Strategies Used to Manage Feedback from Facebook Interactivity: A Case of Kisumu Water and Sanitation Company, Kenya

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Abstract:- **The objective of the study was to determine the strategies used by KIWASCO to manage feedback from Facebook interactivity. To achieve this objective, data was collected using an interview schedule where two PR staff participated. A structured interview schedule was used to collect data from 2 PR officers. Qualitative data was then analyzed thematically. The results revealed that KIWASCO has a recruitment/Human resource strategy with a lot of emphasis on professionalism. Besides, there is a social media communication policy that guides on how, when, what, where, and who should be interacting with KIWASCO social media pages, what content to post at what time, who should be posting, and how they should be posted. Additionally, KIWASCO operated multiple social media accounts such as Twitter (now X), Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, and KIWASCO's official website to reach a wide audience and proper management of feedback. The firm also utilized multiple Facebook page administrators to enhance interaction with customers. Finally, there is the scheduling of the post on the KIWASCO Facebook Page with up-to-date monitoring which is done randomly. The study recommended that KIWASCO should continue to strengthen its presence on Facebook by sharing content beforehand, timely conveyance of information, and customer engagement.**

Keywords:- Facebook, Feedback, Interactivity, Strategies.

I. INTRODUCTION

Organizational communication and public relations are experiencing swift transformations due to the influence of social media tools. These tools have altered the nature of internet services, shifting them from a primarily consumption-focused model to one that is interactive and collaborative. As a result, fresh avenues for engagement between organizations and the public have emerged (Henderson and Bowley 2010). Social media platforms have taken over the way we communicate, do business, and form relationships. Furthermore, the power that social media has in terms of disseminating information in the public domain is huge, where a piece of information could easily reach millions of customers with as many as 100 shares. Many business organizations utilize social networks by creating pages to promote their products, conduct sales, and provide customer services.

Organizations benefit from social media platforms by gaining access to a trustworthy audience that shows genuine interest in their activities and products. These platforms also provide incentives for users to regularly update their profiles and share new content. For instance, on Facebook, each user can fill in their personal information such as their connections, workplace, education, interests, activities, and favorite products, creating a comprehensive "identity template." This wealth of data serves as a valuable relational database for businesses, enabling them to establish meaningful connections with consumers and audiences. Audiences and consumers actively participate in constructing meanings and shaping new contexts and practices (Lawrence and Phillips, 2002). The ability of companies to engage and influence their customers' relationships and conversations plays a crucial role in successfully managing this process of generating symbolic value. It ultimately leads to the creation of intangible assets for the firm (Ravasi and Rindova, 2004; 2007).

Due to technological advancements, the customer and business landscapes have changed, necessitating the need for organizations to adapt to the changes as one of the ways of satisfying the customers' demands that are continuously increasing proportionally with market competition (O'Connor & Galvin, 2001). However, as some would incontestably feel, this is not realized with social media platforms such as Facebook, which offers minimal dialogue or discussions within its pages. For instance, while social media platforms such as Facebook were originally designed to enable the easy exchange of personal information, they do not cater to the professional image of an organization. Consequently, it becomes crucial to approach the promotion of a nightclub on Facebook in a significantly distinct manner compared to managing the online presence of a doctor's office or a law firm.

There are restrictions and care that must be taken to develop and maintain a Facebook presence that reflects corporate philosophy, lest it places the organization in a bad light thereby exposing it to public scrutiny (Fernandes, Belo, Castela, 2015). These limitations, therefore, beg the question of what strategies are being used by firms to manage feedback from Facebook interactivity without compromising the professional reputation of the organization.

Facebook stands as the most widely embraced social media platform. As per Lua (2023), approximately 37% of the global population engages with Facebook. In the context of Africa, an impressive 50% of internet users are active on Facebook. According to Statista's data from April 2022, Kenya boasts over 14 million Facebook users, constituting 24.4 percent of its population. Furthermore, research by Andras and Papp (2022) revealed that 67% of marketers designate Facebook as their primary marketing platform. Moreover, Facebook serves as the preferred choice for more than 200 million businesses, predominantly small-scale enterprises, who utilize its tools. Additionally, a noteworthy figure of over seven million advertisers actively promotes their businesses on Facebook, solidifying its status as the go-to platform for businesses seeking a social media presence (Lua, 2023). Considering these statistics, Facebook emerged as the platform of choice to understand the strategies used by firms to communicate with their customers.

