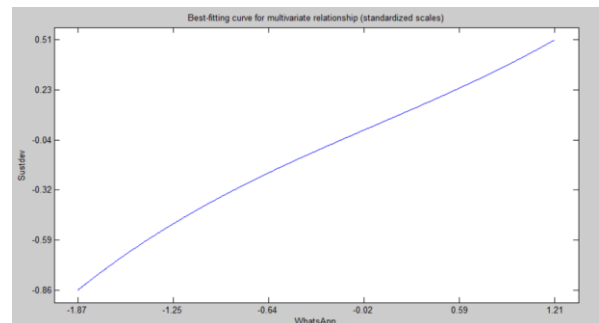


Fig. 1 Relationship between WhatsApp and sustainable entrepreneurship

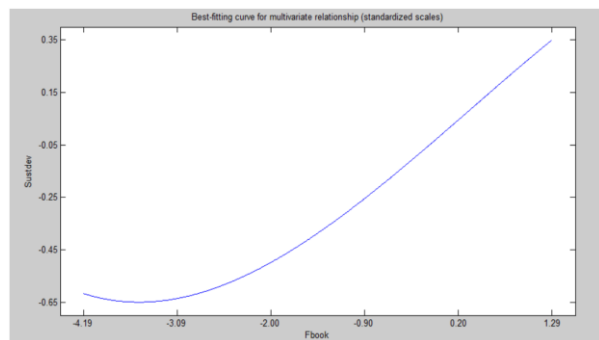


Fig. 2 Relationship between Facebook and sustainable development of women entrepreneurs

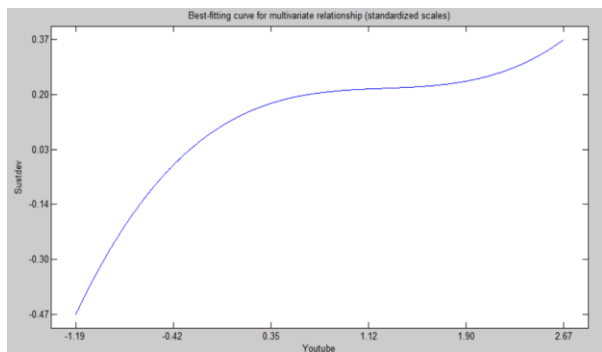


Fig. 3 Relationship between YouTube and sustainable development of women entrepreneurs

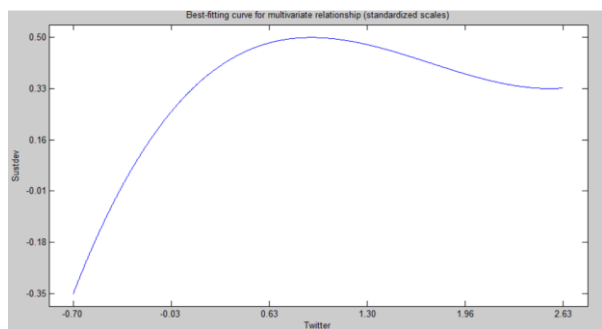


Fig. 4: Relationship between Twitter and sustainable development of women entrepreneurs

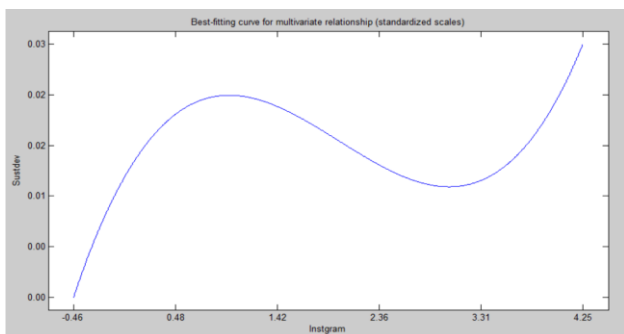


Fig. 5 Relationship between Instagram and sustainable development of women entrepreneurs