Communication between organizations and customers through facebook is almost instantaneous. When Coronavirus pandemic hit Kenya in March 2020, many organizations resorted to working remotely. Kisumu Water and Sanitation Company (KIWASCO), one of the public entities in Kisumu-Kenya shut down many of its physical operations, including its front office which is a key segment in the Public Relations Department. The organization, instead, directed its clients to Facebook as an alternative channel of engagement. Due to inadequate regulation of social media in the country, reluctance by the public to accept social media as an official communication channel, and weak structures in operationalizing Facebook interactivity, KIWASCO faced an uphill task in dealing with the challenges brought about by this form of digital interaction.

Existing literature provides different strategies that have been adopted by organization for effective communication with their customers over the social channel Facebook. These strategies are industry specific and cannot be generalized to different industries. Given this limitation, this study sought to establish the strategies employed by KIWASCO in managing feedback from Facebook interactivity. This was aimed at informing Social Media Communication policy making within KIWASCO as well as other similar organizations.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many companies are hesitant to participate in social media because they lack the knowledge on how to handle it and are concerned about potential negative consequences such as unfavorable publicity. Social media platforms facilitate the rapid spread of news, making it challenging for companies to maintain control over their online presence. Consequently, companies without a social media presence and without monitoring online conversations relinquish control over what is being said about their brand or company (Fitzgerald, 2011).

Social media and online communication have given customers the upper hand in shaping the online reputation of brands and companies. Fitzgerald (2011), suggests that companies should develop a social media strategy to gain better control over the public perception of their brand. How a company responds to negative comments plays a crucial role in determining how long those comments persist. Defensive responses can attract attention and lead to the sharing of negative posts. Therefore, it is important for companies to have a proactive plan in place to effectively address negative comments. Additionally, Smith (2012), advises companies to utilize social media platforms to influence market competition by optimizing industry-related search terms beyond their brand or company name. By employing innovative and creative posts on blogs and Facebook, a company's visibility in industry searches can be enhanced.

Online reputation management is a complex process involving various activities such as positioning, monitoring, measuring, and engaging in transparent and ethical dialogue with online stakeholders. With the rise of social media and the ease of content creation by Internet users, managing the content and overall reputation of a company or brand online has become increasingly challenging. Comments can rank highly in search results, complicating reputation management efforts. Smith (2012), cautions that not all publicity should be considered beneficial. Companies should strive to control search results by providing abundant and high-quality content that is relevant and useful to users. Having multiple social media pages can naturally increase a company's presence in search results, and if necessary, companies should consider investing in paid advertising to ensure high rankings in relevant searches. Positive content can also help companies drown out negative content, particularly in relation to customer complaints.

Nisula (2015) emphasizes the importance of companies responding to negative feedback received through social media. It is common for companies to encounter negative feedback online, and therefore, they should have a pre-established strategy in place to demonstrate appreciation for their customers and address concerns sincerely. Proactive planning for negative publicity in social media is essential, rather than formulating strategies after such incidents occur. Companies should establish plans to manage negative publicity on social media and, if applicable, adapt existing crisis management plans to handle crises that may arise in the online sphere.

Negative information can persist online for an extended period and prominently appear in search results, often being the first impression people have when searching for a brand or company online. As a result, there has been a significant increase in the number of firms specializing in online reputation management. A cohesive reputation is crucial as the online world becomes increasingly integrated into people's lives. These reputation management firms aim to mitigate negative information by promoting positive content instead. Strategies may include obtaining backlinks from reputable websites to elevate positive content in search results. However, this approach may not suffice if the negative publicity is highly damaging or sensational. Additionally, these firms often assist companies in establishing and managing their social media pages, if they don't already have

them, with the intention of later transferring control to the companies themselves (Klara, 2011).