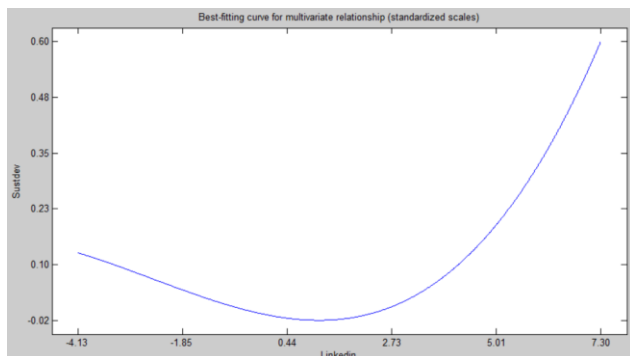


Fig. 6 Relationship between LinkedIn and sustainable development of women entrepreneurs

3) *The effects of Social Media Usage for Entrepreneurship Sustainability of Women Entrepreneurs of Small Businesses*

It was therefore evident that social media platforms are powerful business support tools that is a catalyst for sustainable women entrepreneurship because their usage in business positively predicted entrepreneurship sustainability. Unfortunately, their usage in business by women entrepreneurs of small businesses is far much below average. The usage of social media platform in business enhances business sustainability because with social media platforms, business transactions are fast, cost effective and efficient hence productivity in business. The usage of social media platform in business also eliminates the need of frequent business travels which in turn reduces the chances of contracting communicable diseases such as COVID-19, common flus and tuberculosis (TB) thus improving the general health of entrepreneurs and the general population. Business communication, online meetings, digital marketing, online banking, sales and purchases helps in reducing health related ailments and environmental stress imposed on an entrepreneur as a result of frequent travels that the business demands. Reduced need to travel also reduces environmental pollution caused by motor vehicle and motor cycle emissions and fuel spillages as well as frequent road accidents thus protecting lives.

Online meetings although not a popular service among the respondents can save time and costs spent to travel to meet suppliers, customers, business partners as well as employees. Online meetings also eliminate geographical barriers and allow entrepreneurs to communicate directly with customers and suppliers across the globe. This is very effective because an entrepreneur can upload slides, photos and videos of products and services and share them with the customers during the meeting. Video-conferencing is as effective as face-to-face meetings because of the possibility of interpretation of non-verbal communications. It also reduces generation of paper waste used for letters, memos, minutes and notes as a result of face to face meetings. In the wake of covid-19 pandemics, online meetings are vital for combating the spread of the deadly virus thus protecting the health of the entrepreneurs and their suppliers, customers and partners.

Social media platform for business communication, digital marketing, market research and customer relationship services reduce generated waste. This is because the amount of paper used in printing cheques, posters, reports, memos, orders, assignments, notices and invoices is reduced. This leads to the conservation of trees and the environment and reduced costs of operating.

Online purchases help in reducing supplier power hence reduction in operating costs because entrepreneurs have access to several suppliers countrywide or worldwide. This gives an entrepreneur the opportunity to choose the most viable supplier which helps in lowering the costs of purchases thus decreasing operating costs.

Online sales results into expansion of markets beyond geographical boundaries because of the ability to reach customers beyond the local markets. The ability to reach

global markets leads to larger customer base that leads to higher profit margins. Online sales also lead to fair competition because the customers are geographically dispersed hence local entrepreneurs do not compete for the same customers. High profit margins lead to business expansion and/or investments in new business ventures which are sources of employment for the entrepreneurs as well as others in the society. High profits also lead to improved living standards, poverty reduction and women entrepreneur empowerment. This implies that both the entrepreneur and the employees can afford basic needs such as food and access to better healthcare services. High profit margins also enables the entrepreneur think of investments towards environmental development.

The use of social media platform in business communication increases the entrepreneur and employee productivity because of reduced time needed to search for information from papers and books. Effective business communication also improves customer satisfaction and retention which is an indication of high profit. Similar to business communication, customer relationship services improve customer satisfaction and retention. customer relationship services help entrepreneurs organize customers' information in an organized manner for the purpose of personal market campaigns as well as meeting customer needs.