All in all, **Smith (2012)** states that "Managing reputation through search is undoubtedly getting more complicated and will continue to require more resources, but brands certainly can't afford to just ignore the issue. Clearly, management of negativity directed toward a brand or an organization has been considered a priority by several scholars. It is considered best practice that organizations respond, in a positive way so as to curtail the possible spreading of the negativity beyond the control of the organization. This is because the internet never forgets, and any negative publication online could alter the perceptions of customers years later. As such, despite the presence of reputation management companies are also an extra cost to an organization changing dynamics of social media means that companies ought to have specific ways of responding to negative comments posted online.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

➢ *Research Design*
This study adopted a descriptive research design. Descriptive research, as defined by **McCombs (2020),** is a suitable approach when the objective is to identify characteristics, frequencies, trends, and categories. It proves valuable when there is limited existing knowledge about the topic or problem. In order to investigate the reasons behind a phenomenon, it is essential to comprehend how, when, and where it occurs. One of the methods employed in descriptive research is case studies, as stated by **John (2019)**. Case studies are a widely used research method that aims to analyze specific issues within a defined environment, situation, or organization. The advantages of using a case study include conducting data collection and analysis within the context of the phenomenon, combining qualitative and quantitative data, and exploring the complexities of real-life situations to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

➢ *Study Area*
This study was conducted in Kisumu Water and Sanitation Company, the main water service provider in Kisumu County. The company is under the category of Very large water utilities and was ranked position 16 overall according to the Water Services Regulatory Authority (WASREB) Impact Report Issue 13. As such, the company is a representative sample of other similar utility firms in Kenya that value Public relations practice as their reputation impacts the company both locally and internationally. Further, various articles and reports have been made on KIWASCO and as such there was data available to inform the study. This is in line with Saunders et al., (2009), who note that most studies utilize data from large firms with available public information, as there are difficulties in collecting data from small firms.

➢ *Study Population*
Population refers to the complete group of elements that the study data aims to include for drawing conclusions (Kothari, 2003). On the other hand, the target population specifies the specific units that the study's results are intended to be applied to or generalized from (Dempsey, 2003). The research targeted KIWASCO employees and customers. According to the Human Resource Manual of KIWASCO 2016, there are two employees in the KIWASCO Public Relations Department, and the company has a customer base of 36,000 customers. This is the study population from which the sample size was obtained.

Table 1 shows the distribution summary of the KIWASCO employees as well as customers benefitting from the services of the organization.

Table 1 Target Population of the Study

Category	Population
KIWASCO PR Staff	2

➢ *Qualitative Research*
Qualitative research is an approach that involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data to understand concepts, opinions or experiences. In the present study, the interview was used to collect qualitative data. This process involved the use of face-to-face interviews with respondents. During the exercise, the researcher also observed and assessed the level of respondents' responses to ascertain validity and reliability. In each interview, the researcher studied the population through observation, assessed the situation, and made appropriate conclusions to the objectives of the study.

● *Total Population Sampling*
In selecting the employees of KIWASCO, the study used total population sampling. According to Stephanie (2018), this is a type of purposive sampling where the whole population of interest is studied. Such a population is a group whose members all share a given characteristic. It is most practical when the total population is of manageable size, such as a well-defined subgroup of a larger population, in this case, the number of staff at the Public Relations department of KIWASCO being two.

● *Interview Guide*
Qualitative data was collected using an in-depth interview guide. This augmented the understanding of the phenomena that were being investigated (Christensen et al., 2015). The semi-structured interview guide with open-ended questions for interviews was developed as per the research objectives. This was done to ensure that the researcher collected comprehensive information that improved the quantitative data that were collected in the later stages of the research. The utilization of a key informant interview schedule was deemed crucial as it allows for a more in-depth exploration compared to other data collection methods (**Cohen and Manion, 2012**). This method aims to provide an accurate representation of opinions and insights from knowledgeable experts. To gather the necessary qualitative data from the employees, questionnaires consisting of open-ended questions were employed. The researcher specifically chose open-ended questions to encourage verbal responses from the participants. This approach was selected due to its flexibility in facilitating probing inquiries that go beyond the study's primary focus.

- *Interview Procedure*

The first step involved the development of an interview guide that listed the topics and issues to be covered during the interview. This interview guide is provided in the appendix. The second step involved selecting the Key informants who are knowledgeable about Facebook usage at KIWASCO. In this regard, two KI (Key Informants), were purposively chosen. Step three involved initial contact where the researcher established rapport with key informants to create an atmosphere in which key informants were able and willing to communicate their views and opinions freely. During the actual interview, extensive notes were collected. In addition, tape recorders were used to lessen the burden of note-taking. This enabled the researcher to focus on the interview proceedings.

- *Analysis of Interview Data*

Practical analysis techniques that facilitated insightful analysis of interview data were adopted. The technique involved the use of interview summary sheets, descriptive codes, storing and retrieval systems, and presentation of data. The qualitative analysis process consisted of three steps, as outlined by Creswell (2003) and **Jwan and Ong'ondo (2011).** In the first step, the interviews were transcribed, while the recordings, observations, and field notes were already in written form and did not require further transcription. The transcribed interviews served as the primary data for subsequent analysis, and the researcher stored them in separate password-protected Microsoft files on a computer.

Moving on to the second step, each transcript was carefully read line by line to ensure coherence and to gain a general understanding of the information. This step aimed at grasping the overall meaning of the data. In the third step, the coding process was initiated. Coding refers to the researcher's actions of identifying, organizing, and systematizing ideas, concepts, and categories found within the data (**Benaquisto, 2008**). To assist with this process, the researcher utilized Nvivo, a software designed for organizing and analyzing content from various sources such as interviews, audio recordings, social media, and web pages.

Following the coding process, the next step involved presenting an explanation of the data in a coherent manner to the readers. This stage referred to as narration by Jwan and Ong'ondo (2011), involved paraphrasing the participants' statements and incorporating a few direct quotations to convey their perspectives. The resulting text formed the initial draft of the research report. Subsequently, using a new Microsoft Word file, the study refined the narration by paraphrasing most of the data from the first draft, eliminating repetitive sections, including selected citations to support the report's credibility, and summarizing lengthy aspects. This revised version became the second draft report.

- *Validity and Reliability of the Interview*

Once the tentative findings are made, it is necessary to review them carefully for accuracy and to ensure that they are grounded in empirical reality. The steps below were followed to reduce the most common sources of bias and errors in key informant studies and thereby help to improve the accuracy of the findings. Step one involved checking for representativeness. This step was important because key informants are not selected through random sampling and their numbers are small, the possibility exists that certain groups or organizations may be overlooked in the study design or cannot be reached for interviews. This was done by taking a second look at the list of key informants to ensure that it was fairly representative. The reliability of key informants was assessed in terms of several criteria. These included Knowledge-ability, Credibility, Impartiality, and Willingness to respond

➢ *Ethical Consideration*

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from Maseno University's Media Department to establish the student's legitimacy and introduce the student as a representative of the university to both the company and the study participants. Several ethical considerations need to be taken into account by researchers when conducting a study. This includes creating an introductory note in the questionnaire that clearly explains the study's main purpose and assures respondents that their identities will be protected. The respondents were assured that their responses and identities would only be used for academic purposes outlined in the introductory note. By providing this assurance, the researcher gained the trust of the respondents, enabling them to provide honest information without fear of being exposed or violated. Additionally, the researcher informed the participants of their rights to fully participate or withdraw from the study at any time. Full consent from the participants was only required when they returned the fully and appropriately completed questionnaire sheet to the researcher.7].

IV. FINDINGS

The second objective of the study was to determine the strategies used by KIWASCO to manage feedback from Facebook interactivity. To achieve this objective, data was collected using an interview schedule where two PR staff participated. During the interviewing, the study focused on the following strategies, recruitment of employees in the public relations and communications department of KIWASCO, Social media communication policy, Number of social media accounts operated by KIWASCO, management of feedback from Facebook interactivity and duration spent manning social media platforms. Besides, the section also focused on the most preferred social media channels in terms of delivering service to customers and utilization of Facebook to enhance service delivery in KIWASCO.