IV. CONCLUSION

It is evident that the level of social media platforms usage by the women entrepreneurs of small businesses studied is still very low rendering the potentials benefits of these platforms for entrepreneurship sustainability largely untapped. Social media platform usage in business have matchless potentials to enhance women entrepreneurship sustainability hence should be encouraged and enhanced. Social media platforms usage in business is a catalyst of entrepreneurship sustainability because business transactions become fast, cost effective and efficient hence increased productivity. In addition, social media platforms usage in business is essential for fast-tracking the achievements SDGs because entrepreneurship has the potentials of empowering women hence reducing inequality thus enhancing social cohesion and tackling environmental challenges as well as maintaining financial sustainable.

Out of the six social media platforms that were evaluated, Facebook was ranked second after WhatsApp was commonly used for communication services, customer relationship services, digital marketing, market research and least used in banking services. WhatsApp which was ranked first was mostly used for communication services, digital marketing, customer relationship services, and sales respectively. Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and LinkedIn were not popular. Twitter was commonly used for communication services, digital marketing and customer relationship services. Instagram was commonly used for digital marketing, communication services and market research, LinkedIn was commonly used for communication services while YouTube was commonly used for digital marketing and market research.

WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter were found to be predictors of sustainable entrepreneurship while LinkedIn and

Instagram were found not to be predictors of sustainable entrepreneurship. Although Instagram and LinkedIn did not meet the threshold of this study, they are valuable platforms for entrepreneurship sustainability. This calls for awareness as well as more research studies targeting their potentials in entrepreneurship sustainability.

V. RECOMMENDATION

To step up social media platforms usage for sustainable entrepreneurship, the study makes the following recommendations:

1. The central and county government as well as non-governmental organizations, private sectors and well-wishers should invest in programs aimed at enhancing the digital and entrepreneurship literacy of women entrepreneurs at grass root levels.
2. To encouraged usage their usage in business, central government, the county governments together with private sectors and telecommunication companies should establish data centres in major market centres across the counties where entrepreneurs can be given access upon registration at subsidized costs.
3. To increase the level social media platforms usage in business by women entrepreneurs of small businesses in rural areas, the Kenya Chamber of Commerce in collaboration with the Kenya business community and mobile network providers such as Safaricom, Telkom Kenya and Airtel should come up with sustainable entrepreneurship discounted bundles for small business entrepreneurs in rural areas just as KENET did to make e-learning affordable during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak.
4. Entrepreneurs should set up WhatsApp business accounts, add and label their customers for ease of communication, marketing and customer relationship services. WhatsApp business app enables entrepreneurs to share photos, videos, audios, invoices, payment receipts and other attachments and timely updates about the business with the contacts. Entrepreneurs can also use WhatsApp business accounts for targeted or group communication, customer relationship services and marketing services.
5. Facebook should be used more for marketing, communication and customer relationship services. For marketing, entrepreneurs can join or create a Facebook group for the business. Those with business websites can have links to their sites on their Facebook page to act as a roadmap to their businesses. Entrepreneurs should use Facebook to share business information with existing customers and potential customers as well as answer questions posted by customers. Entrepreneurs can also engage customers on a one-on-one live chat.
6. YouTube should be used more for marketing and customer relationship services. Entrepreneurs can create videos of the products, services and processes to allows their customers made informed decisions before making purchases. Entrepreneurs can also create a community of followers on YouTube for the purpose of updates of new products, services or experiences. Entrepreneurs should

also use YouTube to solve existing and potential customers' problems by responding to their questions.

7. Entrepreneurs should use Twitter to connect to other users globally and to market their businesses. Businesses can also create awareness as well as build a strong following of customers and potential customers. By paying attention to hashtags, entrepreneurs can provide timely customer services to customers following their businesses.
8. Entrepreneurs should also use Instagram as a marketing platform and LinkedIn as a platform for communication as well as marketing.

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