➢ *Recruitment Strategy*

During the interview, the researcher was interested in understanding the professional requirements for one to be employed in the public relations and communications department of KIWASCO. Recruiting the right personnel enhances professionalism in the management of feedback from Facebook interactivity. Both PR staff indicated that the minimum qualification is a diploma in journalism, PR, marketing, and any related field. However, the degree was a

desirable professional qualification. Other desirable qualifications were that the candidate should be a member of professional bodies with adequate experience in a similar capacity. Individuals possessing these professional requirements are expected to assist KIWASCO in achieving its objectives and goals.

- One of the Interviewee (PR1) said that:
"The importance of having a professional is that they bring on board the knowledge learned in school into practice and they put into real action interacting with the different audience like the customers, different stakeholders and the media"

- On the other Hand, the Interview (PR2) Stated that:
I am a registered member of PRSK. Being a member of the PR profession enables me to continue advancing my career beyond the academic requirements.

➢ Social Media Communication Policy

The research noted that KIWASCO has a social media communication policy. According to one of the interviewee (PR2), social medial policy is a document that guides on how, when, what, where and who should be interacting with KIWASCO social media pages, what content to post at what time, who should be posting and how they should be posted. This was further elaborated as:

"Who's going to post content to KIWASCO Facebook official pages and at what time? What topics will the administrators cover?. What is inappropriate for the page, which post needs to be deleted without offending the customers? What happens (and who will deal with) negative feedback?"

- These Sentiments were also Shared with PR1 who Stated:
"Just as earlier mention you will miss out because you will not be able to capture what is relevant for social media publics in time. The policy helps you to communicate objectively and effectively. Knowing what to post at what time is very important. Without this document, you might find yourself posting the right content but at the wrong time or to an irrelevant audience so to means at that point there is no communication that shall have happened"

The researcher noted that the policy acts as a guiding document on how to manage social media pages in terms of who should respond and what should be posted. It gives the episodes of the company over what is happening and what is relevant for the social media public because not everything that happens should be posted. Further, the policy outlines the role of social media platform administrators and therefore, it ensures that there is no conflict of interest among various stakeholders. One of the sampled Interviewees (PR2) stated that:

"Helps you not to miss out or your customers not to miss out. It gives you a 360 view of the company operations that is relevant for the social media audience. So you are able to know what is happening and should be posted during that which is happening like if it is time to read the meters we

know during this period is a meter reading period and we should be able to inform our customers or remind them whatever information that should be going out at around such a time indeed goes out"

➢ Number of Social Media Accounts Operated by KIWASCO

Both PR staff who participated in this study indicated that KIWASCO has more than one social media account. They include Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, WhatsApp, and KIWASCO official website. Having one social media account was associated with a limited audience, and different preferences among customers, and each specific social media account has a different application. One of the interviewee (PR1) stated that:

"Having these social media platforms helps you to reach out to different audiences. The audience that we get on Facebook is slightly different from that on Twitter and the same as LinkedIn and sometimes even the website. Having several platforms helps you to package relevant information for that particular audience you want to address and this means that the information will reach out effectively to the platforms or audience you are supposed to speak to"

➢ Strategies Put in Place to Manage Feedback from Facebook Interactivity

The researcher sought to find out some of the strategies put in place to manage feedback from Facebook interactivity. The researcher noted that KIWASCO has multiple Facebook page administrators to enhance the promptness of feedback from various customers. The majority of customers utilizing KIWASCO Facebook have different queries ranging from payment, water supply shortage, low-pressure water, disconnected water supply, and high bills to queries regarding new account applications among others. Having multiple Facebook page administrators affords the customers the opportunity to get adequate and satisfactory feedback thereby improve customer service. In this regard one of the interviewee (PR2) said that:

"When one person is not in a position to give feedback, the other person will able to view and manage customer interaction"

The second strategy is scheduling the post on the KIWASCO Facebook Page. From the interview results, the researcher noted that scheduling entails distributing posts throughout a period with the aim of proper management of feedback. Both the two interviewees alluded that having a specific post at a particular time enables the page administrators to have enough time at their disposal eventually enabling them to adequately give required feedback. This was well summarized by one of the interviewees (PR1) said:

"When we schedule for posts, we can have like three posts in a day. To ensure all the posts of the interactions or the engagements under each post is well attended to. We schedule the posts if one goes this time the other one goes in the next two hours or so. This helps us to manage and get

real feedback on each post because each post is different. we are able to give customers time to internalize posts and be able to get feedback for each and every post that we publish"

However, PR2 indicated that scheduling has some challenges since some customers will still bring out previous posts that are considered due. Such posts are challenging as far as feedback is concerned since other customers may respond to the feedback initiating a cycle of feedback and counter feedback. This was common during unpopular posts which do not attract adequate attention from the customers. Applying the strategy of using multiple-page administrators, KIWASCO has managed to provide feedback from previous posts.

The third strategy was social media campaigns. KIWASCO has frequently conducted social media campaigns to enhance the management of feedback. The purpose of a social media campaign is to increase awareness and knowledge in regard to various products and services offered by the company. One of the interviewees (PR2) said that:

"...like on a product we want to either market or increase product knowledge, we conduct either social media polling or social media campaigns that will help us inform the customers because they will know what we have apart from just supplying them with water. This helps us to inform the customer of other products we have and we also be able to get feedback on the same"

The last strategy as identified in this study is automatic response. The utilization of automatic response enhances customer services since it gives the customer a passive interactive experience. Automated response lets a customer know that they are not being ignored and the administrator will get back to them as soon as possible.

- *One of the Interviewees (PR1) Stated that:*
  "When a customer reaches to us and maybe we are not able to respond instantly the customer will get an automatic message to hold in as we will be waiting for official feedback on the issue/concern raised"

➢ *Time Spent Manning Social Media Platforms*

The researcher sought to find out how much time the PR staff spent manning the social media platforms compared to other activities. Time is an important aspect in the management of feedback from Facebook in terms of fixed or random. The two PR staff had divergent views on time spent although they advocated for random timing. PR1 who was one of the page administrators indicated that adequate focus should be directed within the first three hours of any posting after that, a fixed timing should be applied. On the other hand, the second interviewee PR2 who is also an administrator of the KIWASCO page indicated that time spent in managing Facebook platform should be predictable since customers access the page randomly. According to her (PR2), she said that:

"Per day I would spend like one and a half hours at most two hours not consistently but different times that I go checking on whether a customer has given feedback or comments so that we react to them"

However, after careful deliberations and careful thought arguments, both PR staff agreed that manning of KIWASCO Facebook platforms should be done on demand due to cases such as vandalism, water leakages, and bursts which require prompt action. Further, according to PR1, random manning of social media platforms creates a 24/7 presence of the company which is important in customer service. Digital platforms have become popular not only in our social lives but also in corporations and other organizations. Many customers have embraced digitization, they reach out to the organizations through social media platforms. So it is very important that every organisation such as KIWASCO especially utility firms should have a strong presence in social media. The way customers can come out in large numbers to complain in the office is the same way they do it social media they expect immediate action and they realize that social media complaints are actioned faster than when they make calls or visit the offices physically. To enhance service delivery to achieve the mission of KIWASCO which is to be the most admired service provider, the company has embraced these as a fast way to reach out to customers to respond to their needs in an objective way: enhancing our service delivery to our customers and enhance our image as a company.

➢ *Facebook usage and Service Delivery Enhancement*

The researcher then focused on the influence of Facebook usage on service delivery enhancement in KIWASCO. Both PR staff who participated in the interview indicated that Facebook has enhanced service delivery in the organization although to varying degrees. The first PR staff (PR1) indicated that, out of ten (10), he will rate it at seven (7) while the second PR staff (PR2) rated it at nine (9) out of ten (10). PR1 indicated that there is room for improvement not only from the PR and Communication departments but from other departments. The interviewee indicated that the PR and Communication department is an anchor between the customers/clients and KIWASCO core operation departments. In as much as the PR and Communication department can manage feedback promptly, laxity in other operational departments may negatively affect service delivery as whole.

On the other hand, according to PR2, Facebook and social media as a whole have enhanced service delivery. Prior to social media, walk-in customers and calls were commonly used channels of customer communication and the public relations and communications department had significant challenges handling customer complaints. According to her, it was difficult to make announcements on rationing, scheduled maintenance on major infrastructure, and other operational information unless they resorted to the use of public announcements, chief *baraza*, print media, radio, or television. However, social media platforms, according to her, add a different dimension to the department. The PR2 said that:

"Whenever we push out content on Facebook we are able to rate the engagement as it gives both the real numbers and percentages that we are able to gauge how many customers interact with this particular information. This helps us to put emphasis accordingly when creating content an example is the KIWASCO alternative product. Most people know us for sanitation and water provision, but they don't know that we have other services like the sale of manure, plant visits, etc. these are some of the things the residents of Kisumu didn't know but through Facebook postings, we have been able to package information that has created so much awareness that the customers know aside from the main mandate but there is more to our services"

➢ *Most Preferred Social Media in Terms of Delivering Service to Customers*

Both PR staff interviewed affirmed that KIWASCO has various social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and WhatsApp to improve their visibility among customers. Studies indicate that customers today are more powerful than ever, as customers have been named king; businesses should be available and open on every social media platform, including Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and internet forums. Therefore, according to them, social media communication channels provide essential opportunities for every organization. In regard to the most preferred social media platform, there were divergent views. As the second PR staff (PR2) highly favoured Facebook, the first (PR1) indicated that there is no perfect social media platform since they have got different applicability. According to his classification, under social networking sites, there is Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn; Media sharing networks, there is Instagram and YouTube, and messaging platforms such as Messenger, Telegram, and WhatsApp. According to his arguments, Facebook increases Brand Awareness, Increase Customer Relationships, and Reaching a Wider Range of Customers. When asked about other social media platforms such as Twitter he (PR1) said that:

"With Twitter, you have a better understanding of customer needs, easy reach to customers, and build engagement. For WhatsApp you have interaction with customers, provision customer services, generate ideas, and increase visibility. Then we have Instagram which assures engaging with customers, spread of brand and visual communication"

Therefore, according him (PR1), there is no single optimum social media platform to enhance customer service, however, proper mix is need so as to enhance customer services through suitable exploitation. On the other hand, the second interviewee (PR2) had a different opinion. According to her, Facebook remains the main dominant social media platform in KIWASCO to drive customer experience and engagement. Her (PR2) assertions were based on statistics in regard to Twitter, Facebook, and other KIWASCO social media platforms. She (PR2) said that

"I would recommend Facebook, since I started interacting with Facebook, the number has been growing so fast, and the expressions are so impressing because you get

to reach out to many people. Further, Facebook gives simplified analytics. On your engagement you are able to understand just by a glance how your posts are performing, how many you've reached, how many sites are following your page, it's so easy to understand, so many people are on Facebook as compared to other channels in our case"

V. DISCUSSION

This study found that KIWASCO has put in place several strategies to manage Facebook interactivity. First, the company has employed multiple Facebook page administrators. Having multiple Facebook page administrators affords the customers the opportunity to get adequate and satisfactory feedback thereby improving customer service. The second strategy is scheduling the post on the KIWASCO Facebook Page. This involved having a specific post at a particular time enabling the page administrators to have enough time at their disposal that eventually enables them to adequately give required feedback. The third strategy was social media campaigns. KIWASCO has frequently conducted social media campaigns to enhance the management of feedback. The purpose of a social media campaign is to increase awareness and knowledge in regard to various products and services offered by the company. The last strategy, as identified in this study, is automatic response. The utilization of automatic response enhances customer services since it gives the customer a passive interactive experience.

These findings confirm Nisula (2015) assertion on the importance of companies responding to negative feedback received through social media. It is common for companies to encounter negative feedback online, and, therefore, they should have a pre-established strategy in place to demonstrate appreciation for their customers and address concerns sincerely. Proactive planning for negative publicity in social media is essential, rather than formulating strategies after such incidents occur. Companies should establish plans to manage negative publicity on social media and, if applicable, adapt existing crisis management plans to handle crises that may arise in the online sphere.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